

## Letters

## Give Gordon Brown credit where it's due

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I have taken a keen interest in British politics since I was a teenager in 1945 and in all that time I have never known a politician so criticised, savaged and denigrated to the extent that Gordon Brown has been (Coup might have saved 'chaotic' Brown government, says Darling, 5 September). If half of what has been and is still being aimed at him were true he must be the most incompetent chancellor and prime minister in British parliamentary history, and for his character faults the devil incarnate.

I thought it was a British tradition that you didn't kick a man when he was down – apparently not so when the man is Gordon Brown. The latest attack comes from Alistair Darling. I had to have a wry smile when I heard Darling saying that he was not surprised to be attacked by the Tories but considered it a bit much to be attacked by his own colleagues; how often must Brown have thought that in the years since he became prime minister. Darling seems to be saying he was correct in his assessment of the economic crisis and what needed to be done and Brown was wrong. But Darling seems to have wanted, albeit in a milder form, cuts and higher taxes, like George Osborne has brought in, and we can see where that is leading us.

Brown is even criticised now for keeping a low profile and a dignified silence. There is a biblical sentence which sums up Brown very well: "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country". Gordon Brown is very highly regarded all over the world, but not here.

Arthur Glasgow

Birmingham

- Why does Alistair Darling turn his fire on his own colleagues instead of the government? Because this is a reprise of the cuts/austerity v investment/growth contest – and Darling has more in common with Osborne than with Brown. Brown and Balls were the only major figures in Westminster who had the analysis – backed up by three Nobel economists – that said there is no immediate economic crisis in the UK and certainly no sovereign debt crisis. That's why Brown was so reluctant to utter the C word.

The record favours Brown, , who led the global Keynesian charge against depression. Osborne inherited a growth rate of 1.5%, which in March 2010 cut £20bn from the deficit and avoided the double-dip recession now forecast. Meanwhile Darling was caught in the glare of the headlamps – not unlike Denis Healey who, in 1976, called in the IMF to oversee the cuts programme that ended the post-war boom. Healey has since admitted there was no need for that pain which led to the "winter of discontent" – there was no fiscal crisis. Whatever Brown's psychological flaws, he did not allow them to interrupt his economic analysis.

Saville Kushner

Barry Kushner

Bristol

- It is no use expecting George Osborne to recant his belief in Osbornomics (Leader, 6 September) and to summon the world to hammer out a plan B. The judgment of history that he and the Tories are looking forward to is of having rolled back the tide of postwar belief that collective action, nationally and internationally, can be a force for good in the world. How different would the world's potential for collective economic problem-

solving have been with Labour – and let's admit it – Gordon Brown at the helm.

**Graham Smith**

*Walton on Thames, Surrey*

• Three years ago the world economy stood on a precipice. Collapse was only averted by a vast bank rescue package. In Europe the sum ran to trillions of pounds. This proved to be no answer to the crisis but poured yet more wealth into the pockets of the rich and led to the sovereign debt crisis. Governments throughout Europe and beyond now propose a single solution – draconian austerity measures that threaten the livelihoods of millions of ordinary people. And indeed millions oppose this policy, which will not bring economic recovery but recession. To address this crisis on a basis that meets the real needs of the peoples of Europe, we will be meeting in London on 1 October at the Europe Against Austerity conference to discuss an alternative economic and political strategy.

**Jeremy Corbyn MP** *Lab, Islington North,*

**Len McCluskey** *Unite,*

**Pierre Laurent** *Party of the European Left,*

**Sevim Dagdelen** *Die Linke,*

**Annick Coupe** *Solidaires,*

**Prof Walter Baier** *Austria,*

**Elisabeth Gauthier** *Transform Europe,*

**Felipe Van Keirsbilck** *European Joint Social Conference,*

**Hugo Braun** *Attac,*

**Piero Bernocchi** *Cobas,*

**Prof Costas Lapavitsas** *Soas,*

**Andrew Burgin** *Coalition of Resistance*