

The Line of March

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TO THE WORK OF THE PARTY IN 2014!

**THE ALTERNATIVE
and
MODERN
COMMUNISM**



REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY
OF BRITAIN
(MARXIST-LENINIST)



**THERE IS
A WAY
OUT OF
THE
CRISIS!**

**Defend the Rights of All!
For an Anti-War Government!
Fight for the Alternative!**

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TO THE WORK OF THE PARTY IN 2014!

Party Socials Inaugurate the Work for 2014

Regional branches of RCPB(ML) hosted a number of socials to inaugurate the Party's work for 2014.

The London region social was held at the John Buckle Centre on January 4 in a spirit of unbounded confidence and optimism. As well as Party activists and sympathisers, there were guests from the New Communist Party and from the Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, including Ambassador Hyong Hak Bong, and other friends of the Party.

A group of progressive singers had prepared a programme of communist and progressive music, including the revolutionary song, *The Founding of the Party*, sung in three-part harmony. This introduced the formal part of the evening, when National Leader Chris Coleman unveiled a bas-relief of John Buckle, sculpted by a long-time friend and comrade.

Chris Coleman spoke of the contribution of Comrade John, who joined the work of the forerunner organisations of RCPB(ML) when he was still a student. He came to prominence as an anti-fascist fighter and leader at the time in the 1970s when the state was trying to lend legitimacy to a party of fascism. This effort was smashed by mass actions in which John Buckle was a leader. John Buckle led the work to found RCPB(ML) in March 1979, and devoted his entire existence to the cause of the people and the revolutionary transformation of society. Today, when the monopolies and their political representatives are wrecking the economy and public services, committing acts of aggression, and storing up terrible tragedies for the people, the ruling circles are also ratcheting up their anti-communist rhetoric, including against the DPRK. As part of this, they are falsifying that very history which the Marxist-Leninists and the whole of the democratic forces created with their struggle and sacrifice. Our Party therefore thinks that it is crucial to uphold the memory of John Buckle and all those who joined the work that history was calling to be taken up. It is important to do so as an inspiration and guide to those who are today entering the fray, especially the youth. Chris Coleman proposed a toast to John Buckle and the cause to which he dedicated his life.

Michael Chant, General Secretary of RCPB(ML), then spoke of the character and work of the Party, and the tasks for 2014, calling on all to join in the work to open the path to progress. 2014 is the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Party. It was founded in March 1979 after the work done right from the 1960s, beginning with the youth and student movement, to prepare the



conditions for the founding of RCPB(ML).

On behalf of the Central Committee, Michael Chant declared 2014 as the year of the Party. He said that RCPB(ML) will take up in an organised form the study, for example, of the work of John Buckle and the Party which he led. It is important to do this, among other reasons, to combat all the disinformation that the ruling circles churn out against communism, equating it with fascism, glorifying imperialism and the whole colonialist history of the British ruling class. In this respect, 2014 is the year of the centenary of the outbreak of the inter-imperialist conflict that was World War I, in which millions of working people were slaughtered. He said that RCPB(ML) wishes to concentrate its target, not only on combating all the disinformation, for instance that this was a "just war", but also on emphasising its lessons today, the importance of not conciliating with the warmongers, upholding the sovereignty of peoples and nations, and declaring all glory to the anti-war movement. He said that RCPB(ML) also will use the opportunity to prepare for celebrating the 70th anniversary in 2015 of the victory of the anti-fascist forces of progressive world humankind against Hitlerite fascism and using it to ensure that such and even greater tragedies do not befall the people. 2015 is also the year of the general election. The issue is to defeat the forces of the anti-social offensive, of the so-called "austerity" programme, and the Party will be going all out to prepare for the election on that basis.

So in conclusion, Michael Chant said, "we raise a toast to 2014, the year of the Party, and to further victories in the strug-

gle of the progressive forces in the coming year". He referred to the movement to safeguard the future of the health service, which has shown optimism, self-reliance, mass political mobilisation and a determination to win decisive battles. He said that RCPB(ML) salutes the movement for the people to have a say in the direction of the economy and society, including on the fronts of health and education. He said that RCPB(ML) looks forward to further developments in the people's culture, against degeneration and elitism, highlighting the movement for enlightenment. He said that RCPB(ML) works for the trade unions as defence organisations of the workers to become effective and to give rein to the numbers and power of the working class. He said that RCPB(ML) hails the movement to bring into being an anti-war government, which stayed the hand of the warmongers in regard to Syria, and defending the right of all countries to chart their own course without outside interference. Michael Chant emphasised the importance of the work to further build the Party as the decisive subjective factor in all these struggles of the working class and people, and to rise to the challenge of formulating the appropriate strategy and tactics. He said that RCPB(ML) salutes the work of building the Party and its institutions, including the John Buckle Centre. He said that RCPB(ML) works to further strengthen the unity of the communist movement, and to give the workers' movement its own independent programme. He said that RCPB(ML) pledges to work for developing internationalist culture and to combat the disinformation of the ruling circles about the nature of communism so as to disorientate and ideologically disarm the workers and people's movements. He said that RCPB(ML) emphasises the importance of all the democratic forces opposing the concentration of power in the hands of institutions such as the EU, and other illegitimate, monopoly directed and warmongering institutions of imperialism and reaction.

Michael Chant said, "RCPB(ML) encourages everyone to join with us in this work, in opening the path to progress, to doing our duty as a contingent of the international proletariat in Britain in advancing along the line of march to a new society, to a socialist Britain. This is a worthwhile life to dedicate one's being to this historic cause." He called on everyone to march together also in 2014 and the coming years, so that the revolutionary movement finds its new adherents, gains in strength, overcomes the obstacles of the anti-social offensive and the imposition of monopoly right, and participates in building a society fit for human beings, in which the people are the sovereign decision-makers.

