



after the historic \$15 minimum wage victory,
don't miss Seattle's socialist councillor

KSHAMA SAWANT

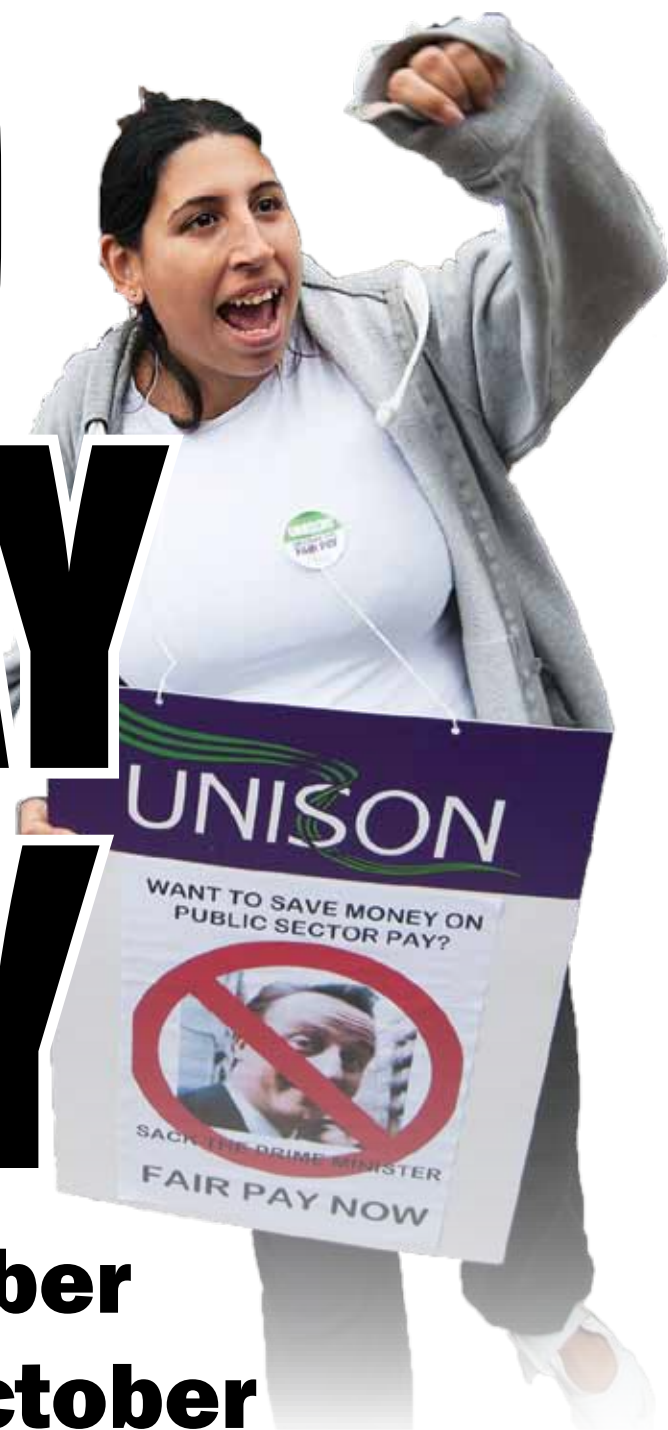
see details on page 8

SOCIALISM2014

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Saturday 8 November 3pm HOW CAN THE PALESTINIANS WIN LIBERATION? Discussion and debate, including live link up with socialists from Israel-Palestine

UNITE TO FIGHT PAY ROBBERY



- **Lobby the TUC on 7 September**
- **Coordinate strikes on 14 October**
- **Join the TUC London demo on 18 October**

Rob Williams
Socialist Party industrial organiser

Workers in Britain have been hit by the biggest fall in pay since 1880. Increasingly, work simply does not pay! But as incomes drop, the anger is rising.

Average wages after inflation are down by more than £1,600 since 2010 - the biggest drop in any Parliament since Tory Benjamin Disraeli was prime minister.

Average real weekly earnings are 8% lower since the Con-Dems came to power and 15% lower for under-

25s. No wonder an estimated half a million people a year will be receiving food parcels by 2016.

The Con-Dem government and its big business masters are taking us back to the 19th century with poverty pay and the destruction of public services.

Workers have got no option but to fight to break the attack on our living standards.

The public sector pay dispute will now continue into the autumn. Local government workers in the Unison, Unite and GMB unions will take strike action on 14 October.

The Socialist Party calls on all the public sector unions to immediately

meet together to ensure that all of the one million-plus workers that struck on 10 July (J10) are involved.

This includes teachers and civil servants. But, with NHS workers also balloting, a strike of 30 November 2011 (N30) proportions is now possible.

Britain needs a pay rise

With the TUC's 'Britain needs a pay rise' demo called on 18 October, we could see a mobilisation on the scale of the mammoth 26 March 2011 demonstration that saw 750,000 workers march through London.

That march, coming a few months

after Osborne's first austerity budget, seems an age ago.

The National Shop Stewards Network produced 40,000 flyers that day warning that we needed the 'fight of our lives' - that if the cuts went through it would be a catastrophe for working class people and the vast majority in society. Isn't that the reality for many today?

But this was not inevitable. The demonstration in March 2011 signalled the build-up to the pensions strike on N30.

Two million workers participated in the biggest single day of action since the 1926 General Strike.

It was a massive day with virtually

every town and city seeing workers' rallies and marches. But instead of being the platform for further action, the TUC and conservative union leaders accepted the government's pensions deal.

The result was not just that the pensions strike was demobilised but the door was opened up to the full force of the cuts.

Undoubtedly, many activists have feared that history was repeating itself as the weeks passed since J10. Earlier dates in September were first floated, but 14 October is an opportunity to build generalised action that must be taken with both hands.

Continued on page 2

The paper of the Socialist Party. Issue 821.

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Low pay - no way Build for 14 October coordinated strike

Continued from page 1

All public sector unions should be involved in the 14 October strike action. A real momentum can be built to get the maximum turnout.

Even during their well-earned summer holidays, many teachers in the NUT will be trying to put pressure on their union to ensure that they line up with school staff. There should be no need to wait around until October to confirm their participation.

The Socialist Party also calls on private sector unions to discuss how their members can coordinate action. Over the last year, we have seen a rash of disputes from workers at London Underground to Doncaster Care UK, Tyneside Safety Glass and Argos.

As we go to press, Ritzy Cinema workers in Lambeth are voting on whether to accept a deal that would in a year take them to the London Living Wage after an impressive struggle.

Thousands of private sector workers could be involved if there is a general call for any live disputes to be coordinated with the 14 October strike.

It is almost unprecedented that the unions are taking action on this scale so close to a general election.

When the POA prison officers' union successfully moved their general strike motion at the TUC Congress in 2012, the right-wing

union leaders who opposed it argued instead that the unions 'should wait for a Labour government'. No doubt some leaders of those unions who took action on J10 are tempted by this argument.

On one hand, they lack the confidence that they can defeat the government, while on the other they don't want to expose Ed Miliband and the Labour leadership just eight months before the general election.

But working class people already see Labour in action in councils where it has simply wielded the Tory axe. And Miliband accepts austerity and the pay freeze that flows from it. The election will be a choice between pro-cuts parties.

Statement of intent

A victory in the pay dispute would not just be a major blow against Cameron. But it would also be a statement of intent against Miliband or whoever forms the next government - they will face a workers' movement that is prepared and able to resist cuts.

Scandalously, a majority of the union leaders at Labour's Policy Forum accepted Labour's spending plans which follow Tory austerity limits in return for minor concessions. This is a disastrous approach that will only demoralise activists.

The calling of the 14 October strike is a reflection of the real world - the real eco-

nomical pain being suffered by workers and their families who cannot wait for the faint hope that Labour, if they win next May will lift the siege on their living standards. It is this mass pressure that is forcing the pay strikes to continue.

The strike planned for 14 October will be a significant step in the battle against austerity. In demonstrating in action their enormous potential power, the unions could draw behind them millions of, as yet, unorganised workers and all those suffering from these brutal cuts.

The idea of a 24-hour general strike has been pushed back by the cowardly actions of the right-wing trade union leaders. But the need for it is widely understood, even if the confidence is not there at this time.

The 14 October action has the potential to change this, bringing general strike action back to the forefront of workers' minds. This

will open up the prospect of defeating this government and any government that acts in the interests of the 1%.

Therefore, union members have to keep the pressure on. If your union hasn't confirmed for 14 October, move a motion at your next branch. Come to the lobby of the TUC Congress that the NSSN has called on 7 September. That will be a more than useful forum to discuss how to keep the action going and broaden and deepen the dispute.

And inevitably, this campaign and the strikes themselves will pose the question of a political alternative. Just as they did on J10 and in 2011, workers striking in October will come up against the opposition of Labour politicians.

They fear a mobilised trade union movement as much as the Con-Dems. The building of a mass political voice for working class people would hugely increase that fear.

NSSN rally and lobby of the TUC Congress in Liverpool: 'Keep striking together for a pay rise'

Speakers include Mark Serwotka, PCS general secretary
2pm, Sunday 7 September

Jurys Hotel, opposite Echo Arena Conference Centre in Albert Dock
See www.shopstewards.net for more - email info@shopstewards.net

Labour policy forum: continuing Tory austerity

Steve Score

The Labour Party leaders have repeatedly promised to continue this government's policy of cuts. If pro-capitalist Labour wins the next election they guarantee we will face more public sector job losses and more reductions in services. Neither will there be any reversal of privatisation in public services.

