

The Line of March

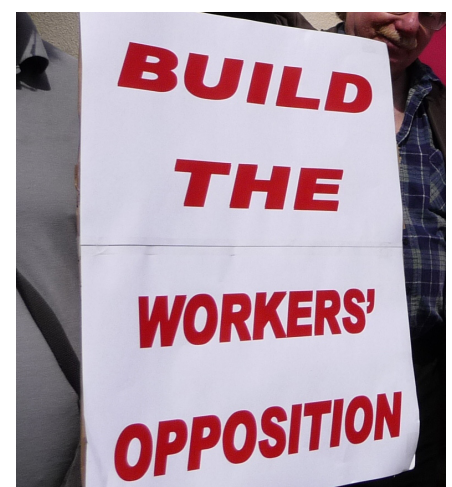
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**May First, 2016,
Day of International Working Class Unity and Struggle**

**ALL OUT FOR
A CHANGE IN DIRECTION FOR
SOCIETY!**



**Defeat the Austerity Agenda! For a New Direction for
the Economy and Society! Defend the Rights of All!**

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May First, Day of International Working Class Unity and Struggle

All Out for A Change in Direction for Society!

Call of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), May 1, 2016

On this important occasion of May First, on behalf of the working class throughout Britain, RCPB(ML) sends its revolutionary greetings to the working class and oppressed people of all lands who are fighting for their rights, who are fighting against austerity and the anti-social offensive of the ruling elites, and who are fighting to defend their sovereignty and to chart their own destiny without outside interference.

Our Party also takes this opportunity to salute the working class and people throughout Britain, in England, Scotland and Wales, who are taking up the struggle for the pro-social alternative, for a human-centred society, for the rights of the people and for a change in direction for the economy and society, which is so urgently needed.

While May Day last year came at the time of the general election, this year it also comes in the context of an important political battle: over Britain's membership of the European Union. This May Day comes as the working people are getting behind the call to take a stand against the European Union of the Monopolies. In doing so, RCPB(ML) calls on the working class to vigorously uphold the principle of proletarian internationalism, to affirm its stand as an international class, and to reject with contempt the poisonous chauvinism which is being whipped up in the Referendum campaign, and not to line up behind the dog-fights of the monopolies, behind the exhortation to make this or that section of international monopoly capital competitive in the global market. It is essential that the working class affirms its own agenda in this context to constitute itself as the nation. A sovereign economy is what is required, and trade under the control of public authorities for mutual benefit and not for empire-building.

We congratulate all sections of the working people throughout society who have been waging spirited and unrelenting struggles under the conditions of the retreat of revolution to turn things around and demand and work for a change in the direction of the economy, public services and society. In this respect, the struggle to safeguard the future of the health service as a public and accountable service dedicated to providing health care throughout society as of right is particularly acute. Also of urgency is the struggle of the working class to reverse the destruction of the manufacturing base, and to save the steel

industry which is a vital component of a sovereign economy. All of this, including the defence of the rights of the organised workers, the defence of wages, social programmes and pensions, raises the paramount issue of rendering the struggles of the workers' movement to be at their most effective. It is an issue of rejecting every capital-centred agenda that seeks to gain influence in the workers' movement and confronting the state power of the monopolies through an agenda that recognises the historic mission of the working class to transform society and to save the day against all attempts to block society's path to progress.

Our Party, RCPB(ML), considers that what is crucial in charting the way forward, is the concentration of the workers on developing their own agenda for change, their own independent programme to *Stop Paying the Rich and Increase Investments in Social Programmes*, and to fight for the development of the Proletarian Front, the solidarity and unity of all working people, with the aim of completing the transformation of society to one with modern relations of production. The working class must rally all sections of society around its independent programme. It must take the lead in this transformation of society, affirming the dignity of labour itself, and putting an end to all war-mongering.

The Proletarian Front must put on its agenda the fight for democratic renewal, the importance of establishing social forms which ensure the unity of working people, and not promote the divisions which the present owners of social wealth attempt to sow in the workers' movement. Above all, the Proletarian Front must conceptualise and fight for the replacement of the anachronistic institutions and arrangements of the capitalist state by modern ones which are consistent with the requirements of the times.

Defeat the Austerity Agenda!

For a New Direction for the Economy and Society!

Defend the Rights of All!

Advance Along the Line of March to a New Society!

Organise for the Working Class to Fulfil its Historic Mission and Vest Sovereignty in the People!

Hail May Day!

For a New Society Fit for the 21st Century!

NO TO THE EUROPEAN UNION OF THE MONOPOLIES!

No to EU Austerity! Working People Themselves Must Set the Agenda

The EU Referendum campaign officially began on April 15 and the voting in the Referendum itself takes place on June 23.

On April 13, the Electoral Commission, following the EU Referendum Act 2015 and the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, designated the lead organisations for the “Remain” and “Leave” campaigns. There was just one contender for “Remain”, called “The In Campaign”, but several for “Leave”. Choosing such a designated organisation is no small matter, since £600,000 of public funds is at stake, as well as a free distribution of information to voters, referendum campaign broadcasts and free use of certain public rooms. “Vote Leave”, headed by Boris Johnson, was chosen by the Electoral Commission as “adequately represent[ing] those campaigning” for leaving the EU.

Thus the people are being asked to participate in the referendum with no say in setting the agenda. The “official” remain and leave campaigns are headed by establishment figures, and the people are being asked to line up behind arguments which give the people no role in decision-making.

What are the issues? What is at stake? The working class and people must reject “Project Fear”. Passions are being raised to create splits and divisions amongst the people, rather than engaging the people in a serious debate to look at the facts and arguments and reach a warranted conclusion. Such a conclusion takes into account matters of principle, and is not confined, as the establishment figures would have us believe, to what “benefits the British people” but takes into account what will open a path which favours the working class and people of England, Scotland and Wales, and defends the rights of the all, acting as one with the working people of Europe, and defending the rights of the workers who are made to suffer from the “free movement of labour”, which is “free movement” for the EU barons, but forced movement for the workers.

