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STRIKE AGAINST THE CUTS

Editorial: Independence referendum

Socialist policies needed to answer Project Fear



Labour's poster campaign attacking the SNP's currency plan

September 18 will see an unprecedented mobilisation to the polls for the referendum on Scottish independence.

An estimated 75-80% of the 4.1 million people entitled to vote are likely to take part. The strength of feeling, in particular the desire by many working class Yes supporters for fundamental social and economic change, will see hundreds of thousands of the most alienated from the pro-capitalist political establishment participating.

Comparisons with the 2011 Scottish parliament elections are striking. Barely 50% voted then, which means that around 1 million extra people are likely to vote in the referendum.

This mood reflects, as Socialist Party Scotland has consistently explained, that support for independence is being driven by a desire to escape from savage austerity and falling incomes. This is the key factor as to why, despite an unprecedented campaign by Project Fear, the polls have not seen, as yet, any sustained fall in support for a Yes vote as September 18 approaches.

The current poll of polls, with just over a month to go, continues to show No in the lead, but only by 56% to 44%, an uncomfortable position for the pro-union establishment and the interests of British capitalism that they represent.

The fact that hundreds of thousands of working class and young people normally disenfranchised from the political process are intending on voting has helped to create a significant trepidation among the ruling elite as to the re-

sult. The stubborn solidity of the Yes vote is certainly not a result of a convincing case from the SNP leadership or the official Yes campaign. Rather than offering up policies for fundamental change, an end to austerity and a transformation of lives and living standards, Alex Salmond and co have desperately sought not to raise expectations too high as to what independence on a capitalist basis could deliver.

Currency war exposes SNP's weakness

This was evident by Salmond's performance in the recent STV debate with the leader of the Better Together campaign, Alistair Darling. A mass audience of over 1 million people watched it on TV, while a further 500,000 followed the debate online.

This was a major opportunity to advance the case for decisive economic and social change under independence based on public ownership of the economy and an end to cuts.

Instead, Salmond persisted with the line that under independence the SNP would be a safe pair of hands for capitalist interests, would "balance the books" and would seek a formal currency union with the rest of the UK.

In practice this would leave the Bank of England in control not only of interest rates, but also, in practice, the levels of spending in an independent Scotland as well.

The leaders of the three pro-union capitalist parties – Labour, Tories and the Lib Dems – have

ruled out a Sterling zone in an effort to undermine the SNP's case. Yet Salmond and the SNP leadership have continued to insist that a currency union is "inevitable" once "normal" relations have been returned to following the referendum. But the overwhelming priority of Cameron, Miliband and Clegg is to inflict a defeat on the Yes campaign, and they see the SNP's currency proposals as an Achilles Heel to be remorselessly attacked.

A poll immediately following the TV debate saw support for independence fall by 4% – an indication that the SNP are vulnerable as their pro-business position becomes further exposed.

Socialist Party Scotland have consistently explained that even if the Westminster government eventually agreed to a formal Sterling zone with an independent Scotland, it would be an austerity-laden trap from its inception. By ceding control to the Bank of England and British capitalism an independent Scotland would be locked into a programme of long term cuts.

This has also been the experience of the Euro zone where the vicious troika of the European Central Bank, the EU and the IMF have insisted on savage austerity budgets for member states. The consequences of this economic torture for Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal etc have been catastrophic. A capitalist independent Scotland would face exactly the same diktats under the SNP's planned currency union with the rest of the UK.

In contrast, a socialist government would carry through the

democratic nationalisation of the finance sector in Scotland and repudiate the capitalist debts built up through the bailing out of the banks in 2008/09.

It would also be necessary to bring into public ownership, under working class control, the key economic sectors of the economy, including oil, transport and manufacturing.

Through these measures, as well as a state monopoly of foreign trade, it would be possible to use the vast wealth of capitalism to break with the austerity practices of the BoE, ECB and the IMF etc and invest in jobs, a living wage and the rebuilding of public services in an independent socialist Scotland. This policy would have to be conducted alongside an appeal to the working class in the rest of Britain and Europe etc to break with capitalism and establish a democratic socialist confederation of states.

Salmond says that it's Scotland's pound and "we're keeping it". But locked out of a formal currency union, were that to be the case, none of the alternatives of "sterlingisation" (using Sterling without a formal currency arrangement and which is in reality the SNP's Plan B), joining the Euro or a separate Scottish currency – without the nationalisation of banking, finance and the wider economy – would represent an escape from permanent cuts.

socialist policies needed

While it's unclear what the outcome of the referendum will be, a major contributory factor in the No campaign still holding a lead is doubts about whether an independent capitalist Scotland would economically deliver for the majority.

When asked by the polling organisations more people consistently believe that both they and the country as a whole would be worse off under independence.

While this reflects the doubts and uncertainties arising from the deluge of negative propaganda from Project Fear, big business and the media, what is also clear is that the SNP's pro-big business policies are an obstacle to answering the lies of Better Together.

The SNP are not campaigning in the referendum for a decisive end to cuts and austerity. Indeed the Scottish Government have imple-

mented £3 billion in ConDem cuts sine 2010 in Scotland. The SNP's Outlook for Scotland's Public Finances paper promises a meagre £1,000 independence bonus, but not until 2029. "If possible", say the SNP, they would increase public spending by £1.2 billion in 2017/18. However, the cuts to the Scottish parliament's budget will have been £6.7 billion by then. A reversal of the cuts under the SNP's plans for independence is ruled out.

As Nicola Sturgeon, deputy first minister, commented "Independence is not a magic wand. We won't wake up the day after becoming independent and find that all of Scotland's challenges have disappeared or that overnight we've become a richer, more economically successful country."

This lack of a decisive break from capitalist policies and austerity by the SNP leadership is weakening support for a Yes vote. None more so than promises to slash taxes for big business under independence, including of the vastly profitable North Sea Oil industry.

public ownership

In contrast there is huge public support for public ownership of gas, electricity, transport and oil. The anger at the pro-rich policies of the main parties is growing by the day, as is the idea of a need for a new party to represent the working class majority. Socialist Party Scotland is campaigning for a Yes vote in September. But we are also putting forward a programme that calls for the powers of independence to be used to end the cuts and for public ownership and democratic control of the main sectors of the economy. We also need a new mass workers party to fight for these policies.

These ideas have been finding enthusiastic support at public meetings across Scotland. Alongside Tommy Sheridan and others Socialist Party Scotland have been organising public meetings on the theme of Hope Over Fear – the Socialist Case for Independence. More than 14,000 people have come to hear Tommy Sheridan since January as part of the tour, looking for ideas they are not getting from the official Yes campaign.

The huge support for an anti-cuts, pro socialist case is an indication of the potential for a new mass workers party to become a major force in Scotland.

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Have you got some news for us?



The paper of Socialist Party Scotland

E-mail: info@socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

Website:

www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

Editor: Philip Stott

Indy ref result

Socialist Party Scotland will be responding to the outcome of the referendum via our website and social media in the hours and days after S18.

We would advise all readers of the Socialist to seek out the most up to date analysis and the political consequences of the result.

A new issue of the Socialist will be printed as as soon as possible

after September 18. Socialist Party Scotland branches will also be holding public meetings following the referendum as a forum to discuss what the results mean for working class people in Scotland.

As always we would appreciate your feedback and opinions via Facebook, Twitter, and email etc. (see details on this page of our website, Facebook and Twitter details.)



www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

Vote Yes, but strike back against cuts

Jamie Coccozza

Socialist Party Scotland, Glasgow

The backdrop to the referendum on 18 September is one of unprecedented cuts and savage austerity.

In one year alone, from April 2012 to April 2013, the numbers living in poverty in Scotland rose by 110,000 to 820,000. The human cost of the savage cuts inflicted by the ConDem's is horrific. But what makes these figures all the more stunning is the fact that more than half of adults living in poverty are in work.

What an indictment of capitalism and the so-called recovery that the number of workers suffering in-work poverty has rocketed. Meanwhile the richest 1,000 people in Britain was their wealth increase by 15% in the last year.

And it's austerity for the majority for the long-term if the ConDem's get their way. 70% of the welfare cuts are still to be implemented – this equates to £6 billion to be stolen from Scotland's poorest families by 2016. Meanwhile public services are

being decimated and the workers who deliver these services have seen their pay slashed in real terms by over £1,600 since 2010. Unbelievably, Ed's Miliband and Balls say they will continue with the Tory cuts if they win the election in 2015. As columnist Polly Toynbee, a New Labour disciple, wrote in the Guardian recently; "So why vote Labour?...Because Labour will cut more fairly."

But it makes little difference to trade union members, the low paid or those surviving on benefits whether it's a Labour or Tory politician making the cuts – none of them are "fair."

