

# WORKERS

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## PAY, CONDITIONS AND THE BATTLE FOR EDUCATION



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# WORKERS

## “ Dark shadows

THE GOVERNMENT says it is reducing the scope of the state. Of course, it is doing no such thing. Instead of the public state, run by an independent civil service and accountable (in theory) to the electorate, the government is creating a private state.

To see just how far it is going, take a look at The Shadow State, a new report on privatisation and outsourcing of public services and assets by the organisation Social Enterprise UK. The shadow state strips out Britain's public sector wealth and assets and places them in the control of multinational companies that operate outside of all democratic accountability.

A recent example is the London Borough of Barnet, which has transferred assets and services worth over £750 million to a private company, Capita. A second tranche of contracts worth a further £275 million due to go out in

January 2013.

The contracts are for ten years with a initial possible extension of a further five years. Local democracy is destroyed in one fell swoop as accountability and control is removed from the local electorate to Capita's boardroom.

Of the 520 staff in transferred December 2012, 57 per cent will be made redundant as work is transferred from North London to Belfast, Carlisle, Southampton, to name but a few of Capita's outsourcing centres. More face a similar future in January 2013.

And it's not just this government that has been creating this dark shadow. "We believe that the way outsourcing has been done in the last couple of decades has created a major problem," says the report – which adds, rightly, that the way public spending is done, and therefore who suffers most from cuts, is an "even bigger" issue than the cuts themselves ■

## From Canada, with debt

THE NEW governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, is yet another unelected Goldman Sachs old boy, just like the unelected head of the Italian government, and the equally unelected head of the European Central Bank.

Carney was head of Canada's central bank, where there has been no housing crash – yet. But just wait: Canadians' personal debt is at record levels. Precisely what job has he been brought in to do? ■



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# Deutsche Bahn's NHS grab



DEUTSCHE BAHN (DB), the German state-owned rail and logistics giant that operates many of Britain's railway trains, is now looking to profit from running NHS ambulances.

Not that DB's presence is immediately obvious – DB operates in Britain under the cloak of the Arriva branding. It made huge profits from Britain's privatised and fragmented railways, and used them to invest in German public transport at the expense of British taxpayers. DB is now looking to perform the same trick in the rapidly fragmenting and privatised NHS.

An angry protest by over 100 ambulance workers was held outside Parliament on 10 December, supported by Unison General Secretary Dave Prentis and Shadow Health Minister Andy Burnham. The protesters condemned the decision to transfer Manchester's non-emergency patient transport service from the NHS in March 2013. The in-house NHS bid beat DB/Arriva on quality but lost on price.

Unison fears this latest move will lead to a poor service for vulnerable patients and act as a blueprint for cuts elsewhere. DB/Arriva had already won a contract to operate the non-emergency ambulances formerly run by the East Midlands Ambulance Service from 1 July 2012. Despite massive public protest, DB/Arriva closed up to 70 ambulance stations spread across Leicestershire, Rutland, Nottinghamshire and Bassetlaw and replaced them with 13 larger hubs to save cash.

MPs Graham Stringer and Paul Goggins from Wythenshawe and Sale East tabled a Commons Early Day Motion, saying they were "appalled" at the latest move by DB/Arriva, claiming that the Care Quality Commission during its inspection of the company's ambulance transport service in Leicestershire found it was not meeting standards in staffing, cleanliness and infection control.

More than 14,000 people have already signed a petition against the awarding to DB/Arriva of the Manchester contract. Doubtless many more would do so if they realised who was taking over their ambulance services.

- Arriva London North bus drivers went on strike over pay at the end of November. They have not received a pay rise in the past two years. The 24-hour strike caused severe delays and cancellations throughout north London. Further strikes by the 2,300 Unite members are possible in the New Year if a settlement is not reached. ■

## PAY Dropping behind

ACCORDING TO the Office for National Statistics average earnings for full-time workers rose 1.4 per cent to £26,500 in the year ending April 2012, but inflation was 3.5 per cent in the same period. So real wages actually fell. It also reports that over 3 million workers out of the workforce of nearly 30 million want to work more hours, nearly one million more than four years ago, at the start of the financial collapse.

Two-thirds of these are in part time employment – so a quarter of part-timers want more work. The ONS concludes the cause for this is the economic slump. Many people who have lost full time jobs can only find their way back into employment by accepting part-time work. This probably goes some way towards explaining the recent falls in the unemployment figures. ■

## CRIME Compensation cut

THE GOVERNMENT is to cut compensation to victims of violent crime. The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme, set up to pay compensation where it is not available by other means, will mean no more awards between £1,000 and £2,000 for minor injuries. This will affect 90 per cent of the victims of violent crime, some 30,000 to 40,000 each year.

The Communication Workers Union warns this will affect many postal workers who are attacked by dogs and where, despite a successful prosecution, the dog owner is unable to pay compensation.

Shop workers' union USDAW says many of its members injured in armed robberies and assaults will now themselves be robbed of any compensation. ■

**If you have news from your industry, trade or profession we want to hear from you. Call us on 020 8801 9543 or email [rebuilding@workers.org.uk](mailto:rebuilding@workers.org.uk)**

## EUROBRIEFS

## The latest from Brussels

**Leave the EU!**

ONE OF the best things our class has done is to ensure that Britain stays out of the euro. The next job in hand is to leave the EU. The DAILY TELEGRAPH said recently after polls showed growing support for an exit, "Leaving the EU, once a fringe issue, is now part of the mainstream."

