

"The emancipation of the working class will only be achieved by the working class itself" (Karl Marx)

"END OF RECESSION"? BUT FOR WHOM?

Since July 25th, the government has been boasting of having brought the recession to an end, because official statistics show that annual production (i.e. GDP) is back to its pre-crisis level. As if bringing the economy back to square one after 6 years of slump was worth boasting about!

But even this claim is no more than a sleight of hand, due to inflation and the increase in population over these 6 years. If both these factors are taken into account, the economy actually produces nearly 6% less per head than it did back in 2008!

A permanent crisis

Another official figure tells a very different story about this "end of recession": total investments by British companies will be £50bn lower this year than in 2008. In other words, the economic degradation is just carrying on, more or less at the same pace.

A large part of the estimated £320bn in lost production due to plant closures, short-time, etc., over the past 6 years was due to a sharp fall in investment. Not that companies were strapped for cash. Simply, the share of their profits which was not re-invested in production increased dramatically - reaching over £300bn last year!

The same thing happened in all the rich countries. The world's 2,000 largest private firms are sitting on a cash mountain worth £2,750bn - or twice Britain's GDP - with around 16% of it hoarded by British companies. However, the same firms cut their investments in 2013 and expect them to fall each year up to and including 2016.

This means that not only are the bosses failing to invest in new production and equipment, but they operate with outdated, worn out,

poorly-maintained machinery - regardless of the risks for the workers concerned. Meanwhile they use their cash piles to speculate and to increase returns to shareholders. Nothing surprising in that, of course: the capitalists are only there to make profits, not to create useful jobs and production, least of all to protect workers' health!

Squeezing more out of our labour

Behind the official GDP figures, there are huge differences between different sectors of the economy. For instance, the output of production industries, which includes all newly-created wealth, is still down by 11% compared to 2008!

On paper, this drop may be made up for, by the growth of services. But this doesn't make up for the hundreds of thousands who have been forced into low-paid, casual non-jobs - or permanent unemployment! Nor for the fact that real wages are down by 12% from their 2008 level.

The economy has shrunk, with the bosses striving to extract more out of our labour to maintain their profits on the basis of reduced production. Worse even, it remains unstable due to speculative bubbles and other "toxic" threats.

But what do the

capitalists and their politicians care if their profit system staggers from one crisis to the next, as long as they maintain their profits by shifting the burden of the crisis onto the working class through austerity policies combined with job and wage cuts?

No wonder the recession is over for the capitalists - in fact it has been, for some time already. Aren't shareholders expected to pocket £100bn in dividends this year (up 5.4%)? Aren't the prices of shares, top-end properties and luxury goods rising endlessly?

But for the working class, the crisis remains as bad as ever and this is precisely why their hopelessly bankrupt profit system needs to be replaced - before it blows up once again! ☐



Their Politics *Cameron sides with state terrorism*

It seemed at times that the only person not shocked and revolted by the brutal attacks on the population of Gaza was David Cameron. He could only trot out the tired old line that "Israel has the right to defend itself", regardless of the blatant mismatch of Israeli and Hamas forces and of the respective death tolls. Only when Sayeeda Warsi resigned as a foreign

office minister did Cameron allow himself some mild criticisms of Israeli policy, admitting that he didn't agree with shelling schools and hospitals!

As opposition leader, Cameron criticised the Israeli attacks on Lebanon in 2006, only to face a backlash from one or two Zionist sympathisers who were also big Tory party donors. But his comments this time go deeper than

just not wanting to upset the wrong people. With the existence of even the state boundaries of the Middle East under attack in Iraq and Syria, Israel is more than ever the most reliable ally of imperialism in the region - which is why Cameron, Obama and their western partners in crime will never do anything against Israel's terrorist policy against the Palestinians. □

• *Rats leaving the sinking ship?*

According to the ex-Tory donor, millionaire Stuart Wheeler, at least another eight Tory MPs are waiting in the wings for the right time to follow Douglas Carswell and defect to UKIP.

Is this really about Euroscepticism? After all, UKIP has been around for a long time and the Tory party was never in favour of Britain leaving the EU. So why didn't Carswell defect long ago?

Why, if not because his only chance to get himself into Parliament was to stand as a Tory? Ideas have nothing to do with this. It's all about careerism.

