

WORKERS

www.workers.org.uk

MARCH 2013 £1



NHS: INTEGRATION, NOT CHAOS

JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY



Teachers Fight for pay where we work

08



Referendum We're one nation, not three

09



Soviet finance How to build lasting progress

12

IF YOU WANT TO REBUILD BRITAIN, READ ON

WORKERS

“ A say in our country’s future

ALEX SALMOND wants to split our country into two new countries, Scotland and “England and Wales”. So shouldn’t we all have a say in our country’s future? Why should it be restricted to those living in Scotland?

But if there is a referendum only in Scotland, it is right to vote in that referendum – no to break-up. It is also right to vote in a referendum on leaving the EU (if we get one) – yes to leaving the EU.

In a recent poll, support for break-up (not “independence” by any genuine definition of the word – see page 9) in Scotland is down to 28 per cent, with 48 per cent against. But expect dirty tricks as Salmond gets increasingly desperate.

We must reject divisive identity politics, whether they sets Scottish people against English, black against white, or Muslim against Christian. Most Scots oppose government policies, not the identities of prime ministers.

Scotland, Wales and England form one island, one country, one working class, and have been for over 300 years. Break-up would mean the break-up of the British working class, solely to the benefit of the employing class.

Yet some in our unions, of the so-called “left”, back Salmond’s tartan Tories, who would divide the British working class. The same people oppose the British workers’ nationalism which would keep our working class united in the face of the capitalist class’s attacks. ■

Africa and amalgamation

“WE EXPECT full integration around 2030, when the [continent’s] economy will be amalgamated. Africans will use one currency, and goods will flow freely within the continent. The common market will also have a unified tax rate for all outsiders.” So said René N’Guettia Kouassi, Director of Economic Affairs for the African Union Commission, in January.

If the disaster of the European Union was not large enough for the world to see, how sad to hear such dismal prospects promoted for

such a great continent. One world created in the depressing image of capitalism would seem to be the vision of such blinkered people.

Africa, the world’s greatest centre of undeveloped mineral wealth, is beset with war and neoliberal economics and squabbled over by the armies of previous empires. It needs to stand up around the principles which originally drove African unity: independence, sovereignty, national liberation and socialism. Why imitate the failed European Union? ■



WORKERS is published by the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)
78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB.
ISSN 0266-8580

www.workers.org.uk
Issue 167, March 2013



Contents – March 2013

News

RMT mulls migration curbs, p3; Iceland fights for its fish, p4; How the slump hits women, p5; News Analysis: Why food costs more, p6

03

Features

Our NHS – we need more NHS planning and integration, not chaos, p6; Teachers: fight for pay where we work, p8; Britain is one nation, not three, p9; Socialism and finance: lessons from the Soviet Union about securing real progress, p12

06

Book Reviews

A farewell to the EU, and how industry starved to death, p14

14

**MIGRATION****BBC****ICELAND****PENSIONS****WOMEN****LONDON****COST OF LIVING****CONSTRUCTION****NEWS ANALYSIS****EUROBRIEFS**

RMT considers curbs

Journalists strike for jobs

Fighting for its fish

More funds close

Hit by the slump

The cable car to nowhere

Paying to go to work

Anyone see a recovery?

Why food costs more

The latest from Brussels

RMT mulls migration curbs

IN A significant move, the RMT (the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers) has opened up discussion with an article in its magazine, RMT News, about how a Resident Labour Market Test could stop what the union calls "social dumping" – bringing in cheap labour from abroad to undercut British pay and conditions.

"The response of much of the 'Left', of most trade unions and the Labour Party, calling for equal conditions for migrant workers, is inadequate for many reasons but mainly that it is simply not working," says the article. It adds that a Resident Market Labour Test would require renegotiating freedom of movement with the EU "on the grounds that it is overwhelmingly one-way and that the current situation is illegitimate" – and says that without renegotiation "the only way out is to leave the EU".

Worldwide supplies of labour tip the scales away from workers towards capital. The EU aims to ensnare ever more, ever poorer, countries – Croatia (18 per cent unemployment), Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, countries across North Africa, and Turkey. Faced with this, the government's Points Based System (PBS) actually brings in workers from outside the EU. Despite the government's supposed cap, there are no limits on key PBS categories, such as transferees within the same corporation and foreign students (a major labour entry pathway with no exit monitoring).

Only one category of the PBS has a Resident Labour Market Test, as a result of the Lindsey Oil Refinery workers' fine victory. Jobs must be advertised in specified places for a specified period before an employer can apply for a Tier 2 General Migrant visa. This should be required for all British jobs.

In the EU/India Free Trade Agreement, India's sole demand is for so-called worker entry access. It would let any Indian firm supply temporary workers to any British industry. Again, the PBS sets no limits. Britain's capitalists will get the "gain", through investment opportunities in India, and British workers will get the pain, through lost jobs.

Evidence that new legislation, trumpeted by the European Union, has proved ineffective against social dumping, came last year with the dumping of RMT maritime members as Condor Ferries replaced British ratings with Ukrainian workers. Massive scope remains for shipping companies to pay lower wages to seafarers from non-EU countries. Condor Ferries employs Ukrainian seafarers on as little as £2.35 per hour (£28.19 a day for a 12-hour shift) to work three months on and one month off unpaid on routes between Portsmouth, Weymouth and Poole and the Channel Islands, inclusive of overtime, additional pay and captive time. They have no entitlement to leave or a pension. Other ferry operators work for only one or two months at a time, with the same period of rest off the vessel. ■

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

BBC**Journalists strike for jobs**

MEMBERS OF the National Union of Journalists working for the BBC have started industrial action against forced redundancies at BBC Scotland, Newsbeat, Five Live, Big Screens, the Asian Network and the World Service.

Action began with a work to rule on Friday 15 February, and was followed by a successful one-day strike on Monday 20 February that took the TODAY programme off the air, among others.

The work to rule comprises three actions around working hours: not working more than contracted hours; having a minimum 11-hour break between shifts; and taking other breaks (such as meals) in full and away from the desk. It also involves not "acting up" unless the deputising has been formally arranged.

The union has criticised the BBC for wasting public money by insisting on redundancies while advertising new posts. ■

ISRAEL**Losses for Likud**

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU'S Likud Party has suffered significant losses in the recent general election in Israel, losing a quarter of its seats, though it is still the largest party. Labour gained seats but the biggest winner was the new Yesh Atid (There is a Future) Party which came second.

