

WORKERS

WWW.CPBML.ORG.UK

MAY/JUNE 2019 £1



JUST LEAVE!

Rail Stop the sell-offs!

NHS Overdue questions

Economy The global slump

Fishing Battle for the future

Brexit It's up to us

Sovereignty The key issue

Honda Swindon anger

Tube Strike vote

Wind Jobs outsourced

plus News, Book

Reviews, Historic Notes

and more

WORKERS



It's up to us

BY NOW we should have left the EU. Vast swathes of people are incensed. But it is evident that Brexit will only be delivered if the people move to enforce it by neutering an obstructionist parliament.

Nothing good will happen until parliament is overwhelmed by the people's desire to leave. Left to its own devices parliament is too much the instrument of the vested interests in society, the big companies and banks, to move unilaterally against the EU.

The overwhelming majority of MPs voted Remain. With honourable exceptions, most MPs want to defy the referendum and stay. And most of those who lean towards Leave lack the courage and the confidence in Britain and in its people to secure a WTO deal for independence.

This obstruction of Brexit is not democracy. But democracy neither begins nor ends in the flawed institution of parliament. It exists to the extent that the people are prepared to exercise their sovereignty, their control.

Parliament didn't come up with the idea of Brexit. It came from the people, from the growing understanding that inside the EU all control was being transferred to transnational companies and their appointees in the European Commission. The EU abolishes borders to maximise profits and eliminates national sovereignty to silence organised opposition.

Only the pressure of the people kept us out of

the euro. Only their stubborn determination forced parliament to agree the in-out referendum. Only the determination to make decisions about our country in our country delivered the 17.4 million votes to Leave.

Brexit does not merely rely on democracy, it is currently its expression. Democracy and Brexit are not separate entities – they are two sides of the same coin. To win Brexit, to enforce the result of the referendum, we must start from one basic principle: against parliament's grubby deals and machinations, the people must enforce their own sovereignty, their own control.

Let Leavers organisations spring up like mushrooms everywhere – in cities, towns and villages – devising local campaigns to unleash the potential of sovereignty in the people. It's already begun.

Channel the anger. Generate the tactics of collective campaigns across the country. Let any despair be temporary. Focus activity on reshaping the politics of Britain for independence.

It took a lot of effort by many people and organisations to get Brexit under way with the referendum. It will take much more to prise Britain out of the EU, to become a truly independent nation. But it will happen because Brexit is based on the people.

The genie of British independence is out of the bottle and cannot be put back. Everyone needs to get involved. Brexit is the future, but we will have to build it ourselves. ■



WORKERS is published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB.
ISSN 0266-8580

www.cpbml.org.uk [@cpbml](https://twitter.com/cpbml)
Issue 212, May/June 2019



Contents – May/June 2019

News Digest

Cold winds for offshore jobs, p3; Tube maintenance staff vote for strike, p4; Anger at Honda closure, p5

03

Features

What are we waiting for? Just leave!, p6; The gathering global slump, p10; The battle for British fishing, p12; Stop the rail sell-offs!, p15; Overdue questions for the NHS, p18

06

End Notes

Book Review: How finance capital makes us all poorer, p20; A culture of secrecy, p21. Historic Notes: Glasgow 1919 – the legacy, p22

20



OFFSHORE WIND	Work goes abroad
EDUCATION	College pay strike
TUBE	Maintenance strike vote
FREXIT	Solidarity from France
EU	MEP elections
CARS	Anger at Honda closure
BREXIT	Riot police at the ready
E-NEWSLETTER	How to subscribe
ON THE WEB	More news online
WHAT'S ON	Coming soon

Paul J Robinson/shutterstock.com



North Sea wind farm off Redcar.

Cold winds for offshore jobs

THE LACK of Scottish jobs in its burgeoning offshore wind farm sector was highlighted at the start of April. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon once again gave evasive replies when asked why promises that substantial amounts of work would be placed in Scottish yards have not been fulfilled.

The issue has flared up over the huge Moray East wind farm project, which will generate 950 MW, at half the cost of earlier sites. It is one of many new developments in Britain's coastal waters. Our geography and engineering skills have made it possible for Britain to be one of the leading countries in the world for this type of power generation.

But Scottish yards are being shut out of contracts for the new work, even though they have proven expertise in offshore oil and gas platforms to build turbine installations. These include Burntisland Fabrications (BiFab), which was saved from closure in 2018 after a work-in. Nearly all the contracts for Moray East have gone to overseas firms, though some fabrication for Moray will take place at the Newcastle facility of Smulders, a firm mainly based in Belgium.

BiFab workers had expected to benefit from commitments to bring work to Scotland made at the time the projects were approved. But the company was awarded only a small part of the first £200 million construction contract at Moray East and also lost out for the Kincardine floating wind farm project. The company's future is now uncertain. ■

• A longer version of this article is on the web at www.cpbml.org.uk.

EDUCATION

College pay strike

WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE staff have been taking to the picket lines across three college sites in a dispute over pay. Members of the University and College Union (UCU) want a 5 per cent increase or £1,500 – whichever is greater – so the college can attract and keep.

A three-day strike started on 9 April. UCU regional official Anne O'Sullivan said: "It's absolutely crucial that we build some momentum behind a campaign to improve teachers' pay because they are the people who teach the next generation." ■

• A longer version of this article is on the web at www.cpbml.org.uk.

BREXIT

New leaflet

THE CPBML has a new leaflet on Brexit. For copies, or help distributing them, email info@cpbml.org.uk. ■

FOR DEMOCRACY. FOR THE PEOPLE.

OUT OF THE EU! FOR AN INDEPENDENT BRITAIN!

Take responsibility. Take control.

PARLIAMENT HAS set its face against the people. Be something to stir in Britain, to end down the country ordinary people are doing it for themselves, demanding that our democratic decision be honored.

After the referendum, frustration and dismay reached as Britain groups and campaigns gained funding and (predictably) massive media coverage. Yet the official leave campaign collapsed, as if the job were done.

Now... things are changing. Independent local groups are setting up (some never went away) and a truly national network of grassroots organisations.

'The genie is out of the bottle.'

The people must take control – it certainly can't be left to MEPs!

A country that controls its own future can plan for the needs of the people. It will be able to sort out the problems across society in the NHS, education, home care and residential care, house the homeless, protect our industries, services and environment from corporate predators, control the movements of capital and labour.

BY THE COMMUNIST PARTY *

If you have news from your industry, trade or profession call us on 020 8801 9543 or email workers@cpbml.org.uk



ON THE WEB

A selection of additional stories at cpbml.org.uk...

Euro finance shock – more to come

The EU's financial weakness reappeared at the end of 2018 after the European Central Bank announced that growth would be lower than expected and inflation higher. That was a dress rehearsal for what is to come.

Leavers are doing it for themselves

Away from parliament and the parliamentary parties, people are starting to organise to defend Brexit in bodies such as Leavers of Britain.

Dishonourable members

All that is rotten about governance in Britain has come together in this pernicious parliament.

Italian scientists take a stand against the ECJ

Researchers from Italy took their campaign for scientific freedom to Brussels – by eating rice pudding in front of the European Parliament...

Council tax - pay twice over

Government is cutting its funding for local authorities. Services are cut or the shortfall is made up by increases for council tax payers, further damaging public services that people rely on.

Plus: the e-newsletter

Visit cpbml.org.uk to sign up to your free regular copy of the CPBML's electronic newsletter, delivered to your email inbox. The sign-up form is at the top of every website page – an email address is all that's required.



Workers

Hundreds of people came over from France to join the Brexit rally in Westminster on 29 March, hammering home the message that leaving the EU is not "anti-European".

Tube maintenance strike vote



Workers

TUBE UNION RMT confirmed in April that over a thousand key London Underground maintenance and engineering staff have voted by around nine to one for both strike action and action short of a strike. The dispute is over cuts to train preparation and inspection schedules which the union warns would have a devastating impact on both service reliability and public safety.

Earlier this year RMT told London Underground it was going into dispute over the fleet train preparation schedules. Despite that, says the union, the management has "continued to fail to engage in any meaningful consultation or negotiation with RMT or provide the union with full information on all safety aspects".

The proposals will "decimate inspection frequencies beyond all recognition", says the union. Not only will it lead to major fleet issues, it will inevitably lead to more train failures in service, putting unacceptable pressure on members and leaving the whole of London Underground and the travelling public at significant increased risk.

The RMT has demanded that no changes to fleet preparation schedules take effect without agreement, and that all current activity in relation to the matter is halted until full consultation and negotiation has taken place, including full examination of all safety aspects.

RMT General Secretary Mick Cash said: "The result of this ballot shows just how angry Tube staff are at proposals London Underground are attempting to bulldoze through that would decimate the inspection and safety culture on the fleet. [Management] should pull back immediately rather than crash on regardless of the consequences of their actions." ■

EU MEP elections

JUST WHEN you thought the cost of the EU couldn't get any higher, we're now going to have to fork out for the cost of an election which has historically seen the lowest turnout of any national poll.

