

# WORKERS

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## INDUSTRY WHY MAKING THINGS MATTERS

**MORE GPs** Where from?

**BREXIT** Yes, please

**BALLOTS** New chains

**TTIP** Myths exploded

**THE MOTOR INDUSTRY**

**UNIONS** Take part

**UNIVERSITIES** Pay up

*plus* News,

Book Reviews

and more

# WORKERS

## “ After the election

AFTER 7 MAY, what should workers do? We don't have the luxury of just preparing for the next election, as the Labour party is doing – though it looks like it is seeing how to lose the next election too. MPs know what to do. Their first priority is to vote themselves a £7,000 a year pay increase.

Be honest. In the general election we got what people voted for. More people voted for the Conservatives than for any other party. If people had wanted above all to defeat the Tories, they knew what they had to do – vote tactically for the candidate most likely to beat the Tory in their constituency. But people didn't choose to do this. Likewise in Scotland with the SNP.

The election result shows the measure of our task. There is no quick fix through electoral reform, nor much democracy in the parliamentary version. Democracy is far more than just putting a cross on a piece of paper once every five years. If it means anything, democracy means we all take responsibility, not leave it to others, and certainly not to parliamentary parties.

Forget elections, or revisions to electoral systems. There will be no advance without a change in people's minds, without a change in the ideology of the working class.

The tasks facing British workers are the same as before: the employer is the same, the government is the same, so is capitalism, so is the European Union, so is NATO. We have to fight

now to survive as a nation and as a class.

Above all, that means fighting on four key issues – key not just because they are needed to survive as a class, but because they have the potential to unite us, not divide us (see “Take part, take heart,” page 19).

Those issues are straightforward: pay, an issue for all; national unity, the answer to separatism and the opposite of division; control over the supply of labour, without which we cannot hope to control its price; and national independence, as opposed to control from Brussels.

The last three of those issues are ones on which most unions display the least clarity. The European Union is a capitalist club lauded by the international monopolies. Every employers' organisation is for the free – not free, actually, more like uncontrolled – movement of labour. They know it's good for them. Yet many in the unions defend the EU and the endless search of workers round Europe for work wherever they can find it, on whatever pay and terms the employer dictates. That's the measure of the task.

Already since the election the tone has been set by Cameron on the EU referendum – we're in for a prolonged period of half-truths, outright lies and bullying, coupled with a large dose of ineptitude. We cannot look to Westminster for a lesson in principled debate. We are going to have to start it ourselves. ■

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## Contents – July/August 2015

### News Digest

Budgeting for decline, p3; Wandsworth: union rights restored, p4; UCU ready to fight on pay, p5; News Analysis: A waste of a dispute?, p6; News Analysis: The GP numbers lie, p7

03

### Features

The facts about what Brexit would mean, p8; Why Britain needs an industrial policy, p10; Who needs the EU? Not the motor industry, p12; Workers against the state, p16; Take part, take heart, p19

08

### End Notes

Book Review: TTIP and welfare – two myths mauled, p22

22



<b>BUDGET</b>	Planning for decline
<b>TUBE</b>	Massive strike vote
<b>WANDSWORTH</b>	Union rights restored
<b>UNISON</b>	Anyone voting?
<b>UNIVERSITIES</b>	Ready to fight on pay
<b>HEALTH</b>	Cuts to shore up PFI
<b>LOCAL GOVT</b>	A waste of a dispute?
<b>GP NUMBERS</b>	The big lie
<b>ON THE WEB</b>	More news online
<b>WHAT'S ON</b>	Coming soon

## Budgeting for decline



HM Treasury, London

CHANCELLOR GEORGE OSBORNE will deliver another government budget on 8 July. Familiarity with the themes of “austerity” and “balancing the books” should not blind us to what is going on behind the figures. Nor is it enough to decry the cuts to benefits paid out, damaging and vindictive though they are.

Economists such as Nobel prize-winner Paul Krugman describe the plans for deficit reduction and austerity as bound to fail, creating a spiral of decline. Yet all the parliamentary parties subscribe to the lie that this is what is needed. They only differ on the detail.

Most tax for state spending comes from workers. Whether PAYE from wages or VAT on spending, it is still taken out of earnings (twice with VAT). The government manages how that tax is spent. Its decisions are not made for social redistribution or investment but solely to maintain and run the capitalist economy.

After the 2008 crisis that purpose was evident to all. But since then it has manifested itself in many other ways. Benefits are cut and employers are subsidised for paying low wages. Both these directly undermine the ability of organised workers to regain a greater share of the value they create.

What we expect and will get from this government is not accidental or poorly thought out. It is a desperate, deliberate attempt to ensure that the working class pays for the failure of the capitalist system. They hope that somehow the economy will revive once workers have been reduced to near-slavery. Their view of the state is that it is no more than a tool to ensure capitalism can't be touched by those it exploits.

Our ruling class knows those methods have failed elsewhere and in the past. Yet their economic system cannot live with workers having more of a share in what their labour produces, or even keeping what we have now. Capitalism does not know where to turn. The drive to increase profits and the rate of profit is incompatible in the long run with anything other than increasing the exploitation of the working class.

The dominance of finance capital and the way it bleeds the wealth of nations is the result of that contradiction. All budgets and fiscal plans attempt to grapple with that issue and manage them politically. They are not plans for maintaining and developing the economy of Britain and the wealth of its people. ■

## TUBE

### Massive strike vote

TUBE DRIVER members of ASLEF have voted overwhelmingly in favour of action against London Underground's attempt to impose new rosters and payments for night shifts from this September. As *Workers* went to press, 24-hour strike action was planned for 8–9 July, with other tube unions RMT and TSSA, which are also balloting, due to declare their results at the end of June.

In May, steel workers at Indian-owned Tata – members of Community, the main union for the industry – voted by 88 per cent for strike action on a 76 per cent turnout, in a pensions dispute. As the strike loomed, Tata made a massive turnaround: an improved offer which the combined steel unions are recommending to their members.

Now it seems that tube drivers are following suit. The ASLEF ballot turnout was 81.3 per cent, with the vote in favour of strike action 97.6 per cent. The dispute goes to the heart of issues around drivers' pay and conditions when London Underground introduces all-night weekend tube services on some lines.

The union says it is not against night working, but that it will bring huge changes for its members – changes which need to be carefully negotiated. But the employers ended direct talks and decided instead to simply impose their will – no pay increase for night working, with instead a one-off payment (non-pensionable) to drivers, and no guarantees about the number of night shifts to be imposed.

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

• A longer version of this article is on the web at [www.cpbml.org.uk](http://www.cpbml.org.uk). ■





## ON THE WEB

A selection of additional news at [cpbml.org.uk...](http://cpbml.org.uk...)

### Rail strike threat draws new offer

Planned strikes at Network Rail over pay and conditions were called off after the rail operator increased its pay offer to 2 per cent this year.

### 'Extremism' proposals that threaten democracy

Anybody who thinks the main threat to democracy comes from groups like the EDL should study the government's latest proposals to "combat extremism".

### New figures show scale of production crisis

The economy grew by just 0.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2015, said the Office for National Statistics on 28 May.

### Terrorist state removes Cuba from its list

The US State Department has finally removed Cuba from its list of state sponsors of terrorism – while newly released documents show that the US shipped arms to al Qaeda and ISIS.

### New Ukrainian laws glorify WW2 fascists

Seventy years after the defeat of Nazism, the descendants of the treacherous Ukrainian fascists are in power – and seeking revenge.

### Ferrybridge C power station to close

The announcement that Ferrybridge C in West Yorkshire will stop generating in March 2016 twists the knife in what is left of coal power generation in Britain.

### Plus: the e-newsletter

Visit [cpbml.org.uk](http://cpbml.org.uk) to sign up to your free regular copy of the CPBML's newsletter delivered to your email inbox.

Andrew Wiard/[www.andrew-wiard.info](http://www.andrew-wiard.info)



Tens of thousands of people took part in the "anti-austerity" marches on Saturday 20 June. Photo shows marchers in London.

## Union rights restored

IN THE WEEK leading up to the general election the London Borough of Wandsworth restored deduction of trade union subscriptions from payroll and returned to the Local Government national agreement which they had torn up nearly 35 years ago.

Both deduction at source of trade union subs (DOCAS) and the national agreement were withdrawn in the early privatisation days at Wandsworth and the political and social cleansing of the borough in the 1980s to make it permanently safe for Conservatives.

Wandsworth was seen as the flagship borough of its day to promote privatising everything. They thought that these actions would destroy the local government trade unions but organisation has always remained.

Now after a Unison initiative the agreement has been restored for all local government trade unions – and this during a period when a dying act of the coalition government included the removal of DOCAS and trade union facilities arrangements from Civil Service trade unions.

