

The Line of March

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FOR A FUTURE THAT REALLY WORKS!



**Stop Paying the Rich! Reject and Resist
the “Austerity” Programme! Increase
Investments in Social Programmes!**

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A FUTURE THAT REALLY WORKS:

The Programme of the Working Class

On the agenda for the working class movement and the Workers' Opposition is to take the necessary steps to develop and further strengthen the organisation of the resistance of the working class and people to the so-called "austerity" programme of the Coalition government.

Chancellor George Osborne's autumn statement on December 5 will underline the assertion of the ConDems that the austerity programme is set to last for years. This anti-social programme is being carried out under the fraudulent banner of "deficit reduction". The mantra of "deficit reduction" covers over that the government's aim is not in fact to "balance the budget" but to slash investment in social programmes in favour of schemes to pay the rich and to privatise public services. It is to uphold the "right" of the monopolies and financial oligarchy to increase their stranglehold over the economy and the whole life of the country, while absolving the government of the duty to serve the public good.

While the Workers' Opposition are calling for a growing economy that serves the needs of the people, the ConDem government is insisting that "growth" means the "right" of the monopolies to aim for the maximum profit, and that the rights of the workers must be disregarded, that the workers are no more than a necessary evil, and the intensity of work must be stepped up, the "labour market" "deregulated", corporation tax slashed, conditions and health and safety at work disregarded, pensions attacked, and a failing economy regulated so that paying the rich is guaranteed. The rich see no future unless this austerity programme is endless and that the agenda is dictated to the working people at every level and in every sphere.

It is very necessary that the working class movement is resisting this completely draconian offensive. In the present there is crisis of the economy, the political institutions and of the destruction of the natural and social environment. It is therefore completely just that the working class movement should demand a future that works, in which the dignity of labour is recognised, that the marginalisation of the working class and people from any kind of decision-making should be ended, and that the people gain control of their lives in every aspect. In short, the working class and people are in the course of their resistance searching for the alternative, for the line of march to a future which really works!

At this time, the programme which expresses this future in the present and unites the whole working class movement is the

programme to stop paying the rich and increase investments in social programmes. It is a fighting programme

to expand investment in social programmes, the social and public sector of the economy and a programme that demands more wealth is put back into the economy and preventing the added value produced by the working class being taken out of the economy by the financial oligarchy. It is a programme that reflects the struggle between the old direction represented by paying the rich and imposing austerity and the new direction of putting more into the economy than is taken out and organising a society for the benefit of its members and that guarantees their rights to a livelihood, to health care, housing and the rights of all. It also upholds the vital question of what is needed for an alternative to the wars and occupations pursued by successive British governments. It is a programme that there is an alternative to war and that taking a stand for this now is the precondition for bringing about a future without war.

The political process requires renewal so that it represents the vast majority of people. The old arrangements of a party in power and a party in opposition are no longer working, and political power is being further concentrated in the hands of a few within the Cabinet. Overall, the government is financing private interests with public funds in disregard of the public good. A future that works actually requires investment in social programmes, public services and public infrastructure in order for the modern socialised economy to flourish. This is what is flagrantly being denied by imposing the austerity programme on society.

The alternative rests in the working class rallying the people behind its own independent programme, a programme that will reverse the present attacks and open the way to a new society worthy of human beings, a future that really works. This programme must be built around the demand to stop paying the rich and increase investments in social programmes. The working class movement must fight for itself to have that power to decide the direction of society and the economy.



Stop Paying the Rich! Reject and Resist the "Austerity" Programme! Increase Investments in Social Programmes!

Developing the Resistance and Organisation of the Working Class

The issue being discussed in the working class and trade union movement following the massive demonstration for A Future That Works is how resistance and organisation can be developed in the fight for an alternative to the government's austerity programme. This also includes discussion of what mechanisms the working class has at its disposal.

For example, what did trade unions and delegates at the TUC Congress take up this year? They focused on the campaign for an alternative to austerity, an alternative to realise that future beginning right now. This campaign which the trade unions have taken up involves a fight to realise now jobs, homes and a decent standard of living for working people. It involves a fight to preserve the welfare state, investments in infrastructure and affordable social housing.

It is expressed as an active industrial policy that makes strategic use of government procurement and helps to develop a greener and more stable economy. And looking at the mechanisms at the disposal of the trade unions, the resolve was that there needs to be a strong voice from all the TUC unions to protect public and private sector workers. The trade union movement as represented in the



to turning things around from the old direction of society to fight for and realise a new direction for society. This experience shows that what is required is not some policy objective for the next Westminster government but to organise to take care of the future political direction in the here and now.

Such a programme requires building on the success following the massive demonstrations the March for the Alternative



TUC is united that co-ordinated actions are required, with far reaching campaigns including consideration of the practicalities of a general strike, as the delegates to the 2012 Congress resolved.

In other words, what the movement is gravitating towards is that the focus is not just about opposition to austerity but

to building on this resistance and take it forward. The spontaneous consciousness is growing that new



forms are required for organising and consolidating the resistance. What is clear is that with the crisis of political representation of the working class, with the need for the democratic renewal of society, the working class and people require a new political direction.