It's no wonder that currently around 1.5 million people, overwhelmingly working class, are saying they are voting Yes in September. It's also no surprise that for many of them support for wealth redistribution, public ownership and tax rises for the rich and big business are overwhelmingly supported.

The SNP leaders are doing their best to lose the vote by offering

nothing decisive in terms of radical change – and they are carrying out cuts themselves to "balance the books." They want to continue with capitalism and the cuts that inevitable accompany this broken system.

That's why Socialist Party Scotland has been putting forward the socialist case for a Yes vote in September. Pointing to how austerity can be ended and how a socialist Scotland could deliver for the majority.

A desire to escape from unending cuts is driving working class support for a Yes vote. And whatever the outcome of the referendum the need to build a mass movement to defeat the bosses and the political establishment's attempts to make us pay for their crisis must be stepped up.

That means mass coordinated strike action by the trade union movement in Scotland and throughout Britain. And crucially, we need the trade unions to launch a new mass workers party to build a real alternative to the parties of cuts and austerity.



Workers in Scotland have faced Tory, Labour and SNP cuts

SOCIALIST PARTY SCOTLAND STANDS FOR:

- An end to austerity and reversal of the cuts
- Introduction of a living wage of £10 an hour and end zero-hour contracts. Proper jobs and trade union rights for all workers
- End the attacks on welfare - for a living income for all
- Building a new mass working class party based on the trade unions, socialists and anti-cuts campaigners
- Bringing into public ownership the banks, oil and the big corporations that dominate the economy under democratic working class control
- An independent socialist Scotland as a step to a socialist confederation with England, Wales and Ireland and a socialist Europe

Establishment fear and loathing

Philip Stott

Editor, the Socialist

An unholy alliance of the Pope, Barack Obama, the Orange Order, Simon Cowell, Cliff Richard and Mick Jagger have voiced their opposition to Scottish independence.

Big business including RBS and Standard Life, BP and Shell oil have also weighed in citing the negative consequences for them if there is a Yes majority in September.

There has been widespread anger at the role of the media, who overwhelmingly back a No position. Regular demonstrations have taken place outside the BBC HQ in Glasgow by pro-Yes campaigners to highlight the one-sided coverage given to the debate.

Project Fear, the self-styled name given to the Tory, Labour, LibDem alliance has conducted an unremitting campaign of fear and loathing, desperately seeking to ensure a defeat for the Yes vote.

But their tactics have backfired, particularly their widely derided intervention in February during which George Osborne, Ed Balls and Danny Alexander all ruled out an independent Scotland being able to use the pound in a currency union.

Since then Project Fear has undergone a cosmetic makeover. A velvet glove has been slipped over the iron fist. The slogan of the so-called Better Together campaign is now "No thanks". While still campaigning on the "uncertainty" "risk" and "dire economic consequences" of independence, as we pointed out in April, "the stick will still be wielded, but the failure of Project fear means



Barak Obama has come out against Scottish independence

the carrot of enhanced devolution is now needed."

More powers

All three major pro-union parties have now come forward with promises for more powers for the Scottish parliament following a No vote. The Tories, who opposed devolution in the 1997 referendum, are proposing that the Scottish parliament should control all income tax raised in Scotland. Labour's pledge is that Edinburgh would set three quarters of the basic rate of income tax.

The recent British Election Survey report showed that 74% of people on Scotland want more powers, including a majority of those who say they'll vote No in September.

Facing the prospect of a possible Yes majority the concessions com-

ing from the No camp are an attempt to split-off those inclined to support Yes as the only way of getting the powers they want from those who are definitely committed to independence.

But the final few weeks are bound to see a return to "pensions will go unpaid", "prices will go up", "business will relocate to England" in a desperate attempt to secure a No majority.

Ed Miliband has said that Labour will have a manifesto commitment for the 2015 Westminster elections ruling out a currency union with an independent Scotland.

The Tories and LibDems are likely to follow suit.

Whatever the outcome in September the struggle to defeat the cuts and build a socialist alternative to poverty and low pay will continue.

RMT members vote on indy ref

Richie Veitch

Edinburgh RMT-personal capacity

In 2012 the Edinburgh Branch of the RMT sent a resolution to the unions Annual General Meeting regarding lack of policy on Scottish Independence.

The union abstained from the debate at the STUC in Inverness. The branch simply believed that the union should have a policy on this important issue.

The decision of the RMT AGM was to hold meetings across Scotland to gauge the opinion of the Scottish Membership and make a policy decision based on the members' views. These meetings were attended by the late General Secretary Bob Crow and other officials of the union.

Meetings were held across the

length and breadth of Scotland from Ayr to Inverness and Aberdeen to Edinburgh and the opinion of the membership that attended those meetings was that the union should support a Yes vote.

However, the union took a "neutral" stand and the Wishaw & Motherwell branch of the RMT lodged an appeal. This appeal was moved by myself from Edinburgh at the 2014 RMT AGM and was successfully won by a clear majority in the hall.

The Unions National Executive Committee have now, in the spirit of democracy, taken the issue to the members to decide whether or not we should support a yes vote, no vote or a position of neutrality. A referendum is now ongoing and we will know the results early September.

Hope Over Fear Tour dates



13,000 people have attended public meetings as part of the Hope Over Fear tour since January. Thousands have come out to hear Tommy Sheridan and others make the case for a Yes vote and that the powers of independence be used to end the cuts and to bring oil, the banks and the energy companies into democratic public ownership. Socialist Party Scotland have been playing a leading

role in helping to organise this tour as well as having speakers on the platform at a number of these meetings.

The Socialist case for independence has found big support among thousands of working class people and we're planning a number of city centre rallies in September. More info also at Facebook: Hope Over Fear - The Socialist Case for Independence

- Wednesday 3rd September - Aberdeen, Copthorne Hotel 7pm
- Thursday 4th September - Dundee, Marryat Hall 7pm
- Tuesday 9th September - Paisley Grammar School 7pm
- Thursday 11th September - Edinburgh University Appellon Tower LT4 7pm
- Monday 15th September - Motherwell, The GLO Centre 7pm
- Tuesday 16th September - Glasgow, 7pm

Unions need a fighting strategy to beat cuts

Brian Smith

Glasgow City Unison (pc)

Since 2009 there has been a 25% real terms cut in Scottish local government spending. Nearly 40,000 council jobs in Scotland have been lost since the start of the ConDems vicious austerity programme and at least £2 billion stolen from councils across Scotland.

UNISON members who work in our colleges and voluntary organisations have also faced a massive assault on their jobs, conditions and the services they provide.

The impact has been even greater when the increased demands on services due to the social fallout of the rich elite's economic crisis are factored in, as well as the billions being cut from the welfare budget. Workers are under more pressure and work related stress is higher than ever.

UNISON Scotland's latest research highlights that 60% of the ConDems cuts have still to come – a further £3.7 billion on top of the £3 billion already cut from the Scottish budget since 2009.

They have been passed by the UK Parliament, but have yet to be implemented. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that local government cuts hit poorest areas hardest, with even more misery to come for the poorest families due to welfare reform.

UNISON members who have used

industrial action in recent years to resist cuts in pay and attacks on conditions, particularly in our branch here in Glasgow against a particularly hard-nosed Labour Council, are to be congratulated.

We have won some disputes, drawn others and lost some. As we enter the second half of 2014, we need to step – up our resistance once again in anticipation of the Scottish local government budget setting process for 2015/16 and beyond.

At the last UNISON Glasgow Branch Committee, there was unanimous support for calling on UNISON's Scottish leaders to do the following:

- Ensure that UNISON Scotland's current policy of calling on local councils to set defiance needs budgets whilst leading a campaign for more money from the Scottish and UK Government's is our primary political demand. We should at least call on all councils to set a 2015/16 budget which is no less than that for 2014/15 under the slogan "No Cuts". We should also make the demand that no further charges are levied for council services.

- Begin a campaign for Scottish wide industrial action in early 2015 if councils move to implement further cuts to jobs, workers conditions and council services as part of their 2015/16 budget. Any action should be co-ordinated where possible with other trade unions.

- Call a Scotland-wide conference of local government trade union organisations to discuss what action can be taken to assist in building a co-ordinated fight back against cuts to services, conditions and jobs. Such a conference could also involve campaigns to defend local services, trades councils and similar anti-cuts organisations.

- The STUC should organise a national demonstration on the theme of "No Cuts" as early as is practicable, but no later than June 2015, as part of this campaign.

Trade unions in local government and beyond should pass similar motions in their organisations. UNISON Glasgow Branch members will continue to fight every local attack the best they can. However, we need a more effective Scottish-wide trade union approach if we are to truly resist the massive attacks we are facing.

