

Newspaper of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

For an Anti-War Government!

The marches through London and Glasgow on March 15 were powerful demonstrations of the sentiment of the people of Britain to put an end to war and to accuse the pro-war

government of New Labour. They were held as part of the global protests against war and occupation, numbered at more than 300.

The London event was called by the Stop the War Coalition,

CND and the British Muslim Initiative. The Glasgow rally, at which organisers estimated that around 5,000 participated, was called by the Stop the War Coalition and supported by the Scottish TUC, Scottish CND and

the Muslim Association of Britain; speakers included Scottish Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Gavin Strang MP, Rose Gentle from Military Families

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Tata Take-Over of Jaguar and Land Rover:

Now Is the Time to Get Organised! Security Lies in the Fight for Our Rights and Interests!



Trade unionists demonstrate at Parliament on October 18, 2007, for the right to take action in defence of their rights and interests

A deal has been agreed for Tata Motors to buy Jaguar and Land Rover from the Ford Motor Company. The sale is expected to be completed by the second quarter of this year. Is this

the end of the matter for the workers? What does the workers' experience say about the security of their jobs and of the car industry in the West Midlands and Merseyside?

The fact is that the car industry has witnessed quite a number of false dawns in the past. Management buyouts and takeovers by other car giants have led to the warranted conclu-

sion that the security of the workers, of the car industry, of the West Midlands and of the whole

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Commentary

Scientists Demand Progress, Not Retrogression

A MAJOR ATTACK ON SCIENCE IS UNDER WAY, IN THE FORM OF CUTBACKS in basic research. The immediate

cause of these cutbacks is a reported £80 million funding shortfall in the budget of the recently formed Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC). The areas being hit hardest are particle physics and astronomy. For example:

* Jodrell Bank Observatory, Cheshire, is threatened with closure (see <http://savejodrellbank.org.uk>). Jodrell Bank is headquarters for Merlin, an array of telescopes throughout Britain with the ability to match the resolution of the Hubble Space Telescope and home of the renowned Lovell radio telescope, the world's third

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largest fully steerable radio telescope, recently upgraded at the cost of £8 million.

* Britain has pulled out of the project to build the International Linear Collider, which will be crucial in advancing particle physics in the coming decades, after investing more than £30 million since 1991.

However, it is clear that this is not a case of financial mismanagement. The government has taken a definite decision to turn its back on particle physics and astronomy. The 13.6% rise in the STFC budget to £6.5m by 2011, allotted in the last comprehensive spending review by the government, "represented an essentially flat cash allocation", according to STFC chief executive Prof. Keith Mason, which has left the Council short of the funding necessary for its commitments. Under the pretext of a shortfall, key areas and programmes of science are being allowed to descend into a state of crisis and die, while the government puts forward no solution.

The government therefore considers science to be a matter of choice. Otherwise, how is a funding crisis in science even possible? Science is a necessity of a modern society. A defining feature of a modern society is one that is able to keep in step with the times, able to renovate itself by utilising the human factor with its social consciousness. A modern society without the science to enable this is unthinkable. Indeed, modern

society owes its very existence to science.

For example, astronomy played a decisive role in smashing the old medieval notions. Galileo's famous battle to place the Earth in its proper place in the Solar System was part of the struggle against medieval suppression, part of creating the correct perspective on humanity and its relation to the natural world and liberating human consciousness from the dogma that was holding it back.

Retrogression pushed

Through particle physics, a far more recent development, previously mysterious forces have become understandable material motions. This has led to unprecedented control over nature's basic constituents, the electron being the prime example of the 20th century.

The pragmatic view followed by the government makes science subservient to whatever economic, political and military ends are being pushed by various forces in power at a particular time. The current phase of policy began with the promotion of the "knowledge-based economy" at the end of the 1990s and the replacement of "science" with "innovation" with the aim of making British-based monopolies more competitive.

A key point was a speech made in March 2000 by Lord Sainsbury, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Science, at the Association for University Research and Industry Links conference on "Science and



Technology in a Changing Environment". He first described the "knowledge-based economy" as a key component of the global economy, where "capital is mobile, technology can migrate quickly and goods can be made cheaply in low cost countries and shipped to developed markets", where the goods fetch the highest prices. He then argued that, to compete in the global market, British business must exploit "knowledge, skills and creativity, which help create high productivity business processes and high value goods and services". Further, "The new knowledge economy depends critically on exploiting our science base to create world-class ideas, breakthrough technology and high-value businesses." In other words, the scientific and technical revolution was to be used almost exclusively for the purpose of serving the "knowledge-based economy", and academic research and education would be geared to this purpose.

The result of that policy was the wave of restructuring and closure of many physics, chemistry and other university science departments that have taken place this decade. The present funding crisis is a sign that things are going beyond even that pragmatic policy. In conditions of economic and political crisis, where the only resort is to desperation, we are witnessing wholesale destruction.

