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NO MORE CARNAGE IN GAZA

Mass struggle to:

- End the siege
- Stop Israeli state terror

Judy Beishon
Socialist Party Executive
Committee

Worldwide, people have once again been shocked and appalled by the terrible images broadcast from Gaza. Palestinians buried in the rubble of their homes, hundreds of children among the dead, thousands of civilians with devastating injuries.

The office of Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, declared that his military "has

gone to unprecedented lengths to keep Palestinian civilians out of harm's way".

Getting out of harm's way has been utterly impossible. The Gaza strip, just 46 by six kilometres in size, has been savagely bombarded from the surrounding land, sea and air.

How can the 1.8 million traumatised Gazans flee, when all the exit crossings are blocked? Inside the strip, over 200,000 people have crushed into United Nations run schools.

But these aren't safe: around 100 UN properties in the strip have been hit by Israeli missiles.

Half of the hospitals have been severely damaged, as has the only power station, which is reported to be beyond repair for a year.

A ceasefire will come at some point, bringing huge relief to many. But it can't reverse the death and injuries, and it will solve none of the underlying problems in the conflict or prevent a new round later.

The ceasefire deal will be over the heads of the mass of people on both sides, who have no say in the content and who would prefer to see negotiations take place that could really lead to an

end to the cycles of bloodshed.

Capitalist or sectarian-driven wars - from the repeated onslaughts on Gaza, to the raging civil war in Syria, or the bloody conflicts in parts of Africa - are never for the benefit of ordinary people.

This issue of the Socialist marks the centenary of the outbreak of World War One, when millions of working class people were sent to die in the front trenches in the interests of rival capitalists' drive for resources, markets and power. Every war has different triggers and circumstances, but the wars we are witnessing in the

world today are also a result of competing ruling classes' desire for profit and prestige.

The anti-war movements globally - at present reviving - must develop to challenge the mainstream politicians whose policies determine the fate and lack of security of millions.

The growth of socialist ideas is also essential, as the only alternative that can end the capitalism system that will always breed war, terror and poverty.

See page 2 for more on Gaza and pages 5,6 and 7 on World War One

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Gaza in crisis!

Mass action needed to stop bloodshed

Shahar Benhorin

Socialist Struggle Movement (CWI Israel-Palestine), writing on 29 July

Whole families burnt alive, parents with children. Shajaiya neighbourhood in Gaza is complete rubble. Over 1,100 Palestinians' lives have ended since 8 July, as a ruthless inferno has rained down on this besieged, impoverished, and highly populated strip of land during the Muslim Ramadan.

Each round of conflict is becoming more brutal. The bombing of the UNRWA school and the Waffa hospital exposed once again the cynicism of the Israeli propaganda that attempts to present the mass killing of civilians as an "unfortunate accident". Some were killed by "warning missiles" that are shot at some of the buildings before they're turned into ashes. These "humanitarian" means of warning the population are nothing but propaganda camouflage to cover the true nature of acts of state terrorism.

The repetitive lies of the Israeli government about a war of "defence" and "no choice" clash with any sober view of the relation of forces and the whole context of the systematic military and economic aggression and super-oppression of the population in Gaza by Israel.

This propaganda is also refuted by the relatively small number of Israeli victims in this war. Three civilians in Israel have tragically died. Also 53 Israeli soldiers have needlessly died - more than in any of the previous military onslaughts on the Gaza Strip, including during the intifadas. However, this has not yet led to a significant break in the high support for this war among the Israeli-Jewish public, whose fear of the rockets and of possible attacks on civilians via Hamas' tunnels from the Strip, have translated into a strong, blind, national-chauvinistic mood.

This mood is based not only on fear of the rockets, which has been exploited by the government, but also on a certain desperate idea that this bout of war, if there is a ceasefire now, as happened after previous rounds, won't fulfil any of the government's promises of security.

After three weeks of war and bloodbath, Hamas is still capable of launching rockets towards Tel Aviv and other central population centres in Israel. Any vicious and imaginary idea that the massacre of families in the Gaza Strip might promote true security for Israeli civilians will inevitably be shattered once more.

This war on Gaza is primarily a war to uphold the Israeli regime's and its government's prestige, and to appear to retaliate, take revenge, and to buy time.

Increased desperation

In reality, the right-wing security strategy has proved a complete failure. The siege policies, meant to topple Hamas, and a whole series

of bloody military offensives on the Gaza Strip, only ended up eventually with Hamas and other militias getting stronger militarily, and possessing even more developed rockets. They sowed more desperation, bereavement, death and destruction, and by this also promoted the spectre of revengeful terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians.

Now, as Netanyahu half-heartedly admits, the Israeli regime no longer has an interest in trying to topple Hamas in the Gaza Strip in the near future, as they can't be certain of the other forces that would take its place. Already there are small forces identified with Da'esh (ISIS) in the Strip.

The war also seems to serve this government in wiping out attention to the social crises and deepening economic problems in Israel. At a time of a serious slowdown in the Israeli economy, the government is now, during the war, promoting significant privatisation steps, among other attacks.

However, this regime is riding fast in the direction of a severe crisis after the war. This has already been manifested by unprecedented public clashes between ministers at a time of war, each trying to shake off responsibility for the gigantic blaze of this crisis. Despite boasting about destruction of around 20 Hamas tunnels in the Strip, and trying to lever this into a display of strategic victory, they're unlikely to be able to get any victory picture. All problems remain.

Though the central demands raised by Hamas and Islamic Jihad in this round are demands against the Israeli-Egyptian siege and Israeli aggressions, Netanyahu's government wouldn't allow itself to accept almost any of them, as that would be a major blow to its prestige and present it as a loser on the political field, despite its massive military force. The fact that the current government completely rejected Obama's and the UN Security Council's calls for an immediate ceasefire emphasises further that the Israeli regime can be expected to become even more isolated.

Anti-war protests

International public criticism and protests against Israel will be doubled following this war, as is indicated in the current impressive solidarity protests with Gaza internationally. Also, very significantly, the Israeli government and its partners internationally are worried about the dramatic radicalisation among Palestinian communities in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and within Israel.

Following the bloodbath in Gaza's Shajaiya neighbourhood, where over 100 were slain, a Palestinian protest strike was organised by the Palestinian workers' unions in the West Bank and by the Supreme Committee of the Arab-Palestinian public within Israel on Monday 21 July.

With the lack of wider trade un-

Thousands of homes in Gaza have been destroyed, displacing over 200,000 people

ion backing - the Histadrut (Israeli TUC) has outrageously supported the war - this was not primarily a workers' strike, but thousands of small businesses were shut down, and even some of the branches of the main Israeli banks were closed, as their managements feared to violate the strike.

On Thursday 24 July, tens of thousands demonstrated in the West Bank, beginning to indicate the true power that can stop the fierce reaction and madness of massacre: the road of a mass struggle, so consciously avoided throughout years by the Fatah and Hamas dead-end strategies. While not yet a mass popular uprising, protests were organised all across the West Bank.

Solutions?

The largest demonstration was a protest march from the refugee camp of Al-Am'ari near Ramallah to the Qalandiya checkpoint. 20,000 participated. Nine of the protesters were killed by the Israeli military, and another one by a Settler, trying to suppress the movement.

This shows the need and importance of taking the struggle forward by organising democratic popular committees that could help to mobilise, coordinate, and guard protests and actions - including by armed means, under democratic control.

Within Israel, demonstrations of thousands of Palestinians took place. There was also a 6,000-strong mostly Jewish demonstration against the war in central Tel-Aviv on Saturday 26 July, the largest demonstration within Israel against the war so far.

Socialist Struggle Movement is in full solidarity with the Palestinian people against the Israeli brutal, barbaric aggressions, and with ordinary Israeli people who have suffered losses in the war. Underlying the current arrogant chauvinistic mood among a majority of Israeli workers there are aspirations for

fundamental solutions.

Netanyahu is making it more and more explicitly clear that in reality he doesn't support any form of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel. The sections of the Israeli ruling class that he represents don't regard it as in their interests for there to be any hint of a viable, independent Palestinian state.

