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TOGETHER LET US CHART A NEW PATH



The times are crying out for the working class and people to take control of the future of society within Britain, and to discuss how this can be done.

The aim is to involve working people and democratic forces from all walks of life in seriously participating in working out how to realise a modern society and take control of the future.



THE WORKING CLASS CAN GRASP THE OPPORTUNITY
TO FIGHT FOR A NEW DIRECTION FOR SOCIETY

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A Call to Chart a New Path

The people of England, Scotland, Wales and the north of Ireland voted on June 23 to leave the European Union rather than remain in the EU. The voting was Leave: 17,410,742 (51.9% of valid votes cast); Remain: 16,141,241 (48.1% of valid votes cast), a majority of 1,269,501, with a turnout of 72.2% of the total electorate of 46,500,001. The number of rejected ballots was 25,359.^{[1](#)}

The result was a blow to the existing arrangements, and to those forces who had been siding with the status quo. It is primarily a victory for the working class, who gave voice to their opposition to the anti-social offensive, to the imposition of monopoly right represented by the EU and to being denied a say in the direction of society.

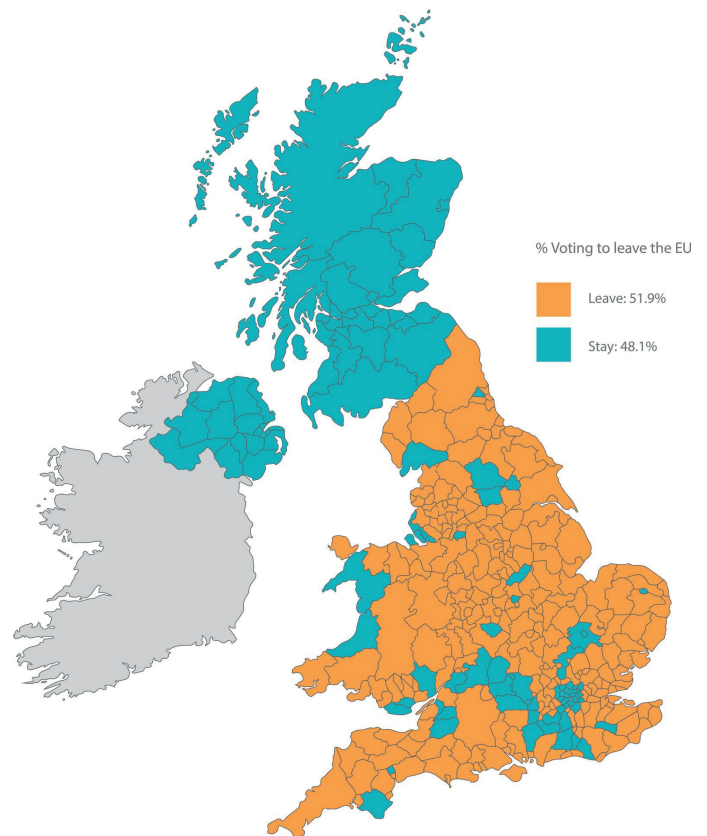
The establishment, through the leadership of both the Remain and Leave campaigns, had attempted to disinform working people and to make sure they could not find their bearings. A chauvinist, racist and xenophobic context was created in which the opposition to the neo-liberal, pro-austerity institutions of the EU was not supposed to be on the agenda.

The vote to leave the EU has created a profound political crisis for the ruling elite. If anything, the campaign to disorientate and disinform the people has been intensified. The most backward sections of society have been highlighted as though they represent the majority. The financiers, speculators and credit rating institutions, who should be deprived of any say in the economy, have themselves plunged the economy further into crisis. Attempts continue to prevent the government being held to account and the will of the electorate implemented.

What the referendum result has highlighted is the aspiration of the people to exercise sovereignty, to have a decisive say in the direction of society, a decisive say in setting its aim. This aspiration is based on the bitter experience of working people that the austerity agenda has targeted them and benefited the rich. It has demonstrated the opposition of the people overall to the supra-national institutions of the European Union which cannot be held to account by the people and which declare nation-building to be at an end. It has demonstrated the rejection of Euro-federalism in which nations are supposed to deny their own identity and not determine their own future, but be subservient to the representatives of the neo-liberal agenda of the EU as an institution.

The referendum was set in motion by David Cameron to attempt to sort out the contradictions in the ruling elite once and for all. Quite how impossible this was has now come home to roost, and far from settling the issue it is he who has had to tender his resignation. Despite some attempts to say that it should be business as usual, the political situation has changed.

The vote to leave the EU opens up the space for discussion on the new kind of politics which society needs, for the discussion on how to take things forward and turn around the economy to favour working people, how to combat the chauvinism



and retrogression which is the only answer of the ruling elite to the crisis of a neo-liberal economy and to the crisis of working class representation. In promoting racism and racist attacks, the state itself attempts to separate national minority communities from the working class of which they are part, and incites and promotes racist activities. The British state's policy towards citizenship and immigration has always been racist. The "free movement of labour" which the neo-liberal "free market" encourages, particularly from Eastern Europe, aims to keep these workers as vulnerable as possible, while driving down living standards and working conditions for all workers. The working class opposes these schemes while demanding that the rights of all workers be recognised in opposition to the demand of the multinational concerns that everything and everyone should be subservient to the interests of the EU and other monopolies, and that only along this path can working people find salvation.

A concerted attempt is being made to turn the Brexit vote for control of a sovereign economy into a racist backlash for which the ruling elite has for long been preparing the ground. Rather the working class and all its allies must take the Brexit vote forward on the basis of fighting for democratic renewal and

empowerment. This attempt at promoting racism is going hand in hand with a coup aimed at blocking the movement to end austerity and instead to reinstate the politics of neo-liberalism and contempt for sovereignty. In both cases, what is evident is the attempt of the ruling elite to block the movement of the people for empowerment, demonstrating the crucial need for the working class and people to discuss the necessity for new arrangements and for a political movement effective in bringing these about.

In other words, taken together these attempts show how the agenda of austerity, racism and war must itself be blocked, and for the working class and people to unite around charting a new path for society. It is not a question of siding with any other force. It is essential that an independent path is taken by the

working class and people.

