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ORGANISING THE WORKING CLASS AND PEOPLE FOR CHANGE



**Fight for a New Direction for the Economy!
Carry Forward the Struggle for a New Society!**

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ORGANISING THE WORKING CLASS AND PEOPLE FOR CHANGE

Capturing the Momentum in 2016

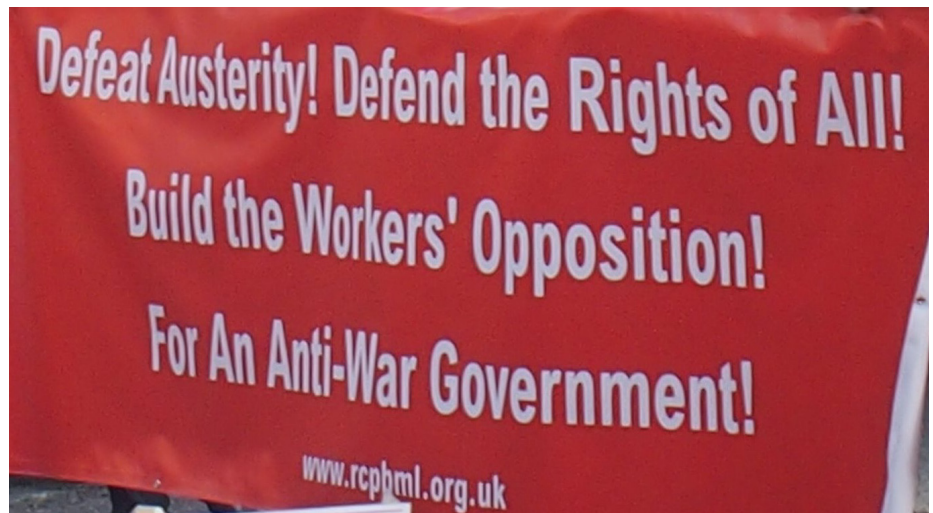
Activists and friends of RCPB(ML) got together in London on January 3 for a New Year meeting and social event with the aim of giving impetus right at the beginning of the year to the work ahead in 2016.

Looking back on 2015, the participants reviewed the momentum that had been built up from the people's struggles. At the same time, the dangers inherent in a situation where political and economic power is concentrated in the hands of the financial oligarchy and the monopolies are very evident.

The situation clearly cries out for change. The people's yearnings and aspirations are not simply for a re-ordering of the old world, not simply for some reforms, but for some fundamental change, for a different kind of world in which the people are at the centre.

In Britain, the reactionary, pro-monopoly and anti-people nature of the anti-social offensive can be grasped simply by reviewing the legislation introduced by the Conservative government. The legislation is bankrupt in the sense that it does not embody the rule of law but is motivated by a vengeful desire to ensure the compliance of the people to the ruling elite and deprive the people of their rights. Whether one takes the counter-terrorism legislation, the hated Trade Union Bill, the attack on the vulnerable and the unemployed through the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, the privatisation of education through the Education and Adoption Bill, the attempt to renew the subjugation of Scotland through the Scotland Bill, or the Hitlerite drafting of the Immigration Bill, this is the case.

Thus arrangements have to be brought into being which favour the people and the exercise of their rights, not the dictate of the financial oligarchy. This is the essence of the aim of the people's movements which matured during 2015. They show how the people are fighting for their interests, but also to provide society with a new direction, indeed for a modern society run to fulfil the claims of all its members and to release the full potential of the human power which a socialised society is capable of. Thus there is the right to be involved in decision-making at every level of society. The anti-war movement and the movement against intervention and aggression abroad seeks to fulfil its aim to bring into being an anti-war government. The fight against privatisation and to safeguard the future of public services, of health and education, has the aim of guaranteeing the right to health care,



education and the public good. The struggle against the decimation of the manufacturing base and for a change in the direction of the economy has the aim of achieving a sovereign economy where the potential of a socialised economy for the ever-increasing needs of the people is fulfilled.

The Old is trying to stop the New from coming into being, bringing about the destruction of the productive forces in the process. The issue of human rights, of democracy, of the direction of the economy are all fierce battlegrounds. The ruling elite defends the rights of private property. It imposes a neo-liberal austerity agenda on society. And it refuses to contemplate the renewal of the political process and institutions. At present what unites in action the progressive forces is the rejection and fight against the fraudulent austerity programme of the ruling elite and the fight for a future without war. The pro-austerity Westminster consensus has been challenged, but it is clear that what is going to be decisive in providing a resolution to the deep-seated problems existing in society is the conscious participation of the people. The initiative has to lie with the working class and people, and the developments in the people's resistance to the status quo and the frank injustice of the anti-social onslaught is a cause of much optimism for the future. The readiness of all sections of the people to fight, to endure sacrifice, get organised, investigate how the world is and glimpse the future of society is indeed a cause for optimism.

The people are resisting, and their sentiment and struggle is to put an end to austerity. Their forward-looking perspective is sharpening the vision of what a new society can be. Socialism in Britain cannot just be a phrase, is not just an aspiration some

time in the future and in the meantime we engage in the day-to-day struggles. In that respect, the quality of getting together to discuss what is the way forward was what the Party's New Year event provided. The question was raised about an alternative strategy. The alternative strategy is working for the new, it is how step by step to get to where we want to be, how the working class and its allies must build on their own strength, develop their own organisational forms, their own theory and practical politics. The discussion about what constitutes a balanced economy, what constitutes a society where everyone finds their place and cultures flourish, is an essential component in unblocking the forward march of society, in opening the path to progress.

It was stressed a number of times during the discussion that the initiative must lie with the people. Holding the government to account does not mean putting pressure on them to solve the problems of society themselves. They are not going to change and operate in a pro-social fashion. This is one of the strengths of the anti-war movement, when the slogan is put forward for an anti-war government. It is not saying: Westminster, you should be an anti-war government. If they are held to account they should be tried for their war crimes, like Blair should be tried for his war crimes. That is what holding the government to account means.

