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**REFERENDUM:
THE CULTURAL
CASE FOR
BRITISH UNITY**

TUC AND PAY: TIME TO GRASP THE NETTLE

JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY



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Once again, no intervention in Iraq

ONCE AGAIN the war drums are beating over Iraq. This time we are told we have to go into battle abroad in order to prevent ISIS waging war on the streets of Britain, or to save the Yazidis.

It's all like some kind of time warp into the 19th century, when gunboats or expeditionary forces were despatched to far corners of the earth in hot pursuit of an "enemy" or in support of a "friend" of whose existence 99.99 per cent of Britain had normally, until then, never heard.

Yet the truth is that every single British military intervention in the Middle East – and elsewhere – has made a bad situation worse. From the secret Anglo-French Sykes-Picot deal of 1916 carving up the old Ottoman Empire (revealed only when the Russian Bolsheviks seized power and found the Tsar's copy) to the partition of Palestine; from oft-

repeated humiliation in Afghanistan to ignominy in Suez; from the partition of Syria that created Lebanon to the chaos in Syria today – no good has ever come out of imperialist meddling. But it goes on, often eagerly encouraged by the "liberal" press.

"Human rights" are the new cover for intervention, a pretext for anything. Funny, though, how that doctrine stops at the borders of Saudi Arabia, a corrupt and feudal nightmare where women are stoned for adultery, there are neither national elections nor legal political parties, Muslim clerics are as powerful and involved in politics and policing as in Iran, women may not even drive a car and where homosexuality is a capital offence.

The only body that should be supplying humanitarian aid is the UN. All the rest is a cover for intervention. ■

Pay: a step in the right direction

IT IS a step forward that this October's TUC national demo will have a single concrete demand: Britain Needs a Pay Rise. This is in sharp contrast to vague calls such as the March for the Alternative or the March against Austerity.

In January 2014 an Office for National Statistics report demonstrated that real wages have been dropping consistently since 2010 by

0.2.2 per cent. This is the longest period of falls since at least 1964.

"Real wages" calculate earnings when the rising cost of living, or inflation, is taken into account. In August the Office for National Statistics reported a drop of 0.2 per cent in actual wages for the quarter to June. The time is right for the TUC's call. ■



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Sport billionaires welcome



Arsenal's Emirates Stadium, north London. Its main shareholder, Stan Kroenke, owns or controls US football, soccer, basketball and lacrosse teams.

NO SOONER is the World Cup a mere dot on television screens and the Commonwealth Games (with the SNP's attempts at Scottish sectarianism) a fading memory, than Boris Johnson, soon to be forgotten Mayor of London, is jostling for space in the sporting arena by promoting Formula One racing on London's streets.

Not to be outdone by the London venues of Wembley, the remnants of the Olympic Village and the O2, he is promoting London as a world centre for ever-richer globetrotting sports teams of any discipline as long as it brings in the punters and the profits.

The estimated number of tourists to visit London and Britain for 2014 is put at between 16 and 19 million people. Sport, celebrity and entertainment have become the circuses and opium of the 21st century. The foreign ownership of Britain's football teams, now deemed an "industry", takes on a further twist. It's no longer rich foreign owners owning rich Premier league clubs, but rich foreign owners controlling a string of football clubs across several nations. There is monopoly in sport as much as in industrial production, banking and finance.

There are all sorts of incentives for foreigners to buy British sports clubs. Anyone from outside the EU who "invests" at least £1 million in Britain can pick up a visa to enter the country, and bring their family along. "Invest" over £10 million and you get on a two-year fast track to be allowed to settle permanently. ■

ZERO HOURS

Interesting definitions...

IN RESPONSE to a query from Unison, service company ISS – which boasts it is the "world's largest and most successful outsourcing service provider in 2013 and 2014" – has provided an interesting definition of zero hours contracts.

In ISS's view zero hours contracts guarantee no work but "crucially" bind workers to employers so that they cannot work for someone else if there is a gap in "assignments". ISS's casual contracts bind a worker to ISS for 5, 10, 15 or whatever number of hours but then, if there is no work, the worker is "free" to take work with another employer.

ISS believes that the term zero hours contracts, if applied to them, is misleading and misrepresents the situation and is obviously a political invention by the enemies of employers. Workers employed by ISS regard this argument as sophistry and a further wheeze to disguise casualisation and fragmentation of the workforce. ■

MEAT SAFETY

Abattoir action

VETS AND hygiene inspectors who work in abattoirs on behalf of the Food Standards Agency, a government body, want a pay rise. About half are members of Unison, and have just voted for industrial action after a below inflation pay offer coupled with a refusal to negotiate.

Any action would seriously affect around 130 meat slaughtering plants across England, Scotland and Wales, which cannot operate without hygiene checks and inspections. ■

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

EUROBRIEFS

The latest from Brussels

Unite referendum call

THE UNITE union has backed a referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union. The union's council argues that "A policy which combines uncritical support for the present working of the European Union while denying any opportunity for a referendum on Britain's membership is thus likely to be an electoral millstone for Labour at the general election."

It concedes that the British people want a referendum, but the thrust of its call is that it will help elect Labour and then (somehow) a new government will ameliorate EU policies.

Poll shunned

THE FINAL overall turnout figure for this May's EU elections has been revised down to 42.54 per cent from 43.09 per cent, the preliminary figure based on exit polls. That's the lowest ever in the history of the EU. Turnout has fallen at every consecutive election since direct elections to the European Parliament began in 1979.

Migration and pay

FREE MOVEMENT of labour is a cornerstone of the EU. The report published in July this year by the UK Migration Advisory Committee into the growth of EU and non-EU labour in low skilled jobs concluded that "The main benefit of unskilled immigration goes to the employer – say in food manufacturing – who often cannot get an adequate supply of native labour."

