

# WORKERS' fight



No 56 - Summer 2014  
price 30p  
<http://www.w-fight.org>  
[contact@w-fight.org](mailto:contact@w-fight.org)

ISSN 2040-400X

*"The emancipation of the working class will only be achieved by the working class itself" (Karl Marx)*

# YES, PAY NEEDS TO CATCH UP!

To follow on from the one-million strong public sector strike on the 10th of July, more initiatives are planned by the unions for September. And the TUC has announced a national demonstration in London on Saturday 18th October.

Of course it's high time that the working class - which has paid such a high price for the government's generosity towards the capitalists over the past six years - should make its voice heard. And high time that Cameron and his City friends experience the collective anger of working people.

All the more so, because no significant industrial action has been proposed by the unions since the last 24-hour public sector strike back in May 2012, despite the talk of "coordinated strikes" at every TUC conference! Yes, it's taken more than two years for union leaders to deliver the goods - or, at least, some of the goods, because this still falls far short of what's really needed.

Indeed, why is only part of the public sector being called out - and not the NHS, its largest battalion? And, more importantly, why is there no attempt to involve private sector workers? As if having a public or a private employer made any difference when it comes to the low wages and lousy conditions we have to face!

### **Common objectives for all...**

Local and central government unions are today putting forward a demand for a £1.00/hr wage increase. This could easily be generalised across the whole of the working class.

And since it's a demand across the board, rather than the usual demand for a percentage rise, it could mean that all workers would have the same interest in rallying together behind it, regardless of how much they already earn. It could be a first step towards reclaiming some of the income we've lost over the past years.



**The last national demo, in October 2012**

Of course, a £1.00/hr increase still falls short of providing the lowest-paid with a wage they can live on. So this demand would need to be coupled with a demand for a substantial increase in the minimum wage, to put an end to the poverty pay on which so many have to try to survive.

Nor would a £1.00/hr increase protect wages against inflation. So we'd need to demand that wages increase automatically in proportion to the real increase in the cost of living - not using a fiddled index like the CPI, but according to what we really pay at the supermarket and on our bills.

### **... For a common fight**

Despite their 3-year public sector pay freeze and a below-inflation increase last year, the ConDems still claim that they can't afford increases of more than 1% this year.

And this, while they award serial corporation tax cuts to companies, tens of billions of pounds to construction giants via Osborne's housing schemes, and spend £3bn on a new aircraft carrier!

Private bosses also tell workers that paying decent wages would bankrupt them. But if it did, then the capitalist class as a whole could be made to pay for its members' defaults.

After all, the economy is awash with unused cash. The proportion of company profits which is hoarded instead of being re-invested has never been so high. It is this surplus cash which is fuelling massive speculation on stock markets and in real estate.

So, whether the government has to be forced to stop its handouts to the capitalist class, in order to increase public sector workers' pay, or whether the capitalists have to be forced to use their unused profits to raise the pay of private sector workers - it is exactly the same problem we face, with the same solution.

We need to tilt the balance of forces in our favour. And surely the best way to do so is for public sector and private sector workers, across all sections and industries, to throw their full weight into the fight, together! ☐

## *It's the whole of society that must be "accountable"!*

One of the new bills included in this year's Queen's Speech is supposed to make the political system more "accountable".

Of course, the fact that this bill should be announced by a "queen" - in the 21st century(!) - is, in and of itself, an absurdity. What could be less "accountable" than a bunch of royals who live a parasitic existence on taxpayers' money - just because they happen to belong to a family which managed to hijack political power centuries ago?

One thing's for sure, though: this bill won't provide for kicking out the royals, once and for all, nor halting their luxurious life on public benefits. Even if that would have been a good starting point!

### **"Accountable"?** **To themselves maybe...**

The new bill will make it possible for 10% of registered voters in a constituency to force the re-election of their MP by signing a petition.

The ConDems are playing it very safe. Not many MPs are ever likely to come under this threat. Using last week's Newark by-election (with a high 53% turnout) as a measure, getting 10% of registered voters to sign a petition would mean getting 19% of all Newark voters to sign, almost 1 in 5!

Putting together such a large petition without polling stations, would be an impossible task for individuals and even groups. And, contrary to the usual hype, the internet and social networks wouldn't help at constituency level. Only the machineries of the big parties have the required resources for such an operation.

But there's even more hypocrisy in this so-called "accountability" bill. In fact, the right to recall an MP via a petition would apply only to MPs who are given jail sentences, or who have been accused by the Commons of engaging in "serious wrongdoing". What is "serious wrongdoing"? There are so many things that MPs consider "normal"! For instance, would breaking election promises be treated as "serious wrongdoing"? It certainly is in most voters' view. But it won't qualify - otherwise the whole House would be kicked out!

And yet, isn't this the most elementary "accountability"?

What's more, as a last protection against irate voters, the ConDems plan to ensure that the Commons retains a veto - meaning that even if a petition manages to gain the re-

including those of the jobless coming to the gates in search of a job. This would certainly reduce significantly the bosses' profits. But that's exactly the point: profits cannot co-exist with "accountability" in society!

On the scale of the economy as a



quired number of signatures, it's still likely to end up in the bin!

### **For workers' control!**

Of course, real accountability - not just for MPs but for all of those who have any responsibility in society - would be something quite different.

It would start at the point where all wealth is being created - in the workplaces. Making the system "accountable" to the workers who are producing this wealth would mean that they would exercise direct control over the numbers employed, the hours and shift patterns worked, the wages payed, etc. They would be able to make decisions as a function of their collective interests, based on all information available.

For instance, more likely than not, they would raise wages to a decent level for all, based on real needs, with regular increments based on real verifiable price increases, rather than massaged inflation indices. They would end unnecessary un-social hours and night work - all of which are just killers even for the most healthy. And they would share the work available, without loss of pay, between all available hands,

whole, "accountability" would mean an end to the commercial secrecy behind which the capitalists conceal their predatory parasitism on the economy. The working class would open companies' books. Then it would become clear what is socially useful - workers' labour - and what is not - that tiny layer of parasites who own everything, screw every bit of profit it can out of the working class and make a terrible mess out of the economy due to their greed.