Hyoung Hak Bong, Ambassador of the DPRK in London, spoke of the strengthening of the ties between the Workers' Party of Korea and RCPB(ML), and of the importance of the friendship and solidarity between the communist and progressive forces in Britain and the DPRK. Ambassador Hyong wished all those present good health and success in the work of the Party in 2014, and pledged to do everything to strengthen the fighting unity of all the progressive forces in the coming year.

The social continued with a cultural programme, marked by its internationalist character. Amongst others, there were progressive songs performed in the Welsh and Spanish languages. Even the food represented the many cultures resident in Britain. The discussions and conversations that took place also embodied the sense of social responsibility that unites those who are taking a stand for the alternative.

On January 10, the New Year social of the Northern Region of RCPB(ML) was held. General Secretary Michael Chant gave the Party's important intervention on the new year and the Year of the Party. Roger Nettleship said on behalf of the region that he really valued the attendance of the Party activists and friends in the region, because even though this was a modest celebration, those who were there reflected the work of the Party in the region for more than ten years. This includes the work in the anti-war movement where the Party has fought for an anti-war government, and in the health service where it has fought to safeguard the future of the NHS. It includes the work in the Cuba friendship movement as well as the friendship movement with the DPRK. Overall, it represents the fight for a new direction for society where the Party has intervened in the political process to stand alternative candidates to the big parties to break the mould of the archaic parliamentary system which is a block to progress. And all of those present reflected to some degree, directly and indirectly that work. Roger Nettleship said it was very fitting that we come together to look at and celebrate RCPB(ML), a modern communist party which has stood at the centre of this work but has no other interest but to achieve the aims and interests of the working class and people in Britain to bring their movements success. He said it was very fitting that the General Secretary of RCPB(ML) was there to give the intervention to outline the Party's views and to further work we are undertaking at this time.

After the address and the toast to the work of 2014, serious discussion on the points raised continued late into the evening, concluding this important event in the Party's work in the Northern Region.

CELEBRATION AND SEMINAR

on the 35th Anniversary of RCPB(ML)

**What the Times are Calling For: Building the Party in the
21st Century**

Sunday, March 16, 2014 – venue tbc

2.00 – 6.00 pm: SEMINAR

On learning from the Example of John Buckle and the Work to Found the Party and Lead the Movements of the Working Class and People. Come and join in and contribute to the work of releasing that human power which will avert the danger of war and build a society with human beings at the centre!

6.30 pm: CELEBRATION AND SOCIAL

Please contact RCPB(ML) to contribute to this work: office@rcpbml.org.uk

Long Live the Memory of Our Comrade John Buckle

November 27, 2013, was the 30th anniversary of the death in 1983 of John Buckle, then General Secretary of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist). He was just 34, and had led the Party since its founding in 1979.

The Line of March honours John's memory, appreciating more than ever the sacrifice of those who, like John, came forward at a crucial time in history to contribute to providing solutions to serious problems of the times.

John Buckle came forward as an anti-fascist fighter and leader at a time when the state tried to float a fascist movement as a respectable political organisation, and he led the movement to smash this. John had joined the work of the forerunner organisations of RCPB(ML) as a student, and from then on dedicated his whole existence to the cause of the revolutionary transformation of society, taking up the work in Britain which led to the founding of the Party in March 1979. He died in a terrible air crash in Madrid, Spain, while on his way to attend an international communist conference in Colombia, South America. Thus his contribution was so tragically cut short, but the cause to which he dedicated his life lives on in the work today to renew all the arrangements at the base of society, provide it with a new economic direction and ensure that the political and social institutions are human centred, not capital centred.

Today, at a time the ruling class is engaged in all-sided wrecking and is perpetrating wars of aggression, having absolutely no way forward for society, it is common to rehash Cold War anti-communist rhetoric and try to dismiss those who came forward

virulently extremist and right-wing advocates of neo-liberal privatisation, and the rich who are becoming ever richer, blame others of extremism so as to give the impression that they themselves stand for

something moderate. Furthermore, they criminalise those engaged in political activity and social action which upholds rights, so that no political movement of the people can coalesce. They commit horrible crimes in the name of human rights even as the world sees them trample the human rights of the most vulnerable the world over and say to hell with the human condition so long as they get richer and their private interests are served.

At the height of the time John Buckle became active, the US secret agencies launched Operation CHAOS in Northern America and Europe to create phoney "left-wing" groups which engaged in extremist activities, such as those of the Red Brigades, and then blamed the Marxist-Leninists. They also engaged in coups d'état such as that in Chile of 1973, and launched Operation Condor to commit horrible crimes against the people who demanded democracy and human rights.

It is important to study the work carried out by John Buckle and the Party which he led, in order to defeat the attempts of the ruling circles to use disinformation to bring down new tragedies onto the peoples, tragedies much worse than those committed by the Hitlerites in the thirties and forties because of the limitless power these ruling elites control today.

RCPB(ML) calls on everyone to channel the human power which is also without limitations so as to bring these reactionary forces under control.



John Buckle leading the fight against the fascists at Digbeth, 1978

***May the life and work of John Buckle serve as an inspiration to the youth of today!
Long live his memory! Long live his example!***

NEVER AGAIN:

The Centenary of the First World War

This year marks the centenary of what has become known as the First World War (1914-1918), the global conflict in which it is estimated over 16 million lost their lives and a further 20 million were wounded. It has already been announced that to mark the centenary five government departments, led by the Department of Culture Media and Sport, will co-ordinate a range of initiatives to commemorate what was once referred to as the “war to end war”. The government has already set aside a £50m commemoration fund and, amongst others things, has announced plans to refurbish the Imperial War Museum and for schools to visit battlefields and commemorative events on the “Western Front”.