Today, however, the situation has changed. The high scores registered by UKIP in the European election - especially in Carswell's Clacton constituency - mean that more Tory MPs are worried that, come next year's

election, a strong UKIP showing may hand over their seats to Labour. Some are still hoping for some sort of deal between Cameron and Farage. Others, like Carswell, may choose to cross the Rubicon by joining UKIP, possibly in the hope that their former constituency Tory party will not oppose them. Whichever is the case, it's all about a desperate attempt to save their seats.

• *UKIP's ambitions*

UKIP's leader Nigel Farage will be standing for the general election in South Thanet and has confirmed the obvious - that his party aims at holding the balance of power between Labour and the Tories.

One way would be through a deal with the Tory party. For instance, the

Eurosceptic and Thatcher-nostalgic Bruges Group is arguing for "a strategic arrangement between the Conservatives and UKIP whereby Tories will stand aside in a handful of seats in exchange for a free pass in key marginal seats". But, so far, the Tory leadership has dismissed speculation

that it is talking to UKIP.

Short of that, in an attempt to broaden its populist appeal, UKIP seems increasingly to be playing the anti-immigration card, especially through local campaigns against Roma people. Gutter politics in the strictest sense of the word!

• *Simmonds of the Ritz?*

A second foreign office minister, Mark Simmonds, resigned within a few days of Baroness Warsi. Not in protest against British policy on Gaza but against the parliamentary expenses regime. Simmonds will even stand down as MP for Boston and Skegness at the general election, saying his £89,435 ministerial salary was not enough to maintain his family in London!

Simmonds, who employs his wife and is entitled to claim up to £25,000 for that, has never rented a flat in

London because he says his parliamentary allowance will not stretch to renting a family-sized property in Westminster. Considering that commuting from a flat in the outer suburbs was not an acceptable "lifestyle", he stayed in central London hotels during parliamentary sessions, racking up public-funded bills of nearly £174,000 in 2013 - making him easily the most expensive MP in Lincolnshire. By the way, how high should the benefit cap be, which you voted for, Mr Simmonds?

• *Class elitism*

A government commission on social mobility and child poverty reported, unsurprisingly, that the positions of greatest power and influence are still dominated by people educated at private schools and Oxford or Cambridge. Just 7% of the population is privately educated, but 71% of senior judges, 62% of senior military officers and 55% of top civil servants were. Only 1% of the population went to Oxbridge, but three quarters of senior judges, 59% of cabinet ministers and 47% of

newspaper columnists did.

But is that any wonder? The capitalist class needs leading politicians, top civil servants and other decision makers who understand its needs and are absolutely loyal to its interests. And it uses Oxford, Cambridge and the top private schools to select, train and recruit those who will form the leading circles of its state and economic machinery. Elitism? Yes, for sure, but that's what this class society is all about.

• *Rotherham: protecting the state machinery*

An independent inquiry into reports of sexual abuse in Rotherham has revealed that local gangs had abused over 1,400 girls between 1997 and 2013. For now, there's been a cross-party agreement to get Shaun Wright, the police and crime commissioner of South Yorkshire, to carry the can for the long-standing relegation of the case.

But what about the police force itself? Despite previous reports by the media and Home Office officials, it made only five token arrests over the last 17 years! Surely it has a case to answer for? Initially the Home Office intended to have the South Yorkshire investigate itself. It was only under pressure that it changed tack and ordered an "independent" enquiry by another force. But how "independent" can an enquiry of the police by the police be, anyway? Not much, obviously. But of course, the point for the politicians is that the repressive arm of the state machinery should be preserved from any discredit - at all costs.

The two faces of the "recovery"

Since the beginning of the current recession in 2008, it is estimated that real wages have fallen by 12%. A pay freeze has been in operation across most sectors of the economy and millions of permanent jobs have been replaced by badly paid and precarious jobs (which, by the way, is the reality behind the marginal fall in the unemployment rate). Such a decline is unprecedented in the history of wage levels in UK, which, even during the Great Depression of the 1930s didn't see such a fall.

And wages are continuing their downward spiral. Real wages fell by 1.3% during 2013-2014, the steepest fall since the first year of the current recession.

At a time when public sector workers are taking action against



a derisory and insulting pay rise, private sector workers have every

reason to join them in making a solid stand against low pay. □

• **Paying for Osborne's tax haven**

Cuts in corporation tax are costing the government about £5bn a year. This is forecast to rise to £8bn, after the tax is cut again next April, to 20%. That's half the US rate and by far the lowest in the G8 countries.