United around the necessity for democratic renewal and empowerment, the working class and people can block the neo-liberal coup of vested interests against the electorate, not get swayed by the hysteria that is being fostered, and discuss the practical steps required to take things forward.

RCPB(ML) calls on the working class and people to chart a new path, discuss the question of empowerment and democratic renewal, and build a movement which will bring about change that favours the people and the nations which at present constitute Britain, and resolve the problems which the working class and people face, including the institutions of the EU. Let us discuss and chart the way forward!

THE 132nd DURHAM MINERS' GALA

The Working Class Can Grasp the Opportunity to Fight for a New Direction for Society

Statement of the Northern Region of RCPB(ML), July 9, 2016

This year's Durham Miners' Gala and Big Meeting is being held when the vote to leave the EU has created a deep political crisis for the ruling elite. It comes when the vital question is for the working class to chart a new path to build a Workers' Opposition and bring about a change that favours the working class and people in the new situation.

The result of the EU referendum was a blow to the existing arrangements, and to those establishment forces who had been siding with the status quo of the EU of the monopolies. The space that has opened up for the workers is the opportunity to fight for a new direction for the economy and for society. It is an opportunity for the working class and people to build a united movement to establish sovereignty over the economy and go for political power. It is an opportunity to fight for manufacturing and public services that serve the needs of the whole population and not the interests of the rich and the monopolies.

Rightly, today the Big Meeting will be talking a lot about the dictate of the ruling elite and the attack on Jeremy Corbyn and how to defend the anti-austerity programme he stands for. This raises in sharp relief the importance of the working class sticking to its independent programme and politics in the face of the desperate attempts to usurp them. But the working class must go further and launch its own offensive to constitute itself the nation. This means it must use its numbers, organisation and wisdom to work to deprive the vested neo-liberal interests of power and instead vest sovereignty in the people. This goes for the project to establish modern sovereign states of Scotland and



Wales, as well as for Britain as a whole. Democratic renewal of the political system must become part of a fighting programme of the working class to increasingly deprive the ruling elite of their ability to marginalise the people and deprive them of power. This is the historic mission of the working class.

Working people in their majority "Leave" vote have dealt a blow the programme of monopoly-dominated "free trade" and the concentration of political and economic power in the hands of a supranational neo-liberal elite. The destruction of the manufacturing base, poverty, unemployment, privatisation and other deep wounds in society must be reversed by the working class challenging the orthodoxy that those who produce the wealth cannot be the decision-makers. The opposite is the case.

The watchword is that the rights of all should be defended.

The British state's policy towards citizenship and immigration, which has been racist and aimed to divide people, must be opposed and blocked. The interest of the EU, British, US and other monopolies is to keep everyone subservient to cheap labour schemes. This must be opposed whilst the working class fights for the rights of all to be recognised. The starting point is the necessity for inviolable rights simply by virtue of being human and upholding collective rights, such as the right of working class and people to organise.

The agenda of austerity, racism and war must itself be blocked, and the working class and people unite around charting a path for a pro-social and anti-war government. It is not a question of siding with any other force. It is essential that an independent path is taken by the working class and people. It

has become clear with the publication of the Chilcot Report that the warmongers are unfit to govern. The vital questions of war and peace, as well as other questions of the public good such as building a sovereign national economy and accountable public authorities, must become the responsibility of the working class.

As we take part in the Durham Gala and the Big Meeting, let us all unite around the need to build a Workers' Opposition to fight for the alternative, to defeat austerity and defend the rights of all. Let us adopt the programme for democratic renewal so that the people are increasingly empowered to make all the decisions in society. The movement of the workers can be built which will bring about change that favours the people and the nations which at present constitute Britain. Grasp the opportunity to bring about a new direction for the economy and society!

A Programme of Political Forums on the Future of Society

The times are crying out for the working class and people to take control of the future of society within Britain, and to discuss how this can be done. This has been underlined by the EU referendum majority vote to leave the European Union, which has demonstrated the opposition of working people to the austerity agenda coming from the ruling elites of both Westminster and the EU, as well as working people's rejection of being marginalised from political affairs and having no say in determining the direction of society. It has also been confirmed by the disarray of the old political arrangements of governance which are in profound crisis.

RCPB(ML) considers that there is an urgent necessity to involve the working class and all democratic forces in discussing and working out their vision for the future of society, and how to build an effective political movement to realise this vision. The ruling elite is seeking to implant cynicism and pessimism in the workers' and people's

movements to keep the democratic forces marginalised. But these movements are affirming that the problems facing society, including the danger of war, the destruction of the manufacturing base, and the trampling on the rights of all human beings, demand resolution and that working people are the force that can bring about change.

RCPB(ML) will therefore be organising a programme of political forums on the future of society. The political forums will take place in the coming months in cities and regions throughout the country. The aim is to involve working people and democratic forces from all walks of life in seriously participating in working out how to realise a modern society and take control of the future. Together let us chart a new path!

To express your interest in participating in this programme, please contact the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) at office@rcpbml.org.uk

Statement on the Killing of Jo Cox MP

The Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) was shocked to hear of the killing of Jo Cox MP on June 16, 2016, on the streets of Birstall in her constituency of Batley and Spen in West Yorkshire. It sends its sincere condolences to Jo Cox's family, friends and loved ones, and to all Jo Cox's constituents, and adds its voice to all those who have condemned this crime.

The killing has taken place in the context of a climate of stepped up racism, chauvinism and xenophobia. The state has given the green light to this vile and putrid atmosphere, with the leading figures in the official EU "Remain" and "Leave" campaigns competing to take the most reactionary stands.

The killing of Jo Cox, who was born and grew up in her constituency, and has been well-known for her democratic and hu-

manitarian stands and her opposition to Islamophobia and the dehumanisation and criminalising of any section of society, cannot be separated from this climate. That the EU referendum campaign has been temporarily suspended as a mark of respect is an implicit confirmation of this fact.

The killing, in the view of RCPB(ML), underlines the necessity for all democratic people to oppose the racism and all forms of discrimination and attacks on the rights of working people which have their source in the state which is swamping the channels of discourse with its programme of retrogression. The independent path for the people to take is for the defence of the rights of all as human beings to permeate all discussion and decisions.