Already, however, leading politicians have launched a propaganda campaign to rewrite history and spread disinformation about the causes and nature of this bloody conflict and the lessons that should be drawn from it. The first off the mark was Michael Gove, the Minister for Education, who wrote an article in the Daily Mail entitled “Why does the Left insist on belittling true British heroes?”. In the article, Gove attempted to turn truth on its head not only in relation to the history of the First World War and how it is presented but also in regard to the government’s failed efforts to arbitrarily control the history curriculum taught in Britain’s schools. He was swiftly followed by London Mayor Boris Johnson, who wrote an article for *The Telegraph* entitled “Germany started the Great War but the Left can’t bear to say so”. With no apparent sense of irony the article was subtitled, “In this centennial year it’s more important than ever that we treat the truth with respect.”

It is clear from the content of both articles that neither Gove nor Johnson has any respect for the truth. Both start from the premise that the First World War was a “just war” fought by those who were “conscious believers in king and country committed to defending the western liberal order”. Gove wishes to exonerate all those who ordered the sacrifice of millions of lives in order to defend the interests of British imperialism in contention with its major rivals. His assertion is that since millions of British soldiers (and those from Britain’s colonies) fought and tragically died with “honour and courage”, that makes the war a “noble cause” fought to maintain “Britain’s special tradition of liberty”.

Both articles make great efforts to assert that the First World War “was overwhelmingly the result of German expansion and aggression”. Johnson even asserts that the First and Second World Wars were similar in this regard and that the British government’s role in both cases was to staunchly oppose “German militarism”. The remarks of these two politicians, as well as views expressed in opposition to them by the Labour Party’s Tristram Hunt, appear to be designed to cause maximum confusion about the ori-

gin of both wars, since their appears to be a Westminster consensus that British imperialism and British governments share no

responsibility at all. At the same time, the impression is created that everyone supported the war, not only in Britain but also internationally.

In fact, by creating the conditions for the outbreak of both conflicts the rich and their governments could be said to have committed crimes against peace. Before 1914, British governments on behalf of the big banks and monopolies engaged in global contention with their rivals, allegedly carrying the “white man burden”, on a “civilising mission” that led to mass slaughter, the invasion and partition of Africa and colonial conquests and interference throughout the world. It was this global contention in Africa, Asia and in Europe itself that caused the outbreak of war. This was the period of warmongering alliances and an unprecedented arms race, which divided Europe into two armed camps, and here too the governments of Britain played a leading role. It was for predatory interests and to safeguard the British Empire that the British government entered World War I and signed secret treaties with the other imperialist powers to re-divide the world. It then carried out that great crime which led to the deaths of millions, who in each country were told that they fighting a “just war” for a “noble cause”. At the conclusion of the war Britain and the other victors re-divided the world according to their interests by taking control of the colonies, territories and resources of their defeated rivals.

The aim of the disinformation being disseminated is not just to create confusion about the crimes committed a century ago but also to create illusions about the danger of war today, when the big powers are again in fierce rivalry and contention. The aim is obscure the lessons of history concerning the nature and causes of wars between the big powers and the fact that the democratic and peace-loving people of all countries have the ability to stay the hands of the warmongers by creating the conditions for the emergence of anti-war governments that will remove the causes of war.



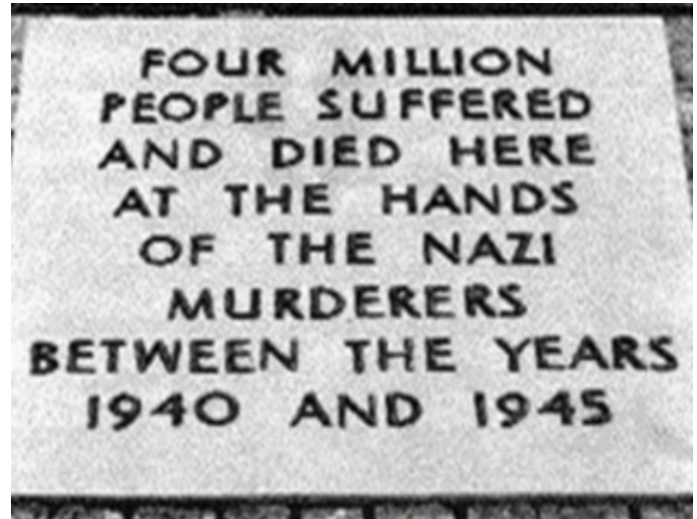
Remembering the Holocaust

THE MARXIST-LENINIST WEEKLY INFORMATION PROJECT

On Holocaust Remembrance Day, January 27, the day in 1945 that Soviet troops liberated prisoners from the Nazis' Auschwitz prison camp, the peace- and justice-loving people of the world join all those whose families suffered so greatly under the Holocaust, a programme of systematic state-sponsored murder by the Hitlerite Nazis and their allies, the Italian fascists and Japanese militarists. The word "Holocaust" must be understood in its broadest sense as referring to the mass murder of all those who were persecuted, imprisoned, tortured and murdered by the Nazis in Germany and the countries it occupied, especially the Jews and others targeted for extinction including the Roma and many Slavs as well as political opponents, particularly communists and resistance fighters. So too the Japanese militarists carried out the Nanjing Massacre and many other atrocities in China and throughout Southeast Asia, while to this day they owe reparations to the Koreans for the crimes committed against them.

The Western powers initially colluded with Nazi Germany with the hopes that it would wipe out the Soviet Union. US monopolies such as General Motors, Ford and ITT built military equipment for the Nazis. Standard Oil, Dupont, Alcoa and General Electric made huge profits collaborating with the Nazis throughout the war. IBM helped the Nazis organise the systematic looting and subjugation of Poland. After the war, the US brought thousands of known Nazis to the US. For example, SS Sturmbannführer Dr Werner von Braun, who was put in charge of the US missile programme, oversaw the Nazis' Mittelwerk rocket factory, which used slave labour from Nazi concentration camps. At the same time, the Western powers also wanted to crush Germany, because it threatened their economic and political interests. The German Nazis wanted to crush everyone, especially the Soviet Union and, as the war progressed, they hoped for Western assistance to do so. Thus revanchism, war and aggression were the order of the day, instead of all countries sorting out matters on the basis of opening society's path to progress.

