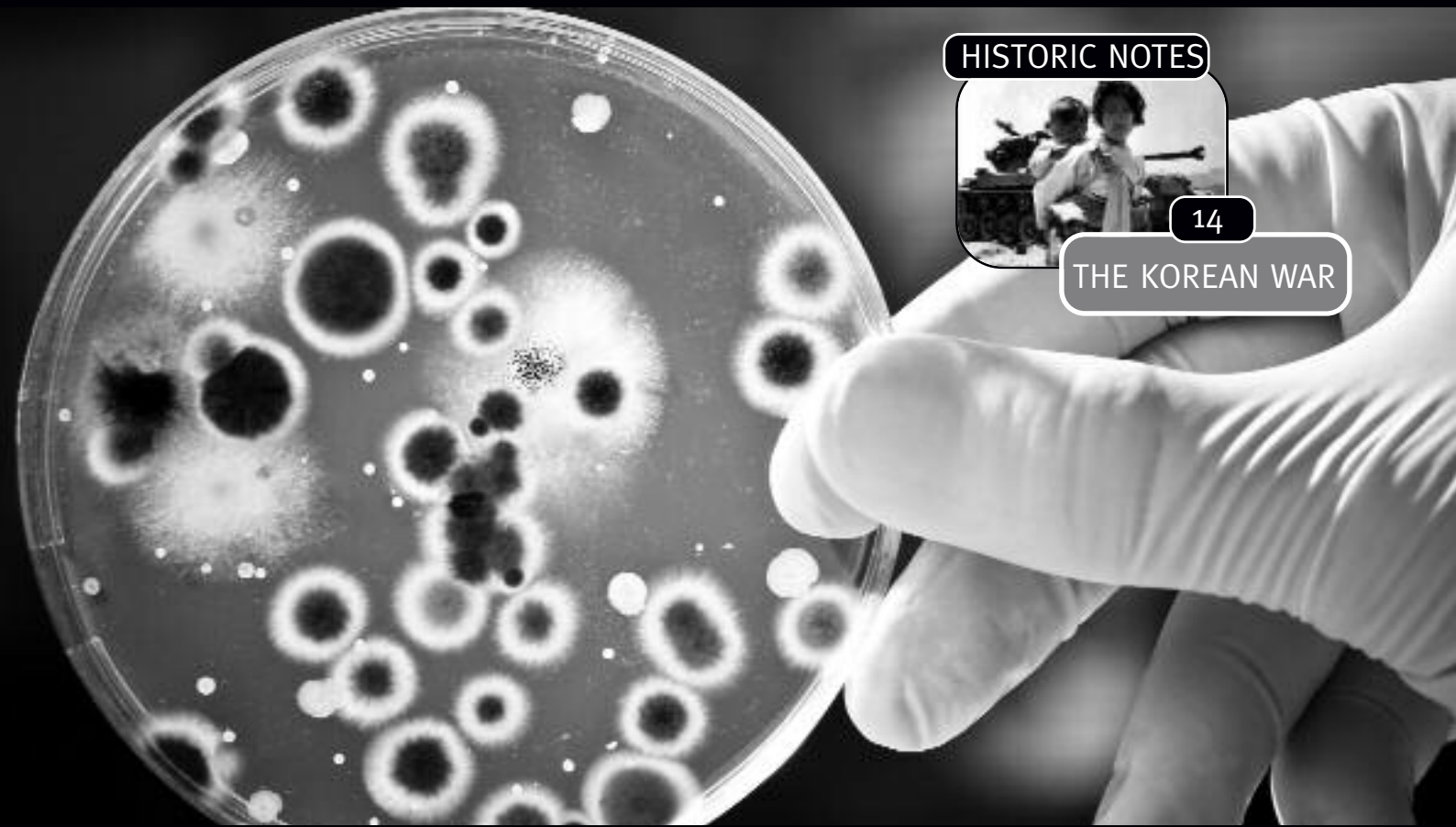


WORKERS

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NOVEMBER 2010 £1



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THE KOREAN WAR

WANTED: A 21ST-CENTURY INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION



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WORKERS

“ The price of capitalism

THE RULING class is attacking public services to destroy the trade unions – that’s what the Comprehensive Spending Review is about. Cutting 500,000 public service jobs will also destroy 425,000 private sector jobs. Its public sector pay freeze will drive down wages in the private sector. Real average take-home pay is already down by 3.4 per cent since December.

Yet it can find the money to bail out bankers, fight aggressive wars, aid foreign tyrants (most foreign aid goes to the Afghan and Iraqi governments), and fund the European Union. It tells us the debt is so bad we must all suffer to pay it off, while forcing students into lifelong debt by tripling tuition fees. We are to pay off ruling class debts so that they can continue to rifle the country’s wealth, wealth created by workers.

The government talks of the need to spend on infrastructure “to support economic

growth”, yet it will cut public sector net spending by 48 per cent by 2014-15, cutting its spending on capital projects by £30 billion a year in the next four years. As the FINANCIAL TIMES noted, “capital budgets are hit harder than almost anything else”. This is killing industry.

Labour talks against the cuts as “unfair” and “too fast”, as if more equal pain and slower implementation would be fine. Had it won the election, it intended to impose cuts, halve the deficit in four years, and, just like the government, cut capital investment by £30 billion a year.

Thatcher said, “There is no such thing as society.” Cameron and Clegg intend to fulfil her wishes by dismantling the structures which make society possible.

This, quite simply, is the price of living with capitalism. Do we want to pay that price?

Short of money?

EVEN LEAVING out the value of property, there are nearly 300,000 millionaires in Britain. These individuals collectively control wealth estimated at £1.28 trillion.

A trillion is a million million – as opposed to a billion which is a mere thousand million.

As the combined health, education, social care, housing and environment public sector budget only equates to £231 billion there is obviously no shortage of cash. If you only look in the right quarters, you can see there is no economic deficit or financial crisis in Britain .



WORKERS is published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)
78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB
ISSN 0266-8580

www.workers.org.uk

Issue 141, November 2010



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Civil servants ponder choices



The Treasury, London

CIVIL SERVANTS are engaged in a long-running dispute about redundancy payments. Government workers rightly feared that the only reason the last government tried to change the rules was to make it easier to sack them. Despite that threat, the unions have not been able to agree on the best way to respond. Civil servants have hard choices to make about how to respond; this is only one of several difficulties facing them including a pay freeze and reduced pension entitlements.

