

protect the right to strike: kill the bill



Professor Keith Ewing
and John Hendy QC

About the authors



Professor Keith Ewing

Keith Ewing is Professor of Public Law at King's College, London. He is President of the Institute of Employment Rights and a Vice President of the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom. He is also Legal editor of the journal *International Union Rights*.



John Hendy QC

John Hendy is a QC specialising in trade union law at Old Square Chambers. He is Chair of the Institute of Employment Rights and a Vice President of the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom. He is also President of the International Centre for Trade Union Rights and a visiting Professor at King's College London and University College London.

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1 Introduction

Much has been said and written in condemnation of the Trade Union Bill. Ideologically driven rather than evidence led, it was rightly attacked by the government's own Regulatory Policy Committee on 21 August 2015, as not being 'fit for purpose'.

In our view the underlying purpose of the Bill is to crush the remaining powers of the unions to protect the interests of working class people. This is in order to facilitate yet further transfers of wealth and income from working class people to the very rich.

The Bill has three particular features:

- The first is to single out public sector trade unionism for particular assault, as part of a strategy to suppress organised resistance to the destruction of public services and to eliminate any meaningful bargaining over pay or terms and conditions from the public sector, allowing the government to cut wages, pensions and staff.
- The second is to undermine collective bargaining by more restrictions on the lawful exercise of the right to strike. Without an effective right to strike, the right to collective bargaining is, of course, no more than a right to collective begging. So the Bill is intended to put yet further obstacles in the way of the only means that workers have to protect or improve the conditions of their working lives.
- The third is to silence the political voice of the organised working class, building on the Coalition's Gagging Act in 2014, to ensure that unions have limited resources and opportunities available to offer political resistance to the government.

These measures – and the accompanying proposals for even more controls on picketing in particular – will not, and are perhaps not intended to, extinguish trade unionism altogether – that would be too bold a step. Instead it is a variant of the 'Gulliver Concept' (as the Chairman of the National Coal Board described the Thatcher government's legal strategy in the Miners' Strike of 1984-85) of encouraging multiple legal actions each one *'[tying] another tiny legal rope around the [union] until it woke one day and couldn't move.'*

2 Austerity and Employer Control

The dramatic changes to the law on industrial action over the last 35 years have already helped to reduce the proportion of British workers covered by collective agreements:

from 82% (then around the European average) in 1979 when Mrs Thatcher became prime minister, to about 20% today. The Tories intend to reduce that proportion to insignificance.

Promoting a desire to remove all fetters on management prerogative, the Bill is

- a full frontal assault on the industrial and political freedoms of the trade union movement,
- a strategic part of the government’s austerity policy involving an attack on the public sector generally, and
- an authoritarian announcement of the Tories utter contempt for civil liberties and human rights – particularly those of trade unions and their members.

The government is out of step with legal developments elsewhere in the world. The link between managerial prerogative, the right to strike and human rights is clearly highlighted in a recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, which swept away legal restrictions on strikes in public services. In doing so, the Court said that:

The right to strike is essential to realizing these values and objectives through a collective bargaining process because it permits workers to withdraw their labour in concert when collective bargaining reaches an impasse. Through a strike, workers come together to participate directly in the process of determining their wages, working conditions and the rules that will govern their working lives The ability to strike thereby allows workers, through collective action, to refuse to work under imposed terms and conditions. This collective action at the moment of impasse is an affirmation of the dignity and autonomy of employees in their working lives. Striking — the “powerhouse” of collective bargaining — also promotes equality in the bargaining process.

Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan, January 2015

Yet, in mobilising their weapons in the Bill and in various accompanying Consultation Documents that propose yet further attacks, Cameron and Osborne are building upon the massive framework of existing legal control inherited from the last Tory governments, introduced between 1980 and 1993. It is true that we had Labour

governments from 1997 to 2010. But Tony Blair made a now infamous promise on the eve of the 1997 election that under a Labour government

‘the changes that we do propose would leave British law the most restrictive on trade unions in the Western world.’

That was one promise he kept, with the result that each change introduced by the Bill is not to be assessed in isolation, but as a yet further restriction on top of the multitude of current restrictions on trade union freedom already in place, and repeatedly criticised in international legal forums, such as the European Committee of Social Rights.

