



Workers of all lands, unite!

CP BRITAIN CP BRITAIN
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Communist Party of Britain international bulletin

1 February
2020

**In leaving
the EU
Communists
in Britain
send their
solidarity
greetings to
all those
fighting for
social justice
and
emancipation
elsewhere in
Europe and
throughout
the world.**



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BRITAIN'S COMMUNISTS see Britain's departure from the EU as an opportunity to develop a wider international struggle against big business and corporate domination whether exercised through the EU or other international organisations.

For us in Britain, facing a right-wing populist government, this struggle will not be easy. However, we also understand the class origins of the mass opposition to the EU in our country. It stems ultimately from the deep anger of working people at the economic degradation suffered as a result of EU austerity and pro-big business controls. It is this struggle against corporate domination that we seek to continue.

We now fight to transform the terms of Britain's departure in interests of working people.

In particular, we are demanding that, in the current negotiations, the terms of any settlement uphold the fundamental democratic rights of our parliaments and assemblies to control the conditions of economic life. This means that our democratic institutions must have the freedom to secure comprehensive public ownership, to provide state aid to prevent unemployment, to use public procurement for the common good and ensure workers are free from the threats posed to their collective rights by the EU's pro-business 'right of establishment'.

Today, on 1 February 2020, we therefore salute all those within the EU who fight a similar battle.

★ We salute the trade unionists and Communists of France who are fighting to defend pension rights and to prevent President Macron's implementation of the EU's Reform Programme.

★ We salute the Communists of Portugal who have mobilised working people to halt the EU-mandated programme of privatisation.

★ We salute the Communists of Greece who have fought back against successive waves of cuts to pensions, social services and wages.

★ We salute the Communists of Denmark, the Czech Republic, Italy, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany who have battled against the erosion of the collective rights of labour, the imposition of EU mandated wage flexicurity and, in Denmark, the imposition of workfare.

★ We salute the Communists of Poland, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania who face imprisonment for their defence of socialism without any intervention by the EU to protect their civil rights and which, on the contrary, has endorsed and promoted a historically false and defamatory resolution equating Communism and Fascism.

★ We salute the Communists of Cyprus whose homeland is occupied by both Britain and Turkey and who are struggling to secure a cross-community unity among working people for a bi-cameral and bi-zonal federal Cyprus and do so in face of conditions of EU enforced austerity and

US, Israeli and Turkish power play

★ We salute the working peoples of the Mediterranean and Africa whose economies have been undermined by EU Free Trade Treaties and whose young people seeking new lives in Europe daily die in face of 'fortress Europe' border policing

★ And we salute finally the Communists of Ukraine who face imprisonment and state violence in an EU Associate Member state whose legitimate government was overthrown by an EU sanctioned coup.

We are determined that our battle against big business domination in Britain, limited though it so far is, will nonetheless aid the struggle against monopoly capitalism and imperialism in Britain, in the EU and across the world.

The world economic situation: Monopoly concentration intensifies imperialist rivalry and aggression

The World Bank Report for January 2020 predicts historically very slow growth in both advanced and emerging economies. It also identifies a very large overhang of debt. The global debt cycle, it says, is approaching the same proportions as 2008. In advanced economies debt stands at 264 per cent of combined GDP (of which public debt is 104 per cent). In non-advanced economies debt to GDP is 170 per cent. The main increase in recent years has been in corporate debt. This is now at double the level seen in 2008.

The ten years 2008 to 2018 have also seen increasingly uneven development both among the imperialist powers and among emerging economies. In some emerging economies (most notably in China and India and to a lesser extent in Brazil) there has been very significant growth. In the US there has been some growth. But in Europe and Japan there has been either stagnation or contraction.

The differences are stark.

● US GDP has grown from \$14.7 trillion to \$20.5 ● China's has grown from \$4.6 trillion to \$13.3, India's from \$1.2 to \$2.7 and Brazil's from \$1.6 to \$1.9. ● Yet in Europe there has been stagnation. ● Germany's GDP has only grown from \$3.7 to \$3.9; France's contracted from \$2.9 to \$2.6 and UK remained the same at \$2.8. ● Japan has contracted from \$5.0 to \$4.9. ● Adverse trade balance menaces the dollar: inter-imperialist rivalries

In terms of the balance of trade the US remains the biggest debtor nation (although proportionate to GDP the scale of the deficit has declined). The deficit was \$0.6T in 2008 and also in 2018. Half of the deficit in 2018 is attributable to China (\$0.3T) and much of the rest to Germany. Germany's overall trade surplus has increased slightly from \$0.26 to \$0.28 while China's has remained the same at \$0.3T and

declined sharply as a proportion of GDP.

