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STILL A WORLD TO WIN

JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY



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IF YOU WANT TO REBUILD BRITAIN, READ ON

WORKERS

Make capitalism history

ONCE-LARGE and once-vibrant unions seem to want to crawl into a hole. The Iron & Steel Trades Confederation, with close to 300,000 members 30 years ago, now has a tenth of that number and has, in shame perhaps, now re-named itself "Community". Surely a matter for the Trades Descriptions Act.

Now that there are no communities left based on iron and steel manufacture, let's call ourselves Community. Still, at least Community is a name. Britain's largest union, the coming together of T&G with Amicus, has only just got one, Unite. A shop steward in the workshops at the London Ambulance Service now calls his union, once the Amalgamated Engineering Union, Tragicus. Perhaps it will stick.

Nothing wrong with merger and industry-wide re-organisation; Unison is the product of just such. But don't, as one of the general secretaries of Tragicus did, herald the new union as "the precursor of world-wide trade union organisation".

Instead of trying to re-invent the International Workers of the World, concentrate on doing what you can do; defend and extend workplace organisation, get more money in workers' pockets and hang on to jobs for the future.

Don't go flouncing off to Brussels, where you can do none of these things, to rent an

office and a lobbying firm to beg for you.

But that's part of our problem. Instead of doing what can be done we try to do what can't. So rather than ensure that everyone where you work is a union member, let's change the climate of planet Earth. Instead of ensuring that employers don't import labour to reduce wages, let's solve world poverty.

Many millions declare themselves to be, even take part in activities which are, anti-capitalist. But what do they think capitalism is? Industry, threatening the planet's future through global warming? The use of animals in experiments? Many think it's all these things.

It's none of them. Capitalism is the extraction of surplus value from the labour power of workers to turn into profit for those who own the means to employ workers.

These owners we call capitalists and their profit-extraction system is called capitalism. Until and unless we destroy that system and uproot those people from ownership and therefore power we will have all the negative effects many millions of those who consider themselves anti-capitalist deplore.

If you want to make poverty history you'll have to make capitalism history.

This article is taken from a speech at the CPBML's May Day rally in London.

Cover picture of 2007 London May Day march by Andrew Wiard/www.reportphotos.com



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Call to defend Cuba

THERE IS WIDESPREAD admiration and support in Britain for Cuba. There may need to be a readiness to translate that support into something more tangible soon, a speaker at the CPBML's May Day rally in London revealed. "It's not widely known in Britain, but thanks to our links with the Cuban Communist Party it is known to us, that the north Americans have established for Cuba all the things they established for Iraq before they invaded that sovereign country."

A colonial administrator (for Iraq Paul Bremer, for Cuba Caleb McCarry), American legislation providing for a future American occupation of Cuba, and the huge financial resources ploughed into pro-American stooges are running at \$80 million so far.

And there are secret military preparations to invade Cuba, a sovereign member of the UN. They have even got as far as determining what exactly they'll do when they've defeated the Cubans, as they cockily believe they will.

"They'll privatise everything in Cuba," the speaker said. "That's a polite way of saying that they'll give everything back to the Yanks, mafia and other criminals the Cubans took it from during the Revolution. This would leave millions homeless, and would destroy the most successful healthcare and education systems ever developed within one generation."

Then the repression would start. Anyone supporting the Party, trade unions or any other mass organisation such as women's and youth organisations – that is, pretty much everyone in Cuba – would be subject to what the US themselves call repressive measures. Bush says the list will be very long.

"So when the Yanks try to make this happen – and they are only waiting for Fidel to die to do that," said the speaker, "We must be on the streets as will be millions across the world, to support the millions who will be on the streets in Havana and Santiago, in Cienfeugos and Pinar del Rio." He added, though, that if it comes to that we might be too late.

It was the refusal of British, and other workers across the world, to support the Soviet Union that led to it eventually being crushed in a vice. Too many of us were concerned at what our enemies didn't like about the USSR rather than realise what it represented – workers running a country. "We mustn't let such squeamishness affect us over Cuba," he said, adding that, "The best way to support Cuba is to act here, in Britain."

The speaker called on workers to turn against the US, and all here who support its crusade against Cuba, including those in the Labour Party like Ian McCartney who recently claimed that there were 10,000 political prisoners in Cuba. "Even the Yanks only claim there are 40!" he said.

NHS RCN to ballot on pay action

THE COUNCIL of the Royal College of Nursing has agreed to conduct an indicative ballot of its NHS members to decide if they wish to take industrial action over this year's pay offer of 1.9 per cent. The indicative poll will ask members if they want a second ballot on industrial action and what type of action they would be prepared to take. It is the second ballot that will decide if industrial action is taken.

Dr Peter Carter, RCN General Secretary, said, "This is an historic decision by Council which has not been arrived at lightly. The very fact we are holding a ballot is a powerful political statement that the Government must take notice of. We need to make sure that Government puts the cost of our pay offer into perspective. It will only cost around £60 million to pay nurses the difference between a staged and unstaged award. This is not a great deal when you consider that recent figures show the NHS spends half a billion on management consultants."

EU ENLARGEMENT Migration grows

A SURVEY from the Office of National Statistics has revealed a "higher than estimated" number of migrants coming to Britain from new EU member states. In the first three months of 2007 around 150,000 Romanians and Bulgarians arrived at British ports and airports. This calculation does not include people arriving by coaches, cars or trains and is likely to be an underestimate.

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

EUOTRASH

The latest from Brussels

New broom, same dirt

NEWLY ELECTED French president Nicolas Sarkozy was the first European Union leader to call for a 'mini treaty' to be introduced without a referendum. He wants a bigger EU budget, direct EU taxes and a directly elected EU President. He wants to remove more vetoes and new powers for the EU over migration, energy and health. He said, "... health, one of the major issues of this new century, [should] become a Community field of action."

When Sarkozy first suggested the "mini treaty" idea, he argued it should be followed by another treaty going further. He said that the mini treaty would cover 'the most urgent priorities', "But in the longer term, root-and-branch reforms remain essential." Other countries are taking up that lead, hoping for an outline agreement at the EU summit in June, followed by a revival of the old treaty terms later this year.