It's also clear now that whatever the outcome of the referendum – Socialist Party Scotland is supporting a Yes vote in September – huge cuts are planned to Scotland's public services. Cuts that SNP and Labour politicians are only too ready to implement. The need for the trade unions to build a new party to represent the working class is vital. We need councillors and MSPs who will refuse to make the cuts and help lead the fight to turn the tide against savage austerity.



Glasgow Unison fighting for fair pay during the Commonwealth Games

Labour uses anti-union laws against workers

By Glasgow Unison members

In the run up to the Commonwealth Games a dispute broke out between trade union members and Glasgow Life, an arms length organisation run by Labour controlled Glasgow City Council.

The dispute was over payments for working during the Commonwealth Games for staff in Glasgow's Sports Centres and Museums.

Unions were calling for extra payments over and above the normal rates for additional hours worked during the games and other related issues. Unison members voted overwhelmingly for strike action.

On Wednesday 16 July, Glasgow Life began legal moves to take UNISON to court under the UK's anti-trade union laws to halt official

strike action planned for 21 July.

The fact that Glasgow Life, a Glasgow City Council run company, used anti-trade union laws introduced by the Tories is despicable. Glasgow Life should have been spending more time trying to resolve the dispute rather than attempting to undermine the democratic votes of trade union members. The planned strike action was suspended following the threat and in response to this undemocratic action by the employers announced a series of lunchtime protests at the Commonwealth Games Offices, Museums and the Council Chambers.

Incredibly, Glasgow council sought an interim interdict ahead of the intended demonstrations in the city centre and at the city's Kelvingrove Museum.

But a senior judge refused the

move for an interim interdict at the Court of Session in Edinburgh taking into account human rights law.

Even the Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Carloway, said: "Having regard to the convention rights of freedom of speech and assembly the court is not persuaded on the material presented to it that the intended protest carries with it any form of illegality."

The protests went ahead and highlighted not only the justified case of the workers, but also the scandalous decision of the Labourled council to use Tory anti-union laws.

This action also underlines the need for the the trade unions to build its own political voice in the shape of a new mass workers party. Labour's actions in Glasgow will only further this mood among trade union members in Glasgow.

Unite to fight the pay robbery

Rob Williams

Socialist Party England and Wales

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.

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

The public sector pay dispute in England and Wales will now continue into the autumn. Scottish Unison members in local government

are currently preparing to ballot for action over pay. If a majority vote for action, the first strike is likely to be late October.

Local government workers in the Unison, Unite and GMB unions in England and Wales 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.

All public sector unions should be involved in the 14 October strike ac-

tion. A real momentum can be built to get the maximum turnout.

The Socialist Party also calls on private sector unions to discuss how their members can coordinate action. 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.

The 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 one that acts in the interests of the 1%.

Scottish TUSC conference planned for November

The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition is hosting a conference on Saturday 2nd November in Glasgow on the theme of building towards the 2015 and 2016 elections.

The aim of the conference is to bring together trade unionists, socialists, community and anti-cuts campaigners and others to discuss preparing a slate of candidates in the forthcoming elections.

Whatever the outcome of the referendum, it's clear that the onslaught of austerity will continue. Indeed whichever party or combination of parties wins the Westminster elections in 2015, all have pledged to carry on with the ConDem austerity agenda.

After September the need for a strong political voice, including for the hundreds of thousands who have voted Yes seeking an escape from falling incomes and cuts, will be more urgent than ever - and will not be catered for by the existing establishment parties.

Tens of thousands of people have been involved in struggles recently.

These include the campaign against the Bedroom Tax, trade unionists involved in strike action against austerity and the mass opposition to the onslaught on Gaza. Yet in almost all these cases the existing political establishment do not speak for us.

Scottish TUSC is therefore inviting all those who agree with the need to build a an alternative to the pro cuts establishment parties to this conference to discuss a way forward in building a political voice for the working class majority in Scotland.

The need for policies like widespread public ownership of the economy, opposition to all austerity cuts, standing up against racism and division, for a living wage and an end to anti union laws could form a core part of such an electoral platform.

The invitation is there for all those who are interested in building such a political alternative, whether a supporter of TUSC, or not.

The conference will be open to all who are interested in building a socialist, anti-cuts alternative to the left of the main parties - including Labour and the SNP.

The need for a more unified, stronger and bigger left and socialist alternative in Scotland is urgent. Hopefully the conference can be an opportunity to discuss and chart a way forward.

More information will be available soon, including via the Socialist Party Scotland website and facebook pages etc.

- The Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition was established in Scotland, England and Wales by the Socialist Party and others in 2010 to enable and encourage trade unionists, community campaigners and others to stand in elections against the political establishment.

- It was co-founded by Bob Crow and is now officially supported by the RMT trade union and a number of socialist organisations.

More information about TUSC is also available at the website www.tusc.org.uk

Gaza slaughter provokes mass outrage

A hail of death has roared down on Gaza for weeks. Working class people in Scotland, Britain and worldwide are shocked and angered at the daily horrors from the Gaza Strip. In this feature **Niall Mullholland** from the Committee for a Workers' International analyzes the current conflict.



Mass destruction in Gaza

As we go to press the Palestinian death toll is heading over 2,000, more than 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 Glasgow, Edinburgh, 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, build-

ing 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".

The bombing of Gaza began again after this ceasefire ended. 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. Only socialist ideas can end the system that breeds war, terror and poverty for Palestinians and break Israelis from their right-wing leaders who cannot deliver peace.

Hamas, Israel and the Arab states



Hamas have emerged strengthened from the current conflict

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 systematically 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 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).

The role of imperialism in the conflict



Tens of thousands have protested against the attack on Gaza

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 military 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 by \$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.

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'.

Socialist solution needed



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 Palestini-

ans 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 (CWI) courageously fights for in Israel-Palestine. (see picture above of CWI members in Tel Aviv.)

Only socialism can

The publication of the new book, *Common Weal*, in June 2014, by the Jimmy Reid Foundation is a contribution, in the context of the referendum, to the ongoing discussion about building a "new Scotland". In this critique of the book **Philip Stott** explains the need for consistent and far-reaching socialist policies to end the scourge of low pay, widening inequality and savage austerity for the majority which the *Common Weal* rightly condemns. (more on the *Common Weal* can be found at www.allofusfirst.org)



The *Common Weal* argues for bosses and workers to come together for the common national interest

The major weakness in the approach of the *Common Weal* is that they believe a transition to a fairer, more progressive capitalism is possible.

The introduction to the book makes a bold claim: "This is arguably the single biggest reimagining of a nation state in modern history." Unfortunately, there is little in terms of new ideas in the book. As the editor, Robin McAlpine, points out in the prologue, "It [*Common Weal*] started with simple aims – let's think about what we want to achieve, let's look around the world to see who has achieved it.....and apply them to 21st Century Scotland." By taking this approach, which they describe as "practical idealism", looking only at existing capitalist models as a solution to a system that is in a deep and prolonged economic crisis, it inevitably fails to achieve the task it set itself.

We are in complete agreement with the *Common Weal* that decisive action is needed to end "inequality, poverty, declining infrastructure, powerless communities, closed politics, profiteering, low pay, overwork, anxiety, stress and unhappiness."

Indeed the book provides quite a powerful indictment of the brutality and waste endemic in capitalism today. The flawed approach of the book, however, is that the authors refuse to go beyond the limits of the very economic and social system that is responsible for these crimes against humanity. Instead they propose to carry through policies that would "humanise" capitalism.

no return to boom

In essence the *Common Weal* hopes for a return to the era of the post-war economic "consensus" which was underpinned by the long

capitalist upswing between 1955 and the mid 1970's. As we explained in our initial response to the *Common Weal* last year:

"During that time, at least in the advanced capitalist countries, the working class won important concessions on welfare, public services, full employment and, relatively speaking, improvements in wages and incomes. The Nordic countries, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and to an extent Finland were the pinnacle of this Keynesian model, delivering relatively high levels of taxation on profits and wages, high government spending and quality public services.

The economic crisis in the mid 70's brought this period to a crashing end. A crisis of profitability and the emergence of hyper-inflation meant that the capitalist class could no longer afford full employment and decent public services.

The bourgeois abandoned Keynesianism and embraced a new orthodoxy – monetarism – whose disciples included Thatcher in the UK and Reagan in the US. Mass privatisation, casualisation of work, attacks on wages and welfare provision followed as the share of income going to the working class was undermined.

There was a massive explosion in financialisation – as the capitalists increasingly sought more "profitable" investment in the "casino economy". Globalisation – in essence the mass exploitation of cheap labour in the neo-colonial world, China and Eastern Europe was used to boost profits. Economic growth was sustained increasingly through unsustainable levels of credit, ensuring a crash at a certain point.