The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) is an independent public body that advises the government. Its report says that the number of people in low-skilled jobs in Britain is similar to that in 1997. There was a decrease of 1.1 million in the number of British-born workers in low-skilled jobs between 1997 and 2013. That was offset by an increase of about the same number of migrant workers in those jobs.

For London it found that "in the worst paying 20 per cent of jobs half of workers are post 1984 migrants. This significant migrant inflow depresses wages for this quintile...at the time of the peak inflow in 2000 there was a 15 per cent reduction in pay compared with what it otherwise would have been." ■



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Launch of the building of the Hands Across the Border cairn at Gretna, 20 July 2014. People from all over Britain link arms for unity as they sing *Auld Lang Syne* after laying their stones. Construction will continue until late September. The site is open every day for visitors and stone laying. ■

Audit abolition on the quiet

IN MARCH next year the Audit Commission will be abolished. Strangely, there hasn't been much publicity over this, given how much interest Audit Commission reports generate in the media. With it will go an important principle of public life – that the audit of public money spent by 11,000 public bodies, including local government and significant chunks of the NHS, should be as genuinely independent as possible to protect the public purse. And hence the media silence: a dirty deed is being undertaken.

What the government wants to put in its place (but not until 2017 at the earliest, thereby giving them a couple of years or more to operate in the dark, it hopes) is what the *Health Service Journal* describes as "a clunky set of committee-like arrangements aimed at preventing council leaders choosing for themselves who will ensure they are spending public money properly".

But the government may have problems keeping this quiet. A recent study by the Institute for Government argues that this "is one of the coalition government's bigger mistakes". Which is saying quite something.

Currently the Audit Commission appoints the auditors, and then stands behind them statutorily and financially if a council or other public body seeks to challenge the auditors' view that money is being misspent or insufficiently protected. Equally, the Audit Commission can back the public body if the auditors seek to rack up their fees unacceptably.

A succession of attempts have been made to create organisations which can oversee the work of other public bodies (never private, capitalist ones, please note): the Care Quality Commission (now in its umpteenth iteration, all costing a small fortune), the National Policing Improvement Agency and the NHS Modernisation Agency, to name but three. This attack on the Audit Commission seems as though it might be different. Although Audit Commission reports are sometimes used as a stick with which to beat publicly owned organisations, the principle of public audit is a sound one, and one that workers would utilise if in power. Watch this space – and whatever bits of the media you patronise – to see what happens next... ■

SHIPBUILDING

Disaster on the Clyde

SCOTLAND'S LAST non-military shipbuilder, Ferguson's on the Clyde, is heading for bankruptcy, with the loss of 70 jobs – despite a promise from SNP leader Alex Salmond to maintain it.

Jim Moohan, Chair of the Confederation of Shipbuilding & Engineering Unions (CSEU) in Scotland

and GMB Scotland senior organiser, said:

"There was a personal commitment from the First Minister that the workforce would be protected and that work would remain...Alex Salmond should deliver a personal apology to each and every one of these men today.

"The CSEU is issuing a direct challenge to the Minister to intervene on behalf of the Scottish Government. Regardless of EU guidelines, he has the right to intervene." ■

MUSEUMS

Closure threat

THE WORLD-FAMOUS Oliver Cromwell museum in Huntingdon is under closure threat after Cambridgeshire County Council withdrew funding as a direct result of government cuts.

In a body swerve to counter criticism of the closure option the council has offered to run the museum with volunteers, reducing the full-time

curator's hours, terms and conditions, and charging visitors. The strategy is designed to present the "Friends of the Cromwell Museum" with a choice between the devil and the deep blue sea.

The Friends are fighting back by presenting alternative charitable status and control mechanisms to preserve the museum and take control away from the vandals who sit in County Hall and no longer see themselves as defenders of local history and tradition but merely administrators of contracts. ■



Workers

University College Hospital, London: the capital's hospitals occupy many top sites.

Bill to open up land grab

AN AMENDMENT to the Infrastructure Bill going through parliament will allow Boris Johnson or his successor as Mayor of London to acquire land held by all public bodies in London. The prime target for this land grab will be the estates of NHS properties in London estimated as being worth over £50 million.

Great concern has been expressed in NHS circles as to what happens to the assets, especially the financial assets released from merger, streamlining and rationalising of NHS provision. Does it go back into the NHS? Will the Treasury reclaim it? The mayor's office sees the chance of a quick kill.

But all public land assets held by local authorities, hospitals, schools etc will be at risk as services are rationalised because of public spending cuts or are outsourced to charities and non-profit organisations. The land grab will then result in public assets being sold off to developers in a speculators' frenzy. ■

CARR INQUIRY

Throwing in the towel

THE BRUCE CARR QC investigation into trade unions following the Grangemouth Oil Refinery dispute in 2013 has flopped. The review was an attempt to make further anti-trade union legislation an election cause célèbre.

Carr has now concluded that in the "progressively politicised environment in the run up to the general election... I have reached the conclusion that it will simply not be possible for the review...to provide

a sound basis for making recommendations."

In other words, since the government trailed its desire to introduce further anti-union legislation the esteemed QC, unable to provide an evidence-based argument as opposed to a politicised summary, has thrown the towel in.

His report will now appear, slimmed down, in autumn 2015, after the general election. Those who want to promote further attacks on the unions are not going to be able to hide behind a QC's wig and gown. ■

WHAT'S ON

Coming soon

SEPTEMBER

Friday 5 September, 7pm. Adelaide's, 209 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4HZ

Better Together concert

Includes Dalriada Quartet playing world première of Eddie McGuire's *Unity Suite*. More details to come on www.votenoborders.co.uk.