Should Theresa May fail to secure a withdrawal agreement by 23 May,

taxpayers face a £109 million bill to hold European elections, even though elected officials would only remain in their posts until the new Brexit deadline day of 31 October.

Employing thousands of presiding officers and poll clerks will alone cost £12 million, on top of £3.7 million for staff to count the votes, and a further £6.2 million for returning officers and their associated expenses. ■

BREXIT

Riot police at the ready

SENIOR OFFICERS at the National Police Coordination Centre have said that more than 10,000 riot police are being readied to manage potential disorder in the wake of Brexit, with plans in place to handle riots, looting and other disturbances.

The first wave of 1,000 officers will be ready to mobilise with just an hour's notice.

The state knows just how serious Brexit is – the most serious challenge to the existing order, and to all the people who benefit from it, since the war.

They're not getting ready to deal with people queuing for toilet paper. They're getting ready for the civil disturbance that may result from the ruling class keeping us in the EU against our will – which is what enforced membership of a customs union, or repeated extensions of Article 50 would represent. ■



Honda workers marching through Swindon.

Anger at Honda closure

HONDA WORKERS marched through Swindon on Saturday 30 March in response to the company's shock announcement that it was closing its factory there. The march was organised by the Unite union.

Closure will mean the loss of 3,500 jobs at the Swindon plant by 2022. An estimated further 12,000 jobs are at risk across the supply chain and in the local area.

Unite, in calling for the march, said it was determined to fight for these jobs as part of a wider fight for the future of British manufacturing. It pointed to the extensive range of automotive manufacture, design and component supply based in Britain. The union believes that if a facility like Honda Swindon can be lost, then no others are safe.

Honda is, like other car manufacturers, at a tipping point in the shift of production facilities from petrol and diesel cars to all-electric. Car makers offering hybrid powered vehicles in their range saw that as a stepping stone to all-electric manufacture. In reality this change was always going to be quite distinct and potentially dramatic. Hybrid cars are still based on an internal combustion engine. All-electric propulsion is very different in manufacture and operation.

Honda's strategic move towards all-electric was not a surprise. But Honda UK workers are angry about the timing and the company's unilateral decision not to site any all-electric manufacture here.

Honda arguably made the decision to leave Britain some time ago regardless of Brexit. Sales of the Civic have fallen, as have all Honda sales in Europe. Honda seems to give Europe a lower priority than the US and China. The brand sells ten times more cars a year in each of those regions than it does in Europe. New models are often launched up to two years later here than in other parts of the world. ■

- An earlier and longer version of this article is on the web at www.cpbml.org.uk.

WHAT'S ON

Coming soon

MAY DAY

Out of the EU! For an independent Britain!

Celebrate May Day at our public meetings in Glasgow, Leeds and London. See notice, p11.

JUNE

Wednesday 19 June, 7.30pm

Bertrand Russell Room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL

"What does Britain need for independence?"

CPBML public meeting

Leaving the European Union will give Britain the chance to be truly independent. And that chance, when it comes, it won't be a moment too soon. Already, membership of the EU has deformed the economy.



Britain is over-reliant on imports. Investment in education is reduced while skilled workers are poached from other countries. Transport, energy and water are in the hands of foreign interests.

Recent events have also shown that Parliament has turned itself into an enemy of national sovereignty. What kind of democracy will an independent Britain need?

Come and discuss. All welcome. Admission free.



Through the treachery of the government and MPs, Britain to taking back control, they have handed the future of the

What are we waiting for

DELAY, AND MORE delay. Britain is now going to be denied independence for up to 6 months longer, a total of three-and-a-half years after voting for it. The delay could be even longer, should the EU decide. Brexit could be revoked.

This political paralysis is bad for Britain. Thanks to the independence saboteurs in parliament the country cannot move forward on any of the matters crying out to be addressed: changing the country for the better, taking control of industry, energy supply, transport networks, farms, fisheries, trade, and the flow of people and goods into the country.

Long battle

None of these is automatic – each one has to be won. But Britain is still in the EU, still in political and economic shackles. And after the latest humiliating trip by prime minister Theresa May to Brussels, the country faces a longer battle to gain that independence it needs to get started on real change.

Yet the mood among marchers in Westminster on 29 March – the day Britain should have left – was not downhearted. There was anger, of course, but also a real buzz. The outrageous behaviour of Parliament and the Remain camp after the referendum has led to people getting organised once more. People are talking about politics, sharing ideas and taking action.

It is invigorating. Leave organisations have sprung up around the country, though



Workers

Marchers in good heart heading for Westminster on what should have been Independence Day – 29

The EU: mired in debt, riven by division

DEBT

NOWHERE WERE the worldwide economic concerns in December 2018 more evident than in the EU. The EU's financial weakness during 2007-2010 and 2013-2014 reappeared following the "shock" announcement by the European Central Bank (ECB) that growth would be lower than expected – and inflation higher.

Banks across the eurozone found they had alarmingly high financing costs, including Germany's Deutsche Bank. The Italian bank Uni Credit was in the same boat. It was forced to pay almost 8 per cent a year in

return for a loan of €3.5 billion to keep it afloat. And Spain's Santander Bank announced that it was altering its debt repayment schedule to avoid repaying on time the debt owed on one of its bonds.

Analysts from Union Bank of Switzerland have since forecast that €450 billion of banking debt instruments need to be issued in the next twelve months. This has forced the to make a new offer of cheap loans to those banks (that is, printing money).

Data revealed last December show that the EU's financial fractures since 2007 have not even started to mend. In March it



is in political and economic limbo. Instead of being free
country over to the EU...

...? Just leave!



March.

‘Make the MPs do what they promised to do at the last general election.’

unevenly spread at present. Many more are needed, with the London conurbation just patchily organised, for example.

The people must make MPs do what they promised to do at the last general election, but now have reneged upon. MPs must be made to see that if they try to cheat us out of leaving, people won't vote for them. And there may be other forms of resistance.

The government and Parliament have pitted themselves against the people. MPs want Parliament to rule over us, but their authority comes only from the people. The people are sovereign over Parliament – and must exercise that sovereignty.

During the all-too-patient wait for British independence, groups of people have been having what amount to sovereign thoughts. Creative discussions have been springing up about how to run specific areas of the economy like farming, horticulture and fisheries. How are we going to change each one – to improve the environment and animal welfare, for example?

Are the people going to continue to let market forces rule the economy and global companies operate freely within Britain? With independence there will be a choice; we will be able to have a debate and decide.

It won't happen all at once, yet such creative discussions must continue and increase in scope. We will also have to take on those who want independence from the EU only to sign us up to a host of free trade agreements designed to continue to promote the interests of transnational corporations. These will violate our independence, which we will have to fight for and defend. But the opportunities are huge.

Planning

Britain needs to plan an integrated energy supply and an integrated transport network. But no country can control such vital parts of its economy's infrastructure when foreign companies own most of it. Let's open up the debate on that.

We can sort out the problems across society in the NHS, education and training, employment, home and residential care, and housing. We can protect our industries, services and environment from corporate predators. We can control the movements of capital and labour, end the Private Finance Initiative, cut out tax havens. And so on.

None of these can be addressed while living under the EU's four so-called

Continued on page 8

and dissent, doomed to decline...

emerged that the German banks Deutsche Bank and Commerzbank are in talks to merge. This is born out of extreme financial weakness. In short, the ECB and the EU banks are between a rock and a hard place.

ITALY

The Italian economy is in a desperate place, with its leaders forced to break the Maastricht Treaty by escalating the budget deficit above the 3 per cent limit agreed by the EU.

The deficit is set to reach 3.7 per cent by 2022 – and that's on the rather charitable

assumption that there's no slowdown in the global economy during that period. But the EU is so terrified trouble that it let the Italian budget go through even though it broke its own norms.

If Italy becomes unable to service its debt (by repaying its bondholders) it will lead to a full-blown crisis – not least because the Italian economy is ten times the size of Greece's.

On top of that, the EU is now in an even weaker position to take any emergency action, as any bailout of Italy would require approval by the German Bundestag.

RECESSION

The eurozone is on the slide. Growth in the euro countries slowed from 2.3 per cent in 2017 to 1.8 per cent in 2018, with much of the decline coming from poor figures from Germany, the “engine” of the eurozone economy.

Things are so bad that on 10 April the ECB warned that when the next set of figures comes out, they are likely to show that the eurozone economy declined still further over the new year.

Continued on page 8

Continued from page 7

“freedoms” and austerity. Inside the EU you cannot choose any other policies. EU treaties prevent reform and make austerity with its privatisation and wage cuts into constitutional obligations.

It was the EU Council that on 19 June 2015 told the UK to put an end to the present “excessive” deficit by 2016-17 at the latest, and even set deadlines for its annual reduction. The government had to take effective action and report it “in detail” by 15 October 2025! So whoever is in power in Britain, they would have to implement austerity policies while we are in the EU.

By contrast, Brexit does not lead to any one set of policies. The aim of voting Leave was to make our own decisions. We didn’t vote to become Singapore-on-Thames or to become a satellite of the US empire through TTIP Mark Two. Outside the EU we might choose austerity, but the evidence is that increasingly the British people reject it. Outside the EU we could choose instead to invest public money to help grow the economy.