Earlier this year five civil service unions thought that they had no choice but to reach agreement on a severe worsening to redundancy terms. The Public & Commercial Services Union (PCS), by far the largest union, did not agree and eventually won a court ruling that the government could not force agreement without the consent of

all of the Council of Civil Service Unions.

Since May negotiations have dragged on without full PCS participation. The new government has repeated Labour's tactics to divide the unions and force agreement. Again the unions other than PCS believe they can go no further and will recommend what appear to be improved terms, or rather less bad than offered before.

This is against the threat of worse to come in legislation before Parliament. Cabinet Office minister Francis Maude says he will withdraw it if the unions reach agreement, within the cost of the current offer. The smaller unions will ballot members, which some of them failed to do before. The difference now is that there is no doubt that there will be a high number of redundancies.

FOOD

Prices rocket



FOOD PRICES in Britain have soared in recent years, according to the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs – confirming what anyone who has been into a shop has noticed for themselves.

Since mid-2007 the price of eggs has climbed by 46 per cent, butter by 43 per cent, pork by 36 per cent and cheese by 27 per cent.

With Britain growing just 59 per cent of the food it needs, it is very reliant on imports, at a time when sterling is weak in exchange markets. That's not all. British supermarkets, which historically have enjoyed far higher profit margins than rivals round the world, stand accused of abusing their power of monopoly to keep their profits high.

PAWNBROKING

A growth industry

THERE HAS been an expansion and doubling of pawnbrokers in Britain. From 500 in 2003, up to 1,300 now. About 60 per cent of those using pawnbrokers are unemployed.

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

EUROBRIEFS

The latest from Brussels

More money for them...

THE EUROPEAN Parliament voted to increase the EU budget by 5.9 per cent to 130 billion euros on the same day that Chancellor George Osborne announced huge spending cuts. The proposed budget increase for 2011 would raise Britain's gross contribution to the EU budget by more than £840 million, to around £6.5 billion.

More power for them...

CONSERVATIVE MPs have voted for laws to increase EU justice and home-affairs powers through extending the so-called European arrest warrant, the EU diplomatic service, and new supervisory rules for the City of London.

More rules from them...

The European Commission has started legal proceedings to scrap the current rules on welfare claims by EU immigrants. Benefits tourists may get the green light to come to Britain and at once claim handouts of an estimated £2.5 billion a year.

At the moment migrants to Britain from the EU are subject to a "habitual residency test" for claiming benefits. They must show that they either have worked or have a good chance of getting a job to qualify for jobseeker's allowance, employment support allowance, pension credit or income support. But the Commission says, "Having examined the 'right to reside' test ... it is not compatible with different legal provisions of EU law."

Concern is not enough

IN A RECENT letter to the EU Trade Commissioner, the European Trade Union Confederation has, for the first time, expressed its concerns on Mode 4 in the EU/India Free Trade Agreement, along with EU free movement of labour and services and "posted worker" issues, and the European Court of Justice's anti-worker judgements. But the letter doesn't go beyond calling for union involvement in these negotiations. What it should be signalling is active opposition to such trade concessions which are set up specifically to attack EU labour conditions.

But to have any effect unions will have to firm up their position and clearly tell their members and countries what the implications of the negotiations are.



Photo: Workers

Striking firefighters in north east London picket Woodford fire station on Saturday 23 October. London firefighters are in dispute over proposed changes to shift patterns which would lead to a cutting of nighttime emergency cover. Fire Brigades Union members want to negotiate, but the employer is saying "accept it or be sacked". The vote for action was high, 79 per cent on a 79 per cent turnout. More strike days are planned.

New pensions offer at BBC

AS WORKERS went to press, BBC staff nationwide were voting in consultative ballots on their employer's response to the overwhelming strike ballot and planned industrial action. Strikes planned for October were called off to allow the offer to be considered. The new offer gives protection for benefits already accrued, reduces the employee's contribution from 7 per cent to 6 per cent, and removes the proposed punitive cap on the accrual of future benefits.

Jeremy Dear, general secretary of the National Union of Journalists, whose members recorded a 97 per cent ballot for action, said, "Given the outrage the BBC's pensions proposals have caused, which staff have consistently viewed as a pensions robbery, we're obviously pleased that the BBC have seen fit to table an improved offer, rather than face strike action. Clearly, the determination of staff at the BBC to fight to defend their pensions has forced a rethink on the part of the BBC's management."

The BBC's pensions offer comes as part of an overall negotiation that includes new measures to give staff facing compulsory redundancy more time to find jobs within the corporation. As staff digest the implications of the latest licence settlement – BBC management agreed to a budget cut of 16 per cent and a freeze in the licence fee for six years, as well as taking on responsibility (from the Foreign Office) for the World Service and BBC Monitoring – the threat to jobs is now intense.

UNEMPLOYMENT

The real figures

WHAT IS the real figure for the number of workers unemployed?

On average, for each job advertised in Yorkshire 9 apply; in the West Midlands 8 apply; in Wales 15 apply; in the South West 8 apply; in the South East 16 apply; in Scotland 25 apply; in the North West 13 apply; in the North East 16 apply; in

London 31 apply; in the East Midlands 7 apply; in East Anglia 14 apply.

However the employment figures are manipulated – whether the basis switches between whole-time posts, part-time posts, agency working, full-time equivalents, averages, etc – the scourge of unemployment and underemployment runs throughout Britain's failing economy.

Some 8 million out of the 28 million workers in Britain now survive by working part-time in several jobs at once.

POLAND**Help from the City**

OVER 20 LONDON banks and financial services companies, including Citi, Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan and UBS, are helping the right-wing Polish government in preparing to privatise over 500 national industries and economic assets.

Starting with the Warsaw Stock Exchange but including energy companies, banks and insurance companies, Poland is preparing to obliterate any vestiges of once being a country with a veneer of a socialist economy. The planned privatisations will go further in the direction of economic and political integration with the European Union and further political alignment with the United States.

Council housing clearances



Photo: Workers

CHANGES TO how housing benefit will be allocated in April 2011, presented by the Coalition as dealing with benefits fraudsters and rogue landlords, will of course have almost the reverse effect. Recipients of housing benefit are people on some of the lowest incomes in London – and rather than sorting out rogue landlords it will encourage more slum landlords as people are driven into cheaper, overcrowded, older accommodation.

The impact in London will be more dramatic than anywhere else in Britain, due to the size of population and rented housing market share, with some 82,000 families – an estimated 250,000 people – then having to seek cheaper accommodation. This is expected to create a substantial population shift into the cheaper boroughs: Newham, Greenwich, Tower Hamlets, Barking and Dagenham. The expected impact on schools, social services, public transport etc will be catastrophic.