Sunday 7 September, 11am until late afternoon. Burston, near Diss, Norfolk

Burston Strike School Rally

The annual rally commemorating the "longest strike in Britain". See burston-strikeschool.wordpress.com/the-rally/

OCTOBER

Tuesday 14 October, 7.30pm,

Bertrand Russell Room, Conway Hall, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL

"Britain not for sale"

CPBML public meeting. Foreign firms and states are buying up our services and industry. That's bad news for Britain. Come and discuss. Everybody welcome.

Saturday 18 October, 11am until 5pm,

TUC march and rally: "Britain needs a pay rise"

The TUC has chosen pay as the topic for a national demonstration in London. Assemble from 11am at the Embankment before moving on to Hyde Park for rally, speeches. Check britainneedsapayrise.org for updates.



Workers on the Web

• Highlights from this and other issues of **WORKERS** can be found on our website, www.workers.org.uk, as well as information about the CPBML, its policies, and how to contact us.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Trade in services

THE EU'S proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is not the only international agreement that would put private investors' profits above human need. The USA and the EU also want a Trade In Services Agreement (TISA) and a Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement to liberalise trade and investment in all services.

Public Services International, the global body for public sector unions, contends that TISA is "among the alarming new wave of trade and investment agreements founded on legally binding powers that institutionalise the rights of investors and prohibit government actions in a wide range of areas only incidentally related to trade".

Yet the TUC supports the EU usurping our sovereignty on such agreements. The TUC's report *Education Not For Sale* talks about the threat from TISA but does not even mention that the EU is party to the negotiations!

EU negotiators only

Since the Lisbon Treaty came into force in 2009, the EU has had the exclusive competence to negotiate trade and investment treaties. The EU now negotiates these on our behalf, and individual countries are barred from making trade and investment deals with other states.

The European Commission is negotiating several trade agreements on behalf of all the member states. These include Free Trade Agreements with Canada, India, Singapore, Malaysia, Colombia/Peru, Mercosur and Central America; a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with China; the European Neighbourhood Policy with Ukraine; and Economic Partnership Agreements between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific group of countries.

Public Services International says the agreement will prevent governments from returning public services to public hands when privatisations fail, will restrict domestic regulations on worker safety, will limit environmental regulations. It will also affect consumer protection and regulatory authorities in areas such as licensing of healthcare facilities, power plants, waste disposal and university and school accreditation.

There would be no requirements on labour standards. TISA would require all participating countries to allow free flows of labour, and would ban all tests to show that there is a genuine shortage of suitably trained local workers. ■

We need to destroy the pay freeze and p workers and employers. Yet few want to

TUC and pay – t



10 July: picket line during the local government pay strike.

A GREAT SLOGAN has been adopted for the TUC Congress opening in Liverpool in September: "Britain needs a pay rise." The truth will out. Reportedly "a line has been drawn in the sand" over public sector pay. "Enough is enough" is the mantra. Nearly every trade union has said pay has to be a critical factor in mobilising Britain's trade union membership.

But how fit is the "army" that is supposed to break down the walls of the pay freeze? What is its state of consciousness and confidence?

This should be the focus of the TUC Congress 2014. But in preparations for Congress the real focus has been on May 2015 and the general election. TUC-affiliated trade unions are united only in the need for the government to go.

Any remaining energy is channelled into

getting the Labour Party to retain its silence over key issues for the working class such as the EU and migration, and any other policy that (if changed) might distinguish it from the government. And also into making UKIP the bogeyman so as to distract from Labour's monastic silence.

Rhetoric

There is precious little unity beyond this – but plenty of manoeuvring, positioning, jockeying, buffing up of egos, armchair generals rehearsing their latest version of the general strike thesis, membership raids, diversions, posturing and rhetoric.

Few want to talk about the mounting obstacles to trade unions delivering what they are really there to do. Fragmentation, the atomisation of work, outsourcing and privatisation have made it almost

put wages centre stage of the real relationship between
to talk about the obstacles to doing that...

Time to grasp the nettle

impossible for GMB, Unison and Unite to run a ballot covering all those whom they previously would have balloted (see *Workers*, June 2014 and the Alemo-Herron EU Court decision). The election will not change this – only a united working class can.

There is commitment through the TUC Public Services Committee to joint action in mid-October across the public services – local government, education, health, etc. What is not agreed is what this action will be. Will it be a token stoppage – fifteen minutes, four hours, or 24 hours? What ballot mandate authorises the strike?

Turnout

Earlier this summer, the GMB, Unison and Unite refused to publish the actual turnout figures in the ballots authorising the 10 July local government stoppage, making public only the percentages of votes backing action. Some obviously think their memberships are stupid, cannot be trusted and are incapable of thinking and working out the maths themselves as to how many voted or did not vote.

The unions have also played into the enemy's hands by letting employers allege a 6 per cent turnout! Such failed tactics have given the government the excuse to dust off plans for yet more anti-trade union legislation.

Health workers in Unison and the Royal College of Midwives are to ballot on whether to strike or take action short of strike, or both. The ballot runs from 28 August to 18 September. There is great unease in Unison ranks that any ballot result delivered for action will be on such a poor turnout as to be meaningless. The omens are not good: ballot results from internal Unison national service group

'But the real focus has been on May 2015 and the general election.'

elections among the health membership declared in June indicated a 40 per cent drop in turnout from 2012.

The last national action over pay in the NHS was in the early 1980s. It resulted in the Pay Review Body (PRB) – a sop to split the unions and split the unions and stop the Royal College of Nursing joining the 1980s action. Following a membership survey with a response rate of just 12 per cent, the Royal College of Nursing said in August that it will not ballot for action, playing up fears over patient safety, and will focus instead on...the May 2015 election. Members also appear to be saying they are more concerned about job security than pay – as if giving up on pay makes anyone's job safe.

And there's a fissure running through the Unison and Royal College of Midwives position. It is this: if the government had honoured the PRB proposal of a 1 per cent pay award then both unions would have accepted it. That's because they are so wedded to the principle of the PRB deciding pay rather than the unions negotiating, and because the PRB denies members a role or asserting leadership and responsibility. That would mean the unions and our members having to function differently.