In general, what is being pushed is retrogression. Ultimately, the cause of the fund-

ing crisis is that the only science to receive funding is that which most lends itself at this particular time to paying the rich. This is retrogression to a kind of medievalism in which science is subject to the absolutism of the monopolies. It represents a turning-back from the path of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, the high road of civilisation, in which modern science and society have their origins.

Organising for progress

However, people are not simply spectators, witnessing these negative developments and powerless to act. A position of disempowerment does not equate to powerlessness. An alternative is possible, which starts with scientists and the people demanding and organising for progress in the face of retrogression, realising the necessity for an enlightened direction for science and organising to end their marginalisation from the decisions of such fundamental importance for society. Scientists would do well to scientifically analyse what kind of economy it is that cannot give science first claim along with all other social necessities, informing public opinion and organising so that people are enabled to hold the government to account over its social responsibility to fund science according to the needs of society and the human beings that comprise it.

For detailed information, see <http://www.hep.ucl.ac.uk/~markl/pp> and <http://www.saveastronomy.org.uk>.

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Tata Take-Over of Jaguar and Land Rover: Now Is the Time to Get Organised! Security Lies in the Fight for Our Rights and Interests!

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economy does not rest in the boardrooms over which the workers have no control and say in, nor in the corridors of Westminster as long as the interests of the independent programme of the working class are not represented there. It lies in the workers organising to restrict the unfettered claims of the monopolies to do whatever they choose, and ultimately in being able themselves to set the direction of the economy for the public good. Specifically, the workers' experience shows that security only lies in their fight for their rights and interests, and that this step also throws up the lesson that this fight must be continued through to the end, and that it is the workers' outlook that will safeguard the economic interests of the country as a whole.

This being the case, the takeover by Tata of Jaguar and Land Rover is no justification for the workers to give up their stance of being proactive. On the contrary, the workers must continue their deliberations and continue strengthening their organisations at the grass roots, whether the decisions which affect their future are made in Detroit or Mumbai. The workers cannot afford to let the lessons of the past go unheeded if they are to safeguard their future and the future of the regional and national economy.

Who decides?

It is understandable that the union leaders are making the point that it is better that the future of the industry is in the hands of a carmaker rather than asset-stripping private equity. But the question still arises, if the industry was doing badly under the Ford monopoly, how can things improve for the industry and for the workers under Tata control? Is Tata gearing up to make the car industry in Britain

more competitive in the global market, come what may, or will the workers decide what is of benefit to the regional and national economy?

It was on April 1, 2000, that workers demonstrated in Birmingham against the Rover sell-off at Longbridge. Justice has still not been done for when MG Rover collapsed five years later and 6,400 workers lost their jobs, the government could offer no more than an "inquiry", which still shows no sign of publishing any findings, and has cost almost £12 million of public money. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that while the car industry and its workers were devastated, the government was determined that no lessons were to be learned and that the monopolies should be allowed to wreck the economy as they please. This, of course, is in marked contrast to the billions of pounds sunk into Northern Rock, which at all costs had to be "saved".

What of promises?

Written guarantees by the monopolies have also come and gone before. These multinationals did not get where they are today – giant monopolies – by having scruples and taking a humanitarian approach. These monopolies have always some pretext for not honouring their agreements. Although the trade unions have said that Tata has not offshored or outsourced any jobs and that its record with the former Anglo-Dutch steelmaker Corus (the one-time British Steel) is "most impressive", they have also seen fit to offer Tata a warning not to renege on its promises.

Industry analysts have been more robust. For example, Krish Bhaskar who heads the Motor Industry Research Unit (MIRU), based in Nice, has said (reported in the Financial Times) that in his opinion there is only one way for the deal to add up, and that is to

switch production to India. He believes that it would mean the end of any large-scale British-owned car industry. "It has to move to India, and that means the direct workforce of about 22,000 goes and the wider supplier industry involves about 200,000. The knock-on effect will kill UK suppliers, and kill the UK-owned automotive industry, this is the killer blow," Bhaskar said.

Workers' own agenda

This is one prediction, but the underlying point is that even if Tata persist with its promises, it has its own global agenda which is to plan car production, as part of its overall manufacturing empire, to maximise its profits. A multinational like Tata with its many tentacles in crucial sectors of the economy globally will recognise the interests of regional and national economies only in the context of its global empire. The analysts who are asking the question "why?" in relation to the Tata purchase of Jaguar and Land Rover must be paid heed to, and act as a caution to the workers to deliberate on their allegedly secure future.

The point is that the workers must have their own agenda, and organise to ensure that it prevails. Anarchy of production and the sole yardstick of being competitive in the global market cannot be allowed to continue unchecked and without challenge. Workers have no choice but to get together to discuss these issues in order that the history of knights in shining armour followed by closures and movement of capital and production does not repeat itself. The elaboration of their own programme needs to be carried out in the context of the struggle for they themselves to become the decision-makers and decide how the national economy is run, for whose benefit and in which direction. Competing in the global market in order to make inroads

and eventually come to dominate it is the name of Tata's game. The financiers who are to reap interest on the approximately £2 billion of loans to Tata to finance the deal will suck away the produced values from Jaguar and Land Rover. Tata's social responsibility could be said to only extend so far, and it is the workers who must actively organise firstly to remind Tata and hold it to this responsibility, but more crucially to take up this social responsibility themselves, and not accepting the narrow role of workers without a say or without dignity.