Netanyahu recently declared: "There cannot be a situation, under any agreement, in which we relinquish security control of the territory west of the River Jordan". This lack of the slightest political will by the present Israeli regime to concede any form of independent state is clearly marking its role of perpetuating the bloody conflict.

Israeli-Jewish workers will eventually conclude that as long as they side with their own exploiters and oppressors against the Palestinians, they will not acquire lasting security, peace and social justice.

It is up to socialist forces to consistently explain not only the need for Israeli workers to struggle on immediate economic issues, but to principally support the rights of the Palestinians, as a crucial step towards a just peace, based on an end of the siege, occupation, settlements and all forms of oppression

Over 1,000 have been killed, including hundreds of children

The Committee for a Workers' International

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

The CWI is organised in 45 countries and works to unite the working class and oppressed peoples against global capitalism and to fight for a socialist world.

For more details including CWI publications write to: CWI, PO Box 3688, London E11 1YE. email cwi@worldsoc.co.uk

www.socialistworld.net

of the Palestinians; the end of all national privileges and discriminations for any group, and the practical fulfilling of an equal right of self-determination.

This would mean the establishing of a truly independent, equal, democratic and socialist Palestinian state, next to a socialist and democratic Israel, with two capitals in Jerusalem and equal rights for minorities, as part of the struggle for a socialist spring in the Middle East.

Economic recovery - so where's our share-out?

Robin Clapp

The Tories can barely conceal their glee. With a general election just ten months away, Chancellor Osborne has announced that the economy has now expanded for the sixth consecutive quarter and has finally surpassed its pre-crisis output peak, reached in 2008. So where's our share-out?

This news makes no difference to the millions who've seen wages slashed by an average of £2,000 a year since 2010, probably the greatest ever decline on record. Nor those for whom the food bank is the new lifeline, or those bullied by DWP chiefs who issue vicious benefit sanction notices like confetti.

Austerity policies have been a barely disguised wealth transfusion from the pockets of the millions into the paws of the billionaires. More people in poverty are in work than jobless and the minimum wage remains rooted below that of France, Netherlands and Ireland.

Lack of investment

What the Tories didn't trumpet last week is that industrial production is stuck at 1988 levels, per capita productivity remains chronic and investment is £50 billion below that of 2008. Firms sit on cash mountains, but are reluctant to retool, preferring instead to exploit cheap, insecure labour.

The economy is hollowed out, still hugely reliant on services and a financial sector that remains a ticking time-bomb.

It has taken over six years for diseased British capitalism to claw itself back to this point, longer than it took to recover from the 1930s Great Depression.

This has only been achieved through slashing living standards, tax breaks to the rich, privatisations which like the sell-off of Royal Mail, give blank cheques to City bank-



What recovery? photo Paul Mattsson

ers, maintaining extraordinary low interest rates and lubricating the economy by great dollops of quantitative easing - for which once again ordinary people will eventually foot the bill.

Permanent insecurity rather than recovery is our norm. Unemployment may officially have come down to 'just' 6.6%, but this disguises a huge growth in underemployment. Half of the jobs created in 2013 were people becoming self-employed, many driven involuntarily into this vulnerable cul-de-sac to escape dole-queue poverty.

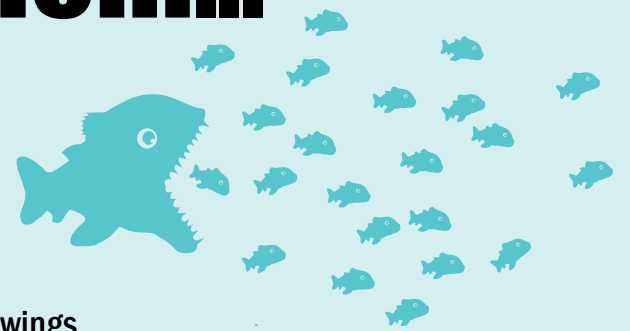
Real jobs are increasingly replaced by boss-friendly zero-hour contracts, now standing at over 1.4

million. In the care industry alone, more than 160,000 are on these exploitative contracts, with no right to sick pay and no guaranteed right to holiday pay.

House building is at its lowest level since the 1920s. Yet over 100,000 estate agent jobs have been created since 2010, more than double the total for new manufacturing and construction jobs. London may be open to the oligarchs and private landlord racketeers, but for most, spiralling housing costs are just another nightmare.

Another week, another Tory lie, another reason to struggle to build the real recovery - the socialist recovery.

Them...



Clipped wings

Record house prices and low wages mean that millions of young people cannot move out of their parents' home.

According to the housing charity Shelter, in England and Wales, 25% of working 20 to 34 year olds still live with their parents - unable to take on a mortgage or to pay rent. The average property price for first-time buyers rocketed by 11.3% to £202,000 last year, while wages for the under-30s have fallen by 13% in real terms since 2007.

2.3 million people have had their council tax benefit support stopped or reduced substantially due to government cuts

King and country

Tory ministers routinely 'commemorate' the anniversary of World War One (see pages 5, 6 and 7) and the soldiers' sacrifices made 'for king and country'. However, the Mirror reported that former squaddie David Clapson, a diabetic, died last summer after being left starving and broke as a result of the government's benefit cuts. David's JSA was stopped after missing one appointment with a Department for Work and Pensions adviser. Helpfully, the DWP says 'people can appeal against sanctions'.

Starving Britons

Malnutrition has soared by 71% since 2010. Not a shocking reference to the plight of refugees displaced by war, but to people in Britain since the Con-Dems came to power. There have been 6,686 admissions to hospitals of people

suffering from malnutrition in 2013-14. This compares to 3,899 in the year up to April 2010.

Dodgy donor

Oil magnate Ian Taylor has donated £550,000 to the Tories since 2006, as well as giving £500,000 to the anti-Scottish independence 'Better Together' campaign. The chief executive of Vitol heads a mega-profitable company which has paid next to nothing in tax, and all with the approval of HMRC.

Beauty and the beast

The government has said that licences to allow the environmentally wrecking, but highly profitable, practice of shale gas 'fracking' in countryside beauty spots will only be granted in "exceptional circumstances". Ahem.

60% households affected by the bedroom tax are now in rent arrears

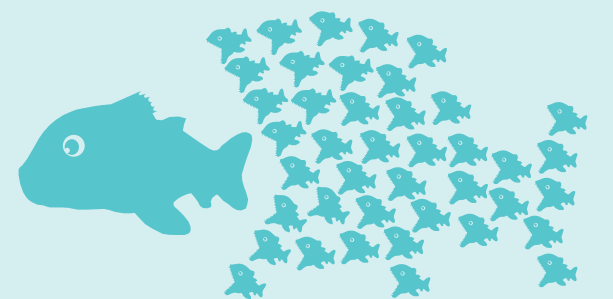
Starry vision

I will not have it said that the upper classes are eccentric. Some of them are completely barking. David Tredinnick, the Conservative MP for Bosworth has recommended astrology as an option for NHS patients. Given that the queues for treatment stretch from here to eternity, enlisting the aid of Hogwarts may be the only answer.

Tredinnick is on the Parliamentary health and science committee. If astrology is what passes for science in Parliament it does explain a lot. A number of the government's policies do seem to be under the influence of a conjunction with Uranus.

Derek Mcmillan

...& Us



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More police spying revelations

Following the admission earlier this year that the police Special Demonstration Squad (SDS) spied on the family campaign of Stephen Lawrence - the black teenager who was murdered by a racist gang in south London in 1993 - a new police report admits that for at least 20 years police gathered intelligence on 18 more families who had justice campaigns for their loved ones, including Ricky Reel, Jean Charles de Menezes and Cherry Groce.

These 18 families are not the only ones. Several Hillsborough families are certain they were spied on. When it's happening on this scale over such a prolonged period it's hard to see it as anything other than an active policy.

The report's author, Chief Constable Mick Creedon, claims that the intelligence was not searched for, it was 'incidentally gathered' by officers infiltrating

other campaigns and then kept for no particular reason. This 'accident' happened to one campaign after another over a span of decades! Creedon acknowledges that this is an unlikely explanation, admitting it "must seem inexplicable".

