



Unity!

STRIKE BACK

Kill the Bill with mass action

Andy Bain
UNITY

THE TORY RESPONSE to the growing wave of strikes is to ratchet up legal threats and criminalise strike action.

Labour leader Keir Starmer says he would repeal any new anti-union laws but says nothing about repealing the whole body of Thatcher's laws which make industrial action so difficult.

We know we can't rely on Westminster Labour but the history of trade unionism tells us that with mass struggle anti-trade union laws can be defeated.

It is a long time since we have seen such unity and support for workers in struggle. When on strike nothing is more important than the unity of the strikers and solidarity from fellow workers.

The practical aspects – supporting each others picket lines and demonstrations, support in the form of food, fuel and money – are as important as political support with united action between our unions and community campaigns.

Two weekends ago the Peoples Assembly Against Austerity conference was full of such unity and solidarity. The call went out to

maximise support for strikes and solidarity protests across the country.

Based on the current wave of strike action we can win inflation-busting pay increases, protect our public services and make anti-union laws inoperable.

The Communist Party fully backs the strikes. Our pamphlet *The fight of our lives. Trade unions in the crisis of capitalism* (right) opens the discussion about the way forward for workers and the trade union movement.

COMMUNIST PARTY INDUSTRIAL ORGANISER
ANDY BAIN IS A FORMER UNION PRESIDENT.

Britain's crisis is a capitalist crisis

Lorraine Douglas
STRIKES

A BIG WELCOME from Britain's Communists to everyone on the streets for 1st February day of action. Every addition to the strike wave for more pay and job security is a step forwards for all working people.

Teachers, Environment Agency employees and Welsh school heads and support staff are among the latest groups of workers to join the movement demanding wage raises at or above the level of inflation.

The Tory government is nailing its authoritarian colours to the mast with further attacks on rights to strike and protest.

A revamped Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill extends anti-strike measures to all sections of workers in the health, education, border security, transport, nuclear decommissioning and fire and rescue services. This is a slaves' charter which would make scabbing a legal requirement.

This call by the TUC for a 'day of action' to defend the right to strike gives a boost to all workers and the green light for English regional, Scottish and Welsh TUCs, trades councils and unions to mobilise in communities for the next rounds of struggle.

We in Britain are not alone. People throughout the world face growing poverty and exploitation. Since the 2008 financial crash, with today's austerity, economic stagnation, climate chaos, Covid 19, war after war, runaway inflation, energy price hikes and food poverty we live in constant crisis. Wholesale gas prices

come down but we must pay more, big business and the banks have embarked on a course of profiteering and price gouging. Profits explode and food poverty now affects one in five British families.

This crisis is rooted in the logic of capitalist profit seeking. The economy is run by big industrial and financial transnational corporations fused with capitalist state power.

New Labour, Tories and the Lib Dems in government have promoted and strengthened the grip of financial markets, banks and other financial institutions. This 'financialisation' means commercial contracts – public and private sector, personal, household, corporate – been turned into financial instruments for speculation and fraud. Banks, investment funds and insurance companies make eye-watering profits, ramping up prices as the Bank of England tries to control inflation by raising interest rates imposing extra burdens on working people.

We see a frontal attack on our wages and living standards. Employers are hell bent on driving up profits – which are nothing more than unpaid wages – combining wage freeze and anti union laws

Soaring inflation erodes our already poverty pay. Runaway inflation is the tool of big business in the fuel and energy sector, in food and supermarkets. Corporations lever their market power to raise prices for essential goods and transfer yet more wealth up the financial pyramid, transforming it into shareholder dividends or share buybacks as corporations shuffle profits into tax havens.

This Cabinet for big business, bankers and bureaucrats is a nest of tax dodgers and speculators headed by the richest man in parliament. None of them live like we do.

The class nature of the crisis is increasingly apparent. While working class families watch the cost of living rise far beyond their wages, the super-rich are growing even richer. City bonuses in 2022 once again broke all records: in the financial and insurance sector bonuses grew by 27.9 per cent in the year to June 2022, while average wages grew by 4.2 per cent. £6bn was paid out in City bonuses in March 2022 alone.

We need a new deal for workers. We need an alternative economic and political strategy to capitalist crisis.

The Communist Party is clear that there is no political strategy *within capitalism* that can work in the interest of the working class. The laws and tendencies of capital function to generate economic and environmental crisis, social inequality and oppression, monopoly, expansion, militarism and imperialist war.

Only by building socialism through the working class and its allies winning state power can we abolish the laws of capitalism that threaten our planet and our future.

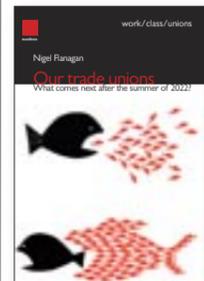
But in the here and now we demand changes that will improve working class living standards, make inroads into the power of big business and build the power of the working class to overcome the inevitable capitalist resistance.

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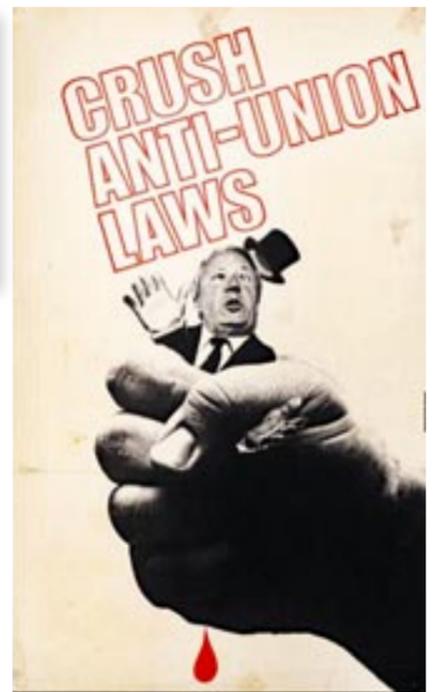


THE FIGHT OF OUR LIVES
Trade unions in the crisis of capitalism

In this pamphlet, the Communist Party offers perspectives on the urgent priorities for the left in the trade unions and on the need for greater left organisation. What is the left doing now to offer leadership? What should our key demands be and how can we best organise to achieve them? £2
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Anita Halpin
SOLIDARITY

IN THE 1970s – when there was more-or-less full employment; a 12-million affiliated membership of the TUC; national collective bargaining, and a strong shop stewards movement – the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trades Unions (LCDTU) played a key role in co-ordinating industrial action. (see above)

This could be a function of the TUC General Council (GC) acting as the General Staff of organised labour in the class war.

Unfortunately, the GC took some years to accept the tactical necessity even of co-ordinated industrial action, a call first made by the PCS. The GC was even slow to acknowledge the potential strength of national collective bargaining, the strategic position promoted by the Institute of Employment Rights (IER), our trade union 'think tank'.

Inter-union solidarity builds the confidence in struggle and it is no accident that the Tories, under Margaret Thatcher, introduced individual contracts, outlawed secondary solidarity action and limited the number on picket lines.

The TUC has changed over the past 50 years. While TUC membership has halved, many of the recent affiliates are specialist health unions – with a large percentage of women workers, including significantly the RCN.

Public opinion is very much in sympathy with the strikers and should clearly see the proposed anti-trade union legislation as a sign that the Tories and big business are panicking. But, the hundreds of thousands striking this month and the millions who back them need Labour to show solidarity with the labourers.

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MEMBER OF THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL



CRUSH ANTI-UNION LAWS



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