**Separatist woes**

UNDER EU treaties, a new country would have to apply to join the EU. Scotland would have to apply to join the EU if it split away, whatever the SNP says. But the remaining parts of Britain could also then be deemed to be a new country. There is a danger that in the event of a Scottish vote to leave Britain, the EU would seize the opportunity to press a weakened "rest of Britain" to sign up to the whole "acquis communautaire". That's all the EU principles including the euro – backed by legislation and court decisions which constitute EU law.

The aim for the British working class must be "out of the EU, keep Britain together". Press for the referendum the ruling class does not want. And expand the one we don't want to let the whole country vote.

**One bank for central control**

AT A SUMMIT in December EU leaders agreed to centralise banking supervision. The European Central Bank will become the chief regulator, weakening the position of individual countries. And beyond that, they agreed to a roadmap for further eurozone integration.

**Secret talks**

FREE TRADE talks between the EU and India started in 2007 and have been kept mostly secret from the public. The little detail that is known suggests the agreement will increase poverty, inequality and environmental destruction in India.

The EU Commission and the Indian government want to complete the agreement soon, but will be in the European General Court this January to answer a suit by Corporate Europe Observatory over alleged privileged access to the talks for business lobby groups. CEO, a research and campaign group against excessive business influence over EU policy, says that business has in effect set the negotiating agenda. ■



24 November: young Lewisham residents rally to the defence of their hospital.

Photo: Workers

## NHS uproar in Lewisham

SOUTH LONDON Health Care Trust was the first failing NHS Trust placed under a Trust Special Administrator by the now departed Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley. The decision to move to administration flew in the face of a successful recovery plan being implemented in the trust. The decision was political and driven by ideology. The government wanted to provoke a crisis and see how market forces would react.

Sadly the legislation was already on the statute book from the previous Labour government, part of their drive to introduce a market-led NHS. The Trust is one of about 20 nationally that face bankruptcy due to a combination of private finance initiatives, poor historic management, the re-introduction of the market into health, and the government's intention to privatise the National Health Service.

If a reaction was what the government was hoping for, indeed they have got one. Every public consultation meeting has seen hundreds of people attending with packed out or overflowed halls and overflow venues heaving. Over 10,000 people marched at short notice to defend Lewisham Hospital's accident and emergency facilities, which are not directly part of South London Healthcare but part of the integrated South East London health economy.

Ironically David Cameron in 2007 boasted of being willing to go into a bare-knuckled fight to defend 27 threatened A&E departments, which at the time included Lewisham. Now planned for the axe, Lewisham A&E seems to have slipped his memory.

Petitions and meetings have galvanised the public consultation exercise, which closed in mid-December. A draft of the report was burnt at an angry 200-strong vigil on 13 December, and its organisers Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign plan a demonstration on 26 January ahead of Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt's decision on the report in February.

The campaign around the SLH Trust is showing you cannot isolate or pick off one Trust; all NHS facilities in South East London are deeply integrated and support each other. Attempted break-up and hiving off of NHS facilities is not as easy as the government thinks, especially when a furore from the population of South East London is roused. ■

## GREECE

### More time, more debt

THE EU and the IMF have allowed Greece to repay its debts over a longer period – but this will inevitably lead to overspending and in the end bigger debts.

The IMF itself is worried about this and the deal is contingent on Greece buying back its ten-year bonds from private investors at current market rates. As these are only one-third of their original value, this would amount to a two-thirds default on these debts.

Apparently Germany is now resigning

itself to the fact that most, if not all, of Greece's debt will eventually have to be written off (along, presumably, with the Greek economy). ■

## STRESS

### Problems mount

THE CHARTERED Institute of Personnel and Development reports that stress-related absences from work are now the main cause of time off. The proportion of bosses surveyed reporting mental health problems among their workers has doubled over the past three years to 44 per cent. ■

**NHS****Commissioning campaign**

THE CAMPAIGNING group 38 Degrees is delivering petitions demanding that doctors prevent local NHS services from being broken up and privatised in England. Each one of the 212 local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) is receiving the petition, calling for them to commission the NHS to deliver all these services.

Letters are also being sent to doctors and local newspapers. The group says that action is urgent because the newly created

CCGs are setting up their constitutions at present.

The government intends that the services delivered by the NHS in England should be tendered out piecemeal, using EU procurement rules, allowing private companies to grab small or large chunks for making profit.

Some CCGs have already rejected tendering out, for example in Hackney and Gloucestershire. In Gloucestershire a referendum revealed that 96 per cent wanted to keep the NHS intact, providing all health care.

See <http://www.38degrees.org.uk> ■

# London's housing crisis

LONDON'S POPULATION is estimated to rise to 9 million by 2025. But uncontrolled immigration from Europe puts into question the validity of this estimate, especially if the doors are thrown open to everyone in Bulgaria and Rumania in 2014, as planned.

Analysis by London councils, embracing all political parties, suggests that London needs 36,000 new homes each year just to stand still and meet current housing demand. But in 2010-11 only 19,860 new homes were built in London. Of those a mere 5,220 were "affordable homes". The government responds to the shortfall by simply handing a gift to developers – lifting planning controls instead of tackling the problem at source, thereby threatening London's green areas, even back gardens.

Councils are campaigning to amend the fantastically named Growth and Infrastructure Bill to remove Treasury guidelines that prevent them from borrowing money and building homes. They say that if the imposed ceiling were abolished, an estimated 54,000 new homes could be started immediately. But without some control on demand for housing the problem will continue to get worse. There is no space for new building in London.

The government is also ensuring rents in London are at an all-time high. Rapacious buy-to-let landlords snap up available property in an unregulated "market". Expensive housing in the capital is an investment opportunity for wealthy foreign owners to keep their money safe against political disturbance elsewhere in the world. London has seen waves of foreign speculation in house buying – Arab, Russian, Greek, French – in recent months.