To turn the situation around, the working class and trade union movement must go all out to mobilise for the next step in its fight for the alternative. It is in this context that the working class needs its own worker politicians and to ensure that all participate in analysing what programme, resistance and organisation are needed, combining this with action to work for a new future.

Workers must increasingly get together in this way to develop their own thinking as to how society is organised so that public right prevails over monopoly right, so that the majority prevail over big party government and so that the working class can take its place as the leader of a new society in Britain. The working class needs that power to implement its agenda. This is the future! The working class has the mission to bring



that future about, and must seriously consider the strategy and tactics required to make its power count. This is the lesson on how to launch the next stage of the line of march of the campaign of *A Future That Works!*

Building Resistance against Austerity: European Day of Action

The biggest Europe-wide day of action so far in resistance to austerity was held on Wednesday, November 15. General and smaller strikes and mass demonstrations took place across the continent, particularly in Spain, Italy, Portugal, Greece, France and Belgium. Rallies and other actions were also held in Britain, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and elsewhere.

The day of “action and solidarity” was called by the European Trade Union Confederation, which represents nearly 90 organisations across Europe and came just a week after a two-day general strike in Greece. It is the first time such generalised strikes have been simultaneously held in a number of different European countries.

For the first time since the fall of the Franco dictatorship,



Spain: Madrid

two general strikes have been held in same year, with more than 9 million Spanish workers participating according to union figures. Power consumption was down 16% due to closed factories

and other workplaces, while over 600 flights were cancelled.

Defying public opinion, Economy Minister Luis de Guindos said that the Spanish government would stick to the spending cuts. To back up his words, tear gas was used on protesters and police fired rubber bullets at demonstrators in Madrid.

Tear gas was also used in Italy, while many arrests were made in Italy and Spain as well as Portugal. Portuguese strikers grounded 45% of national airline TAP and in Lisbon, many thousands demonstrated in front of parliament demanding "Out IMF, out troika", and asserting "This debt is not ours!".

Protesters occupied Italy's iconic Leaning Tower of Pisa, raising the banner: "Rise up. We are not paying for your crisis."

At a rally in central Athens, Greek demonstrators shouted, "Enough is enough!"

In France, marches were organised in more than 100 cities by the five main unions.

Strikes in Belgium severely disrupted the important Eurostar and Thalys rail links connecting Brussels with Paris and London.

In Britain, a rally was held outside the European Commission offices in Westminster.

"Today we stand in solidarity rejecting austerity and demanding a future that gets people back to work and that protects our public services," said TUC General Secretary Designate Frances O'Grady at the rally. The people of Europe "will fight for an alternative based on social and economic justice".



Italy: Rome

THE BATTLE FOR THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE NHS:

The Anti-Social Effects of the Merging of Hospital Trusts

Emergency admissions to hospitals have risen by 37% over the last 10 years. But in the face of increasing need for health care by the population the government is cutting £20 billion from the nation's health budget. Inevitably this places great strain on the systems within hospital and community care, to the extent that 10% of hospital doctors surveyed by the Royal College of Physicians said they do not feel safe in the care delivered where they work and would not recommend their hospital.

This is happening in a context of an agenda to privatise swathes of the NHS, using the powers of the Health and Social Care Act. In September it was reported that contracts for 400 services were up for tender, with £250m contracts signed in one week. £750m of services are currently being opened to competition – put up for tender.

Many local hospital trusts are being forced to undertake mergers into large groupings. Financial difficulties are used to threaten them with being treated as a "failed trust" and taken over by a private health corporation. In April this year the largest Merged Trust in the UK was formed from three inner-city hospital trusts in east London. This now employs approximately 15,000 staff and has a budget of around £1.2499bn.

The restructure to bring three trusts into one with a system of management that integrates the different hospitals is now in the implementation phase with about 150 staff already issued with

redundancy notices. This has been a traumatic experience for many staff and services. Two thousand staff were informed that they were potentially at risk, and many of them had to go through competitive internal interviews to apply for their own jobs in the new structure.

Part of the official rationale for the restructure is to reduce management and "back office" costs. But many senior clinical staff – pharmacists, radiographers, therapists – have been affected with some of the most experienced and skilled staff forced out. And on the other hand many low-paid staff working in IT, administration and clerical jobs, stores, etc., are losing their jobs or have been down-banded with lower pay, contributing to poverty in some of the most deprived boroughs in England.

A radical restructure of three major hospital trusts to build them into one organisation was a huge undertaking under any circumstances. But the whole restructuring itself was rushed though in a period of four months (90-day consultation plus a month to implement) for an official start on October 1. The driving factor on timing was externally set deadlines and the desire to achieve staff cost reductions early enough.

It is understood that during the consultation, staff sent in 540 responses to the proposals, and that most of these were substantial and detailed explanations of what the impact would be of the proposed structures on their service, how their service worked now and what made it work well, as well as some alternative

proposals. This impressive level of response demonstrates, as the unions stated in a Staff Side newsletter, just how strongly staff care about their services. The Staff Side (unions working jointly from across all the hospitals and previous trusts) took up the issues, and meetings were set up between staff and local union reps and management to thrash them out. Some changes were won, but major areas of concern remained. And in these areas there is real concern as to how the service will be provided effectively with the numbers of staff allocated and the pressure on those who managed to keep a job.

