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THE STRUGGLE TO DETERMINE THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE NHS



**ORGANISING AND BUILDING RESISTANCE
AGAINST AUSTERITY**

It's Our Economy! Build the Workers' Opposition!

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THE STRUGGLE TO DETERMINE THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE NHS

“Five Year Forward View”: Which Direction for NHS England?

The chief executive of NHS England, Simon Stevens, has presented the government with a five-year plan which he claims would relieve the pressure on hospitals and GP practices and provide patients with better care.

“We have no choice but to do this. If we do it a better NHS is possible,” he told *The Guardian*. “If we don’t the consequences for patients will be severe.” An extra £8bn on top of the NHS England’s £100bn budget will be required by 2020 to fund the plan, known as the Five Year Forward View. It will also require the full support of future governments to be successful, Simon Stevens warned. He said the NHS was now at a “crossroads”, and the country needed to decide “which way to go”.

The plan was drawn up by Simon Stevens in partnership with five other national bodies: Public Health England, the regulator Monitor, the NHS Trust Development Agency, Care Quality Commission and Health Education England.

In the House of Commons on October 23, Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt, in answer to an Urgent Question put by Andy Burnham, the Shadow Secretary of State for Health, said that the report “recognises the real challenges facing the NHS, but it is essentially positive and optimistic. It says that continuing with a comprehensive tax-funded NHS is intrinsically do-able, and that there are ‘viable options for sustaining and improving the NHS over the next five years’.”



October 18, demonstration through London

the social product through taxation to fund the right of the people to health care. It lets the monopolies, who benefit from the wealth created by a healthy workforce, off the hook.

There is much scaremongering over the funding of the NHS. The government is not averse to increasing funding for the NHS provided it serves its neo-liberal agenda of privatisation and monopoly right, just as it is not averse to providing funding for its pro-war agenda. The scaremongering is designed to underpin this agenda, and blame the people and health care workers for the crisis in the NHS. It is also designed to spread disinformation over the fact that the health service adds value to the socialised economy and to all of society.

Thus, when Jeremy Hunt comments on the report’s statement that “decisions on these options will need to be taken in the context of how the UK economy overall is performing” by saying, “In other words, a strong NHS needs a strong economy,” he is putting the cart before the horse. In fact, a strong economy, geared towards benefiting working people, needs a strong NHS, in which health care is recognised as a right.

However, the report goes far beyond this issue of funding. As Jeremy Hunt said, it “proposes detailed new models of care, putting out-of-hospital services front and centre of the solution, delivered through greater integration between primary, community and specialised tertiary sectors alongside national urgent and emergency networks. These can help to reduce demand significantly for hospital services and give older people in particular the personal care that we would all want for our own parents and grandparents.”



Health workers’ strike, October 13, Birmingham

This is not to put a forward-looking view on the viability of the NHS, but is an archaic rendering of the requirements of meeting the claims of the population for health care provided as of right by the government as the representative of society. In particular, it puts the onus on the claims of the government on

It is very necessary to be vigilant about this agenda of integrating social care and health care. In itself, it sounds very just, since it is a scandal that social care is not funded in the same way as health care, and that social care itself is in crisis. Yet it has to be measured against the reality. The just-sounding proposals may remain policy objectives, while the actual measures taken are likely to be the ones connected with the closing and running down of hospitals, while the increasing onus on GP surgeries remain pie-in-the-sky as the crisis in training and recruiting GPs intensifies. The perspective that GP surgeries can become “mini-hospitals” thus can represent what is in fact the worst of both worlds – neither properly functioning hospitals nor properly functioning surgeries. Of course, the way the government intends to square this circle is actually to intensify the direction of putting both health and social care under the direction of the health monopolies and their spin-off advisory bodies.

The government cries crocodile tears over the quality of care in society and in the NHS, for instance Jeremy Hunt cites the report as talking about “reducing variation in the quality of care, in the wake of the tragedy in Mid Staffs, and about how the new Care Quality Commission inspection regime is designed to drive up standards across the system. It says that to do this we will need to move to much greater transparency in outcomes across the health and social care system. Finally, the report makes important points about better integrating the public health agenda into broader NHS activity, with a particular focus on continued

reductions in smoking and obesity rates.”

But it refuses to accept its responsibility for health care through NHS England as a public good. Instead it promotes the conception that the problems in the NHS are not of its making, but lie either with allegedly uncaring health workers or are the fault of the population for either not looking after themselves or for simply growing older.

The question is indeed what is the direction of travel needed for the NHS. When Andy Burnham in reply said, “what clearer illustration could there be of the serious loss of public accountability arising from the Government’s reorganisation?” he touches on a serious issue at the heart of the matter. But he does not question the “direction of travel”, because, as the Shadow Secretary of State says, “the report endorses Labour’s vision for new models of care, including hospitals evolving into integrated care organisations with more salaried GPs”.

The change of direction in NHS England which is required is to detach it from the neo-liberal agenda and capital-centred thinking and requirements, and declare that health care is a right which the government is duty-bound to guarantee. The marginalisation of the people from decision-making has to be reversed, and health workers and professionals genuinely be empowered to participate in setting the agenda for the health service and having a decisive say in its running. Crucially, the fight must be carried forward for the people as a whole to be empowered to decide the direction of the health service and of society.

***For a Change in Direction of NHS England and of Society!
For a Human-Centred Health Service and Society!
Demand that the Government Recognises Health Care as a Right!***

On the Movement to Safeguard the Future of the NHS

These days, wherever one lives in the country, people are fighting to safeguard their health services.