Saturday, June 18 2016

THE 2016 IMMIGRATION ACT AND THE CRIMINALISATION OF MIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

Urgent Need to Organise against the Racism and Chauvinism of the Ruling Elite and Defend the Rights of All as Human Beings

A new Immigration Act became law on May 12, 2016, when the Immigration Bill received the Royal Assent. The Act increases the government's already considerable powers to restrict immigration into Britain provided by the Immigration Act of 2014, which was designed to create a "hostile environment", as well as by previous immigration legislation.

According to the government the new law was enacted in order to "tackle the exploitation of low-skill workers". Immigration minister James Brokenshire asserted: "Exploiting or coercing people into work is not acceptable. It is not right that unscrupulous employers can force people to work or live in very poor conditions, withhold wages or mislead them into coming to the UK for work. Some employers seem to think that by employing workers who are less likely to complain, including vulnerable migrants, they can undercut the local labour market and mistreat them with impunity. The unscrupulous need to know that breaking the law is a high-risk activity and the full force of the state will be applied to them."

However, the government has no such concern for low paid workers in general and prevents no measures to end their exploitation, neither is it concerned about the rights of exploited workers, whether they are migrants or not. What was also clear throughout the entire passage of the Bill was that it was opposed both within parliament and outside by those concerned for the rights of migrants and refugees. The Act will provide the police and other enforcement agencies with greater powers to harass working people and further criminalise migrants and asylum seekers. Indeed, one of the main features of the Act is that it seeks to establish in law that migrants can be considered and treated as criminals and imprisoned simply for being migrants.

The new Act will amongst other things:

- Establish a new Director of Labour Market Enforcement to coordinate existing "enforcement agencies" specifically focusing on migrant workers;

- Make it a criminal offence to work "illegally", leading to a maximum custodial sentence of six months and provide powers to seize the wages of those that do so; and close businesses employing "illegal" workers and raise custodial sentences for those

- employing them from two to five years. The law will make more rigorous checks on those applying for licences to drive taxis and to sell alcohol and "late night refreshments";

- Create a new criminal offence for landlords who refuse to remove "illegal" migrants from their property and make it easier for all landlords to evict "illegal" migrant tenants. The Act places even more onus on landlords to check on the immigration status of tenants and allows for the arrest of landlords suspected of committing an offence;

- Introduce a new criminal offence of "driving while illegally present in the UK". The Act will give police the powers to search individuals and enter premises to search when they suspect there might be illegally held driving licences and to stop and search vehicles;

- Require banks to carry out periodic checks on the immigration status of current account holders;

- Introduce a code of practice for all public sector workers setting out minimum standards of English;

- Further restrict support for asylum seekers and their dependents whose claim for asylum has been rejected;

- Make it easier for the government to deport migrants and limit deportees' right of appeal.

This latest Immigration Act not only gives the government and other state officials greater powers. It also places the onus on citizens to police immigration with the threat of criminal conviction if they fail to do so. It appears designed to create mistrust and to create the conditions where whole communities can be targeted and discriminated against. The Prime Minister and his government have already been criticised for previous comments about the value given to the English language above all other languages, and the contention that an inability to speak English leads to the "isolation" of some communities and even the potential for "radicalisation". Such measures as the "Prevent" strategy for educational institutions target this so-called "radicalisation", and further facilitate the criminalisation of the right to conscience. In terms of the flourishing of languages, the government has reinforced the conception of a "host", or official, language. Now it has gone one step further since workers

will be required by law to demonstrate proficiency in the English language. The fact that the Immigration Minister has stated that this legal requirement is to “promote integration and British values” confirms that the government has not deviated from its essentially racist course.

The British state and successive British governments have created all the conditions both for large-scale immigration from impoverished countries in Europe and globally, as well as the instability that necessitates many to seek asylum. What has been demonstrated in the new Immigration Act is that the government refuses to accept that migrants and asylum seekers are human,

treat them as human beings and guarantee their rights. Rather it continues along the racist course of its predecessors, intent on criminalising not just migrants but entire communities and whipping up the most reactionary chauvinism.

This is an issue which must be widely discussed so that the ruling elite’s racism and chauvinism do not prevail. The issue has been reaching a fever pitch with the hysteria created by both “official” sides in the EU Referendum campaign. The conclusion is that the democratic stand, independent of the racism and chauvinism of the ruling circles, of defending the rights of all as human beings must be upheld and fought for.

TRADE UNION ACT 2016

The Fight Continues to Defend the Right of the Working Class to Organise

The Queen’s Speech promised to “deliver security for working people, to increase life chances for the most disadvantaged”. Yet this could not have been further from reality, when the government’s legislative programme represents carrying forward the offensive against the whole working class and people, increasing the precariousness of their existence and driving the vulnerable further into poverty. It is a fundamental right of the working class to organise within this situation. This is a right which cannot be negotiated away. Yet the government is hell-bent on attempting to deprive them of this right.

As a Bill, the Trade Union Act 2016 was one of the most vigorously opposed, as it attempts to block the ability of the workers’ movement to itself block the anti-social offensive and defend the rights of all. As well as opposition coming from the organised working class movement, the Bill was opposed within Parliament, with certain amendments from the House of Lords being accepted by the government. These included the attempt to stop trade unions collecting their union dues via the employers’ pay system and other measures, including those to regulate information from social media of those taking part in pickets which were also largely unenforceable. However, the anti-worker thrust of the Trade Union Act 2016, alongside previous anti-trade union laws, still remains largely untouched. It is a malicious Act against the right to organise and the freedom of association, and must be repealed.

