

# The Line of March

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## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2016



*Women at the Forefront of the Fight to  
Safeguard the Future of Society*

*Set the Sights of All of Humanity on  
the Future*

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## CONTENTS

### ***INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2016***

Women at the Forefront of the Fight  
to Safeguard the Future of Society Page 3

### ***THE BATTLE FOR THE FUTURE***

#### ***DIRECTION OF THE NHS***

Now Is the Time For an NHS Based on the  
Right to Health Care! Page 4

Junior Doctors Stage Militant  
Two-Day Action Page 5

Support the NHS Bill Page 6

### ***NO TO THE EUROPEAN UNION OF THE MONOPOLIES!***

Stampeding the "Yes" Vote to  
Continue Britain's Membership  
of the EU Page 6

The Neo-Colonial Nature of the  
European Union As One More  
Reason Britain Must Leave Page 7

Is the EU a Guarantor of Workers'  
Rights? Page 8

### ***Letter to the Editor:***

On British Withdrawal from  
the EU Page 10

### ***COMMENTARY***

The Government's Fraudulent  
and Hypocritical Devolution  
Must be Opposed Page 10

### ***FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT!***

Britain and Its Allies Must Cease  
All Intervention in Libya Page 11

The British State Must Be Held  
to Account for the Crimes of  
Colonialism Page 12

### ***70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLD WAR***

Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain"  
Speech Page 14

### ***DEFENCE OF THE DPRK IS AN INTERNATIONALIST DUTY***

Oppose the Hysteria Aimed at  
Isolating the DPRK Page 15

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## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2016

# Women at the Forefront of the Fight to Safeguard the Future of Society

On the occasion of International Women's Day 2016, RCPB(ML) sends its revolutionary greetings to women throughout the world who are affirming their rights, who are front and centre of the struggle against imperialism, war, oppression and exploitation, and who are rightfully at the forefront of the project to build a new world, a new society without the exploitation of persons by persons and where the rights of all are recognised simply by virtue that all are human. Women's dignity, security and future lies in the fight for the rights of all.

Today's society attempts to downgrade women as human beings, to put them in subordination to men, to reduce their participation to so-called women's roles. And yet despite this, and in direct contradiction to this promoted view, women are very much at the forefront of all the struggles going on in society. In fact, women as a collective are a force in society who are taking up and leading the fight to defend the rights of all. Women lead the fight to defend the NHS, women are at the forefront of the anti-war movement and in fighting for an anti-war government, and women are demanding that social programmes be defended and placed centre stage. Women are showing what it means to be political by being at the forefront of the various struggles being waged. Women are at the forefront and the centre in all aspects, and women are taking their place as second to none.

Women are fighting for a just society and in all areas they are taking a just stand. Women are showing what their right to be actually is, and are showing that it is consistent with opening the door to progress, to a new society.

Those that are exercising the dictate over society in imposing the anti-social offensive, which is today expressed in the form of the fraudulent austerity programme, are mouthing words that they are listening to women, or are concerned about the violence and abuse against women and young girls. Yet these forces stand for escalating the conditions which give rise to all the abuses against women. In fact, women are bearing the brunt of this anti-social offensive.

Women are giving the lie to this propaganda through their very actions in fighting for the rights of the whole society. They are taking a courageous stand against the perspective which is being pushed that the issue is to realise individual women's am-



bitions to break the "glass ceiling" and take their place as equal partners in the exploitation of society by the big monopolies and the warmongers. Women are taking a crucial stand that *No means No!* not just on the abuse and exploitation of women and women workers, but on all attacks on society and the public good. The fact is that all over Britain women are taking up leading positions in the struggles of the people against the anti-social offensive and for the victory of a pro-social programme.

In a modern age and a modern society, the most enlightened thinking is needed and this enlightenment demands that women are at the forefront of solving the problems of society alongside everyone else. What is needed is democratic renewal where the new conditions bring commensurately new arrangements. It is wishful thinking to think that societal change can be made without resisting the neo-liberal agenda; and this is why the affirmation of all the struggles to fight this agenda and to take up the building of the new is so important. And this is why, within this context, the affirmation of the fight of women to take up their place in the fight for an anti-war government and in the fight for the rights of all, is so important.

The conclusion is that women must create the conditions for them to take their place in all spheres of society, and in practice, against all the odds that the status quo of capitalist exploitation places on them, they are doing so. And in taking up these struggles, women are also fighting for a change in the direction of society, they are demanding a decisive say in the running of Society.



## **There Is a Necessity in Women Playing the Leading Role in Transforming Society, Looking at What is Central not Peripheral, What is Proactive not just Reactive**

The present period is one of retreat of revolution. However, it cannot be said that there is no alternative to the retrogression being imposed on society. Far from it. As Lenin said on this day in 1920, "Capitalism combines formal equality with economic and, consequently, social inequality. This is one of the principal distinguishing features of capitalism, one that is mendaciously screened by the supporters of the bourgeois, the liberals, and that is not understood by the petty-bourgeois democrats. Out of this distinguishing feature of capitalism by the way, the necessity arises while fighting resolutely for economic equality, openly to recognise capitalist inequality [...] But capitalism cannot be consistent even with regard to formal equality (equality before the law, 'equality' between the well-fed and the hungry, between the property-owner and the property-less). And one of the most flagrant manifestations of this inconsistency is the inferior position of woman compared with man. Not a single bourgeois state, not even the most progressive, republican democratic state, has brought about complete equality of rights."

Our stand is that the complete emancipation of women is inescapably connected with the emancipation of the working class and the whole of society, that in the act of emancipating itself, the working class emancipates the whole of society. Our call, therefore, in the context of the necessity for the transformation of society under the leadership of the working class, is for working women to join in working out and implementing the independent programme of the working class, which is necessary for this transformation, for democratic renewal, and build the organisations of the class which are indispensable for this transformation.

Our experience in this regard also is that if not consciously participating in this struggle for the emancipation of women as part of safeguarding the future of the whole of society, then the



pressure is for women to get overwhelmed, along with all other sections of the working people. Our call is to recognise the necessity of consciously adopting the road of the line of march to a new society, discuss this with everyone, so as to make the act of emancipation that of the women themselves.