The NHS in recent times has been transformed by successive governments into a battleground of their making. It is a battleground because, over recent years there was the creation of a “purchaser provider market” by the last Labour government which shattered the last vestiges of a collective approach and the coherence of a publicly provided NHS in England, Wales and northern Ireland (it was not introduced in Scotland by the Scottish government). It also dealt a huge blow to co-operation among health services turning them into competing “not

for profit” and for profit health businesses. Then the Coalition government threw their grenade into the NHS with the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and the cut backs to all health budgets have been accelerated along with the drive for privatisation which is now wrecking health services at a rapid rate. Today, it can be seen as ending comprehensive health services at District General Hospitals and reducing availability of already scarce mental health and other community services. In this situation people in every community are fighting with every weapon at their disposal the ongoing systematic cut backs. So, that hardly a day goes by when people are not taking some kind of action,

or activity, in defence of the NHS.

How concerned people are can be seen by the unprecedented opposition, which generally goes unreported by the monopoly media. For example, in September people were outraged that attempts are being made at the new West Cumberland Hospital at Whitehaven, due to be opened in December, to transfer some health procedures and services 40 miles away. This led to 4,000 people confronting the Trust in the Whitehaven's Rugby League ground on September 30. Over the summer the Support Stafford Hospital Campaign continued to organise a camp and festivals in



4,000 people confronting NHS Trust in Whitehaven

their area following the two massive demonstrations last year where 40,000 and then 50,000 people demonstrated against the downgrading of Stafford Hospital services. It has been a similar picture in the rest of country. For example, the people of South, North, East and West London have ongoing campaigns against the increasing destruction of the NHS in London. Whilst Lewisham won an historic battle with the government against the closure of vital health services at their hospital last year with the backing of tens of thousands on the streets of Lewisham, the hospital has been merged with another Trust and community and other services are still under attack. Other campaigns to safeguard health services and hospitals are ongoing at Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Camden, Charing Cross, Ealing, Enfield, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith, Haringey, Ilford, Kingston, Lambeth, St Helier and Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, and Whittington.

These campaigns came together this summer when a number of women from Darlington, known as the "Darlo Mums", and others marched from Jarrow to London in August to save the NHS and following the route of the march by unemployed shipyard workers in 1936. Their march was in response to the government's passing of the Health and Social Care Act, Section 75 and Clause 119, which have led to the removal of the Secretary of State's duty to provide national health services, and the rapid dismantling, privatisation and destruction of the NHS. The marchers were met by thousands, in Leeds, Nottingham and everywhere they went. On September 6, they were met by 20,000 people in London representing campaigns to save their health services across London and other parts of the country.

Today, this movement to safeguard the future of the NHS must continue to strive to seize the initiative. Battles are continuing to be fought to save services. Health campaigners are putting forward their own programmes and demands. For example, leading NHS campaigners have come together to produce an *NHS Reinstatement Bill* to stop and reverse NHS privatisation and are engaging with the campaigns on this draft bill in the run up to the general election next year. The NHA Party is campaigning to take the issues of safeguarding the NHS into the general election with its own candidates, and so on.

Our view is that the movement has to go all out to deal a

blow to this austerity agenda in the run up to election and back candidates that take a genuine stand against austerity and to safeguard the future of the NHS. But what are the blocks to progress for the movement? The movement should not limit itself to what was the best from the past, or limit the discussion to what Britain "can afford" on the NHS out of taxation. Where the save the NHS campaigns have forced governments, health authorities, commissioners, providers and so on, to "consult" or even on some occasions to back down and to give some decisions to people locally, this discussion is always limited to what the government or the local health bodies say is "affordable".

In taking up the alternative it has to be recognised in the movement that this issue of "affordability" of health care is completely fraudulent. It presents the NHS as a "cost" and burden to the economy which has to be curtailed and contained. For the ruling circles this capital centred view is a given, which is that the economy gives first claim to the rich and it is their interests which are addressed first. The economy is not run for all those that live and work it and that they make the decisions. Taxation is based on the same precept that the working people pay, and the rich have first claim on the treasury and extract huge sums in usury (national debt interest!) to fund wars and other schemes that are in their interest. To say that the NHS is a "cost" or a "burden" cannot be justified even in their terms, because as so many people point out that they don't think twice about the billions they spend on nuclear weapons, on war and so on.

But the reality is that far from being a "cost" and burden the NHS is a fundamental contributor of wealth, providing added value from the labour of the health workers to a socialised economy of production and services. The NHS is overwhelmingly a human resourced organisation. It cannot be otherwise in order to provide health care – but this is presented as a negative thing by the capital centric outlook that sees labour as a "cost" and not the producer of wealth. Health workers produce added value to society on top of what they take home in wages. For the health services the NHS workers provide their added value to this socialised economy and to all in society. Yet, the capitalist monopolies do not contribute the amount that they gain from the transferred value of health workers to the industries and services that keep their employees healthy and producing their own add-

ed value to society. These monopolies expropriate all this added value for their own interests and do not contribute it to the socialised economy and its health and other services. Any new bill on health care should make these monopolies contribute to the National Health Service directly in proportion to the added value that is transferred to them by health workers. In other words, health workers are not a "cost" or "burden" but on the contrary add value to society for which the monopolies do not pay. The movement must advance this claim for the proper funding of the public purse for health care and fight just as hard on this as the movement fights against the monopolies having direct control of services for profit with privatisation, PFI, etc.