The government has thrown down a challenge: pick up the gauntlet and fight on a battlefield of its choice. Those who have picked up the gauntlet are now busily scratching their heads as to what to do and where to go.

Gestures

Should the ballot vote be positive, you can be sure that any marginal gains from behind-the-scenes deals with NHS employers will be hailed as a magnificent victory with only token gestures – as with 5 June, where wonderful photos were generated but practically nothing else.

And at the 10 July local government strike, commissioned squads of GMB and Unite staff created wonderful photo opportunities but members in their thousands crossed picket lines. How can we involve the membership in devising action that can create unity, to prevent a repeat?

Meanwhile, 18 October will see the third

Marx on pay

KARL MARX rated the fight for wages by the working class as of utmost political importance. "Without the great alternative phases of dullness, prosperity, over-excitement, crisis and distress,...the up and down of wages resulting from them ...the constant warfare between masters and men closely corresponding with those variations in wages and profits, the working classes of Britain would be a heart-broken, weak minded, worn out, unresisting mass, whose self-emancipation would prove as impossible as that of the slaves of Ancient Greece and Rome." So he wrote in an article on the labour movement published in the *New York Daily Tribune* in 1853.

In more recent times the ruling class has used parliament to introduce various methods of wage restraint with the aim of achieving what Marx warned about. The subtlety of their attack has gone through a number of variations. The minimum wage and its latest incarnation the "living wage" are current examples.

From his standpoint in 1853 Marx in his article had this to say, "There exists a class of philanthropists, and even socialists, who consider strikes as very mischievous to the interests of the working man himself, and whose great aim consists of finding out a method of securing permanent average wages."

Fast forward to 2014 and hand in hand with the minimum wage approach of trying to put class struggle to bed has been the removal of Britain's borders – giving rise to an influx of overseas workers, causing the price of domestic labour to fall further.

Retailers have contributed to indirect wage restraint with unprecedented levels of credit for workers, keeping consumption and profits artificially high while wages have been stifled and personal debt has risen. The political outcome is that workers have queued for credit rather than fight for wages – bringing political complacency and a turning away from trade unions. ■

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national London-based demonstration called by the TUC against the government since 2010. The trade unions must remain British trade unions whatever the outcome of the Scottish Referendum. No split can be allowed by Scottish separatism trying to turn back the clock to before the birth of the trade unions. The demonstration can be a unifying event focusing British workers' attention on the real enemy – the government and its employer backers.

Already there are calls for the demonstration to be “non-political” so as not to run foul of legislation related to funding political parties in general elections. What a fixation workers apparently have with obeying legislation designed to emasculate our every thought, aspiration and action!

Successive governments and employers are pursuing a strategy to make Britain's workplaces union free. Trade union density in the private sector is 12 per cent. Outsourcing of the public sector is intended over a short period of years to shift the balance of power to one where trade union density is similar.

Already in the civil service the Public and Commercial Services trade union, led by the ultra left, has begun a spiral of collapse and membership loss after colliding

with government. There is now a threat that trade unionism in the civil service could be re-defined, obliterated or marginalised.

Government and employers are trying to replicate this elsewhere by incorporating unions through partnership working. That's effectively a one-way street, turning the unions into organisations devoid of political consciousness.

There is to be a role for trade unions under the neoliberal market-driven capitalism of the 21st century but it is to be a neutered role. Workers' rights will be a limited list of tick boxes. All trade unions are adopting the same clothes of business trade unionism, the US model of services to members wrapped up in the language of “organising”.

Spot the difference

It might soon be impossible to tell the difference between the trade unions. All will have their standardised recruitment freebies, competing for the same members, chanting the same mantras, supporting every campaign possible as long as it does not challenge the beast itself: capitalism.

Unions and workers without ideology are like the straw man from *The Wizard of Oz* – without a brain! It will not be workers organising to assert their class power but workers being part of the company brand.

They will then have to rediscover that they really have a brain after all.

A radical re-think is needed about how the trade union movement is to survive. The attempt to hijack unions with an ultra-leftist agenda or style of work is epitomised by Unite (which is not alone!). In classic Trotskyist style, its unachievable and undeliverable demands result solely in derecognition or, worse, the members walking away from the unions.

We need a strategy to make trade unions relevant in the workplace if we are to deal with the deindustrialisation of Britain, changed workplaces and employment. The emphasis has to be workplace, not community, not campaigns outside of work but how to deal with the employer at work. It requires strategies to overcome the great casualisation of the latter years of the 20th century and the intention in the 21st century to splinter workers into units as small as each individual. It requires rebuilding trade unions or even building new ones that can develop the consciousness needed to overcome this lack of identity.

The strengths of unity, organisation and discipline secured our survival through the Industrial Revolution. We have to apply them to the present day – to nurture a new class consciousness to survive this period and reclaim our birthright as a class. ■



Workers

CPBML/Workers Public Meeting, London Tuesday 14 October, 7.30 pm “Britain not for sale”

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

Foreign corporations and states are taking over our services and industry. The government lauds this as “inward investment”. We call it a state-sponsored looting of our national assets that damages Britain's sovereignty and threatens all our livelihoods. Come and discuss. Everybody welcome.

Why are we so passive in the face of attempts by millionaires and zealots to pervert proper education?

The real Trojan horse

ONE OF THE first tasks for the incoming Education Secretary Nicky Morgan on 15 July was to comment on the so-called Trojan Horse conspiracy. A report commissioned by the government into allegations of a Muslim takeover of some Birmingham schools had just been published.

Morgan immediately shot herself in the foot by referring to disturbing evidence that people with a shared ideology were trying to gain control of schools' governing bodies. That's an apt description for many of the academy chains now taking over Britain's schools, of other persuasions besides Islam. The reality behind the headlines is more mundane, yet needs the attention of our class.