The areas where staff had most concerns and it was most difficult to get changes that responded effectively to these concerns, it later became evident, were also the areas where the highest burden of financial “savings” are being imposed. These “savings” are part of the 4-5% annual “cost improvements” imposed on all NHS Trusts by the government. The annual target for this year is £63.3m, £7.2m of which were to come from the merger restructure.

Not least in the consequences of the merger and restructuring has been the adverse effect on the human beings involved.

The impact has been on individuals, with the shock of losing their job in a service in which they have committed years of their working life, or the stress of interviews in which they find their contribution of the years is not understood or valued, to say

the least.

And the impact has been on staff as a collective in terms of their service. Health care professionals and other staff through their knowledge and vision, and consistent work to meet the needs of the population in their area, build up health services over years and decades. If changes are imposed from above without an understanding and worse without a commitment to the reality of the needs of that service and the way it works, it is profoundly stressful. The health workers and professionals are deprived of control over their working environment, their lives, their NHS and their future. They are undermined and experience the devaluing of all their work and standards. This cannot be accepted, and the human factor/social consciousness must be brought into play, with an assertion of the knowledge and vision of the human beings and their collectives. It cannot be accepted that the role of the health workers and professionals is simply confined to “consultation” and parameters of financial targets are imposed as being primary.

Health staff are guardians of standards of care and advocates for patients and services. The challenge is to make the requirement to build our health services to meet our population’s need the deciding factor and to achieve that is a battle for the staff and community to become the decision makers. *The Line of March* calls on everyone to take up this challenge.

Demand the Repeal of the Health and Social Care Act 2012

Since the imposition of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 on March 27, it as if the government has declared war on the social well-being of society, its health workers and its health system that has served society over decades since 1947. The situation shows that the government is determined to drive society down a path to disaster in terms of being able to meet the basic needs of people for health care as long as the finance capitalists and health monopolies get paid.

Shockingly this week the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) revealed that “despite the Coalition’s promise to protect front-line staff from cuts the NHS workforce has fallen by almost 21,000 since the Coalition Government came to power. This includes a loss of more than 6,000 qualified nursing posts – from a total of 312,000 nursing posts in the NHS.”

These days when health workers and their union organisations are faced with ever spiralling attacks on the health services they provide and on their jobs, terms and conditions, it is a struggle in itself not to become overwhelmed by the sheer weight of these attacks on every front. The constant drive to privatise particularly preventative and facility services at this stage but also

whole acute and community services as well causes huge concerns and worry to health workers for their future and the future of their patients. Add to this the constant drive to reduce services and even whole hospitals, to reduce staffing levels to dangerous levels, to transfer staff from one “provider” to another, to attack terms and conditions in a myriad of ways, to freeze pay, to try and “regionalise” pay, seems relentless and unstoppable.

What has made and is making a difference is when health workers discuss what is what and what things mean within the conditions in which they are working. Analysing what the concerns are and what the solutions are and making sure that people at all levels are involved is crucial. So, for example, the Chief Executives of some NHS Foundation Trusts in the north-east have attempted to form a wages and conditions cartel to challenge the Agenda for Change terms and conditions, as has also been attempted in the south-west of the country. Opposition to this at all levels has meant that such a plan has broadly failed so far. Such thinking has been isolated in a recognition that a modern health service requires a national standard for the claim of health workers in regard to the role which they perform. As

can be seen where the health service has been privatised, such as with the closure of elderly care hospitals and the creation of private nursing homes, not only do most residents now pay for their care but also the majority of the nurses are paid only the minimum wage and not even a “living wage”.

Responding on a daily basis to this whole government-driven anti-social offensive in the sphere of health is a crucial if workers are to maintain their resistance and organisation and defend

their rights as well as the right to health care of their patients. One of the most important questions for health workers is also to develop their own thinking in the fight for the future of the NHS and to build their resistance and organisation on this basis. This means to start building that future in the here and now by first of all demanding that the Health and Social Care Act 2012 be repealed. Demand the repeal of the Health and Social Care Act, and fight for the future of the NHS!

Opposition to the Closure of Lewisham Hospital A&E and Maternity Services

At a Save Lewisham Hospital’s A&E demonstration, on November 24, despite the wet weather, an amazing 15,000 people turned out. This magnificently shows the strength of feeling about the threatened closure of the A&E and the determination to stop it. Tens of thousands have also signed the on-line Save Lewisham Hospital petition. Demonstrators marched from nearby Loampit Vale in Lewisham, ending with a symbolic joining of hands round the hospital. This was followed by a rally in Ladywell Fields next to the hospital.

South London Trust Special Administrator Matthew Kershaw had issued a draft report on October 29 proposing the closure of Lewisham Hospital’s A&E department, which has only recently been refurbished for £12 million. This would leave only an urgent care centre and the Maternity Unit with patients being sent to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich. Under the proposal, Lewisham Hospital’s land and buildings would be sold to developers to raise money. Many health services in Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley would be privatised and hundreds of doctors, nurses and other NHS staff in south-east London would lose their jobs.