Health care is a right and it is one of the most important parts of building a modern economy and a modern society. This has yet to be accomplished. Establishing a public health care system in 1948 without establishing it as a right for all in the running of society, and making the people sovereign in the running of so-

ciety and of their health care system has always left the NHS at the mercy of the private owners of the means of production and governments that represent them. It has always meant that people have had to fight to save their NHS services at every juncture in the 66-year history of the NHS.

The marginalisation of the people from decision-making and the claim that their public services are not affordable and have to be privatised have to be rejected as not a way to run a modern society. The dictate of the monopolies and parties that represent them must be more and more challenged and stopped and their whole direction against the public good blocked. The movement must assert that it is the right of all to health care and that this right must be guaranteed by society. Most importantly the working class movement, including the movement of health workers must take up this fight to empower the people to make the decisions in society. This will safeguard the future of the right to health care.

VIGIL AND MEETING AT PARLIAMENT MOBILISE TO SAVE THE NHS

On Friday 21 November Clive Efford MP's private member's bill to reverse the worst of the Coalition's NHS privatisation drive will be discussed and voted on. See: <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/68064>

The Save Lewisham Hospital campaign is organising a vigil at Parliament, and calling for NHS campaigners, trade unionists and anyone who cares about the future of the health service to join us. We will join with all other campaigners to build the vigil for this important Bill. So far it seems that a Bill will include * stop the Privatisation of the NHS, * restore the legal duty of the Secretary of State for Health to provide National Health Services, * amend the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to remove the competition requirements, * amend the ability to provide private health services, * amend the provisions of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 relating to Monitor, * repeal Section 75 Regulations. After the vigil the campaign will be holding a public meeting in Parliament with a range of prominent NHS activists from across the country. But this will not just be a top-table dominated rally: it will be an opportunity to discuss the way forward for saving the NHS, including how we get a clearer com-

mitment about what a Labour government will do. Please get in touch for more information or to support the lobby savelewishamhospital@yahoo.com

Get involved in the consultation for the NHS Reinstatement Bill launched by Allyson Pollock and Peter Roderick: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/ournhs/ournhs/brand-new-nhs-reinstatement-bill-from-allyson-pollock-gives-hope-to-campaigners>

**Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign
calls on NHS campaigners to**

Friday November 21
Assemble Parliament Square
10am - 2pm
**2pm - 4pm Meeting in the
House of Commons**

**Join the
Vigil to Save
Our NHS!
& Organise to
Make Labour
Deliver!**

Clive Efford's Private Members Bill to save our NHS has its second reading in the House of Commons on Friday 21 November. Efford's Bill is for the: *restoration of duty of Secretary of State to provide a comprehensive health service; *removal of Section 75 rules from the Health and Social Care Act; *removal of Monitor as the enforcer of competition; and *restriction of Trusts private income to previous levels. Many NHS campaigners welcome this bill but fear it does not go far enough to save our NHS. The Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign is calling on all NHS campaigners to join the vigil and raise our own independent demands to save our NHS.

**Join the Vigil and Make Demands to
Save Our NHS!**

For more information go to:
www.savelewishamhospital.com

ORGANISING AND BUILDING RESISTANCE

One Hundred Thousand Demonstrate in England, Scotland and the north of Ireland against Austerity

Around one hundred thousand people protested on October 18 in London, Glasgow and Belfast against the low pay economy and the austerity agenda. Many of those protesting were public sector workers such as teachers and nurses opposed to a below-inflation 1% pay offer from the government. This was a massive turnout representing the anger of working people against the anti-social offensive and their determination that the situation must be turned around. It reflects the necessity to build the Workers' Opposition to decision-making being in the hands of the monopolies and the ruling elite and the necessity to overcome the exclusion of the working class from decision-making.

For the statement distributed by RCPB(ML), see page 8.

The massive turnout would send a strong message to Downing Street, TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said. Public sector workers including teachers, nurses, civil servants and hospital workers were among those taking part in the protests, alongside rail and postal workers and others from private firms. The marches followed public sector strikes earlier this week. Midwives went on strike for the first time in their history in protest at the government's unjust decision not to pay a recommended 1% increase to all NHS staff. Hospital radiographers and prison officers were to take strike action in the coming week over the same dispute.

Around 500 Welsh trade unionists travelled on a special train



London

from Cardiff and Newport to join the march and rally in London.

Hundreds of workers from across Birmingham and the West Midlands came to London in several coachloads of members. The Unite union took at least 400 Birmingham members to the protest. Regional secretary Gerard Coyne said: "The government say that Britain is on the mend, Britain is on the up, but the reality is that the people at the bottom can't feel it, in fact 51 per cent feel like it's getting worse."

The TUC, which organised the protests under the slogan "Britain Needs a Pay Rise", said between 80,000 and 90,000 people had taken part in the London march from the Embankment, through central London, to the rally in Hyde Park.

Dave Prentis, general secretary of Unison, said that the best thing the government could do was recognise the value of the masses of people here today who have suffered and give them a pay rise. He said, "Our members didn't cause this recession, our members didn't cause the failures of the banks."

GMB union general secretary Paul Kenny said members' living standards were still falling. "People are currently facing the biggest



Glasgow

squeeze on their incomes since Victorian times, and wages have fallen in real terms every year since 2010,” he said.

