

## Tomb Of The Unknown Claimant

About 800 words and first published on my Blog in July 2015

**'Here lies the body of a claimant. They died so that rich Tories could avoid inheritance tax and large corporations could pay less tax.'**

Everyone seems to have their own idea of why IDS was so happy at yesterday's budget. The interesting thing is that every article I've seen interprets the reason as nasty and unpleasant. I guess the media have finally seen through the IDS lies and sanctimonious nonsense. I'm hoping that the Labour Party opposes this budget, but I'm not holding my breath.

The rise in the minimum wage was welcome, but will be more than offset by the reduction in tax credits. The Tories do seem very good at making sure it's always - "The rule is, jam to-morrow and jam yesterday – but never jam to-day."

George has promised a £9 an hour minimum wage by 2020, but of course the economy may shift by then. Maybe we need a new law saying George can't find any excuse not to put the rate up to £9? But people only see the £9 and don't look at the detail, or the timescale. The BBC found one guy who said he was ecstatic and would probably buy a new car. Of course by now he'll be realising the rise next year will probably only buy a second hand Trabant.

The real news story is the one that will get little attention. The freezing of working age benefits for the remainder of the parliament. At the moment UK inflation is at an all-time low, but supposing it drifts back to just 2% a year? You are then looking at the poorest in the land having to survive on less and less each year.

### **ESA (Employment and Support Allowance)**

After years of persecuting the sick and disabled, the Tories are going to do what they've been wanting to do since 2010; they're going to reduce ESA to the same as Job Seekers Allowance. Remember that JSA is deliberately set as a punitive level, a rate designed to push the unemployed into accepting any job they're offered. No one seriously expects to survive on £73 a week for any period of time. Only the sick and disabled will now have to live on that!

This is a drop of a third of their income. Visualise that when you're wondering if you can afford your Friday night curry. Of course this means Cameron lied before the election when he said he cares about the "poorest and most vulnerable," the people "at the bottom end." There will be more suicides as people are rubber stamped as fit to work. As with child poverty, the Tories will make sickness disappear, simply by declaring that there are no longer any people too sick to work – they just have a bad attitude. Some people will have families who can help them, but many won't. For a huge number of sick people, the only thing they have to look forward to is destitution.

**True heroes of the economy**

The real heroes of Britain's economic recovery (when it arrives), aren't the bankers or the Tories, or the faceless corporations. The real heroes are the sick and the poor, who've taken the weight of the deficit on their already frail shoulders. Many will die, but it is they who have kept the nation afloat. Anytime George Osborne has needed a few billion to look after his friends, the sick, disabled and disadvantaged have provided the funds. Maybe not always willingly, but those with least have continually helped out those with plenty.

We need a memorial to them – A Tomb of the Unknown Claimant

It could be someone driven to suicide by bogus sanctions, or perhaps a disabled person who died from the stress of unpaid bills. They've all paid the price, even if they've managed to tenaciously cling onto life. I'd like the tomb to be somewhere quiet in Westminster, a small green park where passers-by can pay their respect to the people who really saved Britain. In that quiet green place we should build a simple marble memorial and on it should be something like;

'Here lies the body of a claimant. They died so that rich Tories could avoid inheritance tax and large corporations could pay less tax.'

Of course the tomb may never be built, but next time you walk past a quiet park in Westminster, imagine the tomb is there. Be quiet for a moment and thank the poor, vulnerable and voiceless for their huge part in saving the economy.

Wake up! Get Angry! Don't put up with it!

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