Despite Osborne's claims that

these cuts add to economic growth, companies looking to take advantage of the British tax haven can do so by setting up a purely nominal head office, creating no jobs and not investing in any production. And those who end up footing the bill for

Osborne's generosity to the bosses, which is paid for, above all, by cutting the Welfare Budget, are the very poorest in this society. This will have been cut by £21bn by 2015-16!

• **A bonus by any other name...**

In 2012, the EU proposed a regulation to cap bankers' bonuses. Only 2,714 people in the UK would have been affected at the time, but Cameron and Osborne fought for their interests tooth and nail, going so far as to sue the EU Commission over this proposal, in 2013. But they lost their case and the regulation was passed at the beginning of this

year, stating that the variable pay of a banker earning above £1.2m cannot exceed 200% of fixed pay.

And guess what? The bankers have already found a way out of it by substituting the phrase "cash allowances" for bonuses. Just eight months after passing the regulation, 55% of European banks and 47% of non-EU banks are using these "cash

allowances" including Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group, Standard Chartered and Goldman Sachs.

The EU is now "threatening action" against these banks. But the odds are that whether it does something or not, the banks will find another way around it.

• **They're having a ball**

After Nike backed out of a sponsorship deal with Manchester United FC, Adidas has stepped in with a deal for a record amount. As part of the deal, Man U gets an assured £75m a year for the next 10 years, while Adidas calculates that the popularity of the club - particularly in the Asian markets - will allow it to sell merchandise worth £1.5bn to football fans. Man U's dealings also extend to other business partners - it will earn £147m per season, just from T-shirt sponsorship. No wonder shares in Man U hit a 12-month high after the deal with Adidas was confirmed.

This apart, if one counts up the numerous other sponsorship deals, plus money involved in TV rights, ticket sales and increasingly

(absurdly) expensive players bought and sold, football is a thriving industry with large sums of money being splashed about.

So yes, shareholders may have

been thrilled at the prospect of astronomical profits, but for us ordinary mortals living in hard times, these money games take the shine off the real game we love.



Middle East *Populations caught in the great powers' trap*

They say that history repeats itself first as tragedy, then as farce. But there's nothing farcical about it for the populations caught in the events set in train by the British government and its US and EU "partners" in the Middle East and North Africa. Having learned nothing from their disastrous 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq, the more recent bombing of Gaddafi out of Libya, and then, since 2011, their backing of forces fighting the Assad regime in Syria, they're now reacting blindly to the full-blast blow-back they have caused across the whole region.

An estimated 191,000 people have already died in Syria. But not only does this disastrous war carry on, but out of it has appeared the so-called ISIS/Islamic State, courtesy of the western powers' long-term war-mongering and manipulations, which is now wreaking bloody sectarian havoc in Iraq against the populations in its path - all those who do not bow down, literally, to its Sunni Sharia fanaticism - and threatening Iraq with implosion. 51m have been displaced due to the war in Syria and its overflow in Iraq - the greatest number in any conflict since WW2.

As for Libya, where Sarkozy, Cameron and Obama engineered the



downfall of the Gaddafi's regime, all the better to plunder the country's oil, the population was left facing the rule, at gunpoint, of mafia-like Islamic militias, and when, despite the semblance of elections, anarchy prevailed, IS followers in Libya have instigated another "Islamic State" "Caliphate" around the port of Benghazi.

This is a growing catastrophe for the populations, pushing the whole region, and beyond, backwards to barbarism. But it was pre-ordained the moment that, on the basis of a lie about "weapons of mass destruction" and a lie about Saddam Hussein's connections to Al Qaeda,

Britain under Tony Blair and the US under George Bush invaded Iraq in 2003. Now the real progeny of Al Qaeda, IS, is in Iraq for real and, not only that, but the US and Britain may have to rely on the central "enemy" of George Bush's "Axis of Evil", Iran, to try to contain the beast they unleashed and prevent the situation from spiralling even more out of control. They summon the old "your enemy's enemy is your friend" justification for their uncomfortable new alliance, which may, or may not, get them out of their latest quagmire, but which certainly comes too late for the populations caught in this trap. □

• *Obama and Cameron's nightmare*

ISIS, now the Islamic State, and which has declared a Caliphate - Islamic state - across the border of Syria and into Iraq, claiming to literally rub out the colonial borders established when Britain and France carved up the region between them before WW1, was actually born in the rubble of the 2003 Iraq war.

