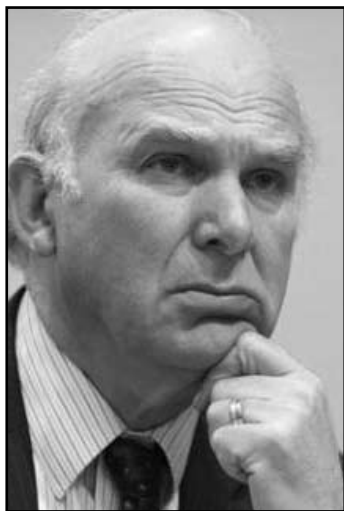


thesocialistpostbag

Do you have something to say?

Send your news, views and criticism in not more than 150 words to
Socialist Postbag, PO Box 24697, London E11 1YD,
or phone 020 8988 8771, email: editors@socialistparty.org.uk.
We reserve the right to shorten letters. Don't forget to give your name,
address and phone number.
Confidentiality will be respected if requested.

A line to Cable



Vince Cable, the Business Secretary, tells us that the government deficit has to be slashed so that future generations are not burdened with our debts. Well, while he is so concerned about that he could get rid of university tuition fees which will burden future students with debt. He could take measures to ensure workers can afford to buy a house without going into debt that will last most of their lives. And he could cancel the Private Finance Initiative which will burden future generations with debt without any benefit to them

**Pete,
Worcester**

VILE capitalism

The Independent's finance section last weekend had an interesting article about what to expect in the economy entitled 'don't let a double dip get you down.' Unsurprisingly it was pretty grim stuff, looking at the housing market, price rises etc. However what summed up the feeling of many 'in the know' were the comments towards the end from Stuart Thomson at Ignis Asset Management: "We think the new decade is VILE - volatile, inflation, less expansive." Certainly 'vile' is one way of describing the situation caused by the capitalist crisis.

**Paul Hunt,
Coventry**

Replace Trident with real jobs

On 1 November, at a major anti-Trident demonstration at Devonport dockyard in Plymouth, anti-nuclear protestors aim to blockade the base to protest at the base itself and the potential re-commissioning of the submarines. While the Socialist Party opposes Trident and calls for the UK to abandon its nuclear arms capacity, we must be aware of working class people's sensitivities. The dockyard is still a major employer in the town and provides some of the area's few remaining unionised and properly paid jobs. Local people rely on the base for jobs. Socialist Party members will be lobbying to replace Trident with real jobs with proper working conditions that pose no risk to the environment, the community and the world. Plymouth Socialist Party is asking for other Socialist Party members to help to offer working people in the city a real alternative.

**Mel Bishop,
Gloucestershire**

Trident could become a major issue for the Con-Dem government. We can demonstrate the current government's twisted priorities, cutting essential services for the poor while maintaining aggressive neo-imperialist military policies.

Justin Pollard

A question of reserves

Is the sound of Labour councillors pleading they have no alternative but to implement cuts familiar? Well, according to the Wimbledon Guardian, Labour-led Merton council in south London has come up with an alternative. Under the previous Tory-led council large reserves were built up so New Labour campaigned in May to give all households a £100 rebate. This proposal was then defeated at the last full council meeting by the combined votes of Tory, Liberal Democrats and Independents. So now £6.8 million of cuts can be stopped.

Next time councillors say they have no alternative, ask them what reserves they have built up.

Don Morrison

Is my brain missing something?

If I get into financial difficulties, my main options are either secured or unsecured loans. Nowhere on the High Street can I get a loan at the unbelievable terms offered to the banks - no lender will give me a hunk of cash for a worthless promissory note based on the potential future worth of my equity at 0% interest.



Is my brain missing something? I'm not happy we lent the banks the money but it's been done, and in our name, so let's start collecting interest payments now. If the people are the lender of last resort then why are our jobs and services being slashed so the people suffer?

Why can't we treat the banks the way they treat us and convert Darling's gift to a commercial loan. They make £millions in profit so they should be able to meet their monthly payment to us. If they miss a payment we surcharge them and if that fails we litigate to repossess to the value of our loan. We wouldn't charge unrealistic interest rates - I'd be happy to mirror Royal Bank of Scotland's, Lloyds Banking Group's or Northern Rock's best secured rate - as a class we're not greedy and we would comply with the FSA and treat our customers fairly!

