

Socialist Labour Party

MANIFESTO for socialism

**'Our Demands Most Moderate Are,
We Only Want the Earth'**

James Connolly

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1 INTRODUCTION by the Party Leader

The manifesto of the Socialist Labour Party is fundamentally different from the manifestos of all other political parties standing in General, European or Local Elections and all other political parties or organisations whose policies are based on retention of an outdated, corrupt, capitalist system.

Our Party's policies do not seek to ameliorate the austerity caused by the capitalist system by cutting public expenditure and imposing further misery on working people; but to make those responsible pay for the crimes they have inflicted.

We have witnessed the banking system collapse resulting in the government handing over billions of pounds to help the banks and the bankers responsible for the collapse and the austerity which adversely affected millions of people throughout the United Kingdom.

No loans or grants have been made available to help people pay off their mortgages or debts; they have been used to increase the massive salaries and bonuses of the bankers responsible for the crisis and help international shareholders continue to have a slice of the cake.

We have witnessed the government nationalise the collapsed East Coast railway and use taxpayer's money to completely refurbish and upgrade the system and then sell off the nationalised rail system – owned by Britain's taxpayers – to Branson's Virgin Company and this is just one example of how capitalism operates. It did the same thing under the Thatcher government when it nationalised Rolls Royce only to sell it off to a German company after it had been made profitable using taxpayer's money.

The Socialist Labour Party is not prepared to collaborate with any government which supports the capitalist system. Our Party wants to see the end of capitalism, a system which has caused unemployment, zero-hours contracts (better known as modern slavery), homelessness, cuts and privatisation of our health and social care systems, education and pensions resulting for the first time since the 1930s food banks established throughout the entire nation. These facts alone demonstrate that capitalism has no place in the twenty-first century.

The only way which Britain can rid itself of the austerity caused by the capitalist system, its banks and financial institutions is for the British people to own and control the means of production, distribution and

exchange, a policy which would take Britain's economic and political control out of the hands of these corrupt oligarchs and place that ownership and control of our nation's future in the hands of all its citizens.

James Larkin and James Connolly the legendary leaders in Ireland warned that independence from an oppressor whilst necessary fails, and will continue to fail, to free its people unless that independence is based on replacing on one set of international capitalists with home grown capitalists who continue to believe in the concept of the "free market" and "globalisation" of that system.

There are those who would suggest that this is revolutionary and they would be right. Compromise with crooks is no solution. It requires the removal of the small elite who control Britain's economy, employment, health service, education system, pensions and social care systems. The mad obsession with the production of nuclear and conventional weapons of war, designed to destroy life, should be replaced by a commitment to save and improve the quality of life for people everywhere.

Today's world is wracked by unjust, unlawful wars, racism, xenophobia and the rise yet again of organisations and political parties who preach fascist doctrine.

The policies outlined in this manifesto deal not only with the injustices which currently face our citizens, in particular the young and the old but also deals with the issue of immigration and migration, the first which our Party support, and the second, which we fundamentally oppose. Economic migration was established by the European Union; it has resulted in chaos not only in Britain but through countries throughout the European Union.

Our Party demands Britain's immediate withdrawal from the European Union and NATO, organisations which continue to threaten, not only our economic well being, but our very lives as demonstrated by NATO's intervention and occupation in wars in the Middle-East.

The Socialist Labour Party wants to see a world free from war, free from want and free from oppression. We want the right to the freedom of assembly, speech and association. We want a world which promotes and protects the environment and the earth's resources, not just for human beings but for all other forms of life.

Our Party wants to see a world at peace with liberty, justice and prosperity for all, above all we want a Socialist world. We want to see the dreams and aspirations of all those who fought for rights and freedoms become reality; a world where leaders are answerable to the people as a whole. These demands are not excessive; they are most moderate. We only want the earth!

Arthur Scargill

2 Economic and Political Austerity

Since the end of the Second World War the people of Britain, Europe and the world have been fed a monumental lie. People have been told that globalisation of the capitalist system is the only solution to the economic problems facing an increasingly competitive world. The population in Europe was told that only a European Common Market could help resolve issues such as unemployment and poverty.

Globalisation has been determined, not by sovereign nations and its peoples, but by secretive economic and political meetings involving major political figures and major financial figures in confidential discussions at events such as the World Economic Forum in Davos each year.

It is at events such as this that economic and political decisions have been and are formulated. They are not formulated in the interests of working people but in the interests of the multi-national corporations; bankers and financial institutions such as Goldman Sachs, JP Morgan, AIG and the industries and services that they own and control which support the interests of profit, not need.

The Billionaires and politicians meeting in Davos in 2015 revealed that the richest 10% of the world's population own 90% of the world's wealth. This fact begins to explain the cause of austerity.

Austerity can be consigned to the dustbin of history by using 90% of the wealth owned and controlled by just 10% of the world's population to finance the policies essential for an equitable society.

What would this mean? It would spell the end of unemployment in Britain. It would see Britain's youth have free education from primary school to a university degree. It would provide Britain's pensioners with an index linked pension equal to the average wage.

It would provide a National Health Service available at the time of need, upon demand, and completely free. It would end all private health care schemes and it would take into public ownership all the private pharmaceutical companies who currently make drugs available, not on the basis of need, but on the basis of cost.

It would result in the building or refurbishment of social housing each year until homelessness is eliminated. This policy is a basic human need and a need which society owes to all its people.

It would spell the end of zero-hours contracts; these so-called contracts are nothing more than twenty-first century slavery. Workers would be employed on a fair wage with fixed eight-hours per day, five-days per week contractual hours, paid statutory and annual holidays together with sickness benefits.

On a world scale it would end the suffering of people in Africa, the Middle-East, South-East Asia, the Indian sub-continent and South America. The richest 10% has robbed the people of these continents of wealth for centuries, now it is payback time; the people of these continents have the right to receive a standard of life equal to that of the wealthiest nations, wealth which was stolen from them.

The Socialist Labour Party has identified the cause of austerity and has also identified how it can be eliminated. Its cause is globalisation and institutions such the European Union, the IMF and the World Bank who for too long have dictated the economic policies of countries whose sovereignty has been eroded and in some cases eliminated altogether.

The solution is to take from the 10% who own 90% the world's wealth and implement the proposals in this manifesto with the commitment to take into common ownership the means of production, distribution and exchange within a socialist society.

Our economy is in a mess that cannot be fixed by cosmetics. The real problem goes deeper than the terrible damage done by the Tories between 1979 and 1997 and by New Labour since 1997.

It is capitalism that is responsible for the destruction of our industries and services, mass unemployment, homelessness and the tragic social problems which follow. We can only begin to solve these problems by attacking their root cause, and that means the eradication of capitalism itself.

The privatising of key industries and services, telecommunications, gas, water, electricity, coal, railways and health and welfare care has devastated our economy, which has been in poor shape for over 25 years.

Labour's policy of ameliorating the unacceptable austerity is simply trying to run the capitalist system better than the Tories. The Labour Party, Liberal Democrats and the Tory Party simply disagree on the degree of cuts in public services and the time scale whilst all continue to support membership of the European Union, the IMF and the World Bank who are responsible for the chaos which is now rampant in countries worldwide.

The capitalist system and its "free-market" policy on which our economy operates is not only corrupt but fundamentally incapable of meeting the needs of the British people.

The fact is that nearly half (48 per cent) of the United Kingdom's privately-held wealth is in the hands of just 10 per cent of the population. The myth of a share-owning democracy has long since been exposed. In a 1993 a report revealed that 87.9 per cent of company shares were owned by only 4 per cent of the adult population in the United Kingdom.

The sell-off of key industries and services has been a major factor in Britain's economic decline. We see what privatisation has done to our railways.

Privatisation means not only lack of investment, it means low pay, poor conditions, falling of safety standards, the destruction of jobs – and all that, in turn, means higher unemployment and further economic stagnation.

Energy, water, public transport, telecommunications are all vital to any society's welfare. Like health care they are **services** on which we all depend. They belong by right to us all and they must be returned to public ownership. *This time, however, they must be properly managed, so that our industries and services are controlled by the people for the people.*

The Socialist Labour Party is firmly committed to taking all the industries and services privatised in the past 36 years back into public ownership. We want to see Britain's banks - which recorded billions in profits in 2014 - and insurance companies and other industries and services all which have been privatised between 1979 and 2015 returned to public and municipal ownership.

All these industries, banks, financial institutions should be taken into public ownership and control; with proper management operating for the common good, public and municipal ownership can always out-perform private enterprise.

Nearly 90 per cent of the British people support the policy of taking back the entire rail system into public ownership, whilst the vast majority support the taking back into municipal ownership buses and trams which, together with rail, should be at the heart of an integrated transport system. Experience has shown that privatisation results in chaos and disaster. The solution is a commitment to public and municipal ownership where industries and services are owned and controlled by the people as a whole.

3 National Minimum Wage

One of the most terrible indictments in this society is the ever-growing gulf between poor and rich - not only in Britain but throughout the world.

Workers, young and old, are ruthlessly exploited in Britain's so-called service industries, and child labour is back with a vengeance. In Britain today, over 10 million people live on or below the poverty level. Zero-hour contracts and a so-called 'living wage' are not the answer to the austerity now suffered by millions.

The Socialist Labour Party is totally committed to setting a proper statutory minimum wage as the first essential step in putting things right. We call for the introduction of a minimum wage of £12 per hour – a figure which would give workers £480 for a 40-hour week, or an annual wage of £24,960.

Women workers, including those who work part-time, must be guaranteed equal pay (along with equal conditions and promotion opportunities) and young workers must have the same pay and conditions as other workers.

The introduction of a national minimum wage of £12 per hour would cost £10 billion, a figure which could be easily met out of the profits of Britain's major companies. Those companies' payments to central government could be doubled without any trouble, particularly if those companies are taken into public ownership.

4 National Health Service

The Socialist Labour Party is committed to a National Health Service available to all at the time of need, on demand and free of all charges – including prescriptions, dental care and eye care. Our Party wants all N.H.S. workers to receive wages and terms and conditions that reflect the social importance of their jobs.

Between 2001 and 2015 there has been a continuing loss of hospital beds and closures of hospitals. There have been cut backs in those areas which specialise in the treatment of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental health and accident and emergency (A&E). In addition one of the first lines of care as been decimated namely the number of ambulances and paramedics. These cuts explain why Britain lags far behind other European health care systems.

Meanwhile private health care has continued to flourish on the back of NHS resources as it did under the Labour government. It is a scandal that a person with sufficient financial resources or a private health insurance provider can get immediate appointments diagnosis and treatment using in many cases NHS consultants undertaking private work. The Socialist Labour Party would stop all private health care. It is obscene that the NHS is paying between 50% and 100% more to employ agency doctors, consultants and nursing staff because the NHS is understaffed and under funded.

Our objectives involve the abolition of all forms of private medicine and health care, an end to all contracting-out services; the strengthening of primary care, not at the expense of secondary or specialist services but properly funded health care based on community, family and individual needs; increased training and recruitment in Hospitals and G.P. practices; the re-opening of all "mothballed" hospital wards and re-establishing district and cottage hospitals; restricting nurses and doctors hours to the average working week without loss of pay; the provision of N.H.S. nursing homes free of charge for those who need them and care homes owned and operated by local authorities and not by private owners.

The Socialist Labour Party is committed to the public ownership of the pharmaceutical industry, so that the provision of essential drugs is not determined by profits to shareholders – many who are multi-national companies – but by the needs of all patients. The government allocated £141 billion for the Health Service but the N.H.S. was only allocated £97.46 billion whilst G.P. practices only received £7.6 billion!

The cost of restoring to NHS to the best health service in the world requires an immediate investment of £20 billion with an annual increase equal to the increase in the Retail Price Index. This sum could easily be met by cutting Britain's defence budget by two-thirds and scrapping the Trident nuclear program. These cuts in defence would provide £130 billion on Trident alone and £20 billion annually from the current conventional expenditure. Our Party is committed to the preservation of life and not to the destruction of life.

5 European Union – Immigration - Migration

The Socialist Labour Party is totally committed to complete withdrawal from the European Union. That is the only way Britain can begin to regain control of our economy, sovereignty and our political power and end the free movement of capital and labour. The free movement of capital and labour both threaten the independence of not only Britain but of all countries which are members of this United States of Europe.

The European Union is a capitalist club that makes it easy for multi-national companies to exploit workers throughout its member states, while the sovereignty of those states is increasingly meaningless, and we are all at the mercy of a vast, faceless bureaucracy.

Britain's European Union 'membership fee' is approximately **£55 million a day**'. Membership of this capitalist club cost Britain approximately **£170 billion a year**. This is far more than the UK's budget deficit; a deficit which has and is being used to impose austerity measures which are being paid for by the British people to combat a crisis caused by the European Union; the EU Central Bank; the IMF and the World Bank.

Britain's banks have been handed billions of taxpayers monies by the government yet taxpayers are being told that we have to repay the banks debt. To achieve this government has slaughtered public services such as health, social welfare, education, pensions and above all vicious cuts in care for the elderly.

The true political nature of the European Union has now becoming clear. It was evident that the drive towards a United States of Europe was endorsed at the Summit which took place in Nice towards the end of 2000. The drive to establish a European army (a concept first advocated by Adolf Hitler), the introduction of taxation policies such as VAT, laws which over-ride laws adopted by the British people, do not represent an advance in either economic or human rights. On the contrary, the laws emanating from Europe mean that the British working class is infinitely worse off then it was in the 1970s.

Value Added Tax (VAT) is an iniquitous tax introduced as a result of a Directive from the European Union. This tax means that a multi-millionaire pays the same tax from goods and services as the unemployed, workers on low wages and of course the 12 million pensioners. It is a tax which must be

abolished and replaced by a fair income tax system which mean no person who earns or receives less than £15,000 would pay any tax whilst anyone earning over £200,000 would pay 70% tax, it should be remembered that this type of tax band – indeed even higher – was implemented between 1945 and the late 1960s. It was a tax system which enabled Britain to provide the best public services in its history including the free National Health Service.

Withdrawal for the European Union is a central party of the Socialist Labour Party's international policy. Britain's withdrawal from the EU would allow our country to develop and expand links with nations in Asia, Africa, South Pacific, Latin America, the Caribbean and Cuba which has endured 54 years of economic blockade and sanctions because the United States fears Socialism. Withdrawal from the EU would save Britain £170 billion a year.

Immigration - Migration

The government and the media continue to brainwash the people of Britain by blaming the massive increase in people coming into Britain as immigrants including people who are seeking asylum from persecution in their own land.

There is a fundamental difference between immigration and economic migration from countries who are members of the European Union. The facts dispel this continuing misinformation.

In 2014, 794,000 people entered the United Kingdom. Immigrants from countries outside the European Union totalled 251,000 (31.61%) whilst economic migrants from European Union countries, mainly Eastern Europe totalled 543,000 (68.38%). The economic migrants entered Britain under the EU Treaty which allows the free movement of labour.

In the same year, 2014, 327,000 people emigrated from Britain to live abroad. It is clear that the number of people emigrating from Britain is more than the number of immigrants coming into Britain. These figures show that whilst 327,000 people left Britain to live abroad only 251,000 immigrants entered Britain.

The majority of people coming into Britain were from the European Union as economic migrants under the free movement of labour directive.

If Britain had retained the policy it had in force for immigration prior to the European Union directive in 2004 the population of Britain would now be approximately 60 million as opposed to the projected 70 million within the next five years.

The Socialist Labour Party policy on immigration/emigration is clear. A sensible and fair immigration policy should give priority to asylum seekers, citizens of Commonwealth countries and countries previously "ruled" by Britain limited to the number of people emigrating from Britain each year.

This policy would have allowed 327,000 immigrants (including any emigrants who decided to return to Britain) to enter Britain i.e. the same number as emigrated out of Britain in 2014 (only 251,000 immigrants entered Britain in 2014. This sensible policy would allow immigrants to enter Britain irrespective of race, ethnicity or religion; this sustainable policy would revert to the policy which operated prior to 2004.

Our Party is committed to Britain's complete withdrawal from the European Union. Only by coming out of the European Union can we begin to put things right economically and socially; everything from the Health Service to child care depends on it.

We are opposed to joining the euro and committed to fighting to regain not only independence from a capitalist European Super State or a United States of Europe, We are committed to campaign for true internationalism so that we can have fair and reasonable trading links with the rest of the world.

Opposing the European Union is part of the Socialist Labour Party's internationalist outlook. We want Britain to come out of Europe and into the world, developing and expanding links with nations in Asia, Africa, the South Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, including countries like Cuba which has endured over 56 years of economic blockade and sanctions because the United States fears Socialism. There would be a net gain of £170 billion if Britain left the European Union, with billions more income from international trade.

6 Housing

Affordable, adequate safe housing is a fundamental human right. We say that homelessness and housing unfit for habitation are products of the capitalist system. In our towns and cities, thousands of properties lie empty and unused – from derelict homes and flats to office blocks which have never been occupied.

Yet thousands of families try to cope day after day with hostel accommodation, while still more individuals are completely without shelter of any sort. It is the responsibility of government to provide and regulate housing on the basis of need. We want a full programme of social housing, homes built and renovated, employing building workers hired directly – using the capital receipts at present still held by local authorities from the sale of council housing. Such a programme would provide not only homes but jobs for the multitude of building workers currently unemployed.

It would result in the building or refurbishment of social housing each year until homelessness is eliminated. This policy is a basic human need and a need which society owes to all its people.

In the short term, we propose measures that could immediately improve the lives and welfare of many people including the abolition of the deplorable "bedroom tax"; an end to the transfer of public housing stock to the private

sector, the reinstatement of housing benefits so that anyone can afford adequate housing. We would integrate housing association properties into council ownership and control.

We are committed to a 'fair rents' system so that it again becomes unlawful for any authority to charge above a level set by an Independent rent officer. All tenants must not only have security of tenure but be able to help determine their environment, and legislation should ensure that all authorities maintain high standards of upkeep and repair.

The Tories have spent £28 billion on house building and the environment yet have only provided just over 100,000 new homes over a three-year period. The Tories now state they intend to build 400,000 new homes on Brownfield sites at a cost of £1 billion, a policy which does not provide affordable homes for all the people who desperately need a home. The Socialist Labour Party policy is to provide a million new or refurbished empty homes, a policy which will cost £33 billion per year. It is this policy which will eradicate homelessness and provide homes at an affordable rent.

The cost of providing a million new or empty refurbished homes per year is £33 billion which could and should be paid for out of the obscene profits of Britain's major banks. This policy could eradicate homelessness in Britain.

7 Education

The Socialist Labour Party is committed to a policy which will ensure that all people have a basic right to free, high-quality education from infancy through to old age. We want free crèche, play group and nursery provision for all children, and full-time school-based nursery provision from the age of three.

Children must be taught by qualified teachers; this can only be achieved if teachers pay and conditions are substantially improved. The propagation of free schools and academies must be reversed the changes imposed by the government have and are undermining the comprehensive education system in the United Kingdom.

School services and facilities are being privatised, a policy which must be reversed otherwise the situation will mean that only families able and willing to pay for their children's education will be able to access a full and proper education.

In addition, the Government continues to destroy the comprehensive school system through public spending cuts and ideological opposition to an education system which provides a first-class education for all as opposed to the Tories policy of second rate education and a third rate education system for the vast majority of children.

School selection by so-called 'ability' must end, this only furthers the reality of some schools creaming off the best performing pupils which then leads to other schools being earmarked as failures as they teach those that remain. Britain's education system must be funded according to need, which means radical changes in the way resources are distributed. The Socialist Labour Party is committed to abolishing all private (public schools); 'independent' schools, faith schools and private colleges.

These schools produce a class divide where pupils from public schools secure the majority of places at university whilst faith schools by their very nature inculcate children with religious beliefs which result in intolerance and prejudice simply because of a child's religion.

If Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and students from other religious backgrounds or no religion can study together at our universities then they can study together in our state Infant, junior and secondary schools.

All privatised education services and their assets must be returned to local public control. Proper administration of nurseries, schools, colleges or universities is utterly incompatible with privatisation in any form, including competitive tendering.

The Socialist Labour Party is committed to the full restoration of trade union rights for all education workers, whose pay and conditions must be determined through proper negotiating structures.

We believe that class sizes must be sharply reduced and more teachers employed, thus ensuring educational standards for our children that will benefit the nation as a whole.

We are also committed to promoting full democratic participation by students as well as teachers and governors in decision-making structures. School communities should be more involved in the appointment of head teachers, and accountability should be shared by teachers, parents, students and pupils.

In higher education, student grants must be restored and the student loan system – which has kept so many young people from education – must be abolished. The Socialist Labour Party believes that grants in line with minimum wage levels should be available for all full-time students. All benefits (including housing and unemployment) that have been withdrawn from students since 1979 should be restored.

Education should be available to all at whatever age. All adults should have the right to planned study leave during their working lives – and effective campaigning by the Labour movement to reduce the working week can turn such an opportunity into reality for millions.

There have been positive moves in Scotland in terms of its education system, particularly insofar as student grants are concerned. All students should

have the right to free education and have the right to receive full grants in respect of the costs of accommodation. These rights should apply to all students in Wales, Scotland and England.

What is needed throughout Wales, Scotland and England is a system which provides free education and grants for accommodation at colleges and universities together with a system which pays students an income equal to the national minimum wage during the period that they are attending a college or university.

The present cost of education is £56.27 billion, a sum totally inadequate to pay for an education system capable of meeting the needs of children and young adults in the 21st Century. Our education system requires an immediate increase of £10 billion per year in education expenditure. This cost can be paid for out of the profits of industries and services privatised over the past 35 years.

8 Pensions

In 1978, the government and the TUC concluded an agreement which guaranteed pensions would not lose value. Pensioners were guaranteed that they would receive an annual increase in their pension equal to the average increase in wages or the Retail Price Index (R.P.I), whichever was the higher. In 1979 the Tory government betrayed Britain's pensioners and unilaterally abolished the 'link' between the annual wage increase or R.P.I. Neither the Tory government nor the Labour government have restored the 'link' agreement despite the Labour Party's repeated promises to do so.

In Britain there are 12 million people of pensionable age, many growing old in poverty, unable to buy sufficient food or heat for their homes in many cases pensioners are having to choose whether to eat or to heat and many are having to go to food banks in order to exist. Pensioners are worse off in real terms than they were in 1978. To add insult to injury, the government and local authorities 'steal' the savings, assets and homes of pensioners who have to go into a care home. These pensioners have paid for their health and welfare care by paying tax throughout their lives.

State pensions account for £74.22 billion. In the United Kingdom 34% of adults contribute to a private pension. The proportion of employees in a public sector occupational pension scheme was 85% compared with only 40% in private sector occupational pension schemes. The median value of occupational pension wealth of employees in the public sector was £42,600, nearly double the wealth of employees in a private sector which stands at £24,000.

The payments for the UK's pensions is £74.22 billion but private UK pension schemes now hold assets valued at a massive £3.65 trillion, more than enough to help pay for every pledge outlined in this Manifesto. The SLP wants a national state pension for all payable at the age of 65; a national state pension equal to the national average wage with a guarantee

that future pension increases are in line with any increase in the national average wage.

Our Party is opposed to the Tory pension scheme which is basically based on a money purchase arrangement and in effect is based on stocks and shares, profit and loss as opposed to the right to a pension by every person who during their lifetime has earned the right to have a standard of life after retirement which recognises the contribution they have made throughout their life.

The Socialist Labour Party condemns the Pension changes as a cynical attempt by the Government to reduce its obligation to pay decent pensions. Our Party rejects all the recommendations and proposals which have already been thoroughly discredited.

Our Party's commitment is to a pension equal to the national average wage. This would give all pensioners an annual pension of £25,000; £480 per week. The cost of the pension arrangements proposed by the Socialist Labour Party of £225 billion can easily be met out of the £3.65 trillion currently invested in life and private and occupational pensions.

9 Energy Policy

Britain has never had an integrated energy policy. As a result our economy has never been able to plan energy supply and, more important, plan the cost of such a policy.

It is a scandal that in the twenty-first century people – mainly the unemployed, low paid and pensioners are having to endure fuel poverty. It is an affront to human dignity to have a society which compels a person to choose whether to eat or heat yet that is exactly what thousands of people are having to do.

The SLP's policy is to eradicate fuel poverty by taking all forms of energy production and energy supply into public ownership. The cost of providing heat and power should be subsidised so that people have one standard affordable supply of energy which is not designed to make profits for shareholders or pay millions in salaries and bonus to people who operate energy industries.

The situation has become worse during over the past 10 years, particularly as a result of the slaughter of Britain's deep mine coal industry, the most efficient and economic coal industry in the world. The closure of Britain's 170 coal mines with the loss of 170,000 jobs and the destruction of mining communities should - we were told - improve our environment by reducing CO2 emissions.

Those who advocated and supported the closure of Britain's coal mines and Britain's coal fired power stations assured everyone that the environment

would be cleaner and CO2 emissions would be reduced. The government advised that a combination of measures would result in CO2 emissions being dramatically reduced below any other form of energy generation apart from geothermal, wind, wave, barrage and solar power. It is therefore surprising – to some – that in 2015 the level of pollution, in particular the level of CO2, in cities like London, Birmingham, Glasgow and Cardiff saw an increase in CO2 levels.

Coal-fired power stations in countries such as Italy and the USA, which have been fitted with the minimum of new technology, are producing less CO2 emissions than the gas-fired power stations currently operating in the UK.

The technological development by the National Coal Board in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s produced coal liquefaction from which oil, gas and other petrochemicals could be extracted; this technology together with fluidised bed and carbon capture eliminates CO2 and other gases yet all this technology has been abandoned. As a result the UK is now dependent on imported coal (44 million tonnes per year), imported gas including LPG gas, imported oil and imported electricity from French nuclear power stations, a policy which is costing UK taxpayers a fortune.

Having taken the decision to destroy our valuable indigenous deep mine coal reserves we now see 80% of CO2 emissions directly related to the use of oil and gas – not coal – yet the ideological opponents of coal desperately continue to pursue a nuclear power programme, apparently oblivious of the nuclear disasters at Windscale (now called Sellafield in 1957); Three Mile Island (1979), Chernobyl, (1986) and Fukushima (2011); disasters which resulted in Germany, Italy, Japan, and many other nations abandoning nuclear power.

The price for deadly nuclear power is astronomic. It is 450% more expensive than clean coal produced with carbon capture and 400% more expensive than gas. For years Britain subsidised its nuclear power industry to the tune of £1.3 billion a year and is now subsidising the development of a new nuclear power station at Sizewell. This is despite the latest serious nuclear incident in France in a nuclear power station which is the same type as the Sizewell project. If the same subsidy had been applied to clean coal technology Britain today would be self-sufficient in cheap indigenous coal. Today the government is having to spend £70 billion on decommissioning nuclear power stations together with clean up costs. Nuclear energy has and is a catastrophe in economic, energy and environmental terms.

Britain needs a long term integrated energy policy based on a deep mine coal industry fitted with carbon capture and technology which would produce the cheapest electricity from reserves which would last a thousand years. A coal industry must however be publicly owned and controlled.

An energy policy of this kind would result in the employment of 100,000 people, and our negative balance of payments would disappear as a direct result of Britain no longer having to purchase expensive subsidised coal, oil

and gas from abroad, a policy which drains the United Kingdom's balance of payments.

The very concept of developing and using nuclear power is terrifying. We currently store nearly 130 tonnes of highly dangerous useless plutonium at a cost of £40 million per year. More than a quarter of a ton of plutonium has been discharged into the Irish sea and the radiation level at the discharge pipes at Sellafield into the Irish Sea are 56 times higher than the nuclear test area in the Pacific Ocean.

The proponents of pit closures have now come up with a new proposal. They want to see a system known as Fracking to extract gas from underground. This system is dangerous both geologically and environmentally. Fracking, not only causes earthquakes but releases dangerous pollutants into the atmosphere and contaminates our water. Fracking for gas is far more dangerous to the environment than the production of coal, oil or natural gas or gas produced by clean coal technology.

Global warming should not be confused with climate change. The climate has been changing for millions of years. The earth's climate will continue to change but not as a result of global warming caused by using fossil fuels.

The main reason why we have global warming is because mankind has demonstrated yet again its madness by deforestation which has already destroyed large areas of the rain forests and woodlands worldwide. The naturally changing climate together with the destruction of the world's rain forests is resulting in rising sea levels. The rise in the sea level can be reversed by constructing desalination plants which would turn the sea water into clean water which could literally make the deserts bloom.

If one traces back CO2 emissions to a time before de-forestation worldwide it can be seen that the rainforests and woodlands generally were the main protector against CO2 emissions.

The Socialist Labour Party's energy policy is not only cost effective but a policy which would provide cheap energy and a cleaner environment for the consumer. Our proposals would reduce CO2 emissions and energy costs, not increase them.

Coal mines in Wales, Scotland and England have been closed because the government claimed that it was essential on economic and environmental grounds. Government papers released in 2014 and 2015 prove that the real reason for pit closures was political. Whilst the UK has closed its most valuable resource other countries have been given money from the United Nation's Fund to spend on coal-fired power plants. Countries which have been authorised to invest in coal production include South Korea, Bangladesh, India and Japan. In March 2015 Japan designated \$1 billion for coal plants in Indonesia. Coal plants in India and Bangladesh have been permitted loans totalling \$630 million; at the same time Germany has been closing its nuclear power stations and now produces 30% of electricity in coal-fired power

stations; no wonder Germany's economy is the strongest in Europe. Germany has pursued this policy unfettered by any EU Directive!

The introduction of this integrated energy policy would cost £20 billion per year over a 10 year period. This would include the cost of new technology for coal mines and coal fired power stations, and moving away from nuclear power. This policy involves alternative environmentally acceptable forms of energy such as wave, tide, barrage, geothermal and above all solar power.

The cost of developing a properly integrated energy policy would be an annual £20 billion investment subject only to any increase in R.P.I., a cost which could easily be met by closing our nuclear energy power plants in the same as Germany and Japan have done and at the same time impose an import control on all imported fuel.

10 Transport

For social and economic reasons, the Socialist Labour Party believes that all transport systems and industries – on land, sea, rail, inland waterways and air – should be in public and municipal ownership, managed in a fully accountable way and complementing, not competing with, each other. This means that all transport (public or freight) and transport networks (roads, rail, waterways) would operate on behalf of the British people, our communities, our regions and the environment.

Even our class enemies agree that the sell-off of Britain's rail network has been an unmitigated disaster. Since the rail system was privatised by the Tories it has required the intervention of the state to save the rail system. The East Coast rail franchise company collapsed.

The government had to take the East Coast line back into public ownership. This government nationalisation - used taxpayers' money – produced a profitable and efficient East Coast rail system which the Tories then sold off to Richard Branson. This policy has resulted in taxpayers' paying for the investment and Branson taking over a nationalised rail network which on any test means it was privatised on the subsidised basis to Virgin.

The Tory government then sold off its share in the nationalised Eurostar rail system which it jointly owned with France and Belgium for £60 million. This idiotic policy sold off an efficient profitable share which was bringing the UK £7 million profit each year. Capitalism argues that this is value for money. We say it is tantamount to giving away the family silver or the equivalent of an assignment of an asset which was developed and owned by Britain's taxpayers.

The Socialist Labour Party wants to see the entire rail network taken back into public ownership and control. At the same time we want to see Britain's bus and tram services taken into or back into municipal ownership.

An integrated transport system requires massive public investment. The development of a nationalised integrated rail, bus, tram, motorway, air transport system and waterways should be funded by the government.

Experts now acknowledge the detrimental effects of the car and heavy duty lorries on our environment, our roads, our villages, our countryside. Only Socialist policies for an integrated public transport system can tackle the problem.

Long distance road haulage should be replaced by rail, sea and/or waterway. Regenerating our railways, bus and tram networks and our badly disused inland waterways – would save us all from the hideous juggernaut lorries that do so much environmental damage.

If the freight which is currently transported by thousands of juggernauts on Britain's roads was transported by rail the effect would be incredible. For example, one train would remove 700 juggernauts from the roads in Britain. Just think how positive that would be in terms of road safety and environmental pollution.

Eighty percent of the UK's pollution – including CO2 emissions is produced by road, airlines and shipping transport who use oil, gas, diesel and other petrochemicals.

A Socialist policy means not only taking all the railways, buses and trams back into public ownership, but putting into place low fares or free travel which result in greater use, stimulating local economies while liberating people from the congestion, chaos and pollution created by high-cost transport.

This means creating or restoring public transport networks to serve isolated areas and communities. A sensible integrated transport policy must also involve the introduction of environmentally-friendly trams or trolley busses in all our cities and towns.

Encouraging the safe use of bicycles and the protection of pedestrians, especially in our towns and cities, would further help to reduce our dependence on cars. This system can only work provided Britain establishes cycle ways which are separate from roads.

The SLP makes clear that the re-nationalisation of all forms of transport which have been privatised will be taken into public ownership and control and not one penny compensation will be paid to these companies – many are foreign owned – whose shareholders have made a fortune out of assets which were owned by the British people.

Developing such a policy – ensuring that all our rail, bus, tram, airline and waterways are in municipal and public ownership, with accountability at all levels – will require an investment of £10 billion per year, a sum which would still leave Britain trailing behind the French and Dutch systems.

11 Repeal All Anti Trade Union Laws

The anti-trade union laws were introduced by the Tory government between 1979 and 1997. The aim was to emasculate the trade union movement, prevent trade unions and workers taking industrial or strike action. The object was to have a compliant workforce and to remove rights which trade unions and trade unionists had won in 1906. The anti-trade union laws were designed to allow high unemployment and low pay which is now embodied in zero-hours contracts and companies organised by gang masters.

The Socialist Labour Party is committed to scrapping these laws altogether. They have been a weapon used to frighten workers and their unions, and are designed to stop them taking action to protect jobs, decent wages and good conditions – including hours of work, holidays, sick pay and pensions.

We believe that trade unions, controlled democratically by their members, are vital for a free and just society. British workers are being denied their human rights set out in the United Nations Charter and the International Labour Organisation conventions. Trade union activity has become in many cases a criminal offence. Workers are denied the right to effectively defend themselves or other workers without facing prosecution, and at the beginning of the 21st century we still have no legal right to strike in Britain.

Trade unions which seek to defend jobs, services or industries face massive penalties, including the freezing of union funds (sequestration) or even receivership – all designed to stop unions from functioning effectively on behalf of their members, or in support of members of other trade unions.

Tragically, too many trade union leaders are failing to defend their members against exploitation, abuse and loss of jobs. The Socialist Labour Party made clear that trade unions should adopt a policy of non-compliance with unjust laws.

Our forebears had a policy of non-compliance with unjust laws, a policy which brought about trade union recognition and decent wages and working conditions. It was this policy of non-compliance by the suffragettes which secured the right of women to have a vote.

Defiance by the trade union movement as a whole would render government anti-trade union legislation totally ineffective – as it did when workers simply stopped work to secure the release of the Pentonville Five in 1971.

If trade unions had adopted a policy of non-compliance with the unjust laws which are in breach of the United Nations' Charter and the Conventions of the International Labour Organisation, it would have saved industries such as coal, steel, car industry, farming, shipping and heavy and light engineering and the loss of thousands of jobs throughout Wales, Scotland and England from the butchery inflicted by both Tory and Labour governments between 1979 and 2015.

The Socialist Labour Party's policy is for a programme of positive trade union rights in line with the United Nation's Charter and the Convention of the International Labour Organisation to which Britain is a signatory. Despite being a signatory to this United Nation's Convention the UK's governments and its Courts have adopted a policy of non-compliance, a clear breach of a UN Convention.

12 Military Expenditure

Britain's military expenditure is £61.8 billion per year. The government is deliberately misleading the British people by withholding information and incurring costs on "adventures" in different parts of the world. For example it has bases in Cyprus, Germany, the Falklands and other countries, all costing billions each year. The so-called "peacekeeping operations" in Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq costs Britain £10 billion per year.

However the real costs in military expenditure is hidden from the British people. For example the replacement and maintenance of Trident nuclear missiles will cost £150 billion plus a further £30 billion for aircraft carriers and £10 billion annual maintenance costs, a total of £190 billion of taxpayers money. This expenditure can only be described insanity.

The military madness also commits Britain to be part of NATO who together with members of the crazy European Union are insisting that Britain increases the amount it spends on weapons of war. This policy has already cost hundreds of young British lives in conflicts and occupations in countries which have nothing whatsoever to do with the defence of Britain.

The unlawful war inflicted on Iraq by Tony Blair resulted in over 100,000 deaths and thousands of men, women and children suffering severe injuries. The invasion of Iraq was a war crime and Tony Blair and those government ministers who supported him should be charged by the International Criminal Court as war criminals.

It was only mass protests in Britain which forces the British parliament to reject the Tory government launching an attack against Syria in 2013.

The United States on the other hand has supported Saudi Arabia in providing weapons which have been used against the Syrian people. This irrational policy has led to the creation of the Islamic State (ISIS) an organisation whose supporters are mainly from countries from different parts of the world.

The US objective is the same as its objective in Libya and Iraq – they want regime change! They want to see compliant governments which do the bidding of the USA and western nations.

The latest intervention is in the Ukraine which witnessed a coup which overthrew a democratically elected government and saw it replaced by forces who are neo-fascist and act in the same way as the fascist forces in the

Ukraine acted in the Second World War when they supported the Nazi invasion of both the Ukraine and Soviet Union.

It is sheer hypocrisy to argue that the west should support a government brought to power by a coup whilst supporting a dictatorial unelected regime in Saudi Arabia which subjects citizens to be lashed and imprisoned simply because they are not Muslims.

The US does nothing to stop the "neo fascist" state of Israel occupying land which belongs to the people of Palestine and refuses to condemn the bombing and slaughter of men, women and children in Gaza, an action condemned by the majority of people throughout the world. The USA constantly uses its veto to block resolutions of the UN Security Council which has called for Israel to withdraw from all the occupied territories it has occupied since 1967.

The United States publicly preaches that countries should not occupy the sovereign territory of any nation and yet it continues to occupy Guantanamo, an integral part of Cuba and use that area of Cuba as a prison to hold people from all over the world who have not even been charged with any offence.

The Socialist Labour Party would cut defence expenditure by £220 billion. This includes scrapping the £150 billion cost of replacing the Trident nuclear programme. This money should be used to save and improve the quality of human life and help make Britain's National Health Service and its Social Care policy, the best in the world.

13 Taxation

The Socialist Labour Party is committed to the introduction of a completely new tax system – one which would abolish the iniquitous VAT, and transfer tax liability from indirect to direct taxation.

Our Party would increase corporation and capital gains tax by 100 per cent; these measures together with a graduated income tax system would wipe out the European Union's VAT/indirect tax system, as well as ensuring that the 'fat cats' and all those on very high incomes would have to pay income tax directly in accordance with the income they receive: a fair policy based on Socialist principles.

The Socialist Labour Party is committed to the implementation of a taxation policy which is fair, equitable and provides the funds necessary for all Britain's social policies including health, welfare, pensions and benefits which protect our people as a whole. It is anticipated that public sector receipts for 2015/2016 will produce £667 billion of which £283 billion will be collected in income tax, and National Insurance Contributions which previously was collected separately.

The Socialist Labour Party would abolish the iniquitous Value Added Tax (VAT), a tax introduced as a result of a Directive from the European Union. In

2015 the amount of VAT paid by the taxpayers of Britain is £131 billion, a tax which is patently unfair.

This system is a tax system for the rich; a tax system paid for by the poor. VAT results in multi-millionaires or someone receiving in excess of £200,000 per year paying exactly the same tax in VAT for goods or services as someone who is unemployed, or on a zero-hours contract or a pensioner struggling on a pension; a pension which has lost over 40% of its value since the Tory government abolished an agreed "link" which had been accepted by the Labour government, the TUC and workers in 1978.

The "link" guaranteed that pensions would be increased each year in accordance with the annual average increase in wages or the increase in the Retail Price Index (RPI) whichever was the higher. The Labour Party promised that when it returned to power it would restore the "link" a promise which it abandoned following its election in 1997.

To add insult to injury, both the Tory and Labour governments have been allowed to 'steal' the savings, assets and homes of pensioners or people who have to face long-term hospitalisation or who have to go into care.

Our Party is committed to stopping this outrage. To take someone's home, their savings and assets simply because they have to go into care is tantamount to theft. The seizing of a person's home to pay for care tramples on the "human right" of people who during their working lives have paid taxes and national insurance contributions in order that the state would cover the cost of their health and welfare care at the time of need.

We would introduce the following tax bands which are fair to all:

| Band | Income per annum (£) | % Payable |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Up to 15,000 | 0 |
| 2 | 15,000 - 30,000 | 20 |
| 3 | 30,000 - 55,000 | 30 |
| 4 | 55,000 - 80,000 | 40 |
| 5 | 80,000 - 100,000 | 50 |
| 6 | 100,000 - 200,000 | 60 |
| 7 | 200,000 - 300,000 | 70 |
| 8 | Over 300,000 | 90 |

These tax calculations are based on Treasury statistics: the calculations *do not* include national insurance contributions or other forms of income which are not specifically tax.

The taxation bands in the Manifesto would increase income tax on the basis that billionaires, multi millionaires and those who are receiving the most income would pay the most tax.

Our system of taxation would help ensure that austerity and unemployment would be eliminated and people would receive a minimum income based on the national average wage.

The Socialist Labour Party's taxation policy would produce sufficient monies to fund its policies; thus ensuring that never again should a person's home be stolen from him or her to pay the costs of social welfare, care home facilities which workers have paid for during the course of their working lives.

A 1% increase in income tax would produce £5 billion per year. The income tax bands set out are similar to the successful tax bands in force in 1945 to 1951.

The Socialist Labour Party's tax bands would produce an annual tax income of £1.3 trillion, enough to help pay for all the policies outlined in this Manifesto.

14 Equality for Women

Despite comprising half of humanity, women in the 21st century still struggle for equality with men. Obviously the position of women varies greatly in different societies around the world, but surely they have a right to expect equal rights in the fourth richest, so-called developed country in the world.

In the UK great strides have been made since the early 20th century when the Suffragettes fought for women to have the right to vote. All professions have become open to women, equal pay acts have given rights at work and divorce laws have been simplified. With the exception of Northern Ireland, abortion has become legal and the contraceptive pill has given sexual freedom.

Women can now 'have it all' as the saying goes.

Why is it, then, that there is still a large gender pay gap with TUC statistics showing that women earn on average 15% less than men? Part-time workers, the majority of whom are women, earn 35% less per hour than men working full time. The biggest pay gap was shown to be amongst health service staff where women earn on average £16,000 a year less than male counterparts. In the Arts, Media and Sport the gender pay gap is 27.5% and in manufacturing it is 24%.

Low-paid jobs such as carers, cleaners, nursery assistants, teaching assistants are most frequently the preserve of women. It is largely women who have to work part-time because they are the most likely to be suffering the constraints of juggling children, looking after elderly relatives, running a home and having to earn a living. This burden has increased in the past 36 years caused by attacks on welfare services, starting with the government implementation of Care in the Community.

With the government now imposing 37% cuts on local government funding, services are struggling even more, and increased responsibility is falling on the unpaid labour of women to care for the vulnerable.

The SLP would seek to ensure flexible maternity/paternity leave on full pay and paid leave for women and men to care for sick dependants.

Socialist Labour believes in providing real options for childcare, ranging from free, good quality nurseries to financial support that enables parents to care for children at home.

All communities should provide good quality care and support for elderly, disabled and mentally ill people thus relieving the caring burden carried by relatives.

Women and girls must have equal access to education and training including crèche facilities for parents returning to work or study after time off to care for children.

It is SLP policy to defend women's right to choose whether or not to have children. Undoubtedly, the lives of women have been made safer since abortion has been legal but this hard won gain has to be fiercely guarded.

70% of women prisoners have mental health problems
37% of women in prison have attempted suicide
20% have been in the care system as children compared to 2% of the general population
70% of women in prison are drug addicts
30% of all adult women in prison have had no previous conviction

When women are sent to prison one third of them lose their homes and often their possessions. They also often lose their children. Just 5% of women prisoners' children remain in their own homes and only 9% are cared for by their fathers. Home office research shows that 66% of women imprisoned have dependent children and at least a third are lone parents.

Incarceration is not the most efficient means of dealing with these social problems and finances should be diverted to targeting the causes of the numerous problems.

Meanwhile, violence, pornography and sexual exploitation continue unabated. If anything, there has been a shift backwards over the past generation in ideas about women's dignity, independence and freedom. On average two women a week are killed by a male partner or by a former partner; this constitutes around one-third of all female homicide victims whilst domestic violence accounts for up to a quarter of all recorded violent crime. Each year there are up to 13 million separate incidents of physical violence or threats of violence against women from partner or former partners.

Although it is, of course, true that men also suffer physical violence and abuse, women are much more likely than men to be the victims of abuse and

sexual violence and are far more likely than men to suffer multiple incidents of abuse and sexual violence.

Despite decades of high profile campaigning, attitudes to rape have scarcely changed. There are countless examples of women being blamed for rape. It is either what women wear or how women behave and or it is who women sleep with or it's what women drink. 'Blame culture' attitudes towards rape victims are widespread. The onus is constantly put on the woman to protect herself and yet there is a consistently low conviction rate in rape cases. The Socialist Labour Party has always argued that a victim of an alleged rape or attempted rape should remain anonymous. The SLP also believes in the principle that any person is innocent until and unless proven guilty. For this reason the Party believes that the accused should also remain anonymous until proven guilty.

Despite legislation to protect them, thousands of women from ethnic minority backgrounds face the threat of forced marriages, honour killings, and female genital mutilation. It is estimated that 66,000 women and girls, mainly of British/African descent have been mutilated in this 'cultural' ritual and thousands are at risk. That this barbaric behaviour cannot be prevented in 21st century Britain is an absolute disgrace.

Sexual harassment in the workplace has and remains a real problem. Women should be fully aware that there is recourse in law in the event of sexual harassment. All employers should display details in the same way as they display details of health and safety.

Only a real shift in attitudes across the whole of society can change these situations and socialist policies would help provide a more caring society.

15 Socialist Labour and Youth

No section of society has suffered more than the young during the past 30 years. The destruction of British industries and services has led to more than 700,000 16-24 year olds being unemployed.

The new apprenticeship schemes that we see today are nothing more than a disgusting attack on the minimum wage for young people. Apprentices are forced to work for a fraction of the minimum wage, it's still yet to break the £3 per hour threshold. This is despite the fact that apprentices usually work the same number of hours as any other member of staff whilst undertaking course work in their free time. You just have to look at the type of apprenticeships that are available to realise that the majority of them are simply ways that a company can pay their young staff less. These meaningless apprenticeships have gone hand in hand with attacks on every area of real education and training. In British society today what hope for the future can young people have?

Hopelessness leads to despair, which is not solved by the 'law and order' outlook of both the Tories and New Labour. Young people must be able to

participate fully in our society and in the world, while they themselves are growing and learning.

Full employment and equal pay policies are necessary to help achieve a fair policy for Britain's youth. Such a policy would help rebuild Britain's industrial and manufacturing base provided there is a policy to restore Britain as an industrial and manufacturing nation. It is essential to establish proper apprenticeship schemes, paying a full wage during the period of apprenticeship. A reduction in the working week with no loss of pay would help maintain jobs and create more jobs for our youth by creating more purchasing power.

Proper funding would be restored in further education too, with student grants and a payment equivalent to the minimum wage and restoring benefits during vacation.

The civil rights and liberties of youth must be respected by society as a whole. We support voting rights at age 16. We believe in comprehensive sex education in schools with contraceptive advice and contraception available to all. Young people should never be forced or coerced into parenthood whilst they still need parenting themselves. Abortion on demand, based on the right to choose, must be available.

In today's society the young are especially vulnerable to the abuse of police powers; Socialist Labour's policies (including scrapping 'stop and search' laws) would end that abuse.

Young people - including Black, Asian and Irish youth, those involved in the peace and animal rights movements and in anti-globalisation campaign groups - have been specifically targeted by the counter terrorism units of the police and the security services. We are committed to ending this intrusion and injustice, and to scrapping the laws and the agencies responsible for all surveillance of innocent citizens.

16 Children's Rights

Every child has a right to live in peace and comfort with decent education, housing, free health care and caring adults to provide a safe, nurturing and loving environment.

Unfortunately, despite the UK being amongst the most prosperous nations in the world this is not always the case. In 2015 it is estimated that almost 3 million children live in poverty and this is projected to rise to 3.5million by 2020. Austerity measures have meant a cut in public expenditure on children's social services and support systems as well as the criminal justice system thus leaving the most vulnerable constantly worse off.

The full human cost of child poverty is impossible to estimate. Nobody can measure adequately the cost in physical or emotional suffering of growing up

in a damp or overcrowded home, of having a parent who relies on charity to put food on the table or of going to school in shabby second hand clothes.

But alongside the human cost, research has shown that child poverty has a huge financial cost which it is possible to estimate, and which is borne by us all.