Some Tory boroughs – Hammersmith and Fulham, Westminster etc – plan to do away with any social housing provision and relocate tens of thousands of people to Dagenham and the East End. Together with the housing benefit changes, this will see the largest gerrymandering, election rigging, social cleansing exercise carried out since the Wandsworth housing scandals of the 1980s. It is intended to destroy any possibility of Labour winning council seats in these boroughs.

In addition, Crown Estates, the Queen's property portfolio, has been trying to offload her 1,400 tenants from social housing in central London. An estimated £250 million was expected to be creamed off from social cleansing of properties in Regent Street and the West End. To date resistance by tenants and blocking of attempts to raise rents and sell properties from under sitting tenants has frustrated the sale across London.

Housing benefit has, in effect, provided a fat public subsidy to private landlords and pushed up rents, but the solution should be to regulate rents in the private sector.

TAX AVOIDANCE**Google's 2.4% tax**

WORKERS HAVE to pay tax. But companies? Google's overseas tax rate has averaged just 2.4 per cent in the last three years. All the revenue it generates in Britain goes through a subsidiary firm in Ireland, then on to the tax haven Bermuda. Likewise, Facebook avoids tax by going through Ireland to the Cayman Islands.

In the popular tax avoidance scheme known as the "Double Irish", companies set up two companies in Ireland, one of which is just a shell with operations in Caribbean tax havens (usually British ex-colonies). Through another scheme, the "Dutch Sandwich", big companies have set up 13,000 "middle" companies in the Netherlands, through which they moved £10.9 trillion in 2008.

One firm's tax avoidance is another man's tax increase.

WHAT'S ON**Coming soon****NOVEMBER**

Wednesday 10 November

"Fund our Future. Stop Education Cuts"
11.15am, Horseguards Avenue, London SW1.

Demonstration jointly organised by the University and College Union and the National Union of Students, followed at 5pm by an after-demo event at the Bread and Roses pub, Clapham. More information from www.ucu.org.uk.

Tuesday 16 November

"For a new industrial revolution"
7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Nearest tube Holborn.

Public meeting organised by the CPBML. All welcome. Come and discuss how to save Britain from the abyss that capitalism has led it to.

NHS**Privateers gain ground**

SERCO, ONE OF Britain's largest facilities management companies, has further extended its grip on pathology services in London.

Following the £500 million joint venture with Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Trust in 2009, Serco has now established a similar joint venture with King's College Health Trust worth an estimated £300 million.

Serco expects to clear £110 million from the King's deal. It also expects to expand into other hospitals in London so as to recoup the investment. Pathology services are estimated as being worth £2.5 billions in Britain.

The joint venture companies are further examples as how the NHS is being marketised, with ownership and provision of the core services, like pathology, being fragmented. Staff will remain as NHS employees, primarily to protect their pension rights, but will be seconded to Serco – effectively "sold" like any other chattel, asset or piece of furniture.

After pathology, look out for hospital pharmacies, as out-patient pharmacies will be contracted out to organisations like Boots or Lloyds Pharmacy and NHS hospitals attempt to save millions by not then having to pay VAT on patients' prescriptions. Wait for the TV adverts – not just any old NHS hospital, but an M&S NHS hospital...

MASSIVE nationwide strikes and demonstrations were held across France on Tuesday 19 October, the 6th day of action against government plans to worsen retirement arrangements. An estimated 3 million people took to the streets in over 250 French cities large and small, with the action replicated from Rouen in the north to Marseilles in the south, and Lille in the east to Bordeaux in the west. In Paris alone a third of a million took part to protest against proposals to change the minimum retirement age from 60 to 62, and the full retirement age from 65 to 67. The Senate finally voted for the change on 22 October, by a narrow margin.

Rolling strikes and actions over two weeks have caused disruption to transport and oil supplies, with all 12 refineries blockaded, ports blocked and 200 oil depots picketed. In the south, a mass of oil tankers prevented from docking can be seen outside the ports of Marseilles and Toulon. Police have cleared depots, only for strikers to return to block them again. One refinery, Grandpuits in eastern Paris, was reopened on October 22 by riot police on government orders. Around two fifths of filling stations are running low or empty. Food and other goods are starting to run short. Buses, trains and flights have been cancelled. In Marseilles, rubbish has piled up on the streets and dinner ladies (mostly single women on very low wages) have shut more than half of nursery and primary school canteens.

The 'no crisis' crisis centre

Sarkozy's crisis centre, set up to deal with the action, stated officially there is "No crisis". Of course, the numbers taking part are disputed by police and government, but local journalists have employed their own counts and footage of demonstrations on YouTube has testified to the scale and breadth of the involvement. The actions have included a wide range of workers from both the public and private sectors. Students and schoolchildren have joined in, saying that French provision was fought for by their grandparents, and a later retirement age means both a worsening of their prospects and fewer jobs as posts are occupied by older workers for longer. Around 14 per cent of schools have been affected by protests.

The government is forcing the change through, counting on the two week half term holiday to weaken the action. It employs the usual "race to the bottom" argument – that French retirement provision is better than elsewhere in Europe (although this is questionable) so people must accept deterioration. This is part of European Commission's drive to weaken workers' retirement provision throughout the member states. So far the French public are unconvinced – according to polls 71 per cent support the strikers, in spite of the widespread disruption. Two more days of action are planned by the unions.

One demonstrator, Vero du Cheyron, 51, a social worker with the mentally disabled, said: "I am protesting today because this reform is a symbol of a society which always favours the rich and hurts the little people. When the banks go under, the government saves them. But it's not saving us. So I'm fighting for me and for my children. They say that people are living longer so they have to work longer, but they don't say anything about the health problems that come by doing that."

Faced with the calamitous results of capitalist policies, capitalist governments are pursuing one strategy – as shown in the sp

Making the workers p

GOVERNMENT TRIUMPHALISM and public anger at welfare and job cuts in the comprehensive spending review mask the failure of the British ruling class to be able to run the country. Their response is simply to make workers pay for that failure.

Chancellor George Osborne announced the results of his spending review on 20 October and set out the government's financial plans for the next three years. He attempted to present this as a path to growth, fairness and reform. The figures on debt and the scale of budget cuts are spectacular but they have been coming for a long time. The dive in the economy triggered by bank failure and rescue was not caused by bonuses, no matter how ill-earned they are.