Women workers must raise their own demands within the struggle for the emancipation of the entire working class. Only in this way can all women be emancipated. We call on class-conscious women to join RCPB(ML), take an advanced position and become leaders of society. This is a crucial problem of our times, to oppose getting diverted into what is known as "identity politics", or movements which do not serve the cause of ending the enslavement of peoples, or worse that call for regime change under the illusory banners of "defence of human rights" or that serve a pro-war agenda. In this way the voice of women can be genuinely heard alongside and as part of the voice of the working class.

We can in this way set the sights of all of humanity on the future. As Lenin concluded, "It is a long struggle, requiring a radical remaking both of social technique and of customs. But this struggle will end with the complete triumph of communism."

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## **THE BATTLE FOR THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE NHS**

# **Now Is the Time For an NHS Based on the Right to Health Care!**

While over 99% of the Junior Doctors have taken a stand in practice on the contract that the BMA was being offered by the NHS Employers, on the basis that it was neither safe for the patients nor fair for the doctors, Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt dictated that the contract be imposed in England.

This is the neo-liberal way, government by dictate. Not a government embodying the popular will and translating that will into legislation, but a government imposing the will of the state, of the ruling elite, on the electorate.

Why would the Junior Doctors and the BMA be opposed to a 24/7 NHS as Jeremy Hunt claimed, and as he kept repeating in Parliament as a slur on the medical profession? Hunt uses targets, waiting times, statistics without context, without substance, without regard for the world as it exists. The BMA and the Junior Doctors, as well as those that have researched and investigated the world as it exists in the health service, point out the selflessness, the dedication of those working in the NHS. They point out the flaws in Jeremy Hunt's arguments and soundbites. They point out that the staffing levels crisis and the finan-

cial crisis in the hospital trusts, which the Health Secretary even refuses to acknowledge, are of the government's own making. They point out that "over-spending" is a quite different situation from the hospital trusts' not being financed by the government for the work they have to do. They point out that the contract which the government is now declaring it will impose will mean the end of contractual safeguards, the banding system, and the end of annual pay progression.

Why would Jeremy Hunt deny these facts of life? Would one not draw the conclusion, as many commentators have done, that the government is intent on managing the NHS for the benefit of the private sector? There have been many thin edge of the wedges over, shall we say, the past twenty years, in the sense of measures which have gone against the principle that health care is a right which must be guaranteed by government. One of the most infamous of recent years was Lansley's Health and Social Care Act 2012, which – after the Conservatives had openly declared that there would be no further top-down reorganisation of the health service – "threw a grenade" into the NHS. The Act declared that the Secretary of State would no longer be responsible for providing a comprehensive health service in England, under the guise that this responsibility should not be government's. What remains is the ability of the government to dictate, and hypocritically pose as a concerned observer. What these attempts to re-organise the NHS show is that they have all been steps in the direction of putting the NHS in the service of the private sector and the monopolies.

The Junior Doctors are refusing to accept the imposition of a contract. Legally, it is being advised that an imposition of contract terms such as these could itself be a breach of contract and could provide grounds for a legal challenge.

With this in mind, the BMA announced new dates for industrial action. These dates are:

- 8am on Wednesday 9 March to 8am on Friday 11 March
- 8am on Wednesday 6 April to 8am on Friday 8 April
- 8am on Tuesday 26 April to 8am on Thursday 28 April

These days of action will follow the emergency-only model used for the previous protests. The BMA is also set to launch a judicial review into the government's decision to impose the new contract, claiming the government failed to follow due process.



The government is playing with the lives and health of the public in its fanatical pursuit of imposing its contract. It is despicably using the ploy of achieving a 24/7 NHS to impose a business model on the health service which eliminates the human factor. It is denying that TTIP would lead to the irreversible privatisation of the NHS against all evidence. To Jeremy Hunt and Co., patients are not patients but consumers.

The conclusion is that enough is enough. The whole direction that the NHS is being driven in is at fault. The resistance of the BMA and the junior doctors is one factor, and a very crucial one, in the resistance of health workers and professionals, as well as the public at large, to this direction. The struggle is putting a spoke in the wheel of the government's juggernaut. And in doing so it is revealing in higher profile that now is the time for an NHS based on the right to health care.

*The Line of March* calls on the whole working class and people to get behind the struggle of the junior doctors. The fact that the government does not accept that the working conditions of the junior doctors are the conditions for the health care of the public exposes how low the ruling elite has sunk in blocking the requirements for a modern health service. We call on the working class to inscribe on its banner that health care is a right. This is the way forward.

***No to the Imposition of a Contract on the Junior Doctors!***

***No to the Privatisation of the Health Service!***

***Health Care Is a Right! For an NHS Based on Fulfilling this Right!***

# Junior Doctors Stage Militant Two-Day Action

From 8am on Wednesday, March 9, until 8am on Friday, March 11, Junior Doctors in England provided emergency care only, as part of the ongoing dispute with the government over an unsafe new contract and the still-present threat of its outright imposition.

Junior Doctors took their place on militant picket-lines up and down the country, braving the wet and cold weather, and receiving 100% support from the public.





# Support the NHS Bill

The National Health Service Bill (formerly known as the NHS Re-instatement Bill), sponsored by Green MP Caroline Lucas, has cross-party support, received over 50,000 signatures in a 38 Degrees petition and was co-authored by Professor Allyson Pollock and Peter Roderick, Queen Mary University of London. On March 11 it received its second reading.

The Bill would restore the founding principles of the NHS in England. These have been eroded over many years, the authors stress, most recently and comprehensively by the Health and Social Care Act 2012. One of the Bill's central features is the abolition of the purchaser/provider split. The Bill would re-establish the Secretary of State's legal duty to provide health care in England. The debate on the Bill was curtailed due to a filibuster by Conservative MPs and will be resumed at a later date. SNP MPs pointed out that the purchaser/provider split had already been



reversed in Scotland, doing away with competitive tendering, part of the privatisation of the NHS.