Nonetheless for the US the deficit is a serious problem because its level of government debt is significantly higher than it was in 2008 at 107 per cent of GDP – hence the intensification of conflict over trade terms with the EU, and particularly with Germany. France's failure to grow sees its government taking the offensive against US big tech multinationals as well as against its own working class.

In terms of government debt this is highest in Japan (236 per cent of GDP) and the US (107 per cent of GDP) and relatively low in China (65 per cent) and Germany (59 per cent). Corporate debt is highest in China at 153 per cent GDP, France 140 per cent, Japan 102 per cent and Britain 83 per cent. In the US it is 74 per cent.

Monopolistic concentration drives imperialism

Recent research by Thomas Philippon (The Great Reversal, 2019) has demonstrated a very significant increase in monopolistic concentration in the US, with similar trends in Europe, and for the monopolised sectors of the economy sharply increased profit levels – at the expense of working people and also, critically, low levels of profit for non-monopoly sectors. In this way increased monopolisation, as noted by Lenin, drives investment to the 'emerging' economies and intensifies inter-imperialist conflict for their control.

US Aggression in the Middle East

The US drone attack of 2 January on Qasem Soleimani, commander of the Quds force, and pro-Iranian Iraqi militia leaders represented one of the gravest threats to world peace in recent years. It underlines all the dangers presented by Britain's nuclear armed alliance with the US. It also highlights its imperialist character.

The US needs to maintain its grip on the Middle East for both economic and military reasons. The US needs control of Middle East oil to sustain the dollar denomination of global trade – and also because its own domestic refineries are engineered to process heavy Middle East oil rather than light shale oil.

Militarily, the wider global hegemony exercised by the US cannot tolerate any one power achieving dominance in any region. Its strategy of control depends on balancing regional powers in order to concentrate its main force against the People's Republic of China.

Equally, Britain's own dominant monopolies, in petroleum and in arms, as well as its financial institutions, are dependent on a regional balance of power in the Middle East policed by the US. Boris Johnson's response to the crisis has been dishonest and dangerous. He joined with France and Germany in triggering the dispute mechanism of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of

Action (JCPOA) – effectively killing the agreement with Iran – while backing Trump's 'deal' and freeing him to take whatever action he wishes.

Communists in Britain therefore condemn unreservedly the attack on the sovereign territory of Iraq. We support the demand of the Iraqi parliament for the withdrawal of all US forces – at the same time as supporting the call of the Iraqi people for the withdrawal of all militias and for an end to the current sectarian basis of parliamentary representation.

However, we also note that Soleimani's presence in Iraq was as commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC). The IRGC presents itself as a multinational defender of Islamic revolution and as such has been responsible for providing military enforcement for the current sectarian regime in Iraq. The Iraqi Communist Party rightly condemns it for the ruthless and continuing killing of demonstrators. We associate ourselves with this condemnation. Iraq must not become an arena for a proxy war between Iran and the US.

Communists in Britain demand an end to all sanctions on Iran. At the same time we also send solidarity to those in Iran struggling for civil and political rights and demand an end to state repression, the release of prisoners and investigation into the killings of unarmed civilian protesters.

Similarly we call for the removal of all forces of NATO powers (Turkey, US, France and Britain) from the sovereign territory of Syria and an end to all attempts to Balkanise that country. We note with concern the call from US Republican Senator Marco Rubio on 10 January for the creation of a Kurdish state across eastern Syria. We support the current peace negotiations seeking to guarantee the full civil rights of all national minorities in Syria which respect that country's integrity.

We call on the British government to ban all arms sales to the states currently involved in military action against the people of Yemen.

We also demand that the British government ends all arms sales to Israel and instead imposes an embargo on trade and investment until the government of Israel ends its illegal occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and agrees to a peace settlement in line with the Oslo Accords and UN resolutions by which the States of Israel and Palestine can freely exist side by side.