This comes as no surprise, since these were exactly Labour's policies last time they were in power. However, some people still hope that the leopard can change its spots and that the next Labour government will be different.

These hopes have been dashed yet again by Labour's recent National Policy Forum. 198 members of the forum gathered to discuss ideas that may eventually make the basis for the election manifesto.

A small number of members tried to reverse a key proposal to stick to the Tories' spending plans, but were defeated by 125 to 14.

Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls hailed the result with the soundbite that Labour stands for "big reform not big spending". In reality they stand for big business not working class people.

Hot air

Since Blair, opposition parties have always claimed to come up with a new 'big idea' in the run up to a general election.

John Cruddas, head of the policy review, claims that it is a fundamental rethink and a "turning point in the history of the Labour Party". This is so much hot air. They just want

to find policies that don't involve spending money.

Similarly, a move to commit Labour to the renationalisation of the railways, something overwhelmingly supported by the public, disappeared.

Instead they passed a policy that merely allows public sector organisations to compete with businesses

Ed Balls gave the soundbite that Labour stands for "big reform not big spending". In reality they stand for big business

for franchises, presumably by driving down staffing levels and cutting staff wages in an attempt to win the bid.

The National Policy Forum is not a democratic body that allows influence on policy from the membership, or from the trade unions. It reflects how the structures of the party have been rigged to ensure control from the top.

With one or two small exceptions, such as a small rise in the minimum wage and the (long overdue) promise to scrap the bedroom tax, Labour will continue the Tories' policies. Even those small concessions will have to be paid for by other cuts.

That's why we need to build the working class alternative that the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is aiming for.



Ed Miliband: protected from the views of trade unionists and socialists photo Paul Mattsson

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) is an electoral alliance that stands candidates against all cuts and privatisation.

It involves the RMT transport workers' union, leading members of other trade unions including the PCS, NUT and POA, and socialist groups including the Socialist Party.

In May 2014 TUSC stood 554 candidates, the largest left-of-Labour local election challenge for over 60 years.

www.tusc.org.uk



Regulating the banks? Don't make me laugh!

Tessa Warrington

Deep in the heart of London, the world's largest centre for international finance, bankers are quivering in fear. The cause of this state of affairs? Apparently, the Bank of England's terrible threat to 'claw back' the bonuses of 'badly-performing' bankers.

But can't bonuses already be withdrawn up to five years after they're awarded? Why yes, they can. The Bank of England's master stroke? To extend that time to seven years.

This will give London the "toughest regime in banking pay of any global financial centre," according

Financial crimes were punishable by death in England from the late Middle Ages until the Victorian era!

to Anthony Browne of the British Banking Association. Well stop the press, because it sounds like all our troubles are over!

However, the banking industry has already begun retaliatory fear-mongering, with claims that this move will 'hurt' London by not being able to compete on salary with other finance capitals like New York and Hong Kong.

Once again the public are being held to ransom with the threat that losing the private finance sector will

negatively impact upon society - but just look at the devastating austerity brought about when a 'functioning' private finance sector triggered a world economic crisis!

With scandal after scandal hitting the front pages, public trust in the banking system is at an all-time low, and the big-wigs of finance capital are frantically scrabbling to restore it.

One think tank has even gone so far as to suggest that bankers take an 'ethics oath'! But, as recent 'highlights' from the ongoing Libor-rigging scandal show, Lloyds bankers defrauded the very government-backed money-lending scheme created to bail them out! In the words of one analyst this was like "stealing from the fire brigade when they come to save your home".

Antony Jenkins, chief exec of Barclays reckons "banks have to regulate themselves", but who can honestly believe that left to their own devices the banks will ever be able to rein in their own profit-driven greed?

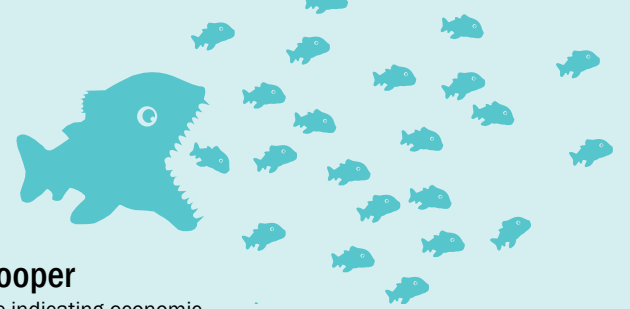
Financial crimes were punishable by death in England from the late Middle Ages until the Victorian era, and even that didn't stop people cooking the books.

These attempts to convince the public that the banks have repented their sins and are taking genuine steps to put their houses in order, are as insulting as they are ridiculous. It is the fear of the public demanding real punitive measures that really has the bankers shaking in their expensive boots.

The Socialist Party calls for nationalisation of the banks under democratic control from below as the only way to secure any kind of fundamental break from the exploitative grip of the banking system, and as a first step towards creating a society based upon people's need not private greed.



Them...



Super-doooper

One statistic indicating economic recovery which Chancellor George Osborne isn't crowing about is the booming sales of super-yachts. There were 221 sales of super-yachts in the first half of 2014, up almost a third compared to 2013. According to the FT, for a mere \$150 million readers can purchase a super-yacht boasting "several gymnasiums and swimming pools, as well as a so-called hydraulic swim platform, where children can pretend they are at the beach". Ideal for stopping the kids getting bored in the summer hols!

the minimum wage to people doing 'valuable tasks' but bosses can get round this by limiting any unpaid work to four weeks. Most intern positions last three months or longer, therefore many bosses are breaking employment law.

Banking hypocrites

Global banking giant HSBC has been accused of Islamophobia after it unilaterally closed the bank accounts of a number of UK Muslim charities and individuals. Some account holders say they were told by the bank that they fell outside its "risk appetite". HSBC appears to have overlooked this criterion prior to making a \$1.2 billion settlement with US authorities in 2012 who accused the bank of illegal money laundering activities with drug cartels and rogue states!

Justice for Tommy

Scottish socialist Tommy Sheridan's conviction for perjury in his News of the World libel trial is to be reviewed by the Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission. If successful, Tommy can appeal to the High Court to have the conviction overturned and his name cleared. The review comes after former News of the World editor Andy Coulson, who appeared as a prosecution witness in Tommy's 2010 trial, was recently convicted of phone hacking and now faces perjury charges.

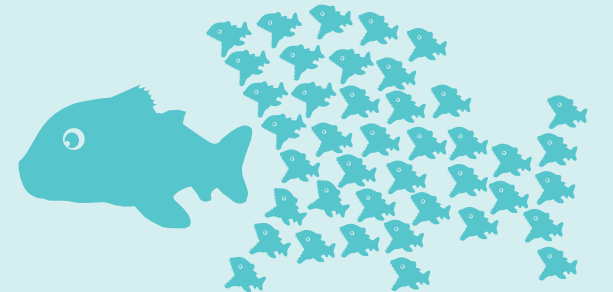
Good for business

War. What is it good for? Big profits if you happen to be an arms supplier. UK worldwide arms sales are worth £12 billion a year. The Con-Dem government has issued arms export licences to British companies to supply the Israel Defence Force and Russia despite a war of terror being waged on Gaza and the civil war raging in east Ukraine.

Cheap labour

A YouGov survey has revealed that 26% of 682 'senior decision makers' of profitable businesses polled admit to paying their graduate interns nothing or less than the minimum wage. 82% of these businesses say their interns perform 'valuable tasks'. It is illegal not to pay at least

...& Us



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Energy giants' profits continue to defy the laws of gravity

Matt Gordon

The next Chief Executive of Centrica, the parent company of British Gas, will be the aptly named Mr Conn, formerly of oil giant BP. Apt, because if making millions from what should be a publicly owned resource is not crooked enough, Centrica are currently arguing that a rise in profits is really a fall, and that these profit hikes are unrelated to the constant price hikes they have inflicted on millions of people.

The latest figures from Ofgem, the government regulator, show that energy companies will make a pre-tax profit of £106 per household in 2014, up from £53 last year - a doubling of profits! According to British Gas, they've "only" made £265 million in profits during the first half of the year, and dispute Ofgem's figures.

This is in the context of energy usage falling which would otherwise cut profits - energy usage has of course fallen not only because of a



mild winter but because rising bills, falling incomes and government austerity have forced working class people to cut back, with many being forced to choose between heating or food.

EDE, the French-owned energy supplier, has also seen profits in Britain go up by 9.5% for the first half of the year - which means that figures for the remaining members of the Big Six energy firms are likely to be similar.

Centrica have tried to say that Ofgem's figures are wrong due to "methodological" differences. I don't think so. But let's have a

trade-union led democratic body to investigate the accounts, and find out what the profits really are, and where the money of millions of customers has gone. Better still let's nationalise the whole energy industry, turning it back into the public service it should be.

Labour's response has been utterly inadequate, saying it was an example of the energy market not working and saying they would freeze energy bills until 2017. The energy market is clearly working, since the whole purpose of markets is to earn profits! The question is, are markets the best way to provide public services and to decide how best to use natural resources?

A re-nationalised energy industry could lower prices, not just freeze them when they are already too high, and keep them low permanently, and invest in green alternatives. Workers and consumers would have to democratically control this. We need a new, mass working class party to fight for these demands.

WORLD WAR ONE ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION

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Doncaster: uniting against anti-union bosses

Alistair Tice reports on two Doncaster struggles against anti-union firms.

Care UK pay dispute

When Doncaster Care UK slashed privatised NHS careworkers' terms and conditions by 35%, workers warned that such pay cuts could cost staff their homes.

Well this isn't propaganda. Mags Dalton has had to give up her home and job in Doncaster because she can't afford her £400 monthly rent – that's how much her wages have been reduced.