Equally implausibly, he says that it appears the SDS were just amassing information and there is no solid documented evidence of sending infiltrators into the families.

However, much of the secret police's information was never written down. Moreover, a great deal of the material that did make it onto paper has been shredded. It leaves a simple question - why would the infiltrator unit be gathering information on people who weren't targets for infiltration?

The SDS whistleblower officer, Peter Francis, has described his infiltration of justice campaigns. After his revelations, police threat-

ened him with prosecution under the Official Secrets Act. Most of the information is not on paper, only in the minds of the people who did it. The truth can only come out if former officers are compelled to give evidence under oath without fear of self-incrimination.

From the Campaign Opposing Police Surveillance (COPS) statement.
[See campaignopposingpolicesurveillance.com/](http://www.campaignopposingpolicesurveillance.com/)

See also the Ricky Reel petition
www.change.org/PoliceSpying

●Justice campaigner Lois Austin adds: "The COPS campaign is gathering support for the demand that the forthcoming public inquiry needs to be fully public and involve all those spied on. We also want to know about the undercover units that currently exist."

What we saw



Bailiff busters!

on YouTube

200 people from around the country rallied in defence of cancer sufferer Tom Crawford who was threatened with eviction in a five year legal battle over his mortgage. The bailiffs were forced to leave empty-handed because they could not get past the picket.

Passport Office: PCS members strike for jobs and decent pay

Thousands of passport workers - members of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union - walked out on 28 July in a bid to end staffing shortages that have caused the ongoing backlog crisis. **DAVE REID** reports from the Newport Passport Office picket line.

There was a good mood as workers struck to demand additional staff to enable them to provide a decent service and for pay parity with other Home Office workers. Members of the public arriving to arrange their passports were overwhelmingly supportive and sympathetic to the strikers.

Since 2010, 700 jobs have been cut from the passport service, which has caused a massive backlog in passport applications. 300 jobs have been lost from the Newport office alone, but apart from the callous indifference of government ministers in cutting jobs from one of the most deprived cities in Europe, the sheer incompetence of Identity Service bosses in cutting so many jobs

has resulted in a backlog of 500,000 passports.

And Passport Office workers are underpaid by up to £3,000 a year compared to equivalent workers in the Home Office. Even Passport Office bosses admit the workers have a case but have to get approval from Chancellor George Osborne to increase funding to give the workers fair pay.

Considering passport workers make the government £56 million profit that should not be difficult, but the Tories will have to be forced to pay up by strike action.

Currently, passport workers are working six days a week to clear the backlog and to get a half decent pay packet.



On the Newport PCS picket line photo D Reid

Ben Rapier, PCS Newport branch chairman, said: "All the overtime our members are having to work is equivalent to 250 jobs. We are having to work to sort out a problem created by the employer's cuts to the workforce and the service.

Members of the public supported us on the picket line.

They were all aware of the backlog that the Passport Office has and we explained that it was caused by job cuts and they were very understanding."

Care UK They thought it was all over - well it isn't now!



photo A Tice

On 29 July, Doncaster Care UK workers, members of Unison, began another two weeks of strike action.

They have already taken 34 days of strike action between February and May against 35% pay cuts as a result of the privatisation of the Supported Living Service for Adults with Learning Difficulties.

Unison has declared a new industrial dispute in support of a pay claim including a 'living wage' for all Doncaster Care UK staff. The company have already declared no pay rise whatsoever for this year. Consultative and

formal ballots produced yes votes for strike action.

The Care UK workers have been a cause celebre to trade unionists. Their determination to overcome anti-union laws to continue their fight against 'Don't Care UK' bosses is inspirational.

To win this dispute, the strikers will need to convince new Care UK staff to join the union and join the action, and persuade Unison to launch a nationwide union recruitment drive of Care UK workers around a campaign for the living wage across the company.

Alistair Tice

The games that Glasgow Labour plays

Glasgow Socialist Party Scotland reporters

Trade union members in Glasgow's sports centres and museums have been in dispute with Glasgow Life, a company run by Glasgow City's Labour-led council, over payments for working during the Commonwealth Games.

Workers in Glasgow city council, other council-run companies and the city's transport companies, have been paid enhanced rates and/or specific payments for working more hours during the Games.

However, workers in the city's

Many workers have had shift changes forced on them without agreement

sports centres and museums are receiving only their basic pay rate for any additional hours they work. Many workers have also had shift changes forced on them without their agreement.

Glasgow's sports centre and museum workers are being treated as 'second class workers' compared to other public services workers in

the city.

On 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. Unison defeated a Glasgow city council bid to win a court order to block a Commonwealth Games pay protests - in workers' own time - at the city chambers.

The judge ruled that the council and Glasgow Life were wrong in their view that Unison members were acting outside the law. The protests went ahead.

Brian Smith, Unison's City of Glasgow branch secretary, said: "Glasgow Life workers want these games to succeed, just like everyone else. But these workers only earn an average of £16,500 a year. These are the people who are working hard to deliver the Commonwealth Games but can't afford tickets to go. They deserve fair treatment."

Interview with Brian Smith - www.citizen2014.net/2014/07/24/glasgow-life-protest-after-top-judge-rules-against-city-council/

For more socialist analysis from Scotland see www.socialistpartyscotland.org.uk

And now for something completely different... a barricaded cinema

James Ivens

Pickets at Ritzy Picturehouse in south London were faced by corrugated metal walls during their last strike. Management at the Brixton cinema erected barriers outside the live screening of sketch troupe Monty Python's reunion gig on Sunday 20 July.

Members of entertainment union Bectu, currently paid £7.53 an hour, have been campaigning for the London Living Wage. The last strike was their eleventh day of action to win the £8.80 rate.

Previously, Picturehouse management has habitually closed the cinema on strike days. The



photo Paul Mattsson

Python live stream marked the first time outside workers were brought in to break the strike. Reps organised a peaceful mass picket to disrupt the event.

Several ticket-holders reportedly handed back stubs and demanded refunds. Terry Jones, a surviving member of Monty Python, also urged his audience not to cross the picket line in a tweet.

One rep summed up management's attitude as "bitter and childish".

Bectu members have had success in using other strike days to build the union in nearby Picturehouse branches. Spreading the dispute would be a major step forward for the campaign. Workers have also called for a national boycott of Picturehouse.

In brief

Hands off Hove Park

On 16 July NUT members at Hove Park school took well-supported strike action against plans to change to academy status. This strike was just one of the three major successes for the Hands off Hove Park campaign on that day as the results of a parental ballot were confirmed as 71% against conversion and, in the evening, the results of an election of three governors was announced with all places going to anti-academy parents. Despite the clear and overwhelming opposition of parents, staff and pupils it is still possible the school will convert as the law does not require governors to actually listen to these vital stakeholders. A local Tory councillor who supports conversion made the mistake of suggesting to those on the picket line that the 71% No, on a 40% turnout, was not a majority of parents. He and the press were quickly presented with figures that showed he was elected by only 6.8% of potential voters in his ward!

Further strikes are likely in the run up to the decision meeting on 22 September as well as a final push from the parental campaign. So far no schools have voluntarily converted in Brighton since this government got in. All involved in the campaign recognise this is a fight not just for Hove Park but for the future of all schools in the city. **Phil Clarke, Brighton Socialist Party and NUT National Executive member**

Bexley pay cut

Unite has condemned proposals by Bexley council in south London to cut the pay of apprentices. The council's review of its apprentice arrangements will lead to level 2 apprentices receiving an increase taking pay up from £100 a week to £115 a week. However, at the same time, level 3 apprentice pay will be cut from £230 a week to £201 a week. Unite regional officer Onay Kasab commented: "Bexley council has given new meaning to taking with one hand and giving with the other. It's an appalling proposal that cuts a low rate of pay even lower. The government talks about recovery - it obviously does not apply in Bexley. If you want to get on and get a job, Bexley is now telling you to expect even lower pay"

Unison Bureaucracy Unmasked: The Defend the Four Story



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WW1

100 YEARS SINCE THE GREAT SLAUGHTER

TONY SAUNOIS, secretary of the Committee for a Workers' International (the world organisation to which the Socialist Party is affiliated), wrote the following article for our sister publication *Socialism Today*. See socialismtoday.org for the full version and more on World War One.

