

Examen d'entrée 2022

Diplôme de l'IEP en Formation Continue

Vendredi 2 septembre 2022 - de 11h30 à 13h00

ANGLAIS

Merci de répondre directement sur le sujet pour les questions et sur votre copie pour l'Essay.

Aucun document autorisé.

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION / DIPLOMA ENTRANCE EXAM

ENGLISH TEST (1h30)

The Guardian, 28 June 2022, by Owen Jones

Labour is losing its sense of purpose just as the trade unions that gave birth to the party have rediscovered theirs. This may seem churlish given that the party won a byelection¹ just last week, but the polling tells us that this is a story of Tory self-immolation, of voters repelled by illicit pandemic-era parties and a failure to address falling living standards rather than a vote for Labour’s vision for the country – the fact of the matter is, it doesn’t have one.

The opposition’s identity crisis was underlined by the performance of the shadow foreign secretary, David Lammy, at the weekend during his broadcast round. His declaration that “a serious party of government does not go on a picket line” was provocative enough: given that he has himself proudly done so in the past speaks to a politician who says only what he believes is politically opportune at any given moment. He also wrongly claimed that British Airways workers were seeking a pay rise, rather than a reversal of a 10% pay cut– leading to understandable fury from Unite, the union that represents them.

As for Keir Starmer himself, when he sought Labour members’ votes, he boastfully showcased his record in standing by striking workers: now he bans his frontbenchers from even standing on picket lines, just another testament to a leadership campaign wholly defined by dishonesty.

But as a hot summer of strikes beckons, Labour’s decision to adopt a hostile posture to a newly assertive trade union movement could prove a costly error. [...]

The polling shows widespread sympathy for the strikes, particularly among younger working adults: that is quite unlike previous industrial action, such as the miners’ strike, which met with public hostility.

With strikes beckoning or already happening in airports, schools and courts, as well as train stations, an opportunity has arisen for the unions to present themselves as the real opposition and make a wider case for transformative change. Unite’s general secretary, Sharon Graham, has emphasised placing workers’ industrial needs before partisan politics. As she put it: “It is now down to the trade unions to defend working people. We are their only voice.”

Today’s young people have only ever known enfeebled trade unions. But this new generation of union leaders could make the case for them that only a strong labour movement and collective bargaining can ensure workers receive a just share of the wealth they collectively produce, rather than allowing it to be siphoned off so that top CEOs can be paid over 90 times more than their low-paid workers.

¹ a by-election: a single election that takes place to fill a vacancy in a political constituency during a government’s term.

Unions could use their platforms to loudly advocate for policies that could transform the lives of the workers they represent: such as a wealth tax to fund investment for public services, public ownership of utilities, a higher minimum wage, restored welfare provision, and a green industrial revolution to tackle the climate emergency and create well-paid, secure jobs. With polling showing they are far more trusted than politicians, union leaders are particularly well placed to take the mantle of opposition.

Such an approach would leave Labour exposed – unless it offers a coherent vision of its own. [...]

If Labour spends the summer denouncing the unions, questions over who Labour actually stands for will only deepen. After all, it was a railway signalman – like those now in dispute – from Doncaster who drafted the resolution 123 years ago that gave birth to the Labour party, intended as a parliamentary wing for a trade union movement treated with contempt by the then dominant Conservative and Liberal parties. While it is true that Labour has historically failed to support strikes, the party’s current posture is particularly hostile, at a time when public sympathy for industrial action is abundant.

Starmer’s leadership has even less substance than that of Tony Blair, whose offer included a new minimum wage, public investment, constitutional reform and gay rights – and that was an era of economic growth and rising living standards, albeit powered by an unsustainable financial bubble.

For those hoping a Starmer government will use the bully pulpit of the British government to drag the political centre of gravity in a more progressive direction on, say, workers’ rights, remember how the New Labour era ended acrimoniously amid a toxic climate on public spending, social security and immigration. An assertive trade union movement offers the most effective organised bulwark against a Labour government’s failure to build a lasting political settlement that confronts Britain’s many injustices.

Labour may no longer understand what it is for, but that is not true for Britain’s long-marginalised unions. If Britain’s political elite collectively abandons the interests of working people, a movement is prepared to take up the mantle.

I. Answer the questions:

1. Which title suits best? /1 point

- A. If Labour won’t stand up for working people, unions will.
- B. Unions will defeat conservatives.
- C. Conservatives do not stand up for working people. They should.
- D. Unions and conservatives can paradoxically work hand in hand.

2. True or False? Justify your choice with your own words /9 points

A. The Tories lost the latest by-election because their program was not as good as that of Labour. T F /2 points

B. David Lammy's declarations are inconsistent with his former political commitment. T F /2 points

C. The Labour party has been supportive of the latest strikes in the UK
 T F /1 point

D. Unions want to be a third political party in British politics. T F
/2 points

E. According to Owen Jones, Starmer's Labour is more progressive than Tony Blair's New Labour. T F /2 points

II. Essay /10 points

Choose one of the following essay questions and answer it in 350 words (+/- 10%)

A – Are trade unions a thing of the past?

B – Has activism changed in recent years? To what extent?