Mags' story explains why Care UK workers, having already struck for 34 days, are currently into the second week of another fortnight of strike action in pursuit of a pay claim for a substantial increase for Tupe transferred staff and the Living Wage for Care UK staff.

These Unison members, whose struggle has inspired trade unionists around the country, know that if they don't take the fight to Care UK then the bosses will want to cut their basic NHS salary next year.

The management now will only promise to pay above the market rate; that's the minimum wage in the care industry!

With 50-60 experienced staff on strike, Care UK can't cope. It's been reported agency staff have been brought in to cover, which is illegal. Strikers are prepared for the long haul if needed to expose "Don't Care UK" and fight for the NHS.

Strikers joined the Doncaster ex-Tesco drivers protest on Friday 1 August and this week will show solidarity with protesters at Stafford Hospital fighting threatened closure.

A coach full will take their message again to London to private equity owners Bridgepoint, the Department of Health, and crucially to Unison HQ to demand a national union campaign against Care UK, a strategy that could achieve a victory.



Doncaster Care UK workers and sacked Tesco Stobart drivers join together in protest photo A Tice

Tesco Stobart drivers

Ex-Tesco drivers in Doncaster have been outraged by a local Tesco store manager, Wesley Scargill, making fun of their plight 20 months after 184 of them were sacked by Stobart, the haulage company now known as "Scumbart", that they were outsourced to.

A photo of this manager, holding Unite placards in imitation of protesting ex-drivers, was posted up on social media.

Information obtained through "disclosure" for a recent employment tribunal (ET) against unfair dismissal and lack of consultation confirmed what drivers already

suspected: there was collusion between Tesco and Stobart to sack the drivers to drive down costs and remove the Unite trade union, to which all the drivers belonged.

The ET resumes in January but the drivers, most of whom have not had any permanent employment since they were made redundant, are stepping up pressure on the companies to fully expose their union-busting



Wesley Scargill

tactics and get decent compensation. On Friday 1 August, drivers and supporters staged simultaneous protests at Tesco/Stobart depots in Doncaster, Goole and Widnes. Over 30 pickets stopped lorries and talked to drivers at Doncaster distribution centre and a dozen protesters turned some lorries away in Goole. Bigger protests are planned at depots and stores.

So Mr Wesley Scargill, the last laugh will be on you!

Land Registry sell-off halted - now jobs fight needed

Dave Lunn

Vice-president, PCS Land Registry group (personal capacity)

In the Socialist issue 817 (2 July 2014), I reported that the government was expected to abandon plans to privatise the Land Registry.

The formal announcement was eventually made by Land Registry minister Michael Fallon on 14 July. This u-turn illustrated clear splits in the Coalition government, with Lib Dem business secretary Vince Cable believed to have influenced the decision following the disastrous and unpopular Post Office sell-off.

The overwhelming reason for the climbdown however was the

massive campaign led by the PCS civil service union, galvanising the public, industry professionals and others into a powerful coalition of opposition.

Action gets results

Ultimately, the two days of solid industrial action on 14 and 15 May were a decisive factor. This view was supported by the Mail on Sunday, usually no friend of workers: "Controversial plans to privatise the Land Registry have been scrapped by the government after a revolt by civil servants"

Mark Serwotka, PCS general secretary, said: "This is a hugely significant victory for our members and

the industry professionals who ran a fantastic campaign, together exposing the emptiness of the government's case."

But concerns remain that privatisation could be back on the agenda following the 2015 general election.

However, privatisation is not the only threat hanging over our members' heads. On 29 July, Land Registry chief executive Ed Lester announced that the Land Registry LR Connect digitisation programme will go ahead, expressed by industry experts as 'digital at any cost'.

Dumbing down

The plans mean dumbing down Land Registry services, reducing the

scrutiny of highly skilled and impartial civil servants and increased customer 'self-serve'.

The primary driver behind digitisation is cutting as many staff as possible. PCS has called for public consultation, something that to date the Land Registry has rejected.

PCS has consistently demanded the current UK network of offices is retained with no compulsory redundancies.

Management has announced that no office closures would happen before July 2016. But the PCS must step up its campaign, refocusing the coalition of opposition to privatisation to defending Land Registry offices and jobs. Further industrial action cannot be ruled out.

Tax workers walkout against cuts

PCS members in HMRC took strike action as part of a regional rolling programme of action on one of the three days from Wednesday 30 July to Friday 1 August.

This follows June action, which afterwards saw the concession of 2,500 permanent posts being advertised.

PCS members are now continuing to challenge HMRC management on a number of issues, including performance management reviews, mass job cuts, office closures and privatisation.

Kevin McHugh, PCS national deputy president, spoke to the Socialist at the Benton Park View pick-

et, Newcastle-upon-Tyne:

"HMRC say we are hitting people who are claiming tax credits during a peak period, but we are doing this to highlight the shortages and the cuts in jobs that HMRC have planned.

"HMRC have moved over 4,000 staff onto telephone lines to deal with the peak. If they stopped the cuts they would have adequate staff to handle the workload.

"Despite this crisis HMRC still plan to cut 10,000 jobs in the next two years. On this site 400 fixed term appointments are due to be sacked in September, 4,000 around the country."



Pickets at Benton Park View, Newcastle-upon-Tyne photo E Brunskill

In brief

FBU names eight dates

The firefighters' union, the FBU, has announced an eight-day period of industrial action in England and Wales in defence of pensions.

The strikes will take place from Saturday 9 August until Saturday 16 August from midday to 2pm and 11pm to midnight.

This latest round of strikes follows on from 10 July when firefighters joined a million public sector workers striking over pay as well as the eight days of action on 14-21 July. The long-running dispute was sparked by the Westminster government raising the retirement age of firefighters to 60.

FBU General Secretary Matt Wrack said: "This is unsafe and unrealistic for both firefighters and the public.

"We know it, and the public know it, but the government will not listen to the evidence-based case we have made to them".

Neil Cafferky

UPS Parcels

On 31 July, the first of the rolling UPS Parcels demonstrations against excessive workloads hit Camden. A national UPS strike ballot by Unite is now planned.

The response from workers was amazing, with workers stating they were ready to walk now and demanding a ballot and strike without delay.

Unite members at Camden in particular have complained of appalling levels of bullying with a strong racist undercurrent.

A black Unite representative was referred to directly by a senior manager as "boy". Workers on the loading bays have for some time claimed that their treatment is motivated by racist attitudes, where white managers feel it is acceptable to harass, bully and overload the workforce because it is predominately black.

But now workers have had enough. Among the thumbs up, raised fists and honking horns at the demonstration was the most telling comment from one UPS driver - "less talk, more action!"

Another demonstration took place at the West London depot on 4 August, with a third protest planned for 11 August in Croydon.

Blacklisters blacklisted

Islington council in London is the first local authority to throw an anti-union blacklisting construction firm off a public contract, taking council house repairs back in house from Kier.

The contract is worth £16.5 million a year and has been carried out by Kier for the past 14 years. 140 former Kier employees are now to be transferred to LB Islington.

Almost 100 public bodies, including the Welsh Assembly and Scottish parliament, have symbolically opposed blacklisting firms. But Islington is the first to actually axe a blacklist from a contract. Continued trade union campaigning could force others to follow.

Reinstate Bryan

One Housing Group workers will be striking at the housing association's Chase Farm Road offices in Camden on 8 to 11 August to demand the reinstatement of trade union activist Bryan Kennedy.

• See the Socialist issue 820 or www.socialistparty.org.uk for an interview with Bryan.

The role of Western imperialism in the Gaza conflict

Niall Mulholland

As the death toll mounted in Gaza, the Cameron government and other Western powers mouthed empty condolences and called for a “cease-fire”. Under growing public pressure, cracks appeared in the Con-Dem government. Foreign Office minister Baroness Warsi resigned, saying government policy on Gaza was “morally indefensible”.

The White House timidly called the Israeli Defence Force’s (IDF) attacks on UN schools “disgraceful” but failed to explicitly blame Israel. At the same time, the US State Senate unanimously voted for \$225 million new funds for Israel’s Iron Dome anti-missile system and to restock Israel’s arsenal.

Labour leader Ed Miliband finally found voice last week and criticised Cameron’s pro-Israeli stance. Until very recently, neither Labour nor any of the main Westminster parties questioned Britain’s lucrative arms trade with Israel. Now, under growing public pressure, Con-Dem government ministers say they will review the sale of £8 billion in arms to Israel. Significantly, however, Downing Street said they would not stop licensing military equipment to Israel outright.

The UN’s Ban Ki-moon condemned Israel’s Gaza onslaught as a “criminal act” and called for an end to “this madness”. But the UN - dominated as it is by the big imperialist powers - proposes no action for Israel’s flouting of international law, let alone a genuine negotiated settlement to the decades-long crisis.

Creation of Israel

What is the real role of western imperialism in this bloody conflict? The modern state of Israel was created in 1948, when Jews fled the Nazi Holocaust and persecution to a new ‘homeland’ on what was then Palestine.

As the British imperialist occupation of Palestine ended and the first Arab-Israeli war erupted, the right-wing Zionist leaders carried out the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, using brutal paramilitary methods and ‘terrorism’. Initially the Zionist movement balanced between Western imperialism and the Stalinist Soviet Union to help create Israel. The new ruling class promised a “land of milk and honey” for its people, but have only delivered decades of crises and wars, and in recent years a sharpening divide between rich and poor.

One of the main reasons Israel has been able to survive is because of enormous economic and mili-

tary aid from US imperialism. It regards Israel as a key client state in the strategically vital and natural resources-rich region. The US arms and finances Israel to the tune of \$3 billion a year, creating the fourth strongest army in the world.