Such "accountability" is not day-dreaming. It was imposed twice in history. First, in 1871, when the Parisian working class took over control of Paris, setting up their own "Commune". The second time was in 1917, when Russian workers formed elected councils or "soviets" in order to control society and reorganise it as a function of their interests.

Today, we are far better equipped than the Parisian and Russian workers were, to do this. For the working class to impose its control over society is a necessary first step in order to get rid of the profiteers, once and for all. And it is the only way forward!

[From the editorial of the Workers' Fight workplace bulletins 9 June 2014]

## Public sector striking back

The derisory 1% pay rise announced by the government in March this year meant yet another cut in real pay for hundreds of thousands of public sector workers. In fact, the government even managed to refuse this meagre increase to a significant section of the workforce! The unions representing public sector workers - Unison, GMB, NUT, Unite, PCS and Northern Ireland's NIPSA - responded with a ballot for strike action, which they won. On this basis, they called a 24hr strike for the 10th of July.

Of course, this strike will only force the government to back down if it is the first step in a series of collective actions bringing together an ever growing number of workers. Because such large-scale industrial action is the only language that this government will ever understand. □



Workers have lost a lot of ground that needs to be regained

## Crisis watch

### • Scrooge Britain

A recent study by the High Pay Centre think-tank illustrated how the economic crisis has devastated a whole section of the population in Britain.

The poorest 20% of British households are the most deprived across Western Europe: with an average annual income of £5,530, their closest contender is France, with £7,373. With

poverty comes all its effects on employment, mental and physical health, education and housing. No wonder the UK has the second highest mortality rate amongst children under five across the EU and rising suicide rates!

On the other hand, the same study shows how the economy is booming for the rich. While the top 20% of

households in Britain are the third richest in the EU, with an average annual income of £31,344, inner London is the richest area (by a long way) and the parasitical top 1% in the country pockets 13% of the total income. Maybe it's the EU that should kick out scrooge Britain, after all?

### • Letting down the disabled

Disabled people claiming benefits are facing huge delays in decisions because of a backlog of assessments. This affects both the main benefits, Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Atos, the company still carrying out most of the assessments for both benefits, has already been exposed for making too many assessments leading to

failed claims for ESA - more than half of which succeeded on appeal. Now, the assessment system for ESA is said to be close to collapse and Atos has decided to quit.

And meanwhile, decisions on PIP are similarly being held up for as much as 6 months by delays in assessment. Hardly anyone is appealing against a refusal of a claim, because legal aid is

no longer available for challenges, but also because so few decisions are being made.

Labour and the ConDems produced this crazy, bureaucratic system of punitive assessments to cut spending, by treating the poorest disabled as if they were "scroungers". These politicians are entirely responsible for this mess.

### • Royal scroungers

While the government has been pinching pennies from the poorest claimants, it splashed out the "princely" sum of £35.7m of tax payers' money last year, on the royal scroungers (although estimates produced by the Republic campaign group are nearly 10 times higher, at £300m). Prince Charles' globe-trotting alone cost £1m of public money.

This included: £255,000 on a chartered flight to Mandela's funeral (regular flights are too uncomfortable, apparently!), £434,000 on his trip to India and £123,000 on the royal train - the most expensive mode of transport per mile.

Then another £4.5m was spent by the taxpayer on refurbishing a 20-room apartment for "Kate and William" (how

about imposing some bedroom taxes on these folks?!). A royal spokesperson said the apartment is "like an ordinary family home", adding "I think you might feel at home in it". Considering we all paid for it, you might think we had a right to feel at home in it. And given the housing shortage, this might be a good place to start with solving it!

### • Fire hazard and water cannons

Earlier this year, London Mayor Boris Johnson invoked the need to make savings in order to close 12 fire stations, with the loss of 520 fire fighters jobs and more than a dozen fire engines.

Since then, however, he has

authorized the purchase of 3 water cannons from the German federal police - although the Met police still has to be given the powers to use them in London.

It seems that, in his cost-cutting

frenzy, Johnson is not too worried about fire hazards - except for one, the fire of angry Londoners taking to the streets in order to oppose his cuts - which they could well do one of these days!

## Their crisis *The real tax dodgers*

A report by a former HMRC advisor reveals the scale of tax fraud by companies in Britain. It estimates that the UK will have lost £47bn worth of tax in 2014 due to unrecorded sales. Around 10% of all sales is undeclared for tax purposes, either because companies fiddle their accounts or because they use some of the 400,000 "shadow companies"

### • *Ungrateful rich*

The share of income tax paid by the 1% richest taxpayers was 30% last year, compared to 21% in 2000 and 11% in 1979. Does this mean one should shed tears on the tax burden imposed on the wealthy? In fact, it means exactly the opposite.

Since the higher tax rate has gone down significantly over the period, it means, on the contrary, that the income

that are unregistered with HMRC.

The HMRC didn't even request corporation tax from 650,000 companies. Of those asked to submit, 270,000 didn't, and although they were penalised, few paid their fines. Only a tiny proportion of the corporation tax returns are checked so that there is virtually no risk involved in failing to declare some income. As

of this 1% has increased far more than that of the other 99%. Or, to put it another way, the rich have got much richer - which is no big surprise, of course, since every government has been doing its best to help them to do precisely that.

But, ironically, this is causing headaches to the Treasury. Because with a drastically reduced corporation tax, it is increasingly dependent on income tax

to the 500,000 companies which said they did not trade in the UK, they were not investigated.

But haven't we been told time and again that social budgets have to be cut due to the budget deficit? The poor applying for benefits get grilled and harassed. But for the capitalist class, the law is in their hands - and the state is in their pockets.

receipts and, therefore, on rich people's income tax. But, unlike PAYE taxpayers who have no control over their income tax, wealthy taxpayers can use tax avoidance tricks to reduce what they pay. And guess what? The rich are not even grateful to the Treasury for all its largesse!

### • *Business on a drip feed*

According to figures released by the Institute for Government thinktank and data analysts Spend Network, just 20 private companies are sharing out more than £10bn worth of British state contracts. The lion share goes to IT companies hired by departments and councils - with Hewlett-Packard in top position, with £1.7bn for both 2012 and 2013, followed by cap Gemini with "only" £1bn.