In opposing the murderous Hitlerites, a great and heroic role was played by the anti-fascist resistance, especially in the Soviet Union, and by the brave fighters for all the resistance movements in Germany and the occupied countries, as well as the liberating armies from all countries which fought the Hitlerites, the Italian fascists and Japanese militarists, including the British and Americans. The living memory of many Jews from Eastern Europe of their direct experience with the Soviets in particular is very positive. Besides the undying gratitude of the world's people for the sacrifices the Soviet Union made, such as at the Battle of Stalingrad and the Battle of Kursk, many Jews and others were provided asylum or were liberated by the Red Army, which they recall with utmost fondness and gratitude. At the same time, because of the influence of Cold War anti-communism and Zionism, some have the tendency to spout anti-communist cold war ideology against the former Soviet Union, or what to this day is



Memorial plaque to those killed by the Nazis in Auschwitz, put in place in 1948 and removed in 1989

called Stalinism to connote oppression and dictatorship. It is all done in a manner which is irrational and completely at odds with their actual experience.

After the war the mantle of the Hitlerite atrocities was inherited by the Anglo-Americans who betrayed the cause for which the people of their own countries sacrificed their lives to liberate humankind from the scourge of fascism. First they created a civil war in Greece killing communist fighters and demanding that all resistance fighters disavow communism and the resistance struggle and espouse the regime of the fascist military junta imposed on them. Then they adopted the Cold War anti-communist ideology to criminalise communism and disorient the generations which suffered so much so that they blame some abstract human nature for the atrocities, instead of the system of economic and political power concentrated into the few hands of a financial elite which sought domination in order to solve its problems.

In the post-war period the crimes committed during the Second World War were systematically used by the Anglo-American powers to stop the peoples from moving forward in a manner which favours them and ensures such things are never repeated. Disinformation was spread on a massive scale so as to justify creating the state of Israel as a bastion of Anglo-American imperialism in the Middle East. This was done in a manner which was to create a permanent state of no-war-no-peace so as to deprive the Palestinian people of their homeland and right to self-determination and also suppress the striving of the peoples of the entire Middle East to empower themselves. This has led to prolonged suffering of a kind which itself represents the attempted genocide of a people. Today, attempts to criminalise support for the Palestinian Resistance by declaring it is "anti-semitic" is a contemptible attempt to manipulate the sympathy expressed worldwide for the suffering of the Jews, amongst others, during the Second World War.

THE BATTLE FOR THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE NHS:

Taking a Stand to Roll Back the Climate of Diktat in the NHS

On January 7, the unjust dismissal of Charlotte Monro from Barts NHS Trust for “serious misconduct” was upheld by the hospital’s appeal panel. Charlotte Monro, who had worked for 26 years as an occupational therapist and a moving and handling co-ordinator at Whipps Cross hospital, had been Chair of the Waltham Forest Unison Health Branch for many years.

Despite the charge of “serious misconduct”, what had become very clear was that in the growing climate of management of the NHS by diktat from above, what was at the root of the dismissal was Charlotte Monro’s work in her role as a union representative to keep health workers informed and raise concerns about the quality of health care and about the direction in which the NHS is heading. This direction is causing concern throughout the health service, and is impacting very seriously on the quality of patient care, yet, despite the hypocrisy of the government’s words about encouraging “whistle-blowers”, the climate has been increasingly one of stifling discussion, of diktat, and disinforming health workers under the guise of maintaining “confidentiality” of proposed plans.

The dismissal of Charlotte Monro is an attack on all health workers and their right to organise at a time of unprecedented threat to the NHS. It has been recognised as such in the campaign which had been organised to reinstate her. Such had been the public anger against her dismissal that the charge of misconduct relating to speaking to councillors at scrutiny committee as a union rep to explain staff concerns over changes to Whipps Cross stroke service was not upheld at the appeal.

In a statement to the press, Charlotte Monro pointed out that no one throughout the whole disciplinary process had stated any concerns about her professional work, or safety with patients and staff. “On the contrary,” Charlotte said, “managers from my past and present gave evidence praising my standard and integrity in my work. Both the original disciplinary panel and the appeal panel have made clear they have no concerns in regard to my professional work and indeed that my strong commitment to patient care is recognised.”

Barts Health NHS Trust issued a disgraceful press statement after the appeal to the effect that her dismissal had been for “personal misconduct”, and in particular they referred to the “failure to disclose previous criminal convictions”. These “previous criminal convictions” in fact show that Charlotte has always been a fighter against injustice, since they relate to the time in the mid-1970s when there was a whole movement to affirm that fascists had no right to organise and to fight against state-or-



ganised racist and fascist attacks. Many progressive people and anti-fascist fighters had been arrested on trumped up charges in the course of this struggle and other struggles against injustice.

Charlotte Monro in her press statement declared: “Barts health statement to the press is a measure of the depth to which they will sink in order to justify their narrow self-interest. In the view of my union branch and a very large number of staff and others Barts Health action was to take an effective trade union rep and voice for staff out of the picture just ahead of launching their ‘financial turnaround’ programme, with an obvious message to staff that they speak out and challenge the trust plans at their peril.

“This vilification of my character, of the contribution to staff and patient safety I have made over 26 years of work at Whipps Cross, of my commitment to defending our local health services, sadly speaks volumes about the nature of those in whose hands the leadership of our health service now lies. What personally is so hurtful is they are trying to take my history from me. But that is not so easy because staff and people in the community know this history.

“Hundreds of people have written letters and signed collective statements expressing their anger and disbelief that the trust should be taking this action against me. Their shock and concern has undoubtedly helped the trust to reverse their decision that speaking out for patient services at scrutiny was misconduct. This reversal is welcome and one step in defending the right of unions and staff to have their independent voice heard by the community on the future of our health service, questioned though it is by the continued and vindictive actions against me.