Although ambivalent on a settlements freeze and the future status of Jerusalem, Yesh Atid is committed to a two-state solution, a resumption of the peace process and renewed political negotiations with the Palestinians. Likud may be forced to include Yesh Atid in any coalition. ■

EUROBRIEFS

The latest from Brussels

Referendum now

LED BY Germany, the EU wants greater integration. Cameron also wants Britain to be tied into the EU even more tightly. Cameron doesn't want an EU referendum, but he is not in control of events. Whatever his motives, we should seize the chance to vote – more, we should demand it now. The whole British people have the right to have our say.

Why wait until 2017? Polls show 61 per cent of us want a referendum before the next election, not after. Typically, the Lib Dems now oppose the referendum which they promised in their most recent manifesto. A majority of Labour voters want a referendum too. Labour Party members should insist that their party demands a referendum.

Out of the population of 63 million, only 17.8 million, just 28 per cent, are old enough to have voted in the 1975 referendum on British membership of the EEC. The vast majority, 72 per cent, have never had a say.

What the single market is for

THE EUROPEAN TUC embraces the EU's single market. Yet it also claims that it wants to "avoid the downward spiral of competition based on lowering basic standards at work". All markets are about competition; the single European market is no different. So it's no use looking to the EU to protect workers' rights.

Promises, promises

CAMERON'S PROMISE to reduce net migration to "tens of thousands" annually will be wrecked if large numbers arrive from Romania and Bulgaria, two of the poorest countries in the EU. In polls, around 79 per cent of the British people oppose this EU open door policy.

The government has carried out a study on how many Romanians and Bulgarians might move here. Communities Secretary Eric Pickles – who has seen the figures, and has warned of a potential shortage of housing – had said the study would be made public. Surprise, surprise: the government is now refusing to publish it.

Fined by Brussels

THE EUROPEAN Commission is to fine Britain nearly 300,000 euros a day for not implementing two EU directives on how gas and electricity markets should be run. ■



Fishing tackle at Pittenweem, the most active port left on the East Neuk coast of Fife: EU fishing regulations have almost wiped the industry out.

Photo: Workers

Iceland fights for its fish

ICELAND, historically hostile to the European Union, found after the banking crisis of 2008 that they have been forced to start negotiations to join the EU. But those negotiations have stalled – one reason being that the Icelandic people quickly recognised that the EU saw the opportunity for a massive smash-and-grab attack on Iceland's mackerel and other fishing stocks.

It looked as though the same fishing robbery that occurred when Heath took Britain into the European Union was about to be repeated – until the Icelandic people said NO! The EU is now threatening sanctions and effectively an embargo on Iceland's fishing fleet deliveries. Brussels uses the argument of overfishing and threats to the sustainability of mackerel and other fish, despite Iceland's evidence that mackerel stocks are at their highest recorded levels.

In 1970 there were over 400 trawlers operating out of Grimsby. In 1975, when Britain entered into the European Economic Community, forerunner of the European Union, Britain's fishing grounds were opened up to EU control. The result: the number of trawlers has dropped dramatically, with only five working boats now operating from Grimsby. The EU ripped the heart out of Britain's fishing and trawler industry.

Grimsby has survived by processing fish from Iceland: 4,000 workers are employed in Grimsby processing between 13,000 and 18,000 tonnes of fish a year, the vast majority delivered by Icelandic boats. An EU embargo would destroy those jobs, and the largest cold storage and fresh fish processing plants in Europe.

The European Union destroyed Britain's fishing industry. It cannot be allowed to threaten another sovereign nation's industry and independence. ■

PENSIONS

More funds close

THE NATIONAL Association of Pension Funds has warned that the closure of public sector pension schemes accelerated in 2012.

In its survey of just over 1,000 private sector schemes, the association found that only 13 per cent were still open to new joiners compared with 19 per cent in 2011, and that 31 per cent were now also closed to existing staff, compared with 23 per cent the year before.

The association concludes that new staff in the private sector have "next to no chance" of joining a final salary scheme, with hardly any of the FTSE 100 firms offering schemes to new entrants. It blames the increase in scheme closures on quantitative easing and the consequent low gilt yields, pushing many into large deficits and higher liabilities.

The Bank of England has bought up

one-third of government bonds as a way of injecting cheap money into the banking system. This has raised the price of the bonds and therefore reduced the return they provide. In 2012 staff at Unilever went on strike over the closure of their final salary scheme. ■

GREECE

Metro workers strike

ATHENS WAS brought to a halt by a series of strikes by transport workers earlier this year as police stormed a metro train depot to break up a sit in.

The workers were protesting against a planned 25 per cent pay cut. The government has threatened to use emergency civil mobilisation laws to arrest them if they refuse to return to work – which could lead to prison sentences of up to five years. Several days of action crippled the Greek capital's underground system. ■

LONDON**The cable car to nowhere**

ONE OF THE white elephants marooned after the 2012 Olympics is Boris Johnson's much vaunted and sponsored Emirates Air Line cable car, which crosses the Thames to link North Greenwich and Royal Docks. Costing Londoners over £60 million, the link has seen passenger volumes drop by nearly 70 per cent in the first two months of 2013.

The obvious reason for the drop is that the cable car takes you from one bread-and-circuses venue, the O2, to nowhere now that the Olympics has closed. As the consultation exercise and campaigning for additional bridge, tunnel or ferry crossing points between South East and East

London begin, local wags are proposing the dismantling of the cable car and its moving upstream to somewhere useful – somewhere where people actually live and could use it. However, large tracts of Bermondsey and Canary Wharf itself are mere dormitory homes Monday to Friday, and the river is wider at Bermondsey than at North Greenwich, so who would want it?

Qatari-owned Emirate Air Lines, as part of the Gulf States colonisation of London, would then have to remove its name from the Docklands Light Railway station.

Dubai Estates owns The Shard, Britain's largest skyscraper, at London Bridge, and Qatari Diar is supposed to be redeveloping the £3 billion Chelsea Barracks site, so money will talk and Boris's cable car remains for the present. ■

How the slump hits women

A REPORT by Plan International and the Overseas Development Institute graphically illustrates the effect the financial collapse has had on girls and women. Global infant mortality has risen as economies contract, and more females are being abused or starved. According to research by the World Bank into previous crises, each 1 per cent fall in economic output results in an extra 7.4 deaths per 1,000 for females and 1.5 for boys.