Propaganda push

THE EU is spending £7 million on 245 extra press officers to sell its rejected constitution to the public across Europe, including Britain.

Beware the nearly-departed

GERMAN Chancellor Merkel and nearly-departed Blair are planning to scrap national vetoes over EU foreign and policing policies. They hope to defeat British opposition to handing over sovereignty by appealing to public fears over global warming and terrorism.

Environmental crimes

THE EUROPEAN COURT of Justice recently ruled that the EU could define "environmental crimes" by a majority vote. The Commission is using this judgment to give itself powers to propose criminal laws in every area, including powers to help fulfil any "fundamental objective of the Union".

Education grab

A PUSH to take control of universities is being made by the EU Commission, through creating a higher education "euro-zone". Sally Hunt, General Secretary of the University and College Union, says that the EU's proposals for greater 'harmonisation' would threaten UK masters degrees and 4-year integrated masters courses.



On strike, and on the London May Day march: PCS workers continue their fight.

Photo: Andrew Wiard/www.reportphotos.com

Civil service strikes continue

CIVIL SERVANTS continue with their campaign to protect pay and public services in the face of government determination to cut costs. The union of Public & Commercial Services (PCS) has voted to carry on with its challenge to the government, and to work with other unions, such as Unison.

This year PCS held two successful one-day strikes on 31 January and 1 May, linked to limited overtime bans and publicity activity. The campaign started in response to Chancellor Gordon Brown's intention to cut central government expenditure in real terms. He wants to reduce the number of jobs significantly and hold wage rises well below inflation. These plans cover a six-year period; it's not a short-term reaction.

So far the Cabinet Office has tried to ignore the action, hoping that the union campaign will run out of energy. There are many different pay negotiations, and many different closure plans, making a single campaign hard to run. Even so the PCS conference this May endorsed the strategy. Some sections doubted that this was well enough focused, but the majority of delegates believed they had to continue with industrial action.

Local fights continue as well. Last month coastguards voted for action over low pay. The Maritime & Coastguard Agency offered rises of 1 per cent to 2.5 per cent; this is less than inflation and ignores pay comparison with other emergency workers. PCS members in the agency voted 4 to 1 in favour of withdrawing from non-emergency work.

UNIONS

Attracting employers?

HAVING FAILED to attract workers to trade unions, the TUC is now trying to attract employers!

In a new leaflet entitled AN EMPLOYERS' INTRODUCTION TO TRADE UNIONS, the TUC highlights the benefits to employers of their employees becoming union members. It cites four things that unions do that employers should be happy with. Do these include defending workers' interests by lodging pay claims to wrench back some of

the surplus value stolen from their labour power by those self-same employers?

Unfortunately not. The four things the TUC wants to use to sell unions to employers are greening the workplace, education and training, health & safety and informing and consulting workers.

Great. We can be consulted in a healthy green workplace where we've been well trained. But we can't fight the employers for wages, jobs or control of the workplace. Still, you can't really blame the TUC. It is the passivity from workers throughout Britain that has brought about this parlous state of affairs.

EDUCATION**Yanks move in**

US EDUCATION company Edison Schools is to be paid £1 million to take over the management of a north London comprehensive, Salisbury School in Enfield. Like other big private US operators, Edison has been waiting to get its hands on British state schools. Until now it has only provided consultancies here.

The management team will be headed by the controversial former head and two deputies from Islington Green school, presumably on fat salaries. Salisbury is not a "failing" school, but governors there decided to spend an additional million of

public money on private managers for their school, rather than on improving resources or employing more teachers.

The move is strongly supported by Andrew Adonis, old chum of Blair who was made a lord in order to enable him to become an education minister without the tiresome need to be elected. He has had meetings with Edison executives on a number of occasions, and has declared he will visit the school soon.

Adonis has no educational background whatsoever, yet he has become the most powerful voice on education in government, seeing off successive education secretaries while pushing for privatisation of schools, changes to narrow the curriculum, and the academies programme.

School meals threatened

LONDON BOROUGH Waltham Forest is planning to be the first council in Britain to close its central school meals service. If this goes ahead, many local schools will stop providing children with a proper lunch, replacing them with sandwiches.

Deputy leader Keith Rayner claimed that the council was committed to "supporting the provision of healthy, affordable school meals." This doublespeak comes from the same council which is to "develop its cultural services" by severely reducing opening hours at local museum Vestry House and at the world-famous William Morris Gallery, and sacking long-standing expert curators.

Labour-run Waltham Forest has a large population of children from low-income and unemployed families, many of whom arrive at school without breakfast. The government's Every Child Matters agenda to improve children's health and reduce child obesity is a sham. Packed lunch boxes packed with crisps and chocolate are unlikely to help.

Dinner ladies, teachers and parents are campaigning for school lunches. So many turned up at a town hall meeting that the council had to open a larger room. Unison and NUT members are planning a "noisy protest" at the next council meeting, with pots and pans, spoons and lids.

Noreen Ferrari, cook supervisor at Warwick Boys School, said that "it would be alarming for this borough if the school meals service is broken up" after the recent report showing that it is the second worst area of the country for children to live in.

METRIFICATION**Victory over Brussels**

BRITAIN WILL be "allowed" to keep pounds, ounces, feet and inches, after EU Industry Commissioner Gunther Verheugen dramatically announced he would drop plans to enforce metrification by 2009.

Faced with a persistent campaign by the Metric Martyrs, set up when five market traders were convicted in 2000 for displaying prices in imperial measures, the EU has been made to back down.

Sunderland greengrocer Steve Thoburn, convicted of breaking EU law (enforced zealously by Labour), led the fight with fishmonger Neil Herron. Thoburn died of a heart attack aged 39 in 2004, days after his

appeal was rejected.

Herron called the u-turn "a monumental victory for people power... We stood toe to toe with the EU and won... and [have] shown others that you can stop the tide of EU legislation. Steve Thoburn was the man who drew the line in the sand... The public had never wanted or asked for imperial measures to be abolished and no political party had ever put it in their manifesto that they intended to criminalise the use of imperial measures."