One of the crucial questions to consider in bringing about change is the question of What Kind of Party? It is something we think is open for discussion, something which everyone should be discussing. These things are not cut-and-dried, that there are old types of parties and new types of parties. Yes, we are a Party of a new type. But what does that mean? The meeting encouraged everyone to join that discussion, as part of getting organised, as part of implementing the independent programme of the working class, of basing ourselves on a modern definition of rights.

The participants in the New Year event concluded that 2016



is going to be a very exciting year. The Party said that 2015 was going to be a year of change and the people's movement has proved itself. Now we must organise so that the torrent of the people's movement must gather strength to break these blocks, to turn the tide of history. This is the challenge that is facing us all, and this is what we call on everyone, the whole people to take up.

The New Year event continued with a lively and militant social, with great spirit. It included an inspiring cultural programme, in which as well as music of taking stock, new music written for ongoing struggles was performed. The whole gathering joined in songs taking up aspects of the people's struggles and of what is best in the people's culture.

The whole event was assessed as one which captured the momentum built up during 2015 and over many years, and one which inspired the participants to take up the challenges of 2016, to go all out to defeat the austerity agenda, work to bring into being an anti-war government and organise the working class and people for change.

The significance of 2015 for democratic renewal

2015 was a significant year regarding the space for change developing around the necessity for democratic renewal, a year that has in certain respects changed the situation.

Beginning with the general election in May, this was an election that had the feel of a battleground. The key election issue was to defeat austerity, expressed through a defeat of the Conservative-Liberal coalition. In Scotland, the issue was also sovereignty in the wake of the Scottish independence referendum the previous year.

The general background was growing frustration with the decision-making process and the party-dominated system of representative democracy – what has become termed the cartel party system – and the lack of any say over the direction of the

economy. In other words, people were sick and tired of the big Westminster parties and their common and constant mantra of cuts. These parties were suffering a serious crisis of legitimacy and there was a growing search for alternatives.

In this context, the intervention of parties other than the big parties, which took a stand against austerity, became the prominent feature of the election. These parties started taking the agenda away from how the establishment, the ruling circles, big parties and media acting in their service, wanted it to be set, and a clear line of demarcation formed in the election over the issue of austerity between these parties and the parties of the establishment.

The election revealed the extent to which the cartel party system itself is in crisis. When the cartel party system was in its

heyday, the role of elections had become the staging of electoral coups d'état to resolve who would be the champion of the interests of the monopolies and to establish a parliamentary consensus around those interests, setting the terms within which the major parties collude and compete for power. A classic example was the victory in 1997 of Tony Blair, who championed the interests of the monopolies under the slogan "Make Britain Great Again" and created a consensus under his "Third Way", which finally rendered obsolete the old political theory of party in power and party in opposition as one that reasonably accommodates various interests and social bases.

However, the 2015 election resolved neither a champion nor a consensus. Instead, an unstable situation has resulted in which the pro-austerity and anti-austerity agendas are in collision. In Scottish constituencies, the consistent stand of the SNP and the repercussions of the referendum resulted in an historic landslide victory for the SNP, which has changed the balance of forces in Westminster. The coalition itself was rejected, with the Liberal Democrats all but obliterated. Small-party candidates that represented the alternative in various ways achieved an unprecedented share of the vote.

A sentiment for something new had taken hold of the electorate, while the election was marked by a lack of predictability, with fear-mongering, hysteria and incoherence characterising the negative campaign of the incumbent parties. The Conservatives managed to steal a majority out of the situation through their own negative campaign as well as the lack of a coherent alternative by the Labour Party. The election therefore showed that the modus operandi remains the staging of electoral coups through campaigns of disinformation, and increasingly, of fear.

The Conservative majority could not in any way be said to represent the popular will. It only sharpened further their crisis of legitimacy and the crisis of representative democracy in general. It simply raises the question: What can people do about an electoral system that does not represent the popular will?

The election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the Labour Party in September has taken these developments yet further. Corbyn has said that a fuse has been lit for a new kind of politics. With this outcome, his campaign stressed, it is clear that a fundamen-



tal change of approach to politics is long overdue.

The question is: what is the essence of this new politics that is required? These events have seriously upset the cartel party system, but that system still operates. The entire establishment has been against Corbyn, making even opposition very difficult. One can see how an uncompromised anti-austerity government simply would not be permitted, as can be seen in other countries across Europe at this time, such as Greece.

The in-power/in-opposition model is itself no longer a guarantee of democracy and is actually a block to empowerment. Progress can only be made when people start making material demands about what kind of democracy is needed, from their own standpoint. Democracy is not an abstract concept: it has a content and must represent their interests. Its forms must reflect the aim of representing the popular will, an aim that is not even recognised at present. It has to be constitutionally based on the sovereignty of the people, with the executive held subordinate to the legislature and the legislature subordinate to the people as a whole. With this aim and constitutional basis, the role of political parties needs to be addressed.

In this sense, it could be said that the significance of 2015 actually began in 2014 with the Scottish referendum. In that referendum, the proposed new written Scottish constitution opened with the declaration that, in Scotland, the people are sovereign. Even to put that on the agenda was very significant and goes to the heart of the historical constitutional contradictions of the British state.

The British government has sought to occupy the space that this has opened up in the interests of the ruling elite, as well as their own narrow interests as the Conservative Party. Therefore, in constitutional changes that were railroaded through parliament, the Commons approved in October the proposed new Standing Orders of the House of Commons known as "English Votes for English Laws", as a means to marginalise the now potentially powerful Scottish voice in Westminster.

2015 changed the political reality in ways that are still unfolding. Whatever the outcome of these developments, the issue is to develop the initiative of the people and the independent politics of the working class in this situation. The characteristic of the new politics is the conscious participation of the population. The space for change has widened, putting even more emphasis on the need for people to occupy this space in favour of democratic renewal.



The Crisis in the Steel Industry Continues as Port Talbot and Other Plants Face Job Losses

Steel production in Britain suffered a further blow on January 20 with the announcement of the loss of 100 jobs at Sheffield Forgemasters.

Two days earlier, the monopoly Tata cut 1,050 jobs, three quarters in Port Talbot, south Wales, along with Trosre in Llanelli, Hartlepool in north east England and Corby, Northamptonshire. That comes on top of 1,200 redundancies made by Tata in October in Scunthorpe and Lanarkshire.