The great recession, the worst since the 1930's, and the partial financial collapse of the world's financial system in 2007/2008 was prepared by the previous policies

pursued by world capitalism. Today, savage austerity is the dominant policy of governments across the world." From the article; Can the *Common Weal* deliver, or do we need clear socialist policies? September 2013

The social gains made in the Nordic states, which the *Common Weal* draws many of its policies from, have been eroded, in the case of Sweden severely so. In fact Sweden seems now to be the "poster child" of the neo-liberals who have recently been lauding Scandinavia's turn to privatisation and austerity. There is no possibility of a return to the "golden era" of a growing capitalist system that could tolerate, for a time, improving conditions and rights for working class and middle class people.

Shared interests ?

The *Common Weal* does put forward reforms which socialists and trade unionists are involved in fighting for day-in and day-out and which form part of our programme. The demands for a living wage, a shorter working week, an end to privatisation, increased rights for workers in the workplace, tax increases on the rich and public ownership are welcome.

However, the *Common Weal* believes that an agreement can be brokered between the capitalists and big business on the one hand, and the majority of the working class on the other, to allow a more equitable and

fairer capitalism to emerge.

In one telling passage in the book the comment is made "Success will come when we can 'coincide' the interests of different groups, seeking ways of doing things that help not one against the other but both at the same time." Even more explicitly the *Common Weal* describes: "an effective system of industrial democracy begins from an awareness from both parties (employers and employees) that in fact their interests are broadly shared."

The argument that there are "shared interests" of workers and big business is naïve in the extreme. It flies in the face of the experience of hundreds of thousands of working class people in Scotland who are facing cuts and brutal austerity, at the same time as the capitalists and the billionaire class get even richer at our expense.

The authors of the *Common Weal* seems not to understand that the logic of capitalism is the maximisation of profit – which itself is extracted from the labour of the working class. Against the backdrop of low growth and a huge debt burden – a result of bailing out the banks – the capitalists are seeking a way out through savage austerity against the working class majority. Profits are up since the crisis in 2008 – but not as a result of major new investment into the economy and the productive forces (science, technique and the productivity of labour). Instead, the so-called recovery is at the expense of falling wages and incomes going to

the working class. In Marxist terms the bosses are increasing the relative and absolute rate of exploitation by cutting wages and, in some cases, increasing the number of hours worked.

In contrast, the *Common Weal* asserts that the laws of capitalism can be overcome through a consensus approach that seeks to reconcile the competing class interests of workers and the employers. One idea is the involving of workers in the running of business through employee representation on boards (always a minority of course – the *Common Weal* proposes the Danish and German models of one third worker participation on boards of management.)

Socialists would counterpose to this the demand for the nationalisation of the major companies to be put under the democratic control and management of the working class through elected committees.

Fight for reforms

Socialist Party Scotland fights tirelessly against cuts and austerity and for reforms that will benefit the working class. Whether it's helping to build mass campaigns to defeat the poll tax, the bedroom tax or advocating that the trade unions organise a 24-hour general strike to defeat austerity, we will support all measures that strengthen the position of the working class. At the same time we consistently explain that under capitalism all steps forward for working class people are temporary. If forced to give concessions to a mass movement with one hand, the logic of capitalism is to seek to take it away with the other. This is not an argument for not fighting for improvements in working conditions, wages etc. What it does do is underline the need to link the fight for reforms in favour of the majority with the need to break decisively with capitalism and to fight for socialist planned economy.

In fact Marxists are the best and most consistent fighters for reforms in favour of the working class. But we understand that any reforms won from the capitalists are a by-product of mass struggle and revolutionary movements. In Seattle our co-thinkers – Socialist Alternative – and the working class of the city have won an important victory recently when the city council voted through a proposal to increase the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. This will initially benefit 1000,000 workers in Seattle. But it was the election of Socialist Alternative's Kshama Sawant, who was the first socialist to be elected in over 100 years in Seattle, and crucially the huge mobilisation of working class communities, including strike action by fast food workers, that have forced the political establishment to move.

The victory has had an electrifying impact across the US and has given confidence to millions of workers. At the same time the Democrats and big business have attempted to water

"The argument that there are "shared interests" of workers and big business is naïve in the extreme."

deliver real change

A PROGRAMME FOR AN INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST SCOTLAND

- **Nationalise, under democratic workers' control and management, the oil and gas industry, the renewable energy sector and the major sectors of the Scottish economy. This would release billions to invest in a massive programme of job creation and to rebuild our public services.**
- **Bring the banks and finance sector into public ownership under democratic working class control**
- **Renationalise gas, electricity, transport and the privatised sectors of the economy.**
- **Tax the rich and big business. Increase the minimum wage and end the attacks on welfare**
- **For a living wage and an end to zero-hour contracts**
- **No to Nato. Trident and all weapons of mass destruction out of Scotland. Invest in socially useful jobs.**
- **Abolish all anti-trade union laws**
- **Trade unions should break from Labour and build a new mass working class party**
- **Reverse the cuts. For a Scottish government representing working people, the unemployed and the poor that defends jobs, wages, public services and pensions and refuses to make cuts to pay for the crisis**
- **For a socialist plan of production in an independent socialist Scotland as part of a voluntary confederation with England, Wales and Ireland as a step to a socialist Europe**

down the minimum wage legislation with exemptions and opt outs. At all times Socialist Alternative have explained the need to build a mass working class movement across the US to turn the tide against big business. As well as building a new political party that will fight corporate interests while advocating socialist policies that would break decisively from capitalism.

A fairer capitalism?

The Common Weal proposes to raise £1 billion by increasing the top rates of tax, although they don't propose any increases in corporation tax – despite the huge profits that are being made. Even this mild redistributive policy – and the other measures to increase wages for workers and to lower inequality – will be ferociously resisted by big business and the main capitalist political parties. The elite are past masters at evading and avoiding tax and hiding their wealth in off-shore accounts and the like. This poses the need to take over the banks and the finance houses into public ownership and democratic control.

Anyone arguing for such encroachment into the wealth taken by the bosses will face howls of outrage from the billionaire class, threats to disinvest, to move abroad and even to sabotage the economy. This threat of a “strike of capital” was precisely the one face by the Wilson Labour government in the 1970's in the UK who had proposed to increase tax the rich. In response the bosses revolted, and the Labour leaders capitulated.

The Common Weal believes that it would be possible to convince capitalists, big and medium sized, that it's in their interests to agree to give up a share of their profits and individual wealth to increase the incomes of the working class.

There is a section of the capitalist class who do support a turn away from the current austerity-laden version of capitalism and would support increased wages and a job creation programme to try and stimulate

growth in the economy. This Keynesian wing is currently in a minority – although this could change if faced with a revolt by the working class against the effects of the crisis. Even then, it would mean increased government spending – increased debt – and the bosses giving up a portion of their profits. For a temporary period they could live with that in an attempt to save their system. In the medium term such temporary concessions would be undermined by the inevitable drive to unload the economic crisis onto the backs of the working class.

The whole historical experience of the workers' movement is that the bosses will fight tooth and nail to resist any encroachment into their profits. Only when faced with a mass revolt that threatens their interests, and even their very existence, will they be prepared to make such concessions. All the more so when capitalism internationally is locked into a depressionary phase and unable to find a route to sustained economic growth. Today, it's counter-reforms rather than reforms that benefit ordinary working class people that are the main direction of travel for big business.

This poses the need for the working class to go further and to fight instead for the productive forces – the factories, machines, offices and resources – controlled by the capitalist elite into democratic public ownership. By owning and controlling the main economic levers – the major corporations that dominate the economy – it would immediately be possible to implement the policies outlined in the Common Weal and much more besides.

Limited ownership

Instead, the Common Weal does not even go as far as the programme implemented by the Labour Government in 1945 that nationalised, on a capitalist basis, around 20% of the economy. Instead there is a significant emphasis in the Common Weal

SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY



Socialism would also be far more democratic than capitalism. Under capitalism most of the important decisions are not taken in Westminster, Holyrood or local council chambers, they are taken in the boardrooms of the big corporations.

By contrast, a socialist government would bring major industry into democratic public ownership. It would be necessary to draw up a plan, involving the whole of society, on what industry needed to produce.

At every level, in communities and workplaces, committees would be set up and would elect representatives to regional and national government – again on the basis of recall at anytime if they disagreed with their decisions. Everybody

on creating smaller, alternative models of ownership including cooperatives and mutuals where employees own the business. In practice these “islands of socialism” would be forced to operate within a hostile capitalist environment. Many of them would be reliant on big business for contracts who would seek to extract a maximum profit by driving down costs. Others would need to rely on the public sector contracts at a time of unprecedented spending cuts.