Brexit is about leaving the EU, taking control, becoming independent. The vast majority of the 17.4 million who voted Leave understand this. Many who voted Remain now understand it too. Any proposed “Brexit deal” must answer one question: Does it provide the independence needed to fix what’s wrong in our country, and make it a

fitter place for people to live?

A range of options has been put before Parliament, which was quick to vote down the only option that allowed Brexit – which they call “no deal” and we call Just Leave. All were rejected but conspirators intend to continue trying to get a majority for one or another, or indeed anything new they may devise except Just Leave.

And why would we agree to a customs union? The economy would still be ruled by the EU, as anything a government decided to do to improve it, like public support for essential industries and services, would require approval from the EU court.

EU tariffs

Under a customs union Britain’s trade would be governed entirely by the EU. Brussels would set tariffs for trade with every other country – in or out of the EU – as it does now. Separate trade deals with any country on goods covered by the customs union would continue to be impossible.

Donald Tusk, the European Council president, made it clear that any such option being considered by Parliament would involve accepting the May/EU “withdrawal” agreement as well. That agreement is designed to rob Britain of any pretence of independence. It would trap the nation in the EU without a voice, without a vote and without an exit. It would make Britain a permanent dependent province of the EU.

That agreement, if passed, would effec-

‘Brexit is now about democracy and having a future.’

tively hand control of large areas of policy in the UK to unaccountable officials in the EU. Article 4 allows the EU to “disapply” any UK law incompatible with the agreement. So, a new government could not legislate its way out of it – the agreement would be enshrined in international law.

Throughout Britain’s history, all progress has come from the people. Changes such as universal suffrage, the NHS or the equal pay act were demanded, not given. When the people tell the government what to do, there is progress. When the government tells the people what to do, there is reaction.

Those who consider themselves progressive and yet prefer EU control should consider this question: Can the people be more effective making demands of a government in Britain, or of the EU Commission, where all EU legislation has to arise?

In Britain the people can change the government – even change the way it is chosen and how it governs. (Indeed that looks like an item that should come up higher in our agenda.) But the EU Commission? Its role is writ in stone, in the EU Constitution, as are its four “freedoms”.

...a would-be empire racing down the r

Continued from page 7

The European Commission (right) is forecasting growth of just 1.3 per cent this year, though some analysts say 0.9 per cent is more likely. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund reckons that growth in the UK will be 1.5 per cent. So much for the Brexit armageddon!

According to the EU’s official Eurostat agency, industrial production in the eurozone was 0.3 per cent lower in February 2019 than in February 2018.

Eurostat reported that industrial produc-



Workers

tion outside the eurozone had, in contrast, risen, by 0.3 per cent. So much for the magic of the euro.

SWITZERLAND

The EU’s attempts to force Switzerland into accepting its demands for a new treaty continue to meet resistance.

One huge sticking point is the Swiss procedure for accepting “posted” workers from EU companies.

Switzerland has accepted the principle of free movement, but is unwilling to give up its current arrangement whereby companies



© European Union

Sign here: Theresa May with Angela Merkel and (left) Donald Tusk at the European Council meeting, 10 April.

Whatever the pantomime Parliament and Remain diehards get up to over the coming weeks, or months, or years, Britain will leave the EU because the majority of people understand that we must leave.

Brexit is now about democracy and having a future. It's about being able to hold lawmakers to account and being able to

take control of our economy. It is very much about independence. And this independence matters. It is worth the hassle and upheaval.

Leaving the EU is Britain's great opportunity. The only way forward is to struggle for independence. Brexit must be respected and the government must be forced to heed

the popular demand for independence. It opens up huge opportunities for improving the lives of all who live in Britain, wherever they were born. It is the way forward.

So let's keep calm. Insist on exiting the EU and taking responsibility for making the most of the opportunities made possible by Britain's independence. ■

road to dissolution...

must give 5 days' notice so that the Swiss can check that local terms and conditions are not being undermined.

To the EU these five days – in fact any notice at all – are unacceptable. Swiss employers don't care, but the Swiss trade union federation does, and voted unanimously at its annual conference in autumn 2018 to keep the status quo.

The EU last year threatened Switzerland with being shut out of European stock exchanges – and with barring European companies from Swiss stock exchanges – unless it agreed to its terms by the end of

December 2018.

The Swiss stood firm, and the EU shifted its deadline to the end of June. But that deadline, too, will almost certainly have to be moved because Switzerland is likely to have to hold a referendum on whether to accept the EU deal.

DISOBEDIENCE

The EU is also finding that central Europe has become a thorn in its side. Last year the European Parliament voted to trigger sanctions against Hungary and Poland for

departing from "European values". The process leading to sanctions has been taken up by the European Commission – but all that will do is show up the impotence of the Commission.

In principle, the sanctions could lead to funds being withheld, and even lose Hungary (in particular) its vote in the European Council.

But that won't happen, because it would require a unanimous vote, and the two countries have promised to veto any move to sanction the other. The empire is indeed facing a rebel alliance. ■

**The June 2016 referendum result was entirely rational. It re
between economics and politics....**

The gathering global sl



Federal Reserve (known as the Fed) again raised US base interest rates.

At the time it said that more rate increases were in the pipeline. On that news the worldwide financial edifice began to once more show all the weaknesses that were apparent during the years following 2007.

Collapse

By early December 2018 equity and bond prices had started to collapse by ten per cent or more. Financial markets feared that all central banks, not just the Fed, were about to significantly reverse quantitative easing (QE), the attempt to manage a way out of the last crisis by injecting money into the financial system. But QE stores up problems which emerge later on.

The markets fear that central banks will not only reduce the level of QE, but will also significantly reduce credit. This fear was already beginning to emerge in September 2018 when the EU's European Central Bank (ECB) said that its own quantitative easing programme would stop by the end of 2018.

At the beginning of this year the Fed announced it was putting future anticipated interest rate rises on hold. That was completely opposite to its declared intention a month earlier. Shortly afterwards the ECB announced a similar about-turn in its own monetary policy. Both the US Federal Reserve Bank and the ECB were concerned about negative German industrial data and other economic indicators pointing the same way.

“Pervasive uncertainty”

Outgoing ECB president Mario Draghi admitted on 7 March this year that central banks cannot solve the underlying problem of “pervasive uncertainty”. This has left EU policymakers groping in the dark

The flash financial meltdown at the turn of the year has once again shown that rising interest rates are disastrous for the ECB. Even modest movements upwards would bring it close to bankruptcy and collapse the euro currency. But low rates threaten the European commercial banks

In panic, the EU Commission now wants further integration. This will eventually entail the operational liquidation of EU countries by

THE PUSH to leave the EU is driven by a desire for political independence and not short-term economic gains. But it makes sound economic sense too.

That's because a slump is coming, though it is not down to Brexit, despite the claims of pro-EU propagandists. On the contrary, instability in the eurozone will worsen the economic climate.

But there is a political connection between Brexit and slump. The desire for an independent Britain started to intensify from 2007 onwards. This was at the beginning of capitalism's financial collapse. This prompted the majority of the British populace to want to uncouple Britain from the EU's ongoing failure.

New recession

Globalist reactionaries, the EU among them, have no meaningful political narrative

because the problems of the 2007-2009 financial collapse will not go away. According to a survey released at the beginning of March three-quarters of the members of the US National Association of Business Economics felt a new recession will occur no later than 2021.

The timing of a downturn is not a given, but there's no avoiding the conclusion that capitalism is in a precarious state. Firm evidence was provided late last year. The US

‘The problems of the 2007–2009 collapse will not go away...’

represented a sophisticated view of the connection

ump

‘The City of London in effect keeps the EU currency alive...’

bouncing their populations into complete economic and monetary union.

No doubt when this plan is put into effect, the occasion will be turned on its head and marketed as an administrative tidy up and a sign of the EU going from strength to strength.

In preparation the EU gave itself regulatory powers in mid-March which could ultimately compel one of the City of London clearing houses to move to the EU bloc. A

clearing house acts as an intermediary between buyers and sellers of financial instruments, including those instruments that prop up the integrity of the euro.

The City of London dominates the market for clearing euro-denominated trades. In effect it keeps the EU currency alive. Hence the EU’s desire to transfer the City’s financial clearing house expertise to euroland after Brexit.

Removal

The British government’s response must be the complete removal of all embedded EU institutions that act as covert enforcement agencies here in Britain and facilitate the transfer of our expertise to the EU.

Quantitative easing must eventually end, to avoid a repeat of a type of 1920s Weimar Republic financial collapse and hyperinflation. When it does, the indications are that

euro bank funding costs will rise to unsustainable levels – a repeat of the credit crunch ten years ago.

The EU supervisory authorities – the European Banking Authority, the European Securities and Markets Authority and the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority – were all set up at the start of 2011 with a clear financial aim: to prop up the euro. They were also designed to undermine Britain’s desire for independence at every turn and to promote the ever-closer union of Europe.

These organs and their local regulatory agencies must now be uprooted from British soil.