3 The Right to Organise in the Public Sector

As we will see, new requirements on member participation and voting thresholds in industrial action ballots, as well as the permitted use of strike-breaking agency workers, are particularly aimed at public sector unions. But there are other special measures in the Bill specifically directed at these unions and workers.

It is pretty obvious why Tory missile launchers are targeted on trade unions in the public sector:

- It is in the public sector where trade unions are the strongest and where the impact of austerity will be felt most immediately;
- It is the public sector that the Tories particularly wish to destroy in their dogmatic commitment to neo-liberalism;
- As part of austerity, the Chancellor announced in the Budget that the 1% pay cap for public sector workers (other than MPs) will continue.

Osborne needs to make the 1% stick. So in addition to the far-reaching restrictions on the right to strike, particular provisions in the Bill target workplace representation in the public sector:

- The first is the requirement that public sector employers provide information about the amount of facility time granted to trade union representatives (and the direct ‘cost’ of it – ignoring indirect benefits to the employer) (clause 12). This is an open invitation for the anti-union media to attack any public authority which abides by international law (and domestic law) by respecting the rights of its workers to be represented by a trade union;

■ The second is a unilateral power of the government to impose limits on the amount of facility time and the purposes for which that time may be used (clause 13). This includes a power for ministers to rewrite legislation in its application to any public sector employers, and the power also to ‘modify’ collective agreements. This is the first time the British government has taken the power to rewrite collective agreements of which it disapproves.

This latter provision is surely a clear breach of ILO Conventions 98 and 151, the latter in turn providing not only that public sector trade unions have the right to workplace facilities, but also that these facilities are to be the subject of collective bargaining. But this is not the end of it, the Tories announcing on 6 August 2015 (after the Bill was published) that they will *‘abolish the check off across all public sector organisations’, as part of ‘curtailing the public cost of ‘facility time’.*

In making this most recent proposal – introduced as a form of collective punishment during a tube strike – the government again appears to have disregarded that ILO Conventions 98 and 151 allow no exception for collective bargaining about check off arrangements, which – on the contrary - the ILO Committee of Experts has held to be clearly covered.

4 The Right to Strike – Ballot Thresholds

The Bill contains an extensive range of measures restricting the freedom of unions to organise industrial action. Firstly, it proposes new obligations by prescribing both (i) minimum levels of participation in industrial action ballots in all sectors, and (ii) minimum levels of support for industrial action in six sectors set out in the Bill.

And as already pointed out, this is in addition to the heavy burdens of existing legislation restricting the purposes for which industrial action may legitimately be called, and imposing complicated procedural requirements of ballots and notices, referred to by one High Court Judge as ‘the inordinate complexity of the statutory procedures’.

The additional requirements are:

■ So far as minimum levels of participation are concerned, industrial action will be

lawful only if 50% of those eligible to vote do so, and if a majority of those voting support the action in question (clause 2);

- So far as minimum levels of support are concerned, in six sectors industrial action will be lawful only if it is supported by at least 40% of those eligible to vote in the ballot (clause 3).

The ‘important public services’ which are to be subject to the 40% support threshold will include public and private sector workers in: health services; education of those aged under 17; fire services; transport services; decommissioning of nuclear installations and management of radioactive waste and spent fuel; and border security.

There are three points to note about these provisions:

- The first is that research by Professor Ralph Darlington and Dr John Dobson (to be published by the Institute of Employment Rights) has shown that:
Only 85 of the 158 strike ballots covered by the database reached the 50 per cent target, and the number of workers who failed to reach the target was completely disproportionate to those that did – while 444,000 workers could have taken strike action because they had a turnout rate of over 50 per cent, 3.3 million workers would have been prevented from going on strike. Even if you take out the large-scale 2011 public sector strikes, it still means 880,000 workers would, under the proposed legislation, no longer have been able to go on strike.
- So the Bill’s changes would have had a massive impact on the right of workers to strike, especially in the public sector where protest strikes are often large scale and cover a multitude of workplaces and employers. No doubt after the Bill becomes law turnouts will increase. Unions will campaign harder and the message will be well understood by trade union members that members who do not bother to vote are members who will be counted as voters against. Whether this will be sufficient to overcome the new hurdles, given that industrial action ballots are denied the obvious means to make them effective such as enabling secure and secret voting at work or by internet, remains to be seen.
- The second is that these changes are almost certainly in breach of international legal obligations, notably ILO Convention 87. In a long-running complaint from Bulgaria the ILO has repeatedly condemned a 50% approval requirement in strike ballots, and pointed out that ‘*account should only be taken of the votes cast*’, while