One hundred years ago World War One (WW1) began, unleashing slaughter on an unprecedented scale. It was dubbed the 'Great War', the 'war to end wars'. For the ten million killed and more than ten million seriously injured it was certainly not great. The battles fought saw some of the bloodiest human slaughter in history.

At Ypres, Belgium, the British army lost a staggering 13,000 men in three hours only to advance 100 yards! The first day of the Battle of the Somme took 60,000 casualties, the greatest loss ever suffered by the British army. This was in spite of the fact that in the preceding six days German lines had been hit by three million shells!

Total casualties in the Battle of the Somme were 1.1 million men on both sides. By 1918, the Entente powers (led by Britain, France, Russia and Italy) counted 5.4 million dead and seven million wounded. The opposing Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, the Ottoman empire and Bulgaria) suffered four million deaths, 8.3 million wounded. Young working class conscripts bore the brunt of these losses.

As subsequent conflicts have erupted, it is self-evident that it did not mean an end to war. In the current carnage in Syria,

6.5 million people have been internally displaced and a further three million driven into external exile. Human suffering and killing have been repeated again and again since this 'war to end war'.

'Midwife' to revolution

World War One ended one historical era, opened another, and reshaped international and class relations. In its wake, empires collapsed, some rapidly, while others took a slower, more inglorious decline. It opened the way for the USA to replace Britain as the world's leading imperialist power. Above all, it acted as the midwife to the greatest event in human history: the Russian revolution in 1917. There, the working class was able to take over the running of society. At the same time, a revolutionary wave engulfed most of Europe.

The prospect of a socialist revolution in a series of European countries was posed. In Germany 1918-19, the Kaiser was forced to abdicate as a workers' revolution swept the country. In Bavaria, a soviet republic was declared, and workers' councils established in Berlin and other cities. In Hungary, a soviet republic was briefly established between March and August 1919.

Mass strikes and over 50

recorded military/naval mutinies took place in Britain. A police strike in 1919 compelled then prime minister, David Lloyd George, to admit years later: "This country was nearer to Bolshevism that day than at any time since".

However, with the exception of the Russian revolution, these mass movements were ultimately defeated by the mistaken policies adopted by the workers' leaders. The defeat of the revolutions in Europe sowed the seeds of the second great global conflict, 1939-45, so that can also be traced to the legacy left by the carnage of 1914-18.

The approaching war in 1914 posed a decisive test for the international workers' movement. Excepting a tiny minority - including Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky and the Russian revolutionaries, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg in Germany, and a handful of others - the leadership of powerful mass workers' parties capitulated one after another. They abandoned an internationalist socialist anti-war position, and backed their respective ruling classes.

All capitalist apologists and commentators find great difficulty in justifying the war. They justify the conflict in 1939-45 as a war against fascism and for democracy. Not so, the mass slaughter of 1914-18.

The trigger for the carnage was the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June 1914. Yet could this really be the cause of such a global conflict? Although centred in Europe, the war drew in Africa, Asia, Latin America and, of course, the USA. While the shooting of the archduke may have been the excuse to unleash the dogs of war, the real underlying causes lay elsewhere. The war erupted as a massive struggle in defence of economic interests, markets and political power and prestige.

Economic slowdown

In the period up to 1914, Britain was the dominant global power with a vast empire covering 25% of the earth's surface. Most of the countries it ruled had been colonised prior to the mid-19th century. The empire was a source of both raw materials and markets.

But Britain's economic growth was slowing. It was a declining power. France, the other major European power at the time, had an empire mainly centred in Africa and the Far East. Although substantial, its empire was only about one fifth the size of Britain's, and its industrialisation lagged far behind.

Germany, only unified in 1871, had colonies only about one third

the size of those of France. Nonetheless, it had experienced rapid industrialisation and economic development. Its economy was more productive than Britain's. While Britain was producing six million tons of steel, Germany produced 12 million.

It was, however, in desperate need of more colonies to supply it with raw materials and much larger markets - the logic of capitalist economic development. The problem was how to secure them. There was nowhere to expand to in Europe, and Britain and France had the lion's share of the colonies. To the east, Germany was blocked by an expanding tsarist Russian empire and Anglo-French interests in eastern Europe.

This struggle for markets lay at the root of the great conflagration which was to erupt in 1914. The development of the productive forces - industry, science and technique - had outgrown the limitations imposed by the nation state. It drove the imperial powers to conquer and exploit new colonies in the hunt for raw materials and new markets. This had already brought Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal and Germany into conflict in the so-called 'scramble for Africa' during the 19th century.

Continued on pages 6 & 7

Continued from page 5

Eventually, this competitive struggle brought the main imperial powers into horrific conflict, as each tried to secure bigger markets or to defend those threatened by emerging powers. If new markets cannot be found, capitalism is driven to a destruction of value in order to begin the productive process anew. The price was to be paid by the working classes of all countries in this power struggle.

A victorious German imperialism would have been much better placed, economically, politically and strategically, to challenge British imperialist interests

Some argued that this contradiction of capitalism had been overcome when it seemed, like today, that a major globalisation of world economy had taken place. In the four decades following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71, there was a period of substantial economic growth and expansion. The world economy had become more interdependent. Between 1870 and 1914 a significant and, until then, unprecedented economic globalisation and integration took place.

In addition to the underlying cause of the 'great war' - the scramble for

colonies and markets - other interconnected historical factors played an important role in the drive to defend the interests of the ruling classes of Germany, France, Britain and tsarist Russia. The Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 resulted in the establishment of a unified Germany and opened the road to its rapid economic development and expansion. France was left weakened. The outcome of this conflict, along with others, left a legacy which was picked up in 1914.

Balkan war 1912

A weakened France lost part of its territory, Alsace-Lorraine, and was compelled to pay large war reparations to Germany. France was in no position to oppose Germany militarily by 1914, with half the population and far inferior military hardware. The Tangiers crisis in 1905 and the Agadir crisis in 1911 both pointed to a conflict with Germany as it continued to oppose French colonial expansion.

The outbreak of the Balkan war in 1912 was a crucial step towards the 1914-18 war. At this juncture it was anticipated that there was a threat of war across Europe. On 8 December 1912, the German Kaiser Wilhelm II convened the Imperial War Council in Berlin. Most of the participants agreed that war was inevitable at some stage, but it was delayed to allow a strengthening of the German navy. In fact, the end of the 19th century up until 1914 was marked by a massive arms build-up by all the European powers. Nothing was concluded at this council but it was clear that preparations for war

were in place.

It was also clear for the international workers' movement. In November 1912, over 500 delegates from the Second ('Socialist') International met in Basel. They agreed a resolution opposing the Balkan war and the threat of war across Europe in favour of international working class struggle. Scandalously, one by one the social-democratic party leaders capitulated and supported their own capitalist classes in the conflict.

Build up to war

The collapsing Austro-Hungarian empire was compelled to act against Serbian attempts to expand in the Balkans as allowing this to go unchallenged would have weakened it still further. The outbreak of the 1912 Balkan war was a crucial element in the conflict. Tsarist Russia lent support to Serbia in order to extend its own interests in the region. Germany was compelled to encourage Austria.

Thus, when Russia ordered a full military mobilisation in response to Austria-Hungary declaring war on Serbia on 28 July 1914, Germany responded by declaring war on Russia and France (1-3 August 1914). When Germany invaded Belgium in order to march on France, Britain declared war on Germany.

Economic expansion had dominated the 40 years leading up to the war. In 1913 strikes and protests had broken out in all the main countries as workers demanded their share of the growth. The German workers' party, the SPD, had made important gains in the elections of 1912.

An abrupt change, however, came in 1913 with the onset of an economic crisis. The ruling classes were worried that a further intensification of the class struggle would develop. The threat of war was used in all countries to try and cut across this.

