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JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

IF YOU WANT TO REBUILD BRITAIN, READ ON

WORKERS

“ It’s our power, let’s build and run it

SO OSBORNE went on holiday to China and came back with an agreement to let Chinese companies run our nuclear power stations. This is trumpeted as a win for Britain. In fact, it is an abandonment of national sovereignty and another step towards handing our energy security to foreign interests.

One thing is sure: the proposed link up between China General Nuclear (state-owned) and EDF (85 per cent owned by the French state) to build the Hinckley C nuclear station will not bring any prices down. The British government has agreed to pay between £89.50 and £92.50 per kilowatt-hour – current wholesale rates for electricity are “just” £55 per kilowatt-hour – and to index those rates to inflation. It’s a licence to print money.

Nor will the deal solve the looming gap between the energy we need and the energy we can generate. Hinckley C will take at least a decade to build. A report from the Royal Academy of Engineering, published last month, says that as early as December 2015 Britain will be at risk of power cuts.

We’ve got the European Union to thank for that – by the end of December 2015 its Large Combustion Plant Directive will have forced 11 gigawatts of coal-fired power stations to close (losing capacity equivalent to more than three Hinckley Cs).

And it’s not even certain that the European Union will agree to the government’s Hinckley deal. Brussels has the power to stop the plan if it rules that its competition rules are being broken. You’d almost think Brussels wants our lights to go out.

All that leaves aside the question of whether workers will be able to afford to switch on their electricity anyway. With further price increases in the pipeline for the winter, a recent report by WHICH? revealed how energy prices have risen much more than the rate of inflation – by 137 per cent for gas and 66 per cent for electricity since 2001. Before the rises announced in October the average cost of gas and electricity per household was £118 a month, £1,420 a year.

The energy market is dominated by six companies – British Gas, EDF, E.ON, npower, Scottish Power and SSE. Last year these six companies made £3.7 billion profit.

EDF says on its website that the new power station at Hinckley will bring 5,000 new jobs to Somerset. How many of them will go to Somerset, or even British, people, rather than to French and Chinese specialists?

Britain cannot let its energy be controlled from outside this country. A demand that British workers must be trained to build and run any new power stations would be a first step towards asserting our own control. ■

Cover image Sweet Lana/shutterstock.com



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Lockout blackmail at Ineos

SWISS-BASED multinational Ineos (the world's fourth largest chemicals company) imposed what amounts to a lockout on its Grangemouth oil refinery and petrochemical plant – demanding a no-strike agreement, a degrading of wages and pensions and threatening closure (as WORKERS went to press).

The union Unite called off a strike over victimisation planned for 20 October "in the national interest" and "in order to protect this national asset from the scandalous behaviour of its owner", saying the reckless full shutdown could risk destroying the plant.

Now SNP leader Alex Salmond has asked Unite to sign a no-strike agreement with the company, which moved its HQ out of Britain three years ago. Ineos was accused at the time by the TUC of trying to save £406 million in tax over five years.

Alf Young pointed out in THE SCOTSMAN that the financial crash of 2008 had reduced Ineos founder Jim Radcliffe's personal fortune from £3.3 billion to £150 million. One result was the 2011 formation of Petroineos, a 50:50 joint venture with PetroChina (part of the China National Petroleum Corporation). Petroineos combines the refining operation at Grangemouth with Ineos's other refinery near Marseille, France. One possibility is a sell-out of its stake in these refining operations to China in order to concentrate on the core Ineos chemicals business. That scenario, and even the current shutdown, compromises the viability of BP's Kinneil plant nearby. Oil and gas from the central North Sea fields are delivered there for processing, refining and export, utilising steam and energy from the power station in the Grangemouth Ineos site. Kinneil accounts for nearly 40 per cent of the entire oil production in Britain. ■



Workers on the picket line at Ineos, Grangemouth, in April 2008, fighting for their pensions. Now the company is threatening permanent closure of this vital piece of Britain's infrastructure

RETAIL

More holiday opening

MORRISON'S SUPERMARKET has joined Tesco, Sainsbury's and Asda in opening its stores on Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Until this year Morrison's graciously allowed their workers a two-day break at Christmas, but not any longer.

After the Olympics allowed supermarkets, shops and retailers to open for effectively unrestricted hours, the four big supermarket chains are now squeezing their staff to try and mop up every penny possible from Christmas shoppers.

Perhaps the decision to open at Christmas really reflects Morrison's falling behind in their takings compared to the other big three supermarkets, with greed not customer demand being the real driving force behind all four contenders. ■

HOUSING

Harrow wants its tenants out

TORY-LED HARROW council in northwest London is offering up to £38,000 to council tenants if they move out of council properties into the private housing market – and anywhere in the world will do.

In a futile attempt to resolve the housing crisis in northwest London – the borough has just 5,000 homes and a further 4,000 people on its waiting lists – the council is trying to bribe people to move out of the borough, out of London, with even the suggestion of moving overseas.

In a more practical suggestion – but one the government will not countenance – the London Assembly's Housing Committee has called for the suspension of the "right to buy" for newly built council homes. ■

Photo: Workers

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

EUROBRIEFS

The latest from Brussels

Stuck with the treaties

CAMERON SAID recently he wants to "claw back" competences (powers) from the EU. In response, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said the only way to reform the EU was to review the EU's body of laws, the "acquis", on a case-by-case basis.

He continued; "The other one is to have a fundamental discussion about the competences of the EU... the second approach is doomed to failure... Britain wants to again consider the option of opting out. Fine, let's discuss it but to put into question the whole acquis of Europe is not very reasonable... the exercise of repatriation of competences... means revising the treaties and revision means unanimity."

Neither Cameron nor Barroso wants to say that any change to the treaties means referenda. They know the EU has no hope of winning them. They dare not risk repeating the last fiasco over altering the EU constitution. They're stuck.

Assault on Greece

THE EU is attacking and destroying Greece: 28 per cent unemployment, 58 per cent youth unemployment. Since 2008 GDP is down by a quarter and debt up from 120 per cent to 175 percent of GDP, 321 billion euros.

The IMF has forecast that Greece will need to cut a further 6.7 billion euros (3.5 per cent of GDP) by 2016. The EU is destroying Greece as surely as NATO destroyed Yugoslavia. The German ruling class knows that the Greek people supported the people of Yugoslavia when NATO attacked and dismembered it.

Ireland cuts again...