A militant rally took place outside Parliament, with many campaigners and speakers.

## NO TO THE EUROPEAN UNION OF THE MONOPOLIES!

# Stampeding the “Yes” Vote to Continue Britain’s Membership of the EU

The fact that David Cameron has had to declare that his tour of the country in the referendum for a “Yes” vote to remain in European Union (EU) is “Project Fact” rather than “Project Fear” rather underlines his desperation to stop any serious discussion on how people should vote and reveals his true aim to stampede through a “Yes” vote in the referendum in June. The EU referendum was called on February 20, just hours after Cameron claimed to have achieved radical reshaping of Britain’s place in the EU, and a “special status” for the UK. The choice of June was opposed by many including those who support the “Yes” campaign as coming too close to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh and Northern Ireland Assembly elections. Nicola Sturgeon First Minister of the Scottish Parliament, Carwyn Jones First Minister of Welsh Assembly and Arlene Foster First Minister of the Northern Ireland Assembly wrote to David Cameron to urge him to defer the date. Cameron ignored their concerns that a June date will confuse the process and it would not give any time for people to consider such an important mat-

ter as whether Britain should remain in, or withdraw from the EU.

David Cameron’s referendum campaign is indeed a “Project of Fear” designed to gloss over the serious issues and is just as shallow as is his claim to have achieved Britain’s “special status” in the EU. Whilst Cameron tries to give the illusion that he is achieving advantages against the other European powers by threatening them with the referendum he also wants to make sure that their interests are also served by stampeding through the “Yes” vote to continue Britain’s membership of this elite club of the monopolies in the EU.

On Sunday, the Cabinet Office published a “detailed document” which has already been reportedly described by some in his own cabinet as another “dodgy dossier”. The warning was of what the Prime Minister called a “decade of uncertainty” if Britain leaves the EU, ridiculously citing negotiations with other European and non-European countries over the terms of “access to their markets” as the reason Britain cannot leave its membership

of the EU. But what the Prime Minister also wants to hide in this fear campaign is that far from being a victim of Brussels, where he claims he had to “negotiate” a new deal, Britain as one of the old colonial powers along with Germany and France has always dominated the European Union and all its member countries on behalf of the monopolies and financial oligarchy he represents. The British monopolies and financial elite are in rivalry to dominate Europe and this is his aim, an aim he shares with the other members of his cabinet that want a “No” vote and who think the interests of the monopolies can be better served outside the EU. All of their concerns have nothing to do with the interests of the people of Britain, and Europe and their future.

Rather than submitting to this climate of fear and the aim of the Prime Minister to stampede through a “Yes” vote the working class and people should look to their own interests and aspirations in this referendum to inform themselves of how they should vote. Having time for people to properly evaluate the issues would enable people to see that a European Union dominated by the European powers and their monopolies is a block to the progress of the working class and people to defeat the pro-austerity and pro-war agenda of the dominant powers in the EU. In deepening the discussion people would see that the EU of the monopolies has imposed extreme measures of impoverishment on Greece as well as other European countries overriding the sovereign governments of those countries. The EU bloc is also an alliance with the US implementing so-called “free trade” agreements such as TTIP (the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) to further allow the penetration of US and European monopolies to privatise public services and interfere in the affairs of European countries, overriding the sovereignty of the people and their governments. The EU as a bloc also seeks to weld EU countries to the warmongering NATO alliance and



the inter-imperialist rivalry on the side of Anglo-US imperialists aim of world domination regardless of the wars, illegal invasions, proxy interference, devastation, death and mayhem they create.

To have this proper debate would mean that more and more people would see the EU for what it is. A block and hindrance not only to the sovereignty of European countries but also a factor for compromising the sovereignty of the peoples of Scotland, Wales and England. Such a discussion would reveal that leaving the EU of the monopolies would remove another major block to progress. It would enable the working class and people to go for sovereign states on a new basis, where the working class and people, if they so desire, can decide on a free and equal union between them which will put the English ruling elite at Westminster in their place. This would support the same struggle for the working class and people of other EU countries and further enable all to embark on a line of march to establish modern sovereign socialist states. Britain leaving on this basis indeed would start to end the anachronism of a Europe of the monopolies dominated by the big powers and open the possibility for genuinely uniting the peoples and countries of Europe on a new equal basis that serves the interests of all the peoples of Europe and the world.

# The Neo-Colonial Nature of the European Union As One More Reason Britain Must Leave

The current debates in the monopoly controlled media concerning the future of Britain’s membership of the EU are presented from the perspective of falsifying its essential character. The EU remains the organisation of the big monopolies and financial institutions of Europe, especially those of Britain, France and Germany, and acts on the basis of the requirements of these interests, not those of the peoples of Europe, nor those in other parts of the world.

The EU has, for example, established a neo-colonial relationship with the counties of Africa. This is based on the unequal relationship that was established historically, first during the centuries when African men, women and children were trafficked across the Atlantic Ocean and which was continued when the leading European nations, such as Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain and Italy invaded and divided the African con-

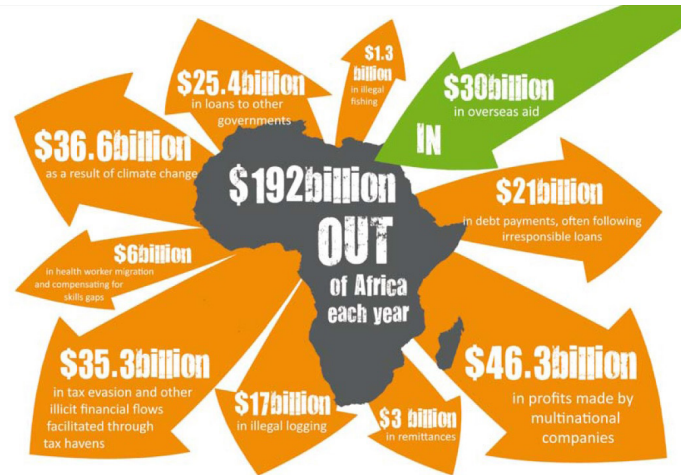
tinent in the period leading up to the First World War. For much of the twentieth century Britain and the other major European powers militarily occupied the African continent and argued that it was their right to exercise colonial rule. In many cases this relationship between Europe and Africa was only ended by armed struggle national liberation struggles. Yet Britain and the other countries that dominate the EU have accepted no responsibility for the crimes committed over centuries relating to Africa and Africans, refuse to accept demands for reparations and continue to interfere in Africa’s affairs. Indeed, further crimes are being carried out both by individual EU countries but by the EU as a body, such as sanctions against Zimbabwe, the actions of the EU towards African migrants and the recent military intervention in the Central African Republic.