The Trust for London says housing costs are a crucial factor in London having the highest poverty rates of all England's regions. 360,000 households are on council waiting lists in London: six out of ten young renters never expect to be able to afford to buy a home.

Tens of thousands of Londoners are expected to be socially cleansed and moved as housing benefit cuts bite and they are made homeless or removed to "cheaper" parts of Britain in 2013, creating housing ghettos. This housing apartheid will tend to keep certain parts of London politically favourable to the government. ■

**OFFICES****Tenants in short supply**

Photo: Workers

The BBC has discovered that London's Shard (above), the tallest structure in

Europe, has no financial tenants. The Pinnacle, which if ever finished will be the second largest building in Britain, was started in 2009 but is still only half complete as work keeps being halted. In the City, Cannon Place is also empty and the Walbrook Building has only filled one sixth of its space.

The British Retail Consortium reports that over 1 in 10 high street shops (11.3 per cent) are empty, the highest number since it started gathering figures. In Wales and the North of England the figure is 15 per cent.

As Comet joins the list of casualties such as Blacks, Clinton and JJB, shopper figures for October were 2.6 per cent lower than for the same month last year. ■

**WHAT'S ON****Coming soon****January****Wightlink Ferries Public Meeting**

Thursday 3 January 2013, 7.00pm

Newport Football Club (upstairs), Isle of Wight

This public meeting has been called by the Isle of Wight Trades Union Council to discuss the effect on Islanders of the reduction in sailings between the Island and the mainland by Wightlink Ferries. The meeting is open to all who want to attend and give their point of view. The IOW TUC says the reduced sailings will be detrimental to all Islanders.

**February**

Tuesday 12 February, 7.30pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.

**"Britain, not three nations"**

For more than two centuries Britain has been one nation, united by a common language, a common culture and a common industry and economy. Now, encouraged by regionalism stoked by the European Union, some are seeking separation. What would that mean for the British working class? Public meeting organised by the CPBML. All welcome.

**HIGHER EDUCATION****For-profit university**

BRITAIN'S FIRST for-profit university has been established by the investment firm Montagu Private Equity. The conversion of the College of Law, established in 2006, into a degree-awarding institution, without state funding – the first such university, promoted by the government to introduce market economics into higher education.

In the usual sleight of hand the government quotes the University of Buckingham as being the trailblazer in this process. That was established in the 1980s as a non-profit research institution with charitable status. It may have been independent of state funding but it was the opposite of the self-styled for-profit "University of Law".

The University of Law sees its marketplace as being in "strategic collaborations" with similar institutions in Singapore, Beijing and Madrid. In other words, foreign students will provide the cash flow. Or others may see it on par with the legendary School of English in Oxford (Street) which graces central London. ■

Chancellor George Osborne and his predecessors, he has done more for them...

## Debt and cuts:



The Bank of England – like everything else in Britain, it is in a state of decay (in this case a Canadian).

THE COALITION declared in 2010 that the answer to recession was to reduce the public spending deficit. The idea was dodgy at best, even in capitalist economic terms. At worst it risked a spiral downwards through reduced employment leading to higher benefit spending, lower tax revenue and failing businesses. And that is exactly what's happened. The date for the recovery recedes, like a mirage. Government debt interest payments this year are about twice that for 2009, and will rise further when Britain's credit rating drops.

Without conviction, Chancellor George Osborne used his Autumn Statement on 5 December to blame the previous Labour government or the eurozone crisis or both for the failure. The laughable claim that the government is on the right track belies the reality. We are in another great depression, comparable with that between the two world wars.

The symptoms are clear. The banking and debt crash in 2008 shows no sign of abating in Britain or worldwide. There are occasional improvements in some places for short periods, and then fresh problems emerge.



A NEW LEAFLET from the Communist Party spells out the links between membership of the EU and the drive to devolution. It provides sharp, reasoned argument why both are bad for Britain and bad for British workers.

Copies are available on request. Please send a self-addressed A4 envelope (with large stamp), to CPBML, 78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB.

## BADGE OFFER – Out of the EU now!

CONTINUE the resistance to the European Union with a new campaigning badge – the new “Out EU now!” badge (actual size 1.5 inches).

The badge is available now from Bellman Books, 78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB, price £1 each including postage or £3 for 5 including postage.

Please make cheques payable to “WORKERS”.



Osborne presented the Autumn Statement. Like all his little idea what causes economic crises or what to do about

## running out of excuses, running out of time



Photo: alessandro770/Shutterstock.com

Britain, soon to be handed over to foreign control (in

In Britain there is now little or no overall growth in production and a drop in industrial output to a 20-year low. Services and construction sectors are weak. Exports are declining, despite some minor spikes.

Economic growth between 2010 and now was predicted to be around 5.7 per cent. It's turned out to be less than 1 per cent, and mainly at the beginning of the period. The budget deficit (the difference between government spending and income through tax) was expected to be £60 billion for the coming year. The forecast now is near to twice that, barring one-off receipts. Even the forecast that "austerity" will end after 2018 is based on predictions without evidence to support them.

### Structural

The number of workers employed is up, but those figures mask deep structural problems. There is increasing under-employment through reduced hours, part-time and temporary work. The number of young workers without jobs is rising fast. Short-term training, even where it is available, will not guarantee future work either.

Inflation is not high in historical terms,

but is running well ahead of wage increases. Savings rates are minimal, yet capital to build businesses is scarce. Taxes are increasing for individuals, though not for businesses. Tax seems to be voluntary for multinational companies. There's a flash of publicity about tax avoidance but no sign that this government can do anything about it, or wants to.

Local authorities are cutting services; progress in education and the health services has quickly fallen away. There is sustained pressure from government to introduce market-driven provision for public services, despite the evidence that PFI contracts and similar arrangements are an expensive failure.