After a policy of ‘enforced integration’ of Palestinians under occupation between 1967 and the late 1980s, Israeli policy shifted towards ‘separation’ during the 1987-93 mass Intifada (‘uprising’), when the ruling elite realised they could not rule in the same old way.

The Israeli state relies on enormous economic and military aid from US imperialism

After the Oslo Agreement saw the creation of the rump Palestinian Authority (PA) under the pliant rule of Fatah, Israel tightened the screws around Gaza, especially after the 2000-2005 second Intifada and the coming to power of Hamas in 2006. Successive Israeli governments and western powers aimed to remove Hamas from power. The Gaza Strip, the world’s largest open air prison, was effectively sealed shut.

Israel has encouraged splits between Fatah and Hamas. Its huge military assaults on the Gaza Strip in 2008-9 and 2012 were intended to ‘mow the lawn’, ie weaken Hamas and strengthen Israeli power. Israel’s current assault, which started on 6 July, is intended to do the same and to destroy attempts by Hamas and Fatah to reach a ‘reconciliation agreement’.

Hamas

However Israel’s ferocious military aggression has strengthened Hamas - regarded as the only line of resistance to IDF butchery even by many of its severest critics in Gaza - and put Palestinian rights back centre stage in world politics.

Over the last months, Hamas entered talks with PA president Abbas from a position of growing weakness. It lost support from Syria and Iran after its refusal to give backing to the Assad regime facing an armed rebellion.

Hamas also faces hostility from the Egyptian regime, which bloodily overthrew the previous Muslim Brotherhood government, a close ally of Hamas. This resulted in the “underground tunnel economy” between Egypt and Gaza being sys-



Huge protests have taken place internationally against the Israeli assault on Gaza (see www.socialistparty.org.uk for reports) photo Mattsson

tematically dismantled by Egypt and Hamas being unable to pay government employees’ wages.

These developments, compounded by Hamas’s authoritarian rule and failure to show a way out of poverty and national oppression for the Palestinian masses, led to a sharp fall in its support in Gaza. Criticisms of Hamas were understandably muted once the latest IDF onslaught began.

The people of Gaza, of course, have a right to defend themselves but the bouts of rocket fire from Gaza since 6 July reflect the desperation of Palestinians in the Strip. They are no deterrent to the Israeli regime with its crushing military superiority. Moreover indiscriminate rocket attacks on Israeli civilians, carried out by groups that are not under democratic control, are counter-productive; they cause widespread fear among communities in Israel which is ruthlessly exploited by the right-wing Israeli government to deploy even more repression against Palestinians.

The interests and aims of Israel and its Western imperialist backers do not always chime. The Western powers would like to see a long-term agreement between Palestinian and Israeli leaders that leads to,

in John Kerry’s words: “two states for two peoples”. Under the watch of imperialism, this would not mean Palestinian liberation but some form of rump Palestinian statelet with a pliant ruling elite.

The Israeli elite could face uprisings in both the West Bank and Israel itself

The Western powers hope this would lead to more stability in the region and safeguard their interests. The corrupt and despotic ruling elites in the Arab states, despite their fake support for Palestinian rights, also fear the establishment of an independent Palestine, dreading that radical developments there could provoke the beginning of the end of their rule.

After both the EU and US indicated they would be prepared to deal with a new Hamas-Fatah regime, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, under pressure

from his far-right ministers and the powerful settler movement, upped the ante. The 12 June disappearance of three Israeli students in the West Bank was used as justification to start military operations against Gaza and to whip up Israeli fears of Hamas “rocket terrorism” and later “tunnel terrorism”. But the main aim of the Israeli regime was to terrorise the Gazan population and to break Palestinian resistance.

Israel’s neighbours and the region are in turmoil - Syria and Iraq convulsed by civil war, Jordan and Lebanon unstable, Egypt under military domination, Libya torn apart by warlords. So the Israeli state also wanted to display and enforce its military power.

Even if the IDF did eliminate Hamas, other Palestinian armed groups would appear, possibly more ferocious foes like Isis (the Islamic State).

Storing up explosions

Netanyahu says the current conflict confirms his argument that ‘security control’ is needed over the West Bank. This implies consolidating the occupation and extinguishing any remaining Palestinian hopes of a two-state solution.

But this policy will only entrench divisions and store up even greater explosions and conflicts. Palestinian numbers are growing in Israel and threaten to become a majority. The Israeli elite could face uprisings in both the West Bank and Israel itself, where the demographic clock ticks on to its disadvantage. The Israeli extreme right will try to counter this process by further enforced population movements or by further stripping rights from Palestinians living in Israel.

Socialists support the right of self-determination for Palestinians and call for the expulsion of imperialism out of the region. But what force can achieve this? Mass struggle by the Palestinians, under their own democratic control, is essential to fight for genuine national liberation.

It will be through the building of independent mass workers’ movements and parties throughout the region that the right-wing and pro-big business agendas of all the current ruling parties can be challenged and socialist ideas can start to take hold. A socialist Palestine and a socialist Israel, as part of a socialist confederation of the Middle East, would lay the basis for a future free from war, terror and poverty.

This is the programme that Socialist Struggle Movement (the sister party of the Socialist Party) courageously fights for in Israel-Palestine. See more on socialistworld.net

Over 300 people from 26 countries attended the summer school of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) from 20 to 25 July. Serious and sober discussion assessed the situation and charted the road forward for the class struggle and the building of the forces of revolutionary socialism on a world scale. Plenary discussions were held on the world situation, Europe, and the building of the CWI, as well as over a dozen commissions to discuss a series of issues and regions, including Latin America, South Africa, the Middle East, the transitional method, national question and more. Below we publish extracts from a keynote speech at the school by PETER TAAFFE, general secretary of the Socialist Party, on world relations and the perspectives for capitalism and the world workers' struggle. For a full report on the discussion on the world and other reports, see: socialistworld.net

geivity of the system. This depends on the preparedness of the working class, to mobilise, organise, seize the opportunity and take power. This, in turn, means the building of an organisation, a party that will be able to achieve and cement the working class's power on a national and international scale. But one thing is certain: capitalism will be challenged again and again by unparalleled mass movements, a taste of which we have been given in the last five years. The current chaos and turmoil of capitalism largely arises from the effects of the 2007-08 crisis. The rhythm is different in each continent but is felt everywhere, including by those continents and countries which have up to now escaped most of its effects.

Different rhythms

Australia has had a 23-year boom but is now joining the rest of the world because of the slowdown in China. Like elsewhere in Latin America, Brazil will see mass movements resumed with ferocity after the World Cup. A growth rate of 7.5% in 2010 has now fallen to 1%! The current president, Dilma Rousseff, is likely to win the election with a reduced majority - but anything is possible. In effect, the epicentre of the world movement against capitalism at the moment is in the Americas, north and south. Europe, on the other hand, is suffering a mild reaction, arising from workers' frustration that their colossal mass movements have battered the foundations of capitalism but for the moment have been contained by the capitalists. This is largely due to the lack of leadership, with no alternative on offer and, in some cases, outright sabotage from the 'leaders' of the mass organisations both on the political and trade union field. This will change in the next period. The much trumpeted economic 'recovery' is fake for millions, shallow at best. The US has not been able to drag the rest of the world out of recession. There are no bright spots for capitalism. Inevitably, resistance by the working class will resume in Europe and elsewhere. This, in turn, signifies the development of mass movements, which we've already seen in the Egyptian revolution and all the convulsions in the Middle East. Revolution is not one act but a process. Counter-revolution has the upper hand at the moment but new outbreaks of mass resistance are likely. The last rites for the movement are being read by superficial commentators. This is entirely premature.

US 'recovery'

"The US recovery simply refuses to live up to expectations," wrote the Economist. It is true that for four straight

CAPITALIST CRISIS CONTINUES WORKING CLASS MUST AND WILL PLAY DECISIVE ROLE

World capitalism is in turmoil and incapable of solving any problems: economic, social, environmental, war and peace

months there has been jobs growth of 200,000 or more but population growth has been larger. Therefore, the tendency is for unemployment to become permanent and its accompanying poverty is above pre-recession trends.

Where recovery and economic growth does take root, the mood of workers will be: "we want our share". Capitalist economic theoreticians like Larry Summers and Robert Gordon believe there are not sufficient investment opportunities to absorb the world's 'savings glut'. They expressed deep pessimism for the system; 'secular stagnation' is taking hold, which means a catastrophic employment position for workers and particularly youth.

Rising debt

In desperation, capitalism is attempting to create the conditions of growth through mass privatisations. The Economist, at the beginning of the year, looked towards a vast looting of state assets internationally, up to \$9 trillion worth, equal to the GDP of China!

The 'Great Recession' has also damaged capitalist globalisation, with collapsing cross-border finance and trade in goods and services. Debt levels in advanced countries are higher than before 2008. However, the piling up of debt is seen as the only method of fuelling growth under capitalism. The crisis in European banks continues with the collapse of Portuguese bank Espírito Santo.

This process includes China, with debt levels rising from 130% of GDP in 2008 to 220% in 2013. If the brakes are applied, there will be an economic slowdown with massive consequences.

The Hong Kong mass demonstrations are highly significant with the admirable



The much trumpeted economic 'recovery' is fake for millions photo Paul Mattsson

the US ruling class and its inability to deliver for the 99% has led to an intensification of the class struggle.

In Britain and Europe also, the crisis of legitimacy of the capitalist institutions is striking.