The nationalist propaganda on each side inevitably resulted in a huge patriotic wave at the outbreak of the war. All governments claimed, as is always the case, that the war was a just cause and would be over quickly. In Germany, the slogan was, 'home before the leaves fall'; in Britain, 'it'll all be over by Christmas'.

Behind the scenes, the ruling class had a more realistic assessment of the situation. Sir Edward Grey, British foreign secretary, commented: "The lamps are going out all over Europe, we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime".

There were anti-war demonstrations in most countries. In Germany, hundreds of thousands took part in peace protests. Many 'conscientious objectors' heroically held out in opposition. However, the overwhelming mood at the outbreak of the war was one of patriotic fervor. Nonetheless the attitude to the conscientious objectors was markedly different in 1914-18 compared to 1939-45. Then, unlike in WW1, objectors were viewed as cowards, not prepared to fight when 'the enemy is at the gate'.

British imperialism could not willingly have stood aside from the conflict and allowed its main rival to emerge in a potentially far more powerful position to expand its empire. A victorious German imperialism would have been much better placed,



Women take up the work in armaments factories



...100 YEARS SINCE THE GREAT SLAUGHTER

The coming to power of the Bolsheviks ended the war on the eastern front and had a crucial impact in building opposition to the war on both sides. Following the revolution, mass strikes broke out in Germany in 1918

economically, politically and strategically, to challenge British imperialist interests.

Moreover, war has its own momentum and logic, and puts the prestige of capitalist and imperialist rulers on the line. This would have been lost by what was the dominant imperial power at the time. At best, not entering the war in 1914 would have postponed a conflict between British and German imperialism.

The patriotic wave gave way to massive opposition as the realities of trench warfare were experienced by millions on both sides of the conflict. Troops fraternised at Christmas 1914, playing unofficial football matches.

The Russian revolution of 1917 was the first decisive break as the slaughter dragged on. The coming to power of the Bolsheviks ended the war on the eastern front and had a crucial impact in building opposition to the war on both sides. Following the revolution, mass strikes broke out in Germany in 1918.

This, together with the now seemingly futile slaughter, had a decisive impact, transforming the outlook of millions, especially the soldiers and naval ratings. Mutinies broke out in the French and British armies.

In France, troops on the western front were ordered to begin a disastrous second Battle of the Aisne in northern France. They were promised a decisive

war-ending battle in 48 hours. The assault failed and the mood of the troops changed overnight. Nearly half of the French infantry divisions on the western front revolted, inspired by the Russian revolution. Three thousand four hundred soldiers faced court martial.

These events, above all the Russian revolution, were decisive in finally bringing an end to the, by then, hated war. Its ending ushered in a revolutionary wave across Europe which terrified the ruling classes. With the exception of Russia, however, these massive movements did not result in the working class taking power and holding it.

The end of the war brought a new world situation and changed the balance of power between the imperialist powers. The triumph of the Bolsheviks in Russia introduced an entirely new factor for the capitalist classes to confront. Germany was obliged, by the Treaty of Versailles, to pay massive war reparations following its defeat - £22 billion at the time - which had a devastating impact on its economy. The final instalment of £59 million was only paid in 2010 - 92 years after the end of the war!

The failure of the German revolution and mistaken policies of the German workers' parties paved the way for the triumph of the fascists and Hitler in 1933, leading to the outbreak of war again in

1939. The consequences of WW1 also accelerated the decline of British imperialism, opening the way for the USA in the 1920s and after to become the dominant imperialist power.

The failure of the socialist revolution in Germany and the rest of Europe also meant that revolutionary Russia was isolated. Eventually, that would result in the degeneration of the Russian revolution and the emergence of a bureaucratic Stalinist regime in the former Soviet Union.

Despite the monstrous distortion of socialism the soviet regime had become, together with the imposition of similar regimes in eastern Europe following World War Two, it did hold the key imperialist powers in check. They were glued together - and were able, largely, to mask their differences - against a common en-

Today, the collapse of these regimes and the re-establishment of capitalism have reopened the old and new tensions which exist between the capitalist powers

emy which represented an alternative social system to capitalism, based on a nationalised planned economy. This was in spite of the undemocratic, bureaucratic and authoritarian methods of rule of the Stalinist regimes.

Today, the collapse of these regimes and the re-establishment of capitalism have reopened the old and new tensions

which exist between the capitalist powers. The globalisation of the world economy, which has reached an unprecedented level - even more so than 1870-1914, has once again starkly revealed how, under capitalism, the productive forces have outgrown the existence of the nation states.

Nonetheless, the recent conflicts which have erupted between the world powers have shown that the nation state is still not obsolete. Each ruling class is vying to defend its own economic, political, military and strategic interests. The growing tensions between the USA and China in Asia, the crisis within the European Union, the 1990s conflict in the Balkans, and the current clash between Ukraine and Russia, are all indications of the friction between the various imperialist and capitalist powers. At root, these are also part of a struggle to acquire new spheres of influence and markets, as was reflected in the 1914-18 war.

Does this mean that another world war is a possibility? Although the USA remains dominant, it is a declining power, as Britain was in the beginning of the 20th century. Even so, it remains the largest of the world powers, still far ahead of China and Japan. The other emerging powers of Russia, India and Brazil remain far behind but strive to extend their influence in their own areas.

The weakened position of US imperialism has been clearly demonstrated recently by its inability to intervene directly in Syria or in the Russian/Ukraine conflict. The catastrophic consequences of the invasion of Iraq in 2003 have made it far more complicated for such military interventions to be undertaken by US and British imperialism, or other powers.

But the prospect of regional conflicts

The stark reality of the horrors of war, and the misery and human suffering which have flowed from the disasters unfolding in Syria, Iraq, Russia/Ukraine and other areas, indicate the bloody and brutal consequences of capitalism in the modern era

and wars is posed in this era of renewed capitalist crisis and the struggle for limited markets and resources. However, the balance of social and class forces prevents, in the short to medium term, the outbreak of a world war such as developed in 1914-18 and again in 1939-45. The consequences of such a conflict, with the existence of nuclear weapons which would mean total destruction, together with the ruling classes' fear of the social upheavals and revolution which would arise, act as a decisive check on the rulers of imperialism and capitalism today.

The stark reality of the horrors of war, and the misery and human suffering which have flowed from the disasters unfolding in Syria, Iraq, Russia/Ukraine and other areas, indicate the bloody and brutal consequences of capitalism in the modern era. If capitalism and imperialism are not defeated, further, even more horrific, conflicts will erupt in the future.

Lessons for today

The lessons of the 1914-18 slaughter need to be drawn by a new generation of young people and workers. The need for mass independent workers' parties which struggle for an internationalist socialist alternative to capitalism, and which combat the patriotic nationalism of the ruling classes, is as relevant today as it was in 1914 if future bloodbaths are to be avoided.

Only a socialist world, based on the democratic planning of the economy, can offer an alternative to the struggle for markets and economic interests which are the inevitable consequences of modern capitalism, and the source of conflict.

In August 1917, there was a mutiny aboard the German battleship Prinzregent Luitpold, stationed in the northern sea port of Wilhelmshaven. 400 sailors went ashore and joined a protest demanding an end to the war. The Independent newspaper recently published a moving letter sent by a young German naval rating, Albin Kobis, to his parents: "I have been sentenced to death today, 11 September, 1917. Only myself and another comrade; the others have been let off with 15 years' imprisonment... I am a sacrifice of the longing for peace, others are going to follow... I don't like dying so young, but I will die with a curse on the German militarist state". On 3 November 1918, the fleet mutinied at Kiel and hoisted the red flag, triggering a revolutionary wave across Germany

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Obituary: Dave Boyes



Dave on a lobby in support of anti-cuts councillor Keith Morrell

We have to share the very sad news that Dave Boyes passed away on 17 July after his prolonged battle with illness.

Dave had retired recently from a lifetime in the construction industry. An active member of the Ucat construction union, he joined the demonstrations against blacklisting of workers. He was an enthusiastic advocate for the National Shop Stewards Network, attending conferences, rallies and meetings when he could.