Provisions of the Trade Union Act

Intact in the Act are major additions to the previous anti-trade union legislation restricting the legality of strike action in Britain. In sections 2 and 3, the Act specifies a 50% turn-out of all the members eligible to vote in a ballot of a trade union for a



strike to be lawful. In addition, for trade unions “normally engaged in the provision of important public services”, the Act specifies that for a strike to be lawful 40% of all eligible members must vote “Yes” rather than a simple majority of those that return the ballot. Even a major attempt by the trade unions to amend the law so that they can e-ballot their members instead of having to use the very expensive postal ballots to increase the turnout was sidestepped and is to be referred to an “independent review”, which will only be “commissioned within six months”. As other commentators have pointed out, the “flagship” aspect and main purpose of this Act remains in place. Carolyn Jones, Assistant Secretary of the Campaign For Trade Union Freedom, pointed out: “The imposition of a 50 per cent turnout and an additional 40 per cent support requirement for workers in health, education, fire response, transport and border security, make it near impossible for those workers currently leading the resist-

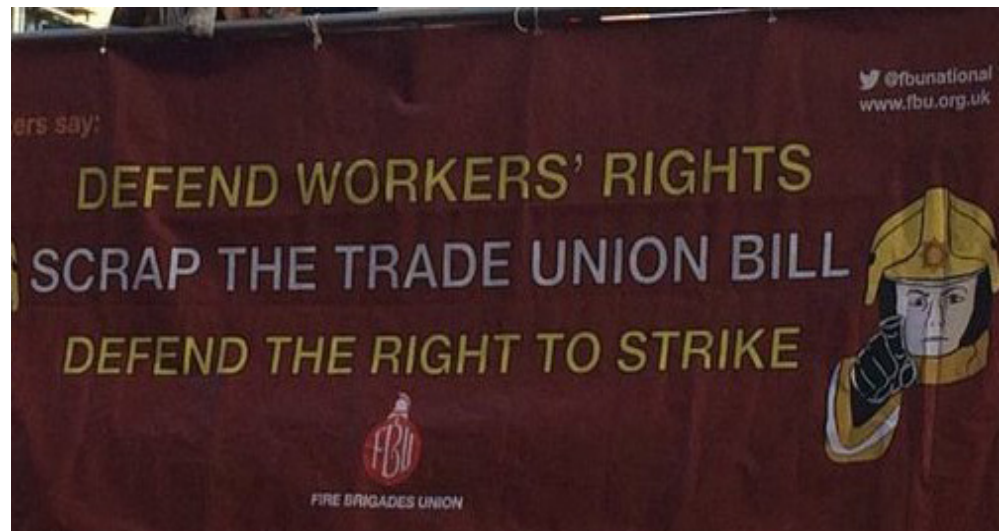
ance against privatisation and cuts to take industrial action.”

Other major additions to the previous anti-trade union laws is an increasingly prescriptive question for industrial action ballots. Every action of the strike as well as the type of industrial action must be stipulated, as well as “the period or periods within which the industrial action or, as the case may be, each type of industrial action is expected to take place”. The Act also demands the appointment of picket supervisors who must make themselves known to police and employers and carry a letter of authorisation. Breaches of any of the restrictions will in future attract criminal charges. The timing and duration of industrial action is also changed with the notice to employers of strike action, formerly seven days, extended to 14 days, and the duration of a strike without a renewed ballot reduced to six months. Thus these new measures deliberately make it extremely difficult for the trade unions to act against the tactics of employers and government, and facilitate the courts being able to rule against the workers.

In addition, new measures in the Act attempt to limit the ability of trade unions to organise in the workplace. Unable to justify the scrapping altogether of paid time off for union duties (facility time), the Act still enables interference by the state in the amount and cost of negotiated facility time for union representatives and threatens to bring further measures on this. Unable to scrap the negotiated check-off system, a system whereby trade unions recover membership dues directly through wages via the employer, after legal challenges from PCS and others unions the Act is still imposing financial charges for check-off even though many unions pay this where appropriate.

Of all the attacks one of the most significant is under sections 11 and 12 concerning the political fund, which specifies that a member must opt in to the union’s political fund rather than opt out. It is the right of trade unions to make a collective decision to support, or not support, a political party. The fact that trade unions give the right to a member to opt-out of contributing to the political fund could also be considered a collective decision to harmonise these collective decisions of the trade union with the conscience of individuals. For the government to authorise the state to interfere in this arrangement is clearly a cynical move against the workers’ right of political association. It is also a deliberate attack against any party that is supported by the trade unions and an attack that openly favours the monopolies and the rich in society. It is an attempt to sabotage the right of trade unions to act in a political way to defend their members. What the government refuses to recognise, wilfully or through class prejudice, are collective rights; the trade unions have come to collective decisions whereas the government would like their members to act as atomised individuals.

The Act also viciously interferes in the political affairs of the union in demanding that the trade union’s annual return includes details of political expenditure on parties supported, candidates supported and almost every type of extra-Parliamentary activity to the Certification Officer. At the same time of course, whilst claiming that “employers’ organisations” are covered by



this, the state makes no move to interfere against the employers themselves. The monopoly corporations and rich individuals who extract huge profits from the labour of working people and use such funds to support parties that represent their interests without any opt-out, or opt-in, of their workforce. This shows in whose interests these new powers are being given.

New powers are also given by the Act to the Certification Officer which politicises this post against the trade unions with powers to investigate, initiate complaints against any national, regional and local bodies and branches of trade union enacting “enforcement orders” as well as compliance in administering the political funds. The Act states that “an enforcement order made by the Certification Officer under this section may be enforced by the Officer in the same way as an order of the court”. The human rights organisation Liberty in its briefing on the Trade Union Bill pointed out: “The cumulative impact of the new proposals would mean that the Certification Officer is responsible for making a complaint, investigating it, reaching a decision and setting a punishment. It is contrary to all notions of justice and best practice for each stage in a process of determining compliance with legal rules to be conducted by the one body. Taking this approach fundamentally undermines the fair administration of justice and the rule of law.” In addition beside imposing this unjust extra-judicial legal sanction against the trade unions the Act under section 20, also imposes a levy on the trade unions to pay for the expenses of the officer in carrying out the functions of investigating, judging and imposing fines on them!

The role of the workers’ movement

It has constantly been pointed out that there is no justice in these hated measures and that they come in the context of the increased resistance against the government’s austerity measures, privatisation, cuts and attacks on the terms and conditions of working people. It is especially focused on the public sector at this time. The heroic strike struggle of the junior doctors relating not only to their pay and conditions but to the future of the health service which is being jeopardised is just one of the latest examples. The Act is an attempt to prevent the workers from bringing their numbers and organisation into play in this resistance, and is itself an abuse of power by the government for which they have no mandate.