The Plan International report found that as the recession bit and poverty spread older girls were increasingly removed from school. Worldwide 29 per cent fewer girls and 22 per cent fewer boys are now finishing primary school. As their mothers were having to work longer hours for less pay girls were being taken out of school to help at home, the report said.

Malnutrition is also growing as the main breadwinner, usually male, has to be given preference. Health cuts have also increased the risk of death in pregnancy and childbirth. Researchers observed an increase in child marriages to get rid of burdensome mouths to feed. Others are sent out to work as child labourers, including for sex.

This was highlighted by the case of Sri Lankan domestic worker Nafeek Rizana, who was beheaded in Saudi Arabia after being convicted of killing a baby in her charge. She claimed the baby choked but the court decided it had been strangled. The Saudi government said it was unable to pardon her because the baby's family insisted the sentence be carried out.

Rizana was only 17 at the time and accordingly should have been classified as a child not allowed to work in Saudi Arabia or to face trial as an adult. Employment agents had falsified her age as 23 on her passport. Her family only heard of her execution through the media and were refused permission to retrieve her body. Human rights campaigners claim that at the trial she had no translator and a lawyer was not appointed until after the sentence was pronounced. The Saudis offered financial compensation to the Rizana family, which they rejected. ■

COST OF LIVING**Paying to go to work**

THE AVERAGE worker pays one pound of every eight they earn for the privilege of getting to work: £1,843 a year, according to research by Santander Bank, rising to £3,561 a year in London. Collectively we spend £67 billion each year on travel, lunch at work, childcare and work clothing. Commuting is the biggest expense, with

£782 on average being spent each year on public transport and those who use their cars spending an average of £829 on fuel and £65 on parking.

We all contribute, directly or indirectly, to the creation of surplus value, the source of profits. To pay to take ourselves to the point of production where that value is created and not to demand that this be reflected in wages amounts to subsidising the employer. Perhaps we should find ways for them to pay these costs. ■

WHAT'S ON**Coming soon****MAY**

Wednesday 1 May, 6.00pm. Word Power Books, 43 West Nicolson Street, Edinburgh EH8 9DB

Wednesday 1 May, 7.30pm. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL.

CPBML May Day Meetings: "Struggle for ideas: the battle for Britain"

We, the British working class, have survived anything and everything thrown at us by early capitalism, capitalism in ascendancy or capitalism in absolute decline. We have survived by organising ourselves and by thinking out the strategies to defeat the brutal reality of capitalism. We now face the greatest struggle of ideas as we battle for our very survival as a class and nation.

Come to our 2013 May Day meetings and discuss the struggle of ideas that will win the battle for Britain. For more information, see advertisement on page 15, or visit www.workers.org.uk

Out of the European Union, no to the break-up of Britain, defend national sovereignty!

Rebuild workplace trade union organisation!

Fight for pay, skill and industry the key to independence!

Build the Party!

CONSTRUCTION**Anyone see a recovery?**

THE CONSTRUCTION Skills Network – the Skills Council and Industrial Training Board for the sector – has predicted that the construction industry will take until 2022 to reach the level of activity just before the recession started. The network describes the present situation as "one of the most difficult periods since World War II".

Last year 60,000 jobs were lost and output fell by 9 per cent, mainly owing to public spending cuts. Employment is expected to fall every year until 2016, reaching 2.36 million, the lowest level in the industry since 2000. Public sector construction fell 20 per cent, infrastructure (roads, bridges, etc) by 15 per cent and private housing by 5 per cent. ■

Why food costs more

FOOD PRICES have risen over the past year – spectacularly so in some cases. The Office for National Statistics reported that in November 2012 potatoes cost 43 per cent and carrots 44 per cent more than they did in the previous November.

These sharp rises were due largely to our wet summer. The Potato Council reports that 2012 saw the worst British harvest since 1976. Yield was down 15 per cent on the previous year, while waterlogged conditions meant the cost of harvest increased. Supermarkets have responded by widening the range of “acceptable” vegetables. So if you thought potatoes and carrots are not just more expensive but smaller and more interestingly shaped, you’ve not been imagining things.

But food price rises may not always be due to unseasonal weather patterns.



Photo: Workers

Futures contracts are used by producers and processors to help hedge against price volatility – they allow future quantities of a commodity to be bought at an agreed price. For example, a buyer will agree to buy 9 metric tonnes of butter in 2014 for an agreed price, and a contract will be made.

But the contract can be sold on – leading to speculation.

Until recently, trading in food futures contracts was rare – they were considered high risk and were research intensive. However, with the advent of electronic trading (as opposed to floor trading) that seems to have changed. Major investment banks such as Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan have been promoting food derivatives to investment clients. They have created hedge funds aimed at generating profits by speculating on food prices.

In June 2010 the price of coffee beans rose by 20 per cent in three days. The World Development Movement (a London-based campaign group) argues that this was the result of a trader calling the bluff of hedge funds that had made millions by selling coffee contracts and betting on the price to fall. The trader’s action left hedge funds scrambling to buy actual coffee beans, and the price shot up from the extra demand. ■

The organisation of health services has to set hospital trust against hospital trust to ensure that the NHS remains not just

Our NHS – we need more



On the march in Lewisham, February 2013.

ACROSS BRITAIN the National Health Service is now centre stage for chaos and deadly systemic failures. We have the Francis Report into the Mid-Staffordshire NHS Trust disaster, cuts, closures, reprieves of closures, disruption of long-term clinically supported reconfigurations, takeovers, mergers, de-mergers, disastrous and lethal failed staffing levels, political intervention on an unprecedented scale, and mind-boggling uninformed localism never seen before in the “National” Health Service.

Campaigns to “save” hospitals are growing apace; one North London hospital (The Whittington) has four separate campaigns to save it. To save it from what? It is of course right to look at the suitability of hospital buildings, but the possibility of professional decision-making is marred by the push to sell off assets as part of the drive for Foundation Status. The crucial question should be what are the best centres for healthcare for local people?

In South East London, health care provision across Greenwich, Woolwich, Bexley, Bromley and related areas, an estimated 4.5 million patient base, has been blighted by political interference by MPs and local politicians promoting themselves. Add to this poor planning, bad management, Public Finance Initiative deals – which border on the insane, incompetent or corrupt – all of which have damaged the integrity of the NHS for over 30 years. Bankruptcy and political dogma are now driving yet another restructuring of the Trusts involved in this health care provision. All aspects of planning and retention of an integrated NHS are being destroyed as the Strategic Health Authority for London nears its extinction under the Health and Social Care Act on 1 April.