any ‘required quorum and majority should be fixed at a reasonable level’. In a case involving El Salvador which turned on the legitimacy of a threshold of 51% for strike action, the ILO Governing Body in 2015 approved its Committee on Freedom of Association in reiterating the principle that restrictions ‘should be reasonable and in any event not such as to place a substantial limitation on the means of action open to trade union organisation’.

- The third is that the ultimate test of worker support for industrial action is not a ballot but whether, in fact, they take industrial action. After all, long gone are the days when a union could ‘instruct’ its members to take industrial action; a union ‘call’ to take industrial action is in reality today no more than a polite invitation. Unions have not been permitted to discipline members for not taking industrial action for nearly 30 years. And the already extensive restrictions on picketing remove the risk of intimidation even without the raft of further restrictions now proposed by the government.

5 The Right to Strike – Raising the Hurdles

Under the existing ‘detailed and complicated way in which strike action is procedurally circumscribed by the ballot provisions’ (as a Court of Appeal judge put it), trade unions are required to give notices of various kinds to the employer involved in the dispute (See Box 1).

Box 1: Current balloting requirements

- Notice of intention to hold a ballot, which must be given at least seven days before the ballot opens. This notice must provide information about the numbers, categories and workplaces of the workers to be balloted;
- Notice of the ballot paper, which must be given to the employer at least three days before the ballot opens. The ballot paper must include information prescribed by the Act about the legal effects of industrial action;
- Notice of the ballot result, which must be given both to the employer and to members entitled to vote, and which must be given as soon as reasonably practicable after the holding of the ballot;
- Notice of intention to take industrial action, which must be given at least seven days before the industrial action is due to start. This notice must also contain details of the numbers, categories and workplaces of those taking part.

The Bill adds to these already extensive obligations in five different ways:

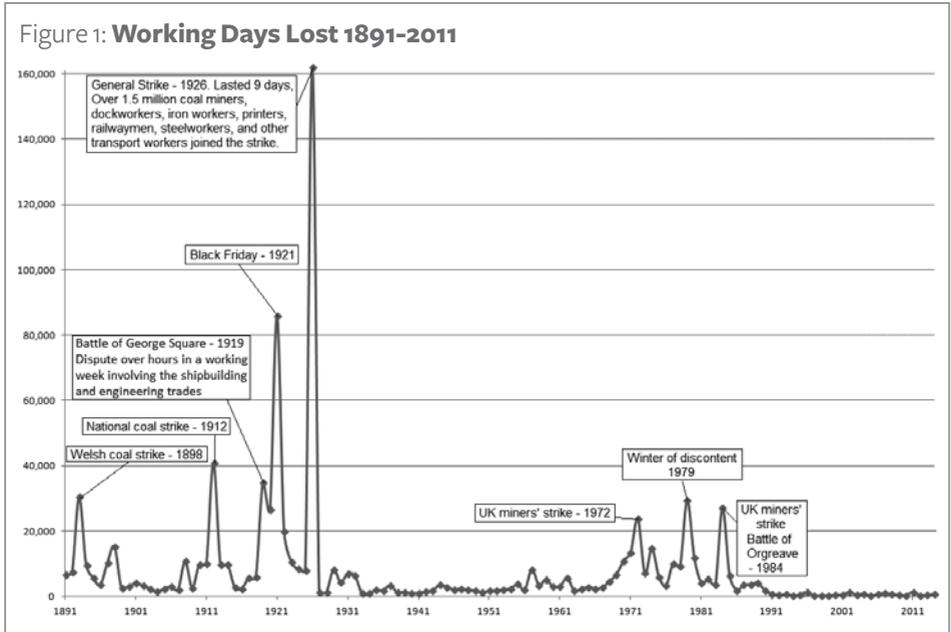
- The ballot paper will have to contain additional information, including:
 - a reasonably detailed indication of the matter or matters in issue in the trade dispute to which the proposed industrial action relates’;
 - where workers are being balloted for action short of a strike, the nature of the action must be specified; and
 - further information must be given of the dates of the proposed action (clause 4);
- The notice of the ballot result to members will have to include information about whether the 50% voter participation was met, and in the case of the so called ‘important public services’ must include information about whether the 40% voter support threshold was met (clause 5);
- The union will have to include information about industrial action in its annual report to the Certification Officer (the statutory body established in 1976 to supervise trade unions):
 - The information must include details about each dispute in which the union has been engaged in the year in question, the action taken and its duration.
 - The union must also supply to the Certification Officer the same information about ballot results as it must supply to its members in the ballot result notice (clause 6);
- The union will have to give 14 days’ rather than 7 days’ notice to the employer before taking industrial action with the authority of a ballot (clause 7);
- A ballot mandate will be valid for only four months. If the dispute is not settled in that time and if the action is to continue, the union must hold a fresh ballot for authority to continue taking industrial action (clause 8).