Fighting for the future!

In particular, the workers must look at the car industry in the context of the need for such important sectors of the economy to be under public control and direction – and, it must be said, this applies even more crucially to steel production, which in Britain has also come under the control of the Tata empire, the energy-production industry, and other foundations of a national socialised economy. This is crucially part of the programme of the working class that it must consciously adopt and fight for. Rather than, as with Northern Rock, "nationalisation" meaning pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for the financial oligarchy, the workers must organise to ensure that public control over the important sectors of the economy (and the financial institutions), which is the responsibility of a modern government, means that political control is in the hands of the working class and the institutions that they build.

The conclusion for the workers is that now is the time to get organised to avert future disasters. A secure future cannot be guaranteed by the workers relinquishing the initiative, but our security can only lie in the fight for our rights and interests. Jaguar workers are still fighting for a future!

Militant Actions across Europe Denounce NATO and Imperialist Aggression

In the lead-up to the NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania, activists across Europe organised militant actions to oppose the aggressive alliance and NATO expansion in Europe.

Ukrainians Reject Bush Visit and NATO Membership

In Kiev, Ukraine, about 5,000 people gathered on March 31 to protest against the US imperialist President George W Bush's visit, and Ukraine's bid for NATO membership. Activists demonstrating in Kiev's Independence Square carried signs with the slogans "Bush out of Ukraine", "Yankee go home", "NATO Gestapo" and "No to NATO", as well as burning an effigy of President Bush.

Should Ukraine be accepted into NATO, "we will take more severe measures", a protest organiser told reporters. He added that around 9,000 people were expected to take part in the protests from March 31 to April 4.

Opposition to Ukraine's push



for NATO membership has also taken place in the Ukrainian parliament. A survey published in March said only 50 percent of Ukrainians support the idea of NATO membership.

Romania: Anti-NATO Actions in the Face of Massive Repression

In Bucharest on April 1, one day before the start of the NATO summit, activists opposing the summit reported intensifying repression of anti-NATO activists. "Alternative-looking people are detained by the police for no reason" an Indymedia report says. "Afterwards the police manufacture absurd offenses, for example saying having a pocketknife amounts to possession of a weapon. Every person coming to or leaving the convergence centre was in danger of getting detained (some simply for walking to a nearby shop). The detained are interrogated, photographed and fingerprinted in police stations, and held for up to 24 hours," the Indymedia report adds.

Demonstrators in Belgium Call for an End to NATO

In related news, 1,000 activists from across Europe participated in the "NATO Game Over" action at NATO headquarters in Belgium on March 22 to oppose the military action in Iraq and Afghanistan and the use of nuclear weapons. News agencies report 150 protesters were arrested. Police in riot gear and others on horseback as well as water cannons were against the protesters some of whom scaled the barbed-wire fence to gain entry to the compound. A police spokeswoman said at least one protester was taken to hospital



with serious injuries after falling on barbed wire.

"Today is close to the fifth anniversary of the war in Iraq and we are protesting against NATO's involvement and in particular European countries which are allowing themselves to be used as military hubs," anti-war campaigner Hans Lammerant told Reuters.

"NATO has 350 US nuclear



weapons deployed in Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Britain and Turkey. According to international humanitarian law these weapons are illegal."

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Against the War, and SSP leader Colin Fox.

In London, Trafalgar Square was packed by well over 50,000 people for a rally before the march on Parliament. It is estimated that full, Trafalgar Square holds 100,000, and the people that occupied the Square left little room for more to enter, and in addition demonstrators thronged the walkways overlooking the Square. In the demonstration's path over Westminster Bridge, along the Albert Embankment, crossing the Thames again at Lambeth Bridge, and walking along Milbank, the head of the march entering Parliament Square practically joined up with the tail passing by it. Speakers at the Trafalgar Square rally included Tony Benn, Stop the War Coalition convener Lindsay German, film-maker Nick Broomfield, CWU general

secretary Billy Hayes, George Galloway, and many others.

The demonstration, though not approaching it in numbers, had that same quality as the massive manifestation of February 15, 2003, when the whole world said no to war. It was a quality of people from all walks of life, all ages, finding their own way to say no to war, and looking for a way to bring into being an anti-war government. As such, it was not simply a protest march or a demonstration of solidarity with oppressed people. It indicated that the anti-war movement is a genuine movement that is being built and is working to build that path to a society in which the principles of an anti-war government are fulfilled. This was borne out by the many conversations and discussions with demonstrators along the way. This is the success of the anti-war movement.

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