“As to my convictions they were 35 - 44 years ago before I trained as an Occupational Therapist and arose from encounters with police in campaigning against injustice, including against racist killings locally, against apartheid, and war. ... Many who

were involved in those movements and with histories from such clashes went on to work in the caring services, because they are people who want to make a better world.”

The campaign to reverse the injustice perpetrated against Charlotte Monro by the Barts NHS Trust has by no means ended. Its significance has become not so much that is focused on opposing the victimisation of one person, but that the experience must be summed up and guidelines drawn for the struggles to come. In this respect, it is clear that there are battles ahead to roll back the climate of diktat in the NHS, and that the movement to safeguard the future of the NHS is going on the offensive on this front. There must be democratisation and renewal at all levels in the NHS from the level of government downwards. Not only must the government be held to account and be seen to be as good as its word in opposing the “gagging” and sacking of those raising concerns about the quality of care and the direction of the NHS, but forums and other appropriate mechanisms must

be facilitated at the grass roots level. The trade unions must also play their part, not only in defending the conditions of the health workers, but in facilitating their members to participate in an organised form in taking a stand for a pro-social direction of the health service.

The case of Charlotte Monro has emphasised the link between the concerns of health workers and professionals on the one hand, and the campaigns in the community against closures, downgrading and privatisation of the health service. It epitomises how the organised workers and the people’s movements can join hands. Above all, it shows that justice lies with the movement to change the whole direction in which the government is taking the NHS, and the necessity for the working class and people to get further organised on this front.

For more information on the background of the campaign to right the injustice against Charlotte Monro, see: <http://www.rcpbml.org.uk/wwie-13/ww13-28.htm#fourth>

An Injury to One Is an Injury to All

In the context of the government’s increasing attempts to ensure that the health service serves the monopolies and not the people’s right to health care, organised opposition within the health service to this agenda is being targeted and ruled inadmissible.

Nurses and other health workers are being declared to be uncaring as the root of the problem in the health service. If professional bodies take up the cause of the conditions of their members, there is said to be a conflict of interest, whereas in fact to ensure that the rights of health workers are respected is to ensure that the conditions for the well-being of patients are safeguarded. Opposition to the direction that the government is taking the NHS is itself declared by Jeremy Hunt and the Coalition to be standing in the way of progress and hence reprehensible.

Far from health workers and professionals having a decisive say in safeguarding patient care, they are being systematically excluded from decision-making. The health unions are facing a serious challenge in this respect as to how to respond, taking up social responsibility for the public good. The government and NHS Trust boards and management would like to make it a matter of some individuals, or whether unions work within the system or flout it.

That it has become not uncommon for individuals to be sacked for “whistleblowing” can be seen from such websites as “A Better NHS” (www.ajustnhs.com) or “Cause” (www.suspension-nhs.org). This, however, is a symptom of the disempowerment of health workers and professionals. How to bring into



play the cohesion of the organised workers’ movement and the people’s movement against the anti-social offensive in health, as in education and other public services, is at the heart of the issue.

An Injury to One Is an Injury to All! Health Care Is a Right!

Defence of Lewisham Hospital Is Defence of the Whole NHS!

The Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign (SLHC) approved its future campaign strategy after its victory last year in its Judicial Review case against Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt. This was an important development for the campaign, and shows it consolidating the factors of consciousness and organisation which had contributed to its successes to date and setting out a plan of campaign to build on them.

As the SLHC website rightly suggests, the campaign has been and continues to be a source of inspiration to many others. Health workers, professionals and the communities which they serve are fighting similar battles on different fronts in the overall struggle to emerge victorious in safeguarding the future of the NHS as a health service dedicated to providing health care for all members of society of the highest quality as of right.

One of the most important features of the SLHC is that its struggle has been carried out on the basis of self-reliance, basing itself on the strength of the people themselves mobilised to participate around the aim of defending Lewisham Hospital and its core acute and maternity services. Not to fight was not considered an option, as the government's plans would have led to the closure of Lewisham as a district general hospital. The campaign continues to demonstrate the absolutely crucial importance of unity in action of the people's forces to achieve their goals, irrespective of the political opinions of the individuals and collectives involved.

The campaign strategy emphasises, "Our message is that this was a victory in just one battle in a long war not only to protect our local services but the whole NHS." This could be said of every step the campaign has taken moving from one successful step to another. This outlook also emphasises that the SLHC campaign provides an example in its perspective to fight the battles as they actually present themselves concretely. As the SLHC website points out, by successfully defending the



local services, the working class and people are actually engaged in defending the whole NHS. The Campaign emphasises that the fight to save our hospitals goes on. The SLHC says that "we know there are huge threats facing Lewisham Hospital in the future. These threats come from massive funding cuts to all hospitals and healthcare facilities; toxic Private Finance Initiative payments and privatisation of NHS services." The government also intends to widen the powers of Trust Special Administrators, under Section 118 of the Care Bill.

This emphasises the importance of adopting a political outlook in each battle the people are undertaking to defend the health service. The SLHC outlines some of the wider threats involved. The strategy document says, "We recognise that Lewisham Hospital cannot be safe unless the NHS is safe; that the threats to Lewisham Hospital are part of a wider attack on the NHS (cuts, privatisation, and Private Finance Initiatives (PFI)); that a victory in one area is a victory for all; that solidarity with campaigners in other areas is vital; and that we have to take up and campaign on the wider issues that threaten Lewisham as part of the NHS."

The SLHC emphasises, "Our strength is our focus on Lewisham: success in Lewisham will inspire campaigns elsewhere to fight on to defend their hospitals and services. The Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign will be a catalyst to other campaigns."

On the significance of the battle against privatisation in the context of the merger which has taken place between Lewisham and Queen Elizabeth, Woolwich (QEH) hospitals to create a new NHS Trust, the SLHC strategy document has this to say:

"Looking at recent changes in healthcare policy, accelerated since the coming into force of the Health and Social Care Act, where private companies have been invited to wield the axe, it would send a mixed message to oppose an NHS organisation



running two local hospitals along with community services.