Thousands of workers took part in a rally in Glasgow, calling for an end to austerity and to highlight the need for pay to increase. Public sector workers including teachers, nurses, civil servants and hospital cleaners marched alongside railway workers, postmen and others from private firms. Glasgow’s event was called “A Just Scotland” with the STUC saying that irrespective of views on the referendum “it’s time to create a just Scotland”.

Thousands of people also gathered in the centre of Belfast for a march and rally to protest over low pay rises for public sector workers.

The event at Donegall Street was organised by the Northern Ireland committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU). The ICTU estimated that 1,500 people took part in the Belfast march. The NI Committee of the ICTU said that a quarter of the region’s working population are paid less than the living wage, which is currently £7.65 per hour.

It’s Our Economy! Build the Workers’ Opposition!

RCPB(ML), OCTOBER 18, 2014

The demonstration of the determination and anger today at the low wage economy is a sign of things to come.

Our fight is to enforce our claim on the wealth we produce as working people. This is a claim for what is ours by right.

The rich are increasing their claim on the social wealth at our expense. We must organise to turn this situation around.

We must have the power to decide, not them! This is our fight, which is a fight to affirm the dignity of labour, a fight to defend the rights of all, a fight to uphold the interests of society and our place within that society as working people.

The dignity of labour requires the recognition of the rights of the working people in words and in deeds.

Our actions underline our demand for a new direction for the economy. To make this demand effective, we must build the Workers’ Opposition; we must organise to claim the wealth which is ours by right. We must base ourselves on our own human-centred independent thinking and agenda to oppose and defeat the austerity agenda; we must organise with our sights set on a society with new relations of production!

Whose Economy? Our Economy! Build the Workers’ Opposition!

Mark Carney’s speech to the TUC: Where Is the Independent Working Class Perspective on the Economy?

On September 9, Governor of the Bank of England Mark Carney gave a speech to the 146th Trades Union Congress. The theme of the speech, delivered in a deadpan and earnest manner, was to attempt to show how the Bank’s Monetary Policy Committee is working “to maintain price and

financial stability”, creating the conditions for “sustainable growth in jobs and incomes”. It is their job “to ensure the economy achieves its potential”.

His message to the workers was to leave these matters to the Bank. Meanwhile, the unions should be responsible with their

pay demands. Under the Bank's guidance, the recovery will continue steadily. Recklessly demand higher pay, and you risk destabilising prices.

"By maintaining price and financial stability, we put in place the foundations for sustainable job creation and income growth," he said. "Stability gives workers the confidence to invest in skills or to change jobs. And it gives firms the confidence to hire new workers, invest in new equipment, introduce new products and pursue new markets. We need workers with the right skills. And we need companies taking strategic initiatives to grow productivity. That productivity is needed to secure real wage increases over the medium term."

He gave his speech in the context of the continuing all-round crisis, ostensibly in a period of recovery. The fundamental problems experienced by capitalism, such as the falling rate of profit, have resulted in ever-intensifying cutthroat competition. In these conditions, dubious and underhand practises have become the norm, which both precipitated the crisis and continue to be pursued with renewed vigour, as evidenced by the exposure of one scandal after another.

Rather than take up the alternative of a public, not-for-profit banking system to facilitate the economy, with the perspective of its development in a pro-social direction, the government and Bank of England are instead aimed at bolstering the existing system. Yet they find themselves unable to do so. They turn to exceptional measures, such as quantitative easing or indefinite periods of very low interest rates, which then do not actually work out as necessarily planned. They are losing their power of prediction.

In this context, the speech attempted to present the Bank as on top of the situation. Yet their argument essentially asserts that it comes down to the market: it is an issue of the supply and demand of labour.

Britain has outperformed, said Carney, in terms of employment with respect to the US and the rest of Europe. He argued that is due to a "shock" in the supply of labour, as well as limited industrial disputes and action over pay. Here he made various admissions, revealing that there has been an unusual peak in those seeking work due to the stress on the working class and the concessions it has made.

Carney therefore mentioned that "financial risk is being steadily shifted to employees from both employers and the state through changes to the structure of pensions and benefits, reduced job security and evolving labour market institutions, including the union movement". Therefore, "the strong performance of the UK labour market reflects in part people feeling compelled to work for financial or other reasons".

"With more workers at competitive wages," he said, "companies have been encouraged to hire." Unemployment has therefore been lower than might be expected in a deep recession. "Britain has an opportunity... to reach and sustain a higher level of employment than in the past. And workers can maximise their pay prospects. But when will Britain get a pay rise?"

His argument was that a trade-off has occurred between pay and jobs. Pay is low, but this has kept people in work. The whole logic to this is entirely capital-centric, and leads him to say: "Supporting jobs means helping the economy reach the maximum sustainable level of employment." The working class

should give up its aim of full employment.

In summary, then, the best that Carney was able to say was that any increase in pay is going to be slow, and depends upon whether the "labour supply shock" settles down, and whether prices can stay stable.

These arguments can be criticised on various levels, not least the old fallacy/lie that prices rise if wages rise. As he put it: "What matters for inflationary pressures... is the relationship between wages and productivity, as captured by unit labour costs." The arguments are entirely capital-centric, starting from the point of view that labour is a cost of production, such as the following:

"The weakness of pay has, in effect, purchased more job creation. It has not resulted in an unusually high level of profits. The burden of the Great Recession has been shared across the UK. Profits have been squeezed almost as much as labour costs. Employees have seen their real incomes reduced, but more people are in work as a result."