Unless we cut the ties to the EU in May’s Withdrawal Agreement and the alternatives proposed by Labour, Britain will be in an economic detention cell waiting to be absorbed into the euro. ■

Communist Party of Britain Marxist-Leninist

MAY DAY MEETINGS 2019

OUT OF THE EU! FOR AN INDEPENDENT BRITAIN!



You are cordially invited to join us to celebrate May Day at our meetings in Glasgow, Leeds and London.

On International Workers Day, come and join the discussion on the way forward. The people of Britain must take responsibility for Brexit: we can rely on no one else.

Admission free. All welcome. Details at cpbml.org.uk/events

As both the EU and the UK government seek to thwart the... it is time to take stock of where we are, and how we can p...

The battle for British fis

THE EU'S LEGACY in popular memory could well be two of their deliberately destructive practices. Long after Britain has left and the EU has imploded from its own contradictions, we will still wonder why we allowed Brussels to pay our farmers not to produce food, and to force our fishermen to throw their catches back while those from other parts of the EU plundered our natural resources, and British fishing ports became as dead as mining towns.

Thanks to the tenacity of Britain's fishermen over forty years of EU membership the campaign to save Britain's fishing industry has stayed in the public eye and was a major factor in 2016's vote to leave. This was the case not only in coastal communities, but across the country.

Britain has been losing fishermen from the industry ever since it joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973, down from 50,000 in 1938, 20,000 in the mid 1990s to 12,000. The fishing fleet has lost 29 per cent of its vessels since 1996. Britain has seven times Croatia's coastline, but its fishing fleet is as small.

When Britain joined the EEC, we still landed 1 million tonnes of fish. That figure is now around 0.4 million tonnes, the lowest figure ever recorded, excluding the two world wars. Since 1984 this island country has been a net importer of fish.

Diverse

In spite of this, Britain still has the most diverse fishing industry in the EU. Our fishermen catch species from the open ocean, such as herring and mackerel, from on or close to the sea bed, such as cod and haddock, as well as flatfish, the cartilaginous fish like dogfish and skate, and crustaceans.

These are caught by boats of all sizes: smaller boats work out of small local harbours, supplying locals, restaurants and hotels, while larger boats can work further offshore and in rougher weather.

That is to say nothing of the farming of fish and shellfish, and the rest of the aquaculture industries. Even the pro-EU UK Trade Policy Observatory at the University of Sussex had to admit that the benefits to the UK of leaving the EU's Common Fisheries



Disused fishing boats beached at Aldeburgh, Suffolk

J. Need/shutterstock.com

Build the boats here!

BRITAIN'S FISHING fleet needs new boats, and skilled workers. Some 60 per cent of our fishing fleet has been scrapped over the years. Continental fisherman have had big subsidies to expand their fleets, while ours has been left to decay.

There must be financial support for skippers to help them upgrade boats and equipment, and investment in training for the fishermen of the future. Existing boats and equipment need quayside services, supplies, repairs and maintenance. The knock-on effects for coastal areas could be considerable.

It is clear – from the “scallop and crab war” of 2018, when French fishermen rammed British vessels and threw stones, metal shackles, petrol bombs and rocket flares or, for those with long memories, the Cherbourg incident – that fishermen will need protection. The Fishery Protection Squadron, (the oldest front-line squadron

in the Royal Navy, which also assists with counter-piracy, counter-smuggling, counter-terrorism and border control) will be needed – and to be expanded, too.

In recent years the Squadron has been diverted elsewhere, to patrol the coast of Nicaragua to catch drug smugglers, or to the Mediterranean to assist in the EU-generated people-smuggling crisis. Fishermen need an increase in Marine Enforcement Officers and a greater aerial and at-sea surveillance presence.

The government was forced to reverse its decision to decommission three ships from the Squadron. A decision to build more, and award the contract to BAe Systems in 2013, came just in time. Five new offshore patrol vessels are being built on the Clyde. And yet, astonishingly, the Ministry of Defence has since opened up the procurement of offshore patrol vessels to international competition. ■

Policy are significant.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea Article 61(1) states: “The coastal State shall determine the allowable catch of the living resources in its exclusive economic zone.” But first we will have to get free of the EU.

Law

International law will provide for an exclusive economic zone extending 200 nautical miles from our shores (or if another state is nearer, to the mid-point between us). Britain will be able to control who can fish, and how much, setting limits on the total allowable catch, and ensuring the maintenance of stocks through conservation.

Britain will be able to say that foreign vessels may fish in its waters only if there is

the results of the biggest democratic decision in our history,
to preserve and develop fishing...

hing



uk, March 2019.

a surplus that our fleet cannot catch, and only at our discretion. It would also be open to us to stop foreign nationals owning British boats and obtaining part of our catch by subterfuge.

In the Factortame cases of the late 1980s and early 1990s, Spanish nationals who were quota-hopping appealed to the European Court of Justice against an attempt by the government to require British-registered fishing boats to be British-owned. Unsurprisingly, the ECJ ruled in favour of the Spaniards.

The original EEC Common Fisheries Policy was signed in 1970 by six countries, Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and landlocked Luxembourg. It is the Common Fisheries Policy that forces fishermen to dump millions of dead fish back

into the sea every year because they're either too small or belong to the wrong species. For as long as we remain in the EU our fishermen continue to be subject to these nonsensical rules.

Quotas are allocated for each individual species. It is possible for a fishing boat to set to sea with quotas for four species, but if it catches its quota for one of those four, no matter that its quota for other species is unfilled, it must return to shore part-empty. Britain should have repudiated this nonsense on the morning of 24 June 2016. Now, if we continue to accept EU rule, those fishermen who have survived so far will be ruined.

As for the EU's claim that its aim is not the destruction of the British fishing industry for the benefit of continental fishermen, but

'If we continue to accept EU rule, those fishermen who have survived so far will be ruined...'

conservation of stocks, consider pulse fishing. Dutch trawlers have long used the practice, sending electric signals to stun and startle fish away from the seabed before scooping them up in the nets. These trawlers are owned by multinationals.

Indeed, the EU does have a clear purpose: to serve monopoly capitalism through the huge global companies which now control, and are destroying, our natural resources.

The five largest quota-holders of UK fish control more than a third of UK fishing quota. Four of the top five quota-holders belong to families on the *Sunday Times* Rich List. The fifth is a Dutch multinational whose UK subsidiary – North Atlantic Fishing Company – controls around a quarter of England's fishing quota (*The Ecologist*, 11 Oct 2018).

Blind eye

Pulse fishing is just one example of how the EU turns a blind eye to the practices of governments it favours and the global companies it serves. This type of fishing was declared illegal in 1998, but the ban will not be enforced until mid-2021. Pulse fishing catches juvenile fish too small to be caught by nets, and damages fish eggs and other marine wildlife.

Charles Clover, an expert on over-fishing, wrote in 2004 that "if there were a prize for the most disgraceful country or group of countries on Earth for pillaging the sea, the European Union would be the most favoured recipient".

The regulations that require nations to

Continued on page 14



Fishing for Leave brought a boat to Westminster for the 29 March demonstration and rally.

Time for action

WHAT CAN we do? There's no point in waiting for any government to act. All political parties have shown themselves ready to sell out fishing at the merest hint from their Brussels controllers.

The Fisheries Bill, which was supposed to take back control of British waters, sits on ice, after a second reading and committee stage in December – “The Bill will deliver a sustainable fishing industry, with healthy seas and a fair deal for UK fishermen,” said Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, introducing the bill. Where is it?

The future of fishing was the test by which any proposals about how we leave the EU should have been judged. All possibilities failed the test, except for leaving

without a deal. We should now behave as an independent nation.

There are possibilities: marine blockades of the big container and ferry ports, backed by land-based demonstrations of support; boycotts of imported fish.

The EU's writ no longer runs in Britain, nor around our coasts. And, since we seem to have elections for MEPs, the question of fishing should be raised at every public discussion.

Action must be at the greatest cost to the enemy, at the least cost to ourselves. When the miners fought in 1984-85, they fought for their industry. Largely, they were left to fight alone. We cannot allow the same to happen to our fishing industry and our fishermen. ■

Continued from page 13

cooperate to preserve stocks are not EU-derived, but come from the United Nations, the UN Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

The instrument to keep Britain in the

Common Fisheries Policy is the transition period the EU wants to force on us– and that is stretching further and further into the future. The EU has only to consult, that is tell, the UK government, about new regulations for fisheries, while continuing to take British money.

The extent to which the British government threw away one of its best negotiating

cards may be seen in the fanatically pro-Remain *Financial Times*, which reported that, for all the EU's implacable hostility to “side-deals” in the event of a no-deal Brexit, it was still prepared to allow side-deals on fishing, and made provision for such deals in its contingency measures in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

Under these measures, the EU will also use the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, paid for in no small measure by British taxpayers, to compensate fishermen who can no longer access British waters.

Access

The French, Dutch, Spanish and Danish fleets have come to depend on access to our waters. Eight members state catch on average about a sixth of the fish landed here. Half the fish landed in Belgian ports is fished from British waters.