Major multi-national corporations dominate the Scottish economy. A recent report pointed out that 90% of oil and gas sector is controlled by multi-nationals from outside Scotland. Key sectors such as oil, energy,

would be able to participate in real decision-making about how best to run society. And organisations in a socialist society would be completely different to the toothless bodies that working-class people are currently allowed to take part in – the committees would actually have the power to say how the economy and society is organised.

In addition, for a planned economy to work, it would be vital that the working class had the time to take part in the running of society. Therefore, measures such as a shorter working week and decent, affordable childcare would be a prerequisite for society to develop towards socialism.

cosmetic changes

In contrast, the Common Weal puts forward cosmetic changes that would not deliver real democracy for the majority. Ideas such as “participatory budgets” where local communities vote on where and what to spend money on – in practice just now that would mean where to make the cuts – is raised as

a way forward. As is the idea of “mini-publics”, made up of a ‘cross section of society’ that would advise governments and councils on public policy but which would not be binding. None of these proposals would fundamentally impinge or alter the power of big capital and capitalist governments.

A big step forward for democracy today, and one that the Common Weal ignores, would be the building of a new party to represent the interests of the working class majority. Only in the “epilogue” is the issue of the lack of political representations touched on. “We need political parties with a real vision for transformation...It is for you to chose and shape those political parties.” But none of the existing parties represent ordinary people. They all support a continuation of capitalism and therefore, in practice, austerity for the majority.

A new mass working class party, with the trade unions playing a decisive role in its creation, armed with socialist policies would represent a massive step forward in representative democracy.

transport, manufacturing and finance should be publicly owned and controlled and managed by the working class – with compensation paid only on the basis of proven need.

This would need to be combined with full government control of incoming and outgoing foreign trade, enabling a democratically elected government – and the working class, not the market – to control imports and exports including capital. This would provide the possibility of developing a democratic, socialist plan of production that could very quickly transform the lives of millions.

There is an old saying that Marxists often use; you can't control what you don't own. If the majority of the econ-

omy were left in the hands of capitalist interests then planning production to protect the environment, to create full employment and a living income for all would be impossible. Especially within the limits of crisis-ridden capitalism where the profit extracted from the labour of the working class is the over-riding priority.

To deliver the policies outlined in the Common Weal and more besides needs a mass movement against austerity and the building of an independent socialist Scotland as a step to the socialist transformation of society internationally. Only then would the task of liberating humanity from degradation and the horrors of capitalism truly begin.

A sporting spectacle amid chronic poverty

Ronnie Stevenson
Glasgow

The Commonwealth Games in Glasgow was a brilliant 11 days of sporting endeavour at the highest level and, unusually, we were able to buy a paper whose sports section was not wall-to-wall football.

I wish that would continue. There were 22 different sports with many more separate events within each one. The talent and endeavour on display was inspiring. For the first time para sports were fully integrated into a multi-sport Games.

Overall, an enthusiastic atmosphere was evident in Glasgow with thousands of visitors adding their own colourful culture to the city's own. Sport, musical and other cultural events were organised throughout the City, which added to the atmosphere.

The opening and closing ceremonies were little about sport directly and featured ideas about Scottish and Commonwealth culture which would not have everyone's agreement.

A black South African female soprano, Pumeza Matshikiza, sang Hamish Henderson's "Freedom Come All Ye". Ironically, a song

which rejects Scotland's past role in aiding the establishment of the Empire, the forerunner of the Commonwealth by, in the main, exploitative brute force. It's a song that looks forward to a future society which is multiracial and just and was particularly moving.

Not much was made of its significance by the TV commentators, probably not appreciating the 'revolutionary' nature of the song.

After one of Jamaica's many athletics gold medal presentations and the playing of Jamaica's National Anthem, Hampden rang out to Bob Marley's "Buffalo Soldier", with its description of the brutality of the slave trade, central to Glasgow's early growth and the creation of the Empire itself. Again, I am not sure all spectators recognised its significance.

Unfortunately, not all the events were open for many Glaswegians to view live, due to cost and the demand for tickets, although much of the games were live on TV.

The BBC produced their own peculiarly anglo-centric version of the games. The other so-called "home countries" were featured centrally as well as BBC's own choice of 'favourite sportspersons' from other

countries competing. In the sport I am most involved with, athletics, it took an American commentator to properly place in context all of the efforts of all of the athletes and not just the English ones.

The security for the games was airport style for every venue, underlining some of the political discord against which the games were taking place.

Locally, spending on the Games infrastructure was taking place against a background of austerity and cuts, particularly relevantly in local Government spending.

a real commonwealth

Also evident was the poverty, which abounds in many of the countries taking part. There were few sports fans from the poor countries of the Commonwealth. Bikes and sports clothing and equipment generously donated are symbolic of the generosity of the human spirit, but no substitute for revolutionary change in the distribution of the world's wealth equally around all countries and all people.

Many millions around the world enjoy sporting activity. Unfortun-



Usain Bolt

nately the inequality of wealth distorts the development of sport both collectively and individually.

Decent facilities, clothing and equipment are in short supply for millions. What we need is for all peoples of the world to have equality of

opportunity to develop their talents in sport or whatever. Harnessing the wealth of the 1% and using it to benefit the 99% i.e. a socialist plan of production is what we need – a real Commonwealth. What a Games we would have then.

Coulson jailed over phone-hacking

Judy Beishon
Socialist Party England and Wales

Andy Coulson (pictured right), David Cameron's former top spin doctor, has been jailed for conspiracy to hack voicemails.

A further five former News of the World employees had also pled guilty earlier in the trial, one of the most expensive in legal history.

The criminal acts in Murdoch's News International have cost the taxpayer £33 million in police investigations and trial expenses.

So rich is Murdoch's empire however that it has so far spent around double that huge sum - an estimated £60 million - on defence. This certainly hasn't broken Murdoch's bank, as his wealth is massive and escalating. Before phone hacking first surfaced his companies' shares had a combined value of \$48 billion. Now, their value is \$85 billion.

This wealth was used to throw every possible argument and confusion against the prosecution in the trial, helping to ensure that multi-millionaire Rebekah Brooks, News of the World editor prior to Coulson, was acquitted. The hacking of murdered teenager Milly Dowler's phone was done while Brooks was editor.

During the trial she said she didn't know hacking was illegal - but she still brazenly denied responsibility for it. Guardian journalist Nick Davies has reminded us that in 2003 Brooks even admitted that her journalists had acted illegally by paying police for information.

This information wasn't put before the jury because it would have broken parliamentary privilege rules, having been part of evidence given to the parliamentary media select committee.

Much other information was withheld from the jury or unavailable for one reason or another, including the hard drive from Brook's computer when she had been editor, which was 'lost'.

Nevertheless, the best legal team



that money could buy was not able to let Coulson off the hook, such was the "industrial scale" of the hacking and the particularly damning level of the evidence against him.

As we commented on at the time of the Murdochgate scandal there was a colossal attempt to cover-up the crimes of the Murdoch empire. "The scandal has exposed the cynical merry-go-round whereby top police officers charged with investigating phone-hacking end up working for News International. News of the World editors and leading journalists secure employment with the police. Others become top advisors to the British political elite. At the same time the Crown prosecution Service refuses to act despite mountains of evidence."

state regulation

The Socialist Party opposes state regulation of the press. Those who 'regulate' were not going to be 'independent' of pro-capitalist interests; and their regulations could potentially be used to hamper left-wing newspapers and trade unions from finding out important information and exposing super-exploitation, tax evasion, and other scandals.

Moreover, they would only be able to tinker, faced with the wealth and domination of the media industry. The power to choose what to print and broadcast would fundamentally rest with the owners of the media corporations - in the main a small, super-rich elite, who serve their own interests and those of capitalism, which are closely intertwined.

So the road to ending the media's lies, discrimination, intrusions and criminality lies not so much in new regulations and anti-privacy laws - phone hacking is illegal in any case - but in developing an entirely different type of media that would be under democratic working class and popular ownership and control.

The main printing and broadcasting facilities should be nationalised, to be made available for all strands of opinion to be heard and discussed and for good quality journalism to have the means of flourishing.

The revenue of the Sun and other papers and websites that promote their rich owners' personal views and bigotry will plummet when mass production alternatives are on offer that reflect the interests, culture and democratically decided boundaries of the overwhelming majority in society.

And is charged with perjury



Andy Coulson has now been charged with perjury arising from evidence he gave during the Tommy Sheridan perjury trial in 2011 at which he denied any knowledge of a culture of phone hacking at the News of the World when he was editor. The case is due to be heard in January 2015.

In a separate development The Scottish Criminal Cases Review Commission is now reviewing Tommy Sheridan's conviction for perjury. Tommy's solicitor, Gordon Dangerfield, commented "In my view the evidence demonstrates

very clearly that the conviction was a shocking miscarriage of justice."