There are those in the trade unions who are so defeatist and spellbound by the Tory election victory that they are already clamouring for retreats in the face of non-existent government threats. It is over 215 years since the Combination Acts sought to destroy our trade unions, and they failed. If a 35-year-old defeat can be reversed then we should look to our strengths: organisation, union density, unity, discipline. ■

## UNISON Anyone voting?

UNISON, the largest public sector union in Britain, announced the results of its biennial national executive council elections at its June annual conference.

One result it may not be keen to announce is the turnout – a 25 per cent drop in participation compared with the 2013 elections, with an average turnout of 5.6 per cent across Britain.

This means that 94 per cent of the membership did not take part. Abstention is a conscious act, not apathy. And the ballot was before the general election, so there will not be the excuse of demoralisation following the Conservative victory.

The legislation covering ballots pre-

dates electronic balloting and is frozen in the 1980s, but irrespective of the process or system, the members have consciously decided to abstain.

When ballots were held in the workplace returns were significantly higher. Back in Thatcher's era the Tories screamed foul and the law was changed to require ballots to be sent to home addresses – beginning a spiralling decline in participation over the last 25 years.

With the government about to set a threshold for industrial action ballots of a 50 per cent turnout then it is only a matter of time before they challenge the mandate of trade union leaderships elected on such a pathetic turnout.

What mandate does a 5.6 per cent NEC have? Who do they represent? Unison members need to start organising for the 2017 NEC elections now. ■

## UCU ready to fight on pay

AS WORKERS goes to press, the Higher Education Committee of the University and College Union (UCU) will be meeting to discuss the results of its consultative pay ballot. The ballot covers members in higher education across Britain, who have been asked for their views on the “full and final” offer for 2015-16 made to the union by the University and Colleges Employers Association. Subject to the decisions taken, the UCU is likely to conduct a statutory ballot in September.

Meeting in Glasgow in May, the national higher education sector conference resolved that UCU should call for members to reject the 0.9 per cent pay offer, to vote yes for strike action and yes to action short of a strike such as marking and assessment boycotts. It is to UCU members’ credit that they are operating as a UK-wide national union. We can capitalise on the extra strength such unity brings. A fragmented workforce is always the employers’ dream.

To ensure the maximum effect on the employers’ core business and to minimise damage to themselves, union members will need to be creative and devious in the use of guerrilla tactics including action short of a strike – as well as ensuring plans for strike action are carefully targeted.

Branches across Britain will need to consider carefully the next steps on pay and in particular what type of action would be most effective. What aspects of the employers’ core business can most easily (for us) be interfered with by selective action short of a strike? Conducted alongside public and unifying strike action, such tactics can be highly effective.

For example, staff might consider putting a spanner in the works of the management-heavy performance-dominated regime under which they suffer. Universities cannot function without the constant and monumentally time-consuming electronic daily form-filling demanded of academic staff, very little of which contributes to the quality of teaching, research or external engagement – the real core business of universities.

The pay offer is for an increase in all pay points of 1 per cent, tapered to secure the equivalent of the “living wage” for staff paid on the lower spinal pay points. UCU repeatedly argued for a pay offer which addressed the accumulated shortfall in pay and gave

some protection to members’ incomes, but the offer was improved only marginally from an initial 0.8 per cent during the course of three meetings.

The UCU leadership is in no doubt that it will take sustained industrial action, including strikes, to bring the employers back to the negotiating table. Action short of a strike on its own, the leadership is advising, will not win this dispute – but will also have to be sustained alongside strike action.

The strength of UCU is shown by the employers’ readiness, outside of the current “full and final” pay offer, to continue to discuss casual employment and related pay issues. Great strides are being made in universities, notorious for casual contracts (as reported in *Workers*, May/June 2015), to get rid of zero hours contracts.

At the University of Glasgow, for example, the union has achieved the following as part of the university’s Extended Workforce Policy: “Only where the requirement to undertake work is sufficiently irregular and occasional, or on an ad hoc basis and where individuals can choose whether or not to undertake the work offered will work be offered on a non-employment basis.” Very little teaching or research falls under this description.

Another victory is the scrapping of controversial plans by the University of Warwick to use the TeachHigher scheme to employ hourly-paid teaching and research staff. The scheme could have left casual teaching staff with inferior terms and conditions and some without any guaranteed hours. In a message on its intranet, Warwick acknowledged the opposition to its plans and stated that the “ongoing scrutiny of TeachHigher has become a distraction and it should be disbanded”. UCU had written to the university describing the scheme as “regressive”. ■



UCU banner on the TUC’s “Britain Needs A Pay Rise” march in October 2014.

Workers

## WHAT'S ON

### Coming soon

#### JULY

**Saturday 11 July**

**Durham Miners’ Gala**

The “Big Meeting”. For full details, see <http://durhamminers.org/Gala.html>

**Friday 17 July to Sunday 19 July**

**Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival, Tolpuddle, Dorset**

The annual festival commemorating the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Music, speeches, play, debates and more. For more detail, see [www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk](http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk)

#### SEPTEMBER

**Sunday 6 September, 11 am to 5 pm**

**Burston School Strike Festival, Burston, Near Diss, Norfolk**

Annual rally to celebrate the longest strike in history. Speeches, march, exhibition. For details, see [www.burston-strikeschool.wordpress.com](http://www.burston-strikeschool.wordpress.com)

**Tuesday 22 September, 7.30 pm**

**“When Britain leaves the EU”**

**Brockway Room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL**

**CPBML Public Meeting**

With the EU and the euro in meltdown, come and hear why, and what Britain needs to do to retain its integrity, sovereignty and unity as an island of labour.

## HEALTH

### Cuts to shore up PFI

BARTS HEALTH, the largest NHS Trust in Britain, has now released its deficit projection for 2016 – £135 million. The deficit is projected on financial savings of £105 million – which translates as cuts. The cuts are almost identical to the cost of servicing the PFI debt.

Adding to its problems are further Care Quality Commission criticisms of failing management, declining staff morale and serious questions after the merger of Barts and the London NHS Trust with, Newham and Whipps Cross NHS Trusts that created Barts Health.

The merger has gone too far to be unravelled without further wasting millions of pounds in investment and infrastructure already spent. The Trust Development Agency needs to act decisively and raise with the government alternatives to the PFI albatross. ■



## One lesson of the GMB's setback in Barking and Dagenham is that unions must work together.

# A waste of a dispute?

THE SHORT DISPUTE among waste collection vehicle drivers in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham ended recently when GMB members, who had undertaken a series of strikes which began in March 2015, were instructed to return to work by their union.

The impact of the strike had diminished over recent weeks with dwindling numbers of GMB members opting to continue the action. Most had returned to work and accepted a deal that had already been negotiated by Unison and Unite following talks at ACAS.

The dispute arose in February 2015 after a proposal by the Labour council to reduce to 15 minutes a 30-minute contractual overtime payment made to the vehicle drivers, with effect from 14 July 2015. The proposal affected around 120 drivers, who stood to lose £1,000 a year, and was part of an extensive cuts programme for 2014/15 agreed by the council's cabinet in December 2014.

Prestart checks are a legal requirement, but most councils include them in the normal working day and not as overtime. The council wanted to avoid any equal pay claim risk, so other vehicle drivers responsible for vehicle checks in passenger transport needed to receive the 15 minutes overtime.

The GMB did not want to enter into negotiations around the issue and proceeded to ballot for strike action in February 2015. Although most of the workers were GMB members, the union took this course of action without discussing a strategy with Unison and Unite, which also had members in the depots.

The council responded by withdrawing the 15-minute prestart payment for those striking, and wrote to everyone affected asking them to sign a contract variation in April which would give them back the 15 minutes.

Unite and Unison members also wanted to challenge the proposals but chose to take a different approach. Unison registered a dispute with a view to going into talks.



Andrew Ward/www.andrew-ward.info

**GMB members held a "Santa demo" at Barking and Dagenham's cabinet meeting before Christmas as part of their fight. Santa is giving out GMB beanie hats, which GMB members had been told not to wear.**

By April, the GMB had escalated strike action, the council was struggling to maintain the refuse collection service and matters were becoming increasingly acrimonious.

The GMB was persuaded to attend ACAS to attempt to negotiate a settlement but engagement was problematic: the union was unwilling to suspend strike action without a firm offer from the council, which wouldn't move unless the action was suspended. At the council's request, Unison and Unite also attended the talks but, at least initially, were little more than passive observers of the process.

After further days of talks, Unison and Unite agree a negotiated settlement acceptable to their members. But the GMB would not agree, and continued the strike.