IRELAND'S LATEST budget includes a further 2.5 billion euros in cuts – reducing pensions, healthcare, and unemployment benefits for young people. The Irish Central Bank has cut its growth forecast for 2013 from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent, warning the government not to relax its "austerity" (poverty) programme.

...as Portugal wields the axe once more
PORTUGAL'S LATEST "austerity" budget has cut a further 3.2 billion euros from pensions and public sector wages, and increased the retirement age. The government admits that this year's deficit will be 5.9 per cent of GDP rather than the targeted 5.5 per cent. ■



Teachers across London, the South East, Cumbria, the North East and South West struck on 17 October in protest over pay, pensions and jobs. Around 3,500 schools were wholly or partially closed in this second regional joint NUT and NASUWT action. In London around three-quarters of schools closed, and around 15,000 teachers marched (above).

Photo: Workers

Unison in credit union link-up

WELFARE SERVICES provided by Unison to its membership in the public services are being overwhelmed by members in hock to payday lenders, credit sharks and other usurers. In an attempt to combat this, the union has entered into an agreement with over 100 credit unions to try and develop alternative loan arrangements for tens of thousands of workers, not only the low paid, who are seeing their pay packets slashed by inflation, zero pay increases and vultures turning poverty into private fortunes.

Analysis by Unison has identified companies like Everyday Loans Limited, controlled by major Conservative party donor Henry Angest, which offers unsecured loans of between £500 and £10,000 at 74.8 per cent interest. At the same time Arbuthnot Latham, a private bank in which Angest owns a majority stake, has offered a £5 million loan to the Conservative party at 3.5 per cent interest. Angest, a former Conservative party treasurer, has contributed £7 million to the party in loans and donations.

Meanwhile, Conservative party donor and advisor Adrian Beecroft runs Dawn Capital Investments, a private investor fund with a major stake in high-profile payday lender Wonga. Wonga's turnover has trebled to almost £185 million in the last year.

High-cost lending companies often rely on the high street banks for funding and set up costs – at the same time as high street banks refuse to provide credit directly to those on lower incomes. These include RBS and Lloyds TSB, recipients of billions in publicly funded bail-outs.

About seven million people on the lowest incomes – a quarter of the working population – cannot access credit from mainstream financial institutions (Department of Work and Pensions figures). The Parliamentary Commission on Banking Standards recently noted the way in which many individuals and geographical areas are poorly served by the banks, leaving many with little choice but to turn to payday and other high-cost lenders when they need to borrow.

Some payday/high cost lenders are targeting women. Get Sameday Loans, for example, offers loans at 2,957.3 per cent APR and presents these in the context of the gender struggle as making women financially independent – but totally debt-ridden! All but one of the ten largest lenders specifically offering payday loans saw their turnover more than double in just three years, according to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism – with one US-owned company growing 42 times in size in three years (see <http://tinyurl.com/m25ff9k>)

The ten biggest payday lending companies have a total turnover of nearly £800 million. In 2010 these companies had a combined turnover of just £313 million. At the start of the 2007-8 recession just one company had turnover of more than £50 million. Now there are four companies with turnovers substantially over £100 million. The struggle for adequate wages is the only answer. ■

Higher ed. votes for action

ACADEMIC, ADMINISTRATIVE and technical staff in their respective unions (UCU, Unison and Unite) are taking strike action on Thursday 31 October in their fight for improved pay across higher education. It's the first time that all three unions will be taking action together, and reflects a growing anger at what is happening to the sector.

Academics' real wages have fallen by 13 per cent since 2008, the largest sustained wage cut of any profession since the Second World War. On top of this, higher education has been using zero hours contracts for many years to squeeze the maximum out of hourly-paid lecturing staff.

The reduction of wage levels for administrative and technical staff has been as savage, with thousands on pay levels just above the minimum wage for undertaking a range of skilled roles.

Universities have used the new fees system to build up a cumulative operating surplus in the higher education sector of over £1 billion, and many higher education institutions have built up cash reserves. Meanwhile, overall staff costs in higher education, as a proportion of expenditure, have fallen from 58 per cent in 2001-02 to 55.5 per cent in 2011-12. But the pay of university bosses has soared, with the average vice chancellor paid £250,000 per year and the highest over £400,000.

Across the sector a light is dawning: "The employer is taking the piss and we won't stand for it." The strike day announcement was greeted with the usual "this will hurt the students" response from vice chancellors. But in several institutions students will be wearing badges supporting their staff, and in others joining the picket line. It is time for everyone working in the sector to point out that valuing the staff in the sector is one key step in protecting students. (See last month's *WORKERS* for who is really hurting students). ■



UCU members in action last year over pensions.

Andrew Wiard/www.andrew-wiard.info

WHAT'S ON

Coming soon

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 12 November, 7.30pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.

"Free movement of labour: modern day slavery"

CPBML public meeting. Free movement of labour is one of the cornerstones of the European Union. And it's a dagger aimed at the labour movement's heart. Come and discuss. Everybody welcome.

LIBRARIES

Birmingham pays the price

BIRMINGHAM has a new, impressive public library, the Library of Birmingham, opened in September by schoolgirl Malala Yousafzai. Yet, at the same time, branch libraries around the city are being run down. A survey of their fabric estimated that repairs totalling £4 million were needed; the council allocated £236,000. Meanwhile, PFI capital charges for the new library will cost the people of Birmingham £7 million a year for the next forty years.



This situation is repeated around the country: in Newcastle, Liverpool, Brighton and many other cities, councils find themselves able to borrow for new projects, so that the government can claim that all is well, while the network of branch and community libraries is run down.

According to the authoritative PUBLIC LIBRARIES NEWS website, 366 libraries (323 buildings and 43 mobiles) are under threat or have been closed or handed over to volunteers since April this year. In 2012-2013 we lost 201, and 130 in the year 2011-2012.

At the end of September members of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals voted decisively in favour of a motion of no-confidence in the minister responsible for libraries, Ed Vaizey – its first ever – and pledged to work with unions and campaign groups against cuts and closures. ■

SYRIA

US supports terrorism

UN SECURITY COUNCIL Resolution 1373, of 28 September 2001, called on all states "to refrain from organising, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in another state." Yet the USA and its allies Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, are all organising, instigating, assisting and participating in terrorist acts in Syria.

On 17 September, President Obama waived a provision in the federal law that forbids arming terrorist groups. This is to admit that it has been arming, and will continue to arm, foreign terrorist groups in Syria. These groups, currently, are devoting their efforts to killing each other, as well as their usual cowardly assaults on the Syrian people.