A number of construction companies and industrial services contractors are also milking the state's cash cow. One of them is the infamous Serco which, despite being under a fraud investigation for overcharging on electronic tagging and accused of serious misdeeds in immigrant detention centres, made a cool £365m in 2012, more than £445m in 2013 and is still operating many profitable contracts.

And these are not small companies. Some are among the FTSE 100, Britain's



**Serco has just lost its contract to run London's Docklands Light Railway**

largest. Proof that big business is "enjoying a lifestyle" on taxpayers' money

- but don't expect Duncan-Smith to complain about it...

### • *Profiteering by deception*

The big payday lender Wonga has to pay £2.6m compensation to customers in arrears who received repayment orders apparently signed by a solicitor - when, in fact, they had been, sent by Wonga itself. The Student Loans Company was also caught using a similar trick, sending letters in which it posed as a debt collection

agency. And now, it turns out that most of the big banks are at it, too. These companies did not even go very far to conceal their deception and so were easily caught out - Wonga, for instance, failed to conceal its own email address, while the Student Loans Company's non-existent front company shared the same

postal address!

For all these companies, posing as solicitors or debt collectors is just another method of intimidating indebted customers. In any case, this shows once again, if it was needed, that there's not that much difference between "respectable" finance and loan sharks!

## Towards another crisis?

The more official experts boast about a "recovery", the more the economy seems to be sliding into the same kind of swamp which caused the present crisis, back in 2008 - only much worse.

Governments all claim to have addressed the causes of the crisis. Regulations have been tightened to contain "irresponsible profiteering" - as if private profiteering could be anything but "irresponsible"! Likewise, banks are subjected to "stress tests" to ensure they won't go bust - but who can be sure they don't fiddle these tests, just as they fiddle their tax returns?

Anyway, the truth is that there's no mechanism to police the bankers. It's only after the event, once the damage has been done, that they may (possibly) be brought to account. Like British banks were caught over the mis-selling of PPI, the rigging of the Libor indices and, more recently, over Barclays' speculative "dark pool" in the US. But even if they have to pay big fines, their profits are so huge that this hardly affects them! So, why would they bother?

But there's worse looming in the background. The colossal amounts of fresh cash which were - and are still - injected by the rich countries' central banks, have created a speculative bubble of their own. Most of this cash went into the hands of a

### • A bubble waiting to burst

The attempts of Osborne's economic whiz-kids to "boost the economy" with the 'Help to Buy' loans for first-time home buyers is "boosting" house prices into outer space - in any case, quite out of reach of a population with steadily plunging incomes. Now the International Monetary Fund is saying this scheme is "contributing to financial risks" - in other words, a housing bubble.

In fact, average house prices

### • "Growth"? Yes, of... indebtedness!

Once again, official statisticians managed to wrangle an 0.8% "growth" out of the economy during the first quarter of this year - whatever that means. They claimed that the "driving force" of this "growth" had been household consumption. But if that is the case, how did the average disposable income of the same households fall by 0.2% over

"shadow banking system" of totally unregulated fund managers - sometimes acting on behalf of "regulated" banks. Collectively, these managers control an estimated £41,000 billion, equivalent to 29 times Britain's annual GDP, with only one objective in mind - to make the highest and quickest possible profit.

Over the past years, this floating capital has been roaming the planet. As the capitalists do not trust their own system, they only go for short-term investment. The result has already been a number of real estate speculative bubbles in so-called "emerging economies". In the rich countries, the same floating capital has been inflating share prices far more than what companies are worth and, like in Britain, pumping up the value of the national currency and the housing market to dangerous levels.

In other words, the ingredients

have increased by 11.8% over the past year alone, with London house prices increasing by an astronomical 26% over the same period (according to Nationwide). This is well over the 10.7% peak reached before 2007. So much so, that the Bank of England has warned of "bubbling property" being the "biggest risk" to financial stability.

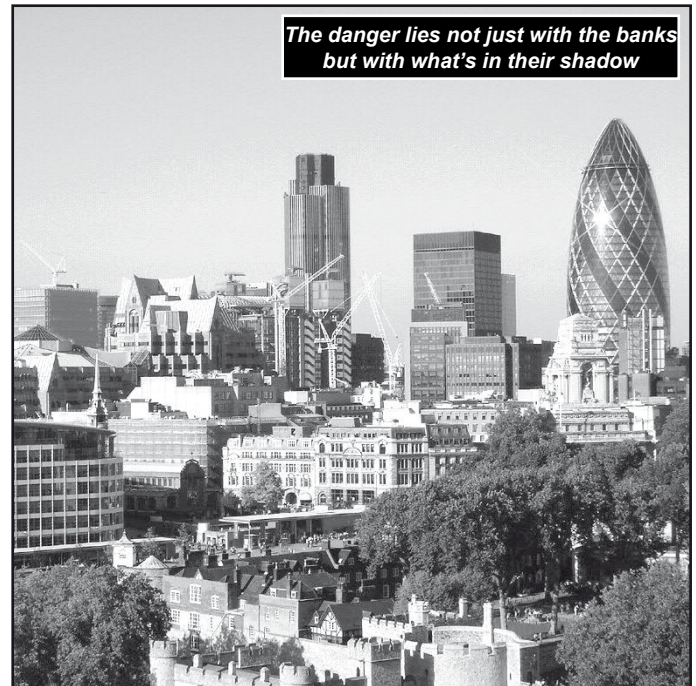
While refusing to publicly acknowledge any risk, Osborne has

the same period, according to their own figures?