The concept of the capital of Britain having no strategic coordinating and planning body for health is unbelievable. But this is exactly what is happening, a

as become a chaotic battleground, with the government seeking trust, locality against locality. It is up to the working class to public and free, but national as well...

planning and integration, not chaos



Photo: Workers

move mirrored across Britain. The impact in London is that without planning, without integration, without longterm provision, Trusts are set against Trusts.

In his short tenure of office, Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt has not issued one statement supporting the NHS. He has seized upon every failing, every bad press report, every local campaign, to justify further dismantling of the NHS. Every protest brought to his attention justifies his mindset that the 'national' health service has to go.

Thin end of the wedge?

225,000 workers marching to save Lewisham A+E demonstrate a fear that this is the thin end of the wedge we have been expecting. That so many have come on to the streets does show the depth of that fear.

Workers in one part of London, in this case Lewisham, can perhaps be forgiven for seeing their part of the whole, but not the overall. The only way they see to fight the

attack on the NHS we all know to be real is to resist every single local change. Local change is frequently needed, but against a background of imminent threat it feels necessary to resist all change. Yet strategic thinking is vital, to ensure that patients receive the best possible care in an integrated service, however that is delivered.

And there's the rub. If workers were truly in power then far more widespread change would need to be undertaken than anything being proposed in London at present. Hospitals, ambulance stations and GP surgeries have all been randomly plonked in various places over the last century and would need to be relocated by a rational health service.

Medical developments mean that less stress needs be placed on quantitative, and more stress placed on qualitative, resourcing. In other words we don't need everything we've currently got, but we need better. It therefore means we have got to close down wasteful buildings and services in order to concentrate larger numbers of higher skilled workers in better and more modern facilities.

An example of how this can work well, and where professionals took charge of change, is the reconfiguration of stroke services in London in 2010. Stroke wards in local hospitals were closed (often to local opposition), while a new network of more concentrated stroke centres was opened, with highly skilled specialist teams and up-to-date diagnostic equipment. In just five months of the new centres opening, the number of stroke patients receiving clot-busting drugs trebled. It is estimated that this change will save over 400 lives each year across London, as long as the level of quality is maintained.

This kind of change is difficult to manage in the current climate of fierce attack on the NHS – it is hard to have an honest, open debate about what needs to go and what needs to develop and grow.

Workers have to view healthcare provision differently. We need centres of excellence, geared to the highest clinical standards. If the infrastructure or logistics of getting people to such centres is lacking

or inadequate at present then we should demand they are built or renewed. Workers must demand more, not less, NHS planning, more integration not disintegration, more patient-centred healthcare rather than profit or managerially driven tick-box exercises. And such demands can only be led by health professionals inside the service, not by campaigners on the outside.

Health trade unions and professional organisations must together demand the removal of the market from healthcare provision, the cessation of the £20 billion efficiency savings tax to the Treasury, the re-establishment of strategic planning and the rescinding of not only the Health and Social Care Act 2012 but all the previous Labour government legislation which paves the way for the possible privatisation and hence destruction of our National Health Service.

And we must say to the Oppose Everything Brigade, your indignation and suspicion are a welcome basis of progress, but they are not enough, and can be counterproductive. We must become the Take Responsibility Brigade and learn that in order to really defend the NHS we need political power. We need to sweep away insidious anti-NHS anti-planning and the Parliament that voted for it.

A path forward

Workers and in particular their unions must develop a way of articulating the real need beneath the surface anger (anger is always an emotion to be avoided in determining political line) which will enable ten times 25,000 to see a clear path forward, not of saving one small facility in one local hospital, but a path to a safe and developing health service where local provision is integral to a national system of healthcare.

It is a sign of how far progress has been retarded that any real national defence of the NHS raises revolutionary implications. Whether we like it or not, no A+E department, no hospital and no healthcare system will ever be safe as long as capitalism rules. This is the lesson we must learn, and quickly. ■

Teacher unions have yet to learn the lesson that real strength starts in the school...

Teachers: fight for pay where we work

TEACHERS' PAY and conditions are no longer determined by national agreement – our unions still need to catch up with that simple fact. National strike action is demonstrably not now an effective tactic, and indeed the government seems intent on goading teachers' unions into that futile course of action. But there are other ways teachers can use their organisational strength to improve pay and conditions.

We have to understand our working environment to work out the best way to survive and prosper collectively. This responsibility applies to school teachers as much as to anyone else; we need to fathom out a convincing way to grapple with their problems and advance the cause of education, the profession and union organisation. Only then will we discover how to unlock the potential for change.

Back in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a huge surge of conflict over pay – without historical precedent – which spilled over into industrial action on several occasions. In those days the Burnham Committee (set up in 1919) was the national negotiating machinery for teachers' pay and conditions of service, made up of representatives from teacher unions, local education authorities and government. But following the long bitter pay dispute of 1984–86, the Thatcher government engineered a crisis in order to abolish Burnham, which it did in 1988.

Overnight, teachers' pay and conditions were imposed by the Secretary of State. By 1991 a review body appointed by government was established to make annual recommendations on pay, with the final decision taken by the government. National negotiations and Burnham were lost, but there was no real response from teachers.

Since the 1990s, the NUT has formulated endless pay policies but has had nowhere to press home the ideas. Newspaper adverts, commissioning research and lobbying got nowhere. Effectively, teachers have had no impact on pay for several decades.

The educational landscape has continued to change and deteriorate. Local Education Authorities were once exactly what the name implies, but successive governments have fatally weakened their



Photo: Andrew Wiard/andrew-wiard.com

locally elected powers to influence what goes on in schools. When the last Labour government removed "Education" from the name it was only reflecting the reality, as newly termed Local Authorities became mere enforcers for ever-changing national government education policies. The academies and free schools, the ending of the Pay Review Body, plans to dismantle national pay structure and extend performance related pay, have all utterly changed teachers' situation – but somehow the mind-set of teacher unions has stuck stubbornly in a previous era.

Going through the motions

Our unions have refused to adapt, still going through the motions of how we used to operate though the world has moved on. Industrial disputes to change the thinking of government on pay when the powers have been devolved away serve little actual purpose and bring no gain. We must accept the gauntlet that was thrown down a long time ago. Our rulers are saying that national pay bargaining is dead (which in effect it has been since the late 1980s), national pay is dead, and power over pay is devolved to schools, whether state schools or academies or free schools.