Government expenditure is currently £697 billion a year, including interest payments of £44 billion and rising net EU payments of £6.5 billion. That is funded by tax, and borrowings of £110 billion. Borrowing and interest have risen steeply since 2008, so that government debt is now around £950 billion – that's equal to 64 per cent of annual gross domestic product. Even excluding the cost of bailing out banks the debt is over £770 billion, or 57 per cent of GDP.

Attack by the markets

The government said it had to act and that the course of the previous administration was unsustainable. As well as the growing debt, tax revenue is falling and they claim that capital markets will start to attack Britain in the way that Ireland and Greece have experienced.

The initial reaction from workers is clear and unequivocal: they do not believe they caused this crisis and do not want to pay for it. Beyond that the picture is less certain. There is no agreement yet on what action to take, nor whether unions are prepared. The predictable response of the Labour opposition is that cuts are avoidable and are bad because they discriminate against the most vulnerable. There is no admission from Ed Miliband that Labour was in any way responsible through its total belief in capitalist markets, or that they were planning something similar.

Osborne claimed that he will lighten the burden of the state. That's true only if you are a non-resident tax avoider. The increases in National Insurance and VAT announced by Darling will still happen and there is no guarantee they will be the last. Pension tax relief changes will hit many more of those who still have a final salary pension plan. The cuts in benefits of all types and a move to a universal credit have the potential to impoverish many workers who thought they would be immune from the worst effects of the crisis. And the decline in support for public services will shift the cost of that crisis to workers. It will ensure that people pay more for transport and other essential services. Whether this is described as ideological rolling back of the state or pragmatic cost-cutting does not matter.

The spending review does not stop there. There are measures which result in an increase in the number of people needing work. Raising pension age and removing benefit entitlement not only reduces expenditure, it puts more workers in competition for jobs.

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And added to those numbers will be more young people deciding they cannot afford higher education, plus families who need two incomes to support themselves.

Nearly half a million public sector jobs are expected to go. For those still working, conditions will worsen through pay and recruitment freezes, higher pension contributions, longer working hours and so on. The indirect effects of those cuts will include even more people looking for work, as well as job losses in private firms and charities that contract to the public sector – estimated at around another half a million jobs. Rising unemployment from all causes will further reduce tax receipts and increase benefit payments.

Ill-prepared

Defence and other capital spending cuts look ill-prepared and poorly planned. No one can believe that an aircraft carrier without planes is the answer to reducing defence spending, yet there is still a commitment to Trident and wars in Asia. Long-term capital projects such as ships and power stations cannot be switched off instantly. The moratorium on capital spending stretches to IT as well, whatever the government says about encouraging growth. Once the jobs disappear it is hard



Photo: Workers

to get them back; the risk is the loss of even more skills in the working class.

The wish to “reform” the public sector unites Cameron and Clegg with Brown and Blair. The spending review gives the latest capitalist vision for deregulation and changing the role of the state. Overall taxation will be more regressive – that is the wealthier you are, the lower proportion of your income you pay. And the burden of tax will also shift further from businesses to individuals.

‘Virtual’ councils

Cuts in central and local government will be over 30 per cent in many places. Cutting out so-called waste and overheads sounds sensible, but it actually

means an increase in arbitrary and unresponsive bureaucracy and more contracting out. It encourages “virtual councils” and other ways to subvert local government controls on government action or distance them from having any influence. In the longer term, the spending review also signals structural changes to the NHS which will undermine it as a universal service and higher education focused mainly on profit.

The arrogance and bravado of this latest bunch of chancers keen to serve the needs of finance capital must be knocked on the head. We have to get our act together to attack those bent on destroying our economy and our society for their profit.



CPBML/Workers

Public Meeting, London Tuesday 16 November, 7.30 pm “For a new industrial revolution”

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

Modern Britain was founded on industry, which gave birth to the working class and to the ideas of socialism. No wonder successive governments have been undermining it. Come and discuss how the working class can rebuild industry and Britain. Everybody welcome.

While Britain cowers at the prospect of over a million conscious government's public sector funding cuts, workers should consider Britain really is under the rule of finance capital. ...

For a 21st-century industrial revolution!

BRITISH WORKERS – who are we? What are we? What do we aspire to?

We as workers and as communists have always seen ourselves as rooted in manufacture, in industry, in the workplace and consequently the trades unions which came from that. This Party published in 1975 a call in the form of a pamphlet: FOR AN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION! It offered a detailed analysis of Britain's industrial base, why that industrial base had to be renewed and why it had to give rise to an industrial workers' revolution, the like of which had never been seen elsewhere in the world.

The pamphlet built on the Party's 1971 Programme which detailed that there are only two classes in Britain: those who sell their labour power as workers and those who exploit that labour power as capitalists.

In 2010, the destruction wrought by finance capital on Britain's industrial base has changed and is changing Britain. Its strategy is to destroy our roots, our heritage, our trade unions, and the ability of our class to survive. If we, Britain's workers, are to ensure our own survival then we have to reflect deeply on the present capitalist-created crisis and maintain our call for an industrial revolution with renewed clarity of understanding of purpose

We need to update and modernise our thinking about industry, about manufacturing, about real wealth creation, about what we want that wealth creation to provide and for whom. Britain cannot survive a future led by the morons with chainsaws we see in the parliamentary politicians or those ruthless profiteers in the banks and boardrooms they are there to assist. We have to set a different economic and political agenda from all that is around us.

What's the agenda?

The attack on the public sector is an attack on the British working class, on the British people, on everything that is deemed civilised. But it follows on a sustained attack on industry which lasted 30 years. It is not the only game in town.



Above: imported coal at the dockside in Avonmouth

We need strong working class organisation, aspirations and goals, collectivity and consciousness. We need unity of purpose and discipline on how we deliver that purpose. We don't need some phoney division of private vs. public sector though we do have this absolute imbalance of trade union organisation between them – 15 per cent density in the private sector and 56 per cent density in the public sector. The number of unions has already reduced to 56 from 58 at this year's TUC. We need some serious discussion about the state of our unions and where we think they are going.

We are dealing with a rapacious ruling class, an enemy with a road map and clear intent so Cameron and Clegg's boast of changing Britain forever cannot be ignored. Their continuation of the work of previous governments threatens the survival of the working class as a conscious class.

We need to identify what our strategic industries are, what we need and what

they should be and what control we have over them. A nation that doesn't own its own ports, or airports, or shipping, or steel industry, or energy etc has no sovereignty and no future.