The WASHINGTON POST said on 25 September 2013, "... 11 of the biggest armed factions repudiated the Western-backed opposition coalition and announced the formation of an alliance dedicated to creating an Islamist state. The al-Qaeda-

affiliated Jabhat al-Nusra, designated a terrorist organization by the United States, is the lead signatory of the new group..."

On 10 September, the Syrian government welcomed a Russian proposal calling on Syria to place all its chemical weapons under international control and for the weapons to be destroyed. This led to a barrage of threats from the US, French and British governments. French President Hollande called for a new UN Security Council resolution authorising an attack if Syria failed to hand over its chemical weapons.

But now Syria is supposed to demonstrate the virtually impossible. They will have to prove to the US, French and British governments that they have handed over every last chemical weapon.

Remember Iraq? Even when the UN inspectors had found no weapons of mass destruction there, the US, French and British governments insisted that there were still some hidden somewhere, and even after they had attacked and occupied the whole country, they were still not satisfied that Iraq had fully complied with the UN's demands. ■

Next year's referendum can become an opportunity for the British working class to rebuild and revitalise our country...

The Battle for Britain: workers take steps to defeat separatism and build unity

WITH 12 MONTHS to go until voters in Scotland are asked to say Yes or No to the referendum question "Should Scotland be an independent country?", the bulk of Britons have no say in an issue vital to their future – the possible break up of their nation. A recent poll of British opinion outside Scotland has 53 per cent rejecting separation. The same poll within Scotland points to the effectiveness of the growing campaign against the separatists, maintaining a healthy lead – 44 per cent no with the separatist yes at 25 per cent. Among those "certain to vote" 52 per cent are against, with 28 per cent in favour.

The resulting large numbers of those undecided, the volatility of polling and danger of low turnout on the day, means hard work must be done to win this argument decisively. By re-uniting British workers and the trade union movement we have the potential to reverse our impoverishment and to rebuild and transform Britain.

Such unity should be a foregone conclusion. After all it was the Britain-wide solidarity, forged in adversity by trade unions in the 19th century, that was the biggest factor in creating British society, pulling together the threads of social and cultural interaction, creating a British nation. Separatists are blind to this development; their minds leap from feudal myth straight to the present day. And it was the hopes and demands of our common struggle against Nazism in World War 2 that gave birth to the all-Britain provision of education, healthcare and arts funding that workers strive to defend today.

Unions join 'no' campaign

A potentially strong and decisive working class and its trade union movement is threatened by a permanent split. Recognising this, a growing number of unions are taking their responsibility for class unity seriously. They have argued for – and won in their conferences – opposition to the break up of Britain and support for affiliation the No campaign organisation, Better Together, and its specialist section

for unions, Work Together.

Albeit small, these unions are embedded in the industrial working class and its struggles. The train drivers of ASLEF were the first, in May of this year, followed by Community, which represents workers in the steel industry. USDAW – the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers – came on board and the National Union of Mineworkers signalled its support too.

The ASLEF conference was unanimous in its support of the No campaign, with one speaker arguing that the referendum should be Britain-wide and not be just among Scottish voters. Their Scottish Secretary, Kevin Lindsay, commented, "We believe the protection of pensions, public services and vital industry is best achieved by working people in Scotland working with people from across the UK."

Community's Scottish Officer, John-Paul McHugh, said, "Workers across the whole UK stand united in solidarity. Whether we are from Glasgow, Grimsby or Glamorgan, we know that by working together we can achieve so much more than we could apart. The complete failure of the SNP to support the Scottish steel industry when contracts were being handed out for the Forth Road Bridge replacement was a taste of what life would be like in a separate Scotland."

USDAW points to its Annual Delegate Meeting having "overwhelmingly rejected the arguments used to advance the case for separation." It had reached its policy "by carefully considering the evidence for and against independence" and concluded that it "does not accept that the lives of our members will be improved if Scotland becomes independent, and this is why we are joining with other like-minded organisations in the Better Together campaign to make a positive and strong case for Scotland remaining part of the UK family."

USDAW's list of "10 Reasons Why Scotland is Better being Part of the UK" includes a warning "that an independent Scotland would be required to join the euro", that "800,000 Scots live and work in England and Wales without the need for papers or passports" and that the

"pensions of 1 million Scots are guaranteed by the UK welfare system". Its Scottish Divisional Officer, Lawrence Watson, wrote in *THE SCOTSMAN*, "The challenges and difficulties faced by USDAW members are the same whether they live in Manchester or Motherwell."

The GMB convenor at Babcock Marine, Eric McLeod, wrote for the Work Together campaign, "By being part of the UK we are able to do the work of maintaining and refitting the Royal Navy Fleet. The two aircraft carriers alone mean decades of work at Rosyth. No Ministry of Defence means no more shipbuilding jobs in Scotland."

But a lot of fence-sitting is going on among the larger unions, and the Scottish Trades Union Congress itself only pledges to "enable debate". Others have deferred deciding – for example, the Musicians' Union rejected a "fence-sitting" motion at its July conference; it will decide policy early in 2014. The Communications Workers Union (CWU) is assessing its position after consultative meetings throughout October – with strong arguments against separation to be presented by its executive. These include the warning that "an independent Scotland would not have the capacity to recapitalise banks in the event of another financial collapse on the scale of the one in 2008."

Who bailed out Scottish banks?

In the worst collapse in capitalism since the Great Depression, it was Britain's taxpayers that bailed out the Scottish banks.

Speaking for the Better Together campaign, former Chancellor Alistair Darling echoed the CWU remarks: "I had to write out a cheque to bail out RBS. I could do it on the credit of the UK; I could not have done it on the credit of Scotland, because it's not big enough. The Irish Government underwrote its banks. It took the world 20 minutes to realise it couldn't afford it."

No wonder Alex Salmond avoids mention of his much-vaunted "arc of prosperity" – an arc of impoverishment would be the result of an "independence" in Europe that would entail seeking fresh



National unity. Doctors in Glasgow join colleagues around Britain in protest against the chaos of the new appointments system, 2007.

EU membership, with the inevitable condition of joining the euro. Scots would find themselves in a workhouse with Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain. Fevered discussion of other currencies – the goat, old Scots merk or remaining in a sterling zone – all disguise what would be the certainty of being drawn into the euro.