Other official figures may give a hint. First there is the fact that households are saving less of their income - 4.9% compared with 6% last year, which is hardly an improvement. And second, that their indebtedness is rising. Ministers may well stress with great satisfaction

## Their crisis

which caused the 2008 crisis are now all in place again - only on an even larger scale and against the backdrop of a world economy which is much weaker than it was at the time. It's an explosion waiting to happen. But what makes this threat even more crazy is that it isn't due



to a lack of resources, but to an excess of private wealth! If there was ever an indictment of the capitalist system, this is surely it! □

ostensibly capped the size of mortgages relative to income - although there is no enforcement mechanism to stop reckless lending. But then, his main problem is not so much to contain the bubble, but to ensure that wealthy investors and real estate companies keep making big profits out of it, even if this means inflating it even more.

that household debt is "only" 135% of earnings, on average - compared with 165% in the run-up to the crisis. Maybe so, but the size of the household debt mountain tells another story: it is now almost 102% of GDP, which is higher than what it was before the crisis!

**Iraqi crisis**

**A time bomb primed by imperialism**

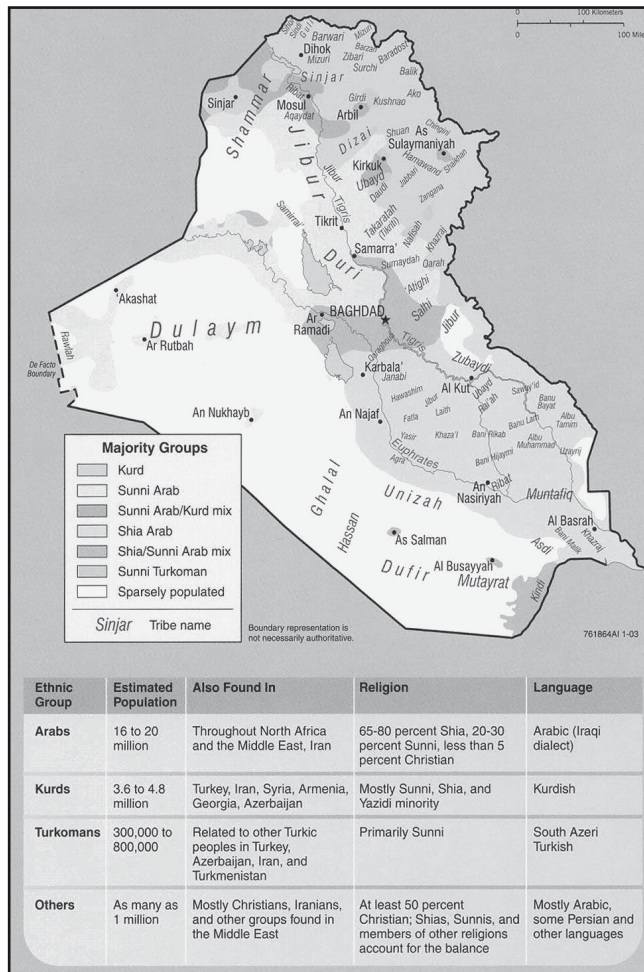
Iraq is descending into a catastrophic war.

Two months after it launched its offensive, the fundamentalist Sunni ISIS militia has declared an Islamic "caliphate" straddling the border between Iraq and Syria.

In the north east, the Kurdish leaders have expanded their territory to the oil-rich region of Kirkuk and they are now preparing to declare independence.

As to the rest of Iraq, it is still formally under the control of the Baghdad regime, but maybe not for long, given the on-going tensions within its motley alliance of corrupt politicians and ambitious militia leaders.

Today, Cameron is telling us that Britain is under threat due to what's happening in Iraq. But haven't we heard it all before? Wasn't that exactly what Blair said to justify the invasion of Iraq, on the basis of grossly fabricated "evidence"? And now the same Blair is coming back with more lies, claiming on TV that Iraq's present civil war has nothing to do with yesterday's



western occupation!  
But who has caused catastrophes

over the past 30 years, right across the Middle East? Who has caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people, while destroying the economies of entire countries? Who has been driving whole populations to despair, thereby pushing tens of thousands into the arms of Islamic fundamentalists?

Who, if not the western powers and their policy to enforce their imperialist order over the Middle East? And what for? To secure the monopoly of the region's oil resources and markets for the western companies and for them only, thereby securing a steady stream of dividends into the pockets of shareholders in the rich western countries!

Because this is all their imperialist order is really about. So, yes, there is a real threat today, but it is not what Cameron and Blair claim it is. The only real threat is that of a profit system whose controlling hands are already stained with the blood of millions. The world will never be safe as long as this system is allowed to survive! □

**• Carving out the Ottoman Empire**

Before World War I, a significant part of the Middle East was unified under the Ottoman Empire. This vast territory not only had access to a great trade corridor, opening the Asian continent, it was also rich in reserves of oil: a bounty which fuelled the greed of British and French capitalists. Thus, in 1916, in the midst of the war, a secret agreement was signed between the two countries

- now known as the Sykes-Picot agreement - whereby they shared out the spoils of the Ottoman Empire after the war.

At the San Remo conference, in 1920, it was decided that Britain would have control over a protectorate covering today's Iraq, Jordan, Israel and Egypt, while France got Syria and Lebanon. The borders of the Middle East states were drawn

with a ruler, artificially and regardless of the needs of the local populations. In fact, this new "world order" only meant one thing to the Middle Eastern populations: bloody repression. And it was only a matter of time before these artificial states began to break up. We may well be seeing history repeat itself today.

**• A history of bloody intervention**

In 1980, the imperialist powers used Saddam Hussein to attack Iran - as a punishment for the overthrow of the Shah, who had been, so far, their main pillar in the region. This ruined both countries. After the war, when Kuwait pressed Iraq to pay back its war loans, Saddam invaded Kuwait. To protect the interests of the oil majors, the West intervened. But after "freeing" Kuwait, they looked on while Saddam brutally suppressed

Shia and Kurdish uprisings. The decade-long embargo that followed, made Iraq into one of the region's poorest countries. Then, after the 2003 invasion, the US and British armies sought to tighten their stranglehold by using the Shia religious militias against the Sunni minority, thereby sparking off a protracted, sectarian, civil war - before leaving the country in the hands of a corrupt regime, dominated by the Shia

religious parties. The oppressive nature of the imperialist order means that it can only be maintained by force, against populations. But each time the imperialist powers try to restore their order, as they have done time and again in Iraq, they only manage to produce more destabilisation and more suffering - until such a time when the situation blows up in their hands again.