That is not to say that a stand should not be taken. For the problems of the economy to be solved, for example, and a new direction taken, Britain cannot remain in the EU. For that matter, from the problems that Greece faced from the Troika of the IMF, the European Central Bank and the European Commission, it is clear that the EU, with its concentration of power and wealth in a few hands, is a cause of the problems of the economies of European countries, not a solution. In other words, the EU of the monopolies is an EU of the austerity agenda and neo-liberalism.

Working people need and aspire to be in control of their own lives. The EU is a block to this aspiration, as it strengthens the power of the global monopolies, and further disempowers the



people. It is also a further threat to peace and a factor for war, contrary to the propaganda that it has ensured peace in Europe. It cannot be otherwise when the big powers of Europe are pro-war, not anti-war governments. The aggressive US-led NATO alliance is also strengthening its co-operation with the EU, notably in their moves to encircle Russia.

Arguments that the British government could have persuaded the European Union to enable them to do more to save the steel industry in this country, despite the EU dictate that forbids state rescue and restructuring of “failing” industries, particularly steel, are also clutching at straws. What is needed is a public authority with the power to invest, set prices, and determine the direction of the economy and the steel industry in particular. This runs contrary to all the EU stands for, making a fetish of “free competition”.

In short, it is the working class which must become organised as the pro-social force to change the direction of the economy and society. It is a cruel joke to suggest that workers’ rights are guaranteed by the EU. Workers and their defence organisations have had to fight to affirm these rights, which still remain under severe attack, for instance from the notorious Trade Union Bill. Has EU law guaranteed the rights of Junior Doctors? In fact, untrammelled monopoly right is what underlies the aims of the EU, as the people of Greece know to their cost. The *nuit debout* demonstrations of working people in France are also a manifestation that rights have to be fought for. The conclusion is that it is the working class and people themselves who must be empowered to guarantee their rights and the rights of all. It is disarming the workers to suggest that they should entrust their fate to EU

laws and regulations.

In this sense, rather than lining up behind the “official” Remain and Leave campaigns, the working class must develop a powerful movement with its allies in society to become the guarantors of an independent, sovereign economy, trading with a view only for mutual benefit of both partners, rejecting the neo-liberal agenda, and building a strong manufacturing base and a self-reliant agriculture for the benefit of the economies of Scotland, Wales and Britain as a whole.

No to EU Austerity! Yes to the Sovereignty of Nations!

Britain Must Leave the EU! For an Alternative Where the Working People Set the Agenda!



The Debate on the EU Referendum Must Not Be Framed in a Chauvinist Manner

One of the most important questions facing the people in the European Union (EU) referendum is how it is being covered by the monopoly media and how the “Remain” versus “Leave” debate is being framed in a chauvinist manner. The issue facing the working class and people is how to seize the initiative and break the limits that are being placed upon it by the ruling elite and re-frame the debate so that it serves their interests.

In the media campaign briefings and news report sound bites one would be forgiven for thinking that the two camps revolved around David Cameron and George Osborne for the “Remain” campaign, and another around Boris Johnson for the “Brexit” campaign. In this way the debate is framed around the vector of what suits the interests of big business, finance capital and the trade of transnational corporations operating in Britain and elsewhere.

On the one hand, the main argument of Cameron and Osborne is one of trying to stampede the “Yes” vote by claiming that Britain’s economy, as compared with other countries, is well on the way to “recovery” and leaving the EU would “end” its trade agreements with European countries and “jeopardise” this recovery. Therefore, they argue, Britain would be better off in what they, just as ridiculously, try to claim is now a “reformed” EU. Also, Cameron and Osborne go on to extend this scaremongering to “British jobs”, saying that car workers’ jobs, for exam-



ple, would go if Britain left the EU.

On the other hand, the main argument of Boris Johnson for a “Brexit” is limited to the same claim of talking up Britain’s economy as a “leader” in the world but that the EU is “burdening” Britain’s economy with over-regulation. The argument goes that this over-regulation “costs” Britain’s economy and “holds

back” Britain’s trade with Europe and the world and is the result of the “interference” in the British economy by “Brussels”. He also goes on to argue that this is better for “British jobs” because Britain would “control its own borders” and blames an influx of foreign workers for holding back the economy, and so on.

In other words, the way the debate gets framed is in a chauvinist way, around the vector where everything in Britain would be better if only Britain were allowed to carry out its anti-social, pro-austerity, neo-liberal, anti-immigrant agenda on behalf of finance capital, within the EU with the “Remain” campaign, or to carry on this same agenda outside the EU with the “Brexit” campaign. This is the limit that the ruling elite are desperately trying to place on the discussion among the people on the EU referendum. They are well aware of the dangers to this anti-social agenda in a Europe of the monopolies should the people start to seize the initiative in the discussion on the EU referendum, just as the Scottish people seized the agenda for a modern sovereignty of the people in the Scottish referendum on independence.

For the working class and people the necessity is to re-frame the debate on the EU referendum in the way that serves their interests. In spite of the media campaign to limit serious discussion of the issues in the EU referendum, people everywhere are wanting to find out more and discuss within workplaces, schools, colleges, trade unions and communities. In progressive circles, the debate must not be narrowed down to prevent people from seeing the world as it is. So, for example in the trade union circles, both those for remaining and leaving the EU, there is a danger for the discussion to get reduced to what is “good” for British workers, jobs and so forth, creating the illusion that either leaving or remaining protects workers jobs, when the security for jobs lies in the fight of the working class and people themselves to defend the livelihood of all.