The government also declared it a UK Act refusing the right of the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh and Northern Ireland

Assemblies to reject the Bill, despite the opposition and the concern of such bodies as the Law Society of Scotland, who challenged the Bill's compatibility with human rights legislation.

The fact is that the workers' right to organise to defend their interests is already shackled in so many ways, many of them dating from the Thatcher government's anti-trade union laws. Not only the interests and dignity of working people are at stake, but so is the broad issue of the public good.

It is working people who are the producers of added value, of wealth in the economy. Indeed, the programme of the working class is a broad programme for defence of the rights of all, for a new direction for society and the economy, for a way out of the

crisis and the capital-centred austerity programme, and for the alternative, a new society.

To achieve their aim of the complete dominance of their capital-centred system the government would like to wipe out the workers' movement in its entirety. Not only can this not be achieved, but the attempt, framed in hypocritical sentiments about the good of the country, of essential services, and working as one nation, is fraught with danger. Resistance is growing and what is required is to expose the criminal nature of the government's agenda and show how another narrative and political agenda is not only possible but the necessity of the times. The Act must be repealed along with all anti-trade unions laws.

NHS "FIVE YEAR FORWARD VIEW" AND "SUSTAINABILITY & TRANSFORMATION PLANS"

Recognising that A Stand Has to Be Taken Against the Whole Anti-Social Direction for the NHS

As the end of June approached, the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in England will have to have submitted interim updates on their Sustainability and Transformation Plans to NHS England which will have to be finalised by the autumn of 2016. It was in March that NHS England issued the NHS Shared Planning Guidance and "asked every local health and care system in England" to come together in "collective discussion forums" to "create their own ambitious local plan for accelerating the implementation of the Five Year Forward View". It named these Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) as "blueprints" that the government and NHS England is trying to create over five years. To deliver these plans it charged NHS providers, CCGs, local authorities, and other health and care services to come together to form 44 STP "footprints". However, what became immediately apparent is that this "guidance" on the STPs is not about "sustainability" and the funding of NHS services and their development as they exist now but is a deliberate five-year plan coming from government to accelerate the cut backs to acute, emergency, GP and community services.

In announcing this STPs "footprints" plan, Simon Stevens, chief executive of NHS England, admitted that he and NHS England had put local health leaders "on a burning platform" to "create change quickly" and he revealed that NHS England "have held back the funding growth for the NHS over the next five years to the NHS" claiming that this is "strong incentives

as to why people should take this process seriously". Of course, there will be no surprise that this confirms that the only direction and only message being delivered in "Five Year Forward View" is one of massive reduction in the availability of all types of health care for the people of England and Wales if these plans are allowed to go ahead, which will also impact on Scotland and Northern Ireland.

For example, in the Northumberland Tyne & Wear (NTW) STP footprint area a fully funded pilot has already closed Berwick-upon-Tweed, Ashington and North Tyneside A&Es to be replaced by Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital at Cramlington some 60 miles from Berwick-upon-Tweed. Since Berwick-upon-Tweed now has no A&E, patients have to be transported by ambulance long distances even in a life and death situation. Now plans are being drawn up to close further acute services and A&Es in the rest of the area.

These closures are being driven by what the five CCGs in NTW are calling a "funding gap". This has already been estimated at £648 million by 2019 for the NTW area if the health service "remains as it is now". Far from this being "shared planning", the government and their commissioners are holding a gun to the head of the providers of health care. In South Tyneside, for example, South Tyneside Health Care Trust (STFT) and City Hospitals Sunderland (CHS) have formed an "alliance" in which to "deal with" around a staggering £50 million shortfall

in funding at both Trusts this year. This “alliance” instead of fighting to maintain services has declared that they intend to close all acute services in South Tyneside Hospital over the time of the plan which, with the loss of acute services, will also make the A&E at the hospital unviable. This at a time when both hospitals are full to capacity and suffering severe shortages of nurses and medical staff. At the same time, whilst the South Tyne & Wear health platform “burns”, it beggars belief that the local commissioners of STFT announced this year a plan to close more hospital beds. They claimed that there is an “over-dependence on hospitals” and a need for “care in the community” based on pharmacies and “self care”. This at a time when there is the lowest number of GP and community services in the area for many years!

It is important to understand what is the nature of NHS England. It is no longer the Department of Health with a Secretary of State for Health who has responsibility for the funding and provision of the NHS. Under the Health and Social Care Act, 2012, that responsibility and accountability of the Minister for the provision of health services was removed. Instead, NHS England was set up as head “Commissioner” of a purchasing mechanism comprised of nation-wide local commissioners (CCGs) in England. In this new arrangement which has been deliberately created over many years by Labour and Conservative governments the health providers, such as acute and community Trusts are treated as independent “not for profit” bodies and have to compete for contracts, with the commissioners and the private sector and sink, or swim jeopardising whole areas of health care provision.

It is a system that is extremely inefficient and wasteful of resources, fragmenting organisations instead of bringing them together. Most of all it is impossible to plan a future health care system for one year let alone five years with such a “market” system in health. It is this commissioning mechanism that the government is using to systematically implement massive cuts to the health budget which have now reached a crisis point for the NHS providers. This is leading to severe stress in every way on the health care system over recent months and the scandal of so many hospitals and health providers being declared to be in “deficit” by NHS England and the government. The plan of



Save South Tyneside Hospital Campaign

successive governments has been to deliberately cut funding of hospitals and services year by year with so-called “efficiency savings”. Now, the present government hopes to accelerate this using the “Five Year Forward View” and STPs. This is not in the interests of a modern health care system but in the interests of paying the rich by starving this public sector of funding. This is the criminal scenario of NHS privatisation that the government and health monopolies they serve has in mind. They hope that by wrecking the NHS in this way they can divert these huge cuts in the NHS budget to lubricate the private health monopolies to take over the most profitable parts of a failing NHS. They will also hope to use the crisis they have caused in the NHS to justify disqualifying more and more patients from free access to health care and justify more and more charges to all patients.