Obama is in trouble over his healthcare scheme and the monstrous deportation of immigrants particularly children. On spying he has alienated allies and Angela Merkel has, for the first time expelled a CIA agent.

The outcomes of both the US mid-term elections and the next presidential elections are not clear. The two-party system is in crisis with millions, particularly of young people, alienated and looking for an alternative. The idea of a new mass radical or socialist party of workers will emerge at a certain time.

US capitalism is still the largest power economically and militarily. That is one of the reasons why socialist success like Kshama's election resounds internationally. But it has been severely weakened, not least because of the actions of George Bush Jr and the 'neocons' post-9/11.

They claimed then that the US had become the sole dominant unilateral power; the "Vietnam syndrome" had been abolished. We warned of the inevitable blowback, in the US itself and internationally. The US population is now more opposed to foreign adventures than after the Vietnam War. This mood, particularly among the youth, was strong enough to check Obama, and Cameron, over the proposal to bomb Syria.

Author Francis Fukuyama famously proclaimed the "end of history" in the wake of the collapse of the Stalinist powers. He claimed victory for permanent liberal capitalist democracy.

Yet he now finds difficulty fitting this model into the realities of the Middle East and North Africa where we have

seen mighty revolutionary events, but also now a phase of counter-revolution reflected in new dictatorial regimes in the region.

In 2001 the CWI said the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in Iraq would lead to at least three 'Saddams', and this is unfolding before us. There are now likely to be three states: the Shias in the south, the Sunni in the central areas and the Kurds in the north.

Borders fixed 90 years ago have disappeared. The Economist said: "Iraq and Syria are no longer considered countries". We also warned that intervention would give chances to the Taliban, Al Qaeda and now its stepson, the Islamic state in Iraq and the Levant (Isis) and of 'blowback'.

It is estimated that Isis has just 15,000 core troops, with up to half that coming from Europe. It defeated the Iraqi army, not because of its inherent influence or strength, but because former Ba'athists and other completely alienated Sunnis went over to its side.

The largely Shia Iraqi army was not prepared to die for the corrupt and discredited Maliki regime.

The net result of US intervention in the region is an arc of sectarian war from Pakistan to Iraq, Syria and the rest of the Middle East and beyond, with incalculable consequences, not least for the unity of the working class, the only hope of escape from this impasse.

Working class solution

Our opposition to military intervention in Libya has been justified by the current position, disintegration and rule by different warlords. There is no shortcut to advancing a programme which sees the working class as the solution to the current sectarian impasse. Foreign policy is only the continuation of home policy.

It should not be forgotten that the Arab Spring, beginning in Tunisia and then Egypt, was primarily economic and social not religious. The alienation of the youth and the working class, driven by the incapacity of Mubarak to solve the accumulated problems, drove the Egyptian revolution which we predicted would break out, not least because of the dramatic rise in unemployment.

Even in Syria it was the drought of 2006-10, which drove predominantly starving Sunni peasants into the burgeoning slums, that fuelled the 2011 uprisings, which were legitimate but, because of the absence of a socialist leadership, then degenerated on sectarian lines.

On top of this absolute horror comes the new war of Israel against the Palestinians. Hamas was isolated and the tunnels were shut down by the Egyptian regime because of its (and the Saudis') hatred of the Muslim Brotherhood, co-thinkers of Hamas.

The fear of Israeli Prime Minister

Netanyahu of a prolonged 'occupation' of Gaza is that Hamas is bad enough but that the alternative of the growth of Isis-style organisations is worse.

Ukraine

Ukraine and Russia have been the other hotspot in world relations. We adopt the same class criteria, seeking to emphasise the commonality of workers' interests irrespective of their nationality. We cannot and should not support, even critically, Putin's Russian regime and its alleged approach that it was fighting a 'fascist' government in Kiev. It was pursuing a policy primarily determined by the interests of the Russian state and those it represents, the oligarchic gangster capitalists.

Initially, there were big elements of independent movements of the working class in the creation of their own militias and independent councils but this was obscured by the presence of Svoboda, the Right Sector and fascists in Ukraine. But the far right's real influence was shown by winning only 3% of the votes in the presidential election.

We support self-determination for Crimea but 'foreign liberation' can ultimately undermine this. Only a democratic constituent assembly, convened by a united movement or a democratically controlled referendum can guarantee this in Crimea and South-Eastern Ukraine.

Neither do we support the Kiev regime but seek an independent working class axis, and critical support of the socialist forces, even though they might be weak.

A new period of intensified conflict has arisen between the US and its allies, and Russia. The US also in its pivot towards Asia has increasingly come up against China's attempt to assert itself, with its new economic strength.

Socialist future

World capitalism is in turmoil and incapable of solving any problems: economic, social, environmental, war and peace. Socialism is knocking at the door of history. It may seem strange to say this when the active forces of socialism appear to be very weak.

Yet out of the chaos of capitalism today, mass movements will arise. Leon Trotsky, through the horrors of World War One, saw the socialist future and the inevitable outbreak of revolution, as did Vladimir Lenin even though the latter thought it was a distant prospect.

Yet Lenin assiduously prepared the forces to intervene in this revolution. That is what we are about today. There is a socialist world to win, which opens up a vista not just of plenty, but opportunities to develop all the talents of all peoples of the world. This is a perspective worth fighting for.

There is no shortcut to advancing a programme which sees the working class as the solution to the current sectarian impasse



Kshama Sawant (left) fighting for a \$15 minimum wage photo Alex Garland. Kshama will be in London in November to speak at Socialism 2014, a weekend of discussion on ideas to change the world. See socialism2014.net

SOCIALISM2014

8 & 9 November, central London

See www.socialism2014.net for further info and to book tickets

Capitalism has created a world in which just 85 people have as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity.

From Britain to Brazil, Seattle to South Africa, working class people are fighting back to raise their living standards. If you want to hear from those at the sharp end of these struggles then Socialism 2014 is the place to be.

While the rich get richer we are made to pay for a crisis of their system. The bosses and their politicians heap austerity upon our heads. This has not gone unchallenged.

This weekend of discussion and debate will take place on 8 and 9 November in London. It will involve socialists, trade unionists and anti-cuts activists from Britain and across the world.

Rally speakers include
 Bakers' union president **IAN HODSON**
 Recently elected Irish TD (MP) **RUTH COPPINGER**
 PCS general secretary **MARK SERWOTKA**
 Socialist Party general secretary **PETER TAAFFE**

Book now!
 20% discount on all tickets until 1 September

After the historic \$15 minimum wage victory, don't miss Seattle's socialist councillor
KSHAMA SAWANT
 Kshama is a member of Socialist Alternative, co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the USA. Her election with nearly 100,000 votes has sent shock waves across the world. Writing in the British press Will Hutton said simply "This does not happen in the US." But things are changing. Kshama's election victory has fed into a successful movement for a \$15 an hour minimum wage and inspired working people the world over.

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 £50 waged, £35 unwaged/low waged. Golden tickets include entry to the entire weekend and one night in central London hostel

WEEKEND:
 £30 waged, £15 unwaged/low waged

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 £15 waged, £8 unwaged/low waged

SUNDAY:
 £15 waged, £8 unwaged/low waged

RALLY ONLY:
 £5

HOSTEL SPACE:
 £25



"I might not be the youngest socialist - I can remember steam trains. It's also true I might have been around a while - I went to my first Labour Party Young Socialist meeting when I was 12 - but I still get excited about going to Socialism 2014. Why? I learn something new every time and deepen my understanding of Marxism. Around the world, on every continent, the masses have struck and taken to the streets to fight for a better future but only, at best, achieved a change in government that continues to exploit and oppress them. Getting rid of capitalism is a monumental task. It becomes more urgent to understand the theories and methods of Marxism so we can apply them wherever we are involved in struggle. And it's great to hear younger comrades leading discussions and sharing their experiences. Because studying Marxism and learning from history and international struggles are pointless unless we can use our understanding to further the struggle for socialism. Oh, and it's great to catch up with friends and make new ones. So that's why I'm excited about going to Socialism 2014. See you there!
Heather Rawling, Leicester



"Across Britain families are struggling to make ends meet. Britain urgently needs a pay rise, wages are being driven down by employers in order to maximise profits. This austerity offensive has of course been driven in the wake of the financial crisis. I am going to Socialism 2014 because I was inspired by the victories of Kshama Sawant in Seattle and the campaigns to win a living wage of \$15 an hour in the city. That's what we need in Britain. Socialism 2014 will be useful in the fight for a decent living wage in Britain and will help inspire the fight for a living wage of £10 an hour. Socialists in Seattle have explained that victories for the working class today have to be linked further to the socialist transformation of society. No doubt, as ever the Socialism event will offer a clear and rousing socialist perspective. That's why I am attending and why you should buy your ticket now.
Dan Celardi, Sheffield



"I'm planning to attend Socialism 2014 to join the discussion on the political issues and conflict in different parts of the world, eg the crisis in Gaza and the rest of the Middle East. I will give my contribution on the uprising in Sudan and report on the work we did among the Sudanese community in Britain. I hope to hear more about the fightback in Britain against austerity measures and how the pay freeze in the public sector, where I work, can be defeated. It's always good to meet comrades from different Socialist Party branches and catch up with them about how they are doing and what sort of ideas they have about the solution to the crisis locally, nationally and internationally.
Sabah Ahmed, Reading

Socialist Party Summer Camp 2014
 August Bank Holiday weekend Starts Friday 22 August 3pm to Monday 25 August 1pm
 Sessions include the Middle East, Trotsky's Transitional Programme and the real history of the Great War.
 Single working (£50), Single unwaged (£30), Family of 4 waged (£100), Children (£12.50), Day tickets (£15)
 Facebook: Socialist Party Summer Camp 2014

The Socialist summer schedule
 We have now entered our summer printing schedule. This issue will last for two weeks, with issue 822, also a fortnightly, beginning on 21 August.