Yet as a profession school teachers are still highly organised in unions. Of course there are stronger and weaker schools and areas of the country, but generally teachers

do join a union – a huge potential source of working class power. Education Secretary Michael Gove has through his policies stated his intention to change that situation once and for all. He wants a set-piece, positional battle which teachers cannot win. Will our unions fall into his trap?

We must stop squandering our strength in national set plays of industrial action that will not force an outcome, stop pretending there is strength where there is not, and concentrate on building it in the workplace. We must raise the level of organisation and response in every school to force collective pay agreements that repulse the divisive move to payments linked to performance.

We must use the strength and resources of the union in a guerrilla way, building on the experience of the action short of strike. This has brought benefits to many school memberships who have used it to sort out pressing problems such as excessive inspection and observation. Each place of work must become the focus. If necessary, industrial disputes will be aimed at individual schools or academy chains.

Union structures need to be reshaped to service this type of work. Governments destroyed the national structures in the hope of weakening us. We must turn that upside down and turn school organisation into fortresses. This project will breathe new life and commitment into teacher trade unionism. Fight for pay where you work. ■

With Scotland gearing up for an independence referendum, it's time to remember why we need to stay together as a united people – and why our enemies want to divide us...

Britain is one nation, not three



Photo: Workers

May Day march, Edinburgh, 2011. One working class north and south, with shared traditions and aims.

IN JUST OVER 18 months' time, less than 10 per cent of the population of Britain will be given the opportunity to decide whether Britain exists at all. Some people call that democracy. We don't. We should all have a vote.

In autumn 2014 Scotland, population 5.25 million, will have its independence referendum. Should the vote go in favour, Britain as a country will cease to exist. Goodness knows what we'd become.

And Scotland, far from becoming independent, would become a mere dependency of the European Union without control over its borders, its vaunted oil, its fish, its industry, its economy, its life. Dependency, not independence.

How has it come to this? Scotland has

been part of Britain since at least 1707, three hundred years ago, when the Scottish Parliament approved the Act of Union (the Westminster Parliament had passed the Act in the previous year). Wales has been part of Britain for even longer.

As capitalism grew, so too did the working class – the British working class. Scotland, Wales, England – we share one territory, one language (British English, not the American kind), one economy, one trade union movement: Britain became a nation. This excludes northern Ireland: Ireland is clearly one nation, north and south. That successive British governments have managed to keep it divided is a tribute to the power of backwardness and bigotry, north and south.

Of course there are differences within Britain. But make Scotland separate, and what about Cornwall? Or Yorkshire. Even South Yorkshire. Or London. Or Pimlico. These differences are a natural part of

any nation. What brings us together is that we depend on each other for everything: the island we live on, for the roads and railways that link us, the services that keep us alive, the language we communicate in.

We have the same employing class. We have the same interests. Divide and rule is a ruling class tactic. Unite and fight is the working class approach.

Britain is the only country in the EU to be officially composed of "nations". It's an odd concept of nation that includes Northern Ireland as one. Even odder to talk about Scotland or Wales as nations but not Catalonia, Andalucia, the Basque Country, Sicily or Bavaria.

Not only is Britain clearly one nation, but the fact that it still operates as a nation is crucial to the future of the working class. Nation states may have

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

Continued on page 10



Fishing fleet in Mull: so-called independence from Britain would put Scottish fisheries at the total mercy of the European Union.

Continued from page 9

been created by the growing capitalist classes of Europe centuries ago, but times have changed. National capitalists are now irrelevant. The transnational corporations have decided that nations must disappear so that there are no barriers to their domination: free movement of capital, goods and labour. Then they can divide and rule the world. Invest, disinvest, dump cheap goods when in surplus, rake in profits in shortages, and above all treat the whole world as a reservoir of unemployment to control workers and wage rates everywhere.

Anything that weakens Britain or breaks it up is good for capitalism and bad for workers.

The European Union poses as a champion of regions but its real business is to break up nations. Its strategy to rob nations of their sovereignty has always been a two-pronged attack: centralise as much as you can in Brussels, and decentralise to regional and local government as much of the rest as you can. That way, they hope, the nation state will just wither away. The process was aided by the Lisbon Treaty, which came into force on 1 December 2009 and among other things acknowledged explicitly, for the first time, the

importance of regional decision making.

Every EU decision has to be passed to the Committee of the Regions for consideration. Every country has representatives there, but in order to downplay the role of nations the smaller the country, the more members, proportionately, it has. So Malta, population 400,000, has five members, one per 80,000 of the population; Britain, population 65 million or so, has 24 members. If it were pro rata, we'd have more than 800 members.

"Our" delegation is led by a nonentity so nondescript that not only is he no household name, but most households wouldn't know where he came from even if they were told: step forward, Gordon Keymer of Tandridge District Council.

Fake regionalism

Of course, the regionalism is fake, because every single member of the Committee of the Regions is appointed by central government. It's a farce, too, because no one takes any notice of it, not in Brussels and still less in Britain. But it provides jobs and positions for the boys and girls, huge employment opportunities for translators. About £80 million a year, utterly wasted.

That, though, is the public face of regionalism. For the more effective part of it, you need to go back up the road to the Commission. In the current six-year

budget, 2007 to 2013, regional spending accounts for over a third of the EU total: 347 billion euros, doled out through the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund (12 newest members plus Portugal, Greece and Spain).

Where does the money go? There are two ways of answering that question. The first answer is straightforward. The money goes mainly to eastern and southern Europe, where we fund, among numerous other projects: a state-of-the-art integrated system for managing solid waste in a region of Romania; the North Estonia Medical Centre; reconvertng a glass factory in northern France; bringing broadband to Lithuania; copper extraction in southern Portugal; a music and cultural centre in Bialystok, Poland; new trains for Tallin, Estonia; eight separate district heating systems in Romania. And so on.

One thing you can be sure about: all these projects, once built, will have large signs telling everyone that they are due to the generosity of the European Union.

That's the second answer: the money can go anywhere, really. At heart EU regional aid is the most expensive advertising campaign in history. The EU signs taking credit are all that really count. Never mind the waste, the fraud – 720,000 euros in aid to Campania, Italy, went on an Elton John concert in Naples – just so long as the citizens of the



Photo: Workers

“regions” believe the European Union is their benefactor.