For example, the Trade Union Bill is not going to be defeated by staying in the EU, or by leaving but by the fight of the working class against it to provide their right to organise with a guarantee in Britain. In other circles, the discussion gets reduced to whether workers see themselves as European, or British, or the issue gets further confused in left circles to the divisive vector of whether you are “nationalist” or “internationalist”. Then alongside this amongst these circles the argument gets promoted for remaining in the EU as more of a “reluctance to leave”, almost mirroring Cameron with a call for critical support to “reform the EU”.

However, all of these arguments confuse the debate and are a block to releasing the initiative of the people. So, for example, Britain’s membership of the EU has nothing to do with whether an individual considers themselves a “European” or an “internationalist”. The EU is on the side of neo-liberal impe-

rialist “internationalism”, not on the side of the working class and people regardless of their views. The EU of the monopolies wants to decide everything, and the concentration of economic and political power in the hands of those EU forces, such as the Troika, who want to impose monopoly right is wrecking whole economies. The case of Greece is a prime example. The privatisation of European public services and other industries through the “free-trade” laws as well as through sanctioning TTIP (the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) further allows the penetration of US monopolies for the same purpose. At the same time, Britain as part of the EU, along with the other European powers, is imposing austerity at home and in Europe. The EU has nothing to do with the unity of European countries but quite the opposite. It is a Europe run in the interests of monopolies riding roughshod over the sovereignty of the peoples and their governments.

For the British working class to avoid infection with the chauvinism of the ruling elite, the debate must be framed with the proletarian internationalist perspective of fighting as one with the working peoples of Europe, and upholding the sovereignty of peoples and nations. It is about the interests of the working class and people being served and the necessity for the people to make the decisions on how their society and economy is run. It is about the working class and people discussing how their agenda and their programme can be addressed.

Then the issue workers face is how can they throw a spoke in the wheel of this Europe of the monopolies and the European powers, Britain, France, and Germany who exploit the countries of Europe for huge profits, wrecking their economies and privatising their public services, as they are doing at home in Britain as well.

In the coming months in the run up to the vote on June 23, the working class and people should vigorously take part in this discussion and support building this Workers’ Opposition to the EU of the monopolies and the whole austerity agenda of the ruling circles in Britain and through the EU. Deepening the discussion along these lines will break the limits that the ruling elite and the monopoly media are trying to place on the discussion on the EU referendum. To have a serious debate would mean that more and more people will see through the bankruptcy of the “two camps” represented by Cameron, Osborne and Boris Johnson and other vile racists. Such a discussion would let the working class and people see that in the struggle to empower themselves the EU of the monopolies represents a major block to progress. It would further enable the Workers’ Opposition to call for a “Leave” vote that unites and serves the interests of all the people and strengthens their demands and the fight for sovereignty to lie with the people and not the monopolies in Britain and elsewhere.

International Trade as a Geopolitical Weapon of the EU

It is asserted that an entity like the EU is a necessary free trade arrangement in order to efficiently distribute human and material resources so as to increase the competitiveness of its member states. However, so-called free trade is trade under the

domination of the most powerful monopolies centred in the big powers. Under their control, international trade serves both their particular private empire-building interests and the geopolitical aims of those powers. International trade has grown into far



more than a purely economic relation: it has become a weapon wielded by the big powers, both in collusion to maintain the imperialist system of states under their domination, and against one another, in mutual competition.

The reality of “free trade” is freedom only for the most powerful monopolies and states. This freedom is enforced over others via international agreements, trade blocs and other arrangements, and any opposition is met with blockades and sanctions through to war and regime change, and other violations of sovereignty. At the same time, rivalry between the big powers manifests itself as national chauvinism and contains the real danger of open conflict and warfare between these powers.

The EU provides a single large territory where the most powerful monopolies based in the big European powers have unrestricted monopoly right within the borders of the Union and have a power base from which to control international trade in contention with monopolies centred in other world powers, particularly North America centred on the US. The EU also provides a geopolitical entity from which agreements such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) can be made with other powers that give these monopolies unrestricted access across whole swathes of the globe.

The brutal treatment of countries such as Greece, particularly over the past year, has shown very starkly how monopolised global trade and big power geopolitics directly confront the public desire for control over the economy and its direction. This desire, expressed in the courageous Oxi (No) vote in the Greek referendum in opposition to the devastating measures imposed by the EU at that time, which was answered by harsh punishment, is the desire for an alternative to austerity and for defence of public right over monopoly right. In the case of countries such as Greece in particular, this desire relates to the need to build diverse self-reliant national economies as opposed to nation-wrecking, sovereignty as opposed to outright annexation. In general, it is the desire for the people to have a say over their own destiny.

For these countries, sovereignty against the hegemony of the global monopolies and the geopolitics of the big powers is a life and death issue, posing the necessity to develop an economy and politics free from this control and exploitation. Any hint of such independence from the Europe of the monopolies cannot be permitted. This presents the problem of withdrawal from the imperialist system of states, where any trade with the big powers is conducted with strict safeguards in place to defend their

sovereign economies.

The wrecking of the national economies and infrastructure of these countries has reached such a degree, along with political destabilisation, that the free movement of labour has become forced movement whereby whole sections of the population, particularly the younger sections, are leaving their homelands in search of employment and stability, creating huge diasporas in the case of some nations.

A country such as Britain, on the other hand, is itself a big power with its own empire-building plans relating to Europe and the world. It wields the geopolitical weapon of international trade itself, not only in collusion with the other big powers, particularly the US and the European powers, but also in competition with them. British monopoly capital is divided on where best to position itself, with conflicting interests between the monopolies that are based in and operate within Britain itself. The official Remain campaign in the referendum on EU membership and the version of the Leave campaign being promoted reflect these divisions. Both are characterised by British national chauvinism and an imperialist outlook, employing hysteria and fear to disinform the population.