These further restrictions have no legitimate purpose; they are simply further traps and hurdles to permit employers’ lawyers to claim injunctions to prevent industrial action or claim damages after the event. The reality is that there is no major problem posed by industrial action in the UK – except that it is so restricted.

Indeed, the previous government proclaimed a ‘*dramatic decline*’ in working days lost through strikes from an annual average of 12.9 million in the 1970s and 7.2 million in the 1980s to less than 700,000 per year over the last twenty years. The average number of working days remains around the average for EU and OECD countries.

The most recent figures were published by the Office of National Statistics in the same week as the Bill. The ONS commented:

there has been a significant decline in the number of strikes since 1995 compared with the previous years. Though volatile, the number of working days lost has remained broadly the same over this period. ... The strike rate in the last 10 years is generally lower than in previous decades.



6 Agency Workers as Strike-breakers

Regulations made in 2003 prohibit employment businesses ‘from providing agency workers to cover the duties normally performed by an employee of an organisation who is taking part in a strike or other industrial action, or to cover the work of an employee covering the duties of an employee taking part in a strike or other industrial action’.

The Tories plan to revoke this regulation, to enable agency workers to be used as strike-breakers. Though this will apply in both private and public sector workplaces, it is the latter which the government has particularly in mind, as the accompanying Consultation Document reveals:

19 There are sectors in which industrial action has a wider impact on members of the public that is disproportionate and unfair. Strikes can prevent people from getting to work and earning a living and prevent businesses from managing their workforce effectively.

20 For instance, strikes in important public services such as education will mean that the parents of school age children will need to look after their children rather than go to work because some schools would not be able to fulfill their duty of care for their pupils during the strike. This would also have a negative impact on some employers of the parents affected, whose workforce and productivity would be affected. Similarly, if postal workers were to strike, individuals and employers reliant on postal services would be placed at a disadvantage due to the resulting large backlog in deliveries.

This is a major challenge to the right to strike and has been rightly condemned by the TUC. Apart from anything else, licensing the use of strike-breakers is a breach of another international legal obligation, ILO Convention 87. The ILO supervisory bodies have not accepted that the use of replacement workers to break a strike is compatible with ILO Convention 87, for obvious reasons.

The ILO Committee of Experts in 2012, made clear that:

provisions allowing employers to dismiss strikers or replace them temporarily or for an indefinite period are a serious impediment to the exercise of the right to strike, particularly where striking workers are not able in law to return to their employment at the end of the dispute.

Yet this is precisely what the government now plans for the United Kingdom. Employers will be permitted to use agency workers indefinitely, and there is no guarantee that workers on strike will ever get their jobs back. This will be a strategically important power of employers, especially if employers are permitted to use agency workers to both replace AND undercut those on strike.