### Backed into a corner

The GMB had backed itself into a corner. The laudable intention to protect members' pay from being cut had resulted in a disagreement between unions at the negotiating table and divisions among the workers.

Further, the council could now gain the upper hand by portraying the GMB as intransigent. It trumpeted the fact that a refuse service had been maintained, with minor inconvenience to residents, funded by the money it had saved by withholding the pay of the striking workers.

The local press, which had mostly taken

a benign view of the strike, now helped tip the balance by showing that the much-touted prestart vehicle checks could be done in less than 10 minutes, not the 30 minutes the GMB claimed.

With many of the strikers drifting back to work during May, seemingly unwilling to accept the escalation of strike action that their leadership demanded, it was only a matter of time before the inevitable conclusion. On 1 June, the GMB announced the remaining 30 strikers would return to work while it and the council held talks at ACAS "with the view of improving relations between the two parties".

Improving relations between the three unions, GMB, Unison and Unite, may be a harder task. But it will need to be done if workers are to be able to respond to employer tactics that seek to undermine our collective strength and resolve.

The Barking and Dagenham dispute has much wider ramifications. Dominated for years by the GMB (most of the councillors are GMB-sponsored and GMB-loyal) exercising control through the Labour Party and trade union branches, the council is now erupting into open warfare between factions inside the GMB.

The waste dispute was part of that internal Labour Party – GMB internecine war complicated by central government cuts slashing local labour budgets.

Barking and Dagenham never was a redoubt of municipal socialism. But with sprawling depressed ex-council estates, the remnants of Ford, poverty, unemployment and migration, there is more at stake here than mere factions left and right in the GMB, or personalised politics of Labour Party figureheads.

How do those who are attached to local control resist the central government juggernaut which intends to sweep away all opposition irrespective of how limited, short-sighted or parochial? Unity must be part of the answer. ■

**The government has pledged 5,000 new GPs in post by 2020 – but numbers are actually set to decline.**

# Tomorrow's doctors?

HEALTH SECRETARY Jeremy Hunt has pledged a “new deal” for GPs aimed at fulfilling a Tory election manifesto commitment to boost the number of doctors in post by 5,000 over five years. The manifesto also promised 7-day access to GP services. Patient groups and doctors are not impressed. In reality GP numbers are set to decline.

Local schemes will offer enhanced salaries including “golden hellos” of £20,000 as an inducement to the newly qualified to opt for general practice. They will only have to commit to staying in post for two years and can refuse weekend and evening work.

Hunt bemoans extreme variation across the country with one doctor to 750 patients in some areas, one per 3,125 in others. He says he is looking to attract more doctors into general practice to stop hospitals, in particular accident and emergency units, being overwhelmed by patients.

There will be a million more people over 70 by the end of the decade and 100,000 more people to be cared for at home. Three million patients will have three or more long-term conditions by 2018. Hunt has known about these issues from the day he was appointed – and has taken no strategic action to address them. Practice nurses

Shahid Khan/shutterstock.com



form part of his solution, yet 30,000 training places were cut in the last Parliament.

Patient groups have criticised these proposals pointing out that ad-hoc payments are not the answer. We already have the highest-paid primary care doctors in the industrialised world. Patient welfare campaigning group Patient Concern described his plans as outrageous and inadequate. They point to the stifling bureaucracy imposed by an internal market that prevents GPs from focusing on patient care without unnecessary distraction.

## Crisis

Last September the Health Education England Task Force declared a crisis in general practice. Their Centre for Workforce Intelligence stated that the current GP workforce was incapable of meeting current demand. Recruitment onto training schemes has been falling year on year since 2010.

The British Medical Association conducted its biggest survey ever, analysing 15,000 returns from doctors working in primary care. This revealed that one in three GPs intends to retire within the next five years and one in five trainees declared they want to seek employment abroad.

Spending on general practice is now just under 8 per cent of total NHS revenue against 11 per cent in 2010 when the coalition took office. In 2013-14 the allocation made was £287 million lower than in the previous financial year. The proportion of NHS doctors working in primary care has fallen from 34 to 25 per cent during the same period. Between 2006 and 2013 GP

**‘The internal market prevents GPs from focusing on patient care.’**

numbers grew by only 4 per cent compared to nearly seven times that rate for doctors working in hospital and community services.

Health Education England has suggested that half of all medical students should specialise in general practice. In 2015 it will be one fifth, and one in ten training slots within GP practices remain to be taken up. Unfilled vacancies for qualified doctors are endemic. The percentage of unfilled posts quadrupled over three years, up to 7.9 per cent in 2013. In 2014, 104 practices applied to NHS England to stop accepting new patients because of workload pressures – double the number of two years previously.

## Rising demand

GP services have consolidated in an attempt to meet rising demand through economies of scale. Between 2006 and 2013 numbers working as single-handed doctors has halved. Practices with more than ten partners have increased by 76 per cent. But the Royal College of General Practitioners estimates that 543 practices in England are at risk of closure because GPs working in them are aged 60 and over.

The College estimates that England needs 40,100 family doctors to meet the needs of an ageing population. There are currently 32,075 in post. Another 1,000 doctors a year will retire from the profession in coming years.

Another pressure (often not mentioned) is the growth in population through inward migration.

So we need 13,000 new doctors by 2020. And with early retirements and departures abroad, the need for retraining places is high. That makes the Tory pledge of “an additional 5,000 extra GPs” look ignorant as well as ungrammatical.

## What's needed?

- 1.** The current 9 to 5 GP service should be properly resourced with timely appointments available to patients.
- 2.** Unions for all workers should ensure that their members get paid time off during the working day for GP and dental appointments.
- 3.** All unions and patient groups should work with the BMA and RCGP locally to make sure primary care medical services are fit for purpose.
- 4.** Out of hours and weekend services should be covered by a properly resourced emergency service with telephone triage support staffed by qualified accredited doctors and nurses with responses continuously audited for quality. ■





propaganda from the EU and its allies suggesting that nothing could be further from the truth...

# Leaving the EU would mean



**'All said we would be doomed unless we joined the euro.'**

believes the British economy would collapse and its society fall apart if we left the Union. After all, non-EU countries like Norway, Iceland and Switzerland are hardly Hobbesian hellholes wracked by poverty and conflict."

## 5. Staying in would mean ceding even more powers.

Some say they want an EU with reduced powers, but the EU's treaties make that impossible. Its treaties forbid reducing its powers. No EU member state has ever recovered any powers given to the EU. Angela Merkel promises reform after the referendum, as a bait.

Even the *Observer* newspaper says that "Merkel cannot wholly be trusted." As Joschka Fischer, a former German Foreign Minister, says, "Angela Merkel will do nothing that will endanger the basic principles of the common market of the EU." She has already refused to back changes to the free

movement of labour. EU Commission President Juncker says treaty change is not on the cards.

Before the 1975 referendum Prime Minister Harold Wilson promised a "fundamental renegotiation", to reduce the EU's powers and to stop all further integration. Sound familiar? In 1975 he broke these promises. His renegotiation failed. So will Cameron's.

Cameron's first big mistake was to threaten to sack ministers who might not do what he wants, even before any negotiation starts. His first defeat was to back down on this threat.

Cameron is on a loser. At the start of the French referendum campaign on the EU constitution ten years ago, more than 70 per cent supported the treaty. By the end, 55 per cent voted against.

Cameron's government is already getting more unpopular, the next financial crisis is ever-growing, the EU is doing worse and worse, the Greek time-bomb is ticking. He's got all the problems. It is us who have the solutions.

We won the 2011 referendum on the voting system. We won last year's referendum and stopped the Scottish National Party splitting our working class. We can win the referendum on the EU and save Britain's independence. ■

## Yes to Britain, no to the EU

THIS PARTY is for the union of England, Scotland and Wales in Britain. We are against separatism, because for a part of the British working class to leave Britain is not independence but secession, splitting. We are for Britain's unity. We are also for Ireland's unity.

The SNP and others talk of four nations – but to call Northern Ireland a separate nation is not only ludicrous, it is to call for Ireland also to be split forever.

Sturgeon, the Scottish Thatcher, proposes that England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, not Britain as a whole, would each have to vote to leave the EU for it to happen. Unless all four voted to leave we would stay in. So each one would have a veto on our leaving.

So on Sturgeon's proposal if the 1.6 million people in Northern Ireland voted by a majority of one to stay in the EU, and everybody in Britain voted to leave, we would stay in!

Yet Sturgeon calls this a democratic protection of the will of the Scottish people. But this concern for democracy is a one-way street. Sturgeon did not propose that unless all four voted to stay in the EU, we leave. That is, she did not propose that each one should have a veto on staying in.