The “Five Year Forward View” and STPs are the most blatant attempt yet to wreck the health service within the timescale of the present government. Already people are protesting these plans and are coming together to safeguard the future of acute, emergency services and GP and community services in Save Hospital campaigns in many parts of the country. These actions of the people have won a number of victories in recent years



such as with the Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign.

Based on their experience the people involved are increasingly recognising that a stand has to be taken against this whole anti-social direction for the NHS and that the people must fight on the basis of a new direction that starts from the modern conception of the people that access to health care is a right of all in a modern society and that it must be guaranteed. As the lessons

of the movement to safeguard the future of the NHS have so far demonstrated, what is important are self-reliance, strength in mobilising the people themselves to defend health service, unity in action irrespective of people's political opinion and most importantly the adoption of a political outlook that fights to deprive those in power of the power to deprive us of our health service and deprive us of the right to health care!

FOR AN ANTI-WAR GOVERNMENT!

There Can Be No Justification for Britain's Intervention in Libya

In 2002, a little known former foreign policy advisor to Tony Blair named Robert Cooper wrote a now infamous article *The Post Modern State and the World Order* justifying a "new kind of imperialism". Cooper, who went on to become a Special Advisor at the European Commission and a member of the European Council on Foreign Relations, argued that there is the postmodern world of the EU, NATO and the other big powers and what he referred to as the "premodern world" which included Africa.

According to Cooper: "The challenge to the postmodern world is to get used to the idea of double standards. Among ourselves, we operate on the basis of laws and open cooperative security. But when dealing with more old-fashioned kinds of states outside the postmodern continent of Europe, we need to revert to the rougher methods of an earlier era - force, pre-emptive attack, deception, whatever is necessary to deal with those who still live in the nineteenth century world of every state for itself. Among ourselves, we keep the law but when we are operating in the jungle, we must also use the laws of the jungle."

For Cooper the "premodern world" was an area of "failed states" which posed a danger to the "postmodern world". Such states, he asserted, might become bases for drug barons and terrorists. In order to prevent this possibility, Cooper argued, there was a need for a "defensive imperialism", a new colonialism allegedly designed to avoid chaos and bring order to the world. Cooper argued that military intervention in Afghanistan was an example of this new imperialism. Cooper's thinking, which argued for the growing irrelevance of borders, was put into practice by the New Labour governments of Blair, which intervened with particular zeal in Africa, as well as elsewhere. Blair referred to Africa as the "scar on the conscience of humanity" as if this was in itself a justification for intervention by Britain and its allies. Never did he explain that this "scar" was the consequence of previous intervention in Africa by the colonial powers, exploiters and slave traders, nor that they too justified their intervention on the most noble and humanitarian grounds,

the "civilising mission" and the "white man's burden".

Now the demand for a new kind of imperialism, for extended foreign intervention has been taken up by the Britain's former Foreign Secretary, William Hague. In a recent article Hague attempts to counter any opposition to the government's plans to intervene further in Libya, to train and manage that country's armed forces, to bolster the weak government in order to further the interests of the monopolies and enhance Britain's geo-political influence in the region. In order to do so he argues that the chaos and anarchy that now exist in Libya are not a result of NATO intervention and the destabilisation that has followed regime change in that country but rather a consequence of the fact that allegedly Britain and its NATO allies did not intervene effectively enough and for as long as was necessary. Moreover, he argues that there is a need for prolonged intervention not only in Libya but elsewhere in Africa and western Asia if the continuing exodus of migrants and refugees, also a consequence of foreign intervention, is to be halted. According to Hague:

"If European countries, including Britain, think they can get by without intervention in that region over the next few decades they face being overwhelmed by a movement of humanity that they have never before contemplated or experienced. Intervention - to try to prevent conflict, end wars, stabilise governments and create economic improvements - will be a completely unavoidable necessity for many Western nations."

Of course Hague suggests that NATO intervened in Libya on the basis of the so-called "right to protect" civilians, a notion that has no basis in international law and was merely a fig-leaf to cover up plans for regime change. It is now well established, not least from Hilary Clinton's leaked emails, that there were no endangered civilians in Benghazi to "protect". The NATO bombing of Libya continued until Muammar Gaddafi was assassinated and regime change occurred, since this was always the aim. What is more, NATO intervened in Libya in such a way as to be certain that the affiliates of the so-called al-Qaeda, Daesh and other sinister forces would be assisted both to carry

The destruction of Sirte by British and NATO bombs, 2011

out racist murders against African civilians and to strengthen their own military and political positions. NATO intervention therefore led not to the protection but to the murder of civilians. Combatting these same sinister forces is now presented by Hague and others as another justification for further intervention.

Hague's views regarding Libya turn truth on its head as do his comments relating to "instability" in parts of Africa and Western Asia. The revolutionary events that took place in Egypt and Tunisia were precisely directly against the regimes that had been supported militarily and economically by the intervention of Britain and the other big powers. The people of North Africa and other parts of the continent are struggling to empower themselves not live forever under various forms of foreign domination. As a result of NATO intervention in Libya the whole of North Africa and beyond was destabilised. But political and economic instability in those parts of Africa that produce so many migrants is also a consequence of the failed economic and political prescriptions, neo-liberal globalisation, the various forms of foreign intervention emanating from the imperialist system of states that has Hague and others as its champions. Even Hague is forced to admit that foreign intervention in Libya, as in Iraq and elsewhere has created instability and chaos but the conclusion that he seeks to draw is that "such situations often need a more forceful, insistent and long-term foreign presence to make them



into a success". Hague even claims that in Libya elections were held too soon, before Britain and its allies could establish the "democracy" that they require.

There is little difference between the colonialist logic of Cooper and Hague and both seek to provide justifications for the actions the British government. It is an open secret that the current government is preparing to send troops to Libya under one guise or another, as part of a wider multinational force, as soon as it can pressure the government in that country to issue an invitation. Hague struggles to provide such a justification precisely because such intervention is outside the international rule of law. Britain and the other big powers much cease all intervention in Libya.