“Alternative unaccountable providers of healthcare are more likely to decimate local services, cut jobs and conditions and erode workforce unity, as has been happening in the drug and alcohol sector locally. The drive for marketisation and cuts does not come from a merged Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Trust it comes from the Government via the Department of Health and the TSA. Adopting a stance on a trust or its merger is not the best way to save the NHS or to save services in Lewisham Hospital, when our biggest threats are governments and their policies, and private health care. The merger will bring together two NHS trusts and community health services in Lewisham to create a bigger NHS trust. Many staff at QEH feel this is a better alternative than the fate that could have awaited them, namely a Hitchingbrooke style takeover by Circle Health. Reconfiguration pressures exist regardless.”

The Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign is joining forces with other campaigns such as Save Our Local Hospitals, Keep Our NHS Public, and the local trades councils to continue the fight to resolve the crisis in the NHS in favour of the people. The campaign is in a position to clarify the threats facing the NHS, such as PFI debt, the imposition of so-called “efficiency savings”, and the threats to beds, staffing and services, and to lead the fight against them and reverse the direction that the government is taking the NHS.

The working class and people have to take up the aim of



Historic victory at the High Court in taking on the government in a judicial review

fighting to block the government’s strategy of paying the rich. Rather, the government should recognise its obligation to ensure that the right of the monopolies is subordinated to the right of social well-being, and that they must recognise the benefit the monopolies reap from having a healthy workforce at their disposal for which they must pay.

The people have to fight against the arrangements which the government is putting in place to cut the necessary social spending on the health service. It is also the people’s right and duty to elaborate their own solutions in the course of this struggle, doing so with the aim of developing the broadest possible fighting unity.

***Defence of Lewisham Hospital Is Defence of the Whole NHS!
Fight to Safeguard the Future of the NHS! Healthcare Is A Right!***

DEFEND THE RIGHTS OF ALL:

No to the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill!

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill, a Government Bill introduced to the Commons by Home Secretary Theresa May, was set for its final reading in the Lords on January 27, after which the Commons were to give consideration to Lords’ amendments.

The government summarises this catch-all Bill as contain-

ing “a variety of measures to protect the public, including from antisocial behaviour, dangerous dogs, forced marriage, sexual harm and illegal firearms used by gangs and in organised crime. It also includes changes to improve the provision of services to victims and witnesses. In addition, the Bill will take forward further police reform, to enhance the public’s confidence in police

integrity and continue modernising police pay and conditions, as well as improving the effectiveness of our extradition arrangements and the efficiency of the criminal justice system.”

The overarching theme of the Bill is to further move away from the established arrangements of “checks and balances” by bestowing police and authorities with increased powers with reduced accountability such that they can act with impunity. Such an all-round attack on the established arrangements has generated widespread opposition, despite the lack of coverage in the media, and has caused unease amongst the Lords. It has led to the bill being dubbed as a law to stop you doing almost anything.

The Bill creates the conditions for criminalising protest and imposing measures to preserve order in the context of driving through the programme of austerity, and furthers the trend of treating the problems and deteriorating conditions faced by the youth, deprived sections of society and national minorities as issues of law and order to be dealt with by swift justice. A case in point is Clause 91 of the Bill, which gives authorities the power to evict tenants who have been convicted of an offence during a riot, a response to the unrest sparked by the shooting of unarmed Mark Duggan by police in 2011. This clause met with significant opposition in the Lords, going to a vote, which however was won by the government with a majority of 33.

One major area of controversy was the clause to introduce Injunctions to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance (IPNAs), a replacement for the infamous Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) introduced by the Blair Labour government in 1998, as a means of criminalising the youth at that time. Rather than abolish this anti-youth legislation, IPNAs were to move further along the direction set by ASBOs in the current conditions.

The fundamental change brought about by the Bill in this respect was not only to broaden, but also to change the focus of what could lead to the imposition of an order away from “anti-social behaviour” to a situation where “on the balance of probabilities” a person might “engage in conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person”. Aside from its extreme vagueness, this would have represented a development from the criminalisation of youth to straightforward criminalisation of dissent. The Bill also specified draconian conditions and consequences of breaching the new injunctions.

The clause introducing IPNAs was amended in the Lords on January 8 in a vote of 306 to 178 during the report stage. The amendment, tabled by Lord Dear, blocked the use of the phrase “nuisance and annoyance” in most instances, reverting it to “harassment, alarm or distress” as currently used for ASBOs. As a result, the government dropped the new injunctions on January 23.

Another controversial clause has been that to create new Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs), which repeat the pattern of widening definitions while abandoning “checks and balances”. Again, the aim of restricting protest is clear.

PSPOs introduce sweeping new powers to prevent public assembly. They can be used to restrict a very vaguely defined set of activities: those that are “carried on or likely to be carried on in a public place will have or have had a detrimental effect of life of those in the locality”. They can apply to “all persons or only to persons in specified categories”. The discriminatory, including



racist, potential is obvious.

Again, the orders require less consultation and local authorities can use them. They can be put into force for up to three years, after which they can be continued for another three. Punishments for violating the orders include arrest and imprisonment, as well as on-the-spot fines, which in themselves diminish accountability by their very nature.

Similarly, the Bill introduces new dispersal powers under which the police, including Community Support Officers, can order a person or group to leave an area and not return for as long as the constable or officer specifies, up to two days, backed by the threat of fines or as much as three months in prison for non-compliance. Such orders can be issued when there are “reasonable grounds to suspect that the behaviour of the person in the locality... is likely to contribute to members of the public in the locality being harassed, alarmed or distressed”, and other such vague situations.