So if people in Scotland voted to leave the EU and everyone else voted to stay in, we would stay in! This proves that the SNP's priority is the EU not the will of the Scottish people. Sturgeon said in 1995, "Europe is our flagship policy." Not independence, note – Europe.

A recent survey by a team from Edinburgh University found that two-thirds of the British people reject the SNP proposal and believe that the majority should decide whether we leave the EU, with no minority vetoes. We must unite our country on class lines, not split it on "national" lines. Unity is strength. ■

Industry ought to be the core of Britain, the heart of our engine of growth, as opposed to the illusion of wealth that

# Why Britain needs an in

BRITAIN CAN'T PROPERLY provide for its people without a complex web of manufacture and technology. For all the talk of services, it needs industry.

Once we were the workshop of the world; much has gone. Now the service sector dominates Britain's economy, contributing around 78 per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product.

Even after all the deliberate destruction, some key industrial areas remain – aircraft, pharmaceuticals, for example, and the motor industry (see following pages). To be in balanced, rude health our working class needs to enforce a restoration of industry in Britain.

It won't happen automatically from the normal processes of capitalism. Governments come and go. Sometimes lip-service is given to it – remember Osborne's "march of the makers". They may even say it might be a good idea to end our reliance on services and finance. But nothing happens.

Look at what has happened over the desperate need to replace and renew our nuclear industry to prevent an energy crisis. There is endless talking, endless prevarication; there is no commitment, because presumably successive governments fear rebuilding our strength.

If it has to be enforced, how do the people of Britain press for the restoration of industry? It won't be by petitioning, or pleading, or making a moral case, but by unceasing pressure of a nation of workers who will not let it drop. Ways must be found of forcing it to the fore and not letting governments get off the hook.

## Divide and rule

We should do a bit of "divide and conquer" ourselves. Finance capital is the biggest enemy of industry in Britain; it is loath to invest in industrial rebuilding. Therefore, it should be isolated; we should engineer splits, rifts and divisions inside the capitalist sphere.

Let's have unity against finance capital. Together workers and industrial capitalists have enough clout to negate finance capital and to force government to implement measures to rebuild our industry.

The mania of finance capitalism for



Land Rover

The Land Rover assembly line in Halewood, Merseyside, with the first Discovery Sport on its way



economy, because it is productive wealth creation. It is the  
 that is financial speculation. But we will have to fight for it...

# Industrial policy



y down the line.

manipulating unproductive wealth, where money seems to make more money but without a use value being generated or anything contributed to society, is a false dream. The only real product of such speculation is the later inevitable outcome: another destructive financial crisis.

So to bring back real wealth creation, we must enforce a national policy for industrial development and the setting up of an Industrial Investment Bank to restore manufacturing, and not just in essential infrastructure.

The willingness of private concerns to invest is negligible compared to our country's need. There will have to be state direction of funds available at low rates of interest to build new industries, expand existing ones and update infrastructure. Other capitalist countries have adopted this method; so should we.

An industrial audit of Britain should be undertaken: highlight what has been lost, what needs to be restored and in which order; and what needs to be developed that is new.

## Intervention

The industrial policy should use governmental procurement and defence contracts to support British companies. There will have to be protectionism and industrial intervention. If this brings Britain into conflict with the EU, so much the better. Others ignore EU directives when it serves their purposes.

A National Investment Bank could address the deterioration of British infrastructure. Investment in Britain's transport, energy, water and other systems has fallen to critical levels over the past four decades.

Capitalist economies find it difficult to recover from major slumps because severe economic depression leads to a collapse in confidence and investment. Banks and companies are sitting on piles of cash or stashing them in relatively riskless, unproductive places. Only state intervention will promote and subsidise new investment.

The most effective, dramatic form of class struggle is collective action, but it can take other forms. Class struggle exists too in the battle of ideas between the two classes – particularly how to progress Britain economically and politically. ■

**'Real wealth creation requires us to enforce a national policy for industrial development.'**

The Thatcherite hatred for state concerns and belief in privatisation has lingered for almost four decades and still exercises a stranglehold over decision making even though it is a tired piece of ideology now.

The state can be successful at developing and running things. But the old falsehood still dominates and must be broken. We need a new industrial revolution in this country so that we can make the range of things that people need and which could also be exported abroad.

Now some capitalists (though not all) favour an EU super-state that promotes freedom of movement for capital and labour, strengthening employers and weakening workers. A centralising EU state functions for the benefit of the strongest, particularly German capitalism's interests.

So for British workers, and for workers in the other nations of Europe, the potential of protection only resides within the national framework. We cannot afford to let our nation go. Our working class needs the protective shield of our national state against the destructive incursions of the EU.

We stand for economic unity with the world. We should trade with the world – not narrow our vision just to Europe. Interestingly, economic activity with the EU accounts for only around 10 per cent of Britain's GDP. Most, somewhere in the region of 60 to 70 per cent, is generated within Britain. Over 10 per cent we export to the world.

The political establishment is scaremongering when it cries "We can't leave the EU!" If we decide to rebuild Britain and reconstruct an industrial economy, then we can prosper outside the EU, which is in a seemingly permanent slump. ■



**Who says Britain doesn't make anything any more? The m  
this country, but that it can survive and indeed thrive outs**

# Who needs the EU? Not

Right: Nissan UK. Bottom: Neil Mitchell/shutterstock.com



**Nissan's Sunderland plant, built on the site of a former RAF airfield – last year its production of 500,000 cars, mostly Qashqais, outstripped car output of the whole of Italy. Below, MG3 super-minis awaiting transport at Longbridge, Birmingham.**

THE BRITISH MOTOR industry is bucking the trend of decline – even though there are no longer any major British-owned motor manufacturers. It is an industry that thrives outside of the EU and demonstrably would thrive even more without the EU's destructive restrictions.

The history and current state of the British motor industry provides a clear exposé of how employers and governments have worked together over many decades to point the finger of blame for their mistakes on workers.

It also shows how they sought to destroy trade union organisation to prevent workers from defending themselves – but

mistakes were made by the unions too. In this feature we highlight the opportunities for the future of the industry and workers' central role in it.

## Pacesetter

The motor industry in Britain has changed dramatically over the past fifty years, from the days when Fords, for example, was a pacesetter for industrial wage settlements, thanks to the organisation and determination of trade unions like the Amalgamated Engineering Union and the Transport and General Workers Union.

Just as the trade unions have changed through merger and takeover, so the indus-

try has been transformed by foreign ownership and new technology.

But the motor industry is so much more than cars and includes bus, truck, van, engine, taxi, formula one racing car, specialist off road vehicle, coach, specialised construction vehicle and component manufacture.

Today, Britain is home to a range of manufacturing plants including 7 mainstream car, 7 commercial vehicle, 9 bus and coach, 8 premium and sports car, 8 Formula One and over 100 specialist and niche manufacturing plants. In addition there are 13 research and development centres as well as 6 design centres.



Motor industry shows not only that manufacturing exists in  
side of the European Union...

# the motor industry...

The industry as a whole employs 731,000 workers, of whom 146,000 are directly employed in manufacturing and 38,500 in motorsport including 25,000 engineers. In 2013, this workforce produced 1.6 million vehicles, of which 1.24 million were exported – making Britain the fourth biggest vehicle maker in Europe behind Germany, Spain and France.

The number of vehicles manufactured in Britain is increasing, while it decreases in every other European country except Slovakia. This growth is in marked contrast to the decline of manufacturing as a whole in Britain.

So why is the British motor industry bucking the trend of decline? Some have suggested that it was in part down to people spending their PPI compensation on this sector. But the real reason is the increase in export potential in Russia, the Far East (particularly China), and South America.

China is expected to import more automotive products each year for the next five years. Some 10 per cent of all British car exports go to Russia. Jaguar Land Rover, for example, exports 300,000 vehicles every year, 80 per cent of its production. China is now the company's biggest overseas market (replacing the USA), while Land Rover is the leading SUV brand in Brazil.

Nissan's Sunderland plant produced 500,000 cars last year. This is more than in Italy, where the Fiat Motor Company decided to transfer its production of the quintessentially Italian Fiat 500 to Poland. Most of those vehicles produced at the Nissan Sunderland plant are the Qashqai, 80 per cent of which are exported. Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant produced 73,000 Astra models, of which 76 per cent were exported.

Almost half of the 2.5 million cars sold in Britain are built in Germany. These statistics explain why the motor industry is not bothered by the possibility of Britain's exit from the European Union.

On the one hand its exports to non-EU countries are set to grow further, especially to China, Russia and South America.

## 'How did Britain end up without any major motor manufacturers being British-owned?'

Secondly, the trade in cars is a strong reason why the EU will not raise trade barriers against an independent Britain. Why would Germany let obstacles be raised against its motor industry's single biggest market?