EDUCATION IS A RIGHT NOT A PRIVILEGE

Academies: The Creation of a Capital-Centred School System

Education Secretary Nicky Morgan announced at the time of the recent local elections, later confirmed in the Queen's Speech, that the planned enforced conversion of all schools to academies by 2022 had been dropped. This was reported as a major U-turn in the media, and certainly it was a response to the growing opposition to academies, with campaigns to prevent conversions taking place across the country and the major teaching unions taking an opposing position.

However, the government remains committed to its aim. Indeed, the majority of secondary schools have already become academies and the kinds of tactics employed by the government to pressure schools to convert have been widely publicised. The

academy system has already become big business and is growing fast.

Since their inception, academies have become the favoured form of primary and secondary education in England by the neo-liberal establishment. Furthermore, a new arrangement is being brought about whereby these academies are run by Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs).

Academies under the control of such trusts is the organisational form being found for a capital-centric school system. The arrangement is a kind of "public-private partnership" aimed at tailoring education to the needs of business, where private competing interests become the main determining factor over the

system.

The Education White Paper released in March elaborates the government's concept of what they call "supported autonomy". On this view, the role of the government in education should no longer be one of directing or standardising teaching methods, but one of measuring outcomes. Through this stepping-back by the government over methods, private interests are given increased space to take control.

The Education Secretary's forward to White Paper explains: "We believe in supported autonomy: aligning funding, control, responsibility and accountability in one place, as close to the front line as possible, and ensuring that institutions can collaborate and access the support they need to set them up for success. And we will work to build a system which is responsive to need and performance, ensuring that institutions respond to changing needs. Autonomy will be both earned and lost, with our most successful leaders extending their influence, and weaker ones doing the opposite."

Dressed up as a "school-led" system with teachers and heads finding their own best methods, touted as a move away from the bad old days of stringent national curricula and micromanagement, the new arrangements are sold as providing "freedom". The question is freedom from what, for whom, to do what? The question is what forces are in control of schools and with what aim.

What the government is actually instituting is a kind of business model for the school system, and it is marked by the same pragmatism: all that matters is what works. Education becomes performance and outcome-based, just as business. Who cares how a business operates as long as it makes a profit?

Implicit in the "supported autonomy" notion is the operation of competition and market forces in the school system. A school market in terms of league tables has existed for some time. The new concept introduces a role for the state through what it calls "accountability".

The idea is that tighter measures will be created on which schools must be focused on scoring highly. The role of the state is then to set targets for these metrics. Such a target-based approach borrows heavily from project and performance management practices common in the corporate world.

This outcome-based market-style approach will filter out good and bad practices, goes the argument, which are supposed to be consolidated via Multi-Academy Trusts. Rather than a government directive, the idea is that the market will find the best practises.

The notion of a planned and scientifically organised system does not figure. The state simply does not care about the theory and practise of education. It is not interested what practises come to be, only the targets and international competition.

While the foreword bemoans that "our education standards have remained static, at best, whilst other countries have moved ahead", chapter 1 claims: "The better educated our society, the fairer, more cohesive, productive and innovative it can be. This is vital to Britain's position in the 21st century. Our education system must compete with those around the world - because while we improve, so do they."

This brings us to the notion of education underlies the government's vision. It is clear from the above that it is directed at British business "success in the global market", to borrow the well-worn phrase.

Nicky Morgan tells us her mission: "Education has the power



to transform lives and, for me, is a matter of social justice - extending opportunity to every child, wherever they live and whatever their background."

The student movement, particularly since the 2010 upsurge, has been very vocal in its demand that education be recognised as a right, not a privilege, to the extent that it has changed the conditions of the debate. Morgan goes as far as to reflect this: "Access to a great education is not a luxury but a right for everyone."

However, the notion expressed in the White Paper is strictly individual and on analysis is not the modern conception of a right at all. At is, rather, the usual neo-liberal notion of an "opportunity society", a collection of individuals essentially in competition, each with a fair chance of "success" (and also failure), in the context of an economic environment under the total direction of the most powerful monopolies.

Thus education simply has the potential to "transform lives". This is antithetical to the notion that all people are born to society and should be fully involved in participating in developing society, engaged in productive activity to that end and playing a role in decision-making and thinking. Without a well-organised education system that serves the whole public this is not possible. Such an education is therefore a right. Rather than one-sidedly giving the individual the opportunity to transform their life, it is enabling the individual to fully participate in transforming society, the conditions of all life, and flourishing as an individual in that context.

Ultimately, the vision is a mass education system that churns out young people like a product on a production line. Each factory might have its own techniques, while the government has the role of quality control. In this manner, the state gives up responsibility to provide for the needs of citizens, this being replaced by a consumer-service relation between pupils and parents on the one hand and schools and trusts on the other.

40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOWETO UPRISING

Signal Contribution of the Courageous South African Students

Isaac Saney, TML Weekly Information Project

On June 16th, 1976 in the African township of Soweto, on the outskirts of Johannesburg, apartheid South African police massacred 176 Black students, and wounded more than 700. The Soweto uprising remains to this day the signal contribution of the infinitely courageous South African students' movement for justice and social transformation everywhere.

The heroic martyrs of Soweto were part of 20,000 students who marched that day to protest the imposition of Afrikaans as mandatory for school instruction for most of the subjects in elementary and secondary school. Afrikaans, a language derived from Dutch, was the language of the ruling elite. Thus, the racist state was inflicting the oppressor's language on Black youth. African languages were denigrated, restricted to the subjects of religion, music and social lessons. Under the Bantu Education Act, the education that Africans received was designed to keep them as a source of cheap labour; the compulsory introduction of Afrikaans further deepened the disenfranchisement of Black South Africans. While the immediate impetus for the demonstration was the imposition of Afrikaans, students were fighting for the broader cause of self-determination.