The report arrived after months of recrimination and hand-wringing. It is studied with head-turning phrases such as "aggressive Islamist agenda", "anti-Western", "intolerant" and so on. Yet it is so afraid of offending the sensibilities of mainstream Muslims that it has to invoke the fear of terrorism to justify its conclusions.

Schools are not sponsoring terrorism, but it suits the government to insinuate that might be so. Expect to see a wave of Ofsted reports next year downgrading schools for not explicitly teaching enough about the dangers of terrorism.

Direct control

The minister also announced that Birmingham would have an education commissioner reporting directly to herself and the chief executive of Birmingham City Council. That sidesteps elected local authority responsibility. As a political bonus Morgan is stealing Labour's thunder, as this is what that party is proposing on a national scale should it win the next election.

So, what is all the huffing and puffing really about? In December 2013, an anonymous letter was leaked to the *Daily Telegraph*. It claimed that some Muslim governors in Birmingham had been and were planning to systematically Islamise schools and oust headteachers who resisted. Accusations of Islamophobia were hurled at anyone who supported a call that such claims should be investigated.

Good heads did quit in the face of constant undermining by governors. There



Andrew Wiard/www.andrew-wiard.com

The enemies of education in government and religion all see schools as places to impose beliefs on children – and make money too.

were links between governors in Birmingham and some in Bradford and other cities with a significant Muslim population. There was strong evidence that the secular, non-faith character of some schools was being replaced by a character more aligned to a conservative Islamic agenda.

Similar charges could be levelled at other faith-based schools. For instance those run by fundamentalist Christians who seek to impose their strange beliefs in schools for which they are responsible. They are not under investigation, but in a rare outbreak of sanity the 2012 ban on teaching creationism as science was

extended this June to cover all schools including academies and free schools in existence in 2012.

This phenomenon isn't new. For years, individuals and groups have sought to take control of schools. Some have a genuine belief that their variety of religion is preferable to any other. Most are driven by power and greed; there is money to be made in education these days.

The concern for teachers, parents and pupils is not that governors should wish to influence schools. It is the collective

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

For free copies, send a self-addressed A4 envelope (with large stamp), to CPBML, 78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB.



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paralysis that takes hold when overzealous governors happen to be Muslim.

Albert Bore, leader of Birmingham City Council, hit the nail on the head commenting on Birmingham’s own investigation. He said: “The report has highlighted areas where we have either taken no action, were too slow to take action, or have simply done the wrong thing.” The report further states, “...this has often been because of the risk of being seen as racist or Islamophobic. Our proper commitment to cohesion in communities sometimes overrode the need to tackle difficult questions about what was happening in a small number of schools.”

This is a clear admission of failing to take the right action at the right time. Yet Bore invokes a wish for “community cohesion” in mitigation. That phrase is no more than a mealy-mouthed incantation which means anything and therefore nothing.

Why are institutions so prone to sitting on their hands whenever Islam gets a mention? That includes local authorities, although they have an admittedly dwindling role in holding schools and governors to account.

Multiculturalism

This weakness has its roots in the 1970s and 1980s when ethnic diversity was championed in the name of multiculturalism. That philosophy was borrowed initially from Canada and Australia, with their long history of immigration. It promoted the equal status of all cultures which coexist in a town or country and explicitly denied the primacy of the host culture. It demonised integration on the grounds that it swamped cultural differences, and placed those differences ahead of togetherness.

That approach had disastrous consequences, not least because it undermined the need to acquire a functional use of English.

Immigration to England in the 1960s and 1970s included a significant proportion of workers from Pakistan. A key focus of the emerging multicultural policies was respect for Islam and Islamic practices.

‘British workers were reluctant to acknowledge our own working class culture as more advanced.’

That was so even when such practices went totally against existing British values such as equality between men and women, the right to choose your own partner and to determine your own course in life.

As a working class, as a people, we saw things we did not approve of; the application of Sharia law, forced marriages, first cousin marriage, the acquisition of British citizenship through marriage to an abducted schoolgirl. We tutted in private, and a few were brave enough to object openly, but deferred in public to the multicultural zealots.

British workers were in effect reluctant to acknowledge our own working class culture as more advanced than that of workers from less developed nations, who have not yet won for themselves the freedoms our forebears did.

The present manifestations of the ethnic diversity approach are everywhere to be seen. For example information leaflets in so many languages that they are unreadable or translation services local authorities pride themselves on providing, but which inhibit the learning of English.

This reaction, the acceptance of diversity over unity, is widespread but still mostly only skin deep. We have not for the most part succumbed to black unions, segregated workplaces and the rest of it. We could do with a bit of healthy pride in our own culture, created over centuries by our own class. We have assimilated internal and external migration, but in progress were united. The NHS, the education service and above all the union movement were all created by us and not imported. ■

Scottish composer Eddie McGuire speaks up for the unity of British culture...

Composing British unity

ORGANISATIONS WITH “British” in their name ought to be concerned that they could lose this identity and be diminished if the Yes opinion wins September’s referendum on independence for Scotland. As a composer I am proud to be with fellow practitioners in such a Britain-wide organisation as BASCA.

Glasgow born, I studied in London and Sweden, but have been back working in my hometown for over 40 years. I still visit my composition teacher in mid-Wales and keep links with fellow composers from my student years who now live all over the UK. I view Britain as my stage and relish having enjoyed premières all over the country, from an accordion prelude at the Arundel Festival near the south coast to a symphonic poem at the St Magnus Festival in the Orkney Islands.

I have loved travelling to hear my music – from the Sound Festival in rural Aberdeenshire to the Semley Festival on the Dorset/Wiltshire border. I have happy childhood memories of summer visits to my aunt and uncle’s Maiden Newton farm and recently arranged *Four Dorset Folksongs* to celebrate that. *Derbyshire Dances* and *Scottish Dances on Original Themes* are also titles from my output.