That in turn came in the wake of Caparo going into administration, and the previous month's closure of the SSI works at Redcar, with 2,200 jobs lost.

So far, 5,000 jobs in the industry have been destroyed over the past year out of 30,000. This will cost the communities affected dearly in lost productive capacity, removing vast sums of value in the form of wages from local economies, further decimating whole towns and communities, and deepening the crisis in the British economy in general.

Unite assistant general secretary for manufacturing Tony Burke said on January 12: "These figures are deeply worrying and show that George Osborne's promise to rebalance the economy is becoming an ever distant pipe-dream."

"As we saw with closure of the steel works in Redcar, the government's laissez faire approach damages communities and strips out decent well paid jobs from the economy," he said. "With steel communities across the UK facing uncertainty and as the storm clouds grow in the global economy we urge the government to adopt an active industrial strategy with steel at its heart."

A modern socialised economy, with its interconnected large-scale production, comes into contradiction with the private ownership of the means of production. When looked at with a human-centred perspective, with the aim of meeting the material and cultural needs of the population, these conditions pose as a matter of necessity the development of sovereign, self-reliant national economies that trade with each other for mutual benefit. This is the opposite of the motivation of the economy of Britain, taken as a whole, in which parasitism, the urge for a quick score, and competition in the global economy hold sway.

It is clear that an economy cannot be built to ensure the claims of society on it without a manufacturing base, which requires basic materials such as steel. There is still a huge requirement for steel and this will continue into the foreseeable future. Even where steel is being replaced by new materials, such as certain



components in vehicle manufacture which are now made of carbon fibre, steel is still ubiquitous, not least in machinery and infrastructure. Steel remains a basic necessity for the functioning of the economy.

After writing off Redcar, Industry and Business Minister Anna Soubry said that "the priority is securing Port Talbot and making sure that Scunthorpe survives". Only recently, she led the Conservative counter-argument in the House of Commons debate of January 13 on trade, that there is too much steel on the market and that the opposition should "get real". The reasons put were that it would be loss-making, asking why anyone would invest. The whole point of steel's significance for the present and future economy was either missed or dismissed.

This narrow market-led view is promoted by media pundits. Reporting on the redundancies at Port Talbot, for example, the BBC claim that the British steel industry is struggling to be "competitive". "But it is fighting against global forces including cheap imports from China," wrote business correspondent Brian Meehan. "The steel industry has not really recovered from the financial crash in 2008 when at its height people stopped buying white goods, cars, and construction stopped."

These are markets dominated by the monopolies, and also under the sway of massive speculation and manipulation. They are experiencing all kinds of chaotic movements, particularly in this time of extended crisis. These problems in the prices of commodities and currencies are also used for various ends in world politics, to accuse and isolate particular countries, enact protectionist measures as part of trade wars and so on, further contributing to disequilibrium.

The European Union of the monopolies is also responsible,

Militant demonstration of Redcar steelworkers, July 18, 2009



since its origins and preliminary organisations like the Common Market and Iron and Steel Trades Federation were based on control of strategic European steel production. The EU is against sovereign countries and economies from developing their self-reliant balanced economies. It prefers balancing to be carried out across the EU and dominated in a one-sided manner, in particular by the strongest economies like Germany, France and Britain. With this aim, EU regulations have long prevented governments from propping-up "ailing" or unprofitable industry, regardless of how vital they are.

Furthermore, it should be remembered that the destruction of the coal and steel industries began in earnest with the rise of neo-liberalism in the days of Margaret Thatcher. The so-called "laissez-faire" of neo-liberalism meant the unbridled rule of the monopolies. Under Thatcher, in fact, the interests of the national economy were over-ruled, despite all the chauvinism associated with her and her ideology.

Osborne promised a "balanced" economy. What would this mean? First of all, a "balanced" economy would have to be human-centred. There must be planned control of market prices and planning over all aspects of international trade. This means restricting the monopolies who already exert such power for their private empire-building interests.

A harmonious economy cannot come about if the economy is fragmented into mutually antagonistic, competing parts. Association has to supersede competition. In other words, instead of anarchy, competition and being subject to the market, human, conscious control over the economy is required, meaning planning, with the aim of meeting the needs of the population. Instead a completely different direction is evident in the monopoly-controlled economy which bears all the hall-marks of the domination of private interests, of irrationality and the demand that everything must serve to counter the falling rate of profit.

This is summed up in the need for a change in direction, for an economy where the steel industry is an integral part of the social economy. In the immediate present, the government must be held to account for its wilful failure to safeguard the steel industry. The proletarian front, led by the Workers' Opposition, must fight to safeguard the future of the steel industry and the whole manufacturing base. It must do this by strengthening its organised resistance to the wrecking of the economy by the ruling elite. This organised resistance gives rise to a glimpse of the future in which the people themselves gain sovereign control of their economy in general and the steel industry in particular.

The government must be held to account over its refusal to accept its responsibility to safeguard the future of the industry. The crisis in manufacturing underlines the necessity for the working class to develop its independent programme and action to bring about a sovereign economy under its control and end the parasitism of the monopolies and financial oligarchy. To take steps in this direction, monopoly right must be restricted and a fight take place for a new direction for the economy.

The Accusation of Chinese Steel "Dumping"

The government and media are making the claim that British steel production is facing a combined hit of weak demand, a strong pound, high energy prices and, in particular, dumping of cheap steel from China, which, it is claimed, is overproducing as its economy slows down. Nothing is mentioned of the situation whereby Britain exports 8.6 million while simultaneously importing 7.4 million tonnes of steel.

While it is true that Britain imported 687,000 tonnes of steel from China in 2014, more than double the 303,000 tonnes in 2013, Britain imported nearly seven times as much steel, 4.7 million tonnes, from Europe. Prices in 2014 averaged at 897 euros a tonne for EU steel imports, one and a half times more than the 583 euros a tonne for Chinese steel.