The National Strategic Skills Audit for England 2010 identified the uneven state of Britain's industrial base and capitalist plans for its future:

a) Britain as the hub of flexible working in the EU – the anytime, anywhere, anything goes employer attitude – no rights, low wages, long hours, deskilled, no trade unions except neutered ones.

b) Britain to be based upon advanced manufacturing not heavy industry – the “new” industries – aerospace; silicon electronics; plastics / printed electronics; industrial biotechnology; composites and nanotechnology; the digital economy and life sciences.

c) Aerospace – Britain has 25 per cent of the global market, second only to the USA. 112,000 workers, £22.3 billion turnover, 600 employers.

ly created job losses, the direct result of the diktat of the er the true state of Britain's economy, how fragile and crippled

Who works where?

Workers always define themselves by what they do, so what do we do? (Figures for sectors from the last quarter of 2009, for employment status June 2010)

Public administration, education and health	7,527,000
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	6,213,000
Banking, finance and insurance	5,451,000
Manufacturing	2,592,000
Transport, storage and communications	1,503,000
Other services	1,406,000
Construction	1,198,000
Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing	220,000
Energy and water	176,000
Employees	24,697,000
Self-employed	3,922,000
Carers	187,000
Trainees	123,000
Unemployed	2,510,000
Economically inactive (2.5 million on benefits; 12 million pensioners; 1 million 16-19 year olds not in education, employment or training; etc.)	18,372,000
(Agency workers	1,300,000)
(Armed Forces	199,000)

d) Three-quarters of Britain's **research and development** goes into manufacturing – but allow the destruction of further and higher education and you will destroy industry and wealth creation.

e) **Engineering construction** – the largest in the EU, second only to the USA in the world and the key to all industrial infrastructure, will lose 75,000 employees, with 60 per cent due to retire in next decade. The attraction of imported cheap labour to the government and employers is obvious. You don't have to train or equip these with skills for the future, just bring them in, use them and then cast them away.

f) **Textiles** – 1 million workers in the mid-1980s, now 100,000, 55 per cent to retire in next decade. Skills, heritage, talent draining away as youth does not replenish these industries.

g) A huge growth in **financial and professional services** – accountancy, legal, housing and property, architectural and engineering services. Many of these

are candyfloss industries supporting the valueless approach to work and wealth so epitomised by finance capital.

h) The new **digital economy** – employing 1.57 million workers in delivering telecommunications infrastructure, the online environment plus media, film, animation, music etc, with 930,000 employed exports – 2.5 million workers in technology occupations. The newer parts of this sector are essentially non-unionised.

i) **Life sciences and pharmaceuticals** – pharmaceuticals, medical technology, medical biotechnology, biology, chemistry, maths, chemical engineering etc. Essentially non-unionised, particularly the new industries.

j) The so-called **creative industries** – £60 billion per annum, (manufacture creates £160 billion), employ 1.5 million people – film, TV, radio, performing arts: relatively well unionised. Computer games, intellectual property, copyright etc are essentially non-unionised.

k) **Care sector** – 40 per cent increase in past ten years in childcare occupations, now stands at 840,000 workers. Personal carer market estimated to rise to a million workers as social care disappears. Much non-unionised.

l) **Retail sector** – employs 2.8 million workers. Essentially non-unionised.

m) **Tourism, hospitality, leisure** employs 2.6 million workers – projected boom by 2020 to supplant manufacturing wealth creation (£188 billion per annum).

n) **Low-carbon industry** – the “green” jobs – employs 888,000 with forecast of over another 440,000 jobs by 2015, worth £106 billions. From car scrappage, to wind farms, to clean coal technology, CO2 storage etc. The potential basis of old industrial skills applied to a new work environment.

o) **Intensive energy users** – iron, steel, aluminium, cement, pulp and paper, chemicals – employing over 222,000 workers, the industrial backbone of future regeneration.

p) **Investment and skills** – the destruction of education providing technical skills, the transmission belts of industry as epitomised in the polytechnics compared to the “new universities” has led to the deskilling of workers. As detailed in the September 2010 issue of WORKERS – “TUC: Back to the Workplace” – the so-called growth industries and skills such as beauticians, tattoo artists, driving instructors, theme park attendants etc, show a deskilled Britain. A deskilled Britain then deliberately importing skilled workers, guest workers, for short-term exploitation.

The battle for training, apprenticeships and skills is about fighting for control. An industrial nation only has one war zone and that is the workplace. Control your work and you control your country.

Britain's population is about 61 million. We are a nation of workers nearly 50 million strong but with now no retirement at 60 – in fact soon to be no

Continued on page 10

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retirement age ceiling – no jobs, skills or education for youth; plus mass immigration!

An industrial revolution is the only alternative to the insanity of capitalism especially when finance capital is cutting loose from any nation state identity or residence. Workers need to reflect on what real wealth creation is, for whom and for what purpose?

Useful...or useless?

Similarly what is useful versus useless work? London is being refashioned as the 21st-century coliseum of world sport – the new Wembley, the Olympic Village, the O2 Arena, the Emirates Stadium, the 2018 World Cup. Bread, blood and circuses for the masses, and as with Ancient Rome, alongside no production, no manufacturing, an importer of all goods, services and peoples with the result the same: absolute decline and collapse for us.



Are 61 million people going to go down with this shipwreck of capitalism? No manufacturing means no wealth creation, which means no future. Unless

mass suicide is planned, then our responsibility is to the future and to say no to the economics of the insane. We have to define the national and industrial plans in order to wrest Britain away from capitalism.

The debate on those plans has to commence:

- Define what we are, what we want, what we need
- Reappraise our strategic industries.
- Reappraise our social and civil society requirements – health, education, housing, employment, national identity etc.
- Revisit the European Union and work with all the peoples of Europe to shatter it.
- Survival – batten down the hatches to survive – for the class, for Britain in the face of successive destructive governments all serving capitalism
- Recognise the hopes and aspirations of workers that only through a new industrial revolution can workers in Britain survive.
- And never forget the enemy's agenda: greed, exploitation, low wages, long hours, no regulation, no restraint on anything they do that would restrict their pursuit of profit at anytime, anywhere at

Meet the Party

The Communist Party of Britain is holding a series of public meetings in London throughout autumn and spring 2010-2011. All meetings will be held in the Bertrand Russell room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL, nearest Tube Holborn, 7.30pm start.

M The next meeting dates will be: **Tuesday 16 November 2010; Thursday 3 March 2011; Thursday 23 June 2011.** The meeting themes will be announced nearer the date. Interspersed with these public meetings, the Party runs regular political study and discussion groups for interested workers.