For the desire for an alternative and for a say over the matters that affect people’s lives to be realised means an alternative to the EU of the monopolies and other such “free trade” arrangements. This means sovereignty and decision-making power being vested in the people over the local economy, so as to develop a diverse, self-reliant economy in the service of the public interest. This creates the conditions for trade relations on a new basis to be formed with other such sovereign local economies for the mutual benefit of each trading partner.

A key battle-ground in monopoly control over international trade versus international trade between free and equal partners for mutual benefit is the determination of prices of traded goods.

The prevalent dogma that the prices of internationally-traded goods are simply determined by supply and demand ignores various factors relating to monopoly control of market prices. The most powerful monopolies influence both supply and demand through their control over production, determining what gets produced, how much and what raw materials are required. Through large financial institutions and rich hedge funds, they intervene in the markets both to speculate or to manipulate prices directly. Free trade agreements increase their scope to operate and eliminate competition. For example, Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) being introduced through TTIP allows a cor-

poration to sue a government for any action that may limit its profits.

Further distortion of price arises from the hegemony over international trade enjoyed by the US dollar, which functions as a means to extract tribute from the global economy. The Euro and other fiat currencies including the pound have aspired to gain this dominant position in contention with the US dollar.

Without such manipulation and distortion, prices of traded goods would reflect their value of production (comprising existing value of materials and instruments transferred by the production process and newly-produced value claimed by workers, owners of capital and governments). From such a starting-point, mutually beneficial bilateral trade would be possible at a price determined by the values of production in the two trading coun-

tries, which would account for their different conditions and eliminate the use of a third party's currency, be that the US dollar, Euro, pound or any other currency. Such arrangements would be an important precondition to popular sovereign control rather than monopoly control over international trade.



FOR A NEW DIRECTION FOR THE ECONOMY

The Steel Industry Is a Vital Part of the Economy! It Must Not Be Destroyed!

The announcement of Tata Steel at the end of March that it was seeking a buyer for its steel plants in Wales, Scotland and England, and that it had rejected a turnaround plan for its Port Talbot site, was a further devastating blow to the steel industry in Britain. The fight is on to prevent this steel industry being wiped out altogether on the altar of imperialist “free trade”. Steel workers, with the support of many sections of working people, are rallying to this fight. They are becoming increasingly aware that “trade wars” bring nothing but disaster, and what is required to turn things around is the independent programme and action of the working class to bring about a human-centred economy from its present direction of serving monopoly right.

The fight to save the steel industry is in some ways reminiscent of the fight to safeguard the future of the health service. For

many years the neo-liberal agenda has gained momentum. With the health service, successive governments have taken it through a series of watersheds which have been decried as the end of a health service serving the claims of the people for health care as of right. With the steel industry, its destruction, privatisation and abandonment began in earnest under Margaret Thatcher and Ian McGregor, with the mantras that the industry needed massive restructuring and cut-backs. Such was their success, the same team turned to the destruction of the coal industry. Since then there have been successive closures and take-overs in the steel industry, all under the banner of neo-liberal “free trade”, “commercial decision-making”, being “competitive in the global marketplace”, “globalisation” and the like.

Various unions and other voices on behalf of working people

have called for nationalisation or temporary nationalisation of the steel industry, and the government has so far refused. This, of course, is of marked contrast to the government's treatment of the banks at the height of the 2008 financial crisis. Two views on the economy have never been more marked.

There is a need for steel in all sectors of the economy, but the government does no more than pay lip-service at best to this requirement. The neo-liberal outlook takes no cognisance of what a balanced economy serving the people's needs should be like. Nor does it pay heed to the dignity of labour and the life of communities. If an industry cannot compete, let it go to the wall, accompanied by many crocodile tears and assertions that the government is doing all it can. The conception of a national sovereign economy serving the people's needs is itself thrown on the scrap-heap. Nor does it matter in terms of the neo-liberal outlook and programme that the workers have continued to make concession after concession in the name of keeping the steel industry producing and "competitive".

For decade after decade now, successive governments have been warned of the damage to the economies of Wales, Scotland and of Britain as a whole with the decimation of the steel industry. At the time of Thatcher, there was still the British Steel Corporation when Ian McGregor was appointed in 1980 as its chair. In the hey-day of the social welfare state, the British Steel Corporation had brought into state ownership 90% of British steel-making in 1967. Under McGregor, the industry was "re-structured" and then privatised in order, it was claimed, for the industry to survive, and the workforce was more than halved from 268,500 to 130,000. This was not without a bitter battle by the steelworkers who fought against the dismantling of the industry with a 13-week national strike.

The inexorable process of mergers, take-overs and closures proceeded with the merger of British Steel and Hoogovens in October 1999 to become Corus, at the time Europe's biggest steel company and the world's third largest steel producer. Yet this meant 10,000 steel workers in Britain losing their jobs in the name of "terrific cost savings in overhead costs, purchase, logistics and adjusted best practices". But the results were plummeting stock market valuations, opposition from the steel workers to a pay-the-rich orientation and job losses and a drop in productivity.

Tata of India acquired the Corus Group in April 2007, which was named Tata Steel Europe in September 2010. At its formation, Corus operated primary steelmaking plants (blast furnaces) in Port Talbot, Wales, and Scunthorpe and Teesside in England, as well as IJmuiden in the Netherlands, with additional steel-making facilities in Rotherham (electric arc furnace), as well as downstream steel production of both long and flat steel. The Teesside plant was mothballed and sold in 2009/2010. The long products division was offered for sale in 2015, with preliminary agreement reached with Greybull Capital in 2016 for acquisition



of most of Tata Steel Europe's long product units.¹

In this context, it can be seen that to lay the blame for Tata's decision on the "dumping" of Chinese steel is completely misguided. If the steel industry were run to serve the needs of the economy, then the issue would not be to ascertain where the cheapest steel could be bought from. If international trade were conducted not on the basis of neo-liberal imperialist "free trade", but from the motive of trade for mutual benefit and building a human-centred economy, then the cheapest steel on the international market would not be the decisive consideration. Nor would it be a question of imposing import tariffs, as if the economy could not be put under conscious control. Decisions are being taken on the steel industry in Britain which are not under the control of any public authority in this country. And the government claims it cannot intervene to rectify this situation. Decision-making must lie in the hands of a public authority here, whether that is for Wales, Scotland or the economy of Britain as a whole, and not in the hands of the monopolies of the European Union or anywhere else.