In response, Shen Danyang, spokesman for the Chinese Min-

istry of Commerce, said that it makes no sense to accuse Chinese steel producers of dumping in the global market, citing falling world iron prices as an underlying cause. He pointed out that the import price into China for iron ore in the first eight months of 2014 had dropped sharply from \$110 to \$63 per tonne.

Far less media attention has been given to other accusations of steel dumping made in recent years.

Russia and Ukraine increased exports 46.4 million tonnes in 2014, nearly half China's exports of 93.78 million tonnes. Furthermore, in January last year, the export price of Russian and Ukrainian hot-rolled coil was reported cheaper than Chinese prices.

In 2012, the European steel group Eurofer accusing subsidised Indian steel of wire being sold below market price.

In the same year, Europe itself was under the spotlight. Mexican steel industry association Canacero, voiced its concerned of rising imports to Mexico from Europe, which were predicted at that time to increase by nearly half on the previous year to 1 million tonnes.

The reality is that steel production in Britain has been wound down for many years. In the 1980s, the steelworkers fought a bitter battle against the dismantling of the industry in a 13-week national strike. Margaret Thatcher brought in the "butcher of coal, steel and cars", the infamous American magnate, Ian MacGregor, to oversee this destruction, which more than halved the workforce from 268,500 to 130,000.

The famous steel town of Corby was attacked, Ebbw Vale in South Wales closed, the Steel town of Sheffield was wrecked, the famous "Round Oak Steelworks" of the Black Country destroyed and numerous others in Birmingham where the then British Steel, Pressed Steel Fisher and GKN rolling mills were wound down or taken over in and around 1979 and the eighties.

Corus was formed in October 1999 through the merger of British Steel and the Dutch monopoly Koninklijke Hoogovens. In April 2007, Corus itself was taken over and became a subsidiary of Tata Steel, as Tata Steel Europe.

More recently, steel workers have been in action again to save the industry and oppose job losses. The people of Teesside and the Blast Furnace steel workers fought to re-open their steel plant in Redcar after its closure in 2010; it re-opened in 2012

George Osborne promised a Northern Powerhouse. As the steelworks of Redcar are closed there's no powerhouse. It looks more like the Tories are set on finishing the job of demolishing the heavy industries of the North.



Redcar steel works prior its closure in 2015

under the ownership of Thai steel company SSI.

The argument that an alternative can be found has not receded and the resistance deepens. Last October steel workers from Redcar, Tata and Caparo steel plants marched on parliament to confront the government over the steel industry closures and massive loss of employment.

The lobby coincided with an opposition-led debate on the steel industry in the House of Commons. The motion tabled for the debate, which was defeated by 307 to 280, called for the Government to "publish a full Industrial Strategy, including what level of capacity the government envisages is needed in the steel industry, so as to safeguard this vital strategic asset".

THE BATTLE FOR THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE NHS

Government's Attack on the NHS Bursary

On November 25, 2015, changes in the government's Spending Review will mean that from 2017/18 (August 1, 2017) new students on nursing, midwifery and Associated Health Professional (AHP) pre-registration courses which lead on to qualification with one of the health professional regulators in England will take out maintenance and tuition loans like other students rather than getting an NHS grant, known as a nurse training bursary. This latest move by the government has been met by universal condemnation. The Scottish government, the Welsh Assembly and Northern Ireland Assembly are refusing to implement the changes with Scotland continuing to uphold non-repayable grants for all students at Scottish universities. The measures are also opposed by trade unions and professional bodies representing health workers, and opposition from student nurses and health workers is building. On January 9, mass protests were organised in London, Manchester, Newcastle and other cities. More than 150,000 people have signed an online petition against the cuts to these student grants which forced the government to debate the issue in Parliament. In this

debate on January 11, Shadow Secretary of State for Health Heidi Alexander said that she served notice on the Minister and that "the Opposition will oppose the plans every step of the way".

With this latest attack on the livelihood of working people, the government intends to plunge student nurses, midwives, paramedics and those studying radiography, radiotherapy, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, chiropody and speech and language therapy into massive debt before they even qualify. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health Ben Gummer in the January 11 Commons debate admitted that the limit on government funded NHS nurse places was the cause of the crisis in nursing numbers. The Minister, with the usual perverse thinking with which the government implements all its fraudulent austerity programmes, then went on to say that the solution is to cut the bursary and replace it with a student loan. Rather than increase the number of training places on the NHS bursary he said that "we want to expand the number of places so that people get the chance to become a nurse, but within the current spending envelope"!

In this way the government engages in an even worse anti-social measure as a solution to a previous anti-social measure that is now in crisis. The crisis of the supply of nurses and nurse training is deepened just as it is in every other field, or sector of the economy. It is this anti-social, pro-austerity consensus direction of successive governments that is causing the destruction of any semblance of coherence in public services and the economy. This is affecting the livelihoods and social wellbeing of all except the minority who stand to increase their wealth through the interest on student loans, nurse agencies and other private monopolies, and so on.

The fact is that the start of this most serious crisis in nurse training and the supply of trained nurses for the NHS can be traced back to the Labour government and Project 2000. Project 2000 shifted the training from teaching hospital based schools to University based training, in one stroke reducing the numbers of new nurses trained. Hospital and community services no longer had direct control of the numbers required to provide the NHS services at their hospitals. At the same time, the NHS salary to student nurses was replaced by a lower paid NHS bursary. In 2010, with the coming to power of the Coalition government, even these inadequate nurse training places were reduced. Government cut the number of places in England from 20,829 in 2009/10 to 17,219 in 2012/13 with 19,206 in 2013/14. The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) had estimated that there are around 100,000 applicants a year for these 20,000 training places in Britain and that this was storing up a huge crisis of the nursing numbers required by the NHS. In this climate, hospitals and community services are now forced to rely more and more on recruitment from overseas, or use expensive nurse agency companies. For example, hospitals now recruit from poorer countries that can ill afford to lose their health workers such as the Philippines, India and Spain. In 2014, hospitals recruited some 5,778 nurses from abroad.