So, you see, I have a view of a whole country without divisions and I have an adamant desire to keep it that way – much better together than apart. More importantly, I am part of a united profession – why break up that strength?

Economies of scale, follies of duplicating effort, economic uncertainty splitting the solidarity of fellow professionals – these are all compelling reasons for working people, including us as composers and songwriters, to stick together. That’s why I have been devoting time and effort this year to sup-

This article is an edited extract of an article composer Eddie McGuire wrote for the latest edition of *The Works*, journal of the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors (BASCA).



porting the Better Together campaign. Subsets of the campaign include Work Together and Academics Together who have proven conclusively the dangers of separatism to medical research and to university funding.

Three Emeritus Professors at the University of Glasgow recently stated jointly in a letter to *The Herald*, “our own research careers, like those of most Scottish scientists, were made possible because of access to UK research funds and it will be a tragedy if this opportunity is denied to future generations of Scottish scientists because of Scotland’s withdrawal from the UK. As part of the UK, Scotland leads the world in medical research: why would we want to put that at risk?”

Creativity

I would contend that a similar scenario applies in the world of musical creativity and development. Alastair Darling has pinpointed the downside of a separate Scottish economy. Projecting his analysis onto Scottish culture, the risks to musical creativity are all too obvious.

And in times of economic crises, why break up the ability to conduct united campaigns to defend culture? Already worries are mounting about the fate of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra if Britain, and the BBC, were to break up. The growing campaign Lost Arts has brought together the Musicians Union, Equity and others in the Federation of Entertainment Unions with members of the Prospect and PCS unions

to counter this steady erosion.

Equity leads the My Theatre Matters campaign to stop theatre decline and closure; and the Voices for the Library campaign has had a UK-wide impact. BASCA members should be part of these united voices for culture.

A third pillar of post-war achievement in the 1940s, together with funding for national health and free education, was funding of arts for all. What started out as a united service, the Arts Council of Great Britain, was gradually divided and weakened by regionalism. Just look at music magazines at either end of the stylistic spectrum – *Living Tradition* and *Classical Music* – to see the array of interacting music-making that makes up the “stage” that is Britain. Time, I think, to save this, reverse the narrowness and divisiveness of separatist thought and make sure we stay together. ■

Unity music

EDDIE MCGUIRE’S composition *Unity Suite* is his cultural contribution to the Better Together campaign. It will have its first performance in Adelaide’s, Bath Street, Glasgow at 7pm on Friday 5 September, performed by the Dalriada Trio. This concert will be a morale-boosting event for the No campaign and will also feature the premiere of a new song against separatism. The event will be available later on YouTube.

Quoted in *The Guardian* on 5 August, Eddie said that he believes there are practical reasons why artists on the No side are less visible. “Those in full-time jobs with a major orchestra, or Scottish Opera, don’t have the ability to speak out [their contracts forbid it] but in my experience they are solidly opposed...Those who are organised in professional bodies and trade unions don’t want to be weakened by separation.” ■

Part 1 of our feature on class, published in July, showed the day-to-day experiences and in the world at large. In Part 2, the disastrous economic, political and social system of capitalism.

Who will claim this century

GO BACK six centuries and you find that our origins as a class and the development of our country were distinct and different to that of Europe. By the 15th century feudal obligations and relationships had broken down here, rejected by English peasants eager to exploit the labour shortages brought on by the catastrophic loss of life in the Black Death.

Wage labour and capitalist practices became the norm in English agriculture centuries earlier than elsewhere. This prevalence of wage labour in the countryside was a vital precursor of the industrial revolution and probably a key trigger for it.

The British working class was the first in the world to emerge off the land. Already by the 1850s workers in Britain constituted the majority, subsequently developing even further in scale as our country became overwhelmingly proletarian in character.

Being the first to form into a class, with no other experience to copy, we had to work things out independently, devising our own method and philosophy of defence against the ravages of early capitalism that threatened to completely exhaust or annihilate us.

The method found was collective: combine in trade unions or combinations, as they were known. The objectives were practical, dictated by a need to survive and repel the assault upon us. So the questions were: how to raise starvation levels of pay; how to reduce incredibly long hours of work (up to 14 hours a day or more); and how to improve appalling conditions.

Trade unions

Of necessity, our fledgling trade unions began locally – in parish, village, mine and town – with deep roots enabling them to endure and flourish. Not imposed from outside or bestowed by condescending do-gooders, they were forged by working people alone, responding to need. Never artificially created by external political organisations or religious groups (as happened much later in other countries to the great detriment of unity and power), they enjoyed strong commitment and bred fierce loyalty.

Typically they resided on the fusing



Workers

Workers on the TUC march, 20 October 2012 – for “A Future that Works”, said the march’s slogan.

factor of a common trade or skill that brought incredible strength as everyone involved had a common identity and shared similar concerns.

Because capitalism feared trade unions, it tried to destroy them, notably with the 1799 and 1800 Combination Acts. As a result, early unions were often born in conspiracy, defying the rulers’ law, and survived only because of the stubborn, unstinting allegiance of many generations of working people.

Later in the 19th century trade unions had to grow nationally to better combat the opposing class. There was an absolute suspicion of building unions of those who did not work at the trade, best illustrated by the practice of the leading craft union, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers. Its rules required that workers control and run the union. Its decision making structures confirmed the leading role of the lay mem-

bership with a sovereign national committee composed of elected workers who had to be working at the engineering trade. As unions prosper again they will need to consider control and initiative in the hands of workers not just participation.

At some point, rather than striving for revolution in a direct route to supremacy and fashioning society in its own image, our class opted for survival with dignity but within the confines of capitalism, consciously rejecting the abolition of capitalism. There was no hoodwinking, no misleading.