Annual expenditure for the Department of Work & Pensions is up to £160 billion, compared to £135 billion in 2009. That's mainly on state pensions and working age benefits excluding tax credits. Amounts paid are being held down through stricter qualifying conditions; nominal rates will rise by less than inflation. This continues a trend set by the last government, and will get worse with the introduction of universal credit from October 2013.

Despite the obvious connection that increased welfare spending follows falling incomes and reduced employment, Osborne claims that there is scope for significant cuts to this expenditure. That prediction will be as inaccurate as the rest. Changes to benefits will cause hardship for all the workers affected by them, but it will be to no avail. The number of people qualifying and needing support is out of control until more return to work, or start work for the first time.

The government's approach to the economic crisis is primarily to cut back. It has announced some plans to build infrastructure such as roads. The amounts promised are a few billion pounds – completely inadequate relative to the need. They come with vague wishes that this will open the way for private investment. That hasn't materialised and the government schemes are barely under way, if at all.

Private investment generally has been strangled too. Banks are reluctant to lend for investment, despite massive subsidy

from the government. Businesses with a cash surplus (there are many) won't invest in development, despite low interest rates. Visible results include empty shops, low levels of house building and increased rents both domestic and commercial.

Public sector wages and occupational pensions have been held down since 2010. That's set to continue for the life of this parliament and beyond. Osborne carried this further by extending the attack on wages and conditions to teachers' national salaries. That follows on in the same vein as plans for civil service reform to introduce regional pay. Legalisation to fragment the NHS will threaten health care, and will also undermine pay and conditions.

### Driving down pay

The effect of public sector pay policy is to drive down wages and conditions generally across the whole country. Osborne wants to push this further. Last year's idea was for public sector workers to set up companies to run what the state does now. It did not grow, though like a persistent weed it keeps springing up in places with disastrous results. This year Osborne announced to his party conference an equally barren scheme. He proposed giving shares to workers who give up employment rights. Few businesses supported him, seeing it as irrelevant.

One feature of the depression in the 1920s and 1930s was the belief that the gold standard (in effect the currency exchange rate) was the mark of economic stability and without it ruin would follow. Yet it was not until that view changed that the crisis began to diminish – though it took a war to end it.

Today we see similar thinking in the eurozone – that countries must be fixed in their relationship to the euro. This is causing hardship and growing tensions across Europe. Although, thankfully, Britain is outside the eurozone, our own government is fixated on the international markets and Britain's credit rating. That's about the only reason it can offer for making debt reduction the priority, yet that policy will almost certainly create the same damage as holding to the gold standard. ■

**Our country is under attack. Every single day, every year, every generation. Growth is in unemployment, poverty and a lack of deed.**

# CONGRI



**The Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) has recently held its 16th Congress, a coming together of the Party to consider the state of Britain and what needs to happen in the future.**

It is now 44 years since the Party was formed, and 41 years since, at its Second Congress, the Party produced its Programme **THE BRITISH WORKING CLASS AND ITS PARTY**. This Programme outlined the thinking of a political party of a new type, a thoroughly British Marxist party. All subsequent Congresses have confirmed the ideas of the Programme, using them as the basis for developing our thought for the changing times.

At our 16th Congress, the Party adopted a number of Calls to Action for the British working class.

## **Out of the European Union, enemy to our survival**

The European Union represents the dictatorship of finance capital, foreign domination, and the bleeding away of our capacity to take responsibility for ourselves. If we do not leave the EU, it will destroy our economy as surely as it has that of Greece. Destroy the economy of a nation and you undermine, possibly fatally, the ability of a country to be a country.

The EU is aided by quislings in our class who would rather supplicate in Brussels than struggle in Britain.

The British working class must declare our intention to leave the EU. We must wage this fight within our organisations, especially our trade unions. British withdrawal from the EU would fatally wound the project and shift the balance of force away from those who would break up Britain and launch war. Referendum Now!

## **No to the breakup of Britain, defend our national sovereignty**

There are those in Scotland who wish to become an EU region with all the prestige of, for example, Estonia. Even a gerrymandered referendum confined

to Scotland must return a “No” vote. Unless it does, the clock is turned back far more than 300 years. It would not only dismember our country (creating a new country called England and Wales) but would create an ideological back door to Britain through which the EU would be invited.

Devolution, and now the threat of separation, are both products of only one thing: de-industrialisation. When the working class in Scottish industry was numerous and active it often led the British working class. The SNP was laughed out of town as the “tartan Tories”. The destruction of industry drags a class down, and no clearer example is extant than that of Scotland.

The future of all of us is at stake. We must demand that any referendum on the dismemberment of Britain be held throughout Britain. We must fight to establish a policy within our trade unions against break up.

## **Rebuild workplace trade union organisation**

Too few British workers are union members. The percentage of public and other service sectors of the economy in unions is dangerously low. It is even lower in industry, in manufacture, in the private sector. Even more



single institution is in decline. The only  
 and war. There is a crisis – of thought,

# ESS 2012

dangerous, it is still declining.

Most of the unions which existed only 40 years ago have now gone, a partial reflection of the destruction of the industries in which they organised. At the present rate of decline, trade unionism could be eradicated within this generation of members. The employing class has always aimed at this.

Unions exist as working members in real workplaces or they become something else entirely – something entirely negative. Workers need to involve themselves, prune back the weedy overgrowth and nourish the shoots.

## **Fight for pay, vital class battleground**

A serious product of the decay of trade unions is the neglect of pay. Pay is our battleground. It reflects the state of struggle because it is concerned with the proportion of our labour power that we control.