M The Party's annual London May Day meeting will be held on **Sunday 1 May 2011, in the Main Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL, nearest Tube Holborn, 2.00pm start with speakers, food, bar and interesting political discussion.**

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



The Browne report into the funding of higher education was commissioned by Labour. No wonder the good of society doesn't seem to figure in it...

Welcome to the university marketplace

SINCE MEDIEVAL times in Britain local communities have collectively funded young scholars from their area to attend higher education. They did so because they understood that to educate young people brought a benefit to the whole community. For some time academics have been describing the trend towards "marketisation" of education, but in Lord Browne's report (commissioned by a Labour government) this is more than a "trend". The essence of the Browne report is that education is a commodity to be purchased by the individual for individual benefit, divorced from any social good or collective endeavour to educate a society. It is an attack on Britain.

In Browne's vision the contribution from the public purse to higher education in Britain will be smaller in percentage terms than in the USA and much smaller than in many other European countries. Pam Tatlow, chief executive of university think tank Million+, said the proposals "transferred the responsibility for the funding of higher education to students, graduates and their families" and would "deeply damage social mobility. Fees at this level – even if they are backed by state-funded fee loans – will undoubtedly mean that some students who would have gone to university will decide not to go."

Wider impact

But to focus solely on "social mobility" is to focus on what happens to individuals rather than to analyse the impact on wider society. This wider impact is captured in National Union of Students President Aaron Porter's call for the government to reject the proposals "that would recklessly undermine our future by ending the notion of public higher education."

The University and College Union (UCU) has said that the enormous cut to the teaching budget will turn Lord Browne into the "Dr Beeching of Higher Education." It predicts that courses, jobs and even whole universities will disappear if Browne's recommendations are accepted in full.

If his proposals are enacted, England



Students and lecturers were out demonstrating in Leeds City Square on 20 October.

Photo: Workers

will have the world's dearest public degrees, with families having to pay between £76,000 and £136,000 to put two children through university. The UCU calculates that a three-year degree with annual tuition fees of £6,000 would cost £38,286, including maintenance loans and interest payments. A three-year degree with annual tuition fees of £12,000 would cost £68,329, including maintenance loans and interest payments.

At a time when the government is proposing to abolish quangos, it is interesting that the Browne report proposes to merge four existing higher education bodies (Higher Education Funding Council for England, Quality Assurance Agency, Office for Fair Access and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator) into one large quango called the Higher Education Council.

One can only speculate on the cost involved in merging the four bodies. However, no need to speculate on the new and additional functions of the quango because they are listed. It will have the power to bail out struggling

institutions but – you knew it was too good to be true – it will also have the power to explore options such as mergers and takeovers if institutions are facing financial failure.

Right to work

The attack on higher education cannot be isolated from the wider attack on employment and the right to work. TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION greeted the Browne Report with a front cover which said "Lord Browne's judgement: let supply and demand shape the sector."

But where is the "demand" for educated young people if there is to be no work? Who needs young scientists if the science budget is frozen? University vice chancellors will be desperately hoping that overseas students will bring the demand that home students cannot make.

In the short to medium term this vision will vanish as India and China and others build their own systems. In the short term, can you stomach the irony of this island providing the land space for universities that cannot serve the needs

British transport workers are showing a determination and persistence in their fight against a wide range of issues affecting their services...

The transport battleground: on the rails and

SINCE THE start of a campaign of solid 24-hour strikes and overtime bans by RMT and TSSA at the beginning of September, the London Underground has been in chaos.

The network has been crippled on strike days, while the overtime bans have seen trains breaking down and being taken out of service, numerous station closures and massive disruption. Safety concerns following the slashing of safety budgets and cutbacks in train maintenance on brakes have been heightened by a runaway train incident, when disaster and loss of life was narrowly averted.

Yet London Mayor Johnson and London Underground have refused to negotiate with the unions and have raised the stakes further by announcing yet more job losses, this time 800 non-operational posts.

This comes on top of slashing 800 station jobs and 500 engineering jobs. London Underground is threatening even more job losses after another "review".

Assembly vote

Reflecting massive public support, the Greater London Assembly has carried a motion calling on Johnson to rethink his plans to cut jobs on the Underground.

The Assembly attacked cuts that will undermine passenger safety at stations, particularly early in the morning and late at night, force passengers into long queues for ticket machines, and disadvantage those with disabilities who find it difficult to use the machines and who rely on staff for assistance.

Proposing the motion, Val Shawcross said: "Three years ago the Mayor was campaigning to save ticket offices, now he seems intent on cutting opening hours. Safety and quality of service must come first."

AS WORKERS went to press, further strikes were planned for 2/3 November, and 29/29 November.

In a separate action, two 24-hour strikes by Alstom-Metro tube maintenance workers over pay and conditions resulted in an offer now being



Tube workers in London are at the forefront of the struggle to maintain union conditions and ensure

put to a ballot, while an indefinite overtime ban remains in force.

Elsewhere on rail...

Rail workers are showing that they do not accept the government's cuts and job losses. RMT negotiators backed by a solid strike mandate won a deal for Network Rail maintenance workers that will deliver a 7 per cent pay rise for many by the end of 2011, along with a £2,000 lump sum before Christmas, and no compulsory redundancies until at least 2012. In South West Trains, a 5.2 per cent increase in pay has been won.

And why should rail workers accept pay restraint? The bosses certainly don't! Keith Ludeman, Go-Ahead group boss who runs London Midland, Southern, and Southeastern train companies, saw his salary rise by 35 per cent to £1,240,000 in July. Southern recently announced it was doing away with toilets on some trains to pack in more passengers!

Stagecoach boss Brian Souter is now paid £762,000 while David Martin from

Arriva, newly taken over by German state railway company Deutsche Bahn (DB) is now paid £743,635. Britain's five biggest transport operators have declared combined dividends of more than £2 billion since privatisation.

Safety on our terms

DB has recently been testing its latest Inter City Express (ICE) in the Channel Tunnel before displaying the train at London St Pancras, a publicity stunt designed to support its move to operate direct rail services from London to Frankfurt or Amsterdam by 2013.

RMT has condemned the stunt, angrily accusing DB, Channel Tunnel operators Eurotunnel and the safety authority of seeking to undermine the stringent safety regime in the tunnel that makes it the safest in the world. RMT believes that safety is being sacrificed to bow to EU pressure and enable competition between DB and existing operator Eurostar.