Dave was from the small village of Warnford in Hampshire. He was won to the ideas of socialism at a young age, especially influenced by the events of the Cuban revolution. As a Labour party member, Dave sought out the ideas of scientific socialism.

He was an avid reader, especially of Rosa Luxemburg. On an early visit to Dave's home he showed me his battered copy of Capital, full of notes and marks where he had highlighted important extracts. He told me he would read two pages every day before he left for work so he could digest all the ideas it contained.

Like many Labour Party members, it became clear to Dave that the party had abandoned the working class and any support it had for socialist ideas. Dave finally met Socialist Party members at a demonstration we held against

the cuts in Winchester.

When I first went to meet him, I was grilled about what we meant by socialism. Dave was not for "shilly-shallying reformism" and wanted assurances that we stood by the need to transform society and establish a socialist economy.

Passion and enthusiasm

Convinced to join, Dave rapidly took on every job he could - organising campaign stalls, selling the Socialist paper and raising funds, supporting picket lines, standing for the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition in the local elections and taking on the job of Hampshire Socialist Party branch secretary.

He brought his warmth, passion and enthusiasm to everything he did. Notably he had an unstinting boldness to recruit to the Socialist Party and was very successful at winning trade unionists and young people to the party.

His combination of experience, passion and confidence in socialist ideas and the working class made him an excellent advocate for our party. For all that he will be greatly missed. In the short time we all knew him, it felt like he had been our comrade forever.

Our thoughts and best wishes are with his many friends and family.

Nick Chaffey

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Remembering class fighters at Tolpuddle

Trade unionists from across the South of England met on 20 July to remember the brave struggle of the Tolpuddle martyrs.

This year's rally marked the loss of two great stalwarts of the labour and trade union movement, Bob Crow and Tony Benn. Bob Crow's death was marked by flags and banners and a large contingent from the transport union RMT, of which Bob was general secretary.

The Labour MPs who spoke met only a pale shade of applause. A large audience listened to Owen Jones deliver a speech attacking the bosses' links with New Labour. There was no mention that the present Labour leadership plans to continue with austerity.

At question time, Daren Ireland, from the RMT, raised the need to support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition, and to build a new workers' party. Katrine Williams, from PCS Wales, posed the need to campaign for a £10 an hour minimum wage.

PCS vice-president John McNally's speech warned the movement of bitter struggle ahead. He spoke of the necessity of joint coordinated trade union action against austerity and the need to build a political alternative.

Socialist Party members cam-



Bob Crow and Tony Benn

aigned for a £10 an hour minimum wage.

Sean Brogan
Exeter Socialist Party

As a first time attendee to the festival I helped out with the BFAWU (bakers' food and allied workers union) stall campaigning for the Fast Food Rights campaign.

People took many leaflets to pass

to friends and family working in the fast food industry.

There was great enthusiasm for the initiative - to do as Tolpuddle's martyrs did and fight for proper representation for a new generation of workers in the industry with real trade union rights, proper contracts and proper pay.

Josh Asker
Southampton Socialist Party

Education for theory and practice

Waltham Forest Socialist Party reading group meets on Wednesday evenings. As a new member of the reading group, I have already found that the reading and discussion has been useful, not only for developing my theoretical understanding, but also for the practice of spreading revolutionary ideas.

For instance, our most recent discussion was on the Branch Organisers' Pack - a short guide to the structure of the party, its aims and organisation and the goals that each comrade should set for themselves. Having participated in stalls and paper sales in the past, this document clarified things that I have learnt through these experiences as well as giving me new advice for future campaigns.

It served as a useful reminder, particularly for the newer members such as myself, of the importance



Amanda and other Waltham Forest Socialist Party members at the reading group photo Sarah Wrack

of each member taking on a role in their branch while ensuring that we

aim to meet possible new Socialist Party members on every activity.

The two previous groups covered The Transitional Programme by Trotsky and The Communist Manifesto by Marx and Engels.

The discussions highlighted the ways in which both of these texts are relevant for the Socialist Party and its international sister organisations today.

For example, we discussed how the transitional method has been used in the campaign for a \$15 an hour minimum wage in the US, led by co-thinkers of the Socialist Party there, Socialist Alternative.

Amanda Kumaraiah

Before our branch meeting on 21 July, two members of the Leeds Socialist Party decided to sell the Socialist outside Leeds City bus station and city centre train station. We sold seven papers.

At the bus station two security guards politely asked us to move on. Soon we got into a discussion on their work and how much they get paid (only just covering their bills every month, with little money for anything else).

A taxi driver who was a member of the

union Unite bought a copy while he was waiting in queuing traffic. One worker said: "I work 40 hours a week and have holes in my shoes" as she wearily walked to the bus.

The Socialist, and those who sell it, give people the confidence that we can fight back against such cruel living conditions. People often left after our conversations with a smile replacing a grimace as they rushed to or from work.

Ben Mayor

SOCIALIST PARTY FIGHTING FUND

	£ received	£ target	July-September 2014	Deadline 29 September 2014
Northern	345	600	■	■
North West	620	1,200	■	■
London	2,247	6,100	■	■
East Midlands	446	1,600	■	■
Southern	202	1,200	■	■
Eastern	194	1,200	■	■
Wales	347	2,300	■	■
Yorkshire	418	2,900	■	■
West Midlands	250	2,100	■	■
South West	154	1,400	■	■
South East	34	750	■	■
England & Wales	32	3,650	■	■
TOTAL	5,290	24,400	■	■

Student loan sell-off plan scrapped

Mary Finch

In the latest government u-turn, Vince Cable, Lib Dem Business Secretary, announced that the student loan sell-off is to be scrapped. Cable told a conference of Lib Dems that the plans don't make financial sense - selling the loan book to private companies would result in the government getting a lump sum payment, rather than its steady trickle of income under the current system.

This shows the ideological nature of the sell-off. Osborne and the Tories, who strongly advocated a sell-off, have acted purely in the interests of their big business friends. By raising interest rates and lowering the minimum earnings threshold for repayment, the private buyers would be set to make huge profits - by exploiting students.

From the moment these plans were leaked in June 2013 it's been obvious they make no financial sense - why are Cable and the Lib Dems only now opposing the privatisation?

The general election is only ten months away. The Lib Dems want to look like the party that stands up for education. Their track record says otherwise, though. In 2010, their MPs were elected after opposing the tripling of tuition fees. Then, as soon as they were safely in government,

they smashed those promises.

As for Labour, they are the party that introduced tuition fees and then tripled them to £3,000. None of the three main parties will stand up for education, or for students.

What student protests there have been against the sell-off have no doubt played some role, but the movement has been relatively small compared to what it could have been if the National Union of Students (NUS) had taken a clear lead.

When they called national demonstrations in 2010 against the tripling of tuition fees, 50,000 students marched on parliament. The role they could potentially play as organisers and leaders of a student movement is clear, but the NUS's right-wing Labour leadership refuses to fulfil this role.

They're afraid of the direction such a movement could take. After witnessing the determination and

anger of the 2010 demonstrations, they condemned them, and called no further action. They're afraid they will lose control; and that students

will call the NUS leadership, and all the establishment parties, to account.

As socialists, we must fight to reclaim our student union. The election of Socialist Students member Edmund Schluessel to the NUS NEC (National Executive Council) both last year and this year has given a national platform for socialist ideas.

The three main parties have no interest in fighting for ordinary students and will do everything in their power to make sure that gains made aren't permanent. We need a party that will stand up for us!

But students can't do it alone - the power to change society lies, ultimately, in the hands of the working class. The NUS needs to link up with the trade unions, to unite the struggles of students and workers, and fight for the creation of a new mass workers' party that acts in the interests of the masses, not the bosses.

● As we go to press Tory education-slayer David Willetts is promoting the idea that universities should buy up the debt... "That way madness lies" and the only response is to step up the fightback.



Solidarity with Birmingham student occupiers

Students at the University of Birmingham have occupied a building to protest against the recent suspensions of two students for taking part in previous sit-ins.

The original wave of protests centred on the demand for an end to cuts and a living wage for staff. University management responded by spending over £60,000 on getting a legal injunction against protests on campus - enough to pay the living wage in the first place!