The main point is the extent to which the human factor is left out of the equation. Firstly, their leaving the market as the determining factor both relegates the role of consciousness and obscures the role of the powerful monopolies who exert huge power over these markets. Secondly, the arguments effectively eliminate the role of the workers themselves.

What comes across in the speech are aspects of how much the crisis has been shifted onto the backs of the workers, though Carney neglected to add how direct actions of the bank such as quantitative easing have also shifted the burden through the eroding of pensions in particular. The aim is to ensure Britain remains attractive to the monopolies. As Carney asserted, the reduction of incomes in real terms that has been suffered by workers was necessary as it "rebalanced" the economy and rebuilt "competitiveness". But there is only so far, even on their terms, they can go with that strategy. Forcing concessions out of the working class is not going to lead to any solution; rather, it will exacerbate them in the long run.

In a theoretical way, the workers' role is eliminated and they are made an appendage of capital. The most Carney can call on the working class to do is give up its claims and get behind the Bank, government and business.

"The squeeze on real incomes [due to the crisis] was pronounced," he said. "And yet there were relatively few calls for higher wages to compensate." Workers and their unions have a responsibility not to demand too much, since: "As a result of that painful adjustment, the UK is more competitive. Britain's labour force and trade unions deserve great credit for ensuring that this risk is much lower in the UK. By sharing the burden, our economy is better positioned for the future."

This participation of the workers in deciding economic affairs as part of the democratic renewal of society is what will open the door to solving the problems of the economy and indeed in the workers' deciding their own worth. The independent working class perspective on the economy rejects the economic pseudo-science which revolves around such concepts as the "natural rate of unemployment" and "labour market dynamics" to justify continued attempts to keep the workers' movement passive and unthinking in the face of the anti-social offensive. These concepts are archaic and unscientific.

Whose economy exactly? The essence of the speech was to leave it to the experts – the workers have no role or say in the direction of the economy. It is neither for the workers nor the unions to decide.

On the contrary, it is only the working class that can save the day. Only it has an outlook that includes the human factor, and from this standpoint can put the economy under conscious control, can determine consciously the prices of production and

exchange, how much of what is produced, resolving the contradiction between production and consumption. The workers will not give up their claims on the economy, will not be diverted from developing their own independent outlook on the economy and will continue to discuss the need for and demand a change in the direction of the economy.

The lesson for the working class movement is that it is our economy; we will decide!

#noTTIP : Tens of Thousands March in Britain and across Europe

More than 1,000 rallied in Westminster on Saturday, October 11, as part of a Europe-wide protest against the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). The TTIP is designed to aid the free flow of finance capital, and ride roughshod over countries' sovereignty and negate the public authority of those countries in favour of the rule of international finance capital.

Tens of thousands of people held mass rallies all over Europe on Saturday against TTIP and its aims. Talks on TTIP started last February and have been mostly held behind closed doors. The government of Britain is backing this neo-liberal deal, claiming it could add billions to the economy by reducing regulations and other barriers to trade. In reality, it is a neo-liberal arrangement for the unfettered dictate of the monopolies. Not least, it would open up public services, including schools and hospitals, to privatisation under the direction of the health monopolies, particularly those of the United States, under the guise of "harmonisation" of regulations. In particular, it would aim to make irreversible this privatisation, which is not to say that the state would be by-passed. In fact, the role of the state as the agent of the monopolies would be enhanced by means of TTIP.

Under TTIP, the monopolies would be empowered by means of the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) to sue publicly-owned bodies if they thought there was an "indirect expropriation" of future profits. Explaining how this could happen, technology writer Glyn Moody told RT (Russia Today) that such companies with a stake in the NHS could sue the government. "This clause would kick in and the companies that have taken these parts of the NHS will say then: 'Hang on, you're taking our future profits. We are going to sue you for billions of euro,'" he said. "That is exactly what will happen with the NHS," Moody said. "So basically privatisation will be locked in. You couldn't reverse it or rather you could reverse it, but you'd end up paying billions or possibly tens of billions of euro if you did so."

The point is that ISDS disputes are adjudicated by *ad hoc* arbitration panels which operate outside and above the judicial system of the host countries. The arbitration panels are made up



from a small group of commercial lawyers, but their decisions are given the force of law through the international treaties that create them.

The effect of empowering investor protection tribunals is to weaken the ability of the public authority at any level to impose restrictions on the activities of investors within its jurisdiction. They have been used under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and in bilateral investment agreements. Investor protection agreements have been a key element in the neo-liberal globalisation of trade since the 1980s. They are part of the neo-liberal offensive aimed at depriving people of having any say about important issues so that international monopolies can operate freely throughout the world as they see fit.

Protests against TTIP on October 11 took place in 22 countries across Europe – marches, rallies and other public events – in over 1,000 locations in Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, Netherlands, Poland, the Czech Republic and Scandinavian countries.

According to the international organisation ATTAC, the decentralised Day of Actions united an unprecedented number of civil society groups and individuals, social movements, trade unions and rights defenders.

The main aim of the wave of protests is to put an end to the negotiations on three major trade agreements: the EU-US deal



(TTIP), the EU-Canada deal (the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, or CETA) and the trade in services deal (TiSA).

In London, British historian and investigative journalist Andy Worthington told *RT*'s Harry Fear that people have reasons not to trust politicians who have been reassuring them since the 1980s, yet "handing over more and more power to corporations".

The leaders of Canada and the EU signed the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) this September, which is yet to be finalised. It will remove over 99 percent of tariffs between the two economies by 2016, reported *RT*.

The Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) is planned to liberalise the trade of services such as banking and transport between 23 parties, initiated by the US. Its draft version was released this June by WikiLeaks, which was followed by rising criticism.

Trade unions also have warned that the TTIP deal would make privatisation of services irreversible if it allowed corporations to make decisions over public policy makers or the general public. Speaking at the TUC in Liverpool on September 10, Unite Assistant General Secretary Gail Cartmail urged Congress delegates to oppose TTIP and rally support amongst working people to demand that David Cameron keep Britain's health services out of the TTIP agreement. "It is clear this government thought they could do this deal in secret – a deal that would mean the irreversible sell-off of our NHS to America," Cartmail said. "Wall Street financiers like Blackrock and Invesco are already heavily invested in the NHS – over 70 percent of new contracts are now in private hands. Over £11 billion of our money in the hands of casino capitalists," she added.

Unison Members to Stage Second Four-Hour Stoppage as Pay Row Escalates

Unison has confirmed that its members working in the NHS in England will stage a four-hour stoppage between 7am and 11am on Monday, November 24. This will be followed by a week of action short of strike action between Tuesday 25 and Sunday 30 November when members will work to rule and not do any unpaid overtime.

A recent Income Data Services (IDS) survey for NHS trade unions revealed that increased workload, low pay, constant restructures and the stresses of the job are among the reasons why two thirds (66%) of NHS workers have considered quitting.

Christina McAnea, UNISON head of health and chair of the NHS staff side trade unions, said: "For many in the NHS, last month's strike was a first. The next industrial action will be bigger as more unions will be joining it. Jeremy Hunt needs to listen to NHS workers who feel this Government is treating them with contempt.

"NHS workers are overworked and underpaid. Most patients would be shocked to know that one in five of the NHS workers who care for them need to do a second job just to survive and

many have to borrow money every month to make ends meet or resort to foodbanks."

The IDS survey of nearly 30,000 union members working in the NHS, including cleaners, radiographers, nurses and senior managers, revealed how workers are feeling the strain as more than a third of respondents work unpaid overtime. This was confirmed by four in five of the managers during in-depth interviews. Around half of managers feel unpaid overtime is causing problems with morale, motivation, fatigue and "burning out". The research also shows a growing number (62%) have to rely on extra earnings compared to 54% in 2012.

Christina McAnea added: "Low morale is endemic. And this is echoed by a King's Fund report out today which shows staff morale is now one of NHS finance directors' top three concerns. Twice as many from the previous quarter."

NHS workers took strike action over pay for the first time in 32 years on Monday, October 13. This was followed by a week of action short of strike action when members took their meal and rest breaks. (*Unison*)

BRITAIN NEEDS AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT!

Parliament Votes for More Death and Destruction: Not In Our Name!

On September 26, MPs voted by 524 to 43 to sanction British air strikes in Iraq, putting Britain squarely as the number one ally of the US. This was another day of infamy in the record of successive Westminster administrations as pro-war governments. It was another day of infamy for the loyal opposition whose leading lights backed the Coalition government to the hilt. As a whole, the cartel parties at Westminster stand exposed as at one with the warmongering imperialist system of states as they collude and contend for global hegemony.

The motion debated in the House of Commons was framed as following the highest ideals, of defending peoples, responding to Iraqi government requests, and defending international security. But it gives no clue as to the source of the problems that Iraq and Syria are facing, no clue that US and British armed intervention and aggression, open and covert, have been the well-springs of the violence and anarchy which the Middle East and North Africa, as well as elsewhere in the world, have been subjected to.

Even some of the voices in the Commons who spoke implac-

ably against this latest criminal motion were not able to take the principled stand that further intervention from whatever source is not the answer, and that it is an urgent necessity of the day to work to bring about an anti-war government in Britain.

It was clear from the Commons debate also that the motion is a step further towards the aim of intervention in Syria and removing President al-Assad in favour of a regime which is more compliant to Anglo-US hegemony. The Coalition spokespeople made it clear also that to act swiftly in future, the government would not require the recall of Parliament.

So, despite the lessons of the past 13 years, and stretching back to the “Great War” of 1914-18 itself, the British government is determined to perpetrate further untold tragedies on the world. This underlines the most salient lessons of this history, that the people themselves must strengthen their organisations and their resolve to take government out of the clutches of these warmongers, further fight for their own empowerment, and put an end to these crimes against peace.

British Troops Leave Helmand Province, Afghanistan

In a statement from the Ministry of Defence on October 27, the Defence Secretary, Michael Fallon, referred to the evacuation of Afghanistan as a “historic moment” for Britain’s Armed Forces, which he claimed were leaving that country with “heads held high”. In fact the thirteen year long occupation of Afghanistan by successive British governments and their allies, allegedly in the interests of “national security”, and as part of the “war against terror” has ended in ignominy but left the “cockpit of Asia” completely dependent on Anglo-American imperialism and the other big powers allied to it.

Establishing what is in effect a proxy state in Afghanistan is estimated to have cost almost £40 billion and the lives of over

20,000 Afghans as well as over four hundred and fifty British troops. The British government will continue to maintain Afghanistan at an estimated cost of at least £250 million a year. In addition, and despite the fanfare about a “historic moment”, several hundred British troops will remain in the country in order to strengthen NATO control over the Afghan National Security Forces.