The problem is that successive governments do not represent the interests of society and the public good but represent the monopolies, with their privatising capital centred interests. Many MPs particularly on the government benches are directly involved in private health companies, including nurse agencies, and drug companies all profiting from the NHS. Yet cynically the government wants to saddle student nurses with £30-50,000

debt and £900 taken out of their annual salary as soon as they start work. How does that improve the health care system and how can such a vicious attack on the livelihood of student nurses, midwives and other health professionals be passed off as a solution to expanding nurse training in England?

Health care is a right and not a privilege and can only be provided a guarantee if the government sets a pro-social direction to meet those needs in full. What must be upheld is that government and health authorities are responsible to undertake the training and nurturing of the next generation of health workers so that they can perform at the highest level in serving the needs of the people.

The issue facing health workers is that in fighting to defeat this latest attack on trainee nurses, midwives and other AHP health professionals the challenge that has to be accepted is that none of these problems facing society are going to be sorted out unless the people who provide health care are also involved in arriving at the decisions. The government has shown that in spite of significant victories of the people to safeguard the NHS the government just comes back with more attacks. In other words health workers must organise to empower themselves to make the decisions. All these questions of the best way to train nurses, doctors and provide the health services and so on can then be properly sorted out in a coherent way. The challenge is for the health workers' movement and the working class generally to build the opposition to these latest cuts and start to turn things around with their own programme and organisation to provide the alternative solutions to all the problems facing health workers and society.



Support the Junior Doctors!

Junior Doctors and supporters demonstrated on February 6, beginning from Waterloo Place in London and marching to Downing Street.

Junior Doctors will strike on Wednesday, February 10, from 8:00am. The government having failed to remove their threat to impose a contract, the hospitals will provide emergency cover only on that day. Student nurses are also set to leave work for an hour.

Many meetings have taken place to support the Junior Doctors, and encourage the public to meet them and learn the truth about the dispute. For example, on January 21 a very successful meeting was held in Lewisham Hospital.

Speaking were Shruti Patel for the Junior Doctors, consultant Helen Fidler for the BMA, student nurse Danielle Tiplady, A&E sister Nicola Pickton, Trainee OT Jenny Leow, GPs Jim Sikorski and Louise Irvine (chair of the Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign). A number of practical ways of supporting the junior doctors and student nurses and health professionals were discussed.



Solidarity with Junior Doctors and NHS Students

Among the many meetings held to meet with and express solidarity with the junior doctors in their struggle and defend the student nurse bursaries was one on Saturday, January 23, called by Waltham Forest Save Our NHS.

The organisers pointed out that despite the junior doctors re-entering talks in good faith, the government has failed to provide them with reassurances on key areas around contractual safeguards and anti-social hours. The stand of the junior doctors is to prevent a contract being imposed which would be unfair for the doctors and unsafe for patients. This stand is one of fighting to safeguard the future of the NHS.

The removal of safeguards on hours would risk exposing patients to doctors working dangerously long hours. It is the case that the junior doctors must win their battle also to prevent the government then imposing contracts on nurses and other NHS staff.

The government has also widened its assault on the NHS by threatening to cut student nurse bursaries. The conclusion which is being drawn is that all the attacks on pay and con-



ditions are a component part of paving the way for further privatisation of the NHS.

Support the junior doctors, healthcare students and all NHS staff!

Safeguard the future of the NHS!

IN DEFENCE OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL

The Racism and Eurocentrism of the Prime Minister Must Be Condemned

Prime Minister David Cameron must be condemned for the outrageous comments made last month in *The Times* and elsewhere in which he claimed that a lack of ability to speak English was connected with what he referred to as an “alarming picture” of isolation facing some Muslim women. He even announced plans to deport some new migrants if they subsequently failed language tests two and a half years after entering Britain on a spousal visa, and announced £20m for the provision of English classes for “women who are isolated”. The Prime Minister then went on to claim that an inability to speak good English and what he called “separate development” and the “development of parallel communities” was not only responsible for “aiding men” who hold a “damaging control” over

women in some communities but might also “help a young person’s slide towards radicalisation”.



Cameron’s provocative comments were presented in the context of upholding the rights of women, building “One Nation”, upholding “our liberal values”, and ending what he referred to as the strategy of “passive tolerance”. However, his efforts did nothing to hide the openly racist nature of the article which singled out “migrants”, Muslim women and people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin in particular. Cameron’s comments, which were repeated in subsequent interviews, were immediately and widely condemned. Baroness Warsi, the former chair of the Conservative Party, asked why proficiency in English was being linked with “terrorism” and why Muslim

women were being singled out. Tim Farron, the leader of the Liberal Democrats, was amongst many who pointed out that the Conservative government as part of its austerity agenda had already cut the budget for English language classes by over £45m, as part of over £400m in cuts to the adult skills budget. The National Association for Teaching Community Languages to Adults pointed out that these swingeing cuts have already led to a 42% drop in the number of migrants, nearly 40,000 people, unable to take English classes.

The Prime Minister's comments point to the openly racist nature of the British state and the fact that it refuses to treat all citizens equally, solely on the basis that all are human and belong to the same polity. Cameron's comments seek to perpetuate the Eurocentric notion that there are first and second class citizens on the basis of language, nationality, religion or some other consideration. What is more, Cameron wishes to find new means by which to deprive certain section of the population of citizenship. How is it possible to speak of the need for "integration" in such circumstances? What is exposed is the fact that Cameron's "liberal values" are based on those of his 19th century predecessors who also spoke of "liberty, equality and mutual tolerance" while engaged in the bloodthirsty task of establishing the Empire and oppressing its inhabitants. Cameron writes of the alleged dilemma of some young people who are "struggling to identify with western culture" in an openly Eurocentric way that infers that their national culture and language is backward and inferior. What is required and must be fought for by all is rather a modern society that defends the equality of all cultures and languages in Britain, that guarantees citizenship rights solely on the basis that we are all human.

Of course, there is also the need for the renewal in all national cultures to combat harmful notions and practices but this must be carried out by the people themselves not based on the Eurocentric diktat of others. What is clearly required is the renewal of the entire political process in Britain as part and parcel of the people empowering themselves and becoming the decision makers. As some commentators have pointed out this week if there is "isolation" it is perpetuated by a political system which disempowers the people, while accommodating and rewarding those

who defend its Eurocentric values. What is required is the building of a new society which guarantees the rights of women, youth, workers, the national rights of all people and the rights of all to determine their own futures.

