

Manifesto for Labour law

Jeremy Corbyn has signalled his intention to review Britain's framework of labour law and, in an effort to assist this, the Institute of Employment Rights (IER) has drawn up a detailed contribution — **A Manifesto for Labour Law: Towards a Comprehensive Revision of Workers' Rights.**

The authors, 15 leading labour-movement lawyers and academics, point out that the number of workers covered by collective bargaining agreements averages 62 per cent in continental Europe and rises to as much as 80 per cent in strong economies like Germany but is less than 20 per cent in Britain.

This manifesto intends to show how the law can be used to create fair, just, secure, democratic and productive conditions of work which will diminish inequality and benefit the economy.

At the heart of the proposals is the need to ensure the voice of Britain's 31 million workers is heard and respected: in government (via a ministry of labour), in the economy (via a national economic forum), and in industry (via sectoral employment commissions).

The role of employers in building a vibrant economy is acknowledged, but the concept of management's unrestricted 'right to manage' is rejected as undemocratic, unproductive and undesirable.

Instead, the manifesto uses as its model the experience of those economies, including post-war Britain, with extensive sectoral collective bargaining structures underpinned by strong trade union rights.

The benefits are threefold: collective bargaining helps to counter the unequal power of the employer; helps to reduce inequality in wealth and health, and helps to promote a stable and productive economy.

This is a manifesto for raising labour standards and improving working conditions for all workers.



Advancing workers' rights

BY CAROLYN JONES

FOLLOWING THE political whirlwind of the past two weeks, it is easy to forget the damaging policies already introduced by the Tories and the future damage they will inflict if left to set a post-Brexit agenda in an opposition vacuum.

At the forefront of both are workers' rights which is why the Institute is currently focusing on the dual tasks of resisting the Trade Union Act and promoting a new Manifesto for Labour Law.

The world of work has changed and with it the nature and role of the workforce.

For Britain's 31 million workers, many of the changes have had a devastating impact on their working lives and their living standards. Britain's workers are among the most insecure, unhappy and stressed workers in Europe.

One major cause of this is the decades of anti-union legislation, once proudly described by Tony Blair as 'the most restrictive in the Western world'.

The latest onslaught on our rights comes in the Trade Union Act, which received Royal Assent in May on the 90th anniversary of the 1926 General Strike.

The original Bill was nasty and, despite some amendment, it's turned into a nasty, anti-working class Act. The intention is clear: to choke the power and confidence of our unions to organise, to represent and to defend living standards for generations to come.

Parliamentary activity delivered what it could in the face of a government determined to silence political opposition, cull collective action, criminalise solidarity on the picket line and strangle unions with bureaucratic red tape controlled by a state surveillance officer.

Some of the more bizarre proposals may have been removed but most of the

'flagship' elements of the Tory Bill are now UK law. And we are yet to see the damaging details contained in still to be published Regulations.

On ballots, the imposition of a 50 per cent turnout and an additional 40 per cent support for workers in important services make it near impossible for many of those leading the resistance against privatisation and cuts to take industrial action. Promises to review and roll-out e-ballots were dumped, kicked into the long grass of an independent review.

The EU referendum easily passed all these hurdles (72 per cent turnout, 52 per cent support) yet with utter contempt of democracy some Tories still want to re-run the ballot or ignore it completely.

And even when these new hurdles to strikes are navigated successfully, proposals to bus in agency workers — often vulnerable people coerced into taking jobs under new Universal Credit rules — still lurk in the background.

On political funds, though delayed for 12 months, the opt-in system is now law and threatens to undermine the political voice of trade unions. And the bureaucratic nonsense of unions having to declare all political expenditure over £2,000 a year stands in complete contrast to the privacy and anonymity given to off-shore funds and off-shore Tory funders.

The spectre in this unnecessary Act is the newly empowered state surveillance officer. The Certification Officer has powers to initiate complaints, undertake inspections, record names, determine outcomes and impose fines of up to £20,000 on any national, regional or local branch. Issues for inspection include political fund procedures and expenditure, internal elections, ballots and much more.

If this Act, like the 1971 Act before it is to be defeated, the immediate battle will be extra-parliamentary, led by workers responding to attacks on their standard of living and working conditions. Those battles are already being fought in the UK, Spain and France and will continue to

grow as current economic policies fail to deliver anything other than growing inequality and lack of opportunity.

In the longer term, it is hoped that Jeremy Corbyn and his team will be given the space and time to develop alternative economic and industrial policies that will expose the political nature of Tory attacks and show how another narrative and political agenda is possible. To that end, IER has launched a *Manifesto for Labour Law* which places trade unions back at the heart of economic, industrial and social regeneration

In the meantime, the labour and progressive movement must do all it collectively can to educate, agitate and organise against this undemocratic, unnecessary and unfair Trade Union Act.

CAROLYN JONES IS DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

Labour in Wales union law pledge

REPEALING the Trade Union Act will be among the first acts of the newly elected Welsh government, First Minister Carwyn Jones announced at the end of June.