The government was defeated in the Lords over its attempt to erode the presumption of innocence through its proposal to change the grounds on which a person wrongly convicted of an offence can claim compensation. The Bill introduces the requirement for newly discovered evidence to prove beyond reasonable doubt that the person is innocent. An amendment overturning this part of the Bill tabled by the crossbench QC Lord Pannick was passed by 245 to 222.

This Bill underscores the growing urgency of defending the rights of all in the face of stepped-up attempts to abandon the old arrangements, norms and notions. It reflects the ruling class even abandoning its own theory, which no longer serves its interests.

These arrangements are not being abandoned in favour of something representing the new, but in favour of a pragmatic set of arrangements that prop up the monopolies and recognise no rights of the working class and people as a whole, and where organising to defend these rights and the general interests of society is not tolerated. There is already growing opposition to Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill and this must be stepped up.



PUBLIC RIGHT, NOT MONOPOLY RIGHT:

The Fight for a Postal Service that Fulfils the Need of Society and the Social Economy

There has been a long struggle against privatisation and break up of the publicly provided postal services and post office. The Universal Service Obligation (USO) by which a letter between the Scilly isles and the Outer Hebrides costs the same as a letter from the City of London to Westminster is entrenched in the national consciousness even longer than that of free universal health care and the NHS.

In 2006, new Labour ended the 350-year public monopoly of the Royal Mail and opened it up to competition so that private companies could grab the most profitable parts of these services whilst having no universal service obligation. Through the Thatcher and New Labour years, it has been the postal workers that have stood up for the national postal service and public good. Their actions against the privatisation by New Labour and defending their terms and conditions have always been in the forefront of the workers' movement and its resistance to the neo-liberal agenda and the practice imposed by successive governments on behalf of monopoly capital.

Today, the struggle of postal workers has come into conflict with these old arrangements of the Labour Party as an "opposition" and the present Coalition government which has privatised the Royal Mail as a fait accompli. The issue has become one of the contest between the postal workers fighting to be part of the Workers' Opposition against the monopoly capitalists and their political champions and apologists in Westminster. It is a contest as to whether the right of the monopolies to suck dry the resources of the country by wrecking public services, or public right should prevail in the new arrangement for society. The

Workers' Opposition is a conception in which it is the workers themselves, self reliant with their fellow workers, their communities and their best representatives and worker politicians that must form this opposition, not as a force to pressure some

other authority or party in Westminster. It is this Workers Opposition that must place itself at the head of this battle against the privatisation of public services and to take back the Royal Mail into public control and ownership as part of the complete renovation of society from top to bottom.

It is clear from the speed with which the Conservative/Liberal coalition had launched the privatisation of the Royal Mail that it is an abuse of its powers against postal workers and the popular will. The struggle of the postal workers, their decisive ballots both against privatisation and for the need for strike action to defend their terms and conditions shows that they are not reconciled to this dictate of the monopolies over society. It shows their determination to fight for the postal service as a service that fulfils the need of society and the social economy. It is essential that all working people recognise and support the stand of postal workers in their defence of public right over monopoly right.



FOR A MODERN SOVEREIGN SCOTLAND:

Scotland Must Decide its Own Future!

The Scottish government published its White Paper, "Scotland's Future – Your Guide to an Independent Scotland", on November 26, setting out its case for independence for Scotland, explaining how a newly independent Scotland would

operate and detailing the process of transition following a Yes vote in the independence referendum on September 18 this year.

In the fortnight leading up to the publication, the British government, big business, think tanks and other allies have gone into

action to try to derail any affirmation of Scottish sovereignty, blackmail the Scottish working class and disinform the debate.

Following the announcement of over 900 jobs to be cut at the BAE shipyard in Portsmouth – ending shipbuilding in the city – and over 800 job losses at sites in Glasgow, Filton and Rosyth, it was announced that work on the Type 26 Global Combat Ship would be reserved for the Glasgow yards, Govan and Scotstoun. In a blatant attempt to hold a gun to the head of the Clydeside workers, former Defence Secretary Lord Reid stepped in and claimed that British military ships will not be built in Scotland in the event of a Yes vote.

Then on November 18 the neo-liberal Institute of Fiscal Studies alleged that Scottish independence would lead to a “fiscal gap” resulting in “spending cuts”. This was immediately seized on by Former Chancellor Alistair Darling, leader of the official No campaign, “Better Together”, and followed three days later by a report by the National Association of Pension Funds suggesting that independence could result in higher pension costs. On the day of the White Paper’s publication, Chief Secretary to the Treasury Danny Alexander asserted that taxes in Scotland could rise by £1,000 per person per year.

All three of the Westminster parties, including their Welsh and Scottish sections, stand as one against Scottish independence. On November 21, Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones of the Welsh Labour Party declared that he would veto a sterling currency zone, with the aim of blocking any smooth financial transition if Scotland votes *Yes*.

Such attempts at blackmail highlight that for a modern Scottish nation-building project to succeed, it must set a new direction for the Scottish economy that is human-centred, not bound by neo-liberal assumptions that favour the interests of the monopolies, and not based on military production other than what the Scottish people decide is necessary for defence of a Scotland that stands against war.

The Scottish government for its part has been rebuking such claims and has hit back on November 24 by declaring the proposed date of independence to be March 24, 2016, the anniversary of the Union of the Crowns in 1603.

A major pillar of the campaign of disinformation is to pose the debate as between “unionism” and “separatism”. This is to divert from the crucial issue facing all people in Britain of democratic renewal, and attempt to discredit the right of Scotland to its independence.

The need is to settle scores with the discredited Westminster system of party-dominated representative democracy. The semi-feudal arrangements of sovereignty lying with the monarch-in-parliament must give way to sovereignty lying with the people as a whole. The need is for a modern constitution that defines the collective and individual rights and duties of citizens, which can neither be violated nor compromised, including the right to self-determination.