In the English Channel, British fishermen are allowed 9 per cent of the cod stocks, whereas the French are allowed 84 per cent. Although 88 per cent of the stock of herring is in British waters, our quota is 15 per cent. A study by the University of the Highlands and Islands NAFC Marine Centre, published in 2016, found that about 58 per cent of the fish caught in our waters were landed by EU boats.

Fishing for Leave, the organisation founded by fishing communities to campaign for UK withdrawal from the EU, wants Britain to regain control from vested interests and run British fisheries in our interests.

It has proposed a plan, with the backing of most of the industry, based on a clean break with the EU discredited quota system. The system works on an Effort Control (Days-at-Sea) “keep what you catch” system. There should be exemptions for small vessels – the nurseries for future fishermen.

Fishing for Leave is also calling for the establishment of a UK-wide fisheries institute, so that fishermen and scientists can work together to monitor and manage stocks.

The EU creates a mesh of destructive regulations designed to remove national borders and democratic control along with it. Leaving the EU takes us a step nearer confronting monopoly capitalism directly without one of its servants in the way. ■

Even the government admits the rail system is a mess. Its solution could make matters worse...

Stop the rail sell-offs!



Waiting for a good service: Waterloo Station, London, during the rush hour.

BRITAIN'S RAILWAYS are again under intense scrutiny. Following the spectacular failings associated with the introduction of a new timetable last May, the government finally conceded that the current structure is not fit for purpose, and commissioned ex-British Airways boss Keith Williams to carry out a fundamental review of the industry.

Williams immediately ran into controversy, seemingly ruling out public ownership at the outset. As the RMT's General

Secretary Mick Cash said: "any review of the rail service that rules out the favoured option of 70 per cent of the British people is a political fix from top to bottom. By ruling out the public ownership model from the off, review chief Keith Williams has confirmed exactly what RMT suspected - that this is an exercise in kicking the can down the road while papering over the cracks of an industry in crisis and buying one-man disaster area Chris Grayling a bit of time."

Meanwhile, the announcement by transport secretary Grayling on 10 April that Stagecoach has been banned from bidding for new contracts has opened the door to further takeover of the rail industry by foreign state companies. Stagecoach was disqualified from bidding over its refusal to pick up the full funding risks associated with staff pensions in the franchises, something the

Continued on page 16

The EU's hand in the privatisation of rail

THE FRAGMENTATION of Britain's railways has its roots in an EEC directive (91/440/EEC) handed down in 1991. This directive decreed the separation of infrastructure from train operations, with the express purpose of creating a competitive market. It was the blueprint used by John Major for the Conservative government's privatisation of Britain's railways from 1994 to 1996.

The EU never talks about privatisation. It prefers instead to refer to competition and markets. This lies at the heart of what the EU is really about, and the inevitable

consequence is to privatise and fragment public services.

Many and complex interfaces between different organisations are required to deliver anything approaching a cohesive service such as the railway. With hundreds of players, the interface costs in the railway soar.

Millions of pounds are spent bidding for the huge number of contracts. Bidding costs for passenger franchises has become so great that some players like National Express have pulled out of Britain and now fish in easier places like Germany, where

the contract regime is somewhat cheaper.

Many of the firms coming in are big companies with little interest in the railways – particularly companies engaged in facilities management, cleaning, and information technology. Many then outsource some of their activities, further fragmenting the workforce.

All of this means the employers are much more difficult to organise in – though not impossible, as the RMT showed in February, winning big pay rises for DHL workers in catering and logistics on the West Coast line. ■

Continued from page 15

government previously underwrote.

Rail union TSSA has accused the government of handing the railways over to foreign state-owned companies. And there's another casualty. As Stagecoach is Virgin's partner in the current West Coast franchise, which is up for renewal later this year, this could mean the end of Virgin trains in Britain – a privately-owned company that has grown very fat on the huge state subsidies provided to it since 1996.

All this followed after the Pensions Regulator cast doubt on the government's long-term commitment to continue funding the pensions, stating that £5-6 billion could be needed to plug the funding gap. With private British companies unwilling to assume such a huge risk, the Dutch state national rail company Abellio was awarded the East Midlands franchise on 9 April.

The British government-owned LNER, created when the Virgin and Stagecoach operated East Coast franchise went bust, has outsourced its train fleet staff to Japanese train builder Hitachi, which immediately attacked staff pensions.

The TSSA and other rail unions have vowed to defend the pensions of their franchise company members.

Fragmentation

One blindingly obvious observation Williams has made is that the national railway has become fragmented. It is as if the carving up of British Rail in the 1990s into literally hundreds of separate companies had escaped attention before now!

The creation of Network Rail less than a decade after privatisation was a recognition that fragmentation was a major problem.

'Splitting up Network Rail again could significantly undermine safety...'



RMT News

RMT has secured a major pay victory for members working on the DHL, Virgin West Coast Mainline contract which will see the entire single site in earnings secured by any trade union for any group of workers anywhere in the country in the current climate. overwhelmingly for strike action in an attempt to get a better pay offer. 'RMT is pleased it didn't come to that but with a solid...'

'RMT Easton branch secretary Kathy Manor and RMT lead Staff rep Montague Kazim - working with regional negotiator Craig Johnson -'

Showing how it's done: article in RMT News describing the victory for outsourced catering workers on the West Coast line.

The ownership and operation of the infrastructure were brought back effectively into state ownership, and the maintenance of that infrastructure was also removed from a plethora of contractors and brought in-house. One reason was that significant cost savings that could be made this way.

Judging by the recent statements made by Network Rail, fragmentation is about to increase again. Apparently pre-judging the outcome of the Williams Review – consultation is not due to end until 31 May – Network Rail under its new chief executive Andrew Haines has begun a major reorganisation driven by an obsession with “devolution”.

This will break up its Infrastructure Projects organisation, which oversees the contractors, making five new regional structures responsible for contracting its civil engineering, track, signalling and overhead line renewal work. Its 8 route organisations will increase to 13.

A big concern is that splitting up Network Rail again could significantly undermine safety – and it was safety issues that

led to the demise of Network Rail's predecessor, Railtrack. Network Rail made great improvements, and the railway is now the safest in the world. Any backsliding to the previous poor standards could result in terrible train crashes again, as experienced under the poor coordination of Railtrack.

Devolution

Devolution in Network Rail is already leading to various parts of the company “doing their own thing” when applying safety processes. And it is set to get worse. The company's contractors are concerned that the significantly different safety practices in different parts of the country are confusing for their staff.

Outside parties working on Network Rail infrastructure liaise with a group of Network Rail staff to ensure that the safety of the railway is not compromised, and to protect Network Rail's interests and assets. Worryingly, Network Rail has suggested its staff are a barrier to the outside parties, and it seems intent on watering down its proce-

dures – which will inevitably affect safety.

Network Rail has called its new direction “Putting Passengers First”. Quite how its potential undermining of safety will do that is yet to be explained!

Network Rail Chair Sir Peter Hendy has even said he and chief executive Haines have no problem if Network Rail were abolished! This suggests the breakup of Network Rail and seems to negate any possibility of improving matters by reunifying the railway under a publicly owned British Rail mark 2.

Network Rail has initiated an “Open for Business” programme to encourage third-party investment and delivery, saying it wants reforms to reduce cost, red tape and internal bureaucracy. It is also encouraging outside organisations to compete for work that it normally does in-house.

This is code for more fragmentation and privatisation. The reference to red tape is likely to include watering down safety – ignoring the lessons of history.

Recent ten-year contracts awarded by Network Rail for track, signalling and other infrastructure renewals have seen further fragmentation, with many contractors being brought in. Some of those have dubious records on trade union recognition and are known for cutting costs at the expense of staff pay, terms and conditions.

Hendy and Haines are clearly dancing to the tune of successive governments, continued by Grayling, of pursuing privatisation at all costs, along with embracing the liberalisa-

tion agenda driven by the European Union in support of multinational companies.

Fragmentation has also meant that relatively few railway staff have free travel on the trains. Most staff at the railway’s biggest employer, Network Rail, get cheaper season tickets to and from work, and nothing else. Staff at many rail companies now get no help with travel at all, and their pensions are far worse than they were.

The government also wants to see new passenger operators coming in on an “open access” basis – one will operate from Edinburgh to London from autumn 2021 in competition with state-owned LNER. These private operations are financially viable only if they are able to suck revenues from the franchises, which of course largely depend on government subsidy. Effectively, the public is subsidising the open access operators.

Comical

Unless you are a passenger directly affected by it, the most comical aspect of fragmentation is that coordination across the industry is disappearing. It was the absence of the oft-talked-of “single guiding mind” that led to last year’s timetable meltdown.

Network Rail electrified the Manchester to Liverpool line long before any electric trains could be built to run on it. And even then, the new trains went to the London area, and the 35-year-old trains they replaced were sent north.

Mick Whelan, General Secretary of train

‘The public is subsidising open-access operators.’

drivers’ union Aslef, spoke out after it emerged that Northern Rail had received six much-needed coach trains to increase capacity on lines into Leeds – but could not run them for another two years.