There are projects in Britain, too, and these also carry prominent EU badges, though the EU contribution is a) generally scarcely a third of the overall project cost and b) paid for anyway by Britain’s net contribution to the EU, with a chunk skimmed off the top to keep the eurocrats in the style to which they have become accustomed. Rather than a gift from the EU, everything we get from it costs us more than we receive.

Of course, the new dictators in Brussels have no commitment to the regions, local government, or democracy in any form. For them, regional policy was and is just one more weapon to break down the power of the nation state so that all power may be centralised in their hands.

Unfortunately for them, some deluded folk actually believed the propaganda. They thought that they would get help trying to break up Britain. But the last thing the European Union wants right now is a rash of new mini-states with new ministries to be created for them to run. Yes, every country has its own responsibility on the Commission. Malta has health, for example; Britain has the dreary Catherine Ashton, responsible for foreign affairs – and possibly new languages, and certainly new petty

“Everything we get from the EU costs us more than we receive...”

dictators to deal with. Regionalism, yes. Nationalism...that’s another thing.

The EU is actually getting a bit wary of creating multiple new nations out of existing ones. Kosovo’s application to join the EU, for example, is being blocked by among others Spain (worried, no doubt, about Catalonia, Andalucia and the Basque Country). And at the back of everyone’s minds is that Germany and Italy are only half as old as the United Kingdom, with strong regional differences.

The European Union has also laid down a rule that any new EU members have to join the euro and the Schengen free movement area, and it’s not about to make exceptions for Scotland.

So having led the SNP and its followers up the bridal path, the EU has left them standing at the altar. EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso caused a fuss when he said on 10 December that an independent Scotland would have to apply for EU membership, and wait in the queue like any other

country – contradicting Scottish ministers who had claimed that Scotland would “quite clearly” stay in the EU if it separated.

Goodness knows why it caused a fuss. It was a statement of the obvious. And later Barroso went further, rejecting SNP requests for talks to clarify the position, saying the European Commission couldn’t discuss a separate Scotland with the SNP unless and until Scotland became “independent”.

That’s the thanks you get for flying the EU flag outside the Scottish Parliament.

Obvious

It’s also obvious that the SNP long ago knew this would happen. In August 2011 a Labour MEP, Catherine Stihler, made a Freedom of Information request to the Scottish Executive asking what advice it had received about the position of an independent Scotland with regard to the European Union. The response from Scottish culture secretary Fiona Hyslop is illuminating: “We consider that to reveal whether the information you have requested exists, or is held by the Scottish government, would be contrary to the public interest” (Section 18).

In autumn 2014 the SNP will be left fighting for an “independence” that would mean handing the country over in chains to the euro, with its new borders wide open, with years of uncertainty about the exact arrangements. It will try all it can, with the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow just before the referendum, to stoke feeling for separation, but it cannot avoid what “independence” means.

What would it mean for England and Wales? No one is talking about that. Some people even think that those of us south of the border would be better off without Scotland. But the attitude of “let them sod off then” is just the other side of the coin of the SNP’s pseudo nationalism, and just as dangerous. We are one country, one nation, and we will need all our strength, all our thought and the experience of all our diversity to fight for a future, or even to have a future at all.

Don’t break up Britain. Defend our British national sovereignty. The whole island should be independent. Out of the EU! ■

The 1930s saw mass unemployment sweep across the world – the world took the concepts of credit and finance seriously...

Socialism and finance: lessons from the Soviet Union

THE INADEQUACY of terms such as austerity or economic downturn is becoming obvious to more and more British workers. In fact Britain is in an economic slump that has similarities with the slump of the 1930s. But this time at its core is a private sector banking mess.

What works, and what doesn't work? During the 1930s what didn't work was capitalist finance – just like now it had painted itself into a corner. What certainly did work during this period was the industrial and financial structure that had been developed in the Soviet Union.

Soviet industrial achievement up to the Second World War has been well documented, but often with little or no mention of banking, credit and the role that financial techniques played in helping to bring about this Soviet success. This is curious because it was not just through industry but also through finance that the Marxist political economy was tested at a time of complete paralysis in capitalist circles.

Taking responsibility

The origins of this Marxist leap forwards can be traced back to 1911, when the Bolsheviks started to ask some hard questions of themselves concerning their understanding of money and currency. For example, they recognised that to talk about the regularisation of economic life under Socialism and to evade the question of finance, means either to betray complete ignorance or to fool the "simple folk" with high-sounding words. They also recognised



Assembling a pumping plant at Magnitostroi – Russia thrived while the West slumped.

that taking responsibility was key and should be accompanied by humility, knowing that it is a complicated measure and that none of them was an expert.

But by 1916 the rewards of rigorous study were emerging, with the publication of Lenin's *IMPERIALISM, THE HIGHEST STAGE OF CAPITALISM*. Three features were identified in this ground-breaking study: first, that the slogan "United States of Europe" was counter revolutionary; second, that there is an iron law under capitalism whereby the uneven economic development of countries is guaranteed; and third, that arising from point 2 it is possible for revolution to occur in one country.

By 1922 things for the Bolsheviks had moved on. The First World War had ended in 1918, revolution followed by civil war had taken place and ten invading capitalist armies had been beaten and removed from Soviet territory. The Bolsheviks then had to address what they called the "swing to the left" that began to gather momentum from 1922 to 1934. This leftist thinking sought to exploit a number of misconceptions: that money loses its importance after a revolution, that money would be quickly abolished, that credit is an anomaly, and that finance is not supposed to exist in a socialist society.

To address these falsehoods an

'Sickly aristocrats with big ambitions...'

"TO BEGIN with, among some Communists an extremely supercilious attitude towards trade in general, towards Soviet trade in particular still prevails. These Communists (excuse the expression) regard Soviet trade as something of secondary importance, something which is hardly worthwhile, and the people engaged in trade as people done for. These people obviously

do not understand that by their snobbish attitude towards trade they do not express Bolshevik views but the views of sickly aristocrats with big ambitions deprived of ammunition...

"...They do not understand that money is an instrument of bourgeois economy which the Soviet Government has taken into its hands and adapted to the interests of socialism in order to give

full vent to the development of Soviet trade and thereby prepare the conditions for direct exchange of products. They do not understand that direct exchange can come only to supplant, and as a result of an ideally organised system of trade, something which we are far from having and which we shall not have so very soon." (Extracts from Stalin's report in 1934 to the XVII Party Congress.) ■

ough not in the Soviet Union, which planned its economy and

Soviet Union about securing real progress

understanding of the behaviour and characteristics of money and banking under socialism was considered to be key. Central to this Bolshevik thinking was the notion that the economic weapons of the bourgeoisie should be used by the working class with a view to overcoming capitalism: not only can you have industry without capitalism but you can also have money and banking without capitalism. "Use industry against capitalism. Use money against capitalism" was the Bolshevik political shorthand of the day.