Today the EU claims that it is in “partnership” with the Af-

frican Union (AU), the organisation of African states that was first established in 1999 precisely to address the many problems caused by neo-liberal globalisation. This “partnership” has been consolidated by various agreements and mechanisms and yet there can be no real partnership of those that are not equal, or when one party dictates to the other. This unequal “partnership” was formally established by the Cotonou Agreement of 2000 which governs the EU’s relations not only with the African continent but also with other former countries of the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) until 2020. This agreement is based on the Eurocentric values enshrined in the Paris Charter and facilitates the intervention of some of the world’s wealthiest and most powerful countries in the affairs of some of the poorest.

Although refusing to accept that wealth accumulated in the EU is in part a product of the exploitation of Africa over many centuries, the EU uses this wealth to continue its intervention in the continent. The EU countries are the main source of foreign direct investment in Africa, despite competition from China and the US. From 2007-2013 the EU provided €141 billion in “development assistance” to Africa and it remains the major financial contributor to the AU, providing 80% of the AU Commission programme budget. Through such means both individual African countries and the AU remain in a dependent relationship with the EU which continues to give itself the right to intervene in Africa’s economic affairs.

The nature of the EU’s intervention in Africa can also be judged by the free trade agreements, or Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), established with individual African countries, or regions such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which also form part of the Cotonou



Agreement. Since these “agreements” are not between equals they are designed to open up Africa’s economies to the big EU monopolies. Countries that refuse to sign, such as Kenya, are pressured to do so by the threat of the imposition of tariff barriers. The EPAs were widely opposed by the workers’ movement in Africa and other ACP countries and by the TUC and other trade union centres in Europe, nevertheless they constitute the main basis for the economic relationship between the EU and the AU as well as other ACP countries.

The relationship established between the EU, Africa and other ACP countries is one of neo-colonial domination and imperialist intervention and must be ended. The demand of all democratic people must be that Britain withdraws from the EU which remains the organisation established in order to serve the interests of the big monopolies of Europe.

## Is the EU a Guarantor of Workers’ Rights?

In the autumn of 1988 Jacques Delors, the then President of the European Commission, addressed the British Trade Union Congress, promising that the Commission would be a force to require governments to introduce pro-labour legislation. Delors also at that time attempted to influence the trade union movements in Denmark and Ireland to the effect that “Social Europe” was a reality they should support.

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher responded with her infamous “Bruges Speech” on September 20, 1988, in which she said that she had not “rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain only to see them reimposed by a Brussels superstate”. In so doing, she was asserting the interests of British monopoly capital to impose its will in an unfettered manner not only in Britain but globally, and demonstrating that there were not only common interests throughout international finance capital but also the most cut-throat contention.

In these circumstances, the ETUC (European TUC) offered “partnership” with the monopolies as a trade-off for survival agreeing discussions with the “Round Table of Industrialists” to limit class struggle and agreeing support for the European

Union.

Various protocols of the “Social Chapter” and “Social Charter” were drawn up along with the various ideas of “limiting working time” and later produced directives. The aim here was to make the European monopolies the most competitive in the global market and encourage the workers of the EU states to get behind these aims in contention with the US and other blocs. It was also a time when there was euphoria among the ruling circles that the workers’ movement with its independent programme and thinking was finished, and the end of history had come with the triumph of neo-liberalism. The EU became the embodiment of that euphoria on a Europe-wide scale. It seems a far cry from the problems that are today racking the EU, the contradictions between “old” and “new” Europe, and the self-created threats to the very existence of the EU as an entity.

The issue really is that the workers’ movement should not get embroiled in these dog-fights of the monopolies but should develop their own independent programme, the alternative. In this connection, it cannot be said that workers’ rights are given by the EU or guaranteed by its legislation. This is first of all untrue



on a theoretical and political level. Workers' rights are inalienable and belong to them by virtue of their concrete conditions of existence, of their being. The struggle of the workers' movement has been and is to provide these rights with a guarantee. But on a practical level, it is at best questionable that the EU directives have done so.

It is said that workers' rights in the UK are "underpinned by EU rules". This could be called a fraud. The same EU promulgates rules and directives that enforce the neo-liberal agenda of privatisation, capitalist competition, dictate of the monopolies and scrapping of regulations that safeguard the rights of all. The question can be asked, for example: is remaining within the EU going to nullify the Trade Union Bill? Where is the guarantee of workers' rights here? It is true that, as TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady said only recently: "[Workers'] rights can't be taken for granted." But what must be recognised is that is the case with or without the EU. It is extremely myopic to ignore the destruction of the manufacturing base, the destruction of jobs, the shackling of workers' ability to resist the anti-social offensive, the dismantling of public services, and then claim that the EU is the guarantor of the "workers' hard-won benefits and protections", in Frances O'Grady's words.

There are many workers across the EU who are having to live with the attacks on hard won, hard fought for paid leave, many workers on zero hour contracts and temporary contracts. Many have reduced leave and many witness the discrepancies across the EU. There have been no "guarantees" with discrepancies even across industries with discrimination still operating against women who become pregnant and whose employment or conditions or progression is threatened. Male parental concessions are not equally distributed in firms across the country and other European countries. Part-time workers are in no-way in a state of equal treatment.

The right to not be forced to work longer than 48 hours a week on average is regularly challenged in wage negotiations by employers, with forced overtime and lack of premium pay. The Junior Doctors are the obvious case in point today and the British government, with no such protection available or invoked, directly enforces their conditions and contracts.