Councils must defy cuts

The letter below is from **Tony Mulhearn**, who was a leading councillor in Liverpool's Labour council when it fought Thatcher's vicious attack on that city between 1983 and 1987. Tony was also president of Liverpool District Labour Party. The letter was sent to the Liverpool media.

photo Paul Mattsson

DEMANDS FOR cuts in jobs and services are orchestrated by the friends of those people who caused the crisis - the pigs whose noses are firmly back in the banking trough. Vince Cable can condemn the excesses of the fat cats, but nothing will happen without the agreement of the same fat cats.

Cameron and his henchmen are straining at the bit to slash the hard-won benefits fought for by generations of working people. Every local authority leader faced with demands for cuts prefaces his or her response with the mantra: 'cuts are necessary.' This is completely false.

Not a single cut nor a single job loss should be accepted to remedy a crisis caused by the obscenely rich so beloved of Cameron, Blair and Mandelson!

We are told that Liverpool council must save the equivalent of the wages of 3,600 employees over the next three years. £110 million, we are told, must be saved between April 2011 and March 2014.

Who says so? A cabinet composed of multi-millionaires, the rabid right that historically has opposed every public provision in health, education and social services, while supporting privatising the utilities, which proved to be a cash bonanza for the bloated chief executive officers of companies.

The latest report on BT's call-handling arrangements with the council



Trade unionists protesting against the 'outsourcing' of jobs and services.

exposes further the lie that privatisation can 'save' the taxpayer money. BT has overcharged the council to such an extent that £23 million a year could be saved if the council terminated the contract.

It's time Joe Anderson, the Labour leader, declared Liverpool's opposition to any further cuts in jobs and services. All those opposed to the cuts are urged to support Liverpool trades council's anti-cuts initiative.

Bosses' 'Tribalism' defeated

IN SEPTEMBER the government cancelled the contract for delivering improvement in children's homes with venture capital backed Tribal Group.

This is a victory for young people in care and those in the care sector who demanded the rescinding of the award.

In March, outgoing Children, Schools and Families secretary and cabinet minister, Ed Balls awarded the contract to Tribal, who had no record of delivery in the children's homes sector.

No reason was given for taking the contract off a successful charity, the National Children's Bureau (NCB), and handing it to the private consultancy firm.

At its core, Balls' replacement of NCB by the multinational Tribal Group, reflected a process that transformed children in care into commodities for profit.

Interviewed in a childcare magazine, John Kemmis, chief executive of the Voice charity, said: "I am appalled by this news. What experience and expertise have Tribal got in residential child care?"

I and other care leavers called on the House of Commons' Select Committee for Children, Schools and Families to demand the suspension of the award while a full and open enquiry was undertaken.

Tribal's demise is a victory, but the government must now use the money saved by cancelling the award to deliver the recommendations of the 2009 House of Commons Children, Schools and Families select committee.

In a major report it called for the government to commit resources to create stable, long-term residential care for the children in the system.

This, the committee declared, required a dramatic rethink into the positive use of children's homes as viable placements for young people in care rather than placements of last resort.

By a former Barnardo's Boy

Government by credit rating agencies

WHO VOTED for Moody's? Who voted for Standard and Poor? What was the point of holding an election when government seems to be just a mouthpiece for credit ratings agencies?

These institutions are consistently wrong in their predictions and comparable in incompetence to Bank of England (BoE) governor Mervyn King. Credit ratings agencies and top bankers still call the shots even though they are the voices of an irrational and unpredictable speculative market.

Marvellous Mervyn couldn't predict the crisis coming as he told the TUC last week. That he's still head of the BoE shows that the rich don't have to pay the price for absolute failure.

One definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results. By this definition the government's solution to the current problems is quite simply insane.

Our practically interchangeable party leaders no longer pretend to be anything other than salespeople

for the market dictatorship. They cannot offer an alternative to the public and so we will have to look outside of parliament for a palatable solution that does not include being victims of 'legitimate' daylight robbery.

As the new emperors don the cloak of austerity, their new clothes will leave them exposed for all to see whose interests they really represent.

**Martin Clements, Bristol Central
Socialist Party**

Defend Tommy and Gail Sheridan against political vendetta

FORMER SOCIALIST MSP Tommy Sheridan defeated Rupert Murdoch's News of the World rag in a civil defamation case in 2006. Following that victory a four year long onslaught of victimisation, intimidation and persecution (costing over £2 million) has been carried out by a combination of the Crown office and Lothian and Borders police - encouraged by News International.

Tommy and Gail Sheridan's trial on charges of per-

jury - relating to the 2006 civil case - is due to start on 4 October in Glasgow. It is widely seen as a crude and politically motivated vendetta against Scotland's most well known socialist.

People will rightly ask why millions can be found to fund a witch-hunt against a socialist fighter, while schools and community facilities are being threatened with the axe.

(see also www.socialistworld.net)