No doubt EU bosses are keen to brush up their image at a time when they are planning to force through the rejected Constitution without a vote. Nevertheless it was the traders' courage and refusal to give way which finally forced the Commission's hand.

WHAT'S ON**Coming soon****JULY**

Friday 13 July to Sunday 15 April, Tolpuddle, Dorset.

Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival

The annual rally and festival kicks off with a ceilidh on the Friday and continues through the weekend, culminating in the march through the village. Not all details are finalised, but for information check www.tuc.org.uk/the_tuc/tuc-12942-f0.cfm

NURSING**Student training slashed**

ALONGSIDE the chaos in doctor training arrangements, the government has generated an equally damaging crisis in nurse education and the allied health professions. Thousands of newly qualified nurses have not been employed, though workloads are the same or higher. The same pattern has been seen across the allied health professions, with newly qualified physiotherapists, occupational therapists and others not gaining employment.

This short term crisis management is now having a profound effect on education of future professionals as training budgets are being raided to pay off deficits. After a period of expansion in student nurse numbers to meet shortages, there is now a reduction of commissions for training places. The scale of these reductions has not been officially acknowledged by the Department of Health but the true extent is now being revealed by the universities that employ the nursing lecturers and which are making redundancies.

Examples include the University of East Anglia, where a third of nurse lecturers could lose their jobs as a result of 28 per cent fewer students being commissioned. Oxford Brookes University says 13 nursing lecturer posts will be "lost" by 2008. The University of Southampton has reported a 14 per cent cut in student numbers this year, with a further 9 per cent reduction for next year. The University of the West of England has cut the number of nursing students and frozen ten nurse lecturer posts.

In denying jobs to newly qualified students, the government is wasting three years of spending. In making nurse lecturers redundant it is abandoning years of skills development and decades of experience.

Unemployed newly qualified nurses, overworked nurses in clinical practice and nursing lecturers have a common cause with other professions across the NHS. Action is needed across the service.

NEWS ANALYSIS

The EU's attack on Russia

THE EUROPEAN Union's stance at its recent summit with Russia has increased international tensions and the danger of war. It seems most likely that, in a break with previous practice, no joint declaration will be issued at the end of the summit, because of the extent of the disagreements.

On the first day of the summit, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso warned Russia that any problems it has with an individual EU state are problems with the whole EU bloc. The EU went on to refuse to begin the long-delayed talks on a new strategic partnership agreement between the EU and Russia, because Poland, supported by Lithuania, imposed a veto on any such accord. The EU supported the Polish veto – Barroso said, “The Polish problem is a European problem. The Lithuanian and Estonian problems are also EU problems.”

The “Estonian problem” is a reference to Estonia's removal in April of the World War II monument in central Tallinn celebrating the heroism of the Red Army soldiers who freed Estonia from Nazi occupation. The removal provoked widespread and angry demonstrations in Estonia, and Estonian police responded viciously, killing one demonstrator and injuring more than 160. The EU has quite unnecessarily interfered in this matter, which can only be resolved by bilateral negotiations between Russia and Estonia. But the EU's intervention has severely worsened the relations between the EU and Russia.

Serbian flashpoint

Widening the rift, the EU and the USA are jointly sponsoring a UN Security Council resolution proposing Kosovo's secession from Serbia. Russia is concerned for the safety of Kosovo's Serb minority, and says it will not support any deal on Kosovo's status that the Serbian government opposes. Russia wants more talks between Serbian and Kosovan leaders, and more discussions in the UN Security Council.

So, as Russia's ambassador to the UN said on 12 May, Russia is increasingly likely to veto the EU-US resolution. The EU finds this most upsetting, and EU officials threaten that a Russian veto would mark a watershed in EU-Russian relations.

But the EU and the USA are out of order on this matter. As a general rule, the UN and its member states oppose claims for unilateral secession. International law forbids the unilateral redrawing of boundaries by secession or territorial seizure and it outlaws the recognition of provinces unilaterally declaring independence against the wishes of the federal authorities. There are good reasons for this: empires have always practised divide and rule, and, as the EU knows full well, there is no better way to divide people than to split them into separate statelets.

So, contrary to the official myth, the EU is not some neutral, peace-loving, third force. It lines up with the USA; it is intimately linked with NATO. On every one of the world's trouble-spots, it backs the US position. Now the EU, with US support, is trying to re-ignite old antagonisms against Russia; it is adding grist to the warmongers' mill.

There is an industrial logic to the m but is that what is driving it?

It takes more than unity

ON 1 MAY 2007 – six years after the merger of the AEU and MSF – the union Amicus teamed up with the Transport & General Workers' Union to create Britain's biggest union, Unite, with two million members. The new rulebook will be drawn up by November 2008, and may outlaw such agreements as binding arbitration and no-strike deals. Had the GMB remained in the frame as originally envisaged, the union would be even bigger. Voting for the merger was on a 27 per cent turnout from each of the two unions – in other words, 73 per cent didn't bother to vote at all. Consultation among TGWU members revealed that they wanted a union that was “not just bigger but better”. Members of both unions were clearly not convinced that this would be the case.

The new union's assets are valued at £200 million. This includes £150 million per annum from membership subscriptions, to be spent, it is claimed, “at the sharp end, supporting the members”. As an immediate priority, £7.5 million is said to have been earmarked for organising and recruitment, rising after three years to £15 million. Although the AEU/MSF merger that created Amicus was intended to boost recruitment, the unions admit that this has not been effective so far. So the strategy seems to be – carry on merging until the refusal of employers to recognise unions has been overcome.

Unite will be based on ten regions – seven in England, plus Scotland, Ireland and Wales. Industrial sectors will be based on the existing 14 TGWU trade groups and Amicus sectors, with autonomy over the conduct of their own business and flexibility for autonomous professional bodies within the sectors. The biennial conferences established in Amicus for each sector will apply to the new union, alternating with a biennial policy conference of the whole union. The emphasis is on lay democracy, accountability of the NEC and full-time officials, with a preference for robust workplace branch organisation.