In terms of international trade, the alternative lies in affirming the sovereignty of each state's public authority over the direction of its economy and society as a whole. On that basis, the people of each country can develop their co-operation and unity which expresses their interests and not that of the monopolies; on that basis sovereign peoples can develop their own institutions of international mutual benefit.

The workers' movement must reject the call to direct their anger against China, and direct it instead against the ruling elite in Britain who are absolving themselves of any responsibility for the steel industry or the health of the economy, or indeed public services. They are demonstrating that they could not care less about these considerations. In particular, they could not care less about the fate of working people with their decisions. What matters to them is what is termed "commercial viability", obtaining the cheapest deals, worming their way into opportunities in the world market, and so on. And what has this outlook demonstrated since 1980? The complete wrecking of the economy, disregard of the claims of working people and unravelling of the social fabric. Particularly obnoxious in this respect are the chauvinist claims that the government is being dictated to by foreign interests, when the issue is actually that it is refusing

to build a sovereign economy at home. Let working people here decide the direction of the steel industry and the economy as a whole, and let them give support to other countries making their own decisions and building their own sovereign economies! How many economies has Britain itself wrecked with its colonial and neo-colonial projects and its imperialist free trade! The “freedoms” it claims, for instance the “free movement of capital, goods, services and labour” are not to create jobs, spur investment and promote economic growth as neo-liberalism asserts, but to preserve the dominance of the global monopolies and the financial oligarchy.

Of concern also to the steel-workers is the talk about the “pension liabilities”, which means that the government puts the rightful claims of the workers to their pensions to the bottom of its concerns. Business Secretary Sajid Javid has said that the government rules out taking responsibility for the workers’ pensions, and the contravention of EU law has been cited as the reason. Indeed, EU competition law is firmly against any restructuring or rescue packages from governments that are aimed to support companies facing financial difficulties or collapse.

It is becoming increasingly glaring that the campaign to *Save Our Steel* means that the working class has to take an alternative,



Militant demonstration of Teesside steelworkers, July 18 2009

independent stand on these matters. Workers must not get into these squabbles for instance about whether Chinese steel or EU steel is better or is the cause of undermining the steel industry here. Workers must take the stand that what is required are sovereign economies, and a steel industry that serves the socialised economy. There are many projects, such as rail and construction which require a thriving steel industry. The government is and has been refusing to make the emergency and long-term investments which the industry needs. The working class must draw the conclusion that the social economy must be brought under the control of those who live, work and produce for it if it is going to be capable of uninterrupted extended reproduction, where more is put into the economy than is taken out and the people’s wellbeing is put as the motive force of the economy.

A new direction is needed for the economy with a thriving steel industry at its centre. Public control is needed over the steel industry, control by the actual producers. The Workers’ Opposition must fight for and create public opinion for this new direction. The working class as a whole must reject the neo-liberal agenda and take the stand that their fate is in their own hands.

Save Our Steel!

For a New Direction for the Economy!

¹“Tata Steel Europe”, Wikipedia



HEALTH CARE IS A RIGHT! FOR AN NHS BASED ON FULFILLING THIS RIGHT!

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

In a 48-hour strike which started on Wednesday, April 6, the Junior Doctors continued their fight against the contract that Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt dictated should be imposed in England. Once again the strike was solid showing that the Junior Doctors are not going to accept government dictate on a contract that is neither safe for the patients, nor fair. What was further noticeable in the strike, on the picket lines and on the demonstrations that followed was the cool determination to not

be intimidated and the resolve to break the attempt of the government to impose its dictate on them.

At the same time, over these days what was also evident is the increasing support from the people and a sense that this fight of the doctors is also synonymous with protecting the NHS against further attacks from the government and its further privatisation agenda with thousands taking part in demonstrations in London, Newcastle and elsewhere. The conclusion that is being drawn is

that enough is enough. The whole direction that the NHS is being driven in is at fault and a new direction is needed based on a government where people constitute the public authority to guarantee the right to health care.

Today, the government see the Junior Doctors as a block to their plans to impose a business model on the health service and they are prepared to jeopardise the lives and health of the public in its fanatical pursuit of imposing this contract on the Junior Doctors. In order to hide its real aims the government claims this is for achieving a 24/7 NHS. Yet, unbelievably it is attacking the very human factor that the health service relies on. The government is assaulting front-line medical staff who have the social consciousness that provides and sustains in the real world the NHS 24-hour service under the very difficult circumstances that successive governments have created in the NHS. Also, successive governments have not funded the training of sufficient doctors, nurses and other health staff for the existing services for many years let alone training more medical staff for increasing those services as the government claims it will. In fact, the government's whole attempt to cut pay, pensions, worsen conditions and overwork staff in the NHS is having the opposite effect and increasing the exodus of vital medical staff from the NHS.