A sound currency and banking structure was considered a key part of "the dual nature of trade under the present conditions of the struggle between socialistic elements and capitalistic elements", as Stalin put it in 1925. This had been ill understood in certain quarters, with a stepping up of leftist reaction following the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1922. Indeed the success of the NEP, the achievement by 1927 of getting production back to the levels of 1913, the success of the Central Bank (Gosbank) in monetary policy and the introduction in 1927 of the first 5-year plan did not deter the leftist attack. In 1931 they were claiming that it was now necessary to proceed with the organisation of direct exchange of products, and that money would soon be abolished.

Clearly this matter now had to be dealt with, and it was (see Box below).

It was during 1931 to 1934 that the monetarist struggle was won by the Bolsheviks. At which point the international capitalists realised that they had lost in the Soviet Union. For the first time ever in a country the political economy of the capitalist class had been successfully changed into the political economy of the working class. Of course the Bolsheviks noted that it was not by coincidence that the Nazi Party in Germany, with their promise of attacking the Soviet Union, suddenly found that their coffers were being flooded by donations from firms such as Siemens, Krupp and Rheinmetall (see WORKERS, March 2012). But what of the German Communist Party, which had 4.8 million voters in 1933?

The paucity of their thinking was summed up by the following acknowledgement that appeared in the June 1934 journal of the German Social Democrats, by now in exile.

"Faced with the despair of proletarians reduced to joblessness, of young people with diplomas and no future, of the middle classes of merchants and artisans condemned to bankruptcy, and of farmers terribly threatened by the collapse in agricultural prices, we all failed. We weren't capable of offering the masses anything but speeches about the glory of socialism."

What the 1930s reveal is that when tested by the touchstone of reality, practical organisation furnished a much more severe test on Marxism than would be supplied by theory or logic in isolation. At a time of worldwide capitalist slump throughout the decade the Soviet Union came through with flying colours.

What went right

It is not so much a matter of looking at what went wrong in the Soviet Union post 1953 but first looking closely at what went right between 1917 and 1953. And for today's naysayers in our trade unions who seek to portray the Bolsheviks in a negative

light, here are two possible clues as to why things went wrong eventually.

Firstly, as Stalin commented in 1945, the tragic loss of 20 million lives in repelling the Nazi invasion could not really be expressed by a statistic; in reality the loss was incalculable. Secondly, in 1958 consumer instalment credit was introduced in the Soviet Union. Specialised credit agencies granted loans to individuals to improve homes charging 2 to 3 per cent over a ten-year period. The loans grew rapidly in popularity. Could easy credit be a route back to capitalism? It has certainly been a prop for capitalism in our time.

Irrespective of the condition of Russia today, we can see what a bold step British capitalism took from 1979 to 2008 in making credit easily available to British workers at amounts unprecedented.

By creating the illusion that living standards could be maintained through queuing for credit rather than fighting for wages, the effects of the policy of industrial destruction pursued by successive governments were cushioned. The reality is now for all to see and it is for the British working class to decide whether to take a bold step in response. ■

Meet the Party

The Communist Party of Britain's new series of London public meetings began on 27 September, with further meetings on 15 November, 12 February and 11 June; 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 (page 5). 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 2013, Wednesday 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 email info@workers.org.uk

This month we look at two books – one short and one longer – that address two key issues facing Britain today: the European Union, and immigration.

A farewell to the EU – and how industry started

Time to bail out? The end of the European Dream, by Paul Dixon, paperback, 50 pages, ISBN 9781478193074, published by Paul Dixon, 2012, £3.99.

IN THIS brilliant and original little book, freelance writer Paul Dixon shows why the euro was always going to fail, why further EU integration will, and should, fail, why we need an in/out referendum, and why Britain needs to leave the EU.

He notes, “That three attempts to lock sterling into external exchange rates should have led to four financial crises and subsequent devaluations [1931, 1949, 1967 and 1992] ought to have served as a warning to anyone intending on signing up for an exchange rate which, to all intents and purposes, would be permanent.”

He points out the simple fact that it is not possible to operate a single currency, with one interest rate and uniform fiscal restrictions across 17 entirely separate sovereign states, each with their own political agendas and economic needs. He urges a return to the drachma as the only possible recourse for the Greek Government, pointing out that the longer it waits to do this the greater the ultimate cost to both the Greek people and the other Eurozone economies.

Instead, the EU, led by Germany and backed by Cameron, wants greater integration, both economically and ultimately politically, as the only option available which could preserve the euro in its current guise. But this is unwanted, undemocratic and impractical. As Dixon observes, “the right of democratic nations to choose their own government, and for that government to then run their country as mandated by the electorate, would be eroded in the event of greater European political integration ...”

He remarks, “National identities are here to stay and by imposing financial hardships, neutralising national parliaments and even foisting unelected governments upon countries, the EU is only stoking the fire of nationalism.”

The EU commitment to the free

movement of labour also raises important questions. Within a year, by EU order, Britain will have to open its borders to the entire populations of Bulgaria and Romania, whose current unemployment levels are 12.4 per cent and 7 per cent respectively.

This potential mass immigration from Eastern Europe is not to meet our economic or social needs, but to obey the EU’s diktat. Immigration is an economic issue. A greater supply of labour will force wages down even further and put more strain on our housing, healthcare and education. Dixon notes, “It is important...to reflect that a sense of pride in one’s own country, a feeling that your own culture, national characteristics, and achievements are precious and should not be ignored, downplayed or forgotten, does not make an individual inherently racist or bigoted.”

We need an in/out referendum. The parliamentary parties don’t want to let the British people have a referendum on whether Britain should stay in the EU or leave it. They are terrified of the answer that we would give.

Surrender: how British industry gave up the ghost 1952-2012, by Nicholas Comfort, hardback, 354 pages, ISBN 978-1849541459, Biteback Publishing, 2012, £20.