At present, Channel Tunnel trains

stance not unlike the French on pensions, but applied across a

and in the air



Photo: Andrew Wiard/www.reportphotos.com

Ensure safety for passengers.

must be at least 375 metres long; so that passengers can walk through a disabled train and be evacuated from the train at a door directly opposite a door into the refuge tunnel. DB trains are only 200 metres long. Eurostar has usefully exposed this by ordering similar new trains from Siemens – but they will be 375 metres long!

Other operators are watching this with interest – Air France-KLM is also in the running to use the route into St Pancras. The British Coalition is proving as toothless as the previous government to resist EU diktats.

Meanwhile at British Airways...

On 21 October BA announced that the basic staff travel allowance (though not the higher concession for senior staff) would be restored as part of a deal to be put to cabin crew over the next few days. The arbitrary withdrawal of this allowance in the middle of negotiations had become the major sticking point in

the 20-month dispute. Worth 90 per cent of air fares, this was never something cabin crews could let go, and their Association BASSA was planning further strikes over the Christmas period.

So far, the 22 strike days have cost BA a reported £150 million, yet still there was stalemate, with chief executive Willie Walsh persisting in downgrading terms and conditions, salaries and benefits.

Prolonged negotiations between him and the union Unite, ACAS and the TUC have been described as “tortuous”, as the economic climate grows ever more hostile. Whatever the eventual settlement, it is a tribute to BASSA members, who had never been on strike before, that they stayed solid for so long in the face of extreme bullying tactics. If they could do it, so could we all.

Smoke and mirrors...

In the government’s Comprehensive Spending Review announced on 20 October, the Department of Transport was declared to be an “outright winner”,

suffering a reduction in overall spending of “only 15 per cent. What have the banks brought us to, that a cut of this magnitude should be welcomed?”

The fact is, we expected to hear that money earmarked for capital investment, infrastructure and the like, had been taken away. In the event, an 11 per cent capital expenditure reduction was included in the 15 per cent, but this was nothing like the 25 to 40 per cent that had been predicted.

Investment of £30 billion was confirmed, including £14 billion for rail upgrades, £6 billion for London Underground, and £10 billion for road improvements and local transport. The £16 million Crossrail project was also guaranteed, and £250 million set aside for rail electrification between Manchester, Liverpool, Preston and Blackpool – to be paid for from central funds and cuts in administration of 33 per cent. The real cost to the regions has yet to be seen, as local government grants are cut by 28 per cent.

Passengers facing pay cuts and pay freezes will also pay of course – hundreds of pounds more for season and saver tickets on the most expensive railway in Europe. This is likely to drive people onto the roads. Companies will be allowed to hike fares by 3 per cent above inflation each year from 2012 – 2 per cent more than is currently allowed. Rail campaigners say that with rising inflation plus existing 2011 rises, fares will go up 31.2 per cent by 2015.

London 2011 fare rises were not announced by the Mayor, but were buried in a press release following George Osborne’s speech – now you see it, now you don’t. The Campaign for Better Transport estimates that an average of £1000 will be added to the cost of a season ticket – £4750 from Brighton by 2014. No wonder Stagecoach, FirstGroup and Go Ahead shares are all up! Toll routes such as the Dartford Crossing will also go up.

However, concessions such as the Freedom Pass are to remain. The fury of the over-60s at the ballot box would have

It is sixty years since the outbreak of the Korean War – a conflict between the United States and its allies – including Britain – committing troops to the peninsula to prevent the spread of communism...

1950: The outbreak of the Korean War

SIXTY YEARS ago a bitter, three-year war broke out in Korea, propelling to centre stage a country that hitherto had been at the margins of international politics. It became the flashpoint of all the tensions then raging between the competing systems of socialism and capitalism. The Korean War was waged on land, on sea and in the air over and near the Korean peninsula. The first year of the war was a seesaw struggle for control of the peninsula followed by two years of positional warfare as a backdrop to extended cease-fire negotiations.

In 1910, Korea had been annexed by Japan, whose domination lasted until the latter stages of the Second World War. The Yalta Conference of 1945 agreed that Soviet and American troops would occupy Korea with a demarcation line along the latitude 38° parallel, pending the establishment of a unified and independent Korean government. Effectively, the terms of Yalta divided Korea into a communist northern half and an American-occupied southern half.

Usurped

America occupied South Korea and usurped power from locally controlled People's Committees, reinstalling many of the former landowners and police who had held office when Korea was under Japanese colonial rule. These moves met with heavy resistance and open rebellion in some parts of South Korea such as the southern islands. In 1948, both the Soviet and US forces were withdrawn. However, after several altercations at the border, it appeared that civil war might be inevitable.

The war began on 25 June 1950 when the North Korean army crossed the 38th Parallel intending to use force to reunite the south and the north with armoured and infantry divisions. The invasion was also fuelled by a massacre in which 60,000 communists and supporters were killed on Jeju Island in the South. The decision to move into the South appears to have been the initiative of Kim Il-Sung, the North Korean leader, rather than that of his Soviet supporters. This bid to



With her brother on her back a war-weary Korean girl tiredly trudges by a stalled M-26 tank, at Haengju, Korea, on 9 June 1951. (Image courtesy Wikipedia Commons)

reunify the country met with popular support across the South. Quickly, the North Korean army, armed with Soviet tanks, overran South Korea. Its capital Seoul fell after three days. By the end of August, the North Koreans occupied almost all of the South, except around the port of Pusan.

Although Korea was not strategically essential to the United States, the US political environment at this stage was such that its government did not want to appear "soft on Communism". So it came to South Korea's aid. The US managed to contrive its intervention as part of a "police action" and it was run by a UN force from 15 nations, though the bulk of the troops were American with a large contingent from Britain.

With the US, UN and South Korean forces pinned against the sea at Pusan, MacArthur carried out an amphibious assault on Inchon, a port on the western coast of Korea. Having made this landing,

MacArthur caught the North Korean army in a pincer movement. By October the US and UN forces had recaptured Seoul. Instead of being satisfied with the rapid re-conquest of South Korea, the US General MacArthur crossed the 38th Parallel and pursued the North Korean army. On 19 October, Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, was captured. The US and UN forces proceeded all the way to the northernmost provinces of North Korea, forcing Kim and his government to flee north, first to Sinuiju and eventually into China.

Afraid that the US was interested in taking North Korea as a base for operations against Manchuria, the People's Republic of China, which bordered North Korea and had only just won its independence in 1949 after decades of war, issued warnings to America that it would not tolerate further advances by American troops. The US ignored them, failing to take note of the

which saw the United
e aim of holding back

revolutionary zeal, military experience, confidence and leadership of the Chinese soldiers redeployed to the Korean border area, many of whom were veterans of the successful national war against Japan and the civil war against the Nationalist Chinese forces.