Strengths and weaknesses

As with the AEU/MSF merger, there are both strengths and weaknesses in amalgamation. There is an industrial logic to unions that campaign and bargain together pooling their energies and resources against the rampant capitalism of the multinational companies. Merger within one country also puts a stop to unnecessary duplication and to competition for membership between the unions involved. On the other hand, when it is a handful of trade union leaders rather than the members driving a merger, the likelihood is that the motives are misguided and over-ambitious. This appears to be

Bring out your badges

Do you have any old labour movement and political badges in odd containers and drawers? Put them to good use and send them to the CPBML – we'll sell them at labour movement events during the year to raise money for the Party. Please send them to:

Badges
78 Seymour Avenue
London N17 9EB

merger of the Transport and General Workers Union and Amicus,

y to create strength



Photo: Andrew Wiard/www.reportphotos.com

Farewell T&G...it will merge with Amicus, but three-quarters of the membership didn't even bother to vote on the merger. Picture shows cleaners employed in Parliament picketing for decent pay.

the case with this latest merger. Tony Woodley of the TGWU and Derek Simpson of Amicus gave the game away when they thanked members for their support for the "NEC's position". Shouldn't it be the other way round?

The truth is that a merger strategy has been developed based on a belief in the powerlessness of ordinary members. There are some shadowy figures from the TUC and ETUC behind this, including former TUC general secretary John Monks, who has never made a secret of his desire to reduce the number of British trade unions in order to create "a new model of

a European trade union".

Six years ago this was tied in with TUC commitment to the euro, but ordinary members scuppered that idea, proving that they are not so powerless after all. The EU regionalisation of Britain is however still reflected in the union structure, and union resources are to be used for organising "in the UK and Ireland – and mergers abroad".

Expansionist thoughts

Both Amicus and the TGWU traditionally organise throughout Ireland, and a merger with the German steel union IG

Metall is never far from the expansionist thoughts of the leadership.

Added to this, on 18 April 2007 in Ottawa – before formal merger and without consulting members in Britain – Amicus, the TGWU, and the Pittsburgh-based United Steelworkers (USW) announced plans to create the first Trans-Atlantic "global super union" representing 3.4 million workers in the US, Canada, UK and Ireland, an agreement which follows a secretive Strategic Alliance signed

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between Amicus and the USW two years ago. In December 2006, Amicus said it had signed agreements with the USW, the US-based International Association of Machinists and IG Metall that are aimed at an eventual merger – again, most union members were unaware of this inexorable drive to go global.

In a joint statement, the three unions say: “We envision building a true global union by expanding our commitments to include other unions across the globe”. You could be forgiven for thinking this was taking the expression “the world of work” just a little too literally.

On the face of it, these mergers might appear to represent a necessary show of international solidarity. The reality is, however, that for all the talk of putting the union in the hands of the members, the “senior officers” propelling this forward have no faith in the ability of members to conduct a struggle against its own capitalist class in the place where they live and work, let alone cooperate with fellow workers abroad.

So Tony Woodley says: “Winning for members...is no longer a game that is solely played out at local and national levels.” [Note – under the “New Union

‘There are some serious questions to be raised in all of this cosy up to the rest of the world...’

Concept”, winning in this “game” is something unions do for their members, not something the members do for themselves.]

In Ottawa the USW President Leo W. Gerard described his union, which represents rubber and paper as well as steel workers, as a “truly international union” that has alliances with Australia, Brazil and Mexico as well as Britain and Germany. He had just signed a merger agreement with the Independent Steelworkers Union, which represents 1,150 workers at Mittal Steel in West Virginia.

There are some serious questions to be raised in all of this cosy up to the rest of the world – questions of national security, the integrity of British unions, and not least the use to which members’ money will be put. A considerable amount

of that money will be spent on an exchange of officers every three months to develop integration, as well as their attendance at conferences and other activities. A Merger Exploration Committee consisting of five officers from each union supported by technical staff will be paid to work on a legal and structural framework for 12 months. Members’ money has also been committed to such projects as support of Columbian trade unionists, the ship breakers of India, and to building links with workers in Chinese transnational corporations.

Back in Britain

Meanwhile, back in Britain, the working class struggles under the weight of EU legislation such as the Services Directive and proposals to undermine collective bargaining. The fruitless search for homes and jobs continues for many, and wages continue to fall as a direct result of liberalisation and the free movement of labour. The TUC remains wedded to EU policies on migrant labour, which work against the interests of trade union members and in favour of the employers, including the multinationals.

British unions should look to their own backyard before embarking on adventures further afield.

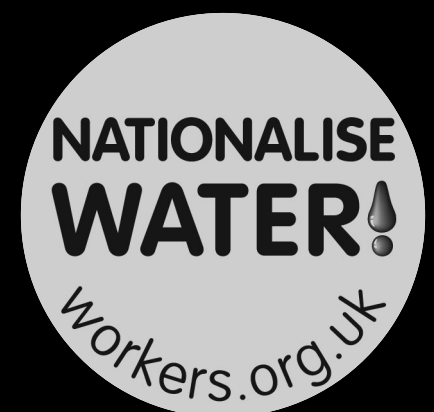
BADGE OFFER – Nationalise water. Reclaim our most vital resource!

BRITISH WATER supplies are in the hands of foreign owned monopoly companies who are enjoying a cash bonanza while our infrastructure crumbles. If the ridiculously high profits made by these companies in the last few years had been channelled into developing a national water grid and other infrastructure projects we would no longer be facing a water shortage.

As it stands, if there is low rainfall in the South East in any winter, then by the following summer much of South East England will be using standpipes.

Severn Water, for example, has seen an 18 per cent rise in profits as complaints against the company rose by 55 per cent and it was investigated for providing false data to OFWAT. And since it acquired Thames Water in 2000, RWE (its German parent company) has extracted around £1 billion in dividends to shareholders!

FIGHT BACK with a Nationalise Water! badge, available from Bellman Books, 78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 8EB, price 50p each, or £4 for 10. Please make cheques payable to “WORKERS”.