It will also be important in the context of industrial action short of a strike, where workers may refuse to take on additional duties or boycott others. English contract law has long permitted the employer, in these situations, to hire agency workers and to send

workers home until they are prepared to do what they are told. This is not just a licence for strike-breaking – it is a licence for bullying and autocratic management.

7 Picketing and ‘Leverage’

In addition to the existing, vast (and highly effective) array of civil and criminal law on picketing, the Trade Union Bill introduces yet further restrictions. This is notwithstanding that the Association of Chief Police Officers told Bruce Carr QC (appointed by the government in 2014 to review the law on picketing):

‘In general the legislative framework is seen by the police as broadly fit for purpose and the range of criminal offences available to the police is sufficient to deal with the situations encountered.’

Yet the Bill proposes that a union will lose protection for peaceful picketing (and will therefore be liable to injunctions not to picket or claims for damages after the event) unless:

- the union appoints a picket supervisor;
- the supervisor must be familiar with a Code of Practice on picketing (it is not clear whether this is the existing Code of Practice or a proposed revision of that Code or an entirely new Code, yet to be drawn up);
- the supervisor has taken reasonable steps to tell the police his/her name, where the picketing will take place, how s/he may be contacted;
- the supervisor has a letter of authorisation from the union;
- the supervisor shows the letter to the police or ‘any other person who reasonably asks to see it’;
- the supervisor wears a badge or armband readily identifying him/her as such.

The government has also ‘consulted’ on further proposals. 14 days before industrial action starts, unions will be required to give the following information to the employer, the police and the Certification Officer:

- Specify when the union intends to hold a protest or picket;
- Where it will be;
- How many people it will involve;
- Confirmation that people have been informed of the strategy;
- Whether there will be loudspeakers, props, banners etc;

- Whether it will be using social media, specifically Facebook, Twitter, blogs, setting up websites and what those blogs and websites will set out;
- Whether other unions are involved and the steps to liaise with those unions
- That the union has informed members of the relevant laws.

This is the modern equivalent of having to give notice of an intention to use the telephone, or send a letter. Any change made by the union to these plans would also have to be published. Failure to comply with these obligations would enable the Certification Officer (under new powers in the Bill) to fine the union or direct that it provides further information; moreover, any failure to publish the plans would be taken into account in any civil proceedings. No doubt it will, in due course, also be proposed that such failure would also render the industrial action unprotected.

No other organisation has to comply with obligations of this kind, with no advance notice to the police of other protests being required. These far-reaching powers have been widely condemned on civil liberties grounds, particularly because of the existing battery of legal powers available to the police and employers. Civil liberties bodies other than trade unions should watch out, for if the government impose such restrictions on trade unions then it is certain that similar requirements will be imposed more widely to restrain civil protest.

Yet it should not be doubted that further restrictions on pickets and protests away from the workplace will be introduced as the Bill goes through Parliament. These further restrictions will be aimed at the industrial dispute campaigns successfully conducted by unions such as the GMB and Unite (called ‘Leverage’ by the latter). The Bruce Carr Review was meant to produce findings on which such legislation could be based but Mr Carr QC declined to make any findings and merely recorded the untested, self-serving hearsay evidence of a number of employers. That will not restrain the government.

8 An Attack on Political Freedom

If the Trade Union Bill is about crushing the industrial power of trade unions, it is also about eliminating their political influence. The aim it seems is to reduce the income available to trade unions for political purposes, whether it be to make donations to political parties, or to campaign against the Conservative Party at elections. The

importance of political action by trade unions is acknowledged by the European Court of Human Rights, which recognised in *ASLEF v United Kingdom* that:

Historically, trade unions in the United Kingdom, and elsewhere in Europe, were, and though perhaps to a lesser extent today are, commonly affiliated to political parties or movements, particularly those on the left. They are not bodies solely devoted to politically-neutral aspects of the well-being of their members, but are often ideological, with strongly held views on social and political issues.

It is offensive that democratic members' organisations like trade unions, dedicated to the defence and advance of members' economic and social interests, should be restricted in using their funds to support political parties or political policies for those ends. Nonetheless, in the UK, trade union political activity has been subjected to tight legal restraints since 1913. Made even more restrictive by the Thatcher government in 1984, this legislation prohibits the use of trade union funds unless a number of statutory requirements are met (See Box 2).