Denied the right to legal or union representation in their disciplinary hearings, the two suspended students (plus one other given a final warning) were singled out purely for having taken part in previous occupations and being filmed speaking at the most recent ones.

The measures that university management have taken to suppress peaceful protest must be fought to show that they will not be successful in scaring students from taking action against cuts and privatisation.

Nick Hart
Birmingham Socialist Party



London

Tens of thousands of people marched through London on Saturday 27 July from the Israeli embassy to Parliament Square, angry at the continued onslaught by the Israeli state on Gaza. Socialist Party placards with the slogan "Stop Israeli state terror" were eagerly snatched out of our hands (often in return for a donation) and were prominent.

Demonstrators were looking for a solution to the situation and were very keen to discuss our ideas with

us, particularly our call for mass democratic struggle in Palestine to fight for genuine national liberation, and within Israel to challenge the government. Mass independent workers' organisations in Palestine and Israel are also needed. Many were encouraged to hear about some of the protests within Israel against the onslaught on Gaza, and how protest movements involving both Israeli Jews and Palestinians in housing and workplace rights had been growing over the last few years. Donations of over £400 show that our participation and contribution was appreciated.

Chris Newby



people buying the Socialist over the last few days, it was clear that there is an interest in socialist ideas.

Matt Dobson

Scotland

Over 4,000 demonstrated in Glasgow on 19 July, 2,500 in Edinburgh on 26 July, and 1,000 gathered on 27 July outside BBC Scotland against the slaughter in Gaza and the BBC's biased coverage. All the demonstrations were youthful and extremely lively. In Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders police tried to stop people marching but were forced back, with demonstrators holding up traffic on Princes Street and occupying Charlotte Square. With 150

Hull

Over 300 people protested in Hull's Victoria Square on 19 July. Speakers included Nadia Ibrahim a Palestinian student at Hull University. When she attempts to contact her family in Gaza, if she cannot get a telephone connection she worries. Gill Kennett and Dean Kirk, Independent Labour councillors, condemned David Cameron's support for the Netanyahu Israeli

government.

Phil Culshaw brought solidarity from the Socialist Party, the Committee for a Workers' International and the Socialist Struggle Movement in Israel-Palestine who are fighting to end the bombing and blockade of Gaza. Socialist Party leaflets were all eagerly taken and 14 people bought Socialist papers to read more of our analysis and programme.

The rally then marched through the city centre, growing to over 400 before stopping outside the BBC building to the repeated chants of "BBC tell the truth".

Paul Spooner
Hull Socialist Party

Lincoln

More than 50 people took part in a protest which was called following a Socialist Party public meeting in Lincolnshire last Thursday.

Participants came from Lincoln's Muslim population and from Unison, PCS and RMT. The open mic speakers included a 13 year-old girl, who made a series of impassioned speeches about the bloodshed in the Gaza Strip.



Nick Parker, secretary of the Socialist Party's Lincolnshire branch, said: "Our protest sends a message today that ordinary people in Lincoln do not support the shameful slaughter of innocent Palestinian civilians and children and the occupation and siege of Gaza."

Lincoln Socialist Party



Miliband needs

a makeover...

Nancy Taaffe

Labour leader Ed Miliband doesn't have an image problem, he has a policy problem. The problem is he doesn't have any, or at least policies that answer the gravity of the situation.

Millions of people suffer as inflation outstrips wages. The cost of food, transport, fuel and housing skyrocket. A million people have visited food banks. This is not only a joyless recovery, for the vast majority of people it's a moneyless one. A smirking George Osborne may don a hi-vis jacket and march through building sites in Northern England to boast of recovery. But when the camera pans to workers

on the streets, people tell a different story. Millions are not feeling this recovery.

Right now a workers' leader with some understanding of 'Main Street' could easily 'connect' if they had the right policies. It wouldn't matter if he dribbled tomato sauce down his face while eating a bacon sandwich, cocked his head to one side like a cockatoo or even smiled like Wallace after a Wensleydale sandwich, if he represented a party whose ideas chimed with what millions of people



were feeling and offered a way forward.

In 2010 Labour agreed with the shock therapy of austerity and still do. As cuts to the sick and disabled were at their height

Labour said they would be tougher on welfare than the Tories. They have not led on the drive to raise the minimum wage or to cancel student debt or even come out in support of any workers on strike, not the firefighters nor tubeworkers nor the million public sector workers who struck on 10 July for fair pay.

It is the job of the workers' movement and workers' leaders to fight for our share in the recovery and to argue that we, the working class, the wealth creators, should run the economy in the interests of all.

The workers' movement has had many leaders who were no oil paintings, who failed to move with the grace of a gazelle yet they were loved and admired by millions. That was because they stubbornly fought for workers' gains. No amount of hostile propaganda or unflattering photo ops could remove these sentiments.

Miliband could learn much from these socialist leaders who remained true to their socialist ideals. But he won't. He's paying 80 grand to an image consultant instead!

See www.tusc.org.uk

...of his party

and his politics

Southampton: Channel 4's Immigration Street condemned



Phillip Sneider

In a meeting pulsating with anger, about 150 people from Newtown and Northam in Southampton discussed the idea of 'Immigration Street', the sequel to Channel 4's 'Benefit Street'. Within 20 minutes, an organised boycott of the show was agreed.

Benefit Street vilified benefit claimants as 'scroungers' rather than the product of the deepest post-war recession. It amplified the establishment's attempts to divide working class communities between those working and the unemployed and to undermine working class solidarity and resistance to the cuts.

The area has a strong sense of community and solidarity, with a recent campaign against the clo-

sure of Graham Road Youth Centre and the Veni playground. It is hardly surprising then that Immigration Street should meet hostility here.

Local people rightly fear attempts to whip up racism and anti-immigrant sentiment and are determined to challenge Channel 4 and defend their community. This community has long established Irish, Afro-Caribbean, Hindu and Sikh communities as well as more recent arrivals from Somalia and Eastern Europe.

Constant calls of 'we need to shut them down!' were applauded throughout. The meeting then agreed to have a poster and window bill campaign. But this would not satisfy the community who clearly wanted a more militant approach to the programme.

The production team had already been filming for 12 weeks without

community consent and used this to get the series commissioned. When the 'Love Production' man finally came out, he looked very pale and shaky.

Several community eyewitnesses said the production crew had targeted vulnerable people in the area using services. One irate local person said the team had been filming as a man was sectioned under the mental health act while on the street.

However, the community's esteem for the producer was already so low that this disgusting detail couldn't make it any lower. Many people asked the producer not to come back but he said it wasn't within his power to decide.

The meeting ended with an anti-Immigration Street poster held in front of the producer being photographed by dozens of people.

Rugby League Have Featherstone fans got their club back?

Michael Griffiths and Simon Barraclough

"It will all end in tears," some Featherstone Rovers Rugby League football club supporters said when news broke of major new investors and signings at the club. Months later, majority "B" shareholder Feisal Nahaboo and chief executive Craig Poskitt walked away from the club.

Featherstone, a small ex-mining community, is proud of its professional rugby league team. The smallest town in Britain to have one, Rovers won the game's biggest prize, the challenge cup, at Wembley stadium three times. It produces local youngsters and causes upsets against more fashionable clubs.

At a packed fans forum after Feisal and Craig's departure, Rovers chairman Mark Campbell reported concerns about apparent inaccurate financial information being presented by the finance director and Feisal's attempt to take over an elected board. The fallout led to legal threats and then Feisal's departure.

Fans raised questions on the

club's financial plight after the departure of the majority shareholder. Feisal's shares are owned by Probiz Excellence Limited. Probiz (and its sister companies) offer "a range of added-value solutions for business owners and individuals from general accountancy to business advisory services to wealth management opportunities," says its website.

Despite threats of winding up orders, however, the club is not on the verge of financial collapse. The chairman stressed that the club does not have to buy back the shares Probiz acquired. Campbell also pointed out that all full and part time player contracts already signed will be honoured.

Campbell's answers seemed to reassure fans. The club is a limited company but many major decisions are still in the fans' control, who can own one "A" share each. The fans control the land the club owns and elects representatives onto the board.