Mr Jones led Welsh Labour into May's Assembly elections with a promise to pass a new law that will overturn elements of Westminster's Trade Union Act.

Unveiling the Welsh government's legislative programme to Assembly Members, he vowed to fulfil the pledge within the first year of the new government.

'We will act to remove the UK government's fundamentally harmful reforms to the rights of workers in the public services this Welsh government is responsible for,' he said.



Copies available from IER, 4th Floor, Jack Jones House, 1 Islington, Liverpool L3 8EG www.ier.org.uk. Special offer price of £5 (50% off) for UNITE Unity readers.



The Morning Star is the world's only English language socialist daily paper and it celebrates its 50th birthday this year.

It was founded in 1930 as the *Daily Worker* to be the organ of the central committee of the Communist Party and in 1948 became a co-operative, the People's Press Printing Society. It is run by an elected management committee which currently has 10 national trade unions - including Unite - in membership.

The paper provides day to day coverage of the fight for workplace rights, equal rights and the struggle against austerity. Until his election as Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was a weekly columnist.

Leading figures in the labour and trade union movement and progressives and

peace activists write regularly in the paper. There is a vibrant arts page and the paper's sports coverage, especially football (including women's football), boxing and racing is renowned.

The paper's online edition is proving very popular with busy trade union activists who want and need reliable and informed labour movement news. A top flight team from the famed Danish Robotnik design agency are working on a web redesign.

The paper is widely available at Unite offices and major events as well as all Co-opStores and at RS McColls and can be ordered at your local newsagent.

www.morningstaronline.co.uk

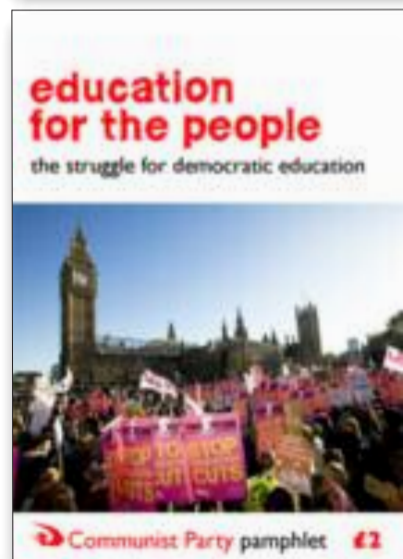
Communist propaganda



Women & class
by Mary Davis

The oppression of women is denied or trivialised by the mass media and the state. On the left, there is a tendency to subsume women's issues within the general class struggle, or to relegate them to a secondary position. The attitude is too often one of 'socialism will sort it all out'. In the meantime, any specific concentration on women's issues is seen as diversionary.

Mary Davis charts the origin and history of women's oppression, puts forward the marxist analysis, debunks 'rival' theories and puts forward the case for placing the liberation of women at the heart of the class struggle for socialism. £2



education for the people
the struggle for democratic education

Written by the education commission of the Communist Party and covering the whole range of education provision this pamphlet outlines the roots of the crisis in Britain's education system in class society and outlines theoretical and practical solutions

Download the entire document free at <http://tinyurl.com/pyovans>

The Communist Party publishes a host of material, much of it free at www.communist-party.org.uk

Join Britain's revolutionary party of working class power and liberation

I want to join the Communist Party/Young Communist League

name _____

address _____

post code _____

age if under 28 _____ email _____

return to **Communist Party** Ruskin House 23 Coombe Road Croydon CR0 1BD
e mail office@communist-party.org.uk or call 02086861659 ★ Unite 2016

'Partnership' is a danger for workers

BY TAM MORRISON

A KEY PLANK of the European Social chapter was 'social partnership' which it was believed - mistakenly in our view - could protect us better than the class struggle of our own labour movement.

But over the years it has become clear that this form of partnership is a very different beast from the pre-Thatcher tripartite model.

The referendum result now gives us a chance to review the best way forward to develop industrial negotiations and return to full collective bargaining.

As a strategy, partnership working (aka class collaboration) mitigates against building a militant fightback across the public sector.

A major weakness of the partnership approach is that it a partnership with the very same group who are driving the cuts agenda - the employers. In the health sector partnership working with the employers has been the norm for some time. It is now growing in local government - but with little sign that it is effective in stopping the cuts and job losses.

The effect of partnership on the shop floor is to dampen down militancy by making it more difficult to build a collective response. It fosters passivity, isolates activists and incorporates unions into the cuts agenda by encouraging members to accept the cuts as inevitable.

One partner makes the other pay for austerity with reductions in pay, terms and conditions and job losses. It can lead to a lazy approach to organising — why bother with such time-consuming tasks as face to face meetings with members when you are guaranteed a seat at the top table.

It can also lead to an unhealthy

relationship, and even collusion, with the bosses by senior stewards and full-time officers combined with the targeting of trade union militants and 'trouble-makers'. No less fatally it creates a political divide between trade unions and service users and the wider community.

Concessionary bargaining becomes the order of the day, give and take, with workers always doing the giving. Accept cuts in real pay and terms and conditions and it will save jobs, we are told.