In order to control the spiral of wage rises it could not control, capitalism took a bold step. It made credit easily available to workers. With Thatcher came the explosion of credit, and with that (and the destruction of industry, which led to mass

unemployment) came a move away from the fight for pay. The collapse of the credit bubble has contributed directly to the slump and depression of the past five years, and now to the present depression.

But this depression is not the product of workers' profligacy; it is the product of workers' cowardice. We think now that we get what we want materially through credit, not by joining a union and putting in a pay claim. In borrowing rather than fighting we assist in our own ideological corruption.

For progress to be made in Britain's economy, this thinking must go. We should spend only what we earn and if we don't earn enough we'll have to fight the employers for more. The fight for pay is central to our survival as a class, and should be put back on the agenda of our trade unions.

## **Regenerate industry, key to an independent future**

Should our country be attacked in war now we would be defeated, because we do not make enough things here. The Soviet Union won the Second World War because Soviet workers made everything there. Their country was materially, as well as politically, independent.

We are encouraged to adopt a corrosively superior attitude: we need manufactured goods, but we are told they should be made abroad. All that dirt! We are encouraged to want energy without digging coal. We'd rather get our electricity from nice clean sources like wind and sea power, but these sources will not keep the lights on.

Science lies at the heart of progress. The two concepts are synonymous. Science must be at the centre of planning a new future for Britain in which all our resources, human and material, are used to meet the needs of our people, and not to make profit for capital. The regeneration of industry in Britain is essential to the future of our nation. Our grandparents, and theirs, knew this. We must now reassert it at the centre of class thinking.

## **Build the Party**

The task of the Party is singular: to change the ideology of the British working class in order that they make revolution here. Until and unless we achieve this we cannot claim success. And when we do achieve it the work of our class will have only just begun. It is vital that we build the Party to assist the class in this historic role.

## Teachers returning to their schools after the Christmas break face... professionalism, the service they work in...

# Pay, pensions and conditions: the battle for

EDUCATION SECRETARY Michael Gove has never disguised his contempt for teachers, particularly those who speak out against his erosion of the education system. Last year, when teachers were planning protest strikes against the government's unjustified assault on pensions, he called on head teachers to side with him against striking colleagues. His arrogance was instantly seen for what it was, and he succeeded in uniting teacher unions, including the heads' union, and propelled thousands more into the fray.

Last summer, his inept handling of the GCSE results fiasco angered every quarter of the educational establishment. In early December, he used Osborne's Autumn Statement as a vehicle to roll out his latest ploy, a proposal to scrap nationally agreed pay scales and foist performance-related pay onto schools. This despite there being no evidence to back his claim that this deregulation of long-standing pay scales will "...make teaching a more attractive career and a more rewarding job", and will "drive up teacher quality". Indeed the evidence points the other way.

A recent international survey by the OECD found that in countries such as Britain performance-related pay leads to a decline in teaching standards. Nationally agreed pay scales, along with conditions of service, afford teachers, and schools, a



20 October 2012, fighting for a future: teachers join the TUC march in London.

Photo: Workers

degree of protection and, in the main, free them to get on with the business of educating children. Gove's desire to remove this protection is driven by his

desire to reduce teachers to a state of individual helplessness and servility, the better to continue with his anti-education "reforms".

## The sad story of 'payment by results'

MOST MINISTERS, and Gove is no exception, like to delude themselves that they are innovators, that they are coming up with new solutions to old problems. This is rarely the case. A recent re-reading of a well-thumbed copy of *THE STRUGGLE FOR EDUCATION 1870 - 1970* (Bourne and MacArthur 1970) unearthed the following gem:

"I cannot promise the House that this system will be an economical one and I cannot promise that it will be an efficient one, but I can promise that it shall be one or the other. If it is not cheap it shall be

efficient; if it is not efficient it shall be cheap."

With these words, performance-related pay for teachers in England and Wales was introduced to the House of Commons in 1861. The plan, which, it was thought, would cut the growing cost of education if teachers did not succeed or raise standards if they did, was the idea of a commission into the state of popular education in England (The Newcastle Commission). It proposed "...to institute a searching examination...of every child in every school...and to make the prospects

and position of the teacher dependent, to a considerable extent, on the results of the examination.

The notorious "payment by results" system lasted for thirty years, during which time teachers taught to the test, were confined to a narrow, boring curriculum, attempted to arrange the school intake, cheated, ignored bright children and drilled and beat the slower ones until they could satisfy the all-powerful inspectors.

Such is Gove's vision of education, to turn the clock back 150 years. ■

# ce an unparalleled assault on their unions, their

## r education

In the same way as many others like him, he looks to the United States for ideas, and yes, performance-related pay has history there. Diane Ravitch, a research professor of education at New York University, made the following observations in a recent *GUARDIAN* article:

“School authorities in the US have tried performance pay plans for almost 100 years. They have never worked. They don't work because teachers don't want to compete with one another for cash prizes. They don't work because teachers are already doing the best they can, and the lure of a bonus doesn't make them work harder or better. Currently, the US has embarked on a scheme to pay teachers based on the rise or fall of their students' test scores.

“The frequency and cost of testing are spiralling upwards, and US teachers are greatly demoralised. In some districts, the teacher of the year has been fired as ‘ineffective’, because scores on unreliable standardised, multiple-choice tests did not go up as much as the computer predicted they should.

“The most thorough examination of bonus pay was carried out by economists at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. They offered a cash prize of \$15,000 (£9,000) to teachers who could raise test scores. They created a control group and an experimental group. At the end of three years, they determined that the bonus made no difference. Both groups got the same result. Mayor Bloomberg in New York City awarded bonuses to whole schools if they raised scores. That didn't work either, but \$56m was wasted.”