## Platinum mineworkers' victory

## South Africa

South Africa's platinum miners - among them those from the Marikana mine where 34 striking workers were shot dead in 2012 - went on strike again this year for a minimum starting wage of R12,500 or £677 per month. Once more they were told not to be so foolish, asking for a 100% increase like that!

Nevertheless, they weren't deterred and stayed on solid strike for 5 months, often under fierce repression by the police. In the end, the giant mining companies - Anglo-American, Lonmin and Impala caved in. And although workers have not won their demands in full, which by the end of the strike included "strike pay" - against the government's adage "no work, no pay!" they have certainly emerged victorious.

Wages will increase by R1,000 in year 1 and 2 and by R950 in year 3 - 30% each year! This would be unheard of here in Britain, even if much-needed! They also won increases in living allowances and what amounts to a "bonus" of R7,000 (£378) on returning to work (disguised strike pay!) to keep them going until pay day. Not bad at all! □



A meeting of Anglo-American strikers, this January

Lonmin Marikana strikers demonstrating in May



### • A cover-up in the making?

The publication of the Chilcot enquiry report, over the British invasion of Iraq, might have provided some explanations about the catastrophic situation which is facing the Iraqi population today. But this won't happen. The report, which was supposed to be published in 2009, has once again been delayed, this time

### • Syrian refugees unwelcome?

So far Britain has "welcomed" just 24 Syrian refugees fleeing the 3-year long civil war. This, despite the fact that the government encouraged anti-Assad forces to wage war and helped arm them. So Britain, along with the other western meddlers, bears responsibility for the war and thus for its refugees. But it isn't taking it.

Surrounding Middle Eastern countries bear the burden: Lebanon resettled 1.1m Syrians - now a quarter of

### • Blair looking after Number One

Since he left the government, Tony Blair has busied himself in the Middle East as representative the Quartet - i.e., the United Nations, the US, the EU and Russia. And despite his title of "peace envoy", he has been calling for military interventions in Syria and again in Iraq.

But, above all, Blair has been

for another year.

Apparently, this is because there is a dispute over what can and can't be published of the discussions between Bush and Blair in the run-up to the invasion. So, now, Chilcot has agreed that only summaries or extracts of these discussions will be published and that anyone

its population; another 1.5 million are in Turkey, Iraq and Jordan - all poorer countries than Britain, with very few resources to spare. Never mind. Cameron refused to participate in the UN-administered resettlement programme and has instead set up a "special relocation programme for vulnerable refugees" which will help out maybe "several hundred people over the next three years"!

In the meantime around 4,000

looking after his own interests, with earnings now estimated at £20m/year, hiring himself to advise anyone with money, from investment funds to dictators. In recent years, for instance, he had a £27m consultancy project for the Kuwaiti government and another for Mubadala, one of Abu Dhabi's sovereign

whose role might be put into question by the report, will have to be shown the relevant passages of its draft.

The odds are, therefore, that this report will turn out to be another white-wash. But is this any surprise? Has the British state ever admitted responsibility for its crimes? Of course not!

Syrians are trying to get asylum here. They will have no hope if they're treated like refugees from Iran, Afghanistan and Uganda, who are interned in deportation centres under "Detained Fast-Track Processes" which result in a 99% refusal rate! No, there's something very sick and inhuman happening to would-be immigrants, economic or political - and it's high time to expose it and stop it.

wealth funds, not to mention plans to advise the Egyptian government under former general Sisi. Who knows where Blair's so-called "peace envoy" job ends and where his business interest starts? He's probably forgotten himself.

## • Miliband shows his priorities

Ed Miliband called for a "welfare revolution" by announcing a policy to exclude thousands of youth from Jobseeker's Allowance if they do not have the skills employers require. Such young people will still be eligible for a payment equivalent to JSA for 16 year-olds (£57/week), but only if they undertake further education or training.

On the face of it, this seems like a sort of replacement for Labour's Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), whose scrapping by the ConDems sent further education students on to the streets in protest. Unlike EMA, however, this payment will be a welfare benefit, means-tested against the parents' income. This illustrates Miliband's

real starting point - i.e., the bosses' old excuse that school leavers do not come ready-made with the skills they need. But this policy is not designed to help the unemployed youth. It's all about showing that Labour is "listening to business" and, by the same token, to the reactionary prejudices of those for whom the unemployed are just "work-shy".

## • Cross-party scapegoating

An MP was recently quoted as saying that fewer EU migrants would mean Britain "can create a more balanced labour market and reduce future pressures on services and housing." As if it was migrant workers - and not the (British) bosses' job-cuts and the (British) government's spending cuts - that were responsible for unemployment and the lack of services

and housing!

This is the sort of anti-immigrant scapegoating one would expect from UKIP and Tory politicians. But this MP is actually John Denham, MP for Southampton and a member of Labour's front bench. Denham has been described as a 'milk-and-water Farrage'. But he is part of Miliband's fan-club and quite representative of

the party's line. Labour's talk about "responsible capitalism" is just another way to avoid blaming the capitalists themselves, choosing instead to blame a worse-off section of the working-class. In doing this, Labour, like the Tories and UKIP, is taking an old leaf out of the ruling class book - divide and rule - against the working class.

## • Gove, "British" bigot

Education secretary Michael Gove says that state schools must teach "British values" and has set out powers to close academies and free schools that are judged not to.

This follows the Ofsted investigation into 21 schools in Birmingham where fundamentalist Muslims were suspected of organising to gain a controlling interest over the governing bodies. Some of the schools

were then downgraded by Ofsted.

So what are these "British values"? For Gove, they include respect for British law, tolerance, and opposition to gender segregation. As his prime example of what he meant by tolerance, he said that girls wearing the burka "must not feel silenced in the classroom". So, for Gove, gender oppression is fine!

And wouldn't tolerance require,

on the contrary, that the education system be free of all forms of bigotry, religious or otherwise?

Except that this would also mean getting rid of Britain's antiquated established Church. Which would be about time. But expect the likes of "Gove" to hang on to it for as long as they can, in the name of "British values".