We finally send our solidarity to the peoples of Algeria, Lebanon and Sudan who have mobilised to secure civil and political rights against sectarian and despotic regimes and have suffered, and continue to suffer, repression, arbitrary arrest and death

Further information on the background to current developments in the Middle East can be found in the Morning Star pamphlet Imperialism and the Middle East (2019 edition).★



British communists celebrate 100 years

CENTENARY

PHIL KATZ

IN 2020 Britain's communists celebrate 100 years of struggle for working class power and socialism. The Communist Party is growing, internally united, non-sectarian in its alliance building, reliable and consistent on the major challenges of today; rebuilding the labour movement, asserting popular sovereignty, opposing the EU and campaigning for a federal republic. In addition to the daily struggle against austerity, we believe these vital characteristics will lead to our party making a real impact on class politics in the coming period. Communists are needed as never before, if the labour movement is to hold its ground.

The party is proud of its history. It looks forward as well as to the past and has focused on the things it is best known for in the movement, to develop its biggest programme of events and activity in 50 years.

January 2020 sees the 90th anniversary of *Daily Worker/Morning Star* and the launch of a mobile exhibition on Party history and the start of a social media campaign: '100 things about the Reds'. From day one, the communists will emphasise their education work in the labour movement with the launch of 'Changing Britain For Good' - a four session education class, piloted first in London. Go to facebook.com/CPBritain to find out more.

February is the anniversary of the first version of the party programme *Britain's Road to Socialism* in 1951.

In March the premiere takes place of the Communist Party history film 'The Reds'. It is a month of campaigning with women workers with an International Women's Day celebration hosted by the Coordinating Committee of Communist Parties in Britain, on 7 March. On the 8th the party hosts a seminar, in London, on Communist Women. The Communist Party will be amongst a range of organisations, taking a speaking tour of women from the Sudan, to labour movement centres.

On 15 March the annual Marx Oration at Marx's grave in Highgate takes place. In April events will be organised across Britain to mark the 150th anniversary of Lenin's birth.

International Workers' Day, 1 May, sees the launch of 24-page special edition of *Unity!*, also to be included as a supplement in the *Morning Star* on 1 August.

June sees the publication of a new book, '100 Red Lives', which charts the lives and militancy of 100 'ordinary' communists and there will be a wreath laying ceremony to mark the contribution of British communists in London (Pollitt, Saklatvala, Inkpin), Moscow (Ifor Jones, Macmanus), Dublin (Despard), Madrid (International Brigaders) and across Britain at commemorative places for International Brigaders.

On 31 July there will be a centenary culture evening with DJs at the popular Rich Mix, in Bethnal Green East London.

Over the centenary weekend, there will be the launch of a new Communist Party history: *The Communist Party - A Centenary for Socialism* simultaneously launched and marked by events across Britain.

On Saturday 1 August there will be a mass internationalist rally at the wonderful Light venue in Euston, bringing together speakers from around the world including South Africa and India, China and Brazil alongside party and well-known figures from our own labour movement. At the event there will be cultural performances including Toyo Aluko's hugely successful one man show, 'Calling Mr Robeson'. Special recognition awards will be given to the party's oldest members takes place in England, Scotland and Wales.

On the same day the rally will greet Pedal4Progress cyclists who will have spent the previous week travelling from Engels statue in Manchester, through Derby and Bedford, to celebrate and raise funds for the party centenary. You will even be able to purchase CP centenary cycling outfits! That evening the party hosts an internationalist cultural evening in Wood Green, North London.

The Young Communist League marks the centenary with its annual summer camp in Yorkshire.

In October the party is organising the Jessie Eden/Kevin Halpin residential school for young organisers. The battle of Cable Street will be commemorated in East London while the launch of the Tom Mann biography takes place simultaneously in London and Sydney, Australia.

The Communist Party 56th congress takes place in London on 14 and 15 November. In the same month communists celebrate the 200th anniversary of Engels' birth.

In December the party is planning a seminar on 'Artificial intelligence, Marxism and future of work'.

Throughout the year, there will be commemorative items produced to help fundraise - every penny raised goes to making a bigger success of the centenary and our future work. For centenary merchandise go to shop.comunistparty.org.uk ★



Women and austerity Mollie Brown
The British catering industry C Ritchie
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Against the Bolivian coup

We condemn the Bolivian army's intervention against President Evo Morales as a grave blow against democracy in Latin America and across the world. We further condemn the recognition by the United States, Britain and Germany as Interim President of Bolivia of Jeanine Anes, an extreme right-wing politician who has urged policies of racist exclusion against Bolivia's majority indigenous population.