The Prime Minister made much of the "liberal values" which he claimed to be upholding but it cannot be denied that these are the same 19th century "values" which provide the justification for state terrorism, for military and economic interference throughout the world and even the invasion of other sovereign countries. It is the also upholding of such values which has created the unstable conditions and poverty which have led to an exodus of millions of refugees and migrants as well as the destabilisation of entire regions. Such values attempt to justify the austerity measures which are based on the principle of paying the rich and giving them first claim on the national wealth which has been created by the workers of Britain and other countries. These "liberal values" which the government and their allies wish to speak of as "universal values" only represent the interests of the financial institutions and monopolies. The Prime Minister cannot claim that these are values that are upheld by the majority of people in Britain, nor can the government demand that anyone adheres to its values, since all have the right of conscience.

David Cameron's comments were clearly designed as an attempt to attack certain sections of the population as the basis for attacking the right of all, to promote racism and Eurocentric notions, to create confusion as to the nature of "extremism" as well as presenting his government as the defenders of enlightened values. Rather it has exposed the fact that it is the government and its values that are increasingly isolated and the need for people of all nationalities to step up their struggle in the defence of the rights of all.



ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF THE GREAT REVOLUTIONARY V.I. LENIN

The Name and Work of V.I. Lenin Will Always Have a Place of Honour

Hardial Bains Resource Centre

V.I. Lenin was a revolutionary and the greatest Marxist theoretician of the twentieth century. On January 21, 1924, he died as a result of an opportunist assassin's bul-

let, lodged in his neck six years earlier. The Great Lenin was only 53 years old when he died, during the very early stages of socialist revolution and construction in Soviet Russia. Amongst his greatest feats were to create the revolutionary party of the proletariat as distinct from the parliamentary parties adhered to

by the Second International; establish the proletarian state of the workers and peasants in Russia, as well as lay down the analysis and the ideological and organisational lines for the development of the revolution and socialism in the conditions of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism and proletarian revolution.

From the beginning, Lenin set his work along the theoretical conclusions of Marxism. In this respect, he had a complete outlook of scientific socialism, based on the firm belief that the only road to open the path for the progress of society is the road of the emancipation of the working class through the proletarian revolution. This belief of Lenin, far from being invalidated by the developments in the last decade of the 20th century and since then, has been fully validated.

His first ideological consideration was the defence of the Marxist trend -- that is, the trend based on the conclusions of Marxism. He presupposed that the unity of the movement hinged on the defence of this trend, which means on the development of Marxist thought and its elaboration from the conditions of his time. Besides other things, he defended the need for the elaboration of a plan for the building of the movement and condemned the spontaneist idea of "tactics as a process". The conclusions he drew from his work at the beginning of the 20th century have profound validity to the present day.

One of the ideas which has profound significance for the present is his conclusion that the task of emancipating the working class belongs to the workers themselves.

Another idea which has great validity and profound significance is his conclusion that without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This very idea of developing Marxist thought and elaborating it, in close connection with the revolutionary movement, has remained the line of demarcation between all schools of opportunism and revolutionary Marxists. For opportunists, revolutionary politics means detaching politics from their revolutionary essence, emasculating and transforming revolutionary theory into a series of dogmas while transforming politics into an adjunct of the bourgeois rule. On the other hand, for revolutionary Marxists, revolutionary theory develops in the course of revolutionary practice. It is an integral part of carrying out both economic and political forms of class struggle. The defence of this very idea of Lenin's is a form of class struggle which they wage.

Recognising the objective condition where capitalism had developed to its last stage, its parasitic and moribund stage, Lenin drew the conclusion that there is no other stage of capitalism and that it is ripe for its revolutionary overthrow and for the building of socialism. Such an idea based on the conclusion of Lenin has great significance. There is ongoing pressure to abandon this idea and replace it with the idea that capitalism has many stages ahead of it and that it is capable of overcoming its own contradictions.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the regimes in eastern Europe with all their capitalist reforms showed that capitalism has no other stage of development. Countries which embarked on the construction of capitalism under the pretext of a "free market economy securing prosperity" are mired in anarchy and economic chaos and their reflection in politics just like the advanced capitalist countries that did not form part of the socialist world.

Lenin's conclusion that imperialism is the eve of the proletarian revolution remains valid today. This idea is another point of ideological struggle, and its defence and elaboration are the or-

Lenin
addressing
workers in
Red Square,
Moscow,
Russia.



der of the day.

It is one thing to describe the progression of imperialist decay; it is another to develop the proletarian front and provide an alternative so that the New can overcome the resistance of the Old and prevail.

Having an acute sense that his period was one of imperialism and proletarian revolution, Lenin drew the conclusion that a new kind of Party is needed in order to address the new problem of proletarian revolution. His organisational principle of democratic centralism has profound relevance today. One of the causes for the collapse of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was the emasculation of this idea, under the heavy weight of the bureaucracy established around the Political Bureau and the reduction of the role of the membership in the life of the Party to the most perfunctory level coupled with the refusal to do theoretical work. The mass of Communist Party members had become apolitical, unable to exercise control of their own decisions and the decisions of the state. This necessarily takes place when the relation between the citizens and the polity is destroyed in favour of executive rule. Then democratic centralism is reduced to an idea devoid of the democratic principle and to a series of organisational hierarchies. The defence of the principle of democratic centralism is one of the most important tasks in laying the foundation for the mass communist party.

Today, the world is witnessing a new clash between the Old and the New of world proportions. This requires a profound elaboration of Marxist-Leninist theory, as was done by Marx and Engels in their time and by Lenin and Stalin in theirs.

Lenin, early in his revolutionary work in 1908, devoted time to defending dialectical and historical materialism, the world view, method and outlook for the study of the relations between persons and persons, and persons and nature, the fundamental problem which theory and philosophy present for solution. Through his work, Lenin revealed how various opportunists under the cover of science posed as Marxists to attack the theory of dialectical and historical materialism.

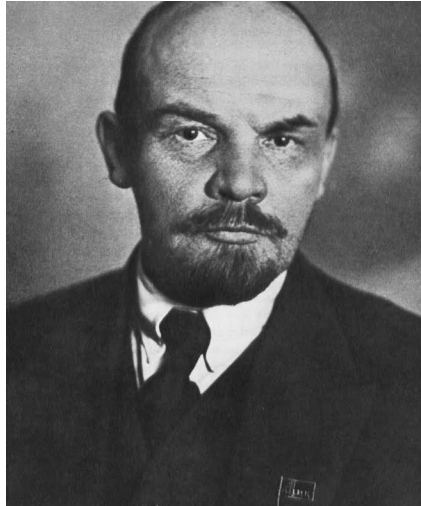
Lenin's work has profound value in carrying out similar work at the present time, in order to defend the theory of dialectical and historical materialism which is under attack from many quarters. The attack on this theory is blurring the high road of civilisation, its definition and its content, and there is pressure to divert it into a dead-end.

Lenin's conclusions about the state and revolution, the role of the working class and its organisations, the role of the peasantry and other social strata, the role of the Bolshevik Party to lead in a step-wise manner, the stages in the revolution and their completion and the building of the unity of all toiling masses around the working class, the waging of the class struggle, with the international proletariat playing its role as the strategic reserve of revolution, and the study of the objective conditions and strategy and tactics, taken together constitute a whole; a body of ideas

which must be defended and elaborated. This body of ideas must be developed from the present conditions with a unique and fresh quality, which means that they must be based on modern definitions. These ideas have a profound meaning as they were brought into being in this epoch, the character of which is still the same. For this reason, these ideas have great relevance so long as they are not reduced to dogma.

Just as Lenin defended the Marxist trend, today defending the Marxist-Leninist trend is indispensable for the building of the revolutionary movement, and this defence has to be carried out in close connection with the movement. This defence of the Marxist-Leninist trend creates Contemporary Marxist-Leninist Thought, the revolutionary theory guiding the revolutionary movement. This work cannot be reduced to repeating quotes from the works of Lenin or anyone else. The content of the defence of the Marxist-Leninist trend must be consistent with the demand of the times. One of the most important elements is to make sure the mass communist party is built to lead the opposition against the dangers which lie ahead.

In fact, Lenin's work began with taking up the tasks required to build the Party. This work cannot be reproduced in the same form and with the same content, as some tried to do in the past, but its essence has to be understood and applied. The essence is that without a revolutionary party there can be no revolution and the building of such a party has to be consistent with the conditions. There are not a few who accused Lenin of abandoning Marxism because he built the Party according to the conditions of his time. In the same fashion, if someone were to abandon the great task of building the mass communist party today for fear of being accused of abandoning Leninism, it would show a lack



of conviction.

The life and work of V.I. Lenin are a great asset to the movement for emancipation. It is crucial to make use of this asset in the best possible way and to the greatest advantage of the working class and people of the world. A lot of changes have taken place since the time of Lenin. These changes are of a calibre that if their profound significance is not appreciated in detail and in time, the asset of Lenin will be frittered away, as happened in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Just as in his day Lenin found in the national liberation movement a great reserve of the proletarian revolution, so too today, all movements of the peoples for improvements in their conditions, especially for the democratisation of life, must be vigorously supported.

Furthermore, how to put this asset at the disposal of the revolutionary cause necessarily involves an appreciation of its essence, that it is by grasping the crucial link in the chain of how things stand that it is possible to get hold of the entire chain and bring about a revolution. In the sphere of preparing the subjective conditions for revolution, capturing the need to provide modern definitions is that link which is directly connected with the revolutionary work under the condition of the retreat of revolution. It is that link which enables the working class to carry out a contest to win the people to its side. The working class cannot prepare itself for final victory if it either does not carry out this contest or does not win key battles with the bourgeoisie during this period.

The cause of V.I. Lenin for the victory of revolution and socialism is as urgent today as it was at the beginning of the 20th century. As long as the struggle to create a new society exists, the name and work of V.I. Lenin will have a place of honour.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The Right of the DPRK to Defend Itself and Maintain the Peace

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) announced on January 6 that it had successfully tested a hydrogen bomb. Immediately there was an anti-communist hue and cry that that country had dared to join the nuclear-weapon-bearing states. Turning truth on its head, the DPRK is painted as the country threatening others. This counterfeit "outrage" is designed to cover up the crimes being committed by the US-led imperialist system of states, including Britain, who are the threat

to the sovereignty and integrity of so many countries across the globe, and who openly speak of regime change and take steps to carry out that threat.

The DPRK has drawn the legitimate conclusion that in these circumstances it must develop nuclear weapons to defend itself, stymie all the plans of the Anglo-US imperialists for regime change, and maintain the peace. It is not legitimate of the US and its allies, not to mention the UN Security Council under



'The US imperialists are the ones threatening to wipe out humankind. They are the only ones who have taken the criminal step of using nuclear bombs in warfare which they did against Hiroshima and Nagasaki in order to attempt to establish their global hegemony at the end of the Second World War. They will never be forgiven for this crime, nor for that matter for the crimes they committed on the Korean Peninsula during the Korean War of 1950-1953.'

vres off the shore of the Korean Peninsula with south Korea and Japan, which has its troops and nuclear weapons stationed in the south, which carries out exercises simulating regime change in the north, including the use of B-52 bombers. It is any wonder that the DPRK takes seriously the threats to its sovereignty and independence,

and responds with its own nuclear deterrent?

The nuclear hysteria of the US and its allies aimed at the DPRK should be opposed. It is the countries with the biggest nuclear stockpiles which must disarm their nuclear arsenals and remove all their weapons and troops from foreign soil. This is the pre-condition for a nuclear-free world which is the demand of all humanity. When the US and all other nuclear weapons states give up their nuclear weapons, there will be no need for the DPRK to develop a nuclear weapons programme either.

The government of the DPRK pointed out in its January 6 statement that the hydrogen bomb test "is a measure for self-defence the DPRK has taken to firmly protect its sovereignty [...] from the ever-growing nuclear threat and blackmail by the U.S.-led hostile forces and to reliably safeguard peace on the Korean peninsula [...]" The statement also affirmed that the DPRK is a "genuine peace-loving state which has made all efforts to protect

their domination, to absolve themselves of responsibility, play the thread-bare human rights card, and seek to isolate the DPRK and other countries that will not bow to their dictate. The United Nations has the responsibility to take a stand against international aggression. But it has long since abandoned this and in these circumstances the DPRK cannot be condemned for taking the measures that it has done to deter aggression and prevent regime change.

The facts of the matter are that it is the development and criminal use of nuclear weapons by the US imperialists that have led to a nuclear arms race in the first place. The US imperialists are the ones threatening to wipe out humankind. They are the only ones who have taken the criminal step of using nuclear bombs in warfare which they did against Hiroshima and Nagasaki in order to attempt to establish their global hegemony at the end of the Second World War. They will never be forgiven for this crime, nor for that matter for the crimes they committed on the Korean Peninsula during the Korean War of 1950-1953 when the use of nuclear weapons was also considered when the US was facing imminent defeat. These monstrous acts of the US imperialists have demonstrated to the Korean people of the DPRK that there is a serious threat of nuclear annihilation and that they must take decisive steps. Neither has the DPRK got its eyes shut to the imperialists' strategic plans for East Asia, the increasing concentration of US military forces in the South China Sea, and the Obama administration's conception of a "Pivot to Asia".

And it is the US who today is the one carrying out nuclear blackmail against the DPRK, threatening it with pre-emptive nuclear strikes. It is the US which is carrying out annual warmongering manoeu-



The signing of the armistice in Panmunjom, July 27, 1953.

peace on the Korean peninsula" and that it would not use its nuclear weapons to commit aggression against another country nor would it suspend its nuclear weapons programme unless the "US rolled back its vicious hostile policy" towards it. It is quite clear that the US must end its hostile policy towards the DPRK, remove its 28,000 troops from the Korean Peninsula and sign a peace treaty with the DPRK to draw a line under the Korean War. This would ensure peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and permit the people of Korea and East Asia to live in peace. When that is done there would be no necessity for the DPRK to develop its nuclear weapons in self-defence. And until that is done, in the face of nuclear blackmail and the most egregious hypocrisy of the Anglo-American imperialists, the DPRK

has the right to develop and test the H-bomb.

The peace-loving people of the world must direct their anger and outrage against the US and its allies, including Britain, who are the ones bringing the world to the edge of a nuclear catastrophe. The working class and people must take up in all earnest their own quest for an anti-war government to act as a block to aggression, nuclear blackmail, the use of force to settle international affairs and the most unjust plans to topple sovereign governments. The democratic forces should take a stand to further develop friendship and solidarity with the DPRK in its heroic path of defending its sovereignty and independence in the face of all the threats to this sovereignty and independence by the US imperialists and the big powers.

Communist Party of Viet Nam Holds 12th National Congress

The 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of Viet Nam was held in Hanoi's National Convention Centre from January 21 to 28.

The Congress carried out its work under the theme: "Promoting the building of a pure and strong Party while putting into play the strength of the entire nation and socialist democracy, stepping up reform comprehensively and synchronously, firmly safeguarding the Fatherland and maintaining a peaceful and stable environment, and striving to turn Vietnam into a modernity-oriented industrialised country."

On January 20, delegates paid tribute to President Ho Chi Minh by laying flowers at his mausoleum in Ha Noi, ahead of the Congress' preparatory session.

Those paying tribute included Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and National Assembly Chairman Nguyen Sinh Hung, as well as President of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front Central Committee Nguyen Thien Nhan, and members of the Political Bureau and the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee.

They expressed their gratitude to the beloved late president and hero of national liberation who laid the ideological foundation of the revolutionary cause of the Communist Party of Viet Nam. The delegation then laid a wreath at the Monument to Heroes and Martyrs.

A total of 1,510 delegates representing more than 4.5 million Party members attended the Congress which also received 235 messages of congratulations from foreign parties, organisations, friends and diplomatic corps, the Secretariat of the Congress reported.

The Congress focused on reviewing the implementation of the Resolution of the 11th National Party Congress and three decades of *doi moi* (renewal), drawing lessons, and defining goals and missions for the entire Party, people and army for the next five years.

As part of the proceedings, Nguyen Phu Trong was re-elected as General Secretary, along with the election of the 200 members of the Party's 12th Central Committee.

In his closing speech, General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong announced with pleasure that the 12th National Congress of the CPV had been a success.

He said after eight days of working promptly and seriously in the spirit of "Solidarity -- Democracy -- Discipline -- Renewal" and with a high sense of responsibility, the Congress successfully completed all of the planned working agenda.

Delegates discussed the work in a candid and democratic manner and unanimously passed important documents, including the Political Report and a report evaluating the implementation of socio-economic tasks between 2011 and 2015 and the orientation and tasks for the 2016-2020 period.

They also approved a report reviewing the leadership of the 11th Party Central Committee; another on the execution of the Party statutes in the tenure of the 11th Central Committee, and a document summing up the implementation of the 11th Central Committee's fourth plenum's Resolution on urgent issues in Party-building.

General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong thanked delegates for their trust in the new 12th Central Committee of the Party -- the supreme organ on party affairs.

He said the Committee is deeply aware of its great responsibility towards the Party, the people and the country. On behalf of the Committee, the General Secretary pledged to fulfil their tasks, leading the country to overcome difficulties and challenges to develop further in the coming period.

The Party's leader also took the occasion to thank international parties, organisations, and friends for extending their congratulations to the Congress, which, he said, demonstrate their friendship and solidarity with the Vietnamese Party and people.

He thanked press agencies both at home and abroad for their timely reporting about the Congress.

The General Secretary called on the whole Party, people and army as well as Vietnamese expatriates to uphold patriotism, self-reliance and great national unity to realise the Resolution of the 12th Congress.

This will help open a new development period for the country towards socialism, he concluded.



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