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SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ received	£ target	July to September				Deadline 29 September 2014
Northern	444	600					
North West	705	1,200					
London	2,246	6,100					
East Midlands	493	1,600					
Yorkshire	888	2,900					
West Midlands	602	2,100					
Southern	252	1,200					
Wales	481	2,300					
Eastern	204	1,200					
South West	157	1,400					
South East	41	750					
England & Wales	32	3,650					
TOTAL	6,550	25,000					

Countdown to independence referendum

For an independent socialist Scotland

Matt Dobson

Intense discussion and debate are developing over the independence referendum in Scotland on 18 September. The vote will not be the end of this process. The latest "poll of polls", excluding 'don't knows', says 57% are likely to vote No and 43% back a Yes vote. This reflects a certain stalling in support for Yes over the last two months, after support increased beyond 40% in the spring.

But it is still too close for comfort for the Better Together 'No' campaign and the British political establishment. There are still a large number of undecided voters. There is also an element of unpredictability with the turnout likely to be much higher than recent elections, with over one million extra voters participating, including 16 and 17 year olds.

The next few weeks could be decisive, with Project Fear, led by



The referendum will take place on 18 September

big business, expected to go into overdrive. In a profit report on 30 July the RBS banking group joined insurance giant Standard Life in raising the possibility of moving its

business operations in the event of a Yes vote. Babcock Marine has also raised the prospect of Royal Navy contracts disappearing from the Clyde shipyards.

Both official campaigns claim to have benefited from the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow - in reality the polls show no impact. While working class people enjoyed the world class sport, the atmosphere was not able to overcome the anger against austerity and inequality. Transport and public sector workers in the city were involved in industrial disputes for overtime pay to keep the games running.

On 5 August a televised debate will take place between Scottish Government First Minister Alec Salmond and Better Together's ex-New Labour chancellor Alistair Darling. Both official campaigns are also posting leaflets to every household in Scotland with "key reasons" to vote either way.

43%
are currently
backing a Yes vote

Neither campaign offers an alternative to endless austerity and falling incomes. Nor do they represent the interests of the working class. However, the bedrock of the Yes vote is desire for change. But genuine doubts exist about whether an independent capitalist Scotland would deliver for the

The Committee for a Workers' International

The Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) is the socialist international organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated.

The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world. For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email cwi@worldsoc.co.uk

www.socialistworld.net

majority - polls consistently show a majority believe Scotland would be worse off economically under independence.

The Scottish National Party's pro-big business policies, such as promising to cut taxes for the largest corporations under independence, and record of implementing austerity are a significant obstacle to achieving a Yes vote.

End austerity

Socialist Party Scotland is campaigning for a Yes vote while putting forward a programme for the powers of independence to be used to end austerity, tax the rich and big business and for public ownership and democratic control of the major parts of the economy. There is overwhelming support for public ownership of gas, electricity, transport and oil and the idea of a new party to fight for workers and young people.

This has been reflected in large public meetings across Scotland, as part of the 'Hope Over Fear - Case for an Independent Socialist Scotland' tour which we have been involved in organising alongside Tommy Sheridan and others. Major rallies are planned in all the main cities in the weeks leading up to the referendum.

For more referendum news and analysis see www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

Argentina: Another debt default

End extortion of vulture markets

Danny Byrne

Thirteen years after the biggest sovereign debt default in history, Argentina has defaulted yet again, on the same debt.

The latest round of crisis was sparked by a US Supreme Court ruling which ordered Argentina to immediately pay \$1.5 billion to 'holdout' bondholders. These are the minority of holders of Argentinian debt who refused to participate in the debt restructuring of the governments of Cristina Kirchner, elected in 2010 and her husband in 2005.

The holdouts waged a decade-long legal battle to demand full repayment and the US Supreme Court ruling found in their favour. This represents a momentous victory for private bondholders over national governments, and sets an important precedent.

Vulture capitalists, inclined to ignore the pleas of countries on the abyss of default for a restructuring or "haircut" of debt to save their economies from collapse, will be bolstered internationally.

For socialists and the working class movement, however, it should serve to hammer home the reality that there is no lasting viable solution to debt crises on the basis of capitalism.

The 'solution' of the Kirchner dynasty to last decade's default was previously acclaimed from pro-market quarters as a shining example of how countries can recover from debt crises on a capitalist basis, through negotiation and a later return to the markets.

The rapid unravelling of this much-lauded solution shows that it was built on sand. This should stand as a powerful warning to those in Europe, such as the leadership of Syriza in Greece, who entertain illusions in similar 'solutions', ie within the framework of capitalism.

In some respects, the recent court case represented a showdown between the Argentinian government and super-speculator Paul Singer, whose investment



firm NML led the creditors' claim. Singer, a well-known supporter and funder of the US Republican Party, is reported to have a fortune of \$1.1 billion and specialises in sovereign debt speculation.

The court's ruling confirms who the laws and courts of capitalism are designed to serve - the Paul Singers of this world. Only a break with this system and a socialist alternative can make the rights of people and their livelihoods come before the right of a multi-millionaire to make more profits.

Whose interests?

This Kirchner government has proved itself unwilling to take such a path. It is talking tough following the breakdown in negotiations, with Finance Minister Alex Killicof, pledging: "We are not going to sign any agreement that compromises the future of the Argentine people."

But it proved willing to bend over backwards to come to a deal with the vultures in the preceding weeks. The government struggled until the last minute to find a solution which could please the bondholders.

However, it found itself caught up in a legal mess, linked to agreements made with those creditors who had accepted its previous restructurings, and was left with no alternative but to default, admitting that to pay the full demands

of all creditors at once was simply impossible.

A workers' government would respond to the US court ruling and extortion of the bondholders with defiance and repudiation of the debt in its entirety.

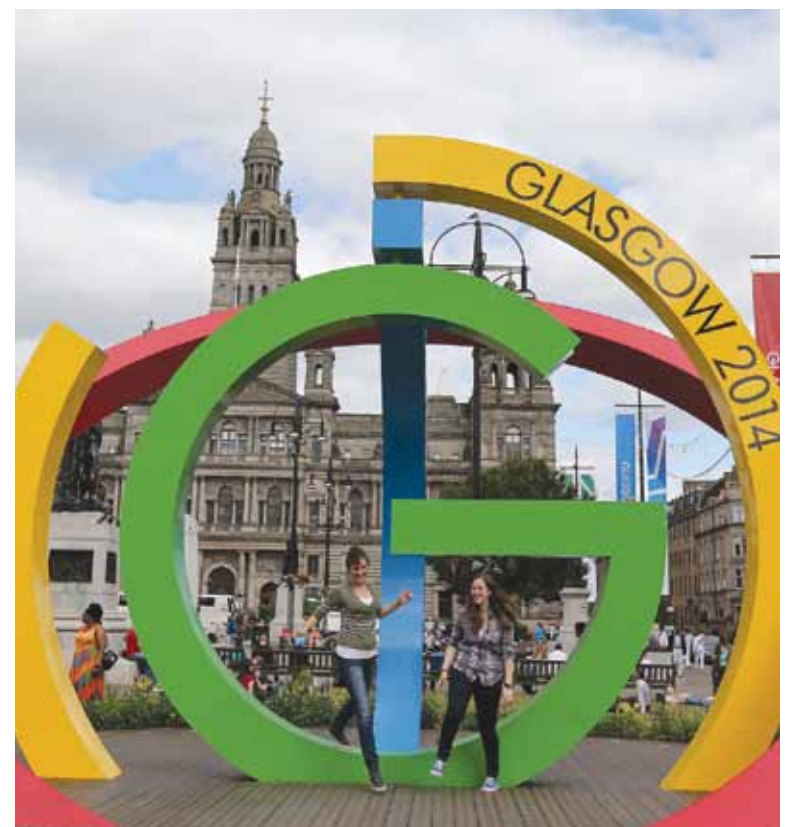
However, this would need to be accompanied by the nationalisation of the banks and financial sector under democratic control, and the implementation of a state monopoly on foreign trade, in order to protect the economy and prevent a flight of capital.

These and other socialist policies would be part of an emergency plan to confront the crisis. Such a plan would be aimed at making the super-rich both at home and abroad pay for the crisis while protecting the salaries and living standards of working class and poor people, and the middle class, against the effects of inflation and devaluation.

Instead of pouring billions into the pockets of bondholders, a massive plan of public works could be put in place to drive genuine economic growth.

If implemented, such policies would gain widespread sympathy and support internationally. This could be translated into the building of an international movement to break with the vulture markets and establish a socialist world.

This is a short extract of an article available in full at www.socialistworld.net



Both campaigns have claimed to be boosted by the Commonwealth Games

the Socialist postbag

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 slippery soap!

A's partner was recently declared bankrupt due to an ill-advised business investment. She may now be in danger of losing her home.

A juggles two poorly paid jobs with unsociable hours. A's son has only casual work on a zero-hour contract and now has a young baby and disabled wife to support.

A was recently forced to choose between the electricity bill and food. With only a stale loaf and a jar of jam in the larder, A had no choice but to shoplift or go to the food bank.

She left her 12 year old adopted daughter in the house alone while at the food bank. Her daughter unwittingly let the bailiffs in and had to witness her laptop and other household items being removed.