The commission will decide whether to refer the case to the High Court for a full appeal hearing.

Socialist Party Scotland has consistently called for Tommy Sheridan's conviction to be overturned as unsafe and unsound.

It's been clear for years that Sheridan was the victim of a political vendetta carried out by the state against one of Scotland's leading socialists.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SCOTTISH SOCIALIST PARTY



A reply to Downfall
The Tommy Sheridan Story

£2

Socialist Party Scotland

Written in 2011, this pamphlet was a reply to the leadership of the SSP and their attempts to justify their role in the prosecution and victimisation of Tommy Sheridan.

It explores the key political reasons for the demise of the party - the abandonment of a principled socialist outlook by the leadership - and draws out the important lessons to be learned by socialists in Scotland today.

The pamphlet can be read at the Socialist Party Scotland website:

socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

We're standing up to rape and sexual assault

Sinead Daly

Socialist Party Scotland, Dundee

In 2012/13, 1372 rapes, 90 attempted rapes and 7,693 sexual offences were reported to the police in Scotland. This represents a 16% rise compared to the previous year! For 2013/14 that figure increased even further, by 23%.

Not enough is known about why there has been such an increase – the recent high profile cases may have given more women confidence to report – however, much more interrogation of the figures needs to be done before we can be sure.

What is clear however, is that these figures are just the tip of the iceberg. Rape and sexual abuse remains a massively underreported crime.

In 2010/11 3% of adults had experienced at least one form of serious sexual assault since the age of 16. This included 5% of women experiencing at least one form of serious sexual assault and 1% of men. (2010-11 Scottish Crime and Justice Survey: Sexual Victimization and Stalking)

Whilst the recent rapes and sexual assaults appeared to have been committed by a stranger, most people are raped and/or sexually abused by someone they know. More than half (52%) of adults who had experienced serious sexual assault since the age of 16 were assaulted by their partner. 95% said the offenders were male and 5% said the offenders were female.

Childhood Sexual Abuse remains a large and serious problem within our society. The NSPCC estimate that 1 in 20 children have been sexually abused, of those children 90% were abused by someone they knew.

The recent high profile cases of actors and celebrities such as Ian



Anti rape protests in India

Watkins, Jimmy Saville, Stuart Hall, Rolf Harris etc demonstrate not just how wide spread an issue it is but also how difficult it has and continues to be for survivors of rape, sexual abuse and childhood sexual abuse to come forward.

One of the main reasons for this is the fear of not being believed and the amount of victim blaming, even with young girls, that exists within society.

Rape Crisis Scotland reported that less than a fifth of survivors in touch with rape crisis centres have reported their experiences to the police.

Victim blaming

Focus on what women wear, the amount they drank and their behaviours or sexual history all receive far more attention than the actions and behaviours of the perpetrators.

A System 3 poll conducted in Scotland in 2008 made for some disturbed reading:

24% think a woman can be at least partly responsible if she is drunk at

the time of the attack

27% thought that a woman bore some responsibility if she wore revealing clothing

29% say there should be some burden of responsibility for rape if the woman is flirting

15% think rape can be the woman's fault if she is known to have had many sexual partners

Such views are inevitably reflected in our judicial system, for which there is still a criminally low conviction rate – just 7% in Scotland for reported incidents of rape.

A recent case in England of a 13 year old girl who had experienced sexual abuse at the hands of an adult caused revulsion and outrage at the attitudes of the judiciary. The judge described the 13-year-old as a "sexual predator" and let a 41-year-old paedophile, Neil Wilson walk free from court. Even more shocking was the comments from the QC for the Crown Prosecution Service, Robert Colover, "The girl is predatory in all her actions and she is sexually experienced." Rightly this case is being reviewed.

Thousands say "these streets are made for walking"



The stroke of midnight on June 9th saw almost 5,000 people take to the streets of South Glasgow to demand an end to the surge in sexual attacks in the city over the last few months.

The massive "These streets are made for walking" demonstration came about following a spate of rapes in the city over last few months leaving a lot of women feeling frightened to go out at night. It started at Queen's Park and circled around the area where a 24 year old woman was raped last month.

Two young women, Ashley Crossan and Amanda Johnston, organised the walk because they were: "tired of harassment, and the fear of assault being a part of our daily lives, simply because we are female. We are tired of being told when we can and cannot walk around our own neighbourhoods as a "preventative measure

Their feelings of anger and desire to do something about it struck a core with thousands of people in their area. It was an extraordinary demonstration, with the young and the old, women and men (with several pet dogs thrown in for good measure) coming together to oppose violence against women.

The Socialist Party Scotland attended and intervened in the protest. We were the only visible political force on the march – we gave out hundreds of leaflets argu-

ing for increased provision of services and ideas of how to take this movement forward – in people were literally grabbing them off us and asking for more! This hunger for ideas, in our view, reflects a desire among people to find out more about the issues and crucially there was an understanding that more can and must be done.

The protest in Glasgow demonstrated vividly the increasing determination of women and men to challenge gender based violence. Last year the rape and murder of a young student in India provoked mass demonstrations not just across India but the world.

The development of the Slut-walk, the 1 Billion Rising movements and campaigns within many universities challenging rape culture show the in-cresing confidence and willingness of women to take up these important issues.

More needs to be done, not just in challenging sexism rape, sexual and domestic abuse, but in fighting to defend key services. With the growing attacks on jobs and services, these vital services will come under increasing pressure to survive.

We will continue to challenge sexism and the growing rape culture, but will ensure that we link these struggles to the trade union and community campaigns fighting austerity and defending jobs and services

Socialist Party Scotland demands:

- An end to victim blaming.
- For a programme of education in schools, colleges, universities, workplaces and the trade unions about the myths and facts of rape and domestic abuse
- No closures or cuts to Violence Against Women services. Fight for an increase in funding to help women affected.
- Reverse the cuts to legal aid. Free access to legal advice and representation for women.

Nationalise the energy companies now

Matt Gordon

Socialist Party England and Wales

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.

FBU leadership election in Scotland

Ian Leech
Glasgow

The recent election for Fire Brigades Union Scottish Secretary saw Steven Thomson defeat the sitting incumbent John Duffy.

Duffy had been heavily criticised by members in Scotland and the General Secretary Matt Wrack for refusing to take members out on strike over an attack on Fire Fighters pensions.

The action, which had been agreed at a FBU National Conference, would have seen a co-ordinated strike of Fire Fighters across the whole of the UK.

Duffy, who is a member and former candidate of the Scottish National Party has been accused of being too close to the SNP.

There has been a list of complaints from disgruntled FBU activists about Duffy's role on various websites. In addition, Duffy faced sharp criticism for accepting an OBE from the Queen. Steven Thomson won the election with 80% of the vote.

In November 2011 the same issue of fighting pension attacks as part of an all-Britain strike was posed before Unison in Scotland.



FBU members in England on strike

Scottish pensions in Local Government are, similarly to the Fire Fighters, devolved to Holyrood.

Yet Unison successfully explored a way of creating a legitimate trade dispute in order to allow members to participate in the largest public sector strike since the 1920's.

According to the Herald newspaper "major spending cuts unlike anything experienced since devolution is predicted for the public sector next year".

How the trade unions and its leaders respond to this deluge will be the concern of every member and every activist in the coming months. The trade unions need to take up the fight with co-ordinated industrial action as widely as possible to defeat the attacks.

Join socialist students - Join the fightback

Socialist Students

www.socialiststudents.org.uk

Socialist Party Scotland and Socialist Students will be present at universities and colleges across the country this autumn, there are plenty of issues for Scottish students to become politically active over.

Scottish students may not have to pay tuition fees like students in England and the Scottish government has kept funding the EMA but this has come at a price.

There have been large scale cuts to college budgets over the last few years and an increase in mergers which has led to a reduction in facilities.

In the past the SNP broke promises to scrap student debt and restore grants, in fact the means tested grants that exist were cut at Scottish universities as part of the 2013 Scot-

tish government budget. This has led to student debt increasing by 58% in Scotland, in the last academic year according to the Guardian's analysis of recent Student Loan Company figures. Students will be disappointed to see there is nothing in the SNP's White Paper on independence on scrapping student debt or restoring grants.

The White Paper also outlines how higher education in Scotland will be financed by charging rest of UK students extortionate tuition fees to study in Scotland. Socialist Students fights for free education at the point of use for all students and the scrapping of all student debt.

Student campaigns and struggles need to be linked with the fightbacks of workers.