Blair is going, but it looks like he is planning a final leaving present for the people of Britain...

Smuggling in the EU constitution

EU GOVERNMENTS are secretly negotiating a new treaty, intended to replace the EU Constitution, which the French and Dutch rejected in 2005. The German government wants the EU to agree the treaty at the 22 June European Council and for all the EU governments to ratify it by the end of 2007.

EU leaders expect to use the treaty to impose key features of the rejected Constitution, claiming these changes would get the enlarged EU moving, but actually the EU has been making new rules and regulations some 25 per cent faster since enlargement.

Blair wrote on 23 April 2004, "What you cannot do is have a situation where you get a rejection of the treaty and bring it back with a few amendments and say, 'Have another go'. You cannot do that." But this is exactly what he and the other EU leaders are now proposing to do whilst protesting all the while that the changes were merely verbal.

Open Europe (www.openeurope.org.uk) has produced a useful new pamphlet, 'The new treaty: what will it mean, and do we need a referendum?'

What the treaty means

The pamphlet says a referendum is necessary and spells out what the treaty means. "Like the Constitution, the new treaty would create powerful new positions and institutions, making the central EU institutions more powerful in relation to the member states." For example, the EU's leaders want an EU President to be appointed by the European Council for two-and-a-half year terms, which would bring control of the 3,500 civil servants in the Council Secretariat and give the President both a substantial power base and an incentive to expand it. The new President would change the nature of the legislative process in Brussels so that negotiations would in future take place between one unelected, independent Brussels institution and another, removing the need for any involvement of the national heads of government.

The pamphlet explains: "Many also see the President as a stepping stone to a US-



The barrack-like Berlaymont building where the European Commission is based.

Photo: Workers

style President of Europe. The author of the constitutional treaty, Giscard d'Estaing, has already suggested that the new President of the Council will later be merged with the President of the Commission, and be directly elected. The (UK) Government tried to block an amendment which allows the two posts to be merged, but later gave way".

On the question of the Foreign

Minister, the pamphlet continues: "The new treaty is likely to include the 'EU Foreign Minister' proposed in the original constitution", creating a powerful supranational official as well as various new powers – for example: to "automatically" speak on behalf of member states in key international

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meetings like the UN security council. The British Government gave way to this too, though still hangs on to changing the title of Foreign Minister (and possibly the President) to something less emotive. But as Italian Prime Minister Prodi has pointed out, "as long as we have more or less a European Prime Minister and a European Foreign Minister then we can give them any title."

The pamphlet draws attention to another proposal from the constitutional treaty that is likely to resurface in the new treaty: the way that the EU takes votes. "The system will be altered so that it is harder for member states to block legislation ... Britain's power ... would be cut by nearly 30 per cent."

Immigration

The Blair Government has already given away our veto over asylum and illegal immigration, in December 2004. The treaty would end our veto over legal migration for which the Commission has been pushing.

The EU recently completed its "first phase" towards common immigration policies. The second phase would be a Common European Immigration Policy. It wants an EU-wide green card system, which would give the EU control over whom we let into the country; harmonised conditions for the immigration of third-country nationals at EU level; an EU-level "independent assessment" to decide who would be allowed entry; and a combined EU work-residence permit.

Some in this country including, unsurprisingly, the Roman Catholic Church, support the EU's attacks on our sovereignty. A demonstration of 7 March, following a "Mass in Support of Migrant Workers" at Westminster Cathedral, called for the regularisation of all migrants in the EU. Those taking part in the rally demanding closing all detention centres and ending all deportations included Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Baroness Shirley Williams and Jack Dromey, Deputy General Secretary,

'We have the right to govern ourselves, so we have the right (and the duty) to reject the treaty.'

Transport and General Workers Union.

An open door for migrant labour is the mirror-image of an open door for capital. Capitalists want more migrant labour because it is cheaper and easier to control. All workers here now, wherever they are from, should organise in trade unions, insist on controls on the movement of labour and defend their own wages and conditions from being driven down.

Demand a referendum

Blair wrote before the 1997 general election, "If there are further steps to European integration, the people should have their say at a general election or in a referendum." But now he and Brown are reneging on this promise. Other EU governments also promised a referendum on the treaty and are now reneging.

We need a referendum for seven main reasons, the first being that any significant treaty should be subject to a referendum. This EU treaty is certainly significant. Sir Antony Acland, former Head of the Diplomatic Service, said, "The idea that the Government should adopt such a significant new treaty without a referendum would be a very dangerous development."

Second, we need the chance to say No. Before the French and Dutch referendums, EU leaders said that if any country rejected the Constitution that would be the end of it. They have reneged on this pledge.

Third, if they get away with not holding a referendum, EU leaders will then implement all the other parts of the EU Constitution and more, over time. Commission President Barroso says that once the new treaty is in place, "nothing rules out the possibility of certain more

ambitious aspects later on."

Fourth, the treaty gives the EU even more powers. Without a referendum, it would be up to MPs to decide, but MPs have no right to give away for ever powers that we only lent them in the first place. Sir John Coles, also a former Head of the Diplomatic Service, said, "If there are to be significant transfers of power to the European level then people should be consulted in a referendum." Geoffrey Fitchew, formerly a Director General at the European Commission, said, "The rejected European Constitution would have seriously weakened the ability of the UK and other Member States to influence or block EU legislation...If any of these proposals are repeated in a new treaty, UK electors must be consulted in a referendum."

Fifth, the proposed treaty is a huge step towards a single EU state, towards ending the sovereignty of all Europe's nations. We have the right to govern ourselves, so we have the right (and the duty) to reject the treaty. The EU works like a ratchet: it always goes in a single, definite direction; it is run by capitalists for capitalists' maximum freedom of action, which means for a single capitalist EU state.

Sixth, no one under the age of 50 has had a chance to have a vote on the EU. It's about time we did. We are entitled to vote on a matter that affects all our futures.

Lastly, and fundamentally, this is about democracy. A TNS poll of voters in all 27 member states in March 2007 found that 75 per cent of voters across Europe want a referendum on any treaty which transfers further powers to the EU and 64 per cent oppose the EU having more powers.