Box 2: Current political fund requirements

- A political resolution must be in force in relation to the trade union in question, whereby the members have approved the adoption of political objects within the preceding 10 years;
- Any political activity falling within the statutory definition of political objects must be funded from a separate political fund in accordance with the political fund rules of the union;
- Every member of the union must be free to claim exemption from contributing to the political fund and must not suffer discrimination or disability for doing so.

The Bill proposes a major revision of these procedures, reminding us of what happened immediately after the General Strike in 1926. Legislation in the following year imposed a number of restrictions on the right to strike, the right to picket peacefully, and the rights of public sector trade unions. But it also imposed fresh restraints on trade union political freedom by restricting the amount of money unions would have for political affiliations and political campaigning.

So in 1927, the rules of the game were changed: trade union members were required to opt in to the political fund if they wanted to contribute rather than opt out if they wanted

not to contribute. This reversal of the rules continued until 1946 when the original position was restored by the Attlee government. In the Trade Union Bill the government proposes to return to the General Strike era, by re-introducing opting in and prohibiting opting out:

- The opting-in obligation will apply to existing as well as new members, that is to say workers who are members at the time the Act is introduced as well as workers who become members after the Act is introduced;
- Trade unions will have three months from the date the Act comes into force to ensure that existing members opt-in. If existing members do not opt-in within three months their obligation to pay the political levy will lapse;
- Members who have opted-in to the political levy may opt out at any time by giving notice to the union. Where a member gives notice to opt-out, the opt-out will take place within one month;
- The opting-in notice will lapse after five years and will have to be renewed by all those who have opted-in, even though the members concerned are entitled to withdraw their notice at any time.

Like the 1927 Act before it, the Bill transforms the nature of trade union political engagement. By individualising this activity, the proposed changes separate the member from the organisation, and undermine the principle of collective power fundamental to effective trade unionism. By enhancing the right of the individual, the government also contravenes the government's own duty to respect the right of workers and trade unions, for which ILO Convention 87, art 3 makes very explicit provision.

9 Transforming the Role of the Certification Officer

We thus have proposals in the Trade Union Bill to attack three core labour rights:

- the right to organise,
- the right to bargain, and
- the right to strike.

The restrictions are bound together by new powers to be given to the Certification Officer, the 'trade union regulator' appointed by the government to issue certificates of independence and deal with complaints from members about the breach of union rules. That role is about to be dramatically transformed, with a new battery of powers for the

regulator, some of which we encountered above in relation to picketing. Most strikingly, however, the Certification Officer will now have the power to initiate action against a trade union even though there has not been a complaint by a member. This applies specifically in relation to trade union elections, trade union political funds, and trade union amalgamations. It needs hardly be said that as a matter of constitutional principle this is an extraordinary proposal, given that the Certification Officer will be empowered on behalf of the State to:

- bring a complaint against a trade union;
- make a decision over the very matter about which he has brought the complaint; and
- use other new powers to impose a fine on the trade union he has investigated and upon which he has decided.

The Bill provides particular powers for the Certification Officer to conduct investigations – or to delegate investigations to outside bodies (no doubt the big accountancy firms will be rubbing their hands at the prospect). The consultation paper makes clear that the Certification Officer will act on information from third parties, which no doubt a hostile media will be enthusiastic to provide, as well, of course, as employers (who will risk no legal costs in raising a complaint in this way) and disgruntled members of the public, MPs and others.

And, to rub salt in the wound, the Certification Officer is to be given the power to impose a levy on trade unions to make them pay for running his or her office. He or she is to be funded by the very organisations he or she is to investigate, and to initiate investigations into matters about which members already have a right of complaint. It will be hard to avoid the conclusion that people appointed to this office in the future will be seen as little more than the ideological pit-bulls of Tory ministers.

By its recklessness, the government will diminish a hitherto important position, occupied hitherto by highly respected Certification Officers.