Later that evening, after a very stressful day, A and her partner are treated to two drinks on the house at their local (it has to be said that it is a very unusual pub!) An elderly customer grumbles that "they have no money to pay their way but can afford alcohol" and an argument ensues. Sound familiar? This was a recent storyline on Coronation Street. While not normally a fan of Corrie's far fetched

from places as far flung as Hong Kong, Canada, and South Africa, as well as closer by, like Sweden, Germany, and Italy.

During the days, we had in-depth political discussions and received reports from each country. During the nights, we socialised and shared our stories. Despite the differences in language and geography, we have a lot more in common with each other than we do with our ruling elites.

Our international has been involved in much significant grass roots political



action across the world in the past year. These events include the World Cup demonstrations in Brazil, the organisation of mine workers in South Africa, and the Occupy Central movement in Hong Kong, to name just a few. Our comrades are brave and dedicated. Many operate in the face of severe government repression, under constant threat of arrest or worse.

It was an honour and a privilege to have the opportunity to meet and work with them. Our international is second to none. It stands as a beacon of hope for everyday people across the world, and I am incredibly proud to be a member. Viva CWI!

Nick Wright,
Leicester branch

Tribute to a fighter

One of the Socialist Party's most forthright champions in our area, Anne Ullah' Khan is in hospital. When two consultant doctors visited her she asked them what they thought about the cuts being made in the NHS. They said it was distressing but nothing could be done about it.

"Oh yes there is" said Anne and sold them each a copy of the Socialist. They said it was very interesting and promised to tell their colleagues about it. Anne you are brilliant!

David Rawlinson, Southampton



story lines, I am slightly impressed with this one, which could even make soapy couch surfers think.

Advice to the Windasses – vote TUSC next year. Oh and Roy Cropper! Raise Anna's wages to £10 an hour and charge a bit more for your bacon 'barms'. Good luck with the library closure protest though.

Lynne S, Newcastle

My first CWI school

This July I had the absolute pleasure of attending my first week long annual Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) School in Belgium. People came

Sacked for union activity

On 4 August, Sodexo catering staff working at London Underground took strike action to demand the reinstatement of RMT union rep Petrit Mihaj.

Pickets took place at four sites across London, including the contractor's Baker Street management office.

The Socialist spoke to Petrit about the dispute.



On the Sodexo picket line - sacked RMT union rep Petrit Mihaj is standing third from right photo RMT

Why is this dispute taking place?

I was sacked by Sodexo on 7 January on trumped up charges. I brought a number of tribunal claims against Sodexo on 19 June.

The tribunal unanimously ruled that I was unfairly dismissed due to my trade union activities and I won 100% compensation (£31,290.07). But the company has refused to reinstate me. We are left with no option but to take strike action.

Why have they targeted you?

When I started to organise this grade in 2011 there were only two of us in the RMT union, including me. I witnessed bullying, harassment, victimisation, racism, and sexism by the management team in TfL Contract.

So we went around and organised. I built the membership. Being anti-union, management and the company tried to make it impossible for me and the union to recruit.

But by around October 2012, we had a membership of 50% plus one of the workforce for recognition. At the Acas arbitration talks that fol-

lowed attempts to block our union recognition we found out that the company had not filled vacancies, and had been overcharging TfL for 15 staff who didn't exist, I called them 'ghost staff'.

Acas confirmed we had the numbers required and recommended that the RMT be recognised as the sole union for bargaining purposes to which the RMT and Sodexo agreed in principle.

However, from October 2012 to April 2013 Sodexo refused to sign the recognition acknowledgment, using many excuses, including that they didn't have anybody with the authority to sign it. Eventually it was signed.

What's it like working for Sodexo?

Sodexo, the 20th biggest company in the world, is seen as being vicious, as bullies. It has been found guilty of racism in court.

A Guardian article (19/7/14) says a manager hit a black lady while she was at work. When she asked him why, he said it was 'punch a black week'.

Sodexo doesn't pay the Living Wage, it pays poverty wages. Sodexo is one of the major private contractors used by the government, including defence, justice, NHS, schools, prisons, care homes, and the TfL (Transport for London) contract which comes to an end in June 2015. The public funds and taxpayers' money could be better spent.

What should be done?

The RMT is calling on TfL bosses and the government to step in and reinstate me. They should also carry out a full investigation into Sodexo contracts. These scandal-prone subcontracting leeches, including G4S and Serco, should be banned from the public sector.

Email protests to Sodexo Chief Executive Debbie White at debbie.white@sodexo.com and TfL Catering Director Nigel Hall at nigel.hall3@tfl.gov.uk calling for Petrit Mihaj's reinstatement.

Full interview can be read on www.socialistparty.org.uk

Ruffling feathers in Cornwall

Socialists strike a chord in Truro

Rob Rooney

Socialist Party members ruffled feathers and connected with Cornish people in a foray into England's furthest-flung corner.

As we were setting up our campaign stall in Truro's market area a jobs-worth from the council tried to move us on. But we stood our ground.

Cornwall's isolation and low-wage economy, with dismal prospects for young people, has caused much resentment against the London-based capitalist politicians.

We found that when socialist ideas are heard, people listen. Our linking of the slaughter in Gaza with the oppression at home - zero-hour contracts, the NHS sell-off, the need

for a £10 an hour minimum wage, struck a chord.

We made links with people like Phil, from St Agnes. He is 70 in November and after a working life in farming, is now working at three jobs to make a living.

He is up at 5.15am every day to clean and open up public toilets in St Agnes. He's usually finished by 8.30am and is at home until 3pm when he travels to Truro to clean offices.

He's contracted to work 17 hours a week at that job but depends on doing overtime.

After Truro he travels to Newquay, to lock up the public toilets there, which takes him until 8pm.

Phil said: "I feel worse off than four years ago - it seems like the money doesn't go as far, with in-

creases in rent, water and phone bills. Somebody said I should get rid of my computer but I've worked all my life for things like that, why should I?"

"I suppose I could retire but I don't think my pension would cover what I gain from work. If there was a decent pension I would probably not work and be able to spend more time at home with my wife."

We had to compete with the Cornwall Symphony Chorus singing for the shoppers. One of their leafleters came up and said he would join our next campaign if it was to have Tony Blair tried for war crimes.

Reflecting the interest in Socialist ideas, we sold 28 papers, collected £26 in fighting fund and six people filled in 'join the Socialists' cards.

Unison Bureaucracy Unmasked: The Defend the Four Story



How four Socialist Party members defeated victimisation within their own union

Available for £5 (plus p&p) from www.leftbooks.co.uk 020 8988 8789

Anniversary of the 1934 Minneapolis strikes

Revolutionary US Teamsters

ALAN JONES and **TY MOORE**, Socialist Alternative, USA. This year marks the 80th anniversary of one of the greatest labour revolts in US history, the strikes of the Minneapolis Teamsters. Led by socialists, this historic strike opened an era of unprecedented revolt of the US working class. Over the course of the following decade, the labour movement would establish itself as a powerful institution in American society and utterly transform the lives of millions of workers for generations to follow.

After a decade of defeats and setbacks in the 1920s and early 1930s, workers' power and unionisation rates were at a low point. Organised labour was dominated by the conservative craft unionism of the American Federation of Labour (AFL). The bad situation was made worse by the Great Depression, causing mass unemployment and a dramatic decline in wages.

By 1933, the pent-up anger of workers exploded into militant unionisation drives across the country. But nearly all ended in defeats, with conservative union leaders incapable of defending workers against violent police repression and fierce attacks by the employers and their hired guns.

In stark contrast, the victory of the Minneapolis Teamsters strike in 1934 showed that combative class struggle methods and mass, democratic 'industrial unionism' could defeat big business and its allies in government.

The fierce class confrontations that unfolded in Minneapolis brought one of three major strike victories in 1934, all led by socialists.

Alongside the Minneapolis truckers, the Toledo auto-parts workers and the longshoremen in San Francisco proved that workers, using the mass strike as their weapon, could fight and win.

These three strike victories opened the floodgates, which led to the emergence of the powerful Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO) in 1937.

The events of 1934 are by no means the only historical moment when the genuine ideas of Marxism were demonstrated to be the most effective guide for workers' movements to win victories.

The most committed and respected workers in Teamsters Local (branch) 574 - those who led the strikes - were principled socialists and veterans of the class struggle. They had been expelled from the Communist Party in 1928 - forming the Communist League of America (CLA) - for refusing to denounce co-

leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, Leon Trotsky.

It was not simply a matter of countering the timidity and conservatism of the union bureaucrats with a revolutionary spirit and firm principles. These traits were combined with clear perspectives, an understanding of the strategy and tactics of the class struggle, and how to link the immediate demands of workers to a wider challenge to capitalism and the dictatorship of big business.

Strike power

Early in 1934, the small Teamsters Local 574 - numbering no more than 120 members - struck against the Minneapolis coal yards. Led by a small core of socialists, the union caught the employers by surprise. The union quickly won formal recognition.

However, the trucking bosses, along with the Citizens Alliance - the powerful business association that effectively ran Minneapolis - had long been hell-bent on crushing union activity. They took pride in maintaining Minneapolis as one of the most notoriously anti-union cities in the country.

Failing to win a contract, after selective strike actions in April, Teamsters Local 574 called a mass meeting on 12 May to take a strike vote against the entire industry.

Local 574 adopted an 'industrial union' approach, admitting as members thousands of truck drivers, helpers, yard workers and workers from various trades. By May 1934 the ranks of Local 574 had grown to over 3,000 members.

The mass meeting on 12 May voted to strike around demands for a 40-hour working week, overtime pay, wage increases, and a closed shop so that all workers in the industry would be represented by the union.