At the very beginning of the war, the Chinese had sent a volunteer army across the Yalu River (the North Korean/Chinese border) and entered the war as allies of the Korean People's Army. The Chinese attack on the combined US/UN/ROK forces was so great that they were compelled to retreat. Chinese troops retook Pyongyang in December and Seoul in January 1951. In March UN forces began a new offensive, retaking Seoul. After a series of offensives and counter-offensives by both sides, by 1951 the front was stabilised along what eventually became the permanent "Armistice Line" of 27 July 1953, where there followed a gruelling period of largely static trench warfare for the next two years.

Devastated

North Korea was devastated by US air raids with very few buildings left standing in the capital and elsewhere in the country. By the time of the armistice, upwards of 3.5 million Koreans on both sides had died in the conflict. Around 53,000 US and 1,100 British soldiers were killed and estimates of perhaps 400,000 Chinese volunteers.

During the war North Korea and China accused the US of large-scale field-testing of biological weapons across all of North Korea and parts of China close to the border, including the spread of diseases such as anthrax and the use of disease-carrying insects. The allegations were always denied but clear evidence has emerged in subsequent years that after the Second World War US medical scientists in occupied Japan had undertaken extensive research on insect vectors for spreading biological diseases from as early as 1946, with the assistance of Japanese staff formerly working for the old imperial regime, so the capability was always there.

More from our series on aspects
of Marxist thinking

STATE AND REVOLUTION

IN 1917, after three years of world war, Lenin identified the nature and function of the state. He declared that a partnership exists between the state and the dominant ruling class with the former charged with serving the interests of the latter. In other words, the state is not neutral in the struggle between the working class and the capitalist class but serves the ruling class to maintain its power. Therefore, he concluded, the state could not be reformed but had to be vanquished and replaced by working class state power.

What comprises the state in Britain today? We have the police, armed forces, judiciary, prisons, parliament and its parties, intelligence services, the church and the monarchy all serving to maintain the power of finance capitalism. And that's not to mention the European Commission and Parliament, Council of Europe, the European Court and judiciary and the coming EU Armed Forces representing a new dimension of the state serving finance capitalism across the EU.

However, as long as the state can maintain the consent of the working class, the issue of class power remains unresolved. In Britain today, workers are reluctant to engage with the implications of acting independently, and so by default give consent to the "democratic" capitalist state that maintains the power of finance capitalism. The temptation of reform to give the appearance of consent remains powerful, with changes to Britain's voting system being the latest "radical" inducement.

But where consent is weakest is with the EU elements of the state and that is precisely why British politicians refused to allow us a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, which was all about entrenching EU power. 100 years after Lenin wrote *THE STATE AND REVOLUTION*, the nature of the state has changed and strengthened, but not its underlying function. The EU represents an extension of the state, another layer even more remote from workers.

So when finance capitalism needs a pool of cheap labour to undermine workers here, the state on its behalf can encourage mass immigration. To suppress trade unions, it can bring in anti-union laws and use its police. To determine what our children know of our class history, it can try to fix the curriculum. To determine what we are told in the news, it can seek to manipulate the media. And to tell us to behave ourselves and not become "aggressive atheists", it can bring in the Pope.

It follows that participating in capitalist "democracy" changes nothing. Our class has to change its thinking, finding the energy and courage to withdraw that consent from the state in order to challenge it and establish working class power.

Interested in these ideas?

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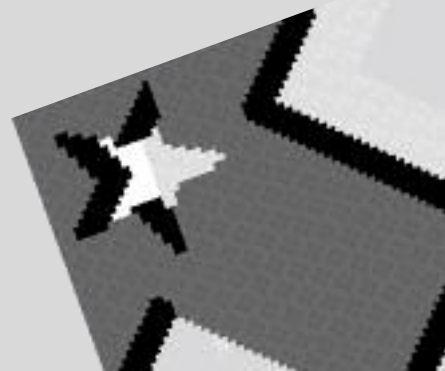
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Back to Front – War on the young

‘If we all suffer at the level of the worst, that will be all right then?’

ATTITUDES towards the young are a litmus test of any government’s intentions. The welfare, health and education of babies, children and youth are the foundations of any civilised society, underpinning of the health of the whole population and providing the building blocks for a decent future.

It’s no accident that socialist countries like Cuba express progress in terms of improvements in infant mortality rates, literacy levels, average calories provided in diets of the young, training and employment levels, and so on.

Treatment of the elderly matters, of course, but the young are the future.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies has shown how severe is the attack on the young and their families (and the welfare of children can’t be seen outside the context of their family). This is no accident. The young are expensive, and this government has a very different future in mind for them and the country they will inherit. It is the interests of capital which are served by a capitalist government – of course, what else would we expect? The future of Britain does not concern them, except as a source of profit.

The change this year is the degree to which our capitalist government feels able to attack our young openly, savagely, because they doubt our strength to resist, or even to oppose at all. Are they right?

The organised labour movement in Britain overall is undoubtedly in a parlous state. We have allowed ourselves to be weakened by the utterly divisive preoccupation with equalities, chasing the hare of what divides us instead of focusing on what unites us.

Governments have been canny in seizing on this – witness the change in women’s retirement age and pension entitlements for the worse, in the name of

equality with men, and the use of mass immigration to undermine our pay and conditions sold to us in the name of international solidarity. We have been seduced to see our movement in terms of a collection of interest groups – men/women, black/white, young/old etc – with probably the most destructive of them all being the obsession with racism. No progress has come through these concerns, just the opposite.

This delusion can even lead to the grotesque triumph of individualism (Thatcher’s particular drive) of the University and College Union’s campaign for the “right” to have no fixed age of retirement, in the name of “diversity” and freedom of choice. What would our ancestors who fought for the right not to work until they dropped dead think of that particular victory?

One concept we should reject immediately is that of “fairness”, or worrying about “vulnerable workers”, a kind of ghastly 19th-century Christian charity “deserving poor” view of a working class, with an implied guilt if you are not (yet) on the poverty line. The Labour Party objects to the spending review on the basis that it is not fair – so if we all suffer at the worst level, that will be all right then?

French youth have understood that pensions and retirement are issues which acutely affect the young. We need to lift the level of debate here too, to see the context, the bigger picture of Britain in the 21st century. We are not victims nor do we seek charity. Dignity for us lies in asserting that our interests as workers are the common interests of the whole of our class, and that by fighting on our particular working issues we are fighting for a decent future for our children and young people.

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