“During the timetable crisis no one – not Chris Grayling, the Secretary of State for Transport who famously washed his hands of the problems passengers were suffering by claiming ‘I don’t run the railway’, and not Northern, ever mentioned that the new, longer, trains wouldn’t be coming in until 2021,” he said.

Whelan continued: “Mr Grayling is the man who hired a ferry company with no ferries and is now responsible for a train company with no trains – or, at least, not the right trains. It’s why his Cabinet colleagues, as well as long-suffering passengers, call him Failing Grayling. That’s why it’s time for him to go.”

Grayling’s departure is long overdue. But when he goes, it will be a long journey to put right the damage done by the fragmentation. The sooner we start, the better. And aside from getting rid of Grayling, we need to cast off the EU that started it all in the first place! ■

Labour joins the fragmentation game

THE LABOUR Party is mired in monumental confusion over the future direction of the railways. Nationally, its policy is to return the railways to public ownership and control. But since privatisation, whenever it has been in power, it has done the reverse.

Transport secretary Chris Grayling wants to break up Network Rail. And he is approaching gullible local Labour politicians and persuading them to help him do it, with the promise of large amounts of cash or valuable assets.

Somehow, these local Labour barons – egos inflated by becoming omnipotent

mayors – can’t understand the con trick Grayling is playing on them.

In London, mayor Sadiq Khan has been suckered into calling for bits of Network Rail to be transferred to Transport for London. Steve Rotheram, “Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region”, is being offered inducements to take over Network Rail’s local infrastructure.

The Labour administration in Liverpool signed up to a “build and maintain” contract with Swiss firm Stadler, which is supplying new trains and taking over the existing fleet together with the depots. The new

trains are designed to run without a guard, and the local politicians relished taking on the RMT union. But it looks as if they have lost that fight as the RMT has stood firm.

And in Wales, the Labour “government” is to take over around routes around Cardiff, about 10 per cent of Wales’s railways, and hand them over to Amey.

It is also outsourcing its train fleets, to Stadler and to Spanish company CAF. A dispute with all the rail unions looks likely unless the Welsh administration gives assurances about the future of pay, conditions and pensions. ■

Change is in the air in the NHS, with its most senior managers and the Health and Social Care Act. And there are new calls to stop

Overdue questions for

IN RECENT MONTHS those in leadership roles in the NHS have broached two big questions which have needed tackling for some time. All those involved in the service need to take part in providing the answers.

The first question dates back to the Thatcher era and the division of the NHS funds between those who “purchase care” and those who “provide care”. This is known as the purchaser/provider split or internal market. Andrew Lansley’s disastrous Health and Social Care Act 2012 made this worse by introducing further institutionalised fragmentation.

The second big question dates back even longer. Why has the NHS relied on overseas trained staff since its inception and what are the ethical and practical implications?

Rejection

Professional bodies, trade unions and providers of the service have been unanimous in their rejection of Andrew Lansley’s Health and Social Care Act 2012. And no one involved can explain how it was in any way helpful in providing NHS services.

That act destroyed the strategic health authorities responsible for NHS planning. It also replaced the primary care trusts (PCTs), which had coordinated local NHS services. In their place clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) were supposed to be the vehicles for GPs to run the NHS.

But CCGs rapidly became nothing more than irrelevant shells, although the better elements have constantly sought to merge themselves into the old PCT boundaries.

The NHS is an unusual organism. It is entirely composed of workers and there is a history of its workers combining to take control of the service. It has taken some time for rejection of Lansley’s act to manifest itself. But even at its most senior levels, the service has tried to bring together those parts of the NHS that Lansley sundered.

As local CCGs began forming federations and clusters, something similar was happening at a national level. NHS England, NHS Improvement and Health Education England are the organisations in overall control of the service in England. They have been drawing steadily closer together. There are limits on how far this integration can go

without repealing the 2012 Act. Everyone is clear about that. But it looks as if the time has come to press the point.

The chief executives of NHS England and NHS Improvement are reportedly ready to push the current Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, to repeal the Health and Social Care Act. This unprecedented move would lift the legislative constraints on integration and open up new, positive opportunities.

If successful, repeal would be a momentous step. For example, existing Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships could develop fully into integrated care systems. This has already started to happen in several parts of the country.

The prospect of single NHS organisations re-emerging raises other possibilities. In 1991 Kenneth Clarke, health secretary in the Thatcher government, introduced the internal market and the purchaser-provider split that accompanied it. These measures undermined clinical responsibility and were the principal organisational mechanisms for doing away with planning in the NHS.

The Chief Executive of NHS England has already mooted that this new move could herald the end of the internal market. There is even now a long-term plan for the NHS that followed on from a five-year forward view. These are the seeds from which regrowth of the NHS becomes a possibility.

In 2008 Kenneth Clarke said on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the NHS, “if one day subsequent generations find you cannot make commissioning work, then we have been barking up the wrong tree for the last 20 years”. He was barking up the wrong tree then, as he is now about remaining in

‘Even at its most senior levels, the NHS has tried to bring together those parts that Lansley sundered.’



Great Western Hospital, Swindon.

the EU. It’s time to lay those ghosts.

The need to resolve the errors of the internal market is becoming urgent. The end point of the purchaser-provider split, amplified by differing regulations brought about by devolution, has led to ridiculous and damaging events.

On 5 April the Countess of Chester NHS Foundation Trust announced that it would no longer treat patients from Wales except for emergencies, due to a row over funding.

The hospital was built as part of the NHS to serve the people of Chester and the wider area of Deeside in Wales. One in five of its current patients lives in Wales, as do many of its staff.

Susan Gilby, the trust’s chief executive said: “This is a national issue related to the highly complex NHS internal market”. That’s true, but she could have added that the

Workers reportedly pressing for repeal of the destructive top looting doctors and nurses from abroad...

the NHS



‘Since its inception the NHS has had an unhealthy reliance on overseas-trained staff.’

professionals they need”. Professor J Meirion Thomas, a cancer surgeon speaking at the same conference, put it plainly: “...there is a moral issue here. We are poaching doctors from abroad and have done for decades.”

It’s vital to address the ethical issue head on as the question is often avoided or side-lined. For example the King’s Fund, an independent health policy think tank, recently produced a report on the NHS Workforce.

This report devotes a whole chapter to international recruitment, which it advocates as a key solution to resolve NHS staffing shortages in the short term. The ethical implications get only a brief mention in the final paragraph! And there’s no recognition that addressing our short-term shortage could leave other nations with a long-term problem.

Other chapters in the report, written by different authors, focus on home grown solutions for workforce development. They document the negative impact of the removal of the nursing bursary in England. The number of placed applicants for undergraduate nursing was 4 per cent lower in 2018 than in 2016.

Progress in expanding the quicker, post-graduate training route, which leads to registration, within a two-year period has also stalled. Given that overseas recruitment often takes a year, then more investment in the post graduate route could provide a homegrown sustainable solution nearly as quickly.

We are still awaiting the first NHS workforce strategy in 25 years as *Workers* goes to press. But the recent King’s Fund report has shown there is a range of homegrown solutions waiting to be coordinated, implemented and funded. ■

fragmentation is further exacerbated because the NHS in Wales is devolved to the Welsh government.

Cross-border protocols are in place to govern how patients who live in Wales but require treatment in England should be dealt with. But payment arrangements are not always the same between the English and Welsh systems! So the end point of the internal market is a refusal to treat patients: its end can’t come too soon.

Home-grown

Since its inception the NHS has had an unhealthy reliance on overseas trained staff. In June 2018, 13 per cent of hospital and community sector staff in England reported a non-British nationality. At some times the reliance on overseas staff waned, but at others— such as the early 2000s – it has

increased.

More recently, the bursary for nursing students was abolished as a cost saving measure by the Treasury. The then chancellor George Osborne faced down opposition from unions and professional bodies, knowing that the NHS could more cheaply rely on other countries to pay the training costs and the NHS could continue to import nurses.

Questioning this reliance over the years tended to be drowned out by sweeping statements that migration is a huge benefit to the NHS. Questions about the impact on countries who were deprived of qualified staff they had trained at great expense were rarely heard in the public domain.

However, speaking at a conference in March this year, Simon Stevens, head of NHS England, said the NHS “must stop denuding low-income countries of health

The bankers of the world like to talk about how they create good at making profits, but the rest of us are bearing the

How finance capital ma



Millionstock/shutterstock.com

The Bank of England: the City has turned Britain into an offshore tax haven.

The finance curse: how global finance is making us all poorer, by Nicholas Shaxson, hardback, 368 pages, ISBN 978-1847925381, The Bodley Head, London, £20. Kindle and e-book editions available. Paperback edition due October 2019.

THIS EXCEPTIONAL book sets out how finance capital can control the economy of countries across the world and how it intends to continue. It also suggests what Britain has to do to fight this.

‘The costs to Britain of hosting a bloated finance sector are estimated at £4.5 trillion over the last 30 years...’

The costs to Britain of hosting a bloated finance sector are estimated at £4.5 trillion over the last 30 years, £170,000 per household. Both the EU and the City of London play a key part in maintaining this robbery.