10 Conclusion

In launching the biggest assault against free trade unionism for a generation, the Tories have revealed high levels of legal and economic illiteracy. As to the former, we recall a lecture given in 2006 by one of the United Kingdom's most distinguished-ever judges. Lord Bingham, said that

The existing principle of the rule of law requires compliance by the state with its obligations in international law, the law which whether deriving from treaty or international custom and practice governs the conduct of nations. I do not think this proposition is contentious.

Nor do we regard that proposition as contentious. The proposition applies to ILO Conventions ratified by the United Kingdom as it does to all other treaties, the Conventions in this case having been ratified by governments led by both Labour and Conservative Prime Ministers. Indeed it was the government of Mrs Thatcher that ratified ILO Convention 151. Several of the provisions of the Bill and the accompanying regulations on employment agencies, in further restricting the right to strike and to picket, violate ILO Convention 87. Other provisions and subsequent announcements violate ILO Conventions 98 and 151 (invalidating and prohibiting collective bargaining on the use of the check off in the public sector). The provisions of the Bill dealing with trade union facilities (clauses 12-13), violate Conventions 98, 135 and 151 to the extent that they empower ministers unilaterally to rewrite collective agreements dealing with facilities.

As to economic illiteracy, the consensus of economic thought today (including IMF researchers) is that the destruction of collective bargaining is both bad for the economy directly and is a significant contributor to the growth of inequality which creates its own misery. The diminution of trade unions' industrial power may appear attractive to right wing back-bench Tories but it is, in effect, shooting the economy in the foot.

It is a fact that collective bargaining raises wages. So collective bargaining helps to resolve a fundamental problem in the economy at present, namely diminished purchasing power. Higher wages allow people to spend more. This stimulates demand in the economy and hence economic activity. Small employers are the greatest beneficiaries. The State too, benefits by greater tax receipts and reduced State expenditure on low wage subsidies and income for the unemployed.

Collective bargaining is also essential for the achievement of social justice at the workplace. In the absence of collective bargaining, the outcome of the conflicting interests of the employer and the workers otherwise reflects the inherent imbalance in power between the worker and the employer. As the USA's National Labor Relations Act 1935 (still in force) puts it:

The inequality of bargaining power between employees who do not possess full freedom of association or actual liberty of contract and employers who are organized in the corporate or other forms of ownership association substantially burdens and affects the flow of commerce, and tends to aggravate recurrent business depressions, by depressing wage rates and the purchasing power of wage earners in industry and by preventing the stabilization of competitive wage rates and working conditions within and between industries.

That is a price the government thinks well worth paying, of course.

But although lawyers and economists will express frustration about these powers and the authoritarian drift that they reveal, it will not be by lawyers' submissions or economists' books that this Bill will be defeated. Trade unionists will have to learn from the past about how to defeat repressive laws.

- How was it that the Industrial Relations Act was defeated? How did our forebears Kill that Bill?
- And why is it that the Thatcher laws are still with us? How did our forebears fail to Kill those Bills?

The answers to both questions will be found in political and industrial arenas, not in court-rooms or lecture theatres.

In the meantime we conclude with this reflection. Widespread collective bargaining was the technique nearly universally adopted throughout the Western World in the 1930s after the crash of 1929 and the following Depression – and it worked over the next 50 years. It still works in the strong and efficient economies of Germany and Scandinavia. The government's proposals ignore this truth: the Trade Union Bill is not only 'not fit for purpose', it is wholly irrational in design and delivery.

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Campaign for Trade Union Freedom

The Campaign For Trade Union Freedom was established in 2013 following a merger of the Liaison Committee For The Defence Of Trade Unions and the United Campaign To Repeal The Anti Trade Union Laws. The CTUF is a campaigning organisation fighting to defend and enhance trade unionism, oppose anti-union laws and promote and defend collective bargaining across UK, Europe and the World.

[@unionFreedom](http://www.tradeunionfreedom.co.uk)

IER, 4th Floor, Jack Jones House, 1 Islington, Liverpool L3 8EG

E: office@ier.org.uk P: 0151 207 5265 W: www.ier.org.uk

CTUF, E: office@tradeunionfreedom.org.uk

P: 0151 207 5264 W: www.tradeunionfreedom.co.uk

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