The background to this outrageous proposal is the alleged £150 million debt run up by the South London Healthcare Trust.



The Trust Special Administrator Matthew Kershaw was appointed in July by the then Secre-

tary of State for Health Andrew Lansley under the Regime for Unsustainable NHS Providers. The Department



of Health said in its statement of October 30 that “the regime seeks to ensure the delivery of high class and affordable NHS services, protecting patients and staff from failing services”.

At the rally, Lewisham Mayor Steve Bullock and local MP Joan Ruddock both spoke of the necessity to keep local health services open and paid tribute to the numbers of people who had come on the demonstration. A nurse from Ealing spoke of their recent demonstration of 5,000 and spoke of the importance of banding together and supporting each other’s campaigns in the nation-wide fight to save the NHS. A Lewisham Hospital Consultant explained that their hospital serves nearly a quarter of a million population in an area of high deprivation and health need, and provides excellent quality of care being among high performers nationally including in A&E and intensive care, and their popular birthing centre. He pointed out that Lewisham Hospital is financially sound and in balance. But the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) build in Woolwich has led to huge debt. Several speakers pointed out that this is what has led to the proposals.

Those thousands of people gathered listening in the darkening wet day outside their hospital had a powerful sense of determination. Here is a community and a hospital’s staff in action, they know their value, the value of their services, and they are

not about to let their future be destroyed.

At a meeting to take forward the campaign, on Wednesday, November 28, well over 500 people filled the Broadway Theatre in Catford, south east London. The speeches by both the table and from the floor showed very clearly that the fight to save Lewisham Hospital is part and parcel of the struggle up and down the whole country to defend the NHS. The speeches were a powerful refutation of the government's disinformation that financing the NHS has to be based on "balancing the books" and "productivity" and false declarations of "bankruptcy". Speaker after speaker pointed out that health care is a human right which cannot be bought on the market. The Lewisham Hospital struggle clearly shows that the budget mechanisms created by the

government to finance the NHS do not take into account the reality of working people's lives; they have no coherence and are designed to create the maximum fragmentation and disruption to health services.

The enormous success of this campaign is a clear indication of the vital importance of keeping up the fight to defend health services, stop the destruction of the NHS throughout the country and effect a change in its direction away from privatisation and alleged financial failure towards the direction that health care is a right, which it is the duty of the government to guarantee.

Website: <http://www.savelewishamhospital.com>

FIGHTING AGAINST DISREGARD FOR SAFETY AT WORK:

Tragic Increase in Construction Workers' Deaths

On October 17, UCATT (the Union of Construction, Allied Trades and Technicians) released a report showing that there was a large increase in construction fatalities involving self-employed workers last year.

The report stated: "In total there were 49 construction deaths in 2011/12 of which the Health and Safety Executive have recorded that 22 involved self-employed workers, 45% of all construction fatalities." It continued: "In 2010/11 36% of construction deaths involved self-employed workers and in the last seven years the previous highest number of construction deaths involving self-employed workers was in 2008/09 when 38% of fatalities were self-employed workers. The highest number of deaths was in the Midlands where 8 workers were killed, an increase of 2 on the previous year. The number of deaths in the West Midlands doubled from 3 to 6." The report also pointed out: "There were also 7 fatalities in the North West and the South East, in both cases an increase on the previous year. There was also a major increase in deaths in the South West where fatalities doubled from 3 to 6, in 2011/12."

UCATT general secretary Steve Murphy said: "This rise in deaths among self-employed workers is very worrying. Self-employed workers frequently work on sites where safety levels are lower and are therefore more vulnerable to suffering an accident or injury."

The UCATT report pointed out that, under the government's direction, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is currently consulting about removing some self-employed workers from health and safety regulation. The report further explained: "While these proposals do not currently include construction

there are concerns that the policy will be extended in the future, as part of the government's desire to 'cut red tape'."

Steve Murphy said: "Every one of these deaths was an individual tragedy and many could easily have been prevented. Rather than cutting safety, the government should be ensuring that existing laws are properly enforced."

"It is vital to remember that each of these deaths was an individual tragedy. Construction deaths remain far too high and many of these deaths could have been prevented."

He added: "Sadly construction deaths are likely to rise in future. After every previous recession as the construction industry has recovered there has been a large increase in deaths. These dangers will be increased due to the cutbacks to the Health and Safety Executive and the Government's attacks on safety laws."

On November 13, UCATT pointed out that Mayor of London Boris Johnson had refused to answer whether he would support the direct employment of construction workers in order to reduce deaths and injuries. Jerry Swain, UCATT Regional Secretary for London and the South East, said: "Sites where workers are directly employed are safer. Direct employment and proper engagement with trade unions about safety was the primary reason why London delivered a safe Olympics. Boris Johnson should not try to ignore those lessons through misdirection and weasel words."

UCATT are now seeking a meeting with Boris Johnson to get his support to ensure that future public sector contracts in London specify direct employment and that private sector contracts be strongly encouraged to follow the same safety models.