Only ten per cent of bank loans are to businesses outside the finance sector. And since 1997 UK investment in the non-financial parts of the economy has been the lowest of the 34 OECD member countries. Shaxson explains that “...the financial sector [has] moved away from creating wealth for the economy, and towards extracting wealth from the economy, using financial techniques.”

Haven

The City of London turned Britain into an offshore tax and financial haven and became the core of global financial markets. Shaxson writes that the City was even less regulated than Wall Street, and “...more to blame for the global financial meltdown”.

London and its offshore satellites played a central role in turning global markets into “a hothouse for organised crime, corruption,

tax evasion and the cross-border stashing of looted wealth.” Shaxson explains that both the financial crisis and enabling of crime arose from the same see-no-evil ideology.

In Britain the bankers and their like are protected; few are prosecuted. By contrast, more than 3,700 senior executives went to jail for fraud in the USA after the savings and loan crisis of 1989.

Chancellor George Osborne intervened at the highest levels of the US government to prevent prosecutions of HSBC executives. The US Department of Justice believed the bank had enabled the activities of Russian gangsters, organisations linked to Al-Qaeda and Mexican drug cartels. It decided in 2012 not to prosecute after Osborne’s intervention.

Growth

Shaxson contrasts the period from the Second World War until the 1970s with the period since then. The era of higher taxes and progressive economic policies saw increased growth and reduced inequality. This was not because of the EEC, predecessor of the EU, but because governments controlled capital flows. The shift to fast-falling taxes has been accompanied by long-term decline in growth and rising inequality.

And he describes the current situation in these terms, “the big multinationals, global banks, wealthy individuals and owners of flighty capital...can easily shift profits or themselves across borders” to where it suits them, “and threaten to go elsewhere if they don’t get state handouts.”

It’s not just the City of London involved. Shaxson shows that the European project is not a bulwark against monopoly capital. It is suffused with a competitiveness agenda and is underpinned by the same intellectual fallacies.

On Jean-Claude Juncker’s watch from 1989 to 2013 as finance minister and then prime minister of Luxembourg, that country aided and abetted the world’s biggest multinationals to avoid tax. This was finally exposed in the Luxleaks scandal of 2014. Two whistle-blowers leaked documents showing how Luxembourg had rubber-stamped these schemes, some of them criminal. The only people prosecuted were the two whistle-blowers. Juncker denied all

the “value”. As an exceptional new book lays bare, they are costs...

makes us all poorer

‘Set aside the EU dogma of the free movement of capital that would block sensible measures...’

knowledge, but leaked diplomatic cables show that he fought successfully in Brussels to prevent proper crackdowns.

Shaxson suggests that the answer is to restore national control, “Monopolies need to be tackled using varied and comprehensive economy-wide strategies: empowering labour unions, reforming banking rules,... cracking down on tax havens that prioritise banks and large multinationals over small businesses, and plenty more.”

We should cut the role of finance, unilaterally. Impose smart capital controls, remove tax breaks and incentives for looting, and encourage genuine productive job-creating investment. Set aside the EU dogma of the free movement of capital that would block these sensible measures.

Singapore-on-Thames

In doing so we would reject the fantasy of Singapore-on-Thames, a “competitive” island abasing itself in pursuit of the wealth of the world’s oligarchs, criminals and tax-escaping multinationals. We must instead pursue the interests of our own people.

Shaxson concludes with a challenge, “So we are at a crossroads: a particularly crucial moment for setting Britain’s future direction. The changes that are now needed are revolutionary ones. But we are already in revolutionary times, whether we like it or not...”

“The old political divisions between left and right are dead. In today’s Britain, one of the greatest political divisions is between those who support financialisation and the finance curse, and those who want to return finance to its proper place, serving society. Which side are you on?” ■

A culture of secrecy

Behind Closed Doors: The Destruction of Accountability in the EU, by Sir Bill Cash MP, European Foundation, November 2018. Downloadable for free from europeanfoundation.org

THIS PAMPHLET is essential reading as we struggle to free Britain from the grip of the EU. It counters any idea that the EU can be reformed from within and reminds us of one of the factors that brought about the vote to Leave.

The European Commission, the EU’s highest law-making authority, meets in secret, bans note-taking, and is of course wholly unelected. Bill Cash, who has much experience of the obscure workings of the EU, provides a complete take down of its lack of democracy.

Not a proper parliament

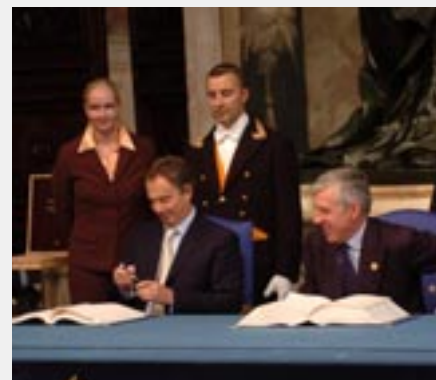
The European Parliament lacks the key feature of any proper legislative assembly: the power to propose (or draft) new law, or to repeal existing law. After the Commission proposes laws, the European Parliament and the unelected Council of Ministers are supposed to be able to amend, even to block, the proposals.

And between 1999 and 2007, the Council rejected 73 per cent of the Parliament’s proposed amendments. The Council does not even have to give its reasons for its decisions to reject.

The Council itself is a secretive body. Its meetings on legislation are generally closed. They cannot be watched online, and its procedures and votes are never made public.

A Conciliation Committee has the role of reaching compromise between the Council and the Parliament, but failing agreement, the Council may just adopt laws without the Parliament’s consent.

The Committee of the Permanent Representatives of the Member States (“Coreper”) is unelected, just like the Commission. Its documents and meetings are not publicly accessible. Its role is to endorse the Commission’s proposals



Tony Blair signing the European Constitution, October 2004.

before they reach the Council. The Council then adopts nearly all its decisions, with no discussion. The Parliament does not participate in these discussions. So, the Council increasingly overrides the Parliament and Coreper increasingly overrides the Council.

Democracy denied

And so it goes on. The pamphlet continues with other ways in which democracy is denied in the EU, including the so-called “trilogues” – where a few unelected Commission representatives, picked MEPs, and civil servants, reinforce the dominance of the Commission and Council.

Cash also examines the Nice Treaty of 2000, which took away member nations’ vetoes. “This evolution of EU law-making was never approved by, nor explained to, the British people, who were promised in the 1972 European Communities Act White Paper (which marked the UK’s accession to the EU) that the UK would never give up its veto, as to lose it would endanger “the very fabric of the European Community’.”

The report sums up, “Executive decision-making appears now to have been conferred upon unaccountable, unelected and technocratic institutions. Indeed, all the EU’s core institutions now favour executive and technical power at the expense of any genuine democratic process.” ■

Glasgow in 1919 was at the heart of British working class worth separating the myth from the reality...

Glasgow 1919 – the leg

THE EVENTS of a century ago in Glasgow were a milestone in decades of struggle by organised industrial workers. They came at a high point of class struggle in Britain as similar events played out elsewhere during 1919.

These events are either denigrated as an isolated “riot” or exaggerated as a failed revolution. Neither is true. Nor was this in any sense an anti-English conflict.

The British working class had begun to exercise its industrial strength before the first world war. And class struggle reached new levels during the war. Large numbers of workers termed “unskilled” were encouraged to join trade unions. Women workers became an important part of the trade union movement. Out of all this, strong shop stewards’ organisations evolved, directly representing workers at the workplace.

The war years saw growing crises in housing and food supply, especially in industrial cities like Glasgow, one of Britain’s major manufacturing hubs. In the decade up to 1914, Clydeside built half the world’s shipping tonnage – an industry linked to nearby coal mining and steel production.

The scene was set for confrontation with the imposition of the Dilution of Labour Act and Munitions Act in 1915. The arrival of thousands of “dilutees” undercut wages and conditions workers had fought for. And it worsened already overcrowded housing and the supply of food. As well as Glasgow, the industrial cities of Sheffield and Newcastle were chosen to enforce this regime.

The crisis was Britain-wide. Prime Minister Lloyd George saw fit to come to Glasgow himself in December 1915 to address 3,000 workers in St Andrew’s Hall, as did the leader of the Labour Party, Arthur Henderson.

The Clyde Workers Committee (CWC) ensured that the most militant filled the hall to shout them down. The newspaper *Forward* reported this humiliation. The government closed it down within days and

‘Local Glasgow women led the action...’

confiscated copies from newsagents.

A week later the CWC issued its own newspaper, *The Worker*. In turn that was suppressed after five editions and its editorial team received prison sentences of up to a year.

The CWC model inspired industrial workers around the country to organise. Over the next three years around 300 similar bodies came into being. Usually termed Councils of Action, they often incorporated trades councils. They developed in Belfast, Birmingham, Liverpool, London, and Manchester as well as areas of Wales and elsewhere in England – in the North East, Yorkshire, the Midlands and the South East.

Rent strikes

From 1915 onwards social protest had developed alongside industrial struggle. In Glasgow this took the form of rent strikes against unscrupulous landlords who raised rents, taking advantage of the absence of husbands and sons serving in the British forces.