THE LABOUR Party has bought into the big lie that it does not matter who owns companies. But, as Nicholas Comfort points out in his survey, foreign ownership means that “when a British plant is doing well, the profits flow overseas – and when it does badly, there is nothing to stop the owners closing it down or transferring production somewhere cheaper. Decisions on where and whether to invest – and, of equal importance, to continue to invest – are taken abroad.”

Comfort notes that foreign ownership is promoted by investment banks. “In Britain, the moment an investment bank gets close to a family-owned company it



Photo: Workers

Fighting against factory closure at Plessey in Bath

encourages it to float on the Stock Exchange, paving the way for a takeover by a foreign competitor – with the bankers taking a hefty commission from both transactions and the national interest the loser.”

Comfort deplores the importing of cheap labour when the need was for higher productivity, also the short-termism of the City and the Treasury, and near-suicidal exchange rate policies. Tight financial policies force the pound up, making our exports less competitive. As he points out, the priority given to defeating inflation causes lasting damage to industry and society.

The Korean War “forced Britain, among others, to divert resources from civilian manufacturing into armaments – and in Britain’s case reduced home demand through a round of fiscal belt-tightening which not only hastened the

hat grapple with the industry...

rved to death



ngate, near Edinburgh, 1982

defeat of the Labour government at the end of 1951, but proved after the event to have been largely unnecessary.”

He observes that Thatcher’s privatisations had an impact on manufacturing industry when centralised procurement or arrangements with a single supplier were abandoned, opening up everything from buses to telecoms equipment. Where this happened, “established British manufacturers from Leyland to Plessey were the sufferers.”

The Labour Party has also bought into the big lie that finance is more important than manufacturing industry. Comfort writes, “the reluctance of the banks to support any potentially productive venture when there are greater bonuses to be earned through the rashest forms of speculation remains a significant brake, not only on manufacturing companies’ expansion but all too often on their survival.”

CPBML/Workers MAY DAY MEETINGS



Wednesday 1 May, 6.00 pm

Speakers, music and discussion

**Word Power Books,
43 West Nicolson Street,
Edinburgh EH8 9DB**

Wednesday 1 May, 7.30 pm

Speakers and refreshments

**Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
London WC1R 4RL
(nearest tube: Holborn)**

STRUGGLE FOR IDEAS: THE BATTLE FOR BRITAIN

We, the British working class, have survived anything and everything thrown at us by early capitalism, capitalism in ascendancy or capitalism in absolute decline. We have survived by organising ourselves and by thinking out the strategies to defeat the brutal reality of capitalism. We now face the greatest struggle of ideas as we battle for our very survival as a class and nation. We fight capitalist ideas and we fight the weakness in ourselves which says, “Live with capitalism.”

Capitalist economics continue in their freefall of failure, poverty, unemployment, hopelessness and closure. Britain collapses under this government. Economic bankruptcy at home equates with imperialist war abroad. The European Union continues its 40-year colonisation to break up Britain and fragment our nation and class.

The challenges may be unprecedented but capitalist ideas are based on failure as they enter the second great economic depression in their history. Their short-term attempt to rule has created a government united only by hatred of the working class. We can destroy them by clarity of mind, rebuilt organisation, unity in the workplace and the assertion of our class resistance.

Come to our 2013 May Day meetings and discuss the struggle of ideas that will win the battle for Britain.

Out of the European Union

No to the breakup of Britain

Rebuild workplace trade union organisation

Fight for pay

Regenerate industry

Build the Party!

**Celebrate May Day with the
Communist Party. All welcome**

Back to Front – Words, words, words

‘The political parties mouth about immigration, but the only thing they put in writing is their signatures on EU treaties designed to prise open borders...’

SPEAK SOFTLY and carry a big stick – that was the advice of US President Theodore Roosevelt. When it comes to the European Union, our politicians prefer the opposite. They shout loudly, but do nothing.

So in February Theresa May belaboured the judiciary for letting foreign criminals stay in Britain after their sentences, on the grounds that they have a right to a family life. The judiciary points out it is only implementing the laws that this and previous governments have so shoddily drafted.

If governments really wanted to stand up for Britain, they would do it. The political parties mouth about immigration, but the only thing they put in writing is their signatures on EU treaties designed to prise open borders so that wage rates can be lowered across the continent. They will throw open Britain’s doors to Romania and Bulgaria next year, if we let them.

Even so, they know that the next general election – fixed for May 2015 – will be unlike any recent one: at last, Britain’s place in the EU will be one of the main issues.

The manoeuvrings to position the parliamentary parties have started. Cameron’s apparent bravado over the European Union, his promise of an “in/out” referendum, which only guarantees further delay and in fact further integration, are an attempt to deflect and confuse the ever-growing hostility and opposition within Britain to the EU. Clegg as a fanatical europhile is hostile to the “in/out” proposal. Miliband remains silent.

Cameron trumpeted his revision of the EU budget. A cut, he said. But Britain will pay more. Clegg, hostile to cutting any EU

expenditure, claims the deal is his idea. Miliband remains silent.

Cameron has started campaigning against mass immigration, or rather he talks about it, conveniently ignoring that Polish is now Britain’s second language. Clegg welcomes mass immigration. Coming as he does from the party that was the architect of mass EU immigration from Eastern Europe, Miliband remains silent.

What we need, what we must bend all our energy towards, is a declaration from our trade unions that they will wage war against the EU and everything it stands for.

We are at present some way from that clarity. With the exception of a few unions, the EU is still seen in the offices of most – and particularly so in the TUC – as some kind of saviour.

That weakness is a crucial support for the EU and for the multinational companies that stand behind it. They share a vision of one landmass devoid of nation states and national interests, with no controls on how they operate, and trade unions rendered powerless to control the price of labour by mass migration.

Miliband’s “One Nation Party” is launched and at least on health says the right thing – repeal the Health and Social Care 2012 Act – but not much else. So all around us we see stunts, photo-opportunities, trailed stories in the media, soundbites and parliamentary drivel.

It is important that this government goes, and goes as soon as possible. But let’s not run away with the idea that salvation lies in general elections. We need a referendum now. ■

Subscriptions

Take a regular copy of WORKERS. The cost for a year’s issues (no issue in August) delivered direct to you every month, including postage, is £15.

Name

Address

Postcode

Cheques payable to “WORKERS”. Send along with completed subscription form (or photocopy) to WORKERS 78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB



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...

Copies of all pamphlets and a fuller list of material can be obtained from CPBML PUBLICATIONS, 78 Seymour Avenue, London N17 9EB. Prices include postage. Please make all cheques payable to “WORKERS”.