LONG LIVE THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE!

Condemnation of the Israeli-Zionist Criminal Assault on Gaza

Emergency demonstrations have been held internationally since Israel began its latest aerial and ground assault on Gaza with “Operation Pillar of Defence”. Demonstrations were held on November 17 and 24 in London.

Around 15,000 marched on November 24 from Downing Street to the Israeli embassy in south Kensington. It was extremely vigorous and militant, despite atrocious weather. The ceasefire won through the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people further lifted the spirits of the demonstrators.

The Israeli-Zionists had launched murderous attacks on Gaza after assassinating the military commander of Hamas. During Operation “Pillar of Defence”, a savage Israeli bombing was unleashed on the civilian population of the Gaza Strip. This killed more than 160 residents of whom more than 30 per cent were children under the age of 10, and another 20 per cent adult women, mostly mothers of the dead children. The tally of the injured was more than 1,000, in which elderly people and children predominated.

Retaliating against this exercise in “collective punishment”, Hamas and other resistance groups in the Gaza Strip fired more than 1,000 rockets and missiles, landing more than two-thirds of

with dozens wounded.

The Coalition government in Britain had joined the Zionists’ disinformation campaign. Far from condemning Israel’s aggression, it tried to heap blame on Hamas. Foreign Secretary William Hague said, “Hamas bears principal responsibility for the current crisis. I utterly condemn rocket attacks from Gaza into southern Israel by Hamas and other armed groups. This creates an intolerable situation for Israeli civilians in southern Israel, who have the right to live without fear of attack from Gaza.” The Foreign Secretary’s statement is the latest example of the government’s decision to ignore international law with respect to Israel’s crimes against the Palestinian people, trying to construe the Zionists’ aggression and war crimes as self-defence.

RCPB(ML) denounces the war crimes of the Israeli-Zionists against the Palestinians. It condemns the ConDem government’s support for these crimes. The crimes of Israel against the Palestinian people must be ended, and the right of the Palestinian people to justice, freedom and to exist as a people upheld. Israel must end its violation of international law and basic human rights, and Britain and the other big powers must end their military, financial and diplomatic backing for the Israeli regime.



them all over the territory claimed by the State of Israel. The official count of deaths was six

Palestinian Resistance Wins Ceasefire

The Zionist occupiers of Palestine were forced to agree to a ceasefire that states, “Israel shall stop all hostilities in the Gaza Strip land, sea and air, including incursions and targeting of individuals ... [and shall commit to] Opening the crossings and facilitating the movement of people and transfer of goods and refraining from restricting residents’ free move-

ments and targeting residents in border areas.”

The agreement is a significant victory for the Palestinian resistance and the second major defeat of the Zionists since they invaded and were forced out of Lebanon in 2006.

The penetration of Palestinian rockets into Tel Aviv and Jerusalem has shaken the aura of invincibility and confidence of

the Zionist aggressors and shows what will come if they do not recognise the rights of Palestinians and reach a negotiated political agreement. The words of the ceasefire are objective and verifiable regarding the lifting of the Zionist blockade of Gaza. The entire world led by the Palestinian resistance will hold the Zionist occupiers to account to turn their words in the ceasefire into deeds and stop their inhuman aggression against Palestinians and lift the blockade of Gaza.

The peoples of the world salute the heroic Palestinian resistance and its determination to right the wrong that imperialism has inflicted on the Palestinian people. Their resistance inspires all who are dealing with the arrogance, interference and murderous assaults of Anglo-US imperialism.

The Palestinians have the inalienable right of return to their land and homes which the Anglo-US imperialists forced them to leave in 1948 and afterwards. The injustice of the Nakba, the

great catastrophe of 1948 and subsequent crimes of the Zionist occupiers and their Anglo-US backers and financiers must be righted with the right of return of Palestinians and their descendants.

The continuous barbarous and genocidal attacks of the Zionist occupiers prove that they are not fit to rule and have no intention of finding a political solution to the Palestinian right of return. They must be held to account for their war crimes. The desire of all progressive and peace-loving peoples of the world is to see the right of return of Palestinians upheld within a Palestinian state that recognises the rights of all its residents regardless of religion or any other cultural observance.

The victory against yet another Zionist war crime further isolates the Zionist occupiers, their conciliators and Anglo-US imperialist backers. It inspires all who are resisting injustice, including the working class and people in Britain.

Interference in Middle East: British Government Must Be Held to Account for its Stands and Actions

In November the British government showed once again that it intervenes in the Middle East to advance its own geo-political interests and to safeguard the position of Zionist Israel and not to further the legitimate demands of the heroic Palestinian people, nor those of Syria or other countries in the region.

Despite regular hand-wringing about the need to resolve the question of the Palestinians' right to statehood, successive British governments continue to support Zionist Israel's war crimes against the Palestinian people, labelling these crimes as acts of self-defence, while at the same time they refuse to recognise the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, refer to the elected government of Gaza as a terrorist organisation and condemn its right to attempt to defend its citizens from the state terrorism of Israel.