Financing “independence” with “Scotland’s Oil” is a pipe dream, as Brian Wilson and other No campaign analysts have proven. Wilson recently exposed the SNP’s admission that oil and gas tax revenue is already being used to fund current spending (presumably with an eye to referendum voters). So much, then, for SNP plans to build an “oil fund” to bankroll its separate Scotland. It would take full British backup to finance new oil and gas exploration in increasingly difficult waters. There will be no second oil boom. And the oil and gas market is too volatile to base a new economy upon.

A love affair – with NATO

In response – to help draw up his Economic Plan for Independence – Salmond brings out the heavy canon in the form of Joseph Stiglitz, Clinton’s former US economic policy advisor. His credits include devising the economic break-up of Yugoslavia. That was done with help from the bombs and boots of NATO; that’s an organisation that

would have an enhanced role in a separate Scotland.

The SNP’s quest for a strategic “Nordic identity” would combine defence with trade and diplomacy in yet another “arc” embracing Scandinavia, Iceland and Canada. The “SNP-speak” in its documents uses the tell-tale phrase “the high north” – one straight out of the lexicon of US-NATO strategy. In 2009 a NATO seminar had been held on ‘Security Prospects in the High North’ and a ‘National Security Presidential Directive’ was issued putting the US view of “broad and fundamental national security interests in the Arctic Region”. The VOICE OF RUSSIA interpreted this and a subsequent Nordic Baltic Summit as follows: “Europeans have decided to watch the Russians in the Arctic and how they behave there closely. The idea of creating an Arctic ‘Mini-Nato’ was discussed at the Summit in London... The heightened activity of North Europe is explained by an increased interest in the Arctic and its natural resources.” A separate Scotland would seek to be part of that activity.

It would seem Salmond, to capture the votes of leftists, liberals and some trade unionists, would call for the removal of Trident nuclear submarines (to be shifted – at great expense – a little further down Britain’s west coast) and, in return, agree to an enhanced role for Scotland in NATO.

On a visit to New York on 6 April for Tartan Day (a “day” pushed through the US Senate by Trent Lott, right-wing Republican ally of the SNP), Salmond held talks with US government officials about NATO membership for an independent Scotland, as well as signalling that US bases could be established in Scotland. He was quoted in a SCOTSMAN article that day (“Salmond opens way for US military bases”) saying the bases would be allowed as long as they were non-nuclear.

Presumably, had Scotland been independent, Scots regiments (in keeping with SNP plans for a Scottish Defence Force, crassly synonymous with the pro-Nazi “Scottish Defence Force” of the 1930s) would now be fighting alongside al-Qaeda “rebels” in Syria. Remember it was an all-British vote that kept us out of war last month and “gave peace a chance”.

Official aid for separatists

The SNP and Yes campaign are using the machinery of Scottish government and hundreds of civil servants – all funded by tax payments of workers of Britain – to give advice and draw up plans and “white papers” for these defence and domestic fantasies. UK Foreign Office officials are already facilitating a semi-autonomous

Continued on page 8



Photo: Workers

Referendum meeting in Clydebank in October, organised by the local trades council. Speakers for working class unity were shouted down.

Continued from page 7

foreign policy conducted with relish by Salmond and his ministers. Witness Li Keqiang (now China's Premier) being received first at a "state banquet" in Edinburgh Castle by Alex Salmond in 2011. And over 50 diplomats from countries around the world invited to the SNP conference.

The Yes campaign has more than double the resources of those arguing for British unity. Brian Wilson pointed out in *THE SCOTSMAN* in August: "The place has gone mad when the Scottish civil service is being used to formulate and communicate hypothetical policies to be pursued by a hypothetical government in a hypothetical state. But the politicisation process is now so advanced that even the most flagrant abuses pass without comment – least of all from those entrusted with defending the integrity of civil servants."

Myth building

How did we get into this mess? Why did a once united working class allow this to happen? The answers could fill a book. Some go back a long way: the Roman

empire tried to destroy the united resistance of Brigantes and Picts by building walls – we must not permit new borders within Britain! Two different currencies and two different immigration systems would inevitably lead to this.

"Braveheart" myth building has distorted history. Even William Wallace was seen in the 19th century as quite a British rebel, more along the lines of Wat Tyler the peasant revolt leader. Then came separate identity spearheaded by new words. Historian Vanessa Collingridge clarifies how the description of anything within Britain as "Celtic" only started after a 1706 language categorisation: "And where there were no historical or cultural precedents to draw upon, sometimes Celtic 'traditions' were simply made up." (from *Celtomania*, a chapter in her book *BOUDICA*).

In the 20th century misleading comparisons with the struggle for Irish independence led activists like John MacLean into the cul-de-sac of seeking a "Scottish Workers Republic" and the STUC into advocating "Home Rule".

With such thinking about, it was easy to divert the bold assertiveness of Scottish industrial workers that grew in the 1960s and resulted in such actions as the work-in

at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders (UCS) in 1971-2. This became a prototype for dozens of work-ins and occupations all over Britain in the years immediately following.

An alarmed capitalist class played on backward thinking to divert a potentially powerful movement into fake nationalism – channelling it into the harmless (to capitalism) Campaign for a Scottish Assembly. The fantasy of leading trade unionists was that it would become a "Workers' Parliament" – a line of thought continued recently in the 40th anniversary film about UCS, which ended with views of the Scottish Parliament, as if this was some kind of achievement growing out of the work-in.

Industrial workers take lead

When such dreams are punctured, rage can follow, as witnessed at one of the most disorderly public meetings of recent decades in Clydebank Town Hall last month. Packed with separatists and their ultraleft cheerleaders, the speakers for British class unity were shouted down and screeched at. Richard Leonard of the GMB union could hardly be heard in his attempt to advocate class thinking above Scottish nationalist thinking.

Anas Sarwar tried to explain he was born here when it was shouted that he should follow the example of his grandfather who had fought for Pakistan's independence. A London woman who spoke up from the audience for the 300 years of developing British unity had the microphone snatched from her and someone shouted "Go home b--ch".

It was brave of Clydebank Trades Council to mount the event; but the town, once a heartland of heavy industry, is now a shadow of its former self. The solidarity outlook of the previous generations of industrial workers would have made it much more difficult for such separatist thinking to prevail. In seeking to rebuild Britain's industrial base anew, we will create not just wealth but collective social thought. It is significant that it is the industrial trade unions that have taken the lead in opposing the break up of Britain.

The No to Separation campaign website is www.bettertogether.net ■

After more than two centuries, capitalism has decided it doesn't really need to know what's going on in Britain – and that the census should go...

Who's counting? Not the government...

IN 1801 BRITAIN held its first census. At that time, as an industrial nation emerged, there was an understanding that the country needed to know how many mouths it had to feed, what the workforce might be, how many people might be available for the armed forces, and so on.

More than 200 years later, capitalism has decided it no longer needs to know such things. In a consultation put out by Francis Maude, one of the last survivors from the Thatcher cabinets, it proposes instead online surveys and the use of other existing government-collected data.

The trained enumerators who went from house to house for each census will be replaced by SurveyMonkey. Though the cost of the census is cited as the reason, in reality, as ever, it is not about money. The FINANCIAL TIMES estimates the entire Office for National Statistics budget for the current financial year is about 0.03 per cent of total public spending – or about 6p a person per week.

Since the latter half of the 20th century the collection of data has never been important to government. Thatcher's Rayner Review cut statistical services by a quarter, while in 2006 the Blair government moved the Office from London to Newport in south Wales, losing many experienced staff in the process. Yet the

Extract from the 1901 census (Edinburgh).

2011 census showed that there were almost half a million more people living in Britain than estimates based on other data sources had suggested. Our ability to understand, as a nation, who lives here,

and who has come here from abroad, is at stake.

Statisticians consider the census as a way of linking up the information obtained from many other sources to provide small-area statistics which enable the planning of education, healthcare, public transport, etc. So if the census were to be abandoned, our ability to understand health inequalities, for example, would suffer. We would not know how many bedrooms there are, nor how many people occupy them, how many graduates are available for employment in a particular part of the country, and so on.

Presumably the capitalists and their politicians today consider that population and public services – like everything else – can be left to the “Market”, so really what need is there for planning based on the needs of the population?

Cancellation of the 2011 census was seriously considered when the coalition government crept into power in 2010, but plans were too far advanced. The last time a census was cancelled was in 1941, when we were at war with fascism. Information from the previous 1931 census provided support for many of the gains won in the peace, the NHS and education. Will the dictatorship of finance capital we now live under be permitted to stop the next one? ■



CPBML/Workers

Public Meeting, London
Tuesday 12 November, 7.30 pm
“Free movement of labour:
modern day slavery”

Bertrand Russell Room, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL. Nearest tube Holborn.

Free movement of labour is one of the cornerstones of the European Union. And it's a dagger aimed at the labour movement's heart. Come and discuss. Everybody welcome.

When care hospitals closed, promises were made to patients – and broken...

Are people valued?

DARENTH PARK, a vast Victorian building near Dartford in Kent, opened its doors in 1878 for people with special needs or for those deemed socially unrespectable – such as young unmarried girls seen as bringing shame on their families, people who were slow learners or people who were seen to be the “village idiots”. Many children were left at the hospital gates with just their name and date of birth while their families moved and left no forwarding address.

By 1970 the population within the institution had grown to 1,500 across 40 wards, 10 of which each contained more than 50 residents.

In August 1988 the last of the residents – all promised they would be moving once and only once – were transferred and the hospital finally closed its doors. Around the country, other similar institutions were being shut in the same way.

Many residents from Darenth were housed at centres designed for them, for example Bassets Close in Bromley, south London – bungalows in quiet surroundings that could house eight to ten residents all with similar needs and abilities, which was a huge improvement from what they’d had and how they used to live. They were told it would be their home for life.

At the heart of the bungalows was a centre that housed doctors, a dentist, a restaurant, art rooms, cookery rooms and sensory rooms, all of these there to cater for people with learning disabilities.

Staff, nurses and carers were all trained to look after the clients. Staff of all levels knew the clients well and after many years all became a large family. Many days out and holidays were enjoyed.

A choice?

In March 2001 the Government introduced a White Paper VALUING PEOPLE, which set out four key principles: Civil rights, Independence, Choice, Inclusion. In its opening statement we find: “People with



Up the garden path? Many Darenth Park residents were told they had a home for the rest of their lives at Bassets Close, Bromley (pictured above) – then the council sold off the accommodation and transferred the residents to private providers.

Photo: Workers

learning disabilities are amongst the most vulnerable and have a choice who cares for them.” What does this mean for the people who had come from places like Darenth Park to the centres like Bassets Close that were created to care for them? In fact, Bassets Close was closed and the staff and residents moved to a private provider.

Some 210,000 people have severe learning disabilities in England alone, and about 1.2 million a mild to moderate disability. Health and social services expenditure on services for adults with learning disabilities stands at around £3 billion.

The White Paper says that day services are often not tailored to the needs and abilities of individuals, but instead of improving and updating these day centres they have been closing too. In the borough of Bromley, for example, five centres have closed in the past five years!

In July 2008 private providers, many of them charity-run organisations, took over the care for people with learning disabilities. One such private provider, which took over the residents from Bassets Close, stated it was “realistic about people’s hopes and needs and will go the extra mile”, but also bragged “we quickly became experts in managing the very difficult transition successfully”.

It failed to mention that the staff it agreed to take over with the residents would be made redundant 18 months after the transition – to be replaced on night

shifts by cheap immigrant labour, causing the residents to endure a night-time raid by armed police looking for illegal workers.

The same provider has now lost the tender for financial assistance for a third of its homes to companies that claim they can deliver care at a lower cost still. But at what cost to vulnerable adults?

The grim results of government policy are to be seen all over the country. One worker at a care home, speaking under the condition of anonymity, told WORKERS of an institution where residents were isolated in their own bedsits with their door locked. Staff who challenged this were asked, “Do you leave your front door open?” Wheelchair dependent residents were placed on first floor bedsits but have never been given emergency fire evacuation chairs in case of a fire despite many requests by the fire department.

At the same institution, the worker said, residents unable to do their own shopping went hungry because staff were told if they went shopping without the resident, even if the resident was ill, they would face disciplinary action. Staffing levels have been kept low to increase the provider’s profits by installing technology which failed to work, meaning that seizures went unnoticed, leading to emergency services being called.

Are the people with no voice being heard, do they feel safe and valued by being sold off to the lowest bidder in a race to the bottom? ■

Almost the entire political establishment, from coalition and Labour leaders to the TUC, may all unite to hold back the tide of opinion demanding a referendum. We must stop them...

Why we need an EU referendum now

THANKS TO the rare success of a private member's bill (304 to 0 – Labour and Lib Dems largely stayed away), Cameron has been forced to offer a conditional referendum on the EU in 2017: conditional on his party getting back into power in 2015. The question will be “Do you think Britain should remain in the EU?” Cameron himself made it clear he would vote to stay in.

In fact almost the entire political establishment from coalition and Labour leaders to the TUC may all unite to hold back the tide of opinion demanding a referendum. Those who have their snouts in the EU trough don't want to take the risk of losing their tasty pigswill.

Some try to say we have had the debate on Europe ever since 1973 after Heath took us in. But how many people under 55 feel they have had the chance to say what they think of the EU now? There are many ways of closing down debate and one is to say we have talked about that enough.

Unions in their sights

The unions managed to put off – for the time being – the EU-inspired recommendations in the Beecroft Report, welcomed by Vince Cable, for collective bargaining at a national level to be terminated and for unfair dismissal rules to be abolished, to be replaced with simple notice of redundancy.

But the EU's sights are still fixed on our trade unions. In Brussels they call it “High Noon for Social Europe”, the moment of truth. In the Eurozone as a whole, according to the Eurobarometer poll, the number who do not trust the EU has doubled, including 68 per cent of Brits. Only 15 per cent in Britain support the euro. The Spanish minister Barroso calls us “political extremists” and “populists”. All the Commission can respond with is more proposals for wage erosion, copying the Irish and the Latvians

This article is an edited version of a speech given at a CPBML public meeting in London in September.



Photo: Workers

The headquarters of the European Commission, Brussels

– such a success story with their wage cuts, job losses, low growth!

So long as we remain in the EU – whether in the euro or not – we will be subject to the same pressures as those in the eurozone. Ideas which have flowed from Europe include automatic wage indexation controlled by employers, the discouraging of workers from comparing wages with company profits, local pay setting, the notion of the “working poor”, tax breaks for living wage employers, living wage cities, living wage zones sponsored by Christian charities, and Fairness Commissions promoted by Labour and lazy trade unions...

Non-working class organisations have sprung up in the vacuum left by the unions, and the implication is: don't bother with unions, we'll get you a minimum wage (though it will have no legal force), and no more bargaining, no

more fighting for what you collectively decide you are worth.

These patronising ideas are alien to British working class traditions. They are designed to eradicate class consciousness and struggle, and encourage dependency, fulfilling the aims of the Commission as set out in various papers. Who is to say what we need to live on, other than workers banding together? We are allowing ourselves to be taken back to the 1800s.

There is no longer any excuse for refusing to acknowledge that the so-called freedom of movement, including movement of labour – immigration, economic migration – is essentially about suppressing wages, the first and most primitive attack of capitalism on the working class.

Continued on page 12



Photo: European Council

The European Council, Brussels, where ministers meet to rubber-stamp decisions.

Continued from page 11

No wages, maximum profit, is the logic of capitalism. No one should be surprised at the revelations of zero hours contracts. The lowering of wages is not just incidental to membership of the EU, not merely an unfortunate spin-off – it is deliberate, it is one of the things the EU was created for.

Proclaiming itself above the nations of Europe, the European Union is a mechanism for maintaining a perpetual army of cheap foreign labour to add to the British pool of unemployed, which historically was always engineered from time to time to restore profits.

In the process, standards are lowered,

including professional qualifications. Higher national standards than the EU norm are regarded as anti-competitive. Distance learning rather than hands-on training, is a tool to normalise cross-border activity.

“Freedom of movement” is actually a myth. The movement is real enough – but the freedom is an illusion!

Why stick with it?

With all this evidence before them, why do our unions stubbornly cling to the EU?

Opinion polls during the year show a majority may vote NO should there be a referendum – but not a big enough majority to enable us to rest on our laurels. If anything the polls show that we

have much work to do to convince a significant minority. And at TUC conferences no union, even the RMT, has yet dared risk defeat by proposing an exit from the EU.

Our Party says “Referendum Now!”, sooner rather than later. It is a long time to wait till 2017 and a lot can happen in that time – the Scottish referendum, and both European and British elections. All who want independence for Britain, the restoration of Britain’s borders, manufacturing, and housing that young people can afford, are allies in this referendum, and should not be denigrated. There are waverers too, frightened by dire warnings of loss of jobs and trade – for which there is no evidence. Although the phrase is “trade with Europe”, we still trade with individual member states.

Employment rights

As for loss of employment rights enshrined in the Social Chapter, or protective directives such as the Working Time Directive, these have been shown to be an illusion, or at best problematic and unsuited to the particular situations British workers and service providers face.

We must seek to inspire confidence that there can be a future outside the EU. We should think carefully about all the different sorts of people that make up the working class, and why they think the way they do, including small manufacturers fighting for survival in the teeth of the transnationals. Many SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) want to leave the EU, then negotiate a trade deal with it.

Contemplating the stages people go through towards grasping the implications of the EU, and how hostility to it has deepened over the years, we get a mental flash of the EU as a 21st-century version of Dante’s Inferno, with its nine Circles of Hell.

Dante is taken on a journey of increasing political awareness of the greed, fraud, treachery and violence among the politicians of his day. He is accompanied by his guide, the Roman

poet Virgil, who first shows him a roomful of uncommitted people, including philosophers, writers and academics – the chattering classes of the ancient world. They are in Limbo, a sort of anteroom to Hell, unable to make up their minds which side they are on, if any.

Is that still the state of half the working class? Are people cynical, inured to corruption everywhere? At home they see MPs, police, judges, bankers. But how much more difficult it is to root out corruption thousands of miles away.

Are some sections still uncommitted because they see the EU merely as a bureaucratic irritant rather than a serious danger? Those early bureaucratic directives – the size of the British pint, the precise curvature of bananas – were really the opening salvos in the attack on our sovereignty. (And no laughing matter for one greengrocer, the so-called metric martyr, who was driven to suicide.)

Do workers believe that the more unpalatable aspects of the EU can be sweetened, reformed?

Competences

It is clear already from Hague's Balance of Competences Review that the government will get the answers it wants. It's obvious that if they only consult big corporate groups like the CBI, or the Russell Group of universities, or the TUC, they are bound to get broad support for staying in. But this exercise does not reach the worker in the street, or the rank and file union members trying to protect their jobs. It is intended to obstruct and reconfigure popular opinion before the referendum.

The TUC questions Hague's methodology, but clings to the old illusions: More Social Europe please. Please sir, can we have some more? Pathetic supplication! Frances O'Grady at Congress says: "Stick together and neoliberalism will take its last gasp." What do they think the EU is about?

Cameron's renegotiation and repatriation of competences will yield negligible results. He will return from Berlin waving a piece of paper. There will be protection for bankers, nothing for

workers. Immigration, crime and red tape will be mentioned, but not resolved.

Re-negotiation will not touch the fundamentals of overarching EU power such as free movement of labour. We may yet need to consider ways of leaving without a referendum. Labour and the Lib Dems will be able to oppose a referendum on the grounds that there has been no material change in our relationship with the EU.

This masks the fact that the material change took place years ago, with the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties intended as the definitive blow against the concept of a sovereign nation. This should be the referendum on the EU Constitution, the referendum we never had. It should be the British people's judgement on the weasel way our governments have wriggled out of consulting their people.

The legacy of Thatcherism, the lifting of exchange controls, paved the way for EU liberalisation, for Germany's success. The EU with its rules on state aid and procurement did the opposite of liberating Britain. It has attempted to force

the break-up of British industry – war by other means.

In the real world (as opposed to Dante's vision) it is not the rich and greedy, the warmongers, the fraudsters, the traitors who are suffering, it is the exploited working class.

So, where are we today? We know that democracy plays no part within the EU. Britain should take a leaf out of Iceland's book, where both parties recently campaigned and voted against EU membership. Their foreign minister said: "This is how democracy works."

We are now out of the comfort zone of Hell's waiting room, but not so far down the pit that we can't get out. However, first the working class has to recognise how grim the alternative will be. Make the connections. Not see just a little piece of the jigsaw and think the other pieces don't matter. To vote out, they have to want to get out.

We have a duty, in our unions and other organisations, to act the guide like Virgil to show the doubters why they must get out. ■

Meet the Party

The Communist Party of Britain's new series of London public meetings continues on Tuesday 12 November, 4 March 2014, 5 June, 14 October and 18 November; all are held in the Bertrand Russell room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London WC1R 4RL, nearest Tube Holborn, and start at 7.30 pm. Other meetings are held around Britain. All meetings are advertised in What's On, see page 5.

M The theme of the meeting on Tuesday 12 November, is: "Free movement of labour: modern day slavery". Details of further meetings will be announced in WORKERS and at www.workers.org.uk.

M The Party's annual London May Day rally is always held on May Day itself, regardless of state bank holidays – in 2014, Thursday 1 May, in Conway Hall, Holborn. There will also be May Day meetings elsewhere in the country.

M As well as our regular public meetings we hold informal discussions with interested workers and study sessions for those who want to take the discussion further. If you are interested we want to hear from you. Call us on 020 8801 9543 or e-mail to info@workers.org.uk

A report for the UN makes trenchant criticisms of the kind of economic policy that underpins the banker-driven economies of the west – but the Stiglitz Report is still in thrall to its desire to stay within capitalism and a system of private profit.

Against economic liberalism, but still in thrall to market fundamentalism

THE STIGLITZ REPORT: REFORMING THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY AND FINANCIAL SYSTEMS IN THE WAKE OF THE GLOBAL CRISIS, by Joseph E. Stiglitz and members of a UN Commission of financial experts, paperback, 204 pages, ISBN 9781595585202, The New Press, 2012, £12.99.

In 2008, the President of the UN General Assembly, Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, convened an international committee of 20 financial experts, chaired by Joseph Stiglitz, to address the crisis and its impact on development. This is valuable because the General Assembly, the one inclusive international body, is far more democratic and representative than the G20 or the G8.

The Commission forecast, “those who have benefited from existing arrangements will resist fundamental reforms”. As Stiglitz notes in his January 2010 preface, “In most countries, the financial sector has successfully beaten back attempts at key regulatory and institutional reforms. The financial sector is more concentrated; the problems of moral hazard are worse. Global imbalances remain unabated.” Many financial institutions are still “too big to fail”. As the Commission observes, “In many countries, the financial system had grown too large; it had ceased to be a means to an end and had become an end in itself.”

The Commission remarks, “At the global level, some international institutions continue to recommend policies, such as financial sector deregulation and capital market liberalization, that are now recognized as having contributed to the creation and rapid diffusion of the crisis.”

Too many governments are still wedded to market fundamentalism, even though “cutbacks in investments in infrastructure, education, and technology will slow growth”. As the Commission points out, “the EU is imposing pro-cyclical policies on the enlargement countries, including wage and expenditure reductions in the public sector”.

The Commission notes that the present system of flexible exchange rates “has proven to be unstable, incompatible with global full employment, and inequitable”. “Developing countries are, in effect, lending



Image: shutterstock.com

Too many governments are wedded to “market fundamentalism”, says the report.

to developed countries large amounts at low interest rates – \$3.7 trillion in 2007” – far more than the aid they get back.

It observes that “in some countries, there has been excessive focus on saving bankers, bank shareholders, and bondholders instead of on protecting taxpayers and greater focus on saving financial institutions than on resuming credit flows”. This has caused “a massive redistribution of wealth from ordinary taxpayers to those bailed out”.

As the Commission says, “Unregulated market forces have provided incentives not only for under-production of innovative financial products that support social goals but also for the creation of an abundance of financial products with little relevance to meeting social goals.” But regulation is not a sufficient remedy. As the Commission points out, “The incentives faced by public officials, regulators, and elected officials, and the role of money in politics are important antidotes to romantic notions of the efficacy of regulation to correct for market failures.”

The Commission rejects market fundamentalism, the assumption that the market is the solution to every problem,

rather than the problem to every solution. Yet the Commission itself is still in thrall to all too many market dogmas. For example, it writes, “Had the financial sector in richer countries, such as the U.S., performed their critical function of allocating the ample supply of low cost funds to productive uses, the world economy might now be facing a boom rather than today’s economic crisis.” No, financial firms’ “critical function” is to maximise their shareholders’ profits, not to steer investment into production.

Again, the Commission refers to “the pervasive and persistent failure of financial institutions”, and to “market imperfections” and “market failures”. But the market worked: it made shareholders richer, as it is designed solely to do, so it succeeded.

The Commission points out that “in financial markets, private incentives, both at the level of the organization and the individual decision-maker, are often not aligned with social returns”. Why should private incentives be aligned with social returns? The market does not exist to serve society but to maximise private profit, whatever the social effects.

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MIS-MEASURING OUR LIVES, WHY GDP DOESN'T ADD UP: THE REPORT BY THE COMMISSION ON THE MEASUREMENT OF ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL PROGRESS, by Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, paperback, 137 pages, ISBN 978-1-59558-519-6, The New Press, 2010, \$15.95.