We deplore the violence exercised by Bolivia's police and armed forces against elected representatives of the MAS and against those demonstrating in support of President Morales. Evo Morales was re-elected President of Bolivia by 48 per cent of the vote to 37 per cent for his nearest rival: no substantiated instances of electoral malpractice have been identified.

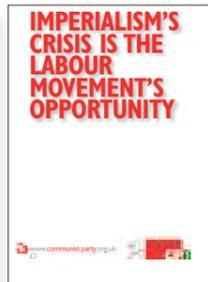
We note the IMF's recent report on the growth of Bolivia's economy since Evo Morales was first elected in 2006 as one of the highest rates in Latin America at 4.9 per year and the IMF estimate that the country's 2018 growth rate also remained one of the highest in the continent. We further note that the IMF reports that since Morales's election as President in 2006 extreme poverty in that country has been reduced by half and that there has been an extension of social and health provision to all Bolivians on the basis of need.

The motive for this coup is clearly both political and economic. Bolivia represented a direct political challenge to the dominance of the USA within the subcontinent. But Bolivia's also possesses the world's second biggest deposits of lithium, essential for the production of batteries for electric cars and its government recently signed an agreement for a partnership between a Bolivian state company and a private German company for its extraction.

We therefore call for the British government to place sanctions on all those usurping power in Bolivia and to ban British companies from any new trade or investment deals with Bolivia until the elected President, Evo Morales, is restored. ★



Workers of all lands, unite!
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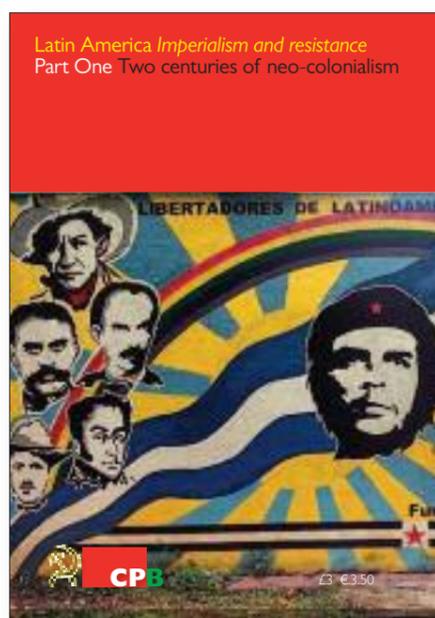
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End Venezuela sanctions

We condemn the human suffering caused by the sanctions imposed on Venezuela by the United States, the European Union and the UK. The major victims of these sanctions are the people of Venezuela with the sanctions now requiring a full embargo on all trade including medical and humanitarian supplies. Their imposition by the United States coincided with US backing for two illegal attempts to use force to overthrow the Venezuelan government in January and April 2019.

The sanctions include: The US government's executive order 13884 of 5 August 2019 imposing a total blockade on trade and financial transactions including those conducted by other countries through US controlled financial institutions.

The US embargo on Venezuelan oil exports and the impounding of the \$7 billion assets of the Venezuelan owned refinery, CITIGO, in the US (from January 2019) and the embargo on the export of Venezuelan gold (November 2018)

We condemn the support from the European Union for sanctions against Venezuela and the decision by the Bank of England to freeze £1.3 billion worth of gold belonging to the Venezuelan government.

In total the sanctions amount to \$30 billion of frozen assets and a further \$23 billion damage to the Venezuelan economy. These are equivalent to a quarter of the current Venezuelan GDP.

We call on the British government to end its support US and EU attacks on Venezuela's sovereignty and to use its influence internationally to end sanctions that are causing a grave humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. ★

Further information is available in the two CPB pamphlets *Imperialism and Resistance* parts 1 and 2 (CPB 2019).

www.comunistparty.org.uk



This pamphlet strips away the layers of myth that surround discussions on China and its growing role in the world economy.

Some of these myths arise from the inability by Western commentators to comprehend Chinese reality but, as we shall see in other cases, China also serves as a convenient scapegoat for economic problems that should instead be laid at the door of Western ruling elites.

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New dangers in the East Mediterranean: US and Turkish initiatives

On 20 December the US Senate ratified the Mendez-Rubio Eastern Mediterranean Security and Energy Act 2019. This establishes a formal alliance between the US, Greece, Israel and Cyprus. Marco Rubio describes the Act as 'strengthening and approving our energy and security cooperation with our key allies and partners in the region'.

It should be noted that both Greