Tory MP claims he can’t live on £300k

WE CAN’T LIVE ON POVERTY PAY!

Demonstrate:
NSSN rally and lobby of the TUC Congress: ‘Keep striking together for a pay rise’

Speakers include Mark Serwotka, PCS general secretary
2pm, Sunday 7 September in Liverpool
Jurys Hotel, opposite Echo Arena Conference Centre in Albert Dock
See www.shopstewards.net for more - email info@shopstewards.net

We need a £10 an hour minimum wage! photo Senan

Claire Job
Swansea Socialist Party

Tory MP Mark Simmonds recently announced he was leaving parliament. He claims that his MP’s wage and expenses don’t give him the life he aspires to for himself and his family. Well join the club, Mr Simmonds! Your government’s policies and actions over the last four years have made every family I know feel the same way - and with far greater cause. Simmonds gets no sympathy from me. I’m a nurse and he does not spare public sector workers a second thought.

Simmonds and his wife (working as his assistant) have a combined yearly wage of £115,000. He can claim an additional £27,875 in accommodation expenses. In 2013 he reportedly claimed £173,000 in expenses. Simmonds, however, thinks this income represented too great a “sacrifice” on his part to work in public office.

What does this man know about ‘sacrifice’ for his family? This career politician is far removed from the rest of us - he knows nothing of the sacrifice ordinary people make every day.

Worse still, while Mr Simmonds is concerned about ‘feathering his nest’ he makes sure that others in London lose their nests. The money he takes from taxpayers to house him in London, money that he claims is not enough, is actually £2,000 more than the benefit cap that he vocally supports! This cap is responsible for driving Londoners with no prospect of work out of their homes and communities.

Simmonds aspires to be one of the top 1% with privilege and riches. The rest of us wish for a job, a living wage, a home that is safe, education and health for our families and enough money to relegiate the atrocious concept of ‘food banks’ to history.

NHS
His party in government has denied 79% of nurses a pay rise over the next two years. That’s after four years of below-inflation pay rises which resulted in a 10% pay cut in real terms.

The Tories are demolishing the health service but NHS workers are working harder than ever against the odds to deliver services and safe patient care. That’s why Unison is balistig health workers over strike action: if approved, health workers will be on strike in October. We have no choice but to take this action to defend pay and conditions being devastated by Simmonds and his friends.

These politicians know nothing of the life we lead as a result of decisions they make. Their policies are making the gap between those who have and those who don’t have, wider than ever before.

We need to replace all the ‘Mark Simmondses’ in parliament with workers’ representatives paid workers’ wages, who will fight for a socialist society run for people’s needs.
Scotland independence vote: Socialist policies needed to answer Project Fear

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 has 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.

Anger at the pro-rich policies of the main parties grows by the day, as does the idea of a new workers’ party.

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 Eurozone, with savage austerity budgets inflicted on member states. The consequences of this economic torture for Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal etc have been catastrophic.

In contrast, a socialist government would carry through 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 on foreign trade, it would be possible to use the vast wealth of capitalism to break with the austerity practices of the Bank of England, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund and invest in jobs, a living wage and the rebulding 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 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 and established as an independent Scotland, it would be possible to use the vast wealth of capitalism to break with the austerity practices of the Bank of England, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund and invest in jobs, a living wage and the rebulding of public services in an independent socialist Scotland.

This would increase public spending by £2 billion in 2017-18. However, the Scottish parliament’s budget will have been cut £6.7 billion by then. A reversal of the cuts under SNP plans for independence is ruled out.

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.”

Public ownership

The SNP’s lack of a decisive break from capitalist policies and austerity is weakening support for a Yes vote. None more so than promises to slash taxes for big business under independence, including the vastly profitable North Sea Oil industry. In contrast there is huge 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 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.

Alongside Tommy Sheridan and others, Socialist Party Scotland has 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 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.

Central to building such a party will be standable implications for the maximum unity of the working class across Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland. We oppose any attempts to divide the workers’ movement on national lines.

A Scottish society as part of a genuine, voluntary and democratic socialist federation with England Wales and Ireland – and as a step towards a socialist Europe - is the only way to end the nightmare of austerity, cuts and capitalism once and for all.

This article was first published on 11 August 2014 as an editorial from the Socialist, the paper of Socialist Party Scotland.
Scandal of underfunded mental health services

A NHS mental health worker

The shocking death of actor Robin Williams starkly highlights the fact that depression is a dangerous and life threatening clinical condition. In 2013, 5,900 clinically depressed people took their own lives. This contrasts with 1,700 people killed in road accidents in the same year. Of these suicides, 76% were men.

Mental health services have long been the poor relation when it comes to NHS funding. Even between 1998 and 1999 when the overall spending in the NHS was growing, spending on mental health fell.

Tory health secretary Jeremy Hunt has pledged 'parity of esteem' between mental health and physical health services. However, while 65% of people with psychosis are getting treatment, sufferers can wait for up to two years for access services as a direct comparison, in the physical health sector, 90% of patients get treatment and wait 18 weeks.

Health and cuts

In addition, the range of NHS treatments available to mental health patients is diminishing. Long term Psychodynamic Psychotherapy is increasingly being cut out of the NHS but is widely available private-ly. But at more than £30 a session it is increasingly difficult to get on the NHS but is widely available private-ly. But at more than £30 a session it is increasingly difficult to get on the NHS but is widely available private-ly. But at more than £30 a session it is increasingly difficult to get on the NHS but is widely available private-ly. But at more than £30 a session it is increasingly difficult to get on the NHS but is widely available private-ly. But at more than £30 a session it is increasingly difficult to get on the NHS but is widely available private-ly. But at more than £30 a session it is increasingly difficult to get on the NHS but is widely available private-ly. But at more than £30 a session it is increasingly difficult to get on the NHS but is widely available private-

According to the OECD, a high stress and long-hours work culture in the UK has led to a higher level of people out of work with mental health problems than any other advanced capitalist country. According to the OECD, a high stress and long-hours work culture in the UK has led to a higher level of people out of work with mental health problems than any other advanced capitalist country. According to the OECD, a high stress and long-hours work culture in the UK has led to a higher level of people out of work with mental health problems than any other advanced capitalist country. According to the OECD, a high stress and long-hours work culture in the UK has led to a higher level of people out of work with mental health problems than any other advanced capitalist country. According to the OECD, a high stress and long-hours work culture in the UK has led to a higher level of people out of work with mental health problems than any other advanced capitalist country.

Many more of our patients are be- ing forced into insecure, substand- ard housing in the private sector as the availability of council flats has been depleted. Cuts to benefit pay- ments increase stress which exacer- bates mental illness.

Evidence shows that sustained or chronic stress, in particular, leads to elevated hormones such as cortisol, the "stress hormone" and reduced sensitivity and other neurons in the brain, which has been linked to depression.

Those patients who may recover sufficiently to consider employment face the frustration of being expect- ed to work for free in volunteering roles or to take low paid work.

Mental illness strikes all people from every social class. However, the experiences of our patients sug- gests that increasingly limited ac- cess to the material basics, imposed on working class people in particu- lar, impede recovery and increase relapse rates.

In December 2005 the social work magazine, Community Care, re- ported that black and ethnic minor- ity groups are over-represented in mental health services and that they are more likely to experience sexism and physical restraint. This is a damaging indictment on the way so- cial workers work with people with psychosis.

Effectively dealing with mental illness means additional investment in mental health services and stop- ping the creep of the 'one size fits all approach' in treatment provision. It also involves taking steps to ad- dress the poverty and inequality at the root of much ill health. -...the more equally wealth is distributed the better the health of that society" ('The Spirit Level' - Wilkinson and Pickett 2010).
Care UK workers to strike for three more weeks

Alister Tice

“We’re Yorkshire folk, we’re like a dog with a bone. We won’t give up, we’ll never surrender!”

This is how Doncaster Care UK shop steward Roger Hurt expressed the sheer working-class determination of the 50 Union members at the meeting after the recent two week strike.

The union won 48 days of action in their battle against 35% cuts in terms and conditions as a result of the privatisation of Supported Living Services for Adults with Learning Difficulties.

These former NHS staff have voted unanimously to strike for another three weeks, starting 7am on Monday 25 August.

Just as 30 years ago miners fought for a year to try to save the coal industry, now Doncaster Care UK workers, including some ex-miners, see their fight as primarily about saving the NHS from cuts and privatisation.

Their confidence has been boosted by coverage from the Observer, including a front page and special reports on the dispute and the role of private equity companies in care.

Care UK’s revenues yet they have not paid a penny in corporation tax since being bought by Bridgepoint in 2010. Huge profits get hidden through accounting methods.

Privatisation crusade

In 1993, the private sector provided only 5% of state funded domiciliary services, that figure had risen to 89% by 2012.

Companies like Care UK make these profits by slashing wages and conditions, and by cutting standards of training and care.

It is estimated that 150,000 care workers are paid less than the minimum wage and 307,000 are on zero hour contracts. That’s why the Doncaster Care UK workers’ strike is so important.

If they win a substantial pay rise and the Living Wage for new staff in Doncaster, thousands of care work

ers could be inspired to join a union and fight for a decent living wage.

Unison must seize this opportunity by declaring war on Care UK across the country and mobilising resources to back the strikers.

Likewise trade unionists and socialists in every city and town should prepare now to answer the strikers’ call for pickets and protests at every Care UK office and Bridgepoint owned company.

North West Fire Service call centre cuts catastrophe

Hugh Caffrey

Socialist Party North West Region

The disastrous consequences of just one element of cuts and privatisation in the fire service recently hit the news, when a fire crew from Carlisle in Cumbria were instructed to attend an incident near Bolton in Lancashire – a 200 mile round trip!

“This cock-up is the latest in a series of errors dismissed by management as ‘teething problems’. It is because fire services, previously done by local authority personnel, are now given wrong or misleading information on a daily basis, crews cant degrade of service. The system crashes on a daily basis, crews are given wrong or misleading information and attempts to speak to an operator to clarify information results in an excessive delay.”

Support Bucks strikers

Birminghamshire Fire Authority locked out firefighters during the last round of national FBU strike action over pensions on 9-16 August.

The Authority banned firefighters from their whole shifts, despite the strike action taking place for two hours from noon then one hour from 11pm.

Messages of protest can be sent to enquiries@bucksfire.gov.uk.

Financial support can be sent to Bucks FBU Harpishord Fund, account 71503124, sort code 40-33-33.

Firefighters taking action against pension cuts at Bromborough fire station in Merseyside photo Merseyside SP

BT pay cuts: we need less surveys, more action!

Clive Walder

CWU Birmingham, Black Country and Worcester branch

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) telecoms section is once again away from a fight with BT and recommending cuts in pay and conditions for new staff.

The 2011 CWU telecoms conference called for an industrial action ballot if there had been no meaningful improvement in performance management by July.

In response, the union conducted a survey asking members three questions: if they had noticed any improvement; if they thought the new agreement (supposed to care all ill) was better or worse; and if they wished to be balloted for strike action.

Four out of five workers said there had been no improvement and 57% wanted a strike ballot. But the union will conduct another survey, this time in conjunction with management, before the next round of negotiations.

Their reasoning was that the 28% response rate didn’t give them a mandate. The CWU telecoms executive now appears to accept David Cameron’s view on ballots.

BT profits

We’ve seen £2.3 billion profits, huge investment in BT Sport and £300 million a year being spent buying back the company’s own shares to increase dividends.

But they aim to pay new call centre workers £6,000 less a year and new engineers about £4,000 less than their longer serving counterparts.

The current CWU Telecoms leadership is proof of the disaster that is ‘partnership’ between employer and union and can now do little more than ‘sell’ BT policy to their members.

Socialists and Broad Left members in the CWU will be vigorously condemning these proposals and campaigning for a fighting union leadership and for taking the entire telecoms industry into public ownership.

See further articles on www.socialistparty.org.uk

In brief

Surrey council workers

In April, Surrey county council imposed a two year pay deal broadly in line with the government’s austerity measures on pay constraint.

As Surrey County Union branch have local negotiations on pay, we are not part of the national local government pay dispute.

Surrey County Unison recently put out a consultative ballot over recognition with the council on pay, after learning that council workers had voted to strike themselves a pay rise of up to 60%.

Our view is that Unison members should also receive a pay rise. We are not asking for 60%, we are asking for a pay increase to keep up with the cost of living.

Members voted in favour of going into a dispute by a whopping 718 to 56 or 98%.

Surrey County Unison supported our colleagues on strike on 10 July. We have the same issues and problems as the rest of our members nationally. We hope to organise and negotiate for better pay with control on the mandate we have been given.

Andy Pattinson, Surrey Unison (personal capacity)

Peterborough Royal Mail walkout

On Friday 8 August, CWU members working at Royal Mail in the Ditton Delivery Office in Peterborough walked out. Those who participated in the action said that “unfair dismissals and bullying” left members without a union.

The business has forced workers nationally to undergo numerous stages of ‘modernisation’ over a number of years. This relentless drive, in the name of improved efficiency, means a chaotic and relentless demand for increased workloads without reward.

Given the company’s privatisation, these disputes are likely to increase in frequency and severity.

Shareholders demand a return on their investment, while senior managers’ pay rises. CEO Moya Greene, for instance, pocketed £1.35 million in her year - 50% more than average pay.

The strikers returned to work with a commitment that the小微 management of workers suffered at the strike lead to eventual strike.

The business has forced workers nationally to undergo numerous stages of ‘modernisation’ over a number of years. This relentless drive, in the name of improved efficiency, means a chaotic and relentless demand for increased workloads without reward.

Given the company’s privatisation, these disputes are likely to increase in frequency and severity.

Shareholders demand a return on their investment, while senior managers’ pay rises. CEO Moya Greene, for instance, pocketed £1.35 million in her year - 50% more than average pay.

The strikers returned to work with a commitment that the union would not work without a union.

Carl Harper, Peterborough Socialist Party

Unison Bureaucracy Unmasked

The Defend the Four Story

How four Socialist Party members defeated victimisation within their own union

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

020 8988 8789
Iain Duncan Smith may claim his changes to the welfare state are making everyone ‘better off’. But the 868,000 16 to 24 year olds who are still unemployed tell a different story. In fact the Institute for Pub- lic Policy Research says that even if there was a full economic recovery, youth unemployment will still be a huge problem. With the onslaught of govern- ment funding cuts to the public sec- tor, existing jobs are being slashed. Education cuts mean vocational training courses are also under at- tack. Young people are being forced out of higher education by £3,000 a year tuition fees. Even with a degree or vocational qualifications, many are forced onto low paid, zero-hour contract jobs.

Fast Food Rights
The talents and aspirations of a whole generation are being crushed by a system that is unable to cap- ture them. Capitalism is a system based solely on the maximisation of profit - for us that means depressed wages, zero-hour contracts, and employing the minimum number of workers necessary. We need job creation, restored funding for training courses and education, a £10 an hour minimum wage, and an end to zero-hour con- tracts. We need a party that stands up for these things because the three main parties all stand for protecting the interests of their capital- ist friends. We need a mass movement that fights for a society democratically run in the interests of everyone’s needs, not just the super-rich and that can offer jobs, education and services for all.

The Fast Food Rights Campaign, set up the Baker’s Food and Allied Workers Union (BFAWU) along with Youth Fight for Jobs and others, has organised a day of action for 28 Au- gust. The campaign calls for decent con- ditions, wages we can genuinely live on, and an end to zero-hour contracts. It is claimed that these cuts are to save money – this is a false economy. The Audit Commis- sion found that it costs upwards of £200,000 for every child lost to the criminal justice system by the age of 16 as opposed to £50,000 to offer them leisure and sporting activities.

Local authorities – run by all of the main parties - are passing on these cuts and refusing to stand up to the Tories and their lap dogs the Lib Dems. The cuts to youth services show that these parties put the needs of the super-rich 1% above the needs of young people who just want the chance to de- cent life.

There is huge anger in working class communities. The Socialist Party has previously warned that rioting and other such behaviour would be a result of these attacks. This was proved correct in the summer of 2011, and the potential for similar events to occur again cannot be ruled out.

We call on the trade unions to harness this anger. We need a move- ment of workers and young people that can defeat these cuts and fight for a society based on need, not greed.

Join the Fast Food Rights day of action on 28 August

Tony Benn and the battle against the cuts

Mary Finch

There is huge anger in working class communities. The Socialist Party has previously warned that rioting and other such behaviour would be a result of these attacks. This was proved correct in the summer of 2011, and the potential for similar events to occur again cannot be ruled out.

We call on the trade unions to harness this anger. We need a move- ment of workers and young people that can defeat these cuts and fight for a society based on need, not greed.
The Second International's capitulation had far-reaching effects, including the withdrawal of itsiglia’s support for the Bolsheviks, which weakened the Bolsheviks’ hold on power. The Bolsheviks’ defeat in the Civil War allowed the creation of a stable government, and the establishment of the Soviet Union. The adoption of such motions was a significant step in the long struggle for women’s rights, and was an important achievement of the women’s movement. It is likely that the principle of wage equality would be extended to men, and that the principle of equal pay for equal work would be adopted.

In summary, the First World War was a turning point in the history of women’s rights, and the mobilization of women into the workforce had far-reaching consequences. It is clear that the war had a profound impact on the political and social landscape of Russia, and that the struggles of the women of Russia played an important role in the development of a new society. The adoption of such motions was a significant step in the long struggle for women’s rights, and was an important achievement of the women’s movement. It is likely that the principle of wage equality would be extended to men, and that the principle of equal pay for equal work would be adopted.
Why I joined the Socialists

As a teenager, I was involved with various activist groups. Then life took over, and my activities outside of work tended to revolve around that wonderful place known as the pub. Two decades later, with a Tory government in power again, that feeling of injustice is back with a vengeance.

I have worked in care for the vast majority of my adult life, and seeing how devastating this government has been to so many vulnerable people, I had to do something. I have been a union rep for 12 years on and off, but this didn’t fulfil my desire to make a difference. I needed somewhere I could discuss the changes that must happen, rather than just shouting at the news.

Through chance, the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) appeared in front of me, hidden away in a BBC list of all unions. I'd heard of it before, but never really looked into it, until now.

Some of the Socialist Party join material photo Socialist Party

Socialist Party

Summer Camp 2014

August Bank Holiday weekend

Starts Friday 22 August 3pm to Monday 25 August 1pm

Sessions include the Middle East, Trotsky’s Transitional Programme and the real history of the Great War.

Single working (£50), Single unwaged (£30), Family of 4 waged (£100), Children (£12.50), Day tickets (£10)

Facebook: Socialist Party

Summer Camp 2014

Protest camp brings NHS activists together

Staffordshire TUSC supporters

Save Stafford Hospital activists, determined to stop its closure, which TUSC supporters helped to launch, has also visited to offer support and build links.

This group is fighting the attempted sell-off of £1.2 billion worth of cancer care across Staffordshire. Importantly, the protest camp is being backed by Stafford NHS workers who make regular visits with food and support. While we were there, we based ourselves with about 30 Donsca Care and Charting Cross in London and from ‘Save the Alexandra’ in Redditch.

The ‘Cancer - Not for Profit’ campaigns gathered together TUSC supporters helped to launch, has also visited to offer support and build links.

Socialist Party

Campaining for genuine equality at Leeds Pride

Thousands gathered in Leeds on Sunday 3 August for the city’s annual LGBT Pride march. As with previous years there was a strong presence from trade unions and other activists.

Getting active

My timing could have been better - my wife was expecting our first baby and the unions were calling everyone out on strike. But here I am, fully paid up member of the Socialist Party, and waiting for a new son any day now. I am determined to attend more of the meetings when I can, and if I change jobs I hope to stand in the local elections for TUSC.

Jay Mitchell
Leeds Socialist Party member and Unite the Union rep

Anger at library closures

On 15 August a small but determined contingent attended the cabinet meeting of Liverpool city council. The main agenda item was the closure of eleven of the city’s libraries – which was approved by the Mayor Joe Anderson and his clones.

The TUSC delegation, which was small in comparison to all the cuts and for a massive campaign to mobilise support for a socialist alternative – though still argued the policy is ‘impractical’.

Mayor Anderson’s hubris is fuelled by the total lack of opposition from trade union leaders, both locally and nationally, in fact local authority trade union ‘leaders’ have advised members to accept the cuts and take redundant pay.

But there is no question that the rumblings of opposition to Anderson’s butchery are growing, subject and louder. Like a smouldering volcano, at some stage the growing resentment will explode and move in the direction of TUSC and its socialist alternative.

Ann Walsh
Liverpool Socialist Party
Iraq: Only united action can stop sectarian war
Iraqis and Kurds cannot trust imperialist ‘helpers’

Robert Bechert

Millions of working people around the world have been shocked by the rapid advance of the extreme religious fundamentalists of ‘Islamic State’ in Iraq and the Levant’ (ISIS) who have now proclaimed the foundation of a ‘caliphate’ the ‘Islamic State’. While most ‘reports’ from this war zone must be treated with caution, there is no doubt about ISIS’s sectarian brutality towards opponents and other religions, something they highlight in their own propaganda videos.

Despite their opposition to the big imperialist powers and populist hostility to some aspects of capitalism, ISIS is not progressive in any sense and does not stand for an end to exploitation and oppression. Its methods include a dictatorial fascist-style crushing of all who do not follow their version of Islam and their single leader, now renamed Caliph Ibrahim, ruler of the Islamic State.

In practice, ISIS follows a similar murderous path to previous religious fundamentalists like the Catholic Crusaders who slaughtered Muslims, Jews and Orthodox Christians in their marches through Europe’s Thirty Years War in the 17th century.

Threat to imperialism
ISIS’s rapid advance is not only a threat to those who do not accept its rule or who follow a different religion, it also immediately poses a challenge to the western imperialist powers. It threatens the break-up of states established on the basis of the 1918 Sykes-Picot agreement between Britain and France. It also represents the most virulent ‘blowback’ to Bush and Blair’s post-9/11 neo-con strategy, which could now undermine the western imperialists’ position in the Middle East and beyond.

Desperately, the West, while searching for an answer to ISIS, is trying to scratch at least a tiny propaganda advantage from ISIS’s advance. Western leaders strive to portray themselves as humanitarian defenders of the oppressed as they attempt to escape from the poisonous legacy of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. But this is not possible. ISIS’s advance represents a crushing defeat of the policies previously pursued by the US and Britain.

At the time of the invasion of Iraq, the CWI warned that this imperialist intervention would lead to the break-up of Iraq into rival ethnic and religious entities. We said this, not out of support for Saddam’s dictatorship, but because the only progressive force that could overthrow Saddam would have been a movement of the Iraqi working and poor masses.

Mass movements
The CWI warned that, without such a mass movement capable of breaking with capitalism and imperialism, Iraq would tend to break-up, resulting in ethnic or religious-based entities ruled by new would-be mini-Saddams.

This argument was dismissed by Tony Blair, the 2003 invasion’s chief protagonist, who tried to camouflegle that imperialist adventure by claiming that only intervention could remove Saddam’s dictatorship.

The 2011 revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt showed that was false, when mass action removed dictators. But Tony Blair was never against dictators, just dictators who did not agree with him – he is perfectly happy to work with the new Egyptian would-be dictator, Sisi, and get paid for his advice!

Now Blair claims that ISIS has grown because of the West’s failure to arm the opposition in Syria. But in Iraq ISIS has armed itself by seizing weaponry given to the Iraqi army by the West.

At one stage elements in the West, as well as in the Middle East, looked favourably on ISIS. In June, ISIS posted on the web photos of some of its fighters with right-wing US Senator John McCain who spoke of his “very moving experience to meet these fighters”.

The Turkish government, which previously tolerated ISIS’s growth in Syria by allowing it free movement across its borders, now feels threatened by the group’s growing strength. This threatens both the close relations Ankara has been building with the Sunni tribes and the Baath government in northern Iraq and, in the longer term, to have an impact within Turkey itself.

In Iraq, the speed of ISIS’s advance was a result of the sectarian policies followed by the Shia Maliki clique which, alienating Sunni tribes and the Kurds, hastened the country’s break-up.

There is no certainty that new Iraqi prime minister Abadi will be able to completely prise away from him some of the Sunni tribes and opposition which joined them in reaction to Maliki’s sectarian policies.

While both Saudi Arabia and Iran, respectively the leading Sunni and Shia powers, have welcomed Abadi, it is not clear how many Iraqi Sunnis will see him as a break with the previous, sectarian Shia rule.

Given the horrific reports of how its treas opponents or those it sees as ‘non-believers’ it is natural that there is a growing demand for action to stop its advance.

New war?
After the previous wars and ‘re-building’ in both Afghanistan and Iraq, there is little popular expectation anywhere in the world that a renewed western deployment in Iraq would fundamentally alter the situation.

Certainly the western ruling class would like to avoid once again putting large numbers of troops on Iraqi soil, although it cannot be entirely ruled out that an attempt to hold parts of Iraq may take place.

UK Prime Minister David Cameron has said that Britain must use its “military prowess” to help in the fight against ISIS. But under pressure from the public mood against any new war, he went on to stress: “Britain is not going to get involved in another war in Iraq.”

With the collapse of the Iraqi army’s military resistance to ISIS, western imperialism is immediately looking to strengthen Kurdish forces, particularly those linked to the regional government. Thus, they hope, will also allow western imperialism to maintain a foothold in the region.

It is not accidental that the British government has sent one of its most right-wing, policy setters, Hadrian Jones, who happens to be of Kurdish origin, to Irbil. Kurdish workers and youth should have no trust whatsoever in such ‘helpers’ who, as in Zhaojan’s case, support vicious attacks on the poor in their home countries.

Resistance
Iraq and Kurdish working people must have no trust in the imperialist powers. These powers are quite prepared to support sectarian religious regimes like Saudi Arabia when it is useful to do so.

The key to stopping the unfolding sectarian war is building a resistance among working people, a resistance that fights against the sectarian attacks by forces like ISIS and the Shia death squads operating in and around Baghdad while, at the same time, defending the rights of peoples like the Kurds to self-determination.

This can only be based upon building democratically-run, non-sectarian bodies as the basis for popular defence, which would be able to appeal to those Sunnis who have railed to ISIS as a means of defending themselves from sectarian Shia attack. Without such an approach, there is a danger that imperialist-backed military action against ISIS will not weaken it and may actually increase its support in some areas.

However, military setbacks or defeats for ISIS will not be the end of the crisis gripping both Iraq and Syria. In both countries the fight against oppression, dictatorship and poverty requires the creation of a movement of working people.

Only such movements can struggle for democratic rights (including full freedom for religious and non-religious alike), oppose further imperialist intervention and fight for governments led by genuine representatives of the working people and poor. These must be prepared to break with the capitalist system that has failed the peoples of the Middle East and begin the socialist transformation of the region.
**Unions and Labour**

The Socialist (issue 821) reported that Labour's National Policy Forum agreed to continue Tory cuts into the next parliament. It is also true that the forum is part of an organisation that campaigns for an end to austerity.

But it is made worse by the big trade unions actually voting for this package, contrary to their democratic determination of policies committing them to oppose cuts. Only Bectu and Paul Kershaw, London Unite member, have the courage to actually oppose further cuts. Socialists would take this issue up within their unions.

Some union leaderships have defended their actions by pointing to policy concessions made in the document. But this is like coming back from pay negotiations and saying “we recommended this deal because you get a couple of days’ extra holiday, unfortunately we had to concede that your pay is halved”. Such a proposal would be likely to get short shrift. In this case, however, the decision to accept further cuts was not put to union members. 

Paul Kershaw, London Unite member

**Loan shark mentality**

A friend who recently had minor surgery was fined £185 for falling behind with her television licence payments. On ringing them on a 0845 number (25p a minute) she was told it was now impossible to pay the original debt of £230! This is nothing short of a loan shark mentality. 

She also had to pay the original debt of £230! This is nothing short of a loan shark mentality to union members. When she asked if she could pay £230 a month over five years via the 0845 number. She was told it was now impossible to pay the original debt of £230! This is nothing short of a loan shark mentality to union members. When she asked if she could pay £230 a month over five years via the 0845 number. She was told it was now impossible to pay the original debt of £230! This is nothing short of a loan shark mentality to union members. When she asked if she could pay £230 a month over five years via the 0845 number. She was told it was now impossible to pay the original debt of £230! This is nothing short of a loan shark mentality to union members. When she asked if she could pay £230 a month over five years via the 0845 number.

Gareth Bronhall

**Stop fracking**

On 2 August, large numbers of police and bailiffs evicted protesters from a protest camp at Rathlin Energy’s site in Crawberry Hill, East Yorkshire. There were six arrests. Rathlin Energy has already started fracking nearby in West Newton. The company’s fracking plans could involve drilling of thousands of wells in the area. Not surprisingly, the local community is totally opposed. 

The company, backed by the UK Government’s Energy Act, was given planning permission by the district council after a public inquiry. But there were so many concerns about the site, that it was recommended by the inspector to refuse permission. 

Dylan Murphy, Huddersfield

**Wikilinks**

Wikipedia is set for Google to hide its first link from the website under ‘right to be forgotten’. The need for a free and open internet is essential for spreading and retention of important information. The ‘right to be forgotten’ is not automatically a terrible piece of legislation on its own. It could be incredibly useful for many who should be afforded the right to start afresh. 

However, the ‘right to be forgotten’ has many worrying implications. It is possible to see a direct line between this piece of legislation and future attempts to limit the freedom of important information. 

Societies’ elites can now effectively re-write links to important information and information they do not wish to be publicised via the internet. They could begin to shape the bias in search results similar to the bias they enjoy in the traditional forms of media. 

Marty Bailey, Stroud, Kent

**Support London Taxi drivers’ fight against deregulation**

On 14 August, the Uber taxi fare mobile app was banned in Berlin. This followed protests in cities across Europe against the software.

Dave Wallis, a London taxi driver, says that whenever a new flavour of Uber comes out, the drivers feel the pain of their own budget cuts. 


The smartphone app works our fares like a taxi meter, but unlike using a taxi meter, which only London taxi drivers are legally entitled to do. This is a right that drivers gain from completing the Knowledge of London and attempts to undermine this are an assault on our livelihoods.

Who anyone should want to spend an average of five years studying the London Knowledge when a smartphone app can offer similar privileges is a no-brainer.

I believe there is a chance of such apps to be another attack on the professional London taxi network, alongside privatisation and deregulation favoured under the Tory-led coalition and London’s Mayor Boris Johnson.

**June protest**

The June protest was superbly attended by drivers and supported by all trade organisations. TfL claimed the protest was pointless. But there were over 10,000 drivers over the road from Trafalgar Square all day. The protest was pointless. But there were over 10,000 drivers over the road from Trafalgar Square all day. The protest was pointless. But there were over 10,000 drivers over the road from Trafalgar Square all day. The protest was pointless. But there were over 10,000 drivers over the road from Trafalgar Square all day. The protest was pointless. But there were over 10,000 drivers over the road from Trafalgar Square all day. The protest was pointless. But there were over 10,000 drivers over the road from Trafalgar Square all day.

Bridges were also blocked so traffic going south and north was severely affected. Our protest was a complete success. 

But now the battle continues. RMT Taxi division held a flash protest on Wednesday 9 July at TFL’s Palestra offices, outside a meeting to discuss taxi tariffs. We picketed outside and were supported by passing London taxi drivers and members of the public.

TfL has also said that the London taxi trade is here to stay and they are not trying to deregulate. But I can assure everyone who uses our iconic taxis that TfL are carrying out what we call back door deregulation.

They have flooded the market by giving permission for satellite mini cabs/private hire companies to set up in night clubs, shopping centres etc, impacting on the work of the London taxi driver. This is with out the illegal touting going on the street, inside stations etc.

London taxi drivers’ earnings have dropped more than 50% over the past six years. So when TFL say the London taxi trade is here to stay, I can tell you we will start to disappear off the streets as it will not be financially possible to run our vehicles.

MP Margaret Hodge has written to Boris Johnson asking why TFL will not consider the options of a smart phone app. The right to a fair pay and level playing field. But TfL don’t want to play fair, so our fight will continue.

Ronnie Job

**Welsh councils have a choice**

But this would only be worth doing if Welsh councils, or more precisely, the 50% of them that are Labour-led, intended to use any such breathing space to build a campaign uniting local authority workers whose jobs are at risk with users of council services that are threatened.

**Labour cuts**

Unfortunately Welsh Labour councils have been no more reluctant to implement Con-Dem cuts than their Tory counterparts in England. Neither has the Welsh Labour Government.

No wonder a study by the Childen’s Society and StepChange has found that 23% of Welsh families are struggling with household debt, getting behind on bills and failing to keep up loan repayments. Apart from by-elections, Welsh people won’t get a chance to elect councillors willing to fight, rather than implement Con-Dem cuts, until at least 2017. All the more reason for socialists to put forward an alternative in next year’s general election.

The constituent parts of the Trades Unionist and Socialist Coalition in Wales, including the Socialist Party and the RMT union, are meeting to plan where and who to stand. When other parties are scraping to see which of them gets to make the cuts they all agree on, we will offer a no cure, socialist alternative to as many working class communities in Wales as possible.
USA: Ferguson erupts over police killing

The police killing of unarmed black youth, Michael Brown, in the Ferguson suburb of Missouri on 9 August, has led to a storm of protest across the USA. Millions of people around the world have witnessed a heavily militarised police force fighting peaceable demonstrators with tear gas, stun grenades and even live rounds. With Ferguson resembling a war zone the authorities imposed a curfew, made arrests, and mobilised the National Guard to quell further protests.

However, residents have refused to be cowed and continue to publicly demonstrate for social justice. Like the Trayvon Martin vigilante shooting in 2012, the Michael Brown killing has revealed the deep racial and class divisions in US capitalism and the injustice and brutality of the state machine.

Jess Spear election success

Ian Pattison

Hot on the heels of socialist Kshama Sawant’s hard-fought election victory in Seattle and the game changing success of the ‘$15 Now’ low paid campaign, comes Jess Spear. Socialist Alternative member Jess is attempting to go even further in a run for Washington State legislature.

Jess’s opponent, Frank Chopp, is a 28-year Democratic Party incumbent. McDonalds and Walmart, oil giants, banks and real estate conglomerates, insurance companies and other corporate oafs have all poured in to back Frank, with the largest of the corporate contributors being the American Federation of Defence, which includes small arms and ammunition.

The latest justification for the arming of the civilian police is national security. Up to $4.3 billion has been spent training them.

The militarisation of the police is not new; it dates back to the London rubber bullets and tear gas in Taksim Square or Brazil and France in the fight against modern policing.

As austerity bites and people all over the world are forced into the streets near you.

Jess is attempting to go even further in a run for Washington State legislature.

Jess’s attempt was captured by Paul Mattsson.

Systemic racism in profit-driven capitalist society

Eljor Hawkins

Socialist Alternative, Harlem, New York

Ferguson is 70% black with a predominately white police force. In a population of 21,000, a quarter of the residents live below the poverty line.

Socialist Alternative member Jess is attempting to go even further in a run for Washington State legislature.

Jess’s opponent, Frank Chopp, is a 28-year Democratic Party incumbent. McDonalds and Walmart, oil giants, banks and real estate conglomerates, insurance companies and other corporate oafs have all poured in to back Frank, with the largest of the corporate contributors being the American Federation of Defence, which includes small arms and ammunition.