Eighteen weeks' parental leave per child and to time off for urgent family reasons simply does not exist for many workers or is made difficult or unavailable to claim.

The right to equal pay for work of equal value between men and women is nonsense in many circumstances. Job descriptions, job evaluations and benchmarks are unrealistic or uncategorised in many circumstances. Hard fought for women's equality amongst production workers, gained by milestone struggles such as by Ford women workers, has still not got the recognition



of establishing new criteria to measure equal pay even though established outside of the EU.

The battle for the right to equal treatment for part-time, fixed-term and agency workers with other employees is still an ongoing struggle.

The right for workers' representatives to be informed and consulted on significant changes that could affect jobs, changes in contracts of employment is still arbitrarily implemented and not conformed with in many consultations.

The right to high standards of health and safety at work have seriously been undermined in recent years leading to increased accidents and industrial injury reported in the press on a daily basis.

There are still no protections for workers affected by outsourcing or business buy-outs. Even when labour is supposed to be "tuped" across (Transfer of Undertakings ; Protection of Employment Regulations, 1981) at local authority level when services are outsourced along with jobs, it is undermined or not carried out.

To intimate that protections from discrimination in the workplace on grounds of sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, and religion or belief is an EU prerogative is totally misleading and to indicate that it will not persist in or out of the EU or would be weaker is erroneous.

*The Line of March* calls on the working class movement to examine the preconceptions promoted about the EU and workers' rights, and to reject the illusions being created that the European Union is there for the benefit of the working class, which is a cruel joke being played on working people. In actual fact, the ruling elite is in such crisis in part precisely because it does not recognise workers' rights, and this is playing havoc with the economy, and is creating problems for the EU states that they had not foreseen nor can deal with. The power of the working class has always been in their own organisation and numbers. This remains true today, and it is these factors which are crucial in being brought to bear in the struggle against the anti-social austerity agenda and for the guarantee of the rights of the workers.

## Letter to the Editor

# On British Withdrawal from the EU

I would like to make a contribution to the discussion on whether the workers' movement should support or oppose a UK exit from the EU.

First, it doesn't seem to me that looking at who else is supporting or opposing the so-called Brexit will help us in any way to make a decision. It is a fact that various reactionaries, such as UKIP and different fascist formations, are campaigning for a UK exit. However, equally reactionary forces, such as David Cameron, the US government and the political representatives of European finance capital are campaigning against the Brexit. The workers will have to make an independent judgement on whether an exit aids or harms their struggle.

Those who oppose an exit make the argument that given the current political balance of forces in Britain, such a move would lead to a "carnival of reaction", massive xenophobic and racist media propaganda and deportation of workers. In effect this argument holds that continued UK membership of the EU acts as a kind of brake on this "carnival of reaction". Therefore on this basis, they call for the workers movement to oppose a UK exit from the EU.

It seems to me there are a number of problems with this argument. First, it is a known fact that the international financial oligarchy demands total global freedom of movement for capital while classifying workers into those who are entitled to take part in "free movement of labour" within a specified economic zone and those who are not. The latter are labelled as "economic migrants" and "illegal immigrants". It is a matter of record that this latter group has long been subject within the EU to this carnival of reaction, xenophobic and racist propaganda and deportations. In fact the corporate media takes pains to classify

the refugees fleeing their countries destruction at the hands of the USA/EU/NATO axis precisely as "economic migrants" and "illegal immigrants". This is all happening now with Britain in the EU so it is difficult to see how Britain's membership of the EU acts as some kind of brake on this carnival of reaction. In the face of this, it has been the people's movement which has taken the stand that "no-one is illegal" and "refugees are welcome here". On this basis, thousands of people came out to last year's demonstration in London and exemplary work has been carried out to combat the poisonous chauvinism regarding the refugees in Calais. Therefore, in my view, it is the organised and conscious actions of the workers themselves which offers protection from the carnival of reaction and not continued membership of the EU of the monopolies. The workers' movement is not as weak as is suggested.

Secondly, the question needs to be posed as to whether achieving pro-social political change is more possible within the EU framework or outside it. The experience of Greece, which revolved ostensibly around that country's membership of the common currency, does strongly suggest that it would be impossible for any government to implement an anti-austerity, anti-war programme while still a member of the EU. It is also common knowledge that the EU currently acts as waiting room for NATO and hence the commitment of the USA to its continued existence. Therefore, continued membership of the EU keeps the country tied into the warmongering NATO alliance. The anti-war, anti-austerity movement in Britain is developing and in my view, a "Brexit" would give this movement more room for manoeuvre. This is why I think the movement would benefit from a UK withdrawal from the EU.

## COMMENTARY

# The Government's Fraudulent and Hypocritical Devolution Must be Opposed

The Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill became an Act of Parliament on January 28. This fraudulent and hypocritical Act has been rushed through Parliament just as Cities and Local Governments have also been rushed to sign up to it during its passage through Parliament. The Act claims to devolve some powers over public services and budgets to cities and local authorities only if a Mayor is provided for the combined authority who embodies these added powers. Many authorities have signed the agreements with the government, yet

the government has provided very little detail in the vague text of the agreements, or how it will be funded. Cornwall, Manchester, the West Midlands, the North East and five pilots in London are among the biggest cities and authorities already signed up to the Act.

On October 23, 2015, before the Act was passed the Tees Valley Shadow Combined Authority (TVSCA) signed its agreement with the government that includes powers for employment and skills, transport, planning and investment for the region. Howev-

er, there is no reference to health in this agreement unlike the rest of the north east of England authorities. On the same day the North East Combined Authority (NECA) signed a devolution deal with the government including a commitment to establish a Commission for Health and Social Care Integration for the north east to “establish the scope and basis for further health and social care integration, deeper collaboration and devolution across the Combined Authority’s area and reduce health inequalities in order to improve outcomes”.