The sectarian, Shia-led government imposed by the US-British coalition in Iraq after the invasion, excluded its rival Sunni Muslims, who, under Saddam Hussein, had enjoyed a relatively privileged status. These outlawed Sunnis, many of them ex-army officers, built an armed opposition both in exile in Syria and Jordan and in Iraq's Sunni-dominated

cities. They turned the West's lie into truth, adopting Al Qaeda's methods. And after their Syrian success, helped by regional sponsors in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, but also by Britain, the US and Europe in their haste to get "regime change" in Syria (they never learn!), IS-ISIS has gone from strength to strength, creating its "Caliphate" in east Syria-northern Iraq and even taking Mosul, Iraq's second city - expropriating its banks.

IS-ISIS' beheading of hostages, enslavement of women and strict application of Sharia law - its terror methods, in fact - made up for its lack of sophisticated weaponry. But now it has taken

over the fleeing Iraqi army's hardware and has access to the funds it needs to advance much further. Which is why Obama, Cameron and their partners are suddenly shaking hands with former enemies and signalling a pause in their aggression against Assad in Syria. They have also ensured the replacement of Al Maliki - the sectarian Shia PM of Iraq in a belated attempt to create a more inclusive government. It is unlikely however, that these moves are going to close the lid on the Pandora's Box they opened when they began their first "War on Terror" back in 2001.

• *Cameron's new "war on terror"*

When it became known that at least 500 "Britons" had joined the forces of Islamic State (formerly ISIS) in Syria-Iraq, Cameron began to speak of a "considerable terrorist threat" which would be posed by the "return of these callow youth to the streets of Britain". So at the end of last month he raised the level of terror threat to "severe" and has now reinstated in law most of the so-called "Tpims" - terrorism prevention and investigation measures - which previous Labour governments brought in, and

which the ConDems had revoked as useless. This includes control orders (akin to house arrest), but with the added possibility of relocating a suspect. One wonders which location Cameron has in mind. The Falkland Islands, maybe? Border police will now have the power to confiscate passports.

The reinstatement of such blank-cheque powers for the police and courts under the pretext of this new "war on terror" was voted in almost unanimously, with Labour's Ed Miliband saying they

weren't extensive enough! Indeed, like the law allowing spying on all e-mails, sms's and internet searches, which was passed without a hitch in the Commons in June, the words "terror threat" are enough to turn all MPs into petrified, gullible puppets. As for the rest of us living on the streets of Britain, the threat we already face thanks to Cameron's austerity is everyday: not managing to make ends meet. Now stop-and-search-happy and trigger-happy police will be on everyone's backs as well.

Anger erupts in Ferguson

On 9 August, Michael Brown, an unarmed black 18-year-old, was shot dead by a white police officer, in Ferguson, Missouri.

In and of itself, such a murder by trigger-happy, racist cops wouldn't have been unusual in the US. What was unusual, this time, was that the population of Ferguson took to the streets in anger.

On this subject we reproduce below extracts of an article published in the American Trotskyist fortnightly *The Spark* (issue #970 - 1st September 2014).

"It happened in Ferguson, Missouri, but it easily could have happened in any city or town in this country. Because young black men, when they walk down the street, have a target on their back.

"Some will say that's an exaggeration. Well, look at the behaviour of the political and police establishment in Ferguson after Michael Brown was gunned down by a cop. The Ferguson police and mayor shielded the cop, impeding the investigation. When they finally released the cop's name, they showered him with praise, calling him, 'a gentle, quiet man.' And they distributed a video at the same time, showing Brown apparently grabbing cigarillos from a convenience store without paying for them - trying to reinforce the idea that Brown was a dangerous criminal...

"In fact, the cop didn't know that Michael Brown had taken that handful of cigarillos. Even the Ferguson police chief admitted it. Michael and his friend were stopped, according to the chief, for 'walking down the middle of the street, impeding traffic.' No. Michael Brown was confronted by a trigger-happy cop for walking down the street and being black.

"This kind of murder could have happened anywhere in the country - and, in fact, regularly does. The difference is that the black population of Ferguson didn't accept it without

protest. The protests have continued for the last week, marked by outbursts that reveal a rage residing deep inside people who have been abused and discarded.

"Authorities from President Obama on down decry the 'violence' that has since broken out in Ferguson. What cynics they are. Without that so-called 'violence', there would be no investigation today by the FBI, no grand-jury investigation. The Missouri governor would not have stepped in replacing the Ferguson

something might have been wrong in what that cop did.