At the same time, Jeremy Hunt and government ministers, whilst saying they will impose the new contract in August and facing further strike dates on April 26-27, still continue to refuse to make any concessions, or even negotiate with the British Medical Association (BMA). Dr Johann Malawana, Chair of the BMA Junior Doctors Committee, has emphasised that the BMA is the one seeking to find a negotiated settlement, and that the way for Jeremy Hunt to avoid strikes by the Junior Doctors is to abandon the imposition of a contract and negotiate. Speaking at a demonstration and rally of over 1,000 on April 9 in Newcastle he said: "As citizens of this country no one wants this. We want a health service that genuinely is there to look after us all when it matters and stands up and catches us when we fall. If we can't have that kind of service what is the point of government. Why do we even have this government if they can't be bothered to look after the most vulnerable and sick people out there."

In other words, what is becoming increasingly exposed is this



Above: Demonstration in Newcastle on April 9 in support of the Junior Doctors

Right: Junior Doctors have begun a 24/7 vigil outside the Department of Health, waiting for Jeremy Hunt, who declared his willingness to meet Junior Doctors at any time, to occupy his chair and talk



Demonstration by Barts Health Trust Junior Doctors outside Hackney Town Hall, April 7

neo-liberal way of government by dictate. A government which imposes the will of the monopolies and the ruling elite and their state cannot be tolerated. A modern society needs a public authority that functions in the interests of all, including upholding the right to health care. It is the neo-liberal dictate by successive governments that has led to the staffing levels crisis and the financial crisis in the hospital trusts. In fact it was why the NHS was divided by previous governments into a "purchaser/provider" split and hospitals were turned into "Trusts". In this so-called internal market in health they could then declare NHS hospitals and community services that should be fully funded as "over-spending" so they can put them under financial investigation with an eye to involving private sector financial consultants and private health care companies who receive lucrative contracts. When these contracts fail, which so many inevitably have, then there is no problem ensuring that the private sector gets paid again and again for failure, while NHS hospitals are continually "monitored" and their finances relentlessly cut every year in so-called "efficiency savings".

The Line of March calls on the whole working class and people to step up their support for the junior doctors. The whole polity must oppose the government's attack on the public good and its promotion of a direction for the NHS that champions health cuts, private market interests and attacks the pay and conditions of health workers. The working class and people must fight for a new direction and a publicly-controlled health care system based on fulfilling the right of all to health care. 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!***



NO TO IMPERIALIST WAR!

The British Government and its Allies Continue their Dangerous Contention with Russia

March 30 marked one hundred and fifty-nine years since the end of the Crimean War waged in the 19th century by an alliance of Britain, France, Turkey and their allies against Russia. At that time the interests of the rulers of Britain demanded that Russian expansion into the Eastern Mediterranean region, at Ottoman Turkey's expense, as well as in Central Asia, must be prevented at all costs, since this threatened Britain's naval hegemony and posed a threat to its empire and especially to colonial India. As part of their contention both Britain and Russia encouraged, or suppressed, struggles for national liberation in Europe as best suited their interests. The immediate causes of the conflict leading up to the Crimean War were soon resolved and made war entirely unnecessary, so the British government engineered a provocation which resulted in war and led to the deaths of thousands, including over 20,000 British troops. However, when the Treaty of Paris was signed in March 1856 the Crimean peninsula was evacuated by Britain and its allies and returned to Russian rule.

Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond made no direct comment on that nineteenth century conflict but issued a statement in March 2016 demanding that Russia cease what he referred to as its "illegal occupation" of Crimea. According to the Foreign Secretary, Russia was guilty of "violating" the "territorial sovereignty" of Ukraine, "destabilising eastern Ukraine", and he alleged that Russia had "contravened international law and challenged the rules based international order". Hammond alleged numerous human rights abuses, defended sanctions against Russia, imposed by Britain and its allies, and concluded by stating "the illegal annexation of Crimea was an act of aggression. And in the face of this aggression, we must stand united in defence of our values".

Of course, Hammond and the government would not consider Britain's occupation of the north of Ireland, Gibraltar and the Malvinas as "illegal annexation" since the control of those foreign territories continues to suit the interests of the rulers of Britain. Defending the status quo in these cases is therefore for the British government not at odds with defending the values of neo-liberal globalisation and the right of might. While in the Ukraine it has been the actions of the the Anglo-Americans and others that have destabilised the country, brought self-declared fascist elements to power and created the conditions to incorporate the entire territory more closely into the orbit of both the EU and the NATO. The struggle between the big powers, the US and major EU countries, on the one hand, and Russia,

on the other, over the future of Ukraine, has been going on for many years and created the conditions for the so-called Orange Revolution of 2004, as well as the coup of February 2014. It was in response to the coup that opposition developed in the Donbass region in eastern Ukraine and in response to requests from the population in the Crimea following a referendum that Russia's intervention took place. The big powers, particularly the US and Britain, created all the conditions for what is now an ongoing civil war in eastern Ukraine in which over 9,000 have lost their lives and which has created an impasse. Loss of life and the displacement of many continues despite the cease-fire agreement reached at Minsk last year. The most recent UN report raises concerns about the deteriorating living conditions of some 3 million people as well as human rights abuses by the Ukrainian security forces.

The US, Britain and their allies have continued to use the unstable situation in Ukraine, and Russia's intervention in the Crimea in particular, as a means to strengthen their encirclement and military offensive against Russia and they have continued to provide training and equipment to the Ukrainian army. Recently, for example, the US military announced that it was sending a dozen fighter jets and nearly four hundred military personnel to Iceland and the Netherlands in order to counter possible "Russian aggression", while earlier in the year six US jet fighters were sent to Finland for similar purposes. Only last month the Cameron government signed a fifteen year defence pact with Ukraine that involves training and "intelligence gathering" and will mean that British troops will engage in more joint exercises. Defence Secretary Michael Fallon commented that the government "will stand firm with Ukraine as they defend their territorial integrity". The new agreement revives an earlier pact that lapsed in 2006 because of the anti-EU stance of the then Ukrainian president, Viktor Yanukovich, who was removed from office by the 2014 coup. The Ukraine and Turkey have also been engaged in joint naval exercises directed against Russia in recent months, while NATO has again announced this year that it is in the process of strengthening its military presence throughout eastern Europe.