Both these devolution agreements mean that the two combined authorities must hold elections for a combined authority Mayor. For example, NECA’s agreement states that the mayor “will create the UK’s first integrated transport system”. This statement beggars belief when in the first place the integrated public authority transport systems, not just for the north east but the whole of the country, were destroyed by the privatisation of rail, buses and ferries in the 1980s. More recently last year, at the same time the government was signing this agreement with NECA on “devolution”, they were also representing the interests of the big transport companies, Stagecoach and Arriva. On behalf of these transport monopolies a government watchdog quango sabotaged the plans of NECA to introduce “quality contracts” even though these contracts only attempted to assert local authority control over the contracts, bus fares and the bus routes of these private monopolies! This is the stage that is being set for “devolution” – that the outsourcing of public service contracts to private companies and safeguarding their interests is to be sacrosanct. Then by this Act the Mayor has extra powers to add a premium to rates to pay for new infrastructure projects and also



the borrowing of funds, but only provided the Mayor has “business support” which is all implicit in the Act.

Similarly, with health and social care integration. Health and social care was integrated in the past before the right to long term health and social care was abrogated in the 1990s with the introduction of charges for “social”

care and the privatisation of nursing and care homes. Today both health and social care budgets are in crisis because the savage cuts governments have imposed over many years. Therefore, the issue is not whether the decisions are taken in London, or the north east of England. The issue of “health and social care integration” can only be dealt with when the right to health and social care is guaranteed by the government and all public authorities. The issue is not one of “devolution” but that government is not carrying out its responsibility to ensure that there are public authorities providing health and social care and that they are fully resourced.

The role of the Mayor has itself become an anachronism in modern society in almost all cities and boroughs with the Mayor confined to ceremonial and other official duties. It is now being revived as a cover to appoint by election regional Chief Executives of England PLC. The reality shows that this “devolution” to an elected north east mayor cannot empower the people of the north east and the rest of the England but is aimed at entrenching further the destruction of public authorities and further concentrating the affairs of cities and regions in the hands of the executive of the ruling elite and the monopoly interests. The government’s fraudulent and hypocritical “devolution” must be opposed.

## FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT!

# Britain and Its Allies Must Cease All Intervention in Libya

In comments made last month the Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, appeared to rule out any direct use of British combat troops in a new NATO invasion of Libya. His comments were made following a meeting of over twenty foreign ministers of countries that are part of the US-led coalition established to allegedly combat the growing presence of the sinister IS/Daesh in Iraq, Syria and Libya. Hammond’s statement also came at a time when there were some indications that NATO and its allies were preparing for new armed intervention in Libya, five years after previous military intervention and bombing of the country led to regime change, as well as the assassination of Libya’s leader Muammar Gaddafi, and ushered in the destruction, anarchy and human suffering that now exists in what was Africa’s most developed country.

In 2011 Britain, the US and the other NATO powers mendaciously claimed that their military intervention was for hu-

manitarian purposes and in order to uphold the “right to protect” civilians from being massacred. However, the fact is that it was NATO’s intervention that has allowed such massacres to be carried out on a regular basis for the last five years. The big powers have continued to intervene in the internal affairs of Libya, not least to attempt to broker a peace agreement between two of the major warring groups, each of which claims to be the government of the country and one of which is formally recognised by Britain and its allies. Under the auspices of the UN an accord was reached late last year, but the two rival “parliaments” have refused to ratify it and the country continues to exist in a state of civil war, a situation that has led to hundreds of thousands of Libyan refugees seeking sanctuary in Europe, while Libya has also become the embarkation point for thousands more refugees from Africa and Western Asia attempting to cross the Mediterranean. UN agencies now estimate that over 3 million Libyans



have been affected, or displaced by violence, while a dire situation now faces 2.5 million Libyans, who urgently need humanitarian assistance and health care in a country which has a critical shortage of health care workers as the majority were evacuated from the country in 2014. The other major consequence of NATO intervention has been to create the conditions for Daesh/IS to establish itself in Libya, especially around the city of Sirte, as well as elsewhere in the region. The instability caused by NATO military intervention in Libya has spread across the Maghrib and has impacted as far as Mali and Nigeria. It now appears that the rationale for further NATO military intervention is the claim that it is necessary in order to deal with the threat to Europe posed by Daesh/IS.

Although Hammond and the representatives of the US, France and their allies have played down reports that a new invasion is imminent, there were media reports that members of Britain's secret services, RAF and Foreign Office flew to Libya last week, to meet with their counterparts from the US and France, as part of the preparations for further military intervention in the country. These meetings occurred at the same time that leading US military personnel suggested that armed intervention was imminent.

It now appears that Britain and its allies are eager to see a new "government of national unity" established in Libya first, so that they might then claim that renewed external intervention has been invited rather than imposed and that it would be presented as mainly for training and organisation of a new Libyan



army. There are still reports that a NATO force of some 6,000 led by Italy could at some stage in the near future be deployed in this role. As Hammond pointed out in his comments, the British government still intends to intervene in Libya but under the guise of supporting the yet to be established new Libyan government and its armed forces.

History has shown that the intervention of Britain and the other big powers under whatever guise in Libya, as well as other countries, has only brought increased suffering to the people that it is claimed need "protection" and has created even more instability and the conditions for further conflict. Britain and the other big powers that have created this instability, millions of refugees and other problems then pose as those best suited to act as saviours.

It is the responsibility of all democratic people to take a stand against such intervention, which completely disregards the sovereignty of nations and peoples and is designed to establish proxy states and even whole regions which are completely under the sway of the big powers, or so unstable that they cannot chart their own independent course of development. In opposition to governments committed to foreign intervention and destabilising wars that are only of benefit to the geopolitical interests of the big monopolies and financial institutions there is an urgent necessity to create the conditions for an anti-war government which abolishes war and puts the people's interests in first place. It is extremely crucial that the anti-war movement unites in action to work towards this goal.

## The British State Must Be Held to Account for the Crimes of Colonialism

Nearly seventy years ago, in 1948, soldiers of the British army carried out one of the most infamous acts of terrorism in living memory, the massacre of 24 unarmed workers in Batang Kali, a village in the Selangor area of Malaya, today Malaysia. This heinous crime carried out under the Labour government of the day was only the first of many crimes carried out by British state and its governments since. There have been continual official attempts to cover up this crime in the many years following the Batang Kali Massacre. These culminated in the judgment reached by Britain's Supreme Court at the end of last year when, by a majority verdict, it was decided that the families of those slaughtered had no right to any enquiry into their loved ones' deaths, no right to an official apology and no right to any form of reparation.