Tell that to those left behind who have to pick up the work of their colleagues who have left local government while demand for services grows.

So, are the small group of highly paid officials at the top who talk about us 'working smarter' and of local government needing to be 'leaner', really the social partners of the working class? Are employers in the public sector who implement the austerity agenda really our partners?

It's a proven myth. How else can you explain the failure to stop mass job losses that in any other industry would create the demand for task forces to be set up. In these circumstances the employer always comes back looking for more concessions. Areas covered by collective bargaining are removed piecemeal and we see the introduction of 'Change Champions', claimed to give a voice to the shop floor. Is that not the job of trade unions?

The only way to stop the attacks is to demand no cuts, no trading away of conditions — building workplace organisation and militancy along with political campaigning, convincing workers on the ground that they should not have to pay for capitalism's crisis.

TAM MORRISON IS SECRETARY OF THE CP'S SCOTTISH COMMITTEE

Cuts and more cuts – time to fight back

SINCE THE Tories were elected in 2015, local government has seen the familiar policy of cuts, cuts and more cuts. These are piling the pressure on services that are already stretched to breaking point, services such as social care for the elderly and the disabled.

We are seeing the closure and scaling back of children's Sure Start centres, parks, libraries, museums and leisure facilities. Where these services are not being ceased altogether we are witnessing services handed over to private providers, run for profits made at the expense of the quality of service provided and a reduction in workers' terms and conditions.

There are job losses for many and for those fortunate enough to keep their jobs, work is intensified and they are all too often subject to draconian absence and performance management policies.

The Tories have hidden behind a smokescreen of the financial crash caused by the greed of the bankers and the diktats of Brussels to launch a vicious attack on the whole notion of public services. Be in no doubt, the continuing attack on local government funding is a political choice and not an economic necessity - it never was.

Councils serving the most

deprived areas of the country in the North, the Midlands and inner-city London have seen the biggest cuts, whilst the leafy Tory voting suburbs of the south east have been protected.

The cuts have been most savage where there is the greatest need for services, greater levels of poverty, higher numbers of children in care and greater reliance on public transport. So much for 'fairness', so much for 'one nation', so much for 'all in this together'.

Now, more than ever, we need to organise as a class and focus all our energies on ridding ourselves of this spiteful government regardless of who gets to live in No 10.

Jeremy Corbyn was elected Labour leader, on an explicitly anti-austerity ticket, gives us all the hope not just of defeating the Conservatives at the next general election – bring it on – but of also seeing policies implemented that advance the interest of the working class, including the reversal of the cuts to local government and restoring trade union rights.

Trades Councils and the People's Assembly are crucial in organising this fight back.

Keep the pressure on, get involved and let's win this fight!

Time off entitlement

TRADE UNION reps are entitled to paid time off from their job to get training and do their work as shop stewards, health and safety, or union learning reps, etc.

'Reasonable' paid time off can be given when you are officially recognised by the employer to represent union members in negotiations. Or helping union members with disciplinary or grievance procedures, including meetings to hear cases

Union learning reps have the right to paid time off to look at the learning or training needs of union members, or give information and advice.

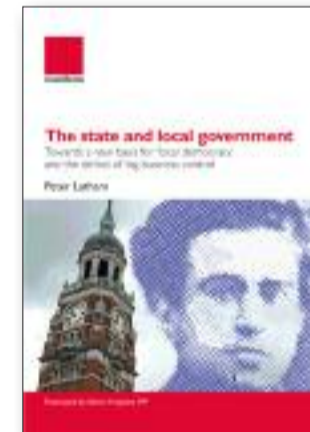
But reps are only allowed paid time off to attend union meetings that directly concern the employer's business. So, for instance, not that easy to get time off to attend a conference even if you are an elected delegate.

There isn't a legal definition of reasonable but the kind of work the business or organisation does, or the time already taken off might affect this.

Your employer's grievance procedures and employment contracts, handbook or intranet site might give details.

Sometimes called Facility Time it might mean that the worker gets a lot or even all time off to work on trade union tasks. It can also mean an employer allows a rep to carry out trade union duties and activities instead of their substantive job for a certain amount of time per week or month.

But both government and employers are trying hard to reduce the amount of time workers have off to do their job of representing you.



The state and local government
Towards a new basis for 'local democracy' and the defeat of big business control
by Peter Latham
Forward by Kelvin Hopkins MP

Reduced price for Unite members
£14.95 reduced to £9.95 (+£4.50 p&p)
500 fact and argument-packed pages

Beneath the rhetoric of devolution and empowerment real power is evacuated to the central state and displaced to corporate capital. Proceeding from the famous dictum of Marx; 'All science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided' Latham demonstrates the foundation – in the particular neo-liberal forms assumed by 'state monopoly capitalism' – of the local governance in Britain and other countries. Theoretically, the study is located firmly in a rigorous address of Marxist theories of the state and argues that "superstructural" readings, which exclude political economy, misrepresent Antonio Gramsci.

www.manifestopress.org.uk