The second pillar of the disinformation campaign is the attempt to keep all discussion of the economy in particular bound by the neo-liberal assumptions and the capital-centred outlook. From this starting-point, so-called fatal problems are placed in the way of independence and self-determination, which are rather problems of the neo-liberal economy. This also has the aim of diverting the working class of Britain as a whole from

fighting for a change in the direction according with their alternative, human-centred perspective. To realise this change in direction for the means that the working class requires control of the economy, to uphold public right and restrict the claims of the monopolies on the economy.

The demand for modern, sovereign states of Scotland, England and Wales is therefore part of and serves the programme of the British working class as a whole. The working class of Scotland constituting itself the Scottish nation and vesting sovereignty in the Scottish people is a component part of the aim for the working class to rise to become the leading class of all nations that make up Britain, and is a crucial step to resolving the age-old constitutional issues that have never been resolved in Britain.

The Scottish working class has the role of leading a project to build the Scottish nation anew. This requires independent control of Scotland’s resources and economy – an economy for which the people will decide the direction. This creates the conditions for a new kind of union, should the peoples so decide: a voluntary union of equals that does not compromise the sovereignty and self-determination of its constituent nations; it is in fact founded on that right of self-determination.

The White Paper can be seen as a minimal programme to put the first elements in place for achieving independence with minimum disruption. It is not revolutionary in that sense: Scotland would remain a constitutional monarchy under the Queen in the first instance; it would seek to retain the pound, and so on. It is, nevertheless, a serious programme for achieving independence and taking that first step. It also seeks to head off the wild accusations that have been levelled against independence, even if its arguments, particularly over the economy, remain firmly within the established capital-centred outlook.

Yet even in this moderate form, it would have a profound impact on British imperialism. The ability to close its docks and waters to the British nuclear programme is just one example. Removing the significant human and material resources of Scotland from the direct control of Britain would change the conditions in which British neo-colonialism operates and would be a key factor in weakening the interventionist and aggressive role that Britain continues to pursue in the world.

All of the issues surrounding how Britain is constituted, the aims and implications of independence, the aims of the Scottish nation-building project, and the practical proposals for how to bring that about and take first steps deserve to be discussed and fully informed. The White Paper is a contribution to that discussion. The working class of Scotland and Britain as a whole should examine these issues from its own perspective, as one class with one programme.

The issue for the working class and people of Scotland is achieving the power to make the decisions in those matters which affect their lives. Sovereignty must be vested in the people of Scotland.



THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Who Does and Does Not Want Peace?

The National Defence Commission (NDC) of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has advanced a crucial proposal to the south Korean authorities on the forthcoming US-South Korea military war exercises.

Inter-Korean relations are vital for safeguarding the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region, and the crucial proposal by NDC is an important step to this end. It is important to bring a halt to the ethos of slanders between North and south Korea and to create an atmosphere for reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula.

The DPRK does not want inter-Korean relations to be compromised. This is the reason why the NDC has made such a crucial proposal at this time, rather than the Committee for Peaceful Reunification of Korea, which would be the usual channel. It is not in the interests of the DPRK to pressure the south Korean side but rather it wishes to encourage south Korea to take a sincere attitude to inter-Korean relations. Meanwhile progressive world opinion stands firmly against the plan of US and south Korea to go ahead with their dangerous joint military exercises. Any accidental conflict could only too easily develop into a full-scale war on the Korean Peninsula. For such a situation to escalate out of control would be disastrous and bring with it an unimaginable catastrophe for the Korean and world's people.

The south Korean authorities, behind whom stands the United States, are attempting to convince world public opinion that the present stalemate in the north-south ties is due to the DPRK. They are calling the staging of the aggressive Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises at the end of February "annual and defensive exercises". Faced with this dangerous situation, the National Defence Commission of the DPRK made proposals to the south Korean authorities for improving the north-south ties.

The NDC proposed to the south Korean authorities to take the practical measure of halting all acts of provocation and slander from January 30, the day before the Lunar New Year.

This year is a significant year marking the 10th anniversary of the "June 4 agreement" in which the north and the south agreed to stop all forms of slanders and psychological warfare in the spirit of the historic June 15, 2000, joint declaration. The NDC points out that if the south side respects this agreement which it signed, there would be no reason for it not to accept the proposal.

The NDC proposes that the south Korean authorities should take the crucial decision of cancelling Key Resolve and Foal Eagle joint military exercises which they plan to stage under the pretext of "annual and defensive drills". The DPRK specifically proposes putting a stop to all acts aimed at provoking the other side on the ground or at sea and in the air, including the five islands in the West Sea, hotspots where both sides are at present levelling their guns at each other.



Friends of Korea meeting on December 14, 2013, at which Ambassador Hyon of the DPRK spoke

The National Defence Commission followed up its proposals on January 23 with an open letter pointing out that the history of the territorial partition which has lasted for several decades has brought untold misfortune and pain to the Korean nation. Foreign forces are wholly to blame for this tragic and disgraceful history of the Korean nation which started following the liberation of the country.

The letter emphasises that the DPRK is not urging the south Korean authorities to stop ordinary military drills but to halt drills for a war of aggression to be staged against their compatriots in collusion with outside forces.

The letter further points out that the "denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula is a goal common to the nation as it should be realised by concerted efforts of all Koreans. The south Korean authorities should have no doubt about the DPRK's will for denuclearisation."

In a statement supporting the just positions of the NDC of the DPRK, Chris Coleman, National Leader of RCPB(ML), said that the coming months will clarify who is for peace and who does not want peace on the Korean Peninsula.

"In our view," the statement said, "the DPRK has demonstrated in words and deeds that it desires peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, and is constantly taking initiatives that pave the way for a just solution to the unnatural division of the Peninsula.

"On the other hand, it is outside forces, led by US imperialism, in whose interests it is to keep the Korean nation divided, and who are unceasingly engaging in hostile acts which can only increase the tension on the Peninsula.

"Our Party is firmly of the belief that the reunification of the Korean Peninsula will come about under the banner 'By our nation itself'.

"Hasten the day of reunification! Korea is one!"



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