The Batang Kali Massacre occurred in the period following World War II when the Labour government re-established control of the colony of Malaya. During the war British and allied forces had fought alongside the Malayan Peoples Anti-Japanese



Army (MPAJA), led by the Communist Party of Malaya, but as soon as the common enemy had been defeated, just as in Greece and elsewhere, the British army turned its guns on its former allies. In the case of Malaya, Britain had fought to remove Japanese colonial occupation only to replace it with British colonial

rule, in order to lay claim to Malaya's resources, especially its rubber and tin the biggest currency earners in the Empire. In 1948 in response to the anti-colonial struggles breaking out in Malaya and the growing influence of the Communist Party, the British colonial authorities declared a "State of Emergency", in effect launching an all out war in defence of colonial rule and in order to remove the threat to this rule posed by the Malayan people's struggle to determine their own destiny.

During the colonial war that followed, the British forces introduced many of the same strategies that would later be used by US imperialism in Vietnam: carpet bombing, including the use of cluster bombs, the use of defoliants, the herding of the population into "strategic hamlets", the use of state terrorism against civilians, etc. In the Batang Kali Massacre the unarmed men of the village were simply shot in order to terrorise others as part of the overall objectives pursued by the British government of the day. What is evident from all the legal wrangling that has ensued since is that it is the British state and successive government that should be held to account, not just the soldiers who were sent to carry out the crime.

The massacre was immediately covered up by the Labour government and the armed forces which referred to those massacred as "bandits", a term used for all those in Malaya who opposed Britain's colonial rule, before the term "communist terrorists" or "CTs" was employed. An official War Office report in 1948 referred to the massacre as a "very successful action". Nevertheless, the families of those massacred, their employer and others in Malaya, including the local press, immediately demanded an inquiry. Although the colonial authorities quickly concluded that the massacre had been justified what is significant is that even material relating to these early enquiries was destroyed along with evidence about many other crimes carried out during this period. An official statement by the Labour Colonial Secretary in Parliament concluded that those massacred had simply been shot while trying to escape, in language which is reminiscent of that used by the Nazis. Nevertheless, demands were still made for a public inquiry but were rejected by the government.

The massacre was publicly debated again in Britain in 1969, twelve years after Malaysia gained formal political independence, when the media issued statements from four British soldiers who confirmed that they had been ordered to carry out a massacre and to falsely claim that those killed had been shot whilst trying to escape. Two of those involved even appeared on television. As a result, the Director of Public Prosecutions under the Labour government of the day began an investigation, although the evidence suggests this was done with the hope and expectation that no criminal case would be brought. In 1970 when the Conservative government took office the investigation was dropped altogether. In 1992, a BBC documentary again focused on the massacre and interviewed those who had witnessed it. In response the Crown Prosecution Service reviewed the case and reached the conclusion that the time that had elapsed since the massacre and the termination of the investigation in 1970 constituted a "prejudicial delay". Nevertheless, in 1993 the wife of one of those who had been shot and



a survivor of the massacre filed a petition to the Queen, requesting that an investigation be carried out, prosecutions brought and reparation made. No response was ever issued by the Palace. Around the same time the Malaysian police made their own investigation and requested assistance from their British counterparts but the Metropolitan Police War Crimes Unit did not send the information requested. In 2008, two further petitions were sent to the Queen and legal representations made to the government, including the submission of new evidence and the request for an investigation and inquiry. In 2010, the government's solicitor made it clear that no investigation would be carried out and in response the families of those massacred applied to the Court of Appeal and finally the Supreme Court for a judicial review to force the government to investigate the massacre.

Although the final judgments of the Supreme Court are presented in the most dispassionate legal terms, what they could not cover up was the fact that a massacre, a war crime, had been committed by the British army in a British colony under the authority and direction of the British government. Since that time for nearly seventy years every effort has been made by the British state, the police, courts, civil servants, and governments of all the major parties to make sure that this crime is ignored, covered up, that nobody is held to account and that no reparation is made to the families of the men massacred in Batang Kali. While some politicians at Westminster like to preach about "British values",

the ruling elite's approach to this massacre is a graphic example of the nature of those values, which have remained unchanging for some seventy years. They maintain the same racist and colonialist logic that considers that the lives of people in Malaysia, and the working people of other countries, don't matter. Those who boast of their defence of the rule of law and their opposition to all forms of "terrorism" stand exposed and condemned before the world's people. Indeed, the case shows how the law itself, the Human Rights Act, the European Convention of Human Rights can be ignored or manipulated by the state

and its governments according to their interests.

The Batang Kali massacre is a crime that like many others cries out for a just settlement, for the criminals to be held to account and for reparation to be made. It therefore raises the



Survivors at the Supreme Court, London which on November 25 2015 again dismissed their case against the war crimes of the British government



question of how this can be brought about, how the British state can be held to account for all the crimes committed during colonial rule as well as for the crime of colonialism itself? What is required is a society and state that places the people at the centre as the decision makers. What is required is an anti-war government of the people and for the people that will hold all the war criminals and their system to account, make reparation for all the crimes of the past and prevent future crimes from being perpetrated.

Britain's Supreme Court 2015: majority verdict decided that the families of those slaughtered had no right to any enquiry into their loved ones' deaths, no right to an official apology and no right to any form of reparation



## 70th ANNIVERSARY OF THE COLD WAR

# Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" Speech

On March 5, 1946, the wartime Prime Minister Winston Churchill was invited to Fulton, Missouri by US President Harry S Truman where he delivered his "Sinews of Peace" speech, in which he claimed that the Soviet Union had imposed an "iron curtain" on Europe. Churchill prepared his speech in Washington, DC, and discussed it at length with US President Truman who accompanied him on stage in Fulton.