And although Featherstone Rovers may not have the money to make the club a force in the game again, we've been through hard times before and will again pull through by our own efforts together.



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

Capitalism has created a world in which just 85 people have as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity. While the rich get richer we are made to pay for a crisis of their system. The bosses and their politicians heap austerity upon our heads. This has not gone unchallenged. 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 weekend of discussion and debate will take place on 8 and 9 November in London. It will involve socialists, trade unionists and anti-cuts activists from Britain and across the world.

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

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

KSHAMA SAWANT

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



Housing under attack: build the resistance

Reinstate Bryan Kennedy Housing workers fight back

Bryan Kennedy, victimised Unite union rep at One Housing Group (OHG), was sacked by letter on 17 June having been suspended by his employer back in February. The Unite housing branch has rallied behind him, took strike action to demand the lifting of his suspension, and is now campaigning for his reinstatement.

Bryan spoke to the Socialist about his sacking:



'I'm Bryan' picket line photo Rob Williams

“ They [OHG] had a raft of allegations at the beginning, some of which were total nonsense - bullying, coercion, fraud, etc, for which there was no evidence.

I had an investigation meeting - six hours, no break, 178 questions! You'd get a better deal from the police!

They went through every email, every bit of paper in the office. After going through all of that, all the slanderous allegations, they've ended up with: 'leaving papers on my desk', 'not signing enough health and safety forms', and 'inflating people's performance scores' as I'm a key manager.

There's also the catch-all one they use for union reps in particular - 'breach of trust and confidence'.

They've got form on this sort of thing before. In 2009 they took over a big swathe of council properties in Tower Hamlets and they quite publicly sacked a Unison rep.

Another Unison rep was sacked last year - one of the charges against him was 'papers on his desk'."

What is the background to your sacking?

"I first became a rep in March 2012. In April, they announced pay cuts for 300 staff.

I had worked in my post for ten years. I had studied the accounts in detail. I knew that they were making quite a healthy surplus. I made a very basic economic argument - the money was there.

Even with only 30 members, we managed to trigger a delay to the pay cut and the argument was effective.

We went out for eleven days of strike action. The union was growing, people were enjoying the idea of taking action. OHG came up with some proper money.

This was a process that started in April 2012 - we concluded in November 2013. They claimed it has cost them £2.3 million more than

they expected to pay.

OHG do not like any independent voice within the organisation that they do not control - that can be a union rep or a tenants' organisation.

We protested outside the headquarters on 23 April. We protested outside the staff conference in May. We called strike days, 6-9 June.

I was getting some very shirty emails saying 'we don't like what the union is circulating'. They wanted the union to stop saying the suspension was union related. If you look at the hundreds of pages - I've never seen a disciplinary process like it, all sorts of crazy allegations - the union is mentioned all the way through it. Some things like petitions and other things that I've had no involvement in are included in the claims. They gave the game away. It's all union related. There was an absolute change of attitude with the pay dispute.

Hackney tenants get organised

Lindsey Garrett from the New Era Estate in Hoxton spoke to Brian Debus from Hackney Socialist Party. Hackney rents and property prices have been among the fastest growing in the country. In the last year New Era rents have been increased by over £100 a month. The super-rich Tory landlord's clear intention is to drive out the existing tenants and to make massive profits at their expense. Lindsey explains how the tenants are organising:

“ The current proposals are to build an extra two floors on top of the existing blocks. This depends on Benyon Estates getting planning permission this October/November.

Owner Richard Benyon just happens to be Britain's richest Tory MP with a home bigger than the 90 flats on the New Era estate. They are also planning to put the rents up to the so called market value by 2016. This would mean increasing the rents to £500/£600 a week, four times the current level.

Tenants are furious and disgusted by these proposals. Generations of families have lived here. One lady has lived here over 70 years since the estate was built in the 1930s. We have now established a tenants' organisation with officers and a rep in each block to coordinate our activities.

We have had lots of media interest and support from trade unions, Focus 15, DIGS and other groups. We



are planning to start publicly petitioning from this Saturday in Hoxton Market. We are also going to hold regular monthly meetings of tenants. We are planning to hold protests locally and more widely. We have established a Facebook page, 'New Era 4 All'.

We want to spread our campaign to draw on as much support as possible, and link this to the issue of affordable rents for all. We all want the right to live where we are with our friends and family and not face evictions or extortionate rents.

Even Jonathon Portes from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research says: "Subsidising construction is likely to be better than subsidising consumption through rents". The only answer to these profiteering landlords is rent controls and a mass council house-building programme of hundreds of thousands of new homes to be built every year to house the homeless and knock the profit out of homes. Sound impossible? In the 1950s local authorities built as many as 245,000 units a year. In the 21st century as few as 130 council houses have been built each year, with both Labour and Con-Dem governments guilty.

Who can 'afford' that?

- Con-Dems cut annual public subsidy for building affordable housing from £3bn to £450m
- The definition of 'affordable' rent was set at 80% of local market rent
- This, and chronic low pay, leaves almost 3/4 of 'affordable' rent tenants forced to claim housing benefit. Since 2010 the HB bill has increased by a fifth as wages stagnate and rents skyrocket. Housing Associations are receiving £8.8bn a year in HB, up 28% since 2010.

Figures: FT

Because the bills keep coming and the rent won't wait!

£10/HR NOW!



Minimum wage activists from the US and Britain at the National Shop Stewards Network conference photo Senan

Claire Laker-Mansfield

'Because the bills keep coming and the rent won't wait.' This slogan, a version of which was used by Seattle's victorious \$15Now campaign, makes the case for raising the minimum wage devastatingly clear.

In Seattle, big business funded politicians argued that multi-billion dollar companies 'couldn't afford' higher wages. But for workers, not affording things means the gas cut off, an eviction notice through the letterbox or a knock at the door from a bailiff. So when McDonalds' CEO says his company is feeling the squeeze, we know to take it with a pinch of salt.

Back in Britain, the economic recovery is apparently now in full swing. More than six years after the financial crash, national GDP is finally back where it was in 2007. But any expected fanfare greeting this news has been muted.

Tory Chancellor George Osborne was at pains to explain that the tough times are here to stay. His caution is an indication of something even the most out-of-touch politician understands: with never-ending austerity and ever-shrinking wage packets - there's no recovery for us.

Organise!

Any recovery ordinary workers do experience will have to be fought for. Just like in Seattle, where a mass grassroots campaign - combined with the election of Socialist Alternative's (co-thinkers of the Socialist Party in the US) city councillor, Kshama Sawant - succeeded in defeating big business, the Socialist Party says that here too, we will have to organise if we want a better deal.

Inspired by the success workers have had in the US, the campaign to raise the minimum wage here is getting underway. The call for £10 an hour has won the backing of large numbers of trade unionists, low-paid workers and campaigners.

The Bakers' Food and Allied Workers' Union (BFAWU) - who initiated the Fast Food Rights campaign - were the first union to back a call for £10. Since then, the GMB has got behind the fight. Youth Fight for Jobs and the National Shop Stewards Network are proudly working alongside these unions with the aim of building the kind of movement capable of winning a minimum wage workers can hope to live on.

To those who argue that this minimum wage rise would be 'too much too soon', we will ask why there was no such outcry when the average rent deposit rose by over 50% in the last seven years. When multinationals plead poverty, we will demand they open their books to show us where their money really goes.

And when politicians tell us that these difficult times mean workers must be prepared to put up with less, we'll have a simple answer: The bills keep coming and the rent won't wait.

What we stand for

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

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

The Socialist Party is part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), a socialist international that organises in over 40 countries.

Our demands include:

PUBLIC SERVICES

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

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

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

WORK AND INCOME

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

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

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

ENVIRONMENT

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

RIGHTS

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

NEW WORKERS' PARTY

- For a new mass workers' party drawing together workers, young people and activists from workplace, community, environmental and anti-war campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the pro-big business parties.
- Trade unions to disaffiliate from the Labour Party now and aid the building of a new workers' party! Support the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition as an important step towards this.

SOCIALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

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