### Letter from Sussex

A couple of primary schools in Hailsham (East Sussex) have now been demoted as "failed" and are being taken over by a private company, Lilac Sky. This company has become a big success story, employing over 400 staff and having "worked with" over 200 schools.

Lilac Sky was founded by Trevor Averre-Beeson, who first made his name by "turning around" Islington Green School. This school had achieved notoriety in the late 1970s when its students sang "We don't need no education" on a Pink Floyd track. Its notoriety was renewed in 1997 when Tony Blair refused to send his children there and the school very conveniently failed its OFSTED test, leaving the door open for Averre-Beeson to make his mark.

Hailsham Primary school staff are not due to transfer to Lilac Sky until September. But, already, the company's evangelists are in place. Not only are they trying to sell their overpriced (lilac!) school uniforms, but laying down



the law about what staff wear (lilac!), where and when they work ....and what they teach. Strangely enough, though,

its curriculum doesn't seem to follow Gove's "British values" - maybe it'll be failed, after all...



## Workers of the world, unite!

True, the EU is a capitalist institution, which was always primarily designed to allow European companies to benefit from a single "domestic" market as large as that of their US rivals. But aren't the British political institutions primarily designed to suit the interests of British capitalists?

Yet if the working class has no

### • *The EU's irresistible attraction for the City*

Judging from past British governments' refusal to join the Eurozone, Cameron's endorsement of Farage's scaremongering about Europe and his proposed in-out referendum on the EU, the Eurosceptics are having a field day in Britain. But behind all these theatrics, what do their paymasters in the City want?

The City is the EU's largest financial centre and the EU is Britain's largest

stake in the EU institutions, it certainly has no interest in the restoration of boundaries that mount obstacles against its movement across Europe or against the free movement of goods. And closing national borders which, for the time being, are relatively open, or building up protectionist barriers, could only be a step backwards in the development

trading partner. So what if Britain did leave the EU? Its government would lose any influence on EU trade agreements; Britain would lose its attraction as a base for multinationals to trade with the EU; even its low taxes wouldn't be enough to make up for the disadvantage of being based outside the EU. In fact, this might even prompt some British companies to relocate to the Continent.

### • *Cameron's bad day*

Cameron really looked like an idiot after all his posturing against the election of Jean-Claude Juncker as head of the European Commission at the end of June. He made sure he was broadcast all over Europe telling everyone what "bad news" the former Luxembourg PM was, given his "federalist" views. But every other head of state - all 26 of them - thought

otherwise and Cameron was the only one to experience a "sad day" in the end. Only he and the Hungarian prime minister - who is also under pressure from his right - voted against Juncker.

Of course this was really just another anti-Europe charade for the benefit of Tory back-benchers and in the face of the internal Tory crisis and potential electoral

## European Union

of society as a whole.

On the contrary, the only future for the working class lies in its capacity to take over Europe - by taking it out of the hands of the capitalists - as a first step toward taking over the whole planet and freeing it from the profit system.

This is why many big companies - both British and foreign - made no secret of their opposition to Britain withdrawing from the EU, like those whose CEOs published an open letter to this effect in the newspapers earlier this year. And despite all their demagoguery to gain votes, ultimately, the politicians will probably do what they're told!

losses, due to Ukip's success. Cameron, like all other true or false anti-Europe politicians, will in the end have to bow to the will of the bourgeoisie which he and they represent: British financial and business capitalists. And these guys just follow the money - into Europe or wherever else.

## The crimes of the British state

In June, Gerry Conlon died of cancer, age 60. He had been one of the "Guildford Four" who were sentenced to life for the 1974 Guildford pub bombing.

The charges were based on forced confessions, which they later retracted, and evidence fabricated by the police. But it took 15 years before they were allowed to lodge an appeal, after which their convictions were squashed.

The scandal of the "Guildford Four" is remembered, thanks to Jim Sheridan's film, "In the name of the father", which is based on Gerry Conlon's autobiography. But there were two other such cases in the 1970s - the "Maguire Seven" and the "Birmingham Six" - which resulted in innocent people spending many years in jail before their trials were formally declared miscarriages of justice.

These scandals were not the product of a justice system gone mad, but of the hysteria consciously cultivated by the Labour government of the time, under Harold Wilson, to justify its military occupation of Northern Ireland.

Significantly, the judges and senior police officers who joined in this hysteria and those who were responsible for these fabrications, were never brought to account.

This would have meant putting the British state itself on trial!



Belfast occupied by the British army



Gerry Conlon's release after 14 years in jail

**Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)****• Class consciousness**

So the shop stewards' committee reminds us that there's a "conflict of interests" issue, if a steward wants to be a foreman. Sure. And maybe from time to time they should also remind some of the union full-time "partners" who have fish dinners with managers, about "conflicts of interest"... [Workers' Fight Ford Dagenham 25/6/14]

**• Not one good word for him**

How "good" it was to see the retiring boss, Nosey Parker's smarmy face in Ford Views. He said he's proud of (screwing us via) the union "partnership" and cutting Puma workers by 40% while increasing scores by 10%. It's even better to see the back of him. [Workers' Fight Ford Dagenham 25/6/14]

**• Like hell, we trust Ford**

Dagenham Motors, who for years has been ripping us off under the so-called "Privilege Scheme" while taking our custom for granted, is changing its name. In future, it will trade as "TrustFord". Yes, sure, that'll cut it! [Workers' Fight Ford Dagenham 25/6/14]

**• 2 is the minimum required**

Why is there inadequate medical cover at nights? We've complained about it many times before. If someone on Lion or Puma had a heart attack there's no way the single (low-paid, subcontracted) nurse on duty would get to him/her in 4 minutes - and if he/she did, who'd help with resuscitation while we waited for the ambulance? It's not an unlikely scenario, given the nature and hours of our work... [Workers' Fight Ford Dagenham 25/6/14]

**• We demand answers!**

It was already 3 months ago that we heard Ford would bring forward the outsourcing of MP&L (driving and logistics). And we had a long-list of questions, including: what special EVR is offered if we leave? If we stay, are we assured of getting off-line jobs? Will Group Leader rates be protected? Among others. We're still waiting for answers. When will we get them? [Workers' Fight Ford Dagenham 25/6/14]