It was in keeping with this approach and by employing blatant lies and disinformation that Foreign Secretary William Hague condemned Hamas for precipitating the recent bloody Zionist assault on Gaza. He put forward the argument that the impediments to advancing what he referred to as the "Middle East Peace Process" were the divisions between the patriotic Palestinian organisations, the "terrorism" of Hamas and the involvement in Iran which, it is alleged, is providing arms for the defence of the people of Gaza. What is especially noteworthy is that the Foreign Secretary does not consider the murderous activities of Zionist Israel to be in any way an obstacle to

the "Peace Process", nor the fact that it has been supplied with weapons, including weapons of mass destruction, by Britain, the United States and their allies since its creation in 1948. The Foreign Secretary even went as far as to suggest that the Palestinians should not demand state recognition by the UN and claimed that this too since might create an impediment to the "Peace Process".

The Coalition government maintained this stand at the EU Foreign Minister's meeting in Brussels and this gathering also condemned the Palestinians and merely called for a "de-escalation" of Israel's murderous assault on Gaza. The government did voice its opposition to a full-scale ground invasion of Gaza, as did the US and others, but only because it calculated that this would be universally condemned and might lead to even greater support for the Palestinians in neighbouring countries as well as internationally. As in the past it has been the militant resistance of Palestinian people that has thwarted the criminal plans of Zionism and Anglo-American imperialism and forced the warmongers to seek a ceasefire and even to make concessions, which on paper appear to favour the people of Gaza.

In regard to Syria, the Foreign Secretary announced that the government would recognise those forces fighting against the Syrian government, the so-called National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces, recently established under the auspices of Anglo-American imperialism and their reac-

tionary allies in the region. The government together with its EU partners swiftly declared that this coalition is considered “the sole legitimate representative of the Syrian people” on the basis that it is prepared to do the bidding of Britain and its allies. As a consequence, the government announced that it would provide significant additional support and aid totalling some £2m to those fighting against the government of Syria, particularly in rebel-held areas within the country. By its own admission, the government is openly training and organising those engaged in a civil war, as well as providing arms through its proxies. Such criminal acts, which have had the effect of fuelling the conflict in Syria and have led to thousands of casualties, are a clear breach of international law and the UN Charter.

The British government sheds crocodile tears about the conflict in Syria just as it does over the plight of the Palestinians, but

it is fully implicated in both tragedies. The government must be held accountable for the crimes it is committing throughout the region just as its predecessors must be held responsible for denying the Palestinians their national rights, creating and propping up the reactionary regimes and creating suffering and instability throughout the region. In these circumstances, workers and all democratic people in Britain must step up their own political struggles and create the conditions to establish their own anti-war government in Britain. This would be a government which fully recognises the rights of all nations, which stops arming and supporting reactionary regimes, ceases all interference in the affairs of the people of other countries, which brings to book all those in Britain responsible for war crimes and crimes against the peace, and which makes reparation for all such crimes.

FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT:

No to the Militarisation of Society and of Government Policy at Home and Abroad!

Following on from the swamping of the Olympic stadia with army soldiers, the increasingly regular appearance of the military at public events, the Remembrance Day ceremonies and their coverage in the media bears witness to the increasing militarisation of society.

It is one thing to solemnly remember the dreadful slaughter of the First World War, when the Great Powers sought to redress the world with callous disregard for the cost in human life, or to pay tribute to the sacrifices made in the heroic struggles against fascism of the Second World War, in which the Soviet Union bore the brunt of the losses. But it is another to glorify Britain’s barbarous colonial wars, the military interventions in the devastating partition of India, the Korean War, the Malaya, Kenya, Suez, Cyprus and Aden “emergencies” amongst others, right up to the Malvinas campaign and the more recent criminal interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. And such glorification only bolsters the threat of war which increases month by month against Syria and Iran.

What we are witnessing is the increasing militarisation of society at home, not to speak of the militarisation of the economy, and the increasing use of war abroad as the main instrument of foreign policy, the main means to settle international disputes. In

other words, a policy of fascism at home and war abroad.

What the governing parties have in store and their justifications could be seen in an article by David Cameron in the Telegraph of November 10, on his plans to commemorate in 2014 the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. He asserts that the commemorations will “capture the British spirit” and will “unite the country in national pride”. He speaks also of the “huge geopolitical impact to remember – the unleashing of Nazism and Bolshevism that caused immeasurable suffering for decades afterwards”. It is hard to believe that repugnant jingoism and outright falsification of history can descend to such crude depths! Yet Cameron is certainly not alone; week after week the media spew out such equally banal and sinister disinformation, dressed up as serious journalism or history.

As regards Cameron’s remarks, any objective historical analysis would show irrefutably that it was the Bolshevik October Revolution which in fact brought the First World War to a swift end, that it was the West who financed and supported the rise of Nazism, and egged Hitler on to Go East and destroy the new workers’ state, the Soviet Union. It would show that it was the proposals of the Soviet Union for collective security against fascism which could have prevented or, at least, made less devas-

tating the Second World War, proposals spurned by the Western Powers, who instead signed the traitorous Munich Accord with Hitler which sealed the fate of Europe. It would show too that it was, in the end, the Soviet Union which would play the main role in the defeat of Nazism, while not belittling the vital contri-

bution of others.