The latest justification for the arming of the civilian police is national security. Up to $4.3 billion has been spent training them.

The militarisation of the police is not new; it dates back to the London rubber bullets and tear gas in Taksim Square or Brazil and France in the fight against modern policing.

As austerity bites and people all over the world are forced into the streets near you.

Jess is attempting to go even further in a run for Washington State legislature.

Jess’s attempt was captured by Paul Mattsson.

Systemic racism in profit-driven capitalist society

Eljor Hawkins

Socialist Alternative, Harlem, New York

Ferguson is 70% black with a predominately white police force. In a population of 21,000, a quarter of the residents live below the poverty line.

Socialist Alternative member Jess is attempting to go even further in a run for Washington State legislature.

Jess’s opponent, Frank Chopp, is a 28-year Democratic Party incumbent. McDonalds and Walmart, oil giants, banks and real estate conglomerates, insurance companies and other corporate oafs have all poured in to back Frank, with the largest of the corporate contributors being the American Federation of Defence, which includes small arms and ammunition.

The latest justification for the arming of the civilian police is national security. Up to $4.3 billion has been spent training them.

The militarisation of the police is not new; it dates back to the London rubber bullets and tear gas in Taksim Square or Brazil and France in the fight against modern policing.

As austerity bites and people all over the world are forced into the streets near you.

Jess is attempting to go even further in a run for Washington State legislature.

Jess’s attempt was captured by Paul Mattsson.

Systemic racism in profit-driven capitalist society

Eljor Hawkins

Socialist Alternative, Harlem, New York

Ferguson is 70% black with a predominately white police force. In a population of 21,000, a quarter of the residents live below the poverty line.

Socialist Alternative member Jess is attempting to go even further in a run for Washington State legislature.

Jess’s opponent, Frank Chopp, is a 28-year Democratic Party incumbent. McDonalds and Walmart, oil giants, banks and real estate conglomerates, insurance companies and other corporate oafs have all poured in to back Frank, with the largest of the corporate contributors being the American Federation of Defence, which includes small arms and ammunition.

The latest justification for the arming of the civilian police is national security. Up to $4.3 billion has been spent training them.

The militarisation of the police is not new; it dates back to the London rubber bullets and tear gas in Taksim Square or Brazil and France in the fight against modern policing.

As austerity bites and people all over the world are forced into the streets near you.

Jess is attempting to go even further in a run for Washington State legislature.

Jess’s attempt was captured by Paul Mattsson.
How the capitalist MEANS WAR! JOIN THE SOCIALISTS!

Steffan Bateman and Ross Saunders

Nato, the war-machine of Western capitalism, will descend on Newport in South Wales for its summit at the beginning of September. Dogging the heels of Obama, Merkel and other world leaders will be thousands of protesters. Newport, like every other part of working-class Britain, has been stripped bare by austerity. The Welsh Assembly and the city council - both run by Labour - have put up no opposition to the government’s cuts.

While the rich and powerful swarm around at the summit in the Celtic Manor resort on the hill, the city centre is a ghost town of boarded-up shops. Hundreds are housed for the bedroom tax and the local University of South Wales could lose an entire campus.

Meanwhile, the resources magically appear to fund the biggest police operation in British history, involving 20,000 officers and 13 miles of high-tech fencing. It doesn’t stop there: having squandered £20 billion on war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the British government has dedicated another £20 billion to Trident nuclear weapons. A strange way to tighten your belt.

The protest in Newport is a chance to unite the anti-war movement with trade unionists and anti-austerity campaigners against what is the largest gathering of capitalist world leaders the UK will have ever seen. Nato’s claim to be “building stability in an unpredictable world” is exposed the world over as a naked lie. Nato affiliates are directly responsible for the quagmire that has developed in Iraq in the aftermath of Bush and Blair’s invasion in 2003. They gave the brutal Israeli government as much support as they could get away with.

The squabble between the Nato bloc and Putin’s capitalist Russia over markets and resources has littered eastern Ukraine with bodies.

US diplomat, George F Kennan, came closer to the truth when he said Nato’s purpose is: “to establish a scheme of relationships which can enable us to keep up the position of inequalities.” Nato is the military wing of profiteering American and European capitalism. They intervene not to safeguard peace and stability but in order to make sure the world’s rich get richer and poor get poorer.

We desperately need a new, mass workers’ party to unite our side against the warmongering profiteers. But the situation also poses more fundamental questions. The choice must be made between the capitalist system of invasions, drone attacks, and torture, and a socialist system where all the world’s resources could be co-operatively used for the benefit of all. The billions spent on war around the world should be used to improve the lives of ordinary people, not invested in industrial-scale slaughter.

War and capitalism are inseparable. If you’re interested in fighting for the alternative, join the red bloc for socialism on the “No Nato” demonstrations in Newport, and join the Socialist Party!

Demonstrate - 30 August
Meet 2pm at Newport Civic Centre for a march around the city

Hundreds of thousands have protested recently against Israeli state terror in Gaza

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 Public 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 democratic, democratic committees that include representatives of service workers and users.

● Free, publicly run, high 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 sick pay 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.

● Scrape 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, fast, 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!

www.socialistparty.org.uk

£1
Solidarity price £2
21 August - 3 September
2014
Issue 822