



18th August 2019

Dear Friends

The Central Executive Committee of the Workers Party extends fraternal greetings and solidarity to the workers of Harland and Wolff, your trade union representatives and all those who are supporting you in your struggle against closure and redundancy.

The Workers Party supports the demand of the workers at the Yard that Harland and Wolff should now be taken into public ownership. It should be nationalised .

The current threat posed to the future of Harland and Wolff demonstrates clearly the urgent need for a strategic economic plan for Northern Ireland.

The future of the Harland & Wolff is not just about the 130 jobs currently at risk. It is about how the economy of Northern Ireland is organised and the absolute necessity for a centrally planned, publicly owned, strategic approach to local manufacturing and economic development.

Northern Ireland industry needs development and investment. Our local skills base needs protection and expansion. Only a hands on government led industrial strategy can ensure that, secure jobs and develop an indigenous manufacturing base.

The stand taken by the workers at Harland and Wolff has brought that into the public spotlight.

The fact that you have been left with no option but to take matters into your own hands is a brutal indictment of the main political parties and their failure to form a functioning Executive and further underlines Sinn Fein and the DUP's arrogant and contemptuous disregard for working class people, their families and their children.

Even if the Executive had been re-instated none of the main parties would have done anything different, or indeed, done anything at all.

Neither the DUP nor Sinn Fein has made this a red line issue. Neither has demanded public intervention to keep H&W in business, retain its jobs and skills base or secure its future. But then, like the Tory government, the main parties here are ideologically opposed to state intervention in the economy – unless of course it involves bailing out the banks or lowering corporation tax. They too hold that it is *“ultimately a commercial issue”*.

Meanwhile, these same parties are happy to promote free market economics, cut budgets, lower corporation tax, sell Northern Ireland as a low wage economy and watch the shipyard slip away. The letter is in stark contrast to the actions of the Scottish Assembly as they prepare to intervene to save ship building on the Clyde.

The workforce at Harland's has taken a decisive and progressive step. You deserve the full backing of the entire Northern Ireland community and immediate state intervention.

Assuring you of our continuing support and solidarity

Fraternally,

Gerry Grainger

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