The criminal activity of successive British governments and their allies in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere can be seen as part of their intention to intervene globally, but particularly in central Asia in contention with Russia, China and others. British intervention in this region, as well as in Africa and elsewhere,

is based on a warmongering Westminster consensus of all the major parties and has led to hundreds of thousands of deaths, increased instability across whole regions of the world and has therefore done nothing to improve the lives or security of people in Britain or elsewhere.

Indeed the instability caused by previous Anglo-American-led intervention is one of the major factors fuelling current conflicts in western Asia and has created the conditions for the emergence of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). This sinister organisation has dubious origins and still appears to be closely connected to those who now claim to be determined to “degrade” it. Its existence is the new justification for another “war against terror” and the British government’s military intervention in Iraq, as well as in Syria, where it is pursuing a policy of destabilisation and regime change aimed at the government of Bashar al-Assad. Only last week the Foreign Secretary was welcoming a new raft of EU sanctions against Syria and by turning truth on its head arguing that it was the Syrian government rather than the actions of Britain and its allies that had brought such destruction and instability to that country.

Just as in the past, when Britain and the US sought to build international coalitions to intervene militarily and to hide their true aims by referring to the loftiest of ideals, today they have established the so-called Global Coalition to Combat ISIL with much talk of tackling extremism and establishing security. But the current military action consisting mainly of airstrikes has done no such thing and just as in Afghanistan seems intended to last for many years. Britain and the big powers and their allies remain determined to reorder the world according to their geo-

political interests and in contention with their rivals. It is clear that those under the leadership of the US wish to establish a government in Iraq that more closely follows their diktat, while in Syria they have brazenly expressed the desire for regime change and refuse to even recognise the existing government.

As the Prime Minister made clear in his recent speech to the UN, his government remains committed to a policy of warmongering and military intervention throughout the world, not just in western Asia but also in North and West Africa and elsewhere. It is acting in the interests of monopolies and big financial institutions and with the intention of preventing the world’s peoples from finding solutions to the problems that confront them. It presents the state terrorism that it and its allies carry out in a variety of guises, which should no longer fool anyone. The present government may claim that its intervention is undertaken to bring security and stability but the lessons of Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya show otherwise.

In opposition to the warmongering and global instability created by the government and the major parties at Westminster stand the great majority of people in Britain who in their millions have demonstrated and voiced their opposition to war, war preparations and all forms of intervention for many years. This opposition has even been felt in Parliament where the government has been unable to gain support for open military intervention against Syria and has been forced to modify the nature of its criminal activities. The anti-war forces must seriously discuss how their opposition can be further strengthened, how they can organise to stay the hands of the warmongers and establish the conditions for the creation of an anti-war government.

No British Troops on Foreign Soil! No to State Terrorism!

REFERENDUM ON SCOTLAND’S INDEPENDENCE

Scotland’s Right to Self-Determination

The total electorate when the people of Scotland voted on September 18 was 4,283,938. Of these, 1,617,989 voted “Yes” to the question “Should Scotland be an independent country?”. This was 44.7% of the 3,619,915 valid votes cast on a total turnout of 84.6%.

This represents a massive vote reflecting the sentiment of the people of Scotland to end the rule from Westminster, and is an enormous slap in the face for the ruling circles who went into desperation mode as the referendum date approached. Many recognised this desperation as a fraud and a bluff, as indeed it now appears, with Gordon Brown even calling for a petition to be launched to ensure Westminster’s hollow promises are kept.

It is also clear that this desperation in fact did little to alter the trend to vote “Yes”, though the fear tactics may have consolidated those that had already decided to vote “No”, such as over the ill-founded fear that pensions may suffer under Scottish independence. The opinion polls, as cited in the House of Commons research paper analysing the results, in fact showed an almost continuous rise in those determined to vote “Yes” from the beginning of 2014, as those who were previously undecided made up their minds, while the “No” vote remained steady. This overall trend remained right up to polling date, accelerating as September 18 approached.

Thus the sentiment of the people of Scotland that they should

be able to determine their own affairs in a manner which they are competent to decide was very evident and almost won the day against all the predictions of those whose interest it was to maintain the status quo.

As everyone is pointing out, political affairs in the “United Kingdom” are not going to remain the same, even though the “Yes” vote was a little over 5% short of prevailing. In other words, a space for change in the political system and institutions has opened up, and it is up to those whose interest it is to bring about democratic renewal and a system based on the rights of the people to determine their own affairs to occupy this space.

The right of the Scottish nation to self-determination cannot be taken away. There is no way that the Westminster-based parties can claim that following the referendum it will be business as usual. David Cameron has sought to utilise this space in the interests of the ruling elite, claiming that there must be “English votes on English affairs”. One of the crucial arenas in this respect is on the issue of human rights, with the Conservative Party banking on blocking the opposition of MPs from Scotland to Britain’s repeal of the Human Rights Act which enacts the European Convention of Human Rights into British law. Thus the cartel parties are doing everything they can to sabotage the demand for change and the guarantee of rights that the Scottish referendum campaign represents.

One of the most marked features which has come out of the campaign is the demand for the people to participate in political affairs. This was particularly noticeable amongst the youth, especially the 16-17 year-olds who were eligible to vote for the first time in the referendum. Some polls showed a large majority



(71% according to a survey by Lord Ashcroft) of these youth voted that Scotland should determine its own affairs. Other surveys showed that right up to age 54, there had been a majority who voted “Yes”.