Research commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimated that child poverty in 2008 cost the country £25 billion a year. The SLP estimates that this cost has increased to £35 billion in 2015.

About half this cost stemmed from the fact that adults have lower productivity and a higher risk of unemployment if they suffer the disadvantages associated with growing up in poverty. The other half was the additional public spending required to deal with social problems resulting from high levels of child poverty.

If this £35 billion were to be used to provide jobs, housing and social programmes to support poor families then child poverty in Britain could be eradicated.

Children have a right to be protected from all forms of violence and abuse. Historical cases of child abuse have been much in the news recently but children still live with these problems inside and outside the home.

According to a study by the NSPCC young people aged between 13 and 18; 33% of girls and 16% of boys experience sexual violence and as many as 250,000 teenage girls suffer from abuse at any one time. Only educational programmes designed to teach respect and consideration for others can help improve this situation.

Every year thousands of British school girls are spirited abroad to marry men they've never met. According to Department for Education statistics, each year at least 8,000 British girls at risk of a forced marriage are brought to the attention of schools, police forces and social services. These children are in UK schools and it is essential that more efficient measures must be implemented in the event of their absence from school.

A civilised society can have no higher goal than to do its best to ensure that every child is cared for physically and emotionally throughout childhood into adult life.

17 Disability Rights

Those of us who are in any way disabled want rights, not charity, and the Socialist Labour Party wants provisions that enable everybody with disabilities to play a full and active role in building a better society. In order to achieve this, we want to outlaw all discrimination in employment, services and amenities. Disabled people are best able to help themselves through control over their own lives.

There must be full and equal access to transport, services and activities. We want provision of 'self assessment' so that those who depend on aids such as wheelchairs can be involved in deciding what equipment is best for them to use. We want an end to segregated education, and provision of resources to ensure that integrated education works properly.

The Socialist Labour Party wants an end to institutionalisation; people with disabilities should be able to live and participate fully in the life of our communities.

For those of us struggling with forms of mental illness there must be support that meets inner and outer human needs. Mental ill health takes a variety of forms, which are affected by class, age, gender and race. We demand policies that acknowledge these differences and provide care which aims to help and heal.

18 Socialist Labour on Devolution

The creation of the Scottish Parliament and the Assembly for Wales in 1999 have not altered the nature of capitalism in Scotland and Wales and the need for Socialist policies that apply to those countries as well as England.

Whilst in both countries there have been significant policy decisions - particularly in Scotland - these in themselves are not enough.

In Wales, devolution has not brought primary law-making powers. During the past 26 years, Wales has lost nearly all its coal industry, an industry which at its height employed 140,000 people and which was the envy of the world, producing the finest anthracite coal available anywhere.

Alongside this destruction, thousands of other jobs have been butchered, first by the privatisation of British Steel and then by decisions of the new private steel industry owners to close plants throughout Wales. The Socialist Labour Party warned in previous General Elections that there would be steel plant closures at all the steel plants in Wales.

The picture in Scotland has been the same with the butchery of the steel industries, including the closure of the giant steel plant at Ravenscraig whilst ship-building in Scotland - once the envy of the world - is now a rump. The docklands in Scotland, as in Wales, and the North East of England, have become theme parks rather than bustling centres of international trade. In both Scotland and Wales, as in England, health care, education, housing, employment and community life have continued to deteriorate.

In 1997 the Socialist Labour Party warned that the policies of both the Tories and the Labour Party would lead to more closures and lost jobs in Wales, Scotland, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and the North East. Tragically, our predictions have proved to be accurate, as the Labour Party has followed the Tories and slavishly adopted the 'free market' system which has destroyed not only people's jobs but their communities and way of life.

The Socialist Labour Party acknowledges and celebrates the history of both Scotland and Wales with their rich and specific cultures, ours is a Socialist and not a nationalist perspective. We believe that only the people of Scotland and Wales have the right to vote for or against independence. The issue of devolution or full independence for Wales, Scotland and or devolution for regions in England can only be determined by the people of Wales and Scotland and by the people in the regions or counties of England.

Devolution has demonstrated over the years that it can be a power for good; the policies for example operated by the former London County Council (GLC) and the South Yorkshire County Council both of which implemented efficient transport systems using subsidies saw thousands of people use public transport as opposed to travelling by car.

The reason why the Tories hated these devolved County Councils, in particular the use of subsidies for transport was because the transport systems were more efficient and more economic than the commercial policies of County Councils who followed the government's line. For example the cheap efficient subsidised South Yorkshire transport system was far more economic than the West Yorkshire County Council commercial transport system which cost far more than the South Yorkshire Socialist subsidised system.

19 Constitutional Reform

The Socialist Labour Party is firmly committed to a written Constitution which incorporates a democratic proportional representation voting system. Proportional representation, like common ownership, is a Socialist demand. It was a demand advocated by outstanding Socialists such as Jim Larkin, James Connolly, John McLean, Kier Hardie and Will Paynter.

It has for years been the cornerstone of Socialists who argued for a democratic electoral system in the UK. If proportional representation had been in force at the end of the Second World War, no Tory government would ever have been elected. The significance of a proportional representational system – even one as weak as the system used for European Union elections has demonstrated that the elected representatives more accurately represent the will of the people than the “first past the post” system which allows the election of MPs with 30% of the vote.

There are many people – including people on the left – who oppose proportional representation on the grounds that it would always result in a coalition government. This argument is not only wrong but has been proved to be wrong. For example, in France a French Socialist Party was elected in the 1980s with over 50% of the votes. In the UK the Labour Party achieved its highest vote of nearly 50% in 1951 when it lost the election to the Tories who polled a vote well below. However in 1951 the Labour Party was supported by Socialists from the North of Ireland, not who would have been in a coalition but would have supported the Labour Party that had secured a majority of votes.

The Socialist Labour Party would abolish the House of Lords whose members are appointed and not accountable. Members of the House of Lords are paid £300 per day just for turning up for a few minutes and then leaving. In addition they also receive substantial subsistence and travel allowance. It is time they were consigned the dustbin of history.

Our Party is committed to the establishment of a republic with an elected Head of State. If most countries in Europe are republics there is no reason why our country should not become a republic with a Bill of Rights.

20 The Case for Socialism

The policies outlined in this Manifesto outline the case for Socialism; the manifesto deals with the injustices and inequalities that people currently face in our society. The policies outlined deal with issues of immediate importance but throughout we stress that the problem facing our people can only be resolved by abolishing capitalism and replacing it with a Socialist system whose institutions represent people as a whole, and which are democratically controlled by and accountable to the people.

We want to secure for the people a full return of all the wealth generated by our industries and services on the basis of common and social ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

We are committed to establishing the most equitable distribution of that wealth, re-establishing a free national health service available at the time of need and upon demand available to all.

Our Party is committed to freedom of assembly, movement, speech and association, and to promoting and protecting an environment in which the Earth's resources are properly used – not just for human beings but for all forms of life.

The Socialist Labour Party wants to see a world that is truly at peace, with liberty, justice and prosperity for all. In simple terms we want a Socialist world - Our demands are not excessive; our demands most moderate are, we only want the Earth.



Manifesto for Socialism

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