Black youth organized to oppose the racist diktat. On April 30, students at Soweto's Orlando West Junior School in Soweto refused to attend class. This profound act of defiance inspired the student bodies of other schools. On June 13, the Soweto Students' Representative Council was formed, which called for a June 16 mass rally at the Orlando Soccer Stadium. On June 16, thousands of unarmed students marched singing freedom songs and carrying signs declaring, for example, "Down with Afrikaans!"; "Bantu Education -- to Hell with It!"; "If We Must Do Afrikaans, Vorster must do Zulu"; and "Viva Azania!" As they marched to the stadium, the apartheid state's police blocked the route. With the youth refusing to yield, the police attacked them with teargas and dogs. Unable to break the resistance, police then fired directly into the massed students. Thirteen-year-old Hector Pieterse was the first student killed. The photograph of 18-year-old Mbuyisa Makhubo carrying Hector's body, as Hector's sister 17-year-old Antoinette runs next to them, is the iconic image of the massacre. As noted, Hector Pieterse died along with another 175 students, with more than 700 wounded. The hospitals were overwhelmed by the number of casualties. However, despite the brutality that was unleashed, the students fought back against the terror of the apartheid state. Soweto

sparked a countrywide rebellion. In the subsequent weeks hundreds of youth were killed by the racist state.

The Soweto Uprising and other Black rebellions that followed in Soweto's wake created an unprecedented crisis for the racist regime, signaling the collapse of the South African government's ability to confine black politics within the limits defined and permitted by apartheid. The uprising was a watershed, heralding, as historian Saul Dubow wrote, "the demise of white supremacy and made real the possibility of liberation, perhaps for the first time... An unquenchable spirit of rebellion was becoming manifest..." Soweto ushered in the era of the ungovernability of the townships and black militancy; it was one of the most significant chronological markers in the struggle against and eventual demise of apartheid.

Soweto and Southern African Liberation Struggles

The Soweto Uprising was part and parcel of the wave of anti-colonial and national liberation struggles that swept southern Africa in the 1970s. The internal struggle within South Africa was dialectically linked to the struggles waged in the region. Angolan and Mozambican liberation pushed the anti-colonial movement onto South Africa's frontiers. Mozambican independence and the defeat of the racist South African armed forces in Angola had an important role in amplifying militancy among Black youth. Allister Sparks, a reporter and editor of the *Rand Daily Mail*, observed: "The slogans and rhetoric of the Portuguese colonial revolution swept the South African townships and stimulated a nascent rise in revolutionary consciousness."

Of particular significance was the defeat of South African armed forces in Angola in 1975-76 by Angolan and Cuban troops. The impact of South Africa's defeat extended to the Soweto Uprising. A principal of a Soweto high school provided compelling testimony, stating that the situation in Angola "was very much on the minds of his 700 students... They discuss it all the time and they are pleased by the developments there -- it gives them hope." The *London Sunday Times* observed that Cape Town's 'coloured' townships gangs were adopting new names such as "Cuban Kids" and "MPLA Terrors." Perhaps, the most poignant illustration of this influence was a placard used during the Soweto march. It simply stated: "It happened in An-

gola. Why not here??”

Nelson Mandela, in a message smuggled out of Robben Island, stated “[T]he frontiers of white supremacy are shrinking. Mozambique and Angola are free and the war of liberation gathers force in Namibia and Zimbabwe.” The South African Communist Party declared, “Whilst Angola destroyed the myth of the South African military invincibility, Soweto demolished the myth that the government’s security forces are able to destroy the people’s revolutionary spirit.” Oliver Tambo, then President of the African National Congress, unequivocally linked Angola and the Soweto Uprising:

“Terrified at the prospect of the victory of the forces of progress within the country in the aftermath and as a direct continuation of the popular victory in Angola, the Vorster regime, unleashed the bloody terror that is today symbolized by Soweto.”

Regional developments had a radicalizing effect on Black



South African youth, playing a significant role in re-igniting the anti-apartheid struggle within South Africa. The uninterrupted frontal challenge to apartheid -- both within and without South Africa -- signalled the collapse of Pretorian regional hegemony. Consequently, the apartheid regime’s existence and survival now rested in the first and final instance of state violence and repression; its domination was primarily exercised through the militarization of the state, townships and the region.

MONTH OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE KOREAN PEOPLE

The War of Aggression against the Korean People and the Necessity for a Peace Treaty

On June 25, 1950, at 4 am local time, south Korean troops under direction from the US launched an attack north across the 38th parallel dividing the Korean peninsula that began the Korean War. In order to launch the Korean War, the US manoeuvred the UN Security Council with the story, based on fabricated “evidence”, that it was the north that began the war. Over 4 million Koreans, mostly civilians, were killed in the war which also inflicted massive damage on the infrastructure of the entire peninsula.

It was the US which illegally divided Korea into north and south. It then mobilised the UN to intervene in a civil war which constitutes foreign interference in the internal affairs of a country and is illegal under the UN Charter.

The concocted pretexts of Tony Blair and George W Bush to justify the illegal war against Iraq and its occupation is fresh in the minds of the British people with the publication of the Chilcot Report. Pretexts for intervention and aggression are also being used with Libya and Syria, as well as elsewhere. It can be seen that this same *modus operandi* was used by the US/UN forces which launched the Korean War against the Korean people.

During the Korean War, the US carried out massive bombing raids, massacred hundreds of thousands of civilians in the north and south of Korea, engaged in germ warfare and chemical warfare and bombed cities and infrastructure north of the 38th parallel in order to force the DPRK to submit. Civilians were buried alive, dismembered, burned to death and drowned. Many were forced to dig their own graves before being executed in the same manner that the Nazis massacred civilians, particularly those

who resisted.

When finally the Armistice Agreement was signed on July 17, 1953, the US refused to comply with the Agreement, the main point of which was for the two sides to sign a peace treaty as soon as possible. Since the time of the Korean War until now, the US has refused to sign a peace treaty.

Anglo-US imperialism as well as the EU continue to target the DPRK with illegal sanctions, threats of a pre-emptive nuclear strike, ongoing disinformation campaigns about the DPRK’s “human rights” record, and annual military exercises directed against the DPRK, in an effort to overthrow its government and socialist system.

Despite the challenges facing them, the Korean people are relying on the justice of their cause and on their own political unity and peaceful efforts to hold high the banner of national reunification and carry it forward. *The Line of March* expresses confidence that in the near future they will succeed in ousting the US military presence in the south of their country and achieve reunification. The working class and people have to ensure that another unjust and criminal US-led war of aggression with Britain’s participation will never again happen on Korean soil.



President Kim Il Sung signing the Armistice Agreement, July 27, 1953



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