The mass strike began on 16 May, affecting just about every business in Minneapolis, from department stores to factories to groceries and bakeries. Not a truck could move without union permission.



'The battle of deputies run' when mass flying pickets routed the police and the bosses' Citizens Alliance thugs

The key tactic employed by the workers to shut down the city was the 'flying squads', mobile pickets stationed throughout the city and dispatched through strike headquarters by telephone whenever a scab truck was spotted. Pickets guarded the major roads, stopping all non-union trucks.

At union headquarters 10,000 people could be fed in a single day by a crew of 120, and there was a hospital with two doctors and three nurses.

The real power for running the strike was the rank-and-file elected strike committee of 100 truck drivers, which met regularly to take all key decisions. They reported to nightly mass meetings. This approach of democratic unionism and mass participation, virtually unheard of today, formed the backbone of union power in Minneapolis.

Another feature of the strike was the extraordinary role of the Women's Auxiliary.

The initial resistance of many union members in an entirely male workforce was overcome by the "explicit, conscious and successful creation of an organised contingent of working class women supporting the male trucking industry workforce" (The Minneapolis Truckers' Strikes of 1934, by Bryan D Palmer).

Reaction

The Citizens Alliance responded to the success of the union by calling for a "mass movement of citizens" to break the strike. They began enrolling special deputies to join the police in preparations to violently suppress the strike and break up the picket lines.

The famous "Battle of the Deputies Run" ended in a rout of the Citizens Alliance. This epic confrontation between workers, police, and the well-off deputies was recorded in films and pictures. Audiences across the country erupted in cheers and applause as they saw strikers standing firm and routing their well-heeled opponents.

The response of the Citizens Alliance was a huge red-baiting campaign against the "terroristic Communist-led" Truck Drivers'

Local 574. After several days of negotiations, the union agreed to a compromise to temporarily end the strike. They won recognition for Local 574 and pay raises for truck drivers while the other issues were to go to arbitration by the local Labour Board.

However, when the employers refused to end their open shop policy, denying the union's right to represent all workers in the industry, Local 574 began preparations for another strike.

When the third strike commenced on 16 July, Local 574 started publishing *The Organizer*, with a circulation of 10,000. Edited by James Cannon, the central figure in the Communist League of America, *The Organizer* countered the propaganda and lies of the trucking bosses and the Citizens Alliance, as well as explaining the union's strategy to workers across Minneapolis.

Martial Law

On 20 July, armed police opened fire on strikers in an attempt to break the strike by terror, injuring 67 people. Two strikers died of their injuries. The leaders of the Citizens Alliance were certain that the strike would be broken. However, the police brutality strengthened the solidarity, determination, and resolve of the workers.

With the continuing upheaval threatening to engulf the entire city, Farmer-Labour Governor Floyd Olson declared martial law, calling in National Guard troops to act

as strike breakers. At a mass meeting, the workers decided to resume picketing in defiance of the governor. Olson ordered the arrest of the top strike leaders and shut down the strike headquarters.

Victory

Pressed by President Roosevelt, who feared the labour revolt in Minneapolis would spread, Olson backed down, called off the troops, released the strike leaders, and returned the strike headquarters.

The strike ended on 21 August, with a mediated agreement that amounted to a huge victory for the union. Most significantly, Local 574 won the right to represent all workers, breaking the employers' hardened adherence to the open shop.

With the bosses' Citizens Alliance defeated, workers in other industries gained the confidence to organise, transforming Minneapolis from a 'company town' to a 'union town'.

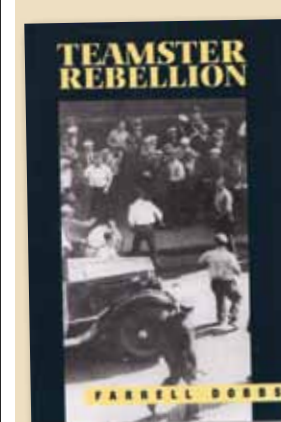
Across the Midwest and around the country, workers inspired by Minneapolis got themselves organised. In the following years, under the socialist leadership of Local 574, much of the interstate trucking industry was organised.

The Minneapolis Teamsters of 1934 serve, then and now, as a model for how a strong, rank-and-file controlled union with socialist leadership can gain mass public support and win decisive victories.

Full version of this article can be read on socialistalternative.org



The Women's Auxiliary underpinned the strike movement



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The classic account of the 1934 Minneapolis Teamster's successful strike movement, written by Teamster's Local leader and Trotskyist Farrell Dobbs. Dobbs' compendium books **Teamster Politics**, **Teamster Bureaucracy** and **Teamster Power** £14 each + postage. Special offer on all four books, phone - 020 8988 8777 - for details. Available from Left Books PO Box 24797, London E1 1YD www.leftbooks.co.uk

END THE SIEGE OF GAZA

Mass struggle to end Israeli state terror

Niall Mulholland

A hail of death has roared down on Gaza for weeks. Working class people in Britain and worldwide are shocked and angered at images of a Palestinian father carrying his dead children's body parts in a plastic bag, and other daily horrors from the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian death toll is fast heading towards 2,000, over 80% of them civilians and many of them children, according to the UN. Over 9,000 have been injured. In this one-sided war, 64 Israeli soldiers have also died, along with three Israeli civilians.

Over 460,000 people out of Gaza's population of 1.8 million have been displaced by the Israeli Defence Force's (IDF) murderous attacks. Many are forced to live in overcrowded makeshift shelters or with relatives. A third deadly missile attack on a UN school in Rafah, which killed at least ten, shows nowhere can offer protection from the indiscriminate IDF bombardment.

The destruction of infrastructure, leading to a lack of clean water and sanitation, poses the serious risk of the outbreak of diseases. Most of the Gaza Strip exists on less than two hours electricity a day. One third of

hospitals and dozens of ambulances have been destroyed. As morgues run out of room, children's bodies are grotesquely piled up in ice cream freezers.

Huge demonstrations against the onslaught on Gaza and in solidarity with Palestinians have taken place in London and many other parts of Britain and across the world. Despite the one-sided reporting of the BBC and most of the mainstream media - who choose to ignore that the Israeli state is occupying Palestinian land, building illegal settlements and blockading Gaza - public opinion is on the side of the oppressed Palestinians. A majority of young Americans now oppose the Israeli onslaught.

Most people see through the hypocrisy of the Western powers. Ruling elites wring their hands over massacred Palestinians while continuing to supply their ally Israel with arms and funding to continue its deadly war aims.

After announcing that it had destroyed most of Gaza's tunnels, Israel declared a 72-hour ceasefire on 4 August and pulled back troops to "defensive positions". It remains to be seen if this ceasefire vanishes like others and the IDF start shelling again. After much bloodletting a ceasefire will eventually come but in conditions of extreme poverty,

exploitation and oppression nothing fundamental will be resolved for Palestinians.

The suffering people of Gaza and the Palestinian Authority can only rely on their own resources, in solidarity with working people in the region and internationally, to struggle to win lasting peace and genuine statehood.

New mass struggles against the Israeli state oppressor and desperate social conditions will see Palestinian working people and the poor striving to build their own independent political voice.

And only socialist ideas can end the system that breeds war, terror and poverty for Palestinians and break Israelis from their right-wing leaders who have shown they cannot deliver permanent peace while oppressing Palestinians.

For more analysis on the latest developments in Gaza see page 5

National demo on the Gaza crisis

Saturday 9 August,
London

called by Stop The War
Coalition

details: 020 8988 8777



photo Paul Mattsson

What we stand for

The Socialist Party fights for socialism - a democratic society run for the needs of all and not the profits of a few. We also oppose every cut, fighting in our day-to-day campaigning for every possible improvement for working class people. The organised working class has the potential power to stop the cuts and transform society.

As capitalism dominates the globe, the struggle for genuine socialism must be international.

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in 45 countries.

Our demands include:

PUBLIC SERVICES

- No to ALL cuts in jobs, pay, public services and benefits. Defend our pensions.
- No to privatisation and the Private Finance Initiative (PFI). Renationalise all privatised utilities and services, with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.

- Free, publicly run, good quality education, available to all at any age. Abolish university tuition fees now and introduce a living grant. No to academies and 'Free schools'!

- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health needs - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out private contractors!
- Keep council housing publicly owned. For a massive building programme of publicly owned housing, on an environmentally sustainable basis, to provide good quality homes with low rents.

WORK AND INCOME

- Trade union struggle to increase the minimum wage to £8 an hour without exemptions as an immediate step towards £10 an hour. For an annual increase in the minimum wage linked to average earnings.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, and sickness and holiday rights from day one of employment.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension.
- Reject 'Workfare'. For the right to decent benefits, education, training, or a job, without compulsion.
- Scrap the anti-trade union laws! For fighting trade

unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time union officials to be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage. Support the National Shop Stewards Network.

- A maximum 35-hour week with no loss of pay.

ENVIRONMENT

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy and into ending the problems of early obsolescence and un-recycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industries. No to nuclear power. No to Trident.
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly owned transport system, as part of an overall plan against environmental pollution.

RIGHTS

- Oppose discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexuality, age, and all other forms of prejudice.
- Repeal all laws that trample over civil liberties. For the right to protest! End police harassment.
- Defend abortion rights. For a woman's right to choose when and whether to have children.
- For the right to asylum. No to racist immigration laws.

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.

- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party! Support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition as an important step towards this.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops immediately from Afghanistan!
- Tax the super-rich! For a socialist government to take into public ownership the top 150 companies and the banking system that dominate the British economy, and run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensation to be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people, and in a way that safeguards the environment.
- No to the bosses' neoliberal European Union! For a socialist Europe and a socialist world!