The same argument can be made for other manufacturing companies. For all Cameron keeps trying to woo countries like India and China into increasing trade with Britain because these are among the world's fastest-growing markets, Britain is not permitted by the EU to negotiate separate trade deals with them! Trade with these countries clearly provides part of the alternative to dependence on the EU.

### No effect

British-owned JCB's CEO and its owner have publicly stated that Britain leaving the EU would have no effect on motor manufacturing.

How did Britain end up without any major motor manufacturers being British-owned? It's worth looking at the largest previously British-owned motor manufacturing company British Leyland (BL). It was created in 1968 by a merger of British Motor Holdings and the Leyland Motor Corporation led by Sir Donald (later to become Lord) Stokes.

At the time BMH was on the verge of collapse and Leyland was a successful commercial vehicle builder. The Wilson Labour government of the time encouraged the merger hoping that Leyland could make BMH more successful.

Unfortunately Stokes was not able to

turn the new company round, with its internal competing models and rival brands. In 1975, it had to be partially nationalised by the Labour government of the day.

The company was strongly unionised, as were other domestic companies such as US owned Ford and Vauxhall, and the media tried to blame the companies' ills on the unions.

In fact, the problems were lack of new models, lack of design and development, infighting, such as the refusal of Triumph to accept the Rover V8 engine for the new Stag model, and competing brand models such as the Morris Marina and the Austin Allegro, the Triumph 2000, the Rover 2000 and the Austin Princess.

BL, under Stokes, could not properly manage the integration of the multiple companies in the group producing competing products. It failed to invest in the design, development and production of a single family of cars like Ford and Vauxhall, which would have saved on development costs and allowed benefits from the economy of scale.

In 1977, Michael Edwardes was appointed chief executive of BL by the Labour government. He announced that his first job was to take on the unions across the company. He started by closing the Speke factory in Liverpool after the workforce took industrial action. This was followed by more plant closures with the loss of 90,000 jobs and by the sacking of a union convener.

Thatcher saw this as a good example for her to follow after she formed a government in 1979. In 1984, the Jaguar marque was sold off, subsequently bought by Ford along with the successful Land Rover marque. Both would later be sold to the Indian Tata Group. The successful truck division was sold to the Dutch company DAF.

The BL bus division was spun off to become Leyland Bus. Rover became jointly owned with Honda of Japan – and then was sold by the government to British Aerospace, which subsequently sold it to

*Continued on page 14*





*Continued from page 13*

BMW. BMW was only interested in the Cowley plant to develop the Mini.

The remaining Rover and MG marques were sold to a hedge fund, Phoenix, when BMW offloaded its other manufacturing assets of the original Rover Group. Government money assisted with the sale to Phoenix. Then in 2005, Phoenix's MG Rover went into administration and its key assets were bought by the Chinese company SAIC. Chinese-built MGs are today being part assembled at the old Longbridge site.

The other British-owned mass car builders were the Rootes Group, that included the Hillman, Sunbeam, Humber, Singer, Commer and Karrier. They were

taken over by the struggling US giant car-maker Chrysler in 1967, which then sold on the remnants of the company to the French company Peugeot in 1978. Peugeot closed its last remaining plant at Ryton in Coventry in 2007 with the loss of 2,300 jobs.

Luxury carmakers Bentley is now owned by Germany's Volkswagen while Rolls Royce motors has been carved up between Volkswagen and German car maker BMW.

### Destruction

What a sorry tale of the destruction of an industry! Capitalism, with financiers at the helm, played at car manufacture from the 1960s, interested only in asset-stripping and short-term profits. It enlisted governments to help each phase of its dirty game,

and together they sought political profit from blaming and punishing the unions.

The wave of so called "new" car-makers began to arrive in the late 1970s following the collaboration between Rover and Honda, but the first new plant was to be the Nissan plant in Sunderland. Thatcher offered Nissan a deal, in which it could buy the land for its new plant at agricultural rates at a knockdown £1,800 per acre. Honda started production in 1985 and opened a new engine plant in 1989. Toyota followed in 1989.

Clearly all these dramatic changes had an effect on the workers and trade unions in the industry. Both BL and Chrysler had launched fierce anti-union campaigns, encouraged by Thatcher and the media. Thatcher joined in with attacks on unionised

## 'Motorsport valley': a centre of manufacturing

IN "MOTORSPORT VALLEY", the business cluster near the Silverstone circuit in Northamptonshire, around 4,300 companies employ around 41,000 people and have a combined turnover of around £9 billion a year. Almost 90 per cent of these companies export their products and services abroad.

This work generates thousands of skilled jobs, including those involved with Formula One – an example of British engineering excellence, creative design and innovative manufacturing with a turnover of £2 billion a year and employing 5,200 highly skilled workers. In 2013, according to the Motorsport Industry Association, eight out of the 13 Formula One teams were based in the Valley.

As in past seasons, eight of the eleven teams racing this year are based in Britain, including the big names Red Bull, McLaren, Mercedes and Lotus. Britain has a leading role in racing, and this stretches beyond the Formula One teams to the supply chain supporting the sport.

In the biggest change in Formula One racing for decades, there are now far stricter limits on fuel consumption, so the cars have to be cleaner and more fuel-efficient. Light turbo-charged 1.6 litre capacity six-cylinder hybrid engines replace the 2.4 litre capacity, eight-cylinder engines that have been in use since 2006.

The new cars all have an energy recovery system, whereby energy and heat from the car's brakes and turbocharger are stored in cells and then used to generate short bursts of power. The engines also now have to last longer, with teams limited to five a season, down from eight.

The knowledge generated does not just stay within racing. McLaren Applied Technologies (MAT) uses some of the lessons learned from Formula One in other



Morio

**Formula 1, the opening lap of the 2010 Malaysia**  
**employment servicing Formula 1 has been creat**

industries. Its engineers help to improve equipment in sports like cycling, sailing, canoeing, rowing, bobsleigh and skeleton.

Gordon Murray's petrol-powered city car T25, pioneered in 2010, used Formula One technology to revolutionise the way city cars functioned and were manufactured. Gordon Murray Design and Zytec Automotive have together produced an electric-powered version, the T27.



**The Red Bull factory and headquarters**  
**in Milton Keynes.**



industry and with more anti-union laws. But, again encouraged by Thatcher, Nissan was to launch itself as the first union-free motor giant. The Amalgamated Engineering Union, already shedding members at an alarming rate, not just in the motor industry, but in the manufacturing sector as a whole following Thatcher's assault on industry, felt its back was against the wall.

Nissan was persuaded to engage in a "beauty parade" of trade unions to be recognised in a single-union agreement with a no-strike clause. To its shame, the AEU "won" this deal, which led to an independent works council with workforce representatives that had no connection with the union. So the AEU was never to be in negotiation with the company.

Today, membership density is just

## excellence



Grand Prix. A cluster of skills and based in an area in or near Northamptonshire.

Williams has taken motorsport expertise into mass transport, particularly the use of energy-efficient, carbon-reducing technologies. Claire Williams, deputy team principal and commercial director at Williams, says the cluster of high-value, hi-tech engineering companies in Motorsport Valley dispels the notion that "Britain doesn't make things any more". ■

## 'Free of EU industrial policy, we could invest in the capital and training needed.'

25/30 per cent of the workforce in most of the "new" Japanese companies. So Thatcher's plan was clear. Close down as much of the unionised motor industry as possible and replace it with non-union plants, or at least plants where the unions had no power.

Honda and Toyota followed suit, with the merged union of the AEEU, a combination of the AEU and the EETPU, signing up to the same sweetheart deals. This became a model for other employers, especially from Japan and South Korea, to follow.

### Collective bargaining

Today, most of the long established motor manufacturers like Ford and Jaguar Land Rover still have collective bargaining. Unite and the GMB are the main unions, and Unite has recognised the motor component sector as a growing part of the industry. It has tried to meet the new situation, creating a Vehicle Building and Automotive section of its membership that includes the component sector. It campaigns around its policy that calls on the government to build on and extend Britain's domestic supply chains – pointing out that too much of the supply chain for vehicles comes from overseas.

Unite also calls for government to encourage public sector bodies to support British manufacturing jobs through their procurement bodies. In other words, British public sector employers should buy British-made vehicles for their fleets. Also the motor manufacturers should buy components from British-based companies.

Desirable as these may be, both of these policies are, of course, not permitted by the EU and in particular by TTIP (see review, page 22). Unbelievably, Unite argues to stay in the EU, whose policy is to

create a motor industry hub in countries like Slovakia, based on cheap skilled labour! Slovakia currently produces more cars per capita than any other country.