Local Glasgow women led the action, including Mary Barbour, who coordinated the protests with the Clyde Workers Committee. In 2018 their successful campaigns were honoured by the unveiling of bronzes portraying “Mary Barbour’s Army” in Glasgow’s Govan district, where she had lived.

By 1919, the continuation of harsh conditions, long working hours and undercutting by imported cheap labour dashed hopes of a better life in peacetime. Returning soldiers, sailors and civilians alike were unsurprisingly angry and desired action. Their thoughts were also spurred by news of workers attempting to take power into their own hands in Russia, Hungary and Germany.

Nevertheless, strikes called by the CWC a few weeks after the end of the war focused on achieving a 40-hour week. The action started on Monday 27 January 1919, closing most factories. Picketing was boosted by the presence of families and women from the earlier rent strike campaigns.

The strike was not confined to Glasgow. Miners struck in Lanarkshire and occupied their union headquarters. In Belfast the action by workers in transport, gas and elec-



Workers

Govan, Glasgow: bronzes commissioned to celebrate Glasgow, unveiled in 2018. The bronzes are the work of the Sussex Sculpture Studios, Billingshurst, which

tricity companies straddled the religious divide.

Four days later, on Friday 31 January, the strikers held a mass rally in Glasgow’s George Square. They sent a delegation to the Lord Provost of the city to discuss the response to their demands.

The police charged the crowd with batons; it is unclear what prompted this. Some reports say it was the attempt of strikers to halt passing trams which they viewed as being operated by strike-breakers.

Myths

At this point the myth-making starts. Subsequent accounts, never substantiated, talk of tanks being deployed, of machine gun nests being set up and local soldiers being confined to barracks. The only weapons ever photographed were standard police batons.

A photo of a tank in the city centre used for decades by *The Glasgow Herald* to say “a tank rolls through the crowds” in Glasgow’s George Square in 1919, has been

activity, but it's

Legacy



celebrate the centenary of the 1915 rent strikes in the work of Andrew Brown who designed them in which he helped to found.

proven to be from January 1918 when “Julian the Tank” was used to encourage people to buy War Bonds!

Despite injuries, there were no fatalities that day. Compared to the Peterloo Massacre and other murderous events, what happened in January 1919 should not be called “Bloody Friday”. The CWC and the Councils of Action continued their campaigning unabated, although they did not win the fight for 40 hours at that time.

The following summer saw many of the individuals involved participate in the Communist Unity Convention, to found a communist party for Britain. Workers’ discontent and action continued, leading up to the general strike of 1926. But by then the whole movement was marred by increasing absorption into parliamentarianism and domination by the Labour Party.

In Scotland, progress was further weakened by an increasingly separatist mindset under the influence of John Maclean and Hugh MacDiarmid, eventually channelled into calls for “devolution”. ■

🐦 @CPBML



Worried about the future of Britain? Join the CPBML.

ABOUT US

As communists, we stand for an independent, united and self-reliant Britain run by the working class – the vast majority of the population. If that’s what you want too, then come and join us.

All our members are thinkers, doers and leaders. All are expected to work to advance our class’s interests. All must help to develop our understanding of what we need to do and how to do it.

What do we do? Rooted in our workplaces, communities and trade unions, we use every opportunity to encourage our colleagues and friends to embrace the Marxist practice and theory that alone can lead to the revolution that Britain needs. Marx’s understanding of capitalism is a powerful tool – the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848 explains the crash of 2007/8.

Either we live in an independent Britain deciding our own future or we become slaves to international capital. Leaving the EU is the first, indispensable step in the fight for national independence.

We have no paid employees, no millionaire donors. Everything we do, we do ourselves, collectively. That includes producing *Workers*, our free email newsletter, our website, pamphlets and social media feeds.

We distribute *Workers*, leaflets and pamphlets online and in our workplaces, union meetings, communities, market places, railway stations, football grounds – wherever workers are, that is where we aim to be.

We hold public meetings around Britain, in-depth study groups and less formal discussions. Talking to people, face to face, is where we have the greatest impact and – just as importantly – learn from other workers’ experience.

We are not an elite, intellectually superior to our fellow workers. All that distinguishes Party members is this: we accept that only Marxist thinking and the organised work that flows from it can transform the working class and Britain. The real teacher is the fight itself, and in particular the development of ideas and confidence that comes from collective action.

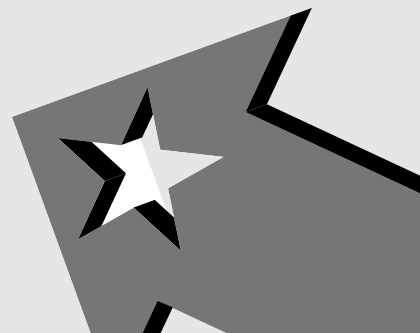
Interested in these ideas?

- Get in touch to find out how to take part. Go along to meetings in your part of the country, or join in study to help push forward the thinking of our class.
- Subscribe to *Workers*, our bimonthly magazine, either online at cpbml.org.uk or by sending £12 for a year’s issues (cheques payable to *Workers*) to the address below. UK only. Email for overseas rates.
- Sign up for our free email newsletter – see the form at www.cpbml.org.uk

CPBML

78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB

email info@cpbml.org.uk
twitter @cpbml
www.cpbml.org.uk
phone 020 8801 9543



Why sovereignty matters

'Sovereign states are all that stands between the peoples of the world and utter domination by transnational monopolies.'

THE EVOLUTION of sovereign states around the world has been an uneven process. Some were founded on shared nationhood, language and culture. Some on lines drawn by colonial rulers. Others out of the chaos of war.

But sovereign states have this in common: they are all that now stands between the peoples of the world and utter domination by the transnational monopolies that think the world is rightfully theirs to exploit.

The needs of monopolies are simple. They want to be able to shift goods, factories, people and investment anywhere in the world, and they want all countries in the world to sell the monopoly's products – whether it's a physical object like a computer or intangible, like insurance.

That's why these corporations – whether based in Europe, or the US, or China – love the EU. Not only does it constitutionally guarantee the free movement of capital, goods, services and persons (the term in the EU treaties), but it makes these principles paramount.

The word "persons" has a double meaning. On the one hand, it refers to people as workers: here free movement drives wages down, turning a whole continent into a reservoir of potentially cheaper labour.

But a company is also a "legal person". Free movement here means the right to up sticks and relocate to a lower wage country – and in the process outlaw workers' action to prevent this. (A ban enforced by the European Court of Justice.)

These principles are the free market made law, neoliberalism as a constitutional imperative. To call them freedoms is to make a mockery of the word, because the freedom of the people counts for nothing when it comes up against the wishes of capital.

And the EU has effectively enshrined these principles as permanent. The EU cannot be reformed. In fact, it has been built to ensure the eternal rule of the monopolies.

To reform its principles, to turn it into a weapon against the monopolies, would involve a treaty change approved unanimously by every member country. (Even the notoriously

hard-to-change US constitution requires just three-quarters of its states to approve a change).

Wander about the corridors of Brussels and you will hear corporate lobbyists criticise the EU. But it's a particular kind of criticism. They complain that it's not moving fast enough. That the single market does not (yet) cover health and education. That there's still too much red tape.

And they all complain about Brexit. Well, they would, wouldn't they? For them the ultimate dirty word is "nationalism". Because, of all the different kinds of sovereign states, the ones based on nation are the hardest for them to crack.

But they're not having it all their own way. Their beloved EU-US TTIP "free trade" treaty, once within their reach, they thought, is languishing. They had hoped to use the combined force of the US and EU to impose a new order on the world economy – to the detriment of all nations, especially developing countries. Now, since Obama has gone, they're back to square one.

The "free trade" treaties were designed to circumvent the refusal of countries in the World Trade Organization to accede to their demands. Now, people in Britain previously unaware of the WTO are saying we should leave the EU and follow WTO rules. Then we can trade freely around the world unshackled by EU trade rules.

Our vote to leave the EU has been a huge blow to the transnationals. It came from the knowledge that sovereignty matters because without it we have no possibility of controlling our lives.

Those who think they can overturn the referendum yet still oppose the multinationals are indulging in an act of wilful self-deception. The EU stands not for progress but for reaction.

And out of the Leave vote a new knowledge is developing, yet more dangerous for the corporate behemoths which think they can buy influence, politicians and power: that sovereignty must reside in the people, not in parliaments. ■

Subscriptions

Take a regular copy of the bimonthly full-colour WORKERS. Six issues (one year) delivered direct to you costs £15 including postage and packing.

Subscribe online at cpbml.org.uk/subscribe, or by post (send a cheque payable to "WORKERS", along with your name and address to WORKERS, 78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB).

Name

Address

Postcode

BADGE OFFER – Out of the EU now!

WE FIRST made this campaigning badge five years ago, and after the Referendum thought we wouldn't need it any more! Fortunately, we still have stocks.... The badge (actual size 1.5 inches) is available now. Let's hope we won't need it for much longer.

Just send a stamped self-addressed envelope, if you wish accompanied by a donation (make cheques payable to "WORKERS"), to Workers, 78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB.