Our class wants the EU to have fewer powers and wants more decisions to be taken at a national level. This is in fact to call to get out of the EU, for the EU cannot accept this. There cannot be a decentralised, reformed, non-capitalist EU, any more than there can be a decentralised, reformed, non-Catholic Church or a reformed, non-social democratic Labour Party. We need to end the EU.

Independent nations are the big obstacle for the European Union and the capitalists who back it...

The attack on Britain

This article is taken from a speech delivered at the May Day rally of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) in Conway Hall.

CAPITALISM ISN'T working. We the British working class can do better. Our problem is that we don't want to. We'd rather leave it up to capitalism than take the responsibility ourselves.

We're like the 30-year-old who won't leave home. We've got to face the fact that we'll have to do our own washing and learn to sew. We can't keep putting this growing up business off forever. It has its painful side but we can't afford to be nostalgic about capitalism just because it's all we know.

So here we are, awash with anniversaries. 300 years today since the Act of Union. 50 years since the establishment of what is now the EU. 200 years since the Act of Parliament abolishing that ruling-class excrescence slavery, which had up to that point been sanctioned by that same parliament, let's not forget.

We were told to celebrate the role of one William Wilberforce in securing the passage of the legislation which eventually outlawed the Atlantic slave trade.

But there's another side to Wilberforce; he it was who piloted other legislation through the Westminster talking shop some eight years before the abolition of slavery.

It was the Combination Acts, introduced to make trade unions illegal. It was the vicious and cruel legislation which led to the branding, incarceration and transportation of our forebears.

Wage slavery

Slavery, the actual trafficking of people as commodities, had been replaced as the most efficient form of exploitation by the exploitation of workers' labour power – the replacement of slavery by wage slavery. It's rather neat that the same man was responsible for laws making this transition possible. Let's hope Wilberforce's true role in history is taught



1984: Scotland, South East England – the whole of Britain in struggle. No wonder the employers want to break up Britain.

in schools.

Like charity and internationalism, progress begins at home, and our home is Britain. Not England, not Europe, but Britain – a uniquely working class construction. Before there was a working class, there was barely a Britain. Although the Crowns of England and Scotland were brought together in 1603, it was not until there was a working class throughout Scotland, Wales and England that Britain became something real.

The Act of Union that created the legal entity of Britain was enacted exactly 300 years ago today. But there was no such place as Britain in reality until the industrial revolution created unified industries and industrial workers. National unions and eventually political parties were formed. Modernity had arrived. No more narrow arguments over where Wales stopped and Worcestershire started; no more battles over Berwick. We could now get on with the real business –

sort the employers out. Work out how to take things away from those only interested in profit and into the hands of those only interested in life.

That Britain is a construction of the working class and industry might be a contentious view. But if Britain isn't the product of industry why, when the industrial base on which our working class rests has been all but removed, is it precisely now that we are infested with the petty nationalist vermin we had shaken off hundreds of years ago?

Who do we mean by petty nationalist vermin? There are those in Scotland who want their own time zone, the euro to replace the pound, and to do these things without consulting the people of Britain, without a referendum. Or, if there is to be a referendum, they only want to ask those they think will be in favour, in Scotland.

Photo: Workers

Continued on page 12

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A bit like the so-called referendum on devolution itself nearly ten years ago. The proposal was to affect Britain as a whole, so why didn't Britain as a whole get a vote? Why can't I, whose grandmother was Scottish, have a say about whether England, the part of Britain in which I live, has to become a country? Because apart from a few nutters who only really want 23 April to be an extra bank holiday, no one in England wants England to be a country separate from the rest of Britain. But England is being forced to become one.

The Yugoslavia principle

It's exactly the same principle as the EU operated in Yugoslavia – there was no referendum there across that sovereign member of the UN about whether it should split apart. There was just formal recognition by Germany of Hitler's former client state of Croatia. That was enough - that separation led to war. And there was no referendum in Czechoslovakia, another sovereign UN member. Just a velvet counter-revolution, again to do what Hitler did, divide and rule, break up the country even though there was no call to do so from within Czechoslovakia. All of this strengthened Germany.

In fact perhaps the best way to think of this is to put yourself in the shoes of the manager of the West German national football team in 1990. There you were, in charge of a team drawn from a large country, some 60 million souls. You'd just won the World Cup. In fact only Brazil, with three times your population, had won it more times than you had.

You usually beat France, you usually beat the hated enemy England, and you also usually beat the enemy that hated you even more than the British did - the Dutch.

You did sometimes lose to these teams, and you also lost to Czechoslovakia and to Yugoslavia, two countries that always punched above their weight compared to the size of their

'The European Union carries on the work of the Third Reich after its military defeat...'

populations.

You also lost occasionally, increasingly often in fact, to your most dangerous opponent, the nation who had destroyed your fathers' hero, Hitler – the Soviet Union.

Oh, and you sometimes very, very annoyingly lost to what you thought of as the wretched German Democratic Republic, whose very existence was a living example of the fact that you don't always get your own way, that you can't even control all of your own country.

You were good, but you would love to be even better. Then a remarkable series of events took place. First this conqueror of yours, the USSR, collapsed. Then it split up, so there was no Soviet football team that was beating you ever more frequently. There was Russia, the Ukraine and Byelorussia, and a host of other places you'd never heard of but which would have been familiar to your father from his Wehrmacht invasion maps.

Then it just kept getting better. Yugoslavia, arguably just about to become European champions, was ripped apart by your clever government's idea of giving Hitler's allies the Ustashe what they'd always wanted, a separate Croatia, and vicious civil war ensued. So no Yugoslavia, only part of Yugoslavia, Croatia, because UEFA had listened to your government and banned the majority of the population of Yugoslavia from having a football team at all! Then eventually, when they were let back in to play football, you only had to play Serbia, Montenegro and Slovenia. Then just Serbia and Montenegro. Then just each one separately.

Then, guess what? You didn't have to play Czechoslovakia any more, only the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. Oh yes, you

also annexed the team from the other bit of Germany in the east, the German Democratic Republic, so you could choose from all their players too! Hardly surprising you don't seem to lose to any of these teams any more.