What Britain has to offer is the skills of its engineers, whether building McLaren Formula 1 cars or Land Rovers. As a nation we need to be expanding those skills, passing them on to new generations, developing new clean technology for powering motor vehicles.

Out of the EU we could implement Unite policies. Out of the EU there will continue to be no trade barriers, because, as previously quoted, half of the 2.5 million cars a year imported into Britain are built in Germany. Not the VWs, Audis, BMWs and Mercedes, but two of Britain's favourite brands: Ford and Vauxhall. Ford only builds engines in Britain today. So Germany has much to lose from raising trade barriers with Britain.

Out of the EU, Britain could negotiate trade deals with those countries that want British vehicles – China, Brazil, Russia and so on. Free of EU industrial policy, we could invest in the capital and training needed, and develop transport and other policies that support British industry. ■



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Then as now, there was a new Conservative government, and the 1970s showed that, properly focused, the power of an orga

# 1971–1974: Workers aga

ON COMING to power in 1970, the first thing the Conservative government did was to try to rush through an anti-trade union bill. Labour's white paper "In Place of Strife" in 1969 had been a debacle, completely failing in its aim of limiting union activity. Edward Heath, the new prime minister, wanted to outdo Wilson and show he could tame the working class.

The Conservative bill posed a fundamental challenge to trade unions. Threatening their effectiveness, it called for state registration of unions. Strikes would become illegal if they were unofficial or were solidarity action. Unions would lose immunity from being sued by employers in the civil courts if they were not state registered.

The bill sought the introduction of postal ballots, cooling-off periods before strikes, the outlawing of closed shops and tighter controls of union agreements and membership. A new court would be created with punitive powers to impose fines on unions and order sequestration of their assets. This was a head-on attack.

Formerly capitalists felt they could live with trade unions, even if they found them a thorn in their flesh. Now they were demanding state intervention to crush them. Our Party pointed out the dangers of a corporate state and warned that only great determination and positive action would stop the bill.

## Phoney war

The TUC responded with a phoney war and intended no action as the Industrial Relations Bill progressed through parliament. It simply called for meetings in tea breaks and outside working hours in January 1971. It was going to accept the bill under protest.

Pockets of unofficial strike action against the bill occurred on 8 December

**'They were demanding state intervention to crush unions.'**



Workers

**AUEW rally in 1973 against the Industrial Relations Act, Tower Hill, London, addressed by Reg Birch.**

1970 and 12 January 1971. But then, breaking with the passivity of other trade union leaderships, the Executive Council of the Amalgamated Engineering Workers Union (AUEW) voted to lead their 1.5 million members into industrial action against the bill with two national one-day strikes in March.

The AUEW declared that, if the bill became law, it would adopt a policy of non-cooperation with the act and its court. The AUEW's lay National Committee over-

whelmingly affirmed this stance and the one-day strikes.

Over a million workers stopped work on 1 March 1971. On 18 March over 2 million workers went on strike. The effect on the economy was massive. More than 80 per cent of Engineering Employers Federation members were affected. The motor industry, docks, and newspapers were completely closed down. Engineering workers in utility industries struck. Others joined the strikes, including boilermakers, printers,

**new anti-union legislation. The engineers' struggle in the organised working class is superior to capitalist law...**

# ainst the state



**"We have been lazy," said Birch. "We have thought we could live with this employing class."**

electricians and postmen. Attempting to throw a restrictive net around our working class, the ruling class had provoked the engineers to openly break their class law in a political battle.

A TUC special conference in March adopted a programme of inaction on a narrow vote. The dead hands only dreamed of watering down the bill in parliamentary debate or finding legal loopholes. They were waiting for repeal by a different government, and in effect accepted the act,

which became law soon after.

The engineers' approach rested on the power of workers to withdraw their labour and bring the entire capitalist system to a halt. At the September 1971 TUC the AUEW put a motion, which was passed. It "instructed" all trade unions not to register under the Act, threatening those that did with expulsion. In total 82 TUC affiliated unions deregistered, though 32 middling to small unions were expelled. In practice, however, only the AUEW actually repudi-

ated Heath's Act and refused to acknowledge the existence of the National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC).

## Rejected

In April 1972, the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), forerunner of today's RMT, rejected a pay recommendation and imposed a work-to-rule and overtime ban. The secretary of state for employment activated the statutory 14-day cooling-off period. The NUR refused to attend the NIRC, but adhered to the cooling-off period ordered by the court. At the end of the 14 days, the NIRC ordered a secret ballot; 88 per cent of members supported the union's proposed action. The dispute was settled with a wage increase. Heath's government never again attempted to use the cooling-off and ballot provisions of the 1971 act.

Next, two container companies at Chobham Farm, east London, being picketed by dockers on unofficial strike, applied to the NIRC in July 1972 for an injunction against them. The court found in the employers' favour, ordering the arrest and jailing of five pickets in July 1972.

The Pentonville Five became an instant cause célèbre. There were large-scale unofficial stoppages of work in protest, including a docks strike. The TUC voted to stage a one-day general strike on 31 July. That was not necessary as a fearful government caved in, using a desperate legal loophole (the "Official Solicitor") as a cover.

The five men were released, even though they had publicly accepted they were picketing. They returned to the picket line on gaining their freedom. One of their shop stewards said, "We do not take orders from judges."

The Transport and General Workers Union tried to be militant without penalties. Sued as responsible for their own shop stewards, the TGWU repudiated them. It cooperated with the NIRC and appealed to the House of Lords, but was still found responsible.

The AUEW was fined on several occasions because it did not recognise the court or the government's right to intervene. Most notably, in September 1973 the NIRC

*Continued on page 18*



*Continued from page 17*

became involved with a strike and picketing by AUEW members in a recognition dispute at a small engineering firm called Con Mech. An order banned the strike while an investigation was carried out. The AUEW ignored this and was fined £75,000 for contempt; £100,000 of the union's assets were sequestrated.

The miners won a victory over the Conservative government, which was defeated in the "who rules Britain?" election of February 1974. Yet the new Labour government did not repeal the offending legislation. The whole apparatus of Heath's Industrial Relations Act was left in place. Worse, the NIRC continued to crucify the AUEW with punitive fines and costs arising from the Con Mech case. That brought about the final showdown.

### Assets to be seized

Con Mech applied to the NIRC to sue the union for damages, and in April 1974 was awarded £47,000 compensation. The AUEW refused to pay. The court ordered the seizure of all the union's assets. The AUEW executive council declared that the sequestration of its union funds meant "all members of the engineering section without exception should withdraw their labour forthwith." The instruction was issued for 8 May, without any end date.

The response from AUEW members was truly remarkable. Up and down the country engineers immediately downed tools. Whole sections even stopped on the night of 8 May on hearing radio news bulletins. Thousands of engineers rallied to the defence of the union. Hundreds gathered within an hour to stop police and bailiffs entering the union's head office. Executive Council member Reg Birch addressed the union members there, and warned against having any truck with the Social Contract between the Labour government and the TUC, which restricted pay claims in return for a limited price freeze. "Unions which sign a contract have to police it," he said.

On the afternoon of 8 May, with the government fearful of this amazing response, an anonymous donor paid the costs against the union, even though the

## 'Up and down the country engineers immediately downed tools.'

President of the NIRC, Judge Donaldson, previously stated he would not accept such a payment. The *Financial Times* characterised this as "a legal conjuring trick". Effectively this was the end of the Industrial Relations Act. Belatedly the Labour government repealed the act and disbanded the NIRC.

The AUEW's demolition of the act and its court undoubtedly scared the capitalist class. That fear is also reflected in the treatment of history books and web accounts devoted to this period. There is little or no mention of the engineers' battles while there is plenty of comment about the disputes of miners and dockers. The TUC's historical web archive fails to mention any AUEW action. It is as if these major events in the past had not occurred – wiped out by an ideological rewriting of history.

The remarkable steadfastness of the

AUEW was in large part down to Reg Birch, then our party chairman. He played a key role through his position as union Executive Councillor and his previous lengthy spell on the National Committee. He cut the tools that others wielded. For four years the AUEW conducted a political action against a capitalist state seeking to fetter trade unions with fascist restrictions.

### The right to rule

By defying this act workers were in effect telling the state agents of the capitalist class that their rule was no longer acceptable. Workers were really claiming the right to rule themselves and overthrow the capitalist class and capitalist system. Unfortunately our class did not pursue this strategy into the future.

