

WORKERS

INVITATION FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY

PUBLIC MEETING

MIGRATION AND CLASS POWER

**Thursday 20 October, 7.30pm
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,
London WC1**

• All welcome. Nearest tube: Holborn

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policy is clear. It is to reduce wages and
conditions to the world minimum...’**

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MIGRATION AND CLASS POWER

Speaking in Bradford in June, the Governor of the Bank of England, Mervyn King, said, "Immigration has reduced wage inflation...the inflow of migrant labour, especially in the past year or so from Eastern Europe, has probably led to a diminution of inflationary pressure on the labour market."

In other words, cheap mass labour from Eastern Europe – the Polish Plumber syndrome – has been used to keep wages stagnant or reduce them. The real purpose of an open-door immigration policy is revealed for what it is: to undermine the wages and conditions of British workers.

Anyone who wants a practical example of this need look no further than Heathrow. The workers at Gate Gourmet were just too expensive, and, even more important, too highly unionised for this spin-off of British Airways. Destroying the union is essential to the project.

Apart from Ireland only Britain – courtesy of Jack Straw and the Labour government – decided to give unrestricted access, from 1 May 2004, to workers from the new Eastern European member states even though transitional arrangements allowed restrictions for up to 7 years. At a stroke, Labour solved the problem of illegal immigration...by making it legal!

The aim of this open-door immigration policy is clear. It is to reduce wages and conditions to the world minimum. In that regard, cheap Polish labour is just a halfway house for capitalism. And already their wages are too high – Polish shipyards, for example, are using even cheaper Russian labour to undercut Scottish yards. Wages in Britain are 20 times those in urban China – and 30 times the Chinese rural wage. The inexorable logic is that unless we suffer wage cuts of 95%, we're "costing too much".

For too long some in the trade unions have been so afraid of charges of racism that they have allowed Labour to operate a deliberate policy of weakening workers' bargaining power on a massive scale. Perhaps those in favour of open-door immigration could explain what is anti-racist about a policy that leads directly to the sacking of hundreds of British women of Indian origin.

In the face of the Bank of England, the Labour government and the European Union, we in Britain will survive only by asserting our class interests. The working class – of every country – must exercise control over the supply of labour.