



## Fighting for communism

*- the future that works!*

**Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)**

### **WE DEMAND**

- The reversal of all privatisation and academisation in our schools and universities.
  - The scrapping of Ofsted inspections and arbitrary measurements and hierarchies; let every school be facilitated in providing the best to its children!
  - A meaningful increase in wages that not only compensates for rampant inflation but also reflects teachers' vital status in society.
  - The scrapping of agency contracts and a return to secure employment for all teaching and support staff.
  - The abolition of management structures aimed at coercing pupils and teachers alike into subservience to privatised business requirements.
  - The restitution of trust and training so that teachers can once more be respected as the leaders of their classrooms.
  - The provision of truly free education for all, away from any entanglement with the market, in service to needs of our children and our class.
- We say:
- Another school is possible and we will fight for it.
  - We will fight for the safeguarding of our children, which is at serious risk with every new staff redundancy in the name of saving costs.
  - We will fight against every capitulation by trade union leaders
  - The children of the working class deserve a militant and class-conscious educational movement that will link its efforts to those of all other striking workers. It is not only our present that we are fighting for, but their future!

# Save our schools from capitalist greed!



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The present teachers' strike is not just about fair pay. It is about the future of education in Britain. Essentially, it is a question of class against class. The capitalist crisis and the inflation crisis it has spawned are a vicious assault on working peoples' lives, and teachers are right to fight back. As the people tasked with helping children to open their wings and fly, teachers cannot tolerate being forced to crawl.

In today's conditions of crisis and war, when our ruling class prefers to spend millions on arms for Ukraine rather than on providing funds for pupils with special needs, and where our trade union and democratic rights to strike are coming under a sustained attack, workers need to stand together and demand the reconstruction of their unions on the basis of a truly class-conscious defence of pay and conditions.

We must oppose the forces of defeatism, capitulation and submission. We must prepare ourselves for a prolonged and multi-faceted struggle.

We believe in an educational system that is centred on the deeply humanist teaching relationship between student and teacher.

We oppose capitalist undermining of education, of transforming our schools into business units, complete with a bureaucratic hierarchy of managers whose job is to implement government policy and to create a mechanism of surveillance and authoritarian control within each school, manipulating and bullying teachers and promoting a 'customer relations' attitude towards parents rather than treating them as respected collaborators in the care and development of society's most precious asset – the next generation.

We oppose all repressive measures against our teachers' right to strike. We condemn those managers who are serving the ruling class by intimidating teachers out of joining a union, forcing them to keep schools open, and encouraging students to cross their teachers' picket lines.

Teachers have every right to protest against conformity and submission to the enforcement of business priorities in schools, which are trampling on the interests of pupils, staff and society at large in the interests of profit-taking. We condemn those 'school leaders' who are taking the ruling class's bribes of executive bonuses and career 'success' in order to enforce this anti-child agenda.

Frontline teachers are in a very different situation from the administrative officers who receive CEO-level salaries in return for implementing the government's privatisation policies – policies that are adversely affecting not only the public and free character of education in Britain, but also pressing hard upon the working lives and conditions of our teachers.

## The roots of the trouble

Like so many other workers in Britain, our teachers have been subject to an incredibly rapid impoverishment over the last 15 years of austerity, which has drastically shrunk their incomes, and this is now being severely exacerbated by galloping inflation. But why are we being asked to pay this price? It is not the workers who are responsible for inflation, but the capitalists, who have been printing money to try to paper over the cracks of their economic crisis. In the process, they have become richer still, while the working class has been asked to

pay the bill many times over.

As privatisation accelerates, the burden of teachers' workloads is becoming unbearable, while in the hierarchy of the contemporary capitalist school, classroom teachers now find themselves at the bottom. At the top are the financial director-managers, whose role is to extract profits by opening the school to business activities and the 'free' market.

These managers spend their time looking for sources of funding and ways to save money – and if that means keeping our classrooms without heating in order to balance their books, nobody seems to care!

Ofsted inspections enforce a parallel set of hierarchies, placing some schools at the top and others at the bottom. Schools with a majority of better-off students tend to achieve good school results, 'innovative practices' in finding resources, and success in attracting 'customers'.

Schools with a majority of poorer students and greater educational needs are left to their own devices to survive in the jungle of market competition, trying to get 'bums on seats' in order to secure funding. Educational priorities are everywhere overwhelmed by the priorities of business.

Schools in poor and immigrant areas are turned into cheap training warehouses for a future workforce of exploited proletarians. They focus purely on functional skills instead of on providing a rounded education; on narrow training rather than on developing general knowledge. The omnipresence of Microsoft and Google apps is killing the last vestiges of creative and fulfilling connection between teachers and their students.

## Severe burnout

As a result, teachers are leaving the profession in droves. Too many are succumbing to severe burnout, buckling under the intolerable pressures of endless bureaucracy and corporate-style meetings, of trying to do their jobs in a poisonous environment where their role and their dignity alike are undermined and undervalued.

It is not difficult to understand why so many teachers are so stressed and are losing all connection to the joy of teaching. Why instead of being enthusiastic, they feel physically and mentally drained. Like our overburdened health workers, they are daily picking up the pieces of a broken system, staggering under the weight of the endless bombardment of extracurricular tasks, bureaucratic burdens and impossible responsibilities, which spread stress, uncertainty and anxiety.

Documents, instructions, circulars, ministerial decisions, new legislation and a daily downpour of new responsibilities are turning our teachers into unpaid computer scientists, nurses, doctors and psychologists, and driving them to the point of exhaustion.

As in our crisis-ridden NHS, we are witnessing an epidemic of 'quiet quitting' in the teaching profession, alongside an unprecedented wave of mental health issues, which cannot possibly be addressed by fatuous assemblies or 'wear yellow clothes' days. It is not a lack of colour that is has brought about this avalanche of depression, but the weight of impossible expectations, lack of meaningful classroom support, abysmal salaries and drastically deteriorating working conditions.