There is a battle brewing over the constitutional arrangements which stand in need of renewal. A Constitutional Convention has been suggested. At stake is the arrangement in which ultimate power rests with the sovereign in parliament.

It is also evident that areas with a high working class population, such as Glasgow, were in favour of exercising the right to self-determination. This points the way forward for the working class throughout Britain to join with the working class of Scotland in fighting that this is but a step along the road towards a modern sovereign state of Scotland. This is the right of the Scottish nation-building project. Sovereignty based on rights and the people holding decision-making power is the future and this is the nub of the struggle which the Scottish referendum has opened up.

***The Scottish People Must Be Empowered to Exercise their Sovereignty!
This Is the Demand of the Working Class of Britain!***

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS:

Brazilian People Vote for Dilma Rousseff to Win a Second Term as President

On October 26, Brazilians went to the polls for the country’s presidential runoff election. Incumbent President Dilma Rousseff of the Workers’ Party (PT) prevailed, with 51.45 per cent over Aécio Neves of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) with 48.55 per cent, a difference of 2 million votes. More than 142 million Brazilians voted, electing as well federal deputies and state governors.

We offer the warmest congratulations to President Dilma Rousseff, the PT and the Brazilian people. President Rousseff’s

election comes despite the efforts of the neo-liberal opposition and their foreign backers to undermine the nation-building project that is making progress in raising the people’s standard of living and affirming their rights. This victory also defends the project of regional integration and relations based on mutual benefit and solidarity that are underway throughout Latin America and the Caribbean in opposition to neo-liberal exploitation and US interference and hegemony.

An editorial in *Vermelho*, a publication of the PCdoB (Com-

munist Party of Brazil), noted that the attempted coup by the monopoly media at the eleventh hour of the election campaign, hostile to all that is progressive, pro-reform and revolutionary, promoted by supporters of the defeated candidate, revealed a dangerous trend and that President Rousseff will have to deal with political divisions in the country. It continued:

“The victory of President Dilma awakens a sense of relief as well that the conservative and neo-liberal restoration would not involve the return of Brazil to the status of vassal of the imperialist powers, with a foreign policy of subordination to the United States and the European Union and alignment with the Zionist positions, abandonment of the role of constructor of a new order of integration in Latin America solidarity, international co-operation and peace. Beyond the sense of relief, the re-election of President Dilma Rousseff arouses unspeakably great joy and popular enthusiasm.”

Following her victory on October 26, President Rousseff called for national unity and vowed to reinvigorate her country's economy and advance political reform during her second term.

“I call on all Brazilians without exception to unite for the future of the country,” she told supporters in a victory speech,

adding that she is “open to dialogue.”

“I want to be a much better president than I have been until now,” Rousseff said.

“Some words dominated this campaign. The most frequently uttered was change. The most common theme was reform,” she said. “I have been re-elected president to make the major changes Brazilians are demanding.”

Rousseff said her top priority would be political reform, and vowed stricter legislation to crack down on corruption and end impunity.

Rousseff said the government would continue to ensure high levels of employment, increased wages, lower inflation and greater fiscal responsibility. “We will give more impetus to economic activity in all sectors, particularly in the industrial sector,” said the President.

Rousseff's second term means another four years in office for the PT which has been in power for the last for the last 12 years, with two terms under “Lula” da Silva. During its tenure, the PT has grown the economy and used this growth to expand social welfare programs, lifting some 40 million people out of poverty.

British Committee to Commemorate the 3rd Anniversary of the Passing of Comrade Kim Jong Il

Kim Jong Il, General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea, passed away suddenly on December 17, 2011. Born on February 16, 1942, he was the son of Kim Il Sung, President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and his son, Comrade Kim Jong Un, is the present supreme leader of the DPRK.

To mark the significant third anniversary of Kim Jong Il's passing, a British Committee was set up on October 21 to commemorate Comrade Kim Jong Il, consisting of representatives of the Co-ordinating Committee of Friends of Korea: New Communist Party, RCPB(ML), Socialist Labour Party, Society for Friendship with Korea (Northern Region) and the Juche Idea Study Group of England and Association for the Study of Songun Politics (UK).

The aim of the Committee in marking this anniversary is to honour Kim Jong Il's life and work by providing appropriate information in contrast to all the disinformation that is put forward by those who are hostile to the progress that humanity is making throughout the world, particularly the advances of the DPRK.

Kim Jong Il is remembered as a great defender of the independence and sovereignty of the DPRK, as a guardian of the socialist nation-building project of the Korean people, and as a tireless worker for the reunification of the Korean nation, brought about by the Korean people themselves without outside interference.

In a world situation characterised by the anarchy and violence created by Anglo-US imperialism, and in the face of un-

ceasing and brutal hostility, Kim Jong Il led the Korean Party and people in continuing to build the socialist society of their choice, in the most trying circumstances, and defend the sovereignty and independence of the DPRK, while ceaselessly striving for the peaceful reunification of the Korean people by their own efforts.

The Committee to Commemorate Comrade Kim Jong Il (Britain) is organising a number of events and publications so that all well-wishers of the DPRK and those active in the fights for the people's rights can acquaint themselves with the life and work of Kim Jong Il.

The Committee will produce a special publication *Kim Jong Il – A Guardian of Socialism*, which will be launched on Friday, December 5.

The participating organisations will hold a joint meeting “Recalling Kim Jong Il's Immortal Works and Life” on Sunday, December 14, 2.00 pm. The meeting will take place at Marx House, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London EC1R 0DU. All are warmly invited.





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