### Penalising

To add insult to injury, on the eve of the Christmas holiday, Gove has weighed into the current form of teacher action with a 24-page letter to head teachers, advising in minute detail how they are to be encouraged to penalise members of the NUT and the NAS/UWT who are presently engaged in a campaign of action short of strike action designed to defend pay and conditions.

### “Gove's intervention, inviting head teachers to dock the pay of teachers, should blow up in his face...”

This form of action, effectively a work to rule, has been in place since September. Essentially it comprises a refusal to complete administrative tasks over and above what has already been agreed. It includes refusal to cover for absent colleagues, refusal to supervise school dinners, refusal to write unnecessary reports etc.

The action is popular with teachers because it is flexible. It enables staff to focus on areas of school life which cause deep resentment, most notably the loss of valuable marking and preparation time to cover for absent colleagues. Teachers are entitled to a break, and supervising a

dining room full of students hardly qualifies as a break, so if it's an issue in a particular school, staff can deal with it.

It means teachers can begin to exercise some influence at their place of work without disrupting education. It is especially popular with younger colleagues who have never known a working life not circumscribed by the most draconian anti-union legislation. They are relatively new to struggle but embrace this guerrilla action because they see themselves as defending a profession under constant attack.

Gove's intervention, inviting head teachers to dock the pay of teachers who work strictly to their contract, should blow up in his face. If the teacher unions keep their wits about them, it will. In a rebuke to Gove, the general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, while acknowledging that school leaders would rather the action was not taking place, nevertheless said, “...it is part of our

*Continued on page 12*

## Meet the Party

The Communist Party of Britain's new series of London public meetings began on 27 September, with further meetings on 15 November, 12 February and 11 June; all are held in the Bertrand Russell room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL, nearest Tube Holborn, and start at 7.30 pm. Other meetings are held around Britain. All meetings are advertised in What's On, see page 5.

**M** The title of the next meeting, on Tuesday 12 February, is “Britain, not three nations”. Details of further meetings will be announced in *WORKERS* and at [www.workers.org.uk](http://www.workers.org.uk).

**M** The Party's annual London May Day rally is always held on May Day itself, regardless of state bank holidays – in 2013, Wednesday 1 May, in Conway Hall, Holborn. There will also be May Day meetings elsewhere in the country.

**M** As well as our regular public meetings we hold informal discussions with interested workers and study sessions for those who want to take the discussion further. If you are interested we want to hear from you. Call us on 020 8801 9543 or e-mail to [info@workers.org.uk](mailto:info@workers.org.uk)

## Helicopters returning to base or ditching in the dash to reap profit from the North Sea

# Safety issues grow as scrambling

*Continued from page 11*

job to sensitively manage the impact of the industrial action, and we will make our own judgements about the best course of action to meet the needs of our schools". In other words: Keep your nose out, Gove.

The teacher unions need to consider their response carefully. They must reflect that calls for strike are one offs, not a campaign. Gove is attempting to make this particular battle a positional one. We can't fall for that.

Despite his rhetoric about the present campaign being ineffectual, Gove is attacking it because it is so effective. The message ought to be "Keep up the good work". Teachers, despite what some self-styled leaders proclaim, are not ready to strike at the drop of a hat. But they are professional, and will engage in action to defend their service.

### Bluff

Let's call Gove's bluff. His inflammatory letter to headteachers simply advises of the Department for Education's view. We choose to take a different view. Teacher unity is vital here. The unions representing classroom teachers and heads have worked together effectively and must do so now.

New tactics may have to evolve. What about meetings for parents in the evening or at weekends so that teachers can explain why they are doing what they are doing? It won't come top of the list of militant stances to take, but would be important to securing support outside of the profession.

Save the set piece battles for when they are needed, for instance should a rogue head choose to take Gove at his word and dock teachers' pay for the crime of doing their job.

What we face is a genuine struggle for education. It will be protracted and therefore needs forms of action which can be sustained, and will see teachers continuing to work in the best interests of the children they teach long after Gove has become a half-remembered joke. ■



**Rescue workers taking part in a safety exercise in the North Sea.**

TWO SEPARATE incidents on 12 December brought home the pressures and dangers bearing upon those engaged in the energy industry in the North Sea. Emergencies affecting two helicopters tasked with transporting workers caused them to return to shore.

In the first, a helicopter carrying 18 workers had to be escorted by emergency services to Aberdeen after leaving the Borgholm Dolphin platform. In the second incident, a helicopter with 15 workers on board had to return to base while en route to the Elgin field. A persistently bad safety record lies behind the fears that

are being created by such incidents.

It was the same type of aircraft – the Super Puma – that crashed in the North Sea in 2009 with the loss of all 16 on board. Another ditched in May this year 30 miles off the Aberdeen coast, with emergency services rescuing all 14 passengers and crew.

In a similar ditching in the sea off Shetland in October, 19 were rescued. With continual groundings of this Super Puma fleet (manufactured by French company Eurocopter) working lives here can only get more arduous over a winter of storms and high seas.

the sea – no wonder there are concerns that corners might be cut in the North Sea...

## Preparation for North Sea oil and gas gathers pace



Photo: Workers

RMT Offshore organiser Jake Malloy announced an agreement that these helicopters should remain grounded until their problems were finally fixed. The industrial officer of Unite, John Taylor, had raised “serious concerns about whether these aircraft are fit for purpose” and praised the pilots and emergency workers for their handling of the incidents.

This year will see the 25th anniversary of the massive gas leak and fire on the Piper Alpha platform in July 1988 in which 167 workers died – the world’s worst disaster in the offshore industry. Unions demanded and achieved a transformation

in attitudes, but still several smaller, but serious events occurred. Now with the increasing scramble for energy, pressure is mounting and corners are likely to be cut. Increased vigilance is needed to prevent the growth of hazardous conditions.