No small Germany

Everybody got weaker, but Germany got stronger. When there are clarion calls to stand up for the rights of small nations nobody ever seems to be suggesting that this applies to Germany. Nobody wants devolution for Germany – which let's remember is a nation newer than many in Europe – its reversion to being Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Thuringia and so on. No, you break up, sorry, offer devolution, only to your enemies.

And that's how we should see it here, an attempt to break up Britain to make our enemies abroad and at home stronger. The most sensible suggestion ever made by a Sports Minister was Tony Banks' proposal to create a British football team, bringing together the teams of Wales, Scotland and England. Who was first to oppose this rational idea? Scotland? Wales? No – it was the governing body of European football, UEFA, with Germany as its largest member, led by its President the German-Swiss Sepp Blatter, that immediately blocked the plan before even a debate could take place.

So Germany plays teams that get smaller and smaller, and prevents the establishment of teams that could get bigger and bigger, while getting bigger and bigger itself. If you were that West German football manager, you'd be pretty pleased at political developments over the last 20 years. So a West German politician will be too.

The whole of Europe now uses the Deutschmark, otherwise known as the euro. Germany now sits on the UN Security Council pretty much as a permanent member, again, with no actual voting ever taking place to put it there, and the enemies so brutalised a couple of generations ago and who eventually defeated you, divided and therefore ruled.



Flashback to 2004: with a statue of Julius Caesar symbolically dominating the proceedings, the leaders of the European Union met in Rome to agree the ill-fated and reviled constitution. Now they are at it again.

Countries broken into regions are then subsumed into the EU under the German umbrella.

Much as the Roman church continued the work of the Roman Empire when the latter was militarily defeated, the EU carries on the work of the Third Reich after its military defeat. British Regional Development Agencies have the same boundaries as the EU regions. What we don't often recognise is that these EU regions are themselves almost exactly the diocesan boundaries of the Roman Catholic Church, which in turn were based on the military regions of the late Roman Empire. So Britain's geography is to be based on a 2,000-year-old, not a 50-year-old, treaty of Rome.

We are clear in identifying our permanent enemy as capitalism, the system of exploitation and theft which was pioneered in Britain. And we are equally clear that this enemy's creation, the European Union, is what we must destroy before we can destroy capitalism.

Just as it was workers' entry onto the economic then political stage that effectively created Britain, it is when workers are organised to leave that stage that Britain breaks up. Or rather, Britain breaks down. I say dividing, rather than seeking to divide, because it almost seems as though it's beginning to work, at least north of the so-called border.

So we say – no more moves to break up Britain. If we have to have a referendum it must be of the whole of Britain. You must ask everyone, not just those you think might be in favour. So not just a referendum in Scotland. The euro constitution repelled by the people of France and the Netherlands is now being revamped by their old enemy Germany, and Scottish separatists want to smuggle it into their part of Britain without a vote.

Petty nationalists everywhere, including in Britain, should beware.

First you get devolution, the apparently harmless establishment of the trappings of break up, street signs in two

languages, spending half-a-billion pounds on a so-called parliament

Then you want separation, a different currency, police force, domestic and foreign policies and perhaps even alliances – let's face it, it wouldn't be the first time in history that Scotland has had a foreign policy inimical to the interests of Britain.

What follows from devolution and separation? Freedom and happiness?

No. What follows is annexation. You'll be taken over by a foreign power.

Then you adopt someone else's currency – the Deutschmark, sorry, the euro, and you'd sit in someone else's parliament – in Strasbourg, which if my geography doesn't let me down, is even further from Edinburgh than London is!

Finally you find yourselves a minor region in the New Order of the German-run European Union.

So we say, Workers for Britain – Britain for Workers. Out of the European Union.

1907 saw a wave of strikes in Belfast as workers fought attempt members and lower wages. A century later, Belfast workers rem worker writes...

The Belfast strikes of 1907: unity, not secta

IN BELFAST this year the traditional May Day celebrations took the form of commemorating the wave of strikes which swept through Belfast in the summer of 1907. Led by Jim Larkin, the common threads that linked the wave of strikes that summer were the call for union recognition, better pay and conditions and resistance to the employers' attempts to defeat the growing working class unity of the Belfast strikers by provoking sectarian unrest.

The strikes began on 26 April when a coal importer called Samuel Kelly dismissed union members among his coal heavers in order to suppress wages. On 6 May, union members working for the Belfast Steamship Company walked off the job rather than work with non-union labour. Faced with this, Kelly backed down and agreed to reinstate the sacked men but the shipping company, seeing the walk-out as an opportunity, rejected all attempts to end the dispute.

The shipping company was owned by Thomas Gallaher, the cigarette manufacturer, and on 16 May over 1,000 women in his tobacco factory struck in support of the National Union of Dock Labourers and a large pay increase. Although the women went back shortly afterwards, the strike demands were widened to include union recognition from all shipping and railway companies and on 26 June all union members in the Belfast port joined the strike.

Strike-breakers

The employers responded by sacking all the workers and replaced them with scabs provided with military and police escorts in an effort to break the strike. This in turn led to further escalation when carters joined the strike in support of the demand for union recognition.

In a further attempt to undermine the strike the BELFAST TELEGRAPH, at the behest of the Government, gave prominent

coverage to rumours that Catholic workers were receiving more strike pay than their Protestant counterparts. Although a Trades Council investigation proved that this was not the case, considerable sectarian tension was stirred up within the trade union movement in the city. Massive demonstrations and marches were organised in support of the workers linking east and west Belfast and this eased the situation somewhat.

The high point of the strike was reached on 27 July. Between 500 and 800 members of the Royal Irish Constabulary mutinied when a Constable William Barrett refused to sit beside a scab on a cart during escort duty. Escort duties were then taken over by military patrols and huge areas of the city controlled by the army in an effort to force scab labour through the picket lines. The action of the army led to a further escalation of sectarian tension and when rioting broke out on the Lower Falls leading to the death of three civilians it was clear that the strike was losing momentum and a settlement soon followed.