The situation in the Crimea and in parts of Ukraine remains unstable as the contention between the big powers continues. Ukraine is in the midst of an economic and political crisis and efforts to integrate it more firmly within the EU appear to be in disarray. Certainly the current situation is of no benefit to the Ukrainian people who appear to be used as pawns in a wider conflict between the big powers. What is evident is that the situation



in Ukraine and the Crimea is being used by the British government and the other NATO powers as a means to justify the increasing encirclement and attempted bullying of Russia. A very dangerous situation has been created and the belligerence and warmongering of Britain and its allies must be brought to an end.

What is required for a lasting peace is the ending of all foreign intervention in the area and an end to hostile actions by the

Britain and the other leading members of NATO and the EU. The dangerous situation in Ukraine and other parts of the world necessitates that all democratic and peace-loving people step up their struggles to establish an anti-war government in Britain, one that immediately withdraws from the warmongering NATO, ceases all intervention abroad and ends the deployment of British troops on foreign soil.

100th ANNIVERSARY OF THE EASTER RISING

Commemoration of the Easter Rising 1916

Over the Easter weekend, people throughout Ireland commemorated the Easter Rising of 1916. More celebrations took place on the actual date of the anniversary of the start of the Rising, April 24. In these, they were joined by millions across the world. RCPB(ML) is proud to be counted among them.

Included in the events marking the centenary was a concert of new music sponsored by the Cornelius Cardew Concerts Trust, which took place on April 8 at Morley College in London. Specially composed pieces by seven composers, inspired by the Rising, were spectacularly performed by the Ensemble De Madrugada, including Irish dance tunes.

The heroic Easter Rising, centred on Dublin, though crushed barbarically by British imperialist troops within weeks, even days, was a turning point in the history of the nation. It led directly to the stunning victory of pro-independence candidates in the General Election of 1918 and the establishment of Dail Eireann in 1919, albeit also brutally suppressed by the British; to the War of Independence 1919-21; to the founding of the Free State in 1922; and eventually to the establishment of the Republic of Ireland in 1949. This assertion of national sovereignty, this nation-building project, whatever the tortuous and often appalling twists and turns, continues to this very day.

As Lenin later stated, the Citizens Army, one of the main components of the Rising, was the first workers' Red Army, and the pity was that the Easter Rising occurred before the revolutionary movement in Europe had reached full maturity. Nonetheless, the Irish revolutionary forces were to be an inspiration and example for revolutionary fighters throughout the world for the remainder of the 20th century, as were to be their mirror image in Ulster the model for counter-revolution, reaction and foreign manipulation.

British media made much of what they characterised as the "shambolic" nature of the Rising (as they did at the time, demonstrating the racism of the British does not depend on the colour of skin of the oppressed) and that it was only the "mistake" of the British in putting down the Rising so brutally and with such vicious retribution that led to the Rising having any significance. But when was a revolution of an oppressed people a tidy affair? And was not the barbarity of British imperialism its standard reaction to any move for colonial freedom throughout its Empire? In fact was it not this very tyranny that made armed uprising inevitable?

Other media accounts asked "why could they not have just waited?", suggesting that Home Rule was inevitable once the First World War was over. But did India, which like Ireland provided tens of thousands of her brave sons for the slaughter on the Western Front, get Home Rule when the war ended? Rather her people struggled for another 30 years before independence was achieved and then only in the wake of one of the most callous and dastardly imperialist crimes of the century, the Partition of India which, as with the equally enforced Partition of Ireland, still bears its bitter and unresolved legacy to this day.

With the Downing Street Declaration of 1993, the then Prime Minister John Major stated that Britain had no territorial interest or claim in what he called "the island of Ireland". If so, why more than 20 years later, does Britain maintain its hold on part of the island? Why is there a Secretary of State for Northern Ireland? Why does Britain maintain a military presence in the north of Ireland, even if troops have been withdrawn from the streets for some years now - admittedly mainly so as to free them for other criminal interventions in the Middle East and elsewhere. Notwithstanding the sincere efforts being made by various forces in Ireland to achieve progress through the Good Friday Ac-

cord and the Peace Agreement, why does the British state and its government continue to interfere in Irish affairs and block progress?

The full liberation of Ireland, and progress in its nation-building project, will be the act of the Irish people themselves. In this they have the support of millions throughout the world, especially in the Americas and Caribbean, and across Europe, especially in England, Scotland and Wales, not least because of the diaspora, working people proud of their Irish heritage, even centuries after emigration, showing their support directly and in their struggles for the same aims. The cause of the Irish people, a people inspired anew by the Easter Rising, and loved throughout the world for their indomitable fighting spirit, their humour, their great tradition of arts and culture, their joy of living and the craic, will surely prevail!

Hail the Easter Rising!

Victory to the Struggles of the Irish People!

Our demands most moderate are - We only want the earth!



Women played an important role in the Rebellion, with many members of Cumann na mBan, the women's auxiliary branch of the Irish Volunteers, fighting for independence - PHOTO: Kilmainham Gaol.

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

7th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba

The 7th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba opened at 10 am on Saturday, April 16 with the presentation of the Congress' Central Report by First Secretary Raul Castro in a plenary session. One thousand delegates are taking part in the Congress. Following the Central Report delegates went to work in commissions which continue on April 17. The plenary will again meet on the April 18 to discuss reports from the commissions. That afternoon will be devoted to the introduction, analysis and vote on the proposed Party Central Committee candidature. On April 19, also in plenary session, the Central Committee elected will be announced, along with Political Bureau members, as well as the First and Second Party Secretaries. The closing session of the Congress will be held that afternoon.