The increasing militarisation at home, the glorification of criminal war abroad, make clear the vital necessity to build the Workers' Opposition, to change the direction of the economy and of society itself, to bring into being an anti-war government.

Organising for an Anti-War Government Is Imperative

In a statement to Parliament on November 7, Foreign Secretary William Hague made it clear that the governments of Britain, the US and other NATO countries are intent on regime change in Syria and are openly working to unify the various groups that opposed to the Syrian government, so as to make them a more effective instrument of their aims. Hague also recently announced that the government has published what it refers to as the Iraq Network Strategic Review, in short its new strategy for Iraq, following the criminal Anglo-American-led invasion of that country in 2003 and then the withdrawal of the remnants of the occupation forces last year.

Hague's statement on Syria shows that the Coalition government has already appointed a Special Representative to the Syrian Opposition, and is therefore interfering openly in Syria's internal affairs. By its own admission, it is assisting in co-ordinating the activities of the various organisations ranged against the government of Syria and is co-ordinating these activities with its NATO allies and with the various bodies of the UN. Just as in Libya, the UN that was established on the basis of safeguarding the equality and territorial sovereignty of all members, non-interference in their internal affairs, as well as for the suppression of acts of aggression, is being used by some of the most powerful countries as a means of carrying out aggression, violating territorial sovereignty and intervention.

The so-called Arab Spring has provided an "opportunity" for the Coalition government. But it is not an opportunity to advance the interests of the people of North Africa or western Asia but rather for the big monopolies and financial institutions to advance their domination and geo-political interests and to remove those regimes which are not to their liking. The approach of the British government is also determined by the need to contend with its rivals and "succeed in the global race".

As regards the Iraq Network Strategic Review, the Foreign Secretary's assertion is that Iraq is "gradually becoming more stable" with a "democratically-elected government" but such phrases cannot hide the facts that even the British government accepts, that there are major economic problems, including unemployment affecting at least a third of the population, as well as great political instability, wide-scale corruption and human rights abuses. There is the likelihood that political instability

and violence will increase both as a result of internal problems caused by the legacy of the Anglo-American-led invasion and by the destabilisation of neighbouring Syria as a consequence of the activities of Britain and the other big powers in collaboration with their regional allies. It is in the face of such instability that the British government is attempting to secure an advantage in its contention with the other global and regional powers in an area that the Foreign Secretary claims "is vital to UK security and prosperity".

The government's strategy in regard to Iraq is to secure economic advantages not for the people of Iraq, nor in order to "support a stable, democratic and prosperous Iraq", but rather solely in the interests of the big monopolies and financial institutions who are plundering the country of its precious resources. At the same time, the government has made clear that its aim is to contend with its allies and rivals to attempt to develop Iraq as a state that is compliant with these aims and which can be utilised to further the government's geo-political interests throughout the region. The Strategic Review is therefore a means to establish a state that is by no means independent but rather increasingly tied to the aims of the ruling class in Britain.

The Labour government of Blair justified the invasion of Iraq and destruction of Iraq, the subsequent regime change and the loss of thousands of lives with lies and deceit in a vain attempt to establish a smoke screen to mask its war crimes. The present government is not making reparation for these crimes but adding to them in the interests of the rich in regard to both Iraq and other countries.

As regards Syria, the government's continued interference alongside that of its allies and rivals is fuelling the bloody civil war. Its activities in the Gulf and its bullying of Iran are all contributing to the destabilisation of the entire region and create the conditions for even greater threats to peace.

It must become the mission of the workers and all democratic people in Britain to end such crimes, to establish an anti-war government, bring all the war criminals and profiteers to book and make appropriate reparation. The need for an anti-war government becomes ever more urgent, and the working class must place this necessity on their own agenda as a problem taken up for solution.

Memorial Bust of Anti-Fascist Heroine Noor Inayat Khan Unveiled in London

On November 8, a bust was unveiled in Gordon Square in central London commemorating the bravery of Noor Inayat Khan.

Noor Inayat Khan grew up in Paris and was the first woman SOE (Special Operations Executive) radio operator sent into occupied France during the Second World War. She was captured by the Gestapo, held in chains for 10 months without revealing any information to her captors, and executed at Dachau. She was awarded the George Cross and the Croix de Guerre. Gordon Square, now owned by the University of London, was where Noor lived and played as a small child, and near where she again lived before setting off on her fatal mission. The bust was sculpted by Karen Newman, whose other work includes memorials to fellow SOE heroines Violette Szabo and Nancy Wake.

The unveiling was carried out by The Princess Royal. This was, perhaps, more than a little ironic given that Noor's famous forebear Tipu Sultan, the legendary Tiger of Mysore, was killed in battle by the British, that her father was hounded out of the country, from his very Gordon Square residence, because of his links to the Indian Freedom Movement, and that Noor herself told her WAAF commissioning board she might well be fighting against them for Indian independence if she survived the war. Nonetheless, it seems entirely right and proper that her sacrifice should be honoured by the state, though the context of the fight against fascism is the subject of so much disinformation by those very state forces.