Although union recognition had not been achieved, better pay and conditions were won and the trade union movement emerged intact as a force for worker unity and against sectarianism, and was able to continue the fight for workers' rights into the future.

During the course of the strike it was recognised that the greatest force to have been overcome was not the determination and



Photo: Workers

Unity in action: Belfast workers enjoying a sunny May Day march this year.

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ember. An Irish

arianism

brutality of the employers and the Government, though that was real enough, but the sectarian tensions that bedevilled the labour movement. Everything was done to combat this, the Catholic Jim Larkin even standing down at one point as strike leader in favour of Alex Boyd of the Municipal Employees, a member of the Independent Orange Order. Indeed the Order played a significant role in the development of the strike providing financial support and assistance to Catholic and Protestant workers alike.

Vanishing industry

Much has changed since 1907, not least the fact that a significant part of the industry that was setting for the strike action has all but disappeared from Belfast, in common with the prevailing de-industrialisation of Britain. However, there are some signs that the lessons learned that year are only now beginning to emerge as a potential force in the politics of today.

With the restoration of a devolved Assembly on 8 May this year there is a growing sense that all is not as it was before. For the first time in living memory the election that led to the establishment of the Assembly, was not dominated solely by constitutional matters.

The main concern of voters was the introduction of water charges, the appalling state of the health service, the crisis in local government and education and the growing awareness from both sides of the political divide that Westminster could not provide solutions to any of this.

Sinn Fein and the DUP agreed to form an administration not because of any coming together in love and harmony but simply because the workers in northern Ireland refused to accept any other course of action. They wanted their main concerns addressed by a group of people who were accountable to them.

Whether they are up to the job is, of course, another matter but workers have now firmly set the agenda and should be prepared if necessary to finish the job themselves.

WHAT'S THE PARTY?

We in the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist), and others who want to see a change in the social system we live under, aspire to a society run in such a way as to provide for the needs, and the desires, of working people, not the needs and desires of those who live by the work of others. These latter people we call capitalists and the system they have created we call capitalism. We don't just aspire to change it, we work to achieve that change.

We object to capitalism not because it is unfair and unkind, although it has taken those vices and made virtues out of them. We object because it does not work. It cannot feed everyone, or house them, or provide work for them. We need, and will work to create a system that can.

We object to capitalism not because it is opposed to terrorism; in fact it helped create it. We object because it cannot, or will not, get rid of it. To destroy terrorism you'd have to destroy capitalism, the supporter of the anti-progress forces which lean on terror to survive. We'd have to wait a long time for that.

We object to capitalism not because it says it opposes division in society; it creates both. We object because it has assiduously created immigration to divide workers here, and now wants to take that a dangerous step further, by institutionalising religious difference into division via 'faith' schools (actually a contradiction in terms).

Capitalism may be all the nasty things well-meaning citizens say it is. But that's not why we workers must destroy it. We must destroy it because it cannot provide for our futures, our children's futures. We must build our own future, and stop complaining about the mess created in our name.

Time will pass, and just as certainly, change will come. The only constant thing in life is change. Just as new growth replaces decay in the natural world, this foreign body in our lives, the foreign body we call capitalism, will have to be replaced by the new, by the forces of the future, building for themselves and theirs, and not for the few. We can work together to make the time for that oh-so-overdue change come all the closer, all the quicker.

Step aside, Capital. It's our turn now.

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Back to Front – Some independence!

‘An area surrounded by water but not allowed to send out its own fishing boats, farmland that under EU dictat will become uneconomic, water, gas and electricity all foreign owned...’

THE BRITISH agents of the EU led by Blair are resourceful but ultimately limited, resorting to old tricks. Separatism for the regions of Britain, originally called devolution, was first attempted by a Labour government in the late 1970s. An obvious variant of the divide and rule tactic, it attempts to maintain the domination of Capital.

It is no coincidence that the last time the Scottish National Party has been as influential in Scotland was during the 1970s, also under a Labour government. As now the Labour government covertly promoted the SNP to try to undermine British working class unity. The SNP had dwindled and become an irrelevance in the 1980s and 90s until Blair resurrected and breathed life into it. To any observer it was immediately obvious that the beneficiaries from the introduction of Holyrood would be the SNP.

In 1978 in response to devolution we produced the pamphlet UNITY NOT DEVOLUTION – in which we said,

“The pure opportunism of the call for devolution can be seen clearly by the fact that those who shout the loudest for it, supposedly in the name of preserving national cultures, are also those who were and still are in favour of the Common Market.”

Then as now the Labour government and SNP are pro EU.

It has been this clarity that has held up the EU juggernaut and is the reason why the EU’s British agent Blair has to go. He has failed to shift opinion away from rejection of the euro and hatred towards the EU, understood from Land’s End to John O’Groats.

But in his going Blair leaves Scotland with a gift akin to the Trojan horse – the

Holyrood Parliament that in reality is nothing more than an EU regional assembly.

We know that the workers’ vote for the SNP in May was in most cases not about a desire for Scotland to leave the Union but as a means to remove Labour. But from this position the SNP will be looking for advance. So from day one we can expect the SNP to start provoking the British Parliament into rejecting seemingly legitimate Scottish demands emanating from Holyrood.

The SNP’s whole stance is phoney and wrapped up in progressive populist rhetoric, when in fact what they are really about is to detach Scotland from the rest of Britain and deliver it for annexation to the EU as a separate region that will embrace the euro.

Some independence. An area surrounded by water but not allowed to send out its own fishing boats, farmland that under EU dictat will become uneconomic, water, gas and electricity all foreign owned. If the EU annexes Scotland it will be emasculated, but if we remain united and identify our enemy, we can reclaim our resources by coming out of the EU. This will be true independence and not pretence.

We have a responsibility from both a Scottish and an English perspective, rather than simply from a Scottish stance. Economic power is moving from the consumers of the world’s resources to their producers. In Britain we have resources that many other countries do not have and so we have both a political and economic opportunity to be independent. By demanding it we can tear off the mask worn by the SNP, revealing its subservience to the EU.

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