The people in Ferguson are right to protest, they are right to find all the ways they can to express their outrage. 'Power concedes nothing without a demand.' That was a famous line from a speech by Frederick Douglas, speaking of the fight to overturn slavery. It's just as true today, as it was then, 157 years ago...

"There can be no justice for Michael Brown, nor his family. He is

USA



police. Without the protests, it would have been business as usual. And business as usual, when a young black man is killed by a cop, is to brush all evidence of murder under the rug. In fact, it wasn't until the protests - and yes, the 'violence' - continued for six days that anyone in authority dared to acknowledge that

dead, cut down in his 18th year. And he can't be brought back. But the anger that today is roiling the streets of Ferguson may back off some other trigger-happy cop, saving the life of some other teenager, who next week otherwise would have been cut down before he, too, had the chance to live out his life." □

• Hiding torture and rendition

When will that US Senate Report on torture of terror suspects between 2001-2009, extraordinary rendition and secret CIA prisons, be released? It is being held up once more - with arguments going to and fro between US and British government agencies over what can and can't be told to the public. And no wonder. Since it contains

yet more evidence of the direct involvement of British agents in interrogation by torture and rendition to CIA prisons during and after the so-called "war on terror".

British attempts to hide their involvement might be comical if this did not concern the unbearably horrific physical depravity that prisoners were

subjected to, leaving some of them permanently disabled. For instance, when asked for logs of flights to Diego Garcia (the Indian Ocean island "loaned" to the US by Britain after it threw the island's population off), now known to be the location of a CIA prison, officials said unfortunately these logs had "got wet", rendering them illegible!

Our Class *Co-ordinated strikes - up to a point*

The unions Unite, GMB and Unison announced a further one-day strike of local government workers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland against a 1% pay offer on Tuesday 14 October. It's a one-day follow-up to the one-day strike on 10 July, and 3 months on, can hardly be called an "escalation", as they describe it! But at least they co-ordinated the action between them.

Yet on exactly the same issue of unacceptable low pay (and no pay rise this year) Unite and Unison have only just begun balloting NHS workers for strike action. Unison's ballot excludes Northern Ireland, while its ballot in Wales is to run from 30 September to 20 October - closing after the local government strike! In Scotland, NHS union leaders have avoided action altogether, agreeing a 1% pay rise with a minimum of £300 for all workers on under £21,000/yr.

For all their militant talk, the union leaderships' priority is to keep a tight rein on the various disputes and keep them strictly separate. Bringing different sectors together



July 10th strike demo in Bristol

so that they can feel their strength - and show it - may make better

sense, but only if you want to rock the boat... ☐

• *Fighting is the only future*

A report by a think tank, the Resolution Foundation, describes the situation for the 5.2m younger workers in Britain between 21 and 30 years of age - and how it has changed since the crisis. The median wage for young workers was £12.56 in 2009 and is now down to £9.83 an hour - a drop of £2.73.

Within this group, the proportion of workers on low wages (i.e. earning less than 3/4th of the median wage - meaning £7.71/hr, today) has tripled over the past four decades, to 1.5m workers. This is against a background where the cost of living is skyrocketing and under-employment is increasing.

Back in the 1970s the Sex Pistols shouted out about "no future" with this system. That it has nothing to offer anyone, let alone the youth, as this report yet again confirms, surely leaves no option but to turn around and fight it.

• *EU migrants facts and politicking*

In his overbidding with UKIP, Cameron has announced new rules against EU migrants. In future, they will only be allowed to claim welfare payments for 3 months, instead of 6, as previously. This comes on top of a raft of rules which already limited their welfare coverage.

Significantly, however, Cameron

said nothing about a Home Office report on EU immigration - whose publication was delayed due to Tory complaints that it was too "pro-European". No wonder: this report stated that the effects of EU migration was "largely positive" and that EU migrants were less likely to claim benefits than British-born

citizens; moreover it estimated that 2.3m EU migrants lived in Britain, compared to 2.2m British living in the other European countries (out of 5m British expats).

But who cares about facts, when Cameron's main concern is to pander to the same reactionary prejudices that UKIP is trying to whip up?

• *Universal hypocrisy*

In theory, Universal Credit should replace housing benefits and many other benefits in 2017 - that is, if the IT system on which it relies is finally made to work, which is not certain. For the time being, it is being piloted in limited areas, but already it is displaying some major flaws.