**• Off line : the bottom line**

Yes, we're giving Ford notice - as of now - that MP&L workers aren't prepared to go back on the line. Getting an off-line job in MP&L was progress for us. To go back to the line amounts to demotion - and we're



just not having that. As for those already "demoted" they should be reinstated of fine! The best solution to all of this is for MP&L to remain in-house. Full stop. [Workers' Fight Ford Dagenham 25/6/14]

**• Never too late**

By the way, we heard LineSide (subcontractor in the new plant) is close to signing the deal to takeover MP&L. Maybe good news for the EssexCowgirl boss, but not for any of the rest of us. The low wages and screwball conditions just set the benchmark for the downward race. But it's not too late to stop this happening... [Workers' Fight Ford Dagenham 25/6/14]

**• Progress, not at Fords!**

In fact, managers have been holding meetings with the JWC each Friday to monitor MP&L mates applications for "other" jobs... They want to close down the department early. Their meetings don't even last 5 minutes. That says it all.

**Mount Pleasant mail centre (London)****• The big competition game**

Now we have Jul/Aug Voice, we again see how CWU leaders push the idea that we must defend "our" industry against competitors, supposedly to preserve the USO. But we don't own RM and what these guys pretend (or do they believe it?) is a real "say" in the so-called business, is just a con to screw even more out of us. [Workers' Fight Mount Pleasant 1/7/14]

**• The (new) way forward**

Yes, the flotation they agreed to, without the slightest intention of leading a fight against it, was never anything other than an invitation to competitors - and a way to run down (cheapen) the public service. If we want to defend our jobs and conditions, we have a huge fight on our hands - to take back RM! How else? [Workers' Fight Mount Pleasant 1/7/14]

**• Hooper hops in... and out?**

What's more, we see RM appointed Richard Hooper, the architect of privatisation, to advise on how to fight the consequences of privatisation! Yes, the same guy taken on by Mandelson to advise on selling off RM for Blair/Brown! And his updated report underpinned the ConDem's flotation.

Now Hooper's meant to "encourage"

Ofcom to review the letters delivery market (end-to-end competition)... What a joke! And once he's done, we'll probably see him popping up on the board of TNT to help them beat RM. That's how this system works, after all! [Workers' Fight Mount Pleasant 1/7/14]

**• Name the tune...**

Gee whiz... Billy Hayes wants "to teach the world to sing"... in perfect harmony with the bosses? We know where he wants to go with this, but maybe he even wants to skip the Alan Johnson MP stage, and go straight up to the Lords, or even maybe the angels, who do quite a lot of singing, apparently... [Workers' Fight Mount Pleasant 1/7/14]

**• ...we're singing the blues**

So what's this new thing: a magic blue cloth for Romec cleaners to carry around dusting everything they come across? Watch out everyone! You may get your nose polished! Whose idea is this? And do we have to sign for each one? [Workers' Fight Mount Pleasant 1/7/14]

**• Gremlins are needed**

As for the cleaning in the nursery, this isn't going very well. Of course a nursery has to be super-clean, but there just aren't enough cleaners to stretch that far. We suggest the nursery boss hires an army of micro-fibre blue smurfs to do the job.



The kids'll love it! [Workers' Fight Mount Pleasant 1/7/14]

**• Suarez awareness week**

Dog attacks on Postal workers are up 8%. The union had a dog awareness week, but when it was, we don't know. Anyway, we suggest it should be during the coming week, and since Suarez is now on the loose, we should all be careful, especially if we are Italian. And there are red cards for all owners of dogs more vicious than Luis. [Workers' Fight Mount Pleasant 1/7/14]

**• Mail dogs**

There was a good story about a postman who took his dog along with him on his round - which effectively kept the other dogs away and kept him bite-free. This is the only thing which we have heard of lately which actually works. So how about training dogs for all walks? Sort of like guide dogs? Maybe they could also be trained to pull small doggy-trolleys full of parcels? [Workers' Fight Mount Pleasant 1/7/14]

**King's Cross railway station (London)****• Big thieves want more**

You'd think ISS management had already taken everything including the biscuit. But no, they want even more. Now they've withheld the travel passes of ex-BR workers. And our old ones were due to expire this Monday.

What's the problem? Are they refusing to pay the organisation of Train Operating Companies or what? And they're still paying many of us short every week. How would they like it if we cut our work accordingly? [King's X Workers' Platform 2/7/14]

**• Who needs training?**

Those of us working for East Coast on the station and in the Travel Centre have to go on "Customer Service Training". It's compulsory and not just for new recruits. After having worked here for donkey's years, East Coast wants to teach us all how to suck eggs. We have no problem wasting time sitting in an office, listening to some nonsense, but not while our mates are left short of hands

- travel centre workers aren't covered during these sessions! [King's X Workers' Platform 4/6/14]

**• Shush, bosses don't know**

Also, we wondered what kind of deal managers got over this? We heard the training is done by a private contractor for a fee of £120+VAT pp. They could have given us that money and in exchange we would have let them into a secret: "Customer Service" is what we do every day... [King's X Workers' Platform 4/6/14]

**• The full Monty**

Passengers could be in for a free show... We'll soon be taking off our too-heavy East Coast uniforms bit by bit as the day gets hotter and hotter. If anyone objects, we can ask them to sign our petition for a light and breezy summer design... [King's X Workers' Platform 18/6/14]

**• Bad track record required**

National Express dropped East Coast (which the government took back), rather



than pay its franchise commitment, but it was nevertheless allowed to keep its other franchises. And now, amazingly, its C2C franchise is renewed, no problem! [King's X Workers' Platform 2/7/14]

**• Wrong kind of passengers?**

"Not-for-profit" Network Rail announced profits of over £1bn for the last year. They say it all goes back into the railway - the bit that doesn't end up in the directors' pockets, that is. Why should directors get anything when punctuality is getting worse and the target was missed by miles? 1 in 10 trains ran late but NR had a great excuse. They blamed it on "too many passengers".

**BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)****• A mind of its own...**

Among the host of electrical problems that are delaying the new Mini, one stands out. The onboard computer is supposed to contact the dealership and arrange the car's service without the owner having to raise a finger, using an "onboard speaker" to dial the dealership and arrange a suitable date... in theory! One workmate in the WiP was startled by the magnified sound of a dialling tone. When the dealership answered, the Mini announced that its service was due. As the dealership pointed out, how could it be when the car still hadn't been delivered to its purchaser!? The right to have holidays with our kids [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 4/6/14]

**• Which year?**

Slowly and in small numbers, some Gi (agency) workers are at last getting new-style (substandard) BMW contracts after the lengthy recruitment process. Meanwhile others go through preliminaries. The local MP hailing a "good Christmas present for agency workers" looks a bad joke now - or did he mean Xmas 2014? At this rate BMW can hardly have issued 700 contracts by then! [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 2/7/14]

**• The blame game**

Last week a big budget meeting was used by BMW to instruct area managers to spread the word down the line that "we" are "way over budget" owing to production problems. Does that mean that we are to blame for the current mess? No, of

course not. But don't expect them to admit that. [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 18/6/14]

**• Wrong person in the dock**

Already process leaders and lead associate have been ordered to increase the discipline rate, leading to a spate of trumped-up charges. In APU 2 a new start was ordered at 2.50pm to go and get some safety boots. Given his lack of knowledge of the plant, it was no surprise that he got lost. He got to the shop 2 minutes after it closed; returning, he took another wrong turn and the whole errand took him 22 minutes. But who sent him so late? Yes, the PL (local manager) who then tried to get rid of him! [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 18/6/14]

**• BMW shot itself in the foot**

In APU 1 another new start was seen with a mobile phone in his hand. In fact he was checking the time, hoping to hold out until the break before he went to the WC as he didn't want to bother the LA. No such consideration from BMW who called him a liar. When this mate found out that he'd be disciplined regardless, he announced, "This will be my last day at BMW where workers are treated like slaves by idiots." [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 18/6/14]

**• Their cock-up, their loss**

One new start in buy-off was to be disciplined in effect for not being fast enough! He only escaped because he complained that he'd only had two days training (in fact less as he'd helped out a workmate for half a day.) Gi agreed to speak to someone who spoke up on his behalf. It's all down to BMW's decision to turn the screw on us,



to claw back some of the losses from their own mismanagement. They deserve a big collective NO from us. [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 18/6/14]

**• They'll know when to stop**

BMW may be getting too greedy for its own good. As fork-lift driving can't be learnt in half a day, many of the new recruits are experienced drivers. So to be offered agency jobs with R&H at £7 per hour and be kept on that wage for months on end is taking the p\*\*s. Since the whole factory will go belly-up if forklift drivers stop work, what if we decide this was a good moment to watch that happen? [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 18/6/14]

**• Rotate or vacate**

According to the Collective Agreement we should all be rotating our jobs. It's meant to slow down repetitive strain injury, prevent boredom and allow a worker on an easier job to help others on harder jobs. This being the case, how come rotation hardly exists in the cockpit area, which is meant to be specially designed for older workers? More evidence that in reality, this "age friendly" line is just another sham? [Workers' Fight BMW Oxford 18/6/14]

## 2014 World Cup **Brazil: The other side of FIFA**



Rio's Maracana Stadium: between two favelas

The 2014 World Cup in Brazil tells the same story as the 2008 Olympics in China or the 2010 World Cup in South Africa: glittering new stadiums standing in the middle of massive slums and dilapidated infrastructure.

An estimated £8bn was spent on the 2014 World Cup - equivalent to 60% of the education budget or 30% of the health budget. Meanwhile, in most cities, large sections of the population live in "favelas" - informal settlements with neither sanitation, nor electricity, nor even proper streets. In Rio de Janeiro, the 2nd largest city, 22% of the population lives in these favelas!



June 2014: Rio's tube workers on strike

### • Who says politics and sport don't mix?

If you missed Al-Jazeera's re-screening, just before this year's World Cup, of French ex-footballer Eric Cantona's 5-part documentary series called "Football Rebels", you can always watch it again on their website. Because it's well worth it! It's the story of 5 footballers who made courageous political stands.

First, Didier Drogba who helped Ivory Coast qualify for the 2006 World

### • Goal-den Profits

When Uruguay ended England's World Cup dreams, businesses could hardly have been more distraught - although they couldn't care less about the game itself.

According to VoucherCodes.co.uk, the point is that every goal scored by England was estimated to be worth £200m in sales of liquor, foodstuffs,

Cup and went on to oppose Ivory Coast President Gbagbo's bloody civil war. Next, Rachid Mekhloufi who, back in 1958 as a star striker for the French team of St Etienne, left to join the fight for Algerian independence against France. Third, is former Yugoslav player Predrag Pasic who started a "multi-ethnic" football school in Sarajevo in the middle of the war. Then comes Chilean Carlos Cazaly, who in 1973 stood up to

sportswear as well as in revenue from advertising, betting, etc. While things were still good, John Lewis, Waitrose, betting and advertising agencies and pubs were all booming. JD Sports even went so far as to hide its profits from the City for fear of "misleading investors".

If England had made it into the group

the Pinochet regime and whose mother was brutally tortured as a result. Finally there is the Brazilian Socrates, the "midfield maestro" who "turned every Corinthians' match into a political meeting for democracy" against Brazil's dictatorship in the 1980s.

We could do with that kind of stuff today! And maybe it would improve the England team's headwork, as well as their footwork.

stages, the website estimated that total revenue could have gone above £1bn. But when Suarez clinched it in the 85th minute, sales dropped, profits slumped and retailers found themselves stuck with enormous stocks.

With their overoptimistic anticipation of huge profits, businesses struck an own goal...

In addition to this monthly paper, we publish fortnightly bulletins in several large workplaces in the South East, a quarterly journal, "Class Struggle" and the "Internationalist Communist Forums" - a series of pamphlets on topical issues.

If you wish to find out more about our ideas, activities and publications, contact the Workers' Fight activist who sold you this issue of our paper, or write to us either by e-mail, at [contact@w-fight.org](mailto:contact@w-fight.org), or by postal mail at:

BM Workers' Fight - LONDON WC1N 3XX.