Many students are also also workers facing issues like low pay and zero-hour contracts. A recent report

by the Scottish affairs select committee (April 2014) found 4,500 staff at Scottish universities are on a form of zero-hour contract. Socialist Students supports the efforts of trade unions like EIS, Unite and the UCU who are campaigning at universities like Glasgow and Edinburgh against these contracts.

Often this exploitation takes place on campuses. For students, just like the majority of people in society, the bills keep coming and the rent won't wait!

The fight for free high quality publicly funded education with living grants for all students and the scrapping of student debt, takes place alongside workers fighting for a £10 an hour minimum wage and to scrap zero hour and casualised contracts.

Join Socialist Students on your campus today



Socialist Students fighting for free education and an end to cuts

Socialism 2014: an event not to be missed

Saturday 8th and Sunday 9th November, London

Includes: How can the Palestinians win liberation? on Saturday 8 November 3pm. Discussion and debate, including live link up with socialists from Israel-Palestine

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

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. For them the lives of the vast majority are so much small change in their pursuit of ever greater profits.

This has not gone unchallenged. 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. This is your chance to discuss how to take the fightback forward and build the socialist alternative to cuts, crises and capitalism. Speakers include:

Kshama Sawant

One of the most anticipated speakers will be Seattle 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/hr minimum wage and inspired working people the world over. This is the first time Kshama has spoken in Britain since being elected.

Mark Serwotka

General secretary of the PCS union who have repeatedly struck against austerity and campaigned for the biggest possible coordinated action by workers.

Ian Hodson

President of the bakers' union BFAWU which has been central to the growing Fast Food Rights campaign and recently came out in favour of a £10/hr minimum wage.

Ruth Coppinger

The Socialist Party's second TD (member of parliament) in Ireland, recently elected in a by-election. Ruth has been to the forefront of campaigns against the Irish government's austerity policies including the Water Tax.

Peter Taaffe

General secretary of the Socialist Party and first editor of the Militant newspaper which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

A full list of discussions and rallies and to book your place can be found at www.socialism2014.net

Why we joined the socialists



Socialist Party Scotland members campaigning on Gaza

Elaine from West Lothian

"The system is broken" "This isn't right". I've heard those phrases from nearly everyone I know for as long as I can remember!

I've seen friends and family failed time and time again by a corrupt regime designed to keep the poor misinformed and powerless! But it doesn't have to be that way!

I read the Socialist Party Scotland manifesto and was amazed at my agreement in everything it stood for. I felt compelled to make contact and get more information.

I was delighted and surprised at how quickly a party member came out to meet me and answer all my questions (even the daft ones) with great patience and clarity.

I now understand how important grass root campaigns are, protests, marches and petitions. I had no idea that SPS members were paramount in forcing the SNP to axe the bedroom tax, as well as being key players in ridding us all of the poll tax many years ago.

I now understand the protection that trade unions offer the working class and most importantly that public ownership is the only ethical answer to corporate oppression. I knew I wanted Independence, I knew I wanted my vote to count, I knew I wanted rid of nuclear weapons and corporate greed. The difference now being that I genuinely believe it's possible!

I'm learning as I go and some will surely call me naive, but you don't need a degree in politics to recognize social justice and equality.

Neither do you need 25 years experience before you can be of any use. So here I am, a late arrival to the cause and a comrade.

Lynda from West Dunbartonshire

"I joined the Socialist Party Scotland because I was horrified at the state of politics in Britain. I'm passionate about politics and want to see a more equal society, not the present system which serves only the elite and punishes the poor.

When I discovered that my own village had food banks I felt outraged. We have over 100 billionaires living in Britain, yet families, many who work, don't have enough money to feed themselves. We hear there must be austerity measures but big business and the elite are richer than they have ever been.

People are dying after being thrown off benefits by ATOS. Thinking of all these things, I decided I wanted to get more involved. I did some research on all political parties but a party like Socialist Party Scotland is active in workplaces and communities and takes up international issues like Gaza, which has cemented my decision on joining."

Matt from Glasgow

"I have always believed in the ideas of socialism and society working together for the benefit of the majority, rather than the few. It is only recently following both the referendum debate and the economic crisis that I have felt compelled to take action to raise awareness of the ideas of socialism.

As the referendum debate was heating up, political discussions began to take place more and more in my daily life however the idea of any alternative/socialist methods of governance was not something that most of my peers seemed to be

Socialist Party

Scotland is involved in many campaigns from the referendum, to Gaza, from building trade union struggles against cuts, to campaigning for a £10 an hour minimum wage, as well as winning support for socialist ideas among the working class. We asked some of our members who have recently got involved why they joined.

aware of and to those who were dismissed them as some unworkable pipe dream.

With my limited knowledge on the workings of socialism I initially found it difficult to counter this point of view. The Socialist Party provided me with both the platform to develop my knowledge to reach out to others and to fight for the needs of the millions affected by the cuts of austerity."

Catriona from Angus

The debate about Scottish Independence has led me to get politically active.

It wasn't until I discovered SPS in Dundee back in April that I found a community of open and friendly people who I was comfortable engaging with fully. After years of cynicism about the political process I have finally found an experienced group with a great attitude, principled methods and a carefully and thoroughly thought out plan.

Each weekly meeting is inclusive with plenty time for discussion, questions and contributions from everyone. As part of an international organisation, the Committee for a Worker's International, SPS is fully engaged in accurately analysing the context of Scotland's present situation. This enables us to provide a realistic alternative to the failed conventional political agenda of the capitalist-serving elite.

We provide an alternative vision which welcomes and serves all people, regardless of differences. I am so grateful and pleased to be involved in such a worthwhile action-based People's party.

Strike to break the pay cap

Jim McFarlane

Dundee City Unison secretary (pc)

UNISON members in Local Government in Scotland are to be balloted for a campaign of industrial action against an imposed 1% pay deal for 2014. The timetable for the official ballot is 9th to 29th September. A previous consultative ballot resulted in 66% of members voting to move to industrial action.

Council workers have faced years of pay freezes and below the rate of inflation pay deals.

Along with the years of pay being held back workers have faced the onslaught of austerity imposed on them by the Westminster and Holyrood Governments that local councils run by all the main parties passed without a whimper of protest.

Thousands of jobs have gone along with severe service cuts and threats to terms and conditions of service. Yet at the same time those workers left have been expected to provide at least the same levels of service to communities with less and less resources.

The impact of the economic crisis has clearly resulted in an increased demand for services from those hit hardest of the austerity agenda.

There has been an increase in need for services to the poor, disabled and older people, yet the employers and government claim that



Care workers took seven days of strike action in January and February 2014

their cuts are not having an effect of frontline services.

It should also be noted that the majority of cuts are still to come. If a lead is given at both a Scottish and local branch level then members will respond. The socialist led Glasgow City UNISON branch have shown that by taking industrial action in a number of disputes victories can be achieved.

For many workers the time has come to say enough is enough. UNISON branches have to ensure that as many workplace and council wide meetings for members are held to ensure not only a successful ballot result, but also to make sure the action planned to begin in October is as strong as possible across Scot-

land.

UNISON Scotland has to make sure branches and members are armed with the necessary resources. Serious attempts should also be made to link up and co-ordinate action with other trade unions.

Council workers in the rest of the UK, PCS members, teachers and railworkers are all currently involved in action and any action will be made more effective on a united basis.

Politicians of all the main parties should be challenged on where they stand. Austerity is a political choice not an economic necessity and its not good enough for the SNP or Labour to blame this on the ConDem government at Westminster.

Unite debates links with Labour

Kevin Parslow

Socialist Party and Unite member

Len McCluskey, in his general secretary's opening address to the Unite policy conference, said that Unite's major focus of the next ten months had to be the election of a Labour government.

But several delegates, including Socialist Party members, explained that a Labour government would not solve the problems of workers.

Labour has pledged to continue austerity and, in 13 years of government, didn't reverse the anti-trade union laws.

Labour will not back trade unionists taking action on 10 July, including council workers in Unite.

Socialists argued that workers need a new mass party to represent their interests. There was a vibrant debate on the relationship between Unite and the Labour Party at the union's policy conference.

Because it was a policy conference and not a rules conference, motions could not discuss disaffiliation from Labour and setting up a new party.

But a composite that came from branches called for a conference to be organised so that the political strategy of the union and the relationship with Labour and alternatives could be discussed.

Seconding the motion, Socialist Party member Suzanne Muna made the point that the "not now, not now" anti-disaffiliation argument would still be made if Labour came to power and implemented cuts.

Ed Miliband doesn't yet have to look over his shoulder at a mass left alternative that could put pressure on him.

The last speaker in the debate, Jamie Coccozza, a Glasgow Socialist Party Scotland member and rail

worker, explained to conference that the successful \$15 Now campaign in Seattle - already mentioned at the conference - involved, as well as the struggle of unions, the election of city councillor Kshama Sawant, a socialist representative of workers on a socialist programme.