Under the old system, housing

benefits were directly paid to landlords, which meant that in case of payment delays, the tenant was not to blame. But under the new system, claimants will have to pay their rent themselves, out of a lump sum they will get at the end of the month. However, landlords will expect the rent at the beginning of the month. In other words, claimants

will have to pay their rent in advance out of their own pockets!

Faced with protest from housing associations and charity organisations, the Department of Work and Pensions is advising claimants to save up for their rent - although they didn't explain how someone who's forced to claim benefits can have any savings!

Mount Pleasant Mail Centre (London)

• **The folly of flotation**

Now those in the know say the government won't sell the 1/3 of RM it still owns – at least not till after next year's election. They also say that people who're upset about the "small" dividend (13.3p

per share) and fall in the share value (but still high, at 482p a share), should recognise that RM's value is only as a "regulated utility". In other words, to exist, survive, and provide share value, it has to have state protection. Forget about "free markets"! [Worker's Fight bulletin 14/07/14]

• **The "alternative" is, no sale!!**

Anyway, let's see what Cable&Co find out in their review (under Lord Myners) of the "botched" RM sale – and what "alternatives to IPOs for privatising state assets" they come up with, in the light of the government's decision to abandon

the sale of the UK Land Registry... At least that's good news, especially for its 4,500 workers. [Worker's Fight bulletin 14/07/14]

• **Taking the p**

It may be hard to believe, but Romec seems to have taken on several agency workers on zero-hours contracts. Of course we need extra workers and yes, we've been complaining about this for years. But we want workers on the same rates and contracts as we are, and no others: equal pay and equal conditions for equal work! [Worker's Fight bulletin 14/07/14]

Ford Dagenham estate (Essex)

• **No more, no more....**

They say quality control may be next for out-sourcing. But we thought quality was already out. In fact all they needed to add was the sauce... [Workers' Fight bulletin 23/07/14]

• **Keep it in-house!**

Sorry for that bad joke: we oppose this move and suggest that Ford increases

the number of quality control inspectors, in-house, so that the department ceases to be a "source" of such bad jokes. [Workers' Fight bulletin 23/07/14]

• **What's that all about?**

Here's some news to cheer us all up: Former CEO Allan Doolally has been recruited to Google just as it launches its new Android Auto (what?), which he apparently would apparently know all about, having turned the Ford workforce into auto androids. Goolally is it? [Workers' Fight bulletin 23/07/14]

• **Do we have to kill them?**

Obviously we're melting in this heat. But are bosses offering us heat relief breaks? Of course not. They say: "over our dead bodies". Do they mean ours' or theirs? If it's our dead bodies, we can see them just pulling the corpses to one side and

getting mates to take over where we fell down. But if it's theirs', well, that's a challenge. [Workers' Fight bulletin 23/07/14]

• **Bring back this cool blast from the past!!**

Actually, heat reliefs really did exist in "them olde days"! A mate would swing a thermometer on a ratchet over the lines (and inside the cars) and if the temp was above 78°f we'd get an extra 10 minutes break and above 82°, this would be 15-20 minutes (or 5-10 minutes every hour). And we'd have iced drinks, not the litre of hot "squash" full of additives (and no fruit!) which is put in each area and which makes you sick or thirsty, but certainly not rehydrated! [Workers' Fight bulletin 23/07/14]

King's Cross railway station (London)

• **Drawing the short straw**

Staff shortages are getting ridiculous: from Rail Gourmet, which doesn't cover sickness and won't let people take

holidays, via Initial, where we're constantly short, to Network Rail, which tries to cover gaps with temps and wants to cut our numbers even more without any regard for station safety. And on EC, we're constantly short of guards and catering workers, not to mention station staff. If all the companies on the station want to unite us against them, they're certainly going about it the right way. [Workers' Platform 14/07/14]

• **Making us feel like prisoners?**

Workers on the Underground are fighting to stop companies, like ISS which provides cleaning, from using fingerprint ID. They're right. But here on the station it's already been imposed by Initial and

at Liverpool Street, by ISS. Well, let's UN-impose it there and prevent it here! [Workers' Platform 14/07/14]

• **They're just so generous**

In the ticket office, East Coast managers have judged it necessary to re-brief us on their print-at-home ticket policy. Originally, we could print tickets for passengers who forgot to print them at home, for a £10 fee. Then they decided we couldn't do it any more and we could tell them to speak to the guard on the train. However, it's more than likely they'll then be charged for another ticket – which is a lot more than £10... [Workers' Platform 14/07/14]