The AUEW victory over the industrial relations court was a political earthquake that shook the whole country. But it didn't reshape it, because at the moment of victory the ruling class was already pressing against us in another direction. Soon the trade unions, including the AUEW, fell into line with the voluntary restraint of the Social Contract, effectively making our unions the servants of a Labour government. Five years later that government gave way to Thatcher. ■

## Meet the Party

**The Communist Party of Britain Marxist-Leninist's next series of London public meetings begins with on 22 September – with the title "When Britain leaves the EU" – and 25 November in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. The meetings will take place in the Brockway Room, which can accommodate more people than the room previously used. Other meetings are held around Britain. Meeting details will be published on What's On, page 5, and on [www.cpbml.org.uk/events](http://www.cpbml.org.uk/events).**

**M The Party's annual London May Day rally is always held on May Day itself, regardless of state bank holidays. There are also CPBML May Day meetings in Edinburgh and Leeds.**

**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 send an email to [info@cpbml.org.uk](mailto:info@cpbml.org.uk)**

**Lack of participation is throttling the labour movement. We need unity and participation, not minority ‘activists’.**

# Take part, take heart



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HOW HEARTENING to be in a united and determined group of workers who successfully resist a move against them or gain an improvement. What could be better? When this happens we set down a marker that cannot be ignored and has a positive effect on others elsewhere. It advertises clearly the benefits of the collective approach better than anything else.

Securing a common acceptance of the road to be taken by any group of workers or the class as a whole is the most important factor in the development of thinking and the creation of a class ideology. It won't just

**‘Advance never comes from only a minority being prepared to get stuck in.’**

happen – it has to be worked for.

The most essential step is to get more workers to become involved. Lack of participation is the prime handicap to successful action, as it holds back more willing ones. Advance never comes from only a minority being prepared to get stuck in. If a minority cannot win over a reasonable majority, we must conclude that there is still work to do

convincing people, as such weakness will be spotted by the employer or the government and duly exploited – no doubt – to divide us further.

So, how do you tease commitment out of people? How do you overcome reluctance to getting involved? There's not one magic approach, but the answer lies somewhere in the realm of discussion, argument and reason among work colleagues.

## **No fence to sit on**

Realising there isn't a fence to sit on is the first step. When conditions are being worsened and lives should be being bettered, to feign apathy or uninterest or even antipathy to avoid involvement is only subjugation. Therefore, organise.

**This article is an edited extract of a speech given at the 2015 CPBML May Day Rally in London.**

*Continued on page 20*

*Continued from page 19*

After the current prolonged period of counterrevolution and its hemming in of our living standards and social provision, increasing numbers of people are considering taking up the cudgels again. But organisation and struggle might be new to many or not practised for a long time by others. Renewed attention will have to be paid to the art of struggle. It is an art to get people to voluntarily combine their efforts and forge a common identity. Some methods are good; others disastrous.

### **Fight for pay**

The fight for pay can be a great spur to unity. There have been some welcome signs of working class renewal in this area. The best responses have been in factories and industries where union membership is concentrated around similar skills or jobs.

In these places votes cast in union ballots for action have been very high, often in the 80 to 90 per cent region. Usually in these cases settlements have been agreed despite the protestations of companies at first that there would be no increases. These battles have shown the influence of unions. They are still alive, and capable of delivering for members.

## **‘We must take a long hard look at the innards of our trade unions, not just their facades.’**

Unity can also be built on conditions of work and service. There is so much that is wrong in the work environment, you don't have to invent a cause to take up. Select the one that causes most upset to the most people. Raise it in a collective way and seek improvements.

Even just talking about such issues in union groups can lead to convulsions inside management. It can have a reinvigorating effect on a workplace if good tactics are used to tackle the issue and seek a remedy.

We need to follow the example of those who created the first trade unions in Britain. No doubts our forebears would have thought the odds stacked against them, but they forged collective combinations and resisted the demands of capital. They joined together in conditions often of great danger and secrecy. We can do the same.

We must take a long hard look at the innards of our trade unions, not just their facades, and examine whether they are well rooted or not. If they're not, put them right. Or new ones will emerge.

### **Is size everything?**

Does the way our trade unions are arranged foster active unity or generate non-involvement, because everything is so remote and far away? In particular those super-sized unions – the product of endless mergers rather than real membership growth – project the mirage of strength while not necessarily providing it where it matters, inside workplaces and work sectors.

We want the reality of actual strength inside workplaces and sectors to fend off attacks or make advances. We don't want remote leviathans. Our class organisations must be tailored to fit actual or potential members, be easy for lay members to get involved in and dictate the issues and solutions where they work.

If a massive union straddles lots of different work activities, then perhaps trade unionists will have to internally reassemble it on the basis of skill or occupation groups. That way it will be easier for members to be fully involved, or mobilised.

Strength resides around class identities.



### **CPBML/Workers**

## **Public Meeting, London**

**Tuesday 22 September, 7.30 pm**

**“When Britain leaves the EU”**

**Brockway Room, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Nearest tube Holborn.**

Over the past 50 years and more, Britain's ruling class has battled to ensure Britain is enmeshed in the European Union. With the EU and the euro in meltdown, come and hear why, and what Britain needs to do to retain its integrity, sovereignty and unity as an island of labour. All welcome.





**Leading by example: London ambulance workers picketing during the health pay dispute in October 2014. Where members are involved, the fight for pay can be a spur to unity.**

To be effective unions must exert an influence in the workplace, where each collective should seek an impact over working arrangements. Combine. Enforce your common interests. Exert a work discipline. Because organised workers who press their case get respect and make an impact.

In some unions the major voices of disunity come from varieties of ultra-left or other “activist” politicians. Though small in number, they have a devastating impact of weakening struggle and are stridently divisive. This often happens where the mass of workers have withdrawn from union activity and there are not enough brave people wishing to openly disagree with their poor tactics and strategy.

These self-styled activists are happy to shun the general union membership; indeed they do their best by their behaviour and policies to discourage widespread participation. These people are consumed by the zeal of stupidity.

One example from education in Newham, east London, indicates the terrible consequences they can have. For many years, until about 2008, the line was held of resisting academies in Newham.

Fortunately the first big fight against the imposition of an academy was in a secondary school where there were no ultra-leftists and a communist leadership. Eventually the academy sponsor was fended off and a cooperative solution was found to stop the school passing into private control.

There have been no successes since

then. Later a number of Newham secondary schools have become academies, because ultra-left leadership inside these schools was incapable of uniting the teaching force or local community to fight off the changes.

### ‘Activism’ fetish

Politics count. This notion of reliance on “activism” as against a conscious involved membership takes responsibility away from workers and preserves control in a pre-ordained caste of a few. Workers must return en masse to trade unions and clear them of the lunacies of this fifth column.

Tactics and strategy are the lifeblood of a working class wanting to survive and prosper. In the early phases it will have to be guerrilla tactics nationally and locally because we are unable at the moment to muster direct offensives on a large scale.

The endlessly repeated mindless chant of “general strike, general strike” is a substitute for thought and a refusal to think about the best way forward. A general strike is really a political weapon to be reserved for those circumstances when a working class wants to overthrow the exploiters’ system and seize the levers of power. Otherwise, a general strike should not be broached; other more irregular tactics should apply.

### The way to win

However unlikely it may appear now, we can win in the future. If our class sticks to the enabling view that it must “come to the fore”, and must rely upon its own exertions

to resist and advance, then change will ensue and the working class will start to dictate events.

Don’t run away from problems. Face them, because you are the only solution. Avoid crippling divisions and diversions. Press your causes. Increase active unity. If we garner strength in this way, then in the future working class influence will increase, and things that have not appeared remotely possible for ages will surge centre stage again.

The development of an extensive network of working class strongholds across Britain can break and dispel the economic fetters and political oppression of capitalism that constrains everyone. The combined skills and talents of our class make it possible for us to challenge and sweep away capitalism; the very same virtues will be the means of reconstruction under socialism.

The greatest productive force is the working class. Because we can, our class must effect this change and move history on to new ground. There is no option but to do it ourselves. We must be masters of our own destiny.

There are some signs of a reawakening in our class. Will it spread?

If we can restore working class strength, then think of the potential of our class. We embrace all occupations, skills and talents necessary to run and deliver a whole society and a complete economy. We can manage it, literally, without the capitalists. We must find ways to represent this vision of the future in the present. ■

In this issue we look at two works on the economy, both painstaking research, each challenging conventional assumptions

# TTIP, welfare: two myths

**The Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: European disintegration, unemployment and instability, by Jeromin Capaldo, Global Development and Environment Institute Working Paper No. 14-03, October 2014. Available for download at [tufts.edu/gdae/Pubs/wp/14-03CapaldoTTIP.pdf](http://tufts.edu/gdae/Pubs/wp/14-03CapaldoTTIP.pdf)**

THE PROPONENTS of the European Union's TTIP, the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, claim all sorts of benefits from the controversial treaty. Effectively, they promise an intercontinental deluge of milk and honey, with more "win-wins" than you could shake a dividend voucher at.

So this academic study from the US, submitting the claims to detailed scrutiny, is particularly welcome. It appeared in autumn 2014. We have already noted it in *Workers* ("TTIP: The Tufts study", Jan/Feb 2015 page 11). But it deserves a closer look.

## The wrong models

The study comes from Jeromin Capaldo, a researcher at Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts. His starting point is that all the estimates of TTIP benefit use an "unsuitable" economic model as favoured by the World Bank. Models are just models, of course. But the predictions coming from research using the World Bank models about the economic consequences of trade reforms have been consistently wrong.

Specifically, they assume that the more "competitive" sectors of the economy will absorb all the resources (people, capital) released from shrinking sectors that are losing out to international competition. That simply hasn't happened. In the real world of "austerity", with restrictions on wages and hence on people's ability to buy goods, the supposed benefits disappear. A lack of government support for investment makes things worse still.

Capaldo has looked at all this from another perspective. Abandoning the World Bank-type models, he has assessed TTIP using what he calls the more "realistic" United Nations Global Policy Model.

Capaldo is not challenging the assumptions about increased trade resulting from the treaty. This might be seen as a weak-



Konstantin Chagin/shutterstock.com

ness, as those assumptions should surely come under independent scrutiny. But his approach is informative. He asks: even if the trade assumptions are correct, how will that play through to the real economy? Will it lead to more jobs and more disposable income for workers?

## The opposite is true

In short, Capaldo finds that the reverse will happen. He sums up, "We project that TTIP will lead to a contraction of GDP, personal incomes and employment. We also project an increase in financial instability and a continuing downward trend in the labour share of GDP." It would affect the whole economy, not just services.

There would be losses in net exports, wages, jobs (600,000 across the EU), and labour share of GDP (in Britain, an extra 7 per cent transferred from wages to profit).

**'Who benefits?  
Capitalists in  
general.'**

Also a drop in government revenue will increase government debt as a percentage of GDP for every EU country.

"TTIP would have a negative effect on the EU. We find that a large expansion of the volume of trade in TTIP countries is compatible with a net reduction of trade-related revenues for the EU. This would lead to net losses in terms of GDP and employment."

This paper should be required reading for anyone interested in TTIP, and especially for those in trade union research departments. Even without the embattled concept of Investor-State Dispute Settlement and the threats to the NHS, it shows that the impacts of TTIP described above will lead to even more cuts.

Who benefits? Capitalists in general. The paper suggests that "TTIP would reinforce the downward [labour] share of GDP, leading to a transfer of income from wages to profits with adverse social and economic consequences."

This is not the final word from Capaldo, who describes his paper as "a work in progress". Watch out for more from Medford, Massachusetts. ■



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**Good times, Bad times: the Welfare Myth of Them and Us**, by John Hills, paperback, 334 pages, ISBN 978-1-44732-003-6, Policy Press, 2014, £12.99.

SIR JOHN HILLS is Professor of Social Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science. His deeply researched book demolishes many of the myths about welfare.

Unemployment benefits account for just 4 per cent of Britain's welfare budget. But 75 per cent of us thought that they account for 40 per cent or more. Myths have consequences. Playing on such false belief makes it easier to justify cutting the welfare budget.

Hills shows that the Coalition's policies made more people poor and will keep them that way. "The new 'welfare cap' is intended to ensure that total benefit and tax credit spending (excluding pensions) never grows faster than prices...living standards for many in the bottom half of the income distribution will automatically fall behind others when the economy returns to growth. If this happens, poverty will rise."

So this is a ratchet device for the continual forcing down of welfare levels over the long term.

Most of us believe that benefits and services should go to people according to their needs, and that those on higher incomes should pay proportionately more. But that is not happening in Britain. Tax and benefit reforms have been regressive, shifting the burden in the opposite direction.

Hills examines the myth that there is a static group – "them" – who benefit, and another static group – "us" – who pay for it. This contains a profound misunderstanding. Instead of remaining static, we experience long-term changes over our lives and many have sudden changes in circumstances, causing a temporary need for support.

In conclusion Hills says "...most of us get back something at least close to what we pay in over our lives towards the welfare state. When we pay in more than we get out, we are helping our parents, our children...In that sense, we are all – or nearly all – in it together." Not a message you are likely to hear anywhere near Westminster or Holyrood. ■

# 6 SIX CALLS TO ACTION

Worried about the future of Britain? Join the CPBML.

**Our country is under attack. Every single institution is in decline. The only growth is in unemployment, poverty and war. There is a crisis – of thought, and of deed. The Communist Party of Britain Marxist-Leninist held its 16th Congress in November 2012, a coming together of the Party to consider the state of Britain and what needs to happen in the future. Here we set out briefly six Calls to Action for the British working class – for a deeper explanation, see [www.cpbml.org.uk](http://www.cpbml.org.uk).**

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

The European Union represents the dictatorship of finance capital, foreign domination. The British working class must declare our intention to leave the EU.

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

Devolution, and now the threats of separation and regionalism, are all products of only one thing: de-industrialisation.

## **3: Rebuild workplace trade union organisation**

Unions exist as working members in real workplaces or they become something else entirely – something wholly negative. Take responsibility for your own unions.

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

The fight for pay is central to our survival as a class, and must be central to the agenda of our trade unions.

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

The regeneration of industry in Britain is essential to the future of our nation. Our grand-parents, and theirs, knew this. We must now reassert it at the centre of class thinking.

## **6: 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.

### **Interested in these ideas?**

- Go along to meetings in your part of the country, or join in study to help push forward the thinking of our class. Get in touch to find out how to take part.
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# First they come for the unions

**'The British ruling class may play at national division, but is quite clear on its unity against the working class.'**

WE HAVE said for some time that the main danger of fascism in Britain comes not from the EDL-type fringe but from the heart of the establishment, parliament. If you doubt this – and many still do – take a look at the Trade Union Bill announced in the Queen's Speech.

It is the very essence of fascism: the suppression of working class organisation in the interests of the ruling class. It looks to set a framework which will see effective trade unionism obliterated by 2030. Britain's "prosperous major economy" will have ensured that "hardworking people are not disrupted by little-supported strike action". Like the fascists of the 1930s, the Conservatives pose as a party for the working class.

The Trade Union Bill is a transparent attempt to ban strikes in the public sector. A 50 per cent turnout threshold will be introduced for strike action. Within that, in what the government calls the "core public services", ballots for strikes or actions short of a strike will have to be approved by 40 per cent of those entitled to vote. That "core" includes education and health. Note, these thresholds are higher than any margin required to elect an MP.

Workers, though, should reflect. Where we are relatively weak – as evidenced in some abysmally low turnouts in other ballots on action, in sectors where it is often made much harder by outsourcing and dismemberment of the workforce – it is pointless to call for action which will be largely unsupported.

Unrealistic calls for all-out strike action where we clearly don't have the forces will only expose our weakness to the employer – something evident in the most recent local government pay dispute. But if the government is doing us a partial favour by making kamikaze strikes more difficult to start, remember that its aim is the outlawing of all strikes.

It's also true that on current form such thresholds will be insufficient to stop, for example, action by firefighters. Prepare, then, for future legislation raising the bar. Why a 40

per cent threshold? Why not 60 or 70 per cent?

And while the government is about it, there are a few extra shackles thrown in for good measure. More legislation will be introduced to stop the so-called intimidation of non-strikers ("scabs" in plain English) on top of the existing legislation. Time limits will force expensive re-balloting in any protracted dispute. The use of agency scabs will be legitimised.

The moribund Certification Officer will receive further powers to intervene in the internal affairs of trade unions. Some 95 per cent of Certification Officer cases at present arise from ultra-left attacks on the mainstream trade unions or the establishment of "pop-up" trade unions designed to cause division and confusion.

The British ruling class may play at national division, but is quite clear on its unity against the working class. The proposed legislation will apply to the whole of Britain plus Northern Ireland – the devolved "nations" and separate administrations are not going to be able to escape a unifying nationwide anti-trade union agenda. It's divide and rule, but ruling comes before dividing.

Where is the pro-union agenda? Certainly not in parliament. From 1997 to 2010 Labour did not reform any anti-union statute introduced under the Tory governments of 1979 to 1997. In fact it strengthened various aspects, especially around the Certification Officer and ballots, to intervene in the internal affairs of trade unions.

There is a lesson here for workers: there is no salvation waiting for us the other side of another election.

This government aims to tie unions up in legal knots. We have to box clever, take a strategic approach, and focus on recruiting and strengthening our unions in the workplace. As the fight against a previous Conservative government's Industrial Relations Act showed (see "Workers against the state", page 16), no laws can stop a united and determined working class bent on asserting its own justice. ■

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