### Challenges increase

Many new oil and gas fields are in much deeper waters, further out. For example the Rosebank field, developed by Chevron, is 80 miles to the north west of the Shetland Isles and in waters 3,700 feet deep. These oil fields are believed to

contain a fifth of Britain’s remaining reserves, with the Rosebank field having 240 million barrels of recoverable oil.

The current exploration of the Faroe-Shetland Channel takes the industry away from the North Sea and out into the Atlantic. A report in November from Scottish Enterprise identified 86 new oil fields on the British Continental Shelf – 34 under development and another 52 where work will start around 2016. In October, Shell announced its development of the Fram oil and gas field – 135 miles east of Aberdeen – which alone will provide 5 per cent of Britain’s gas requirements at peak production.

But training in the correct skills is not keeping pace – over 120,000 skilled workers need to be recruited over the next decade to cope with these developments. The “hub” for the oil and gas industry could well move out of Britain if the skills are not rebuilt and the necessary infrastructure provided. A shortage of drilling rigs compounds the problem.

### Vying for control

Alf Young in *THE SCOTSMAN* pointed out “the future of North Sea wealth could prove to be the defining question in the independence referendum” and indeed Alex Salmond never misses a chance to lay claim to the pot of gold he is sitting on. Yet he links his fate to the European Union, which has been manoeuvring for years to control energy policy throughout Europe.

Who actually controls the industry? In November BP sold £625 million of stakes in five of its oil fields to the Abu Dhabi government-owned Taqa. China’s state oil company, CNOOC, is taking over Canadian firm Nexen, which has major North Sea interests including joint operation of Britain’s largest oil field, the Buzzard field, and employing 1200 in Britain. The Beijing based Sinopec is buying a 49 per cent stake in Canadian company Talisman’s North Sea operations.

The list of such deals goes on and on. It’s time Britain took control of its own energy resources. ■

If you compare eighteenth-century British capitalism with today similarities. Most noticeably a tendency to tyranny...

## A tale of two eras – but the same plot

SOMETIMES OLD sayings seem very apt. And when you compare the ruling class treatment of workers in the early and late phases of British capitalism, then the old adage “The more things change, the more things stay the same” does have relevance. The fear, the tendency to inflict deliberate harm and the reliance on tyranny are strangely similar. Indeed, the past eagerly provides many glaring parallels to the present.

Stuart pretensions to absolute monarchy were defeated in the English Civil War (1640-48) and, following the final acknowledgement of bourgeois ascendancy with the Glorious Revolution of 1688, modern capitalism spread relentlessly across Britain. By the early 18th century, Britain’s new bourgeois rulers set about consolidating their power, exploiting and oppressing workers here as well as those in a growing empire. Consolidation meant draconian laws and stern actions.

First came The Riot Act (1715) which made it unlawful for 12 or more people to assemble and allowed the ruling authorities to disperse crowds of workers (though its implementation wasn’t always successful). If people didn’t disperse, then members of the crowd were guilty of a felony, for which they could be hanged or branded. The Transportation Act (1719) sanctioned felons being sent as forced labour with terms of seven or ten years to the colonies of the West Indies or North American plantations. 50,000 “felons” were despatched to North America between 1719 and 1785.

The Combination Act (1721), passed at the behest of master tailors wanting to undermine 15,000 striking journeyman tailors, made trade union efforts to advance wages or lessen hours illegal. The Workhouse Act (1723) established the hated workhouses, the bane of working class life for the next two centuries. In the aftermath of the collapse of the South Sea Bubble and ensuing economic depression, the infamous Waltham Black Act (1723) brought in the death penalty for 50 criminal offences such as poaching, which in some areas was the alternative to hunger. It remained in force for a hundred years, gaining a lasting notoriety.

The capitalists slashed the living standards of industrial and agricultural workers and destroyed their jobs. Merchant seamen (and sometimes others) were press-ganged forcibly into the imperial navy. There were 1,257 Acts of Enclosure between 1730 and 1780, which evicted customary tenants and landless villagers, driving them off the land.

The 18th-century capitalist state was weighted towards the military and the people were taxed for war: between 1688 and 1815 Britain was at war for 70 out of the 127 years and government expenditure on military purposes did not drop below 60 per cent of overall spending in any one year. All these acts of aggression against our class failed to suppress the working class’s impulse to organise and protect its interests.

### Draconian

The picture at the tail-end of British capitalism remains depressingly familiar. Our ruling class has instinctively resorted to draconian laws. Millions are unemployed or under-employed. Wars abroad have happened in convoy – for the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, and against Iraq and Afghanistan.

In terms of anti-trade union legislation, crippling legislative restrictions have been enacted in this field with repetitive force: in 1968, 1971, 1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004 and 2008. Parliamentary tyranny has increasingly restricted unions’ ability to undertake lawful industrial action, outlawed sympathy strikes, curtailed picketing to workers’ own place of work and six official pickets only, introduced postal balloting for official industrial action, thus preventing decisions taken at workplace meetings, allowed employers’ injunctions against unions and against “unofficial” action, introduced periods of notice for action and other hurdles and interfered in union democracy and autonomy, to name but a few.

Yet despite all these restrictions some unions and workers have still managed to undertake action including instances of downright defiance of trade union



Police “pacifying” pickets during the strike at Pill

legislation.

The erosion of civil liberties is a constant feature of recent decades. Since 1997, 60 new powers have been introduced in 25 acts of parliament. The Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 allowed cover up of government errors, the holding of the DNA of innocent people and the sharing of personal data between public bodies.