BMW Mini centre (Cowley, Oxford)

• **Endless probation**

In Body-in-White half a dozen seniors retired at the end of last month. Meanwhile, thanks to a full order book, young workers working on the line on Mini's derivatives have been told their jobs are guaranteed until the autumn. But why should these workmates only be given extended probation? Give them - and everybody - the permanent contracts they've earned, end of story. [Workers' Fight bulletin, 14/07/14]

• **Keeping our cool**

It's not yet official but it soon will be: Oxford is having one of the hottest summers on record. Good news for BMW with its new solar farm on the body shop roof. But if managers are as slow as they usually are to concede heat relief, we might just have to take the air outside, regardless... [Workers' Fight bulletin, 14/07/14]

Scottish referendum

The gap between the "yes" and the "no" vote in the 18th September referendum seemed to be narrowing, when on September 7th, after months in which the "yes" vote had lagged behind, it suddenly surged to 51%. Opinion polls being notoriously unreliable, speculation over the result is useless. Significantly, however, some did indulge in another form of speculation... on shares. The shares of the main Scottish-based companies - the likes of RBS, Lloyds Bank, Scottish and Southern Energy, etc., slipped suddenly. Obviously, speculators are betting on the fact that investors will sell these shares should the "yes" vote win.

Pro-business policies

Does this mean that the bosses are terrified by the prospect of an independent Scotland? Not really. After all, SNP first minister Alex Salmond has given them every guarantee, both while in office and for the future, by offering them substantial gains from an independent Scotland.

For instance, the CEOs of IAG (owner of British Airways) and Ryanair have both endorsed Salmond's policies because he plans to abolish air passenger duty. Others have hailed the SNP's plan to increase government funding to industrial projects and to cut the rate of corporation tax by an additional 3% on top of Osborne's cuts.

Moreover, Scottish-based companies know that, independent or not, the Scottish government will retain Scotland's ties with the English economy. After all, 70% of Scotland's non-oil exports go to England, including 40% in financial services which depend heavily on the City. Would a party as "responsible" as the SNP, take the risk of undermining Scottish companies? Certainly not. On the contrary, it will do whatever it takes to help them to boost their profits. In short, Scotland will remain an auxiliary of British capital.

No stake for the working class



Democratic illusion

The SNP is trying to capitalise on the frustration of Scottish voters: for decades, they elected Labour majorities, only to be ruled by the Tories or by Labour with Tory policies. The SNP rose on this frustration, especially after 1997, when it filled the vacuum to the left of Labour, following Blair's rightwing shift.

Eventually, in 2007, 8 years after devolution, Salmond came into office. Instead of implementing all the cuts decided by Westminster, he took "old Labour" measures which were not too costly - such as abolishing prescription charges (as in Wales and Northern Ireland), charges for elderly personal care and university fees.

However, these measures didn't prevent workers from being hit just as hard by the crisis. Nor were they meant to.

Nevertheless, these measures combined with the mirage of the proceeds of North Sea Oil feeding Scotland's budget, were used by the SNP to substantiate the illusion that Scotland would be better off ruled as an independent state.

Not a future for workers

Like devolution, independence is meant to provide professionals with well-paid, secure jobs which they would never have had otherwise.

But maintaining a state machinery - the SNP also wants to join NATO and have an army! - is costly. Someone will have to foot the bill. And since, the SNP also wants to reduce business taxes, Scottish workers will be presented with this bill. Just as they will be told, like here, that they must make themselves cheaper to attract investment.

This is why there's no stake for the working class in this referendum. The real issue is not the institutions running society - independent, devolved or otherwise - but what class interests they represent.

Whichever way the vote goes, Scotland will be managed in the interest of the capitalist class. For workers there's no "good" capitalist - whether they come from Scotland, England, or anywhere else for that matter. They are all enemies and should be fought as such. □

In addition to this monthly paper, we publish fortnightly bulletins in several large workplaces in the South East, a quarterly journal, "Class Struggle" and the "Internationalist Communist Forums" - a series of pamphlets on topical issues.

If you wish to find out more about our ideas, activities and publications, contact the Workers' Fight activist who sold you this issue of our paper, or write to us either by e-mail, at contact@w-fight.org, or by postal mail at:

BM Workers' Fight - LONDON WC1N 3XX.