At the ceremony attended by some 300 people, Shrabani Basu, Noor's biographer who initiated and vigorously led the campaign to erect the memorial, entirely funded by the public, gave a moving tribute to Noor's supreme courage and sacrifice

in the struggle against fascism, to her internationalism, her principles of peace and harmony between the peoples. She spoke also of the great contribution of those of Indian origin to life in Britain, of the fact that over two and a half million Indians volunteered, like Noor, to fight in the Second World War.

The ceremony included music composed by Noor's surviving brother Hidayat, poetry and song composed by Noor herself, and concluded with a solemn Last Post.

The Noor Memorial Trust, it is noted, intends to carry on its work, keeping the memory of those like Noor alive and highlighting the contribution of those of South Asian origin to the life and progress of the country.



YOUTH AND STUDENT MOVEMENT:

Students Demand Empowerment

More than 10,000 students, workers in higher education and other concerned people and supporters marched through central London on November 21. The NUS called "#Demo2012" under the slogan Educate, Employ, Empower.

"The current government has put the future of an entire generation at risk. Jobs are hard to come by, students are saddled with unprecedented levels of debt, it's a struggle to get onto the property ladder, and state pensions are being phased out," said the NUS. "Now we have an opportunity to create a movement

that empowers us to take back our future.”

The Education Activist Network, writing in support of the demonstration, said: “This autumn is only the start; if we want a future then we’re going to have to fight austerity.”

Taking place just a month after the huge TUC march and rally “For a Future that Works”, the march was the first national student mobilisation since the massive 50,000-strong demonstration of 2010, which marked a new phase of the student movement. Particularly evident in what was being said in the latest action, the slogans and the demands, was the growing consciousness in the movement that empowerment is at the heart of the issue. It is a consciousness that it is up to the students themselves to take control of their future.

Students are setting their own political agenda and will ensure that education funding and the chronic employment situation faced by graduates are key election issues. Yet, students “can’t just sit back and wait for the next election,” said NUS President Liam Burns; “... it’s about time we started setting the agenda.”

In this respect, students are taking up the right to hold those elected to account. Moving beyond the limitations of pressur-

ising politicians, students are demanding that politicians listen, represent students’ interests, and do not renege on their promises. Liberal Democrat leader and Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, in particular, has become a focal figure of this anger.

It is in the context that the Metropolitan Police took measures to prevent students from marching through Parliament Square. “This government has no electoral mandate for raising fees or attacking the welfare state, and the attempts to prevent us from marching to demonstrate this have no legitimacy either,” said the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts, who, with the University of London Union, organised a feeder march. “When the police are ensuring dissent is kept away from our democratic structures, the legitimacy of both the police and the government are called into question.”

Students should not allow themselves to be diverted by such divisive measures that aim to split them on the basis of being either “moderate” or “radical”. They must remain united in their struggle to defeat the austerity agenda in the universities and build an empowering movement to end their marginalisation that will bring into being their alternative vision for the future of education.

Kim Jong Il Lives On in the Advances of the Korean People



Great leader Comrade Kim Jong Il making a conclusion at a meeting of the propaganda officials of the WPK

December 17 marks the first anniversary of the passing away of the leader of the Workers’ Party of Korea (WPK) and of the Korean people, Kim Jong Il.

Kim Jong Il was held in such esteem by the Korean Party and people that he was named as General Secretary of the WPK in perpetuity. For over half a century he steered the WPK and the Korean people to advances in building the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) as a strong socialist country, despite all difficulties. This is verifiable, despite the disinformation and mockery that is propagated in Britain and elsewhere.

Kim Jong Il ensured that the profile of the DPRK was raised as a country strong in politics and ideology, in which the issue of how to build a nation with a single will but with the flourishing of individual human beings was taken up for solution. Further-

more, despite setbacks caused in the main by the hostile intent and activities of Anglo-US imperialism, under his leadership a turning point in the movement to reunify the Korean Peninsula was brought about, in the spirit of “By-Our-Nation-Itself”.

The DPRK stands now as a thriving socialist nation, human-centred and with a revolutionary perspective, which has never submitted to big power bullying and never will conciliate with imperialism.

In this respect, *The Line of March* takes this opportunity to congratulate the people of the DPRK and their leadership on the announcement of a polar-orbiting earth observation satellite to be launched between December 10 and 22. This is a significant development in the placing of the country’s technology in the service of the use of space for peaceful purposes.

COMMEMORATIVE MEETING

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2-5PM

Marchmont Community Centre, 62 Marchmont Street, London WC1N 1AB (nearest tube: Russell Square)

All friends of Korea are warmly invited to participate in this meeting which will take a stand in celebrating the achievements of Kim Jong Il and of the people of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) under his leadership. With a memorial film-showing, together with a number of short presentations highlighting the importance and significance of Kim Jong Il’s life and work. Also highlighting the confident outlook of the Korean people whose sentiment is that Kim Jong Il still lives on in their advances.

Organised by the British Committee to Commemorate the Passing of Kim Jong Il

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Order Your Copy of Line of March Now!

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