Eventually, trade unions endorsed the formation of a Labour Party in 1900, our most retrograde act, a turning away from our origins and traditions, a political and philosophical denial of the working class as deciding force. This backward step has constricted and side-tracked us for over a century. We surrendered ultimate control of our politics to a separate caste of outsider

at the concept is central to making sense out of both our
 , we argue that action as a class rings the death knell of
 pitalism...

Century?

politicians, inextricably intertwined with the bourgeois political system.

An occupying force

Capitalism straddles the economy, suffocating society like the alien occupying force it is. There is nothing natural about a market's over-lording control; only capitalism's relative longevity gives it a false respectable veneer. Capitalism distorts how production, institutions and services are run and operated, foisting irksome management techniques and unnatural methods over everyone, intending to confuse and undermine worker professionalism.

For instance, in education the distortion is produced by schools competing against each other in league table results, obsessions about data, manic management, constant inspections and monitoring, an Ofsted regime pitted against teachers' professionalism, and so on.

Class change

Only the widespread organised network of an extensive working class can break the economic fetters and dispel the political oppression that constrains everyone. The combined skills and talents of our class will challenge capitalism and also be the means of reconstruction under socialism. Because we can, our class must effect a change and move history on to new ground.

Capitalism in its dotage signifies an unsatisfactory past and a declining future. The working class wants a productive economy whilst capitalists can only spawn speculative booms and busts. That is why at the 16th Congress of our Party we made the call for a regeneration of industry in Britain.

Though capitalism is utterly dependent on workers' labour power to generate profits, a working class is not similarly reliant on capitalism. It can branch out on its own as proven by the October Revolution in 1917 and other revolutions since.

Think of our potential if we organise and cooperate together as a class. We are vast in number, all-embracing in terms of occupation, talented in every expertise. A capitalist class can only survive and govern a

'We have all the skills necessary to run a whole society.'

modern economy by employing mercenaries for certain managerial or executive functions. Among our working class ranks we possess all the requisite skills and talents necessary to run a whole society, deliver a complete economy and assume managerial tasks. We can prosper without capitalists, without finance capitalists, even most probably without a separate category of politicians.

Aggregate together all our skills and economic activities into a combination of political power and you have more than sufficient resources to not only oust capitalism but also construct a productive, sophisticated socialism.

Others may accommodate and adjust to a declining capitalism. The Party does not, for our stance is different. History is not the preserve of the forces of Mammon whose absolute decline – if it is not halted –

brings impoverishment and threatens subjugation of our class if it is not halted. An awakening class is vital if we want to be working, educated and healthy. Our absolute rise is essential here and throughout the world.

If our class wants to be supreme and govern, then we will have to:

- Cast aside any sense of inadequacy.
- Rid ourselves of crippling fear.
- Act as "the solution" to every problem, or opportunity.
- Be the master of our destiny.

Amid the adverse conditions of capitalism, somehow we have to change our mind-set, gradually shed softness of thinking or deference and master the art and technique of struggle. From a class-in-itself, we must apprentice ourselves through a journey of practice and learning where we train ourselves to become a class-for-itself seeking absolute control over economic and political life.

Who will claim this century?

The 21st century should be remembered as the time when an ascendant working class took charge. By then the working class in Britain, and hopefully in other countries too, will have become at long last the supreme, governing class. ■

Meet the Party

M The Communist Party of Britain's series of London public meetings continues after the summer on 14 October ("Britain not for sale" – see notice page 8) and 12 November. Both will be held in the Bertrand Russell Room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL, nearest Tube Holborn, and start at 7.30 pm. Other meetings are held around Britain. All meetings will be advertised in What's On, page 5.

M The Party's annual London May Day rally is always held on May Day itself, regardless of state bank holidays – in 2015, Friday 1 May, in Conway Hall, Holborn. There will also be 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 e-mail to info@workers.org.uk

When Scotland and England united in 1707, it set the scene throughout Britain...

1707: The Treaty of Union

GREAT BRITAIN was born as a state in 1707. The Treaty of Union was ratified by the Scottish Parliament on 16 January 1707 amidst much furore and rhetoric and a large measure of disdain and distaste in both England and Scotland. After ratification by the Parliament in Westminster, the separate parliaments of England and Scotland ceased to exist. They were replaced by a Parliament of Great Britain. They had already shared a ruler, Queen Anne of the House of Stuart.

This union was a formal recognition of the ascendancy of capitalism over feudalism in all of this country. The absolutist Stuart monarchs of the 17th century toyed with union; the brief but productive Commonwealth (1649 to 1660) made tentative moves in that direction. Once united, the combined resources and talents of the two countries were at the service of capital, then in its dynamic phase.

Some Scots cried. "We are bought and sold for English gold." That was not far off the mark in a way, though not by direct bribery. Budding Scottish capitalism was weak compared to that in England. It had been mortally wounded by recklessly pouring capital into the ill-fated Darien Scheme. This damaged the Scottish economy on a scale greater than the failures of RBS and others in 2008.

In the 1690s Scots venture capitalists had proposed the establishment of a colony, Darien, on the Panama isthmus in Central America. This was an attempt to match the burgeoning imperial ambition



The battle of Culloden, 1746. Scots – including highlanders – actually fought on both sides.

and colonial acquisitions of English capitalism. The scheme aimed to cut the time and cost of transporting goods to and from China and Asia and to establish Scotland as a power to match France, Holland and England. An estimated £400,000 was raised; half the total capital available at that time throughout the country below the tribal Highlands.