There are four commissions. The first is discussing the conceptualization of Cuba's socio-economic model. The second addresses the development plan for the upcoming period through 2030, the nation's vision, priorities and strategic sectors. The third is evaluating the implementation of the Guidelines approved by the 6th Congress and their updating for the next five years. The fourth commission will analyze progress made toward meeting the objectives agreed upon by the First Party Conference. Besides delegates, there are 280 invitees. The basic criteria for their selection, beyond the personal recognition which the invitation implies, was the contribution they can make given their knowledge and experience in different areas which are being addressed by the Congress, both in the economic arena, as well as the social and ideological.

Among the invitees are Party cadres, deputies to the National Assembly, representatives from Central State Administration

bodies, Cuban civil society, combatants, researchers from scientific centers, university professors, intellectuals, and press editors, among others.

The eldest delegate is José Ramón Fernández, Hero of the Republic of Cuba, a founder of the Party and combatant, with an outstanding, lifelong record. He is 92 years of age. The youngest delegate is Idalinea Díaz Casamayor, from Guantánamo, president of a People's Council, and a deputy to the National Assembly. She is 27.

It is natural that comrades with considerable experience and long careers in the Party's ranks are elected to attend an event of this nature. The fact that there are 55 young delegates is a demonstration of how much each one of them has been able to contribute personally, despite their youth, but, above all their presence represents recognition of a generation which is giving continuity to the work of their grandparents and parents.

There are many other youth who could have been elected as delegates, just as there are many other comrades who founded the Party; participated in the literacy campaign; fought in the underground, the Sierra, Girón, the Escambray, and Angola; who cut sugar cane in critical people's harvests; built communities, hospitals, schools, factories. They are all represented at the Congress, along with the youngest.

Also participating are 14 members of Party units in Cuba's international solidarity missions, from five countries: Venezuela, Brazil, Haiti, Bolivia and Ecuador.

Women constitute 43 per cent of the delegates, while 36 per cent are Black or of mixed race.

In both cases, these figures match their composition within

the Party membership. The percentages are 2.5 and 4.5 per cent greater, respectively, than those from the 6th Congress.

The Congress is a reflection of the membership and Cuban society as a whole. There are a significant number of Party cadre, from the national, municipal and district levels, as well as leaders of grassroots organizations (Party units and committees). There are workers, farmers, technicians, state and enterprise leaders, researchers, economists, professors and teachers, healthcare workers, combatants from the FAR and Minit, intellectuals and artists, jurists, journalists. As evidence of the transformations advanced by the 6th Congress, some delegates work in the non-state sector of the economy. This is the Party of the Cuban nation, not a part of it.

(Granma)



7th Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba held at Havana's Convention Centre, which began on April 16 and continued to April 19

DEFENCE OF THE DPRK IS AN INTERNATIONALIST DUTY

Condemn the Warmongering and Sanctions against the DPRK

In March, the UN Security Council passed resolutions unjustly condemning the DPRK's nuclear test of January 6, and its satellite launch of February 7, falsely calling this a launch of a ballistic missile.

At the end of March, the European Union followed suit, expanding trade and financial sanctions against the DPRK. According to news agencies, the EU's External Action Service, which oversees its policy on international affairs, said that the new sanctions extended export and import bans on items that would allegedly help build up the capacity of the DPRK's armed forces. The EU also expanded financial sanctions against the DPRK, including a new asset freeze on government entities which the EU claims are linked to the DPRK's nuclear or ballistic missile programmes. The EU, showing itself to be a reactionary bloc hostile to progress, first imposed sanctions on the DPRK in 2006.

In fact, the launch of the earth observation satellite demonstrates the DPRK's advanced status as a space power. The satellite *Kwangmyongsong 4* was launched by the National Aerospace Development Administration (NADA) of the DPRK as part of its National Five-Year Programme for Space Exploration. It is packed with measuring and communications equipment for earth survey. It is the DPRK's sovereign right to pursue this exploitation of space for peaceful purposes, and NADA affirms that it will send further satellites into space in the future, following the policy of prioritising science and technology.

The unjust UNSC sanctions are aimed at irreparably damaging the economy of the DPRK and destabilising it. The ultimate aim is that of forcing it to submit to the dictate of the US and other big powers, and even bringing about regime change. The desire of the DPRK is to live in peace, as an independent sovereign state free from foreign interference. All its actions have this aim, including all its efforts for peace and stability on

the Korean Peninsula and to reunify the Korean nation.

The fact is that the massive stockpiles of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the arsenals of the US, Russia, China, Britain and France – the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – are of grave concern to the world's people. In particular, peace- and justice-loving humanity is opposed to US nuclear blackmail and threats around the world. It is the country that atom-bombed the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the Second World War and possesses close to 2,000 nuclear weapons, hundreds of which are strategically placed around the world to advance US imperialist dreams of world conquest. Many of these are also to be found in Korean waters, threatening the DPRK and China. The double standards and disinformation when it comes to the DPRK is made clear by the fact that the US held two ballistic missile tests and Japan launched a satellite, neither of which caused a ripple in the proceedings of the Security Council.

From March 7 to April 30, the US and south Korean militaries staged the Key Resolve/Foal Eagle war games. Far from being routine, they involved 15,000 US troops, including special forces, twice the number as in previous years. More than 290,000 south Korean troops also participated. These annual war games include the massive deployment of air, sea and land operations openly aimed at overthrowing the government of the DPRK. They constitute "planning, preparation, initiation, or waging of wars of aggression" – the "supreme international crime" under international law.

The Line of March calls on the working class and people to stand with the people of the DPRK and demand that all unjust UN Security Council Resolutions against the DPRK be withdrawn. All foreign troops must be withdrawn from the Korean Peninsula, and a peace treaty signed by the US imperialists with the DPRK to finally put an end to the state of armistice from the Korean War.



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Order Your Copy of Line of March Now!

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