Police were given powers to detain terror suspects for 28 days without charge, with new stop-and-search prerogatives allowing them to apprehend people without reason at airports and other designated areas. There are restrictions on the right of peaceful protest.

There has been a massive rise in surveillance in Britain, including the ever-present CCTV camera, new laws allowing individuals to be electronically tagged, and

's, there are clear



Kingsons, St Helens, May 1970.

the legal interception of letters, emails and phone calls

The Coroners and Justice Bill currently going through parliament seeks to hand the state the dictatorial power to prevent embarrassing revelations of government failure becoming public. Coroners are currently able to criticise the government and any of its agencies that cause a death. But the Bill would hand the state new powers to suspend inquests, or force them into secret. It would also allow government agencies to share personal data. Only growing, mass action will defeat the restrictive tactics.

We know what the rulers think of us: tyranny, oppression and impoverishment are their holy trinity, always. Breaking from their yoke and creating our own freedom to operate is the next great endeavour. ■

# D DEMOCRACY AND THE EU

More from our series on aspects of Marxist thinking

**We the working people of Britain created our own democracy. We had the advantage of living in an island, so there was no issue between ourselves and foreign countries over the definition of borders. We denounce and disown the traitor class who tried and try now to use Britain as a base for seizing other countries.**

Countries' borders are always porous – ours as much so as any other. Daniel Defoe's hugely popular satirical poem of 1701, *The True-Born Englishman*, proved that no such person exists: we are all of mongrel stock and the stronger for it. But those who live here and feel they belong here, who work here and raise their families here, are British no matter where they were born.

Britain is for the British working class – to own and to run.

It has not always been so. There were still slaves in Britain when the Domesday Book was compiled (1086). The king was a tyrant even when forced to sign Magna Carta and concede the right to trial by a jury of one's peers. The peasants were still serfs after 1381, when their revolt was put down. But the hunger for democracy was stirring over these centuries, and the tide began to turn with the Civil War and Commonwealth of the 1640/50s, which saw the end of absolute monarchy in Britain and the assertion of the mass of the people in the New Model Army.

When, a century later, the greedy land-owners began to enclose the common land, and capitalists opened factories in the towns with offers of work (14-hour days) for dispossessed villagers, people flooded into the towns and, out of the depths of despair, invented a new twist on democracy: trade unionism. Organised in unions, workers won the 10-hour day and then the 8-hour day, and could stand up and face the employer and the world, with pride in their trade, money in their pockets and affirming this country as their country.

This has been the root from which real British democracy, British rule over Britain, began.

But now we find ourselves with our laws made by a foreign body, daily asserting extra powers for itself, trying to force us into a single economy with a single currency, soon to establish a single armed force, already attempting to impose its Constitution and Head of State upon us.

We fought off Napoleon and Hitler and their would-be pan-European dictatorships. We the people demand rule by the people (true democracy). Not rule by professed "representatives" – they don't represent us. Cut out the middlemen. We demand a referendum: Britain out of the EU now!

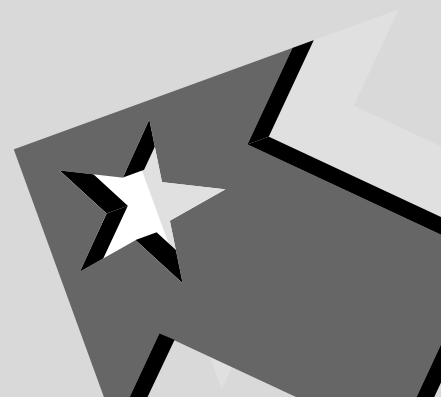
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# Back to Front – A bad anniversary

**‘The rise of the European Union and the decline of British working class clarity and political acumen are linked...’**

THE YEAR 1972 saw the House of Commons commit Britain to joining the European Economic Community, the pre-runner of the European Union, by 309 to 301 votes. Since 1972 the controversy around Britain’s membership of the EU has never ceased or faded away.

Every day sees further introduction of EU directives and regulations, all intended to further entwine and entangle Britain into political and economic integration with the EU. For example, British law addressing street pedlars and beggars from the 19th century is scrapped as EU directives overturn protective legislation in favour of unbridled aggressive door to door sales techniques.

The fortieth anniversary of then Prime Minister Edward Heath’s drive to Europe, supported as now by politicians from all parliamentary parties, was the only alleged triumph of Heath’s brief but brutal premiership. Unfortunately it is a “triumph” we are still suffering from.

Look at other dates in 1972 and we see a very different vibrant working class compared with today, dealing with attack after attack.

In January, the first national miners’ strike since 1926, followed by a state of emergency in February. In March and April the Transport and General Workers Union are fined tens of thousands of pounds by the National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC) over secondary

picketing in Liverpool docks.

ON 21 July five dockers are jailed for contempt of court for refusing to lift secondary picketing, and released on 26 July as millions of workers take supportive strike action.

In September the TUC suspends any union registered under the Industrial Relations Act. In November the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers is fined by the NIRC for refusing a scab a union card. The AUEW responds by calling its million strong membership out on strike.

Set against those tidal waves of class battles, the actions of treacherous MPs providing the majority for the passing of the European Communities Bill, may have slipped past the attention of Britain’s organised workers. But 40 years on the deindustrialisation of Britain, the fragmentation of union and nation, the destruction of independent working class and trade union organisation, the loss of sovereignty and national independence, plus Britain’s perilous finance situation, cannot be ignored and must be firmly laid with Heath and those Quisling-like MPs.

The rise of the European Union and the decline of British working class clarity and political acumen are linked. We should mark the fortieth anniversary by reasserting our determination to take Britain out of the European Union, break the chains and reassert our class and national independence. ■

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