The one person who had visited the Darien peninsula warned against the venture. Lionel Wafer, a buccaneer and ship's surgeon, told all who would listen about the heat, humidity and fever-plagued conditions, but he was ignored. The colonisers of the first five ships that sailed from Leith in

1698 were attacked by disease and by the Spanish. A third of them, around 400 people, were dead within months of landing. Over the next two years others arrived to meet a similar fate. In all, nine ships were lost; 2,000 men, women and children were drowned, buried, captured by the Spanish or sold to English plantation owners. Half the capital, £200,000, was lost.

Bankrupt

Scotland was bankrupt; English capitalism took advantage. The treaty of 1707 did not allow for equal terms of trade. The Scottish linen industry was impoverished by cheap imports brought from Ulster by English merchants. Scottish coal owners had to sell cheaply into the English market.

There were bloody but relatively short-lived anti-Union riots. However there was little enthusiasm outside of the Highlands for a return to the absolutism of the Stuarts. James Edward Stuart, the Old Pretender and half-brother to Anne, received only marginal support for his claim to the throne in 1715. That was despite riots in London against the Hanoverian king, George I.

The Stuarts always wanted to be restored to the crowns of Scotland and England; they intended to rule as their forefathers from London, not Edinburgh. By the time of the 1745 Rebellion of Charles Edward the Young Pretender, the Stuarts

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‘Our own organisations were uniquely non-sectarian.’

were even more marginal though supported by French loans. Their army reached as far south as Derby, before retreating in the face of the delayed British response.

The battle of Culloden in 1746 ended the uprising. The British army there included three Scots battalions and two of Highlanders. Nonetheless the vengeance wreaked afterwards on the people of the Highlands was nothing short of genocide. That began a process carried on by their own clan chiefs and landowners through the Highland Clearances which took place over the following 100 years.

Across Britain other changes came with the rise of modern industry and of the proletariat that grew with it. Workers dug coal, made iron and textiles, built ships and railways and much more. In the 200 years since the last Jacobite Rebellion, the population of Britain rose from under 10 million to over 50 million, more than 95 per cent of us being workers.

Our own organisations, unions and political parties and labour movements born of those unions were uniquely non-sectarian and nationally based. A common interest against capital overrode earlier divisions of religion and location that formed the background to the political events of the 17th and early 18th centuries. For the most part British workers moved on from religious and linguistic backwardness, some of which is still prevalent in European trade unions to this day.

Since industrialisation Scottish workers have been an important part of the British working class, whether exercising their skills, science and creativity or organising in defence of our class. The union of the two countries into a Britain made by workers has made us, with our national institutions and organisation, the guardians of a working class future for this, single, nation. ■

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 has recently held its 16th Congress, a coming together of the Party to consider the state of Britain and what needs to happen in the future. Here we set out briefly six Calls to Action for the British working class – for a deeper explanation, see www.workers.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 threat of separation, are both products of only one thing: de-industrialisation. Any referendum on the break-up of Britain must be held throughout Britain.

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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Genocide in Gaza

'Since the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, the United States has provided Israel with an estimated \$121 billion.'

YET AGAIN Israel's military terrorises Gaza. The inevitable toll of death and destruction tarnishes an already impoverished strip of land. Why does political progress remain so far out of reach in this pivotal part of the Middle East?

The present tragedy in Gaza recalls Lebanon in September 1982. The Palestinian refugee camps at Sabra and Shatila were sealed off by Israeli soldiers who allowed Maronite Phalangist militias to rampage through them.

Thousands of men, women and children were killed, beaten, tortured and raped. The stories that emerged were as chilling as those from any war or atrocity in history. The United Nations General Assembly condemned the massacre as an act of genocide in resolution 37/123. Britain, along with USA and 20 other countries, abstained.

The current events, on the face of it, amount to genocide. In particular the pre-dawn shelling on 31 July of the Abu Hussein School at Jabaliya killed 16 women and children and displaced 3,000 refugees. The UN had notified the precise location of this school to the Israeli Defence Force on 17 separate occasions.

This massacre and the deliberate targeting of civilians fleeing previously agreed ceasefires merits reference to the International Court so that an independent inquiry can determine whether war crimes have been committed. The Palestinians cannot do this as their previous application to join the court was denied.

The scale of destruction and suffering in Gaza is unprecedented, but the current crisis has deep roots. It results from decades of political failure and continuous Palestinian displacement at the hands of the Israeli military. Since 2007, more than 1.6 million Gazans have been living under a suffocating, deadly siege imposed by Israel and accommodated by Egypt: all movement of people and products are strictly curtailed. This

is a defenceless civilian population, densely packed into a besieged enclave with no place to take refuge from the military onslaught.

Is the only future for Palestine and Israel going to be a fatalistic one of periodic, ferocious outbursts between two unequal adversaries, each side seemingly locked into knee-jerk retribution against the other, merely re-stoking the enmities and ensuring the continuance of an awful, unjust status quo?

Israel's military incursions rely on the tacit support of the American government, whatever its public pronouncements say. Israel possesses massive military hardware, which would not be possible without the direct assistance of the USA. Since the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, the United States government has provided Israel with an estimated \$121 billion.

America occasionally tut-tuts about Israel's military adventures, but is happy to prop up its fifth column in the Middle East. If it were to cut off its financial pipeline, there would be a marked change of attitude in Israel. If it wanted to stop settlement construction in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, it could bring immediate pressure to bear; it doesn't.

There is still much to re-learn from the political direction of Yasser Arafat in his later years. By 1988 he had convinced Fatah and the Palestine Liberation Organisation to accept the existence of Israel inside changed borders alongside a Palestinian state. This development spurred the peace movement inside Israel to greater heights. But with the rise of Hamas particularly in Gaza, the movement has largely collapsed and Israeli citizens are supporting their government's draconian aggression in the hope of securing temporary security from threats of rockets.

If things stay as they are, nothing will improve. The blockade of the Gaza Strip, occupations of the West Bank and invasions of Gaza will endure. The rigid positions of both sides will harden. A ceasefire will be merely the precursor of the next war. ■

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