THIS SMALL book asks whether Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the most widely used measure of economic activity, is a reliable indicator of economic and social progress. "GDP mainly measures market production, though it has often been treated as if it were a measure of economic well-being," the authors say. They urge "the time is ripe for our measurement system to shift emphasis from measuring economic production to measuring people's well-being." A fine idealist sentiment.

So they suggest looking at households' incomes and consumption, and at the distribution of incomes and consumption; broaden income measures to non-market activities; and attend to subjective and objective dimensions of wellbeing.

The authors note that many of the services people once received from other family members are now commodities bought on the market. "This shift translates into a rise in income as measured in the national accounts and may give a false impression of a change in living standards, while it merely reflects a shift from non-market to market provision of services," they say. At the same time, many services that households produce for themselves are not recognised in official income and production measures, yet they constitute an important aspect of economic activity.

They point out that there are many reasons why market values "cannot be trusted when addressing sustainability issues, and more specifically their environmental component". They conclude that we do indeed need a monetary index of sustainability, as well as an assessment of the stocks of natural and human resources, so that we can check whether we are adding to or depleting them.

Not a hint, then, about different class interests, but the book does expose the fallacy of using the market as a yardstick of value. ■

6 SIX CALLS TO ACTION

Worried about the future of
Britain? Join the CPBML.

Our country is under attack. Every single institution is in decline. The only growth is in unemployment, poverty and war. There is a crisis – of thought, and of deed. The Communist Party of Britain Marxist-Leninist has recently held its 16th Congress, a coming together of the Party to consider the state of Britain and what needs to happen in the future. Here we set out briefly six Calls to Action for the British working class – for a deeper explanation, see www.workers.org.uk.

1: Out of the European Union, enemy to our survival

The European Union represents the dictatorship of finance capital, foreign domination. The British working class must declare our intention to leave the EU.

2: No to the breakup of Britain, defend our national sovereignty

Devolution, and now the threat of separation, are both products of only one thing: de-industrialisation. Any referendum on the break-up of Britain must be held throughout Britain.

3: Rebuild workplace trade union organisation

Unions exist as working members in real workplaces or they become something else entirely – something wholly negative. Take responsibility for your own unions.

4: Fight for pay, vital class battleground

The fight for pay is central to our survival as a class, and must be central to the agenda of our trade unions.

5: Regenerate industry, key to an independent future

The regeneration of industry in Britain is essential to the future of our nation. Our grandparents, and theirs, knew this. We must now reassert it at the centre of class thinking.

6: Build the Party

The task of the Party is singular: to change the ideology of the British working class in order that they make revolution here.

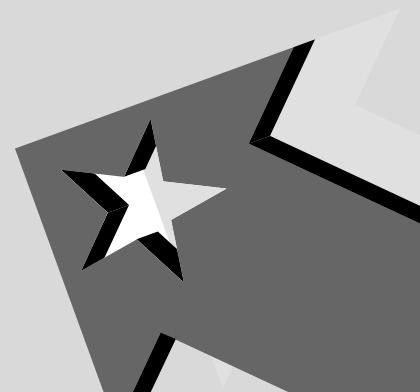
Interested in these ideas?

- Go along to meetings in your part of the country, or join in study to help push forward the thinking of our class. Get in touch to find out how to take part.
- Get a list of our publications by sending an A5 sae to the address below, or by email.
- Subscribe to WORKERS, our monthly magazine, by going to www.workers.org.uk or by sending £15 for a year's issues (cheques payable to WORKERS) to the address below.
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Recovering into the grave

'If this is a recovery, then perhaps it's the only kind of recovery that our moribund capitalism can muster...'

IT'S A FUNNY kind of recovery we are having. The newspapers are full of it. Chancellor Osborne is full of it. So why aren't we all rejoicing?

Osborne is a fool who thinks if he keeps telling us life is improving then we'll be daft enough to believe it, even though it is plainly getting much, much worse. Though if this is a recovery, then perhaps it's the only kind of recovery that our moribund capitalism can muster.

A few facts. First, Britain's industrial production fell in August, its biggest drop for nearly a year, according to figures from the Office for National Statistics.

The August drop surprised "analysts" (they had expected a 0.4 per cent rise and got a month-on-month fall of 1.1 per cent fall). Analysts always seem surprised by reality, perhaps because they always assume that the government is telling the truth.

Second, overall GDP is 3 per cent down on its pre-slump peak in 2008 – with industrial production and construction output still about 1 per cent down on their pre-slump peaks.

Third, business investment remains at about 75 per cent of its pre-slump level – despite the government's belief in the theory of "expansionary fiscal contraction", which says that government spending cuts lead to economic growth.

"Expansionary fiscal contraction" is an idea that appeals to this government (and the last, one might add). So much so, that no one bothers to read the small print. The authors of this dodgy doctrine had a couple of conditions, including the

condition that disposable income should not constrain consumption.

For most workers, consumption is indeed being "constrained" by disposable income. That shouldn't be a surprise, as average pay has fallen 5.5 per cent in real terms since mid-2010, according to figures collated by the House of Commons Library and published in August. No wonder it doesn't feel like a recovery.

For many, it's even worse. The think tank Resolution Foundation has looked at the effect of the economic crisis on workers' wages using the Living Wage as a measure (£8.55/hour in London and £7.45 elsewhere). It has found that 4.8 million (20 per cent of the workforce) now earn less than this, compared with 14 per cent in 2009.

This includes one in four women, three in four under-21s and two in three working in hotels and restaurants. A separate TUC study shows real take-home pay has fallen by an average of 6.3 per cent in the past five years. Many people took a pay cut to stay in work, but those who have been sacked have been forced to take jobs with fewer hours and lower rates of pay.

For some, of course, life is definitely improving. The number of people earning £1 million or more a year has doubled in two years, according to HM Revenue and Customs. And joy of joys, we now have more than 1,000 people in the country with assets of more than £65 million. Maybe that's what Osborne means by recovery. ■

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Workers on the Web

• Highlights from this and other issues of WORKERS can be found on our website, www.workers.org.uk, as well as information about the CPBML, its policies, and how to contact us.

Publications

CHANGE BRITAIN, EMBRACE YOUR PARTY

This pamphlet brings together the statement from the Party's 2009 Congress with those from two former Congresses in 2003 and 2006. Also included is a statement on the European Union: "The fascist dream of a united Europe resurrected." (£2.75 including P&P).

To order...

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