This showed that having an alternative could put huge pressure on Labour.

As Jamie explained, even the Democrats now have had to discuss the idea of a \$15 an hour minimum wage.

The executive put forward a statement, which was passed by around three votes to one, that maintained the union's existing strategy within Labour and opposed the call for a conference.

Delegates at this stage don't see any alternative to the idea of supporting Labour in the 2015 general election.

But there were no real illusions that Labour would be a radical alternative to the Con-Dems.

Even McCluskey, and members that supported the executive statement, have to accept that this issue will remain central for Unite whether Labour win or lose next year's election.

Reflecting on this, a motion encouraging Labour councillors to vote against cuts passed, with two delegates who are also Labour councillors speaking against the motion.

So far Labour has expelled or suspended the handful of councillors who have voted against Labour council cuts.

Yet on the same morning, prompted by socialists Danny Hoggan and Cathy Smith from Greenwich and Bromley local government branches respectively, conference voted to ensure that

councillors who vote against the cuts would be publicly supported by the union!

Conference supported resolutions for the renationalisation of energy and transport. Conference also overturned the EC on fracking, rejecting its compromise statement and backing a composite that opposed fracking.

A major leverage campaign fighting NHS privatisation was also launched, designed to involve the union's entire membership and not just its health sector members.

Zero-hour contracts

Helen Pattison from London spoke in the debate on zero-hour contracts and outlined the development of the Fast Food Rights campaign.

Tanis Belsham-Wray from Leeds outlined the role that Unite Community - comprised of students, the unemployed and retired - could play, building support for workers in struggle.

Conference rejected a right-wing backed motion that would have stalled any mergers, including with the PCS civil servants' union. However, Len McCluskey's remarks opposing the motion - he said that no merger was in prospect - need to be clarified with the PCS executive.

Thirty people heard Liverpool 47 councillor Tony Mulhearn speak at the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition fringe meeting.

The first Socialist Party meeting at a Unite conference was a success, with 40 present.

We had delegates and youth observers from the CWI sections in Scotland and Ireland, as well as from England and Wales. This meeting reflected the growth of socialist ideas inside the union.

PCS members in HMRC striking over job cuts



PCS picket line at HMRC in Dundee on J10

By Socialist Party reporters

PCS members in HMRC have been taking strike action for one day 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 action taken in June, which afterwards saw the concession of 2,500 permanent posts being advertised. PCS members in HMRC are now continuing to challenge HMRC management on a number of issues:

PMR (performance management review) _ mass job cuts _ office closures _ privatisation in Benefits and and post rooms _ FTA (fixed term appointment) redundancies _ flexible resourcing

Tyneside

Kevin McHugh, PCS national deputy president, spoke to the Socialist on the picket line at Benton Park View, Newcastle upon Tyne, about the strike action:

"The strike is about a number of issues, mainly around jobs and staffing. 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. We maintain 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.

There is work for them so we demand that they are given full-time jobs so that we can give a good service to claimants.

Meanwhile Lin Holmer, chief executive of HMRC was recently given a £20,000 bonus. This is more money than 80% of the staff on this site earn in a year! Those staff were given just a 1% pay increase."

RMT members fighting ISS and poverty pay on East Coast line



Richie Veitch
RMT Edinburgh branch

Low paid workers employed by ISS on their lucrative East Coast Mainline Contract entered into their latest round of strike action starting on Friday 8th August 2014 for 24 hours, coupled to a 48 hour strike being planned later in the month.

For over 2 years now members of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers have been locked in a head on battle with rogue employer ISS in a fight for a living wage to bring them out of the poverty line. These workers are paid the National Minimum Wage by ISS yet the company will be creaming profit off the back of a poorly paid

workforce who they treat with contempt and disdain.

Morale amongst the members is good, despite having had no pay rise since 2011. However it appears that the company's arrogance shows no bounds as their attitude has been to cancel meetings that are in place to address the issue at a moments notice and expecting the workers and the union to accept this.

Picket lines will be in force at Kings Cross, Newcastle and Edinburgh Waverley on the strike days. Come along and stand shoulder to shoulder with the ISS workers in their fight to bring themselves out of poverty.

The next round of Industrial Action is planned for 48 hours commencing Friday 15th August.

The Socialist is dedicated to reporting the struggles of workers. If you have a report for us please email it to info@socialistpartyscotland.org.uk Phone 07889135533

£10 now

Raise the minimum wage

Richard Neville
Socialist Party Scotland EC

Workers across the country will have been left scratching their heads this summer as George Osborne announced the economy had fully recovered from the crisis that began in 2008.

The reality for ordinary working class people is very different. The TUC calculate that workers are on average £40 per week worse off than they were in 2008. And with the cuts to vital public services that have been carried out workers will be left wondering who this precarious growth is actually benefiting.

The truth is that any growth is at the expense of the working class. The reality of austerity has meant wage freezes and job losses in the public sector.

In the private sector, which the Tories tell us will be the driver of growth, wages are worth less than ever before as below inflation wage

increases are used to maintain profits at bewildering levels.

The bosses claim they can't afford a pay increase. Morrisons made £785 million, Sports Direct a record £240 million, and Tesco made an eye watering £3.3 billion. Away from the High St, British Telecom made a staggering £2 billion while the transport company firstgroup made £79.3 million.

The government loses around £120 billion per year in uncollected or evaded tax, and is looking to spend over £100 billion on replacing Trident.

The fight for a larger share of the wealth for workers has been kick-started in Seattle with a mass movement by fast food workers in the 15now campaign. Socialist Alternative (Socialist Party co-thinkers in the U.S) councillor Kshama Sawant was elected on a ticket demanding a \$15 hourly rate.

This movement successfully took on big business in Seattle and



- A minimum wage of £10 an hour without exemptions as a step to a real living wage
- End the pay freeze now
- Scrap zero hour contracts and all forced under-employment
- Invest in a massive programme to create socially useful jobs

passed legislation meaning that the city now has the highest minimum wage in the country.

Here in Scotland and Britain the Socialist Party and Youth Fight For Jobs, have been at the forefront of the £10 Now campaign. We're organising protests outside workplaces, as

well as building support within the trade union movement. The £10 Now campaign is calling for the minimum wage to be raised to £10 as a step to a living wage for all workers.

The Bakers union were the first to adopt the fight for £10 as policy and they have been joined in the TUC by

GMB, the third largest union in the country. Through our campaigning work up and down the country, we are keeping the issue of poverty pay right at the top of the agenda.

To get involved in the fight for £10Now contact youthfightscotland@gmail.com.

what we stand for

work and income

- For the unions to take immediate action 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.
- Reject Welfare to Work; for the right to decent benefits, training or a job without compulsion.
- A maximum 35-hour week without loss of pay.
- All workers, including part-timers, temps, casual and migrant workers to have trade union rates of pay, employment protection, sickness and holiday rights from the first day of

employment. End zero-hour contracts.

- Scrap the anti-union laws. Build fighting trade unions, democratically controlled by their members. Full-time officials should be regularly elected and receive no more than a worker's wage.
- An immediate 50% increase in the state retirement pension, as a step towards a living pension. Reinstate the link with average earnings now.

environment

- Major research and investment into replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy. End the problems of early obsolescence and unrecycled waste.
- Public ownership of the energy generating industry. No to nuclear power. No to Trident
- A democratically planned, low fare, publicly owned transport system, to help end environmental pollution.

public services

- Fight all cuts. No to privatisation. Renationalise all privatised utilities and services.
- Free, high quality education for all from nursery to university; with a living grant. No to the return of tuition fees in Scotland. Cancel the student debt and end the cuts in education funding.
- A socialist NHS to provide for everyone's health - free at the point of use and under democratic control. Kick out the private contractors from all parts of the NHS.
- Keep council housing public. For a massive programme of publicly owned housing to provide good quality homes at low rents.
- Fully fund all services and run them under accountable, democratic committees that include representatives of workers and service users.

rights

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

A mass working class party

- For a mass workers party that draws together workers, young people and activists from other movements to build a political alternative to the big business parties.
- Trade unions should disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and play a central role in helping to build a new workers' party.

socialism and internationalism

- No to imperialist wars and occupations. Withdraw the troops now from Afghanistan.
- Tax the super rich. For a socialist government that takes the major companies in Scotland into public ownership and the top 150 companies and banks that dominate the British economy. Run them under democratic working class control and management. Compensation should be paid only on the basis of proven need.
- For a socialist Scotland and a free and voluntary socialist federation of Scotland with England Wales and Ireland.
- A democratic socialist, environmentally secure plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people.
- No to the bosses neo-liberal European Union. For a socialist Europe and a socialist world free from poverty.