The first recorded use of the "iron curtain" metaphor used by Churchill was by the Nazi Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels during the war. In his speech, Churchill condemned the communist system of states and called for an alliance of the "English-speaking nations" to save the world from Soviet domination and communism. All of it was to accuse communism of violating the right to conscience so as to present it as an ideology of enslavement. In fact communism is the condition for the complete emancipation of the working class and, as such, a condition for the emancipation of all humanity. It cannot be communism unless it establishes the condition for the complete emancipation of the working class.

Because of the great prestige communism enjoyed after World War II, the Anglo-American imperialists needed a justification to smash the anti-fascist alliance. Winston Churchill's "Iron Curtain" speech was an important rationalisation of the Anglo-American imperialists for attacking the anti-fascist united front, claiming that there now existed two worlds, one called "free" and centred around the US, the other called "enslaved", centred around the Soviet Union. Churchill, along with others, called for a grand Anglo-American strategy (including geo-political considerations and war aims) linked to notions of laws and values to combat this development. The Soviet Union subsequently conciliated with the notion of two worlds and on this basis a bipolar world order was created.

Winston Churchill's formal declaration of the Cold War in his "Iron Curtain" speech put the right to conscience in utter disrepute in the post-war period. In this way, in the years which followed World War II, first the US and then the Soviet Union raised their hand against the right to conscience. This right was held in such contempt that it was "granted" only on the basis of which camp an individual or a country belonged to.

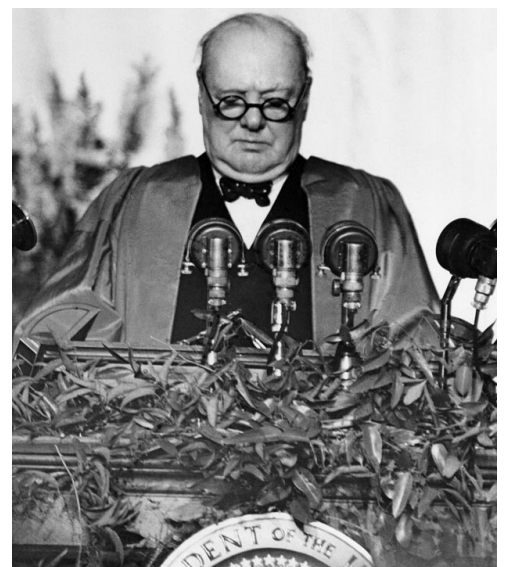
US President Truman proceeded to demonstrate the meaning

of this when he convinced the US Congress to send more than \$400 million to support the fascist forces in Greece. The aim was to restore the monarchy linked to Queen Victoria's dynasty so as to ensure the defeat of the democratic struggle which was underway in Greece and thereby guar-

antee the geo-political interests of the US over western Europe as well as position it to take over eastern Europe. By this act, not only was Greece deprived of the right to self-determination but the Greek people who refused to renounce the anti-fascist resistance were accused of being communists and kept in concentration camps established by the British for forty years. All over Asia and Latin America communists were slaughtered in the name of this high ideal.

In the late fifties and thereafter, the world was to witness the Soviet Union also defining what was progressive on the basis of whether the country, organisation or individual in question was its friend or enemy. No sooner had the Cold War officially ended in the 1989-91 period with the demise of the Soviet Union than it became quite clear that under the US striving to become the sole superpower, the right to conscience was again to be made the target of attack. Today, the US imperialists and their allies continue to trample it underfoot in the name of defending the national interests of the big powers, as they once more attempt to re-divide the world between their own spheres of influence.

(TML Weekly Information Project, March 5, 2016)





## DEFENCE OF THE DPRK IS AN INTERNATIONALIST DUTY

# Oppose the Hysteria Aimed at Isolating the DPRK

The United Nations Security Council imposed additional sanctions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on March 2. The DPRK's refusal to submit to the US dictate and to take defensive measures, as is its right, are called "provocations", while its launch of an observation satellite is painted as an offensive measure. The British government has itself joined in this hysteria aimed at isolating the DPRK.

The Foreign Secretary, Philip Hammond, spoke about the DPRK's "illegal" nuclear test on January 6, and "illicit proliferation". He said that the DPRK must "take tangible steps to re-engage constructively with the international community". The working class must realise that it is the Anglo-US imperialists who are the ones seeking to isolate the DPRK, attempting to rail-road it into submitting to the imperialist system of states, and aiming for regime change in the DPRK.

Furthermore, despite repeated warnings from the DPRK as well as protests and criticism around the world, the US imperialists have gone ahead with the Foal Eagle and Key Resolve military exercises in south Korea, which began on March 7. They are scheduled to run until April 30, that is, for nearly two months. These exercises are unprecedented in scale and intensity, and include operations for "surgical strikes" on DPRK nuclear and rocket facilities as well scenarios for regime change. The exercises involve 15,000 US troops, three times the usual number. Foal Eagle and Key Resolve are neither "defensive" nor "routine" as claimed. They include detailed plans for the rehearsal and invasion of the DPRK. They aim at invading the DPRK and

occupying it.

It should also be remembered that the US has itself recently test-launched intercontinental ballistic missile Minuteman-3 in its mainland. It is the height of hypocrisy that those who call for building the "world without nuclear weapons" while increasing their nuclear arsenals are accusing the DPRK of proliferation. These accusations are taking place in the context of the US strategy of its "pivot to Asia", an aggressive manoeuvre in the context of its plans for world domination. It is the true intention of the US to build a far eastern region and Asian continent where only its high-handed and arbitrary practices are allowed. Those such as the US and Britain who follow the medieval line of "Might Makes Right" reveal their hypocrisy and double-standards when they accuse the DPRK of threatening world peace.

Neither the US imperialists nor the British government have any right to deprive the DPRK or any others of the sovereign right to defend themselves against the threats and provocations of the US-led imperialist system of states. The peoples of the world should stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the DPRK in exercising this right. The situation brings to the fore that it is an urgent necessity for the people to establish anti-war governments that can act as a force for peace by withdrawing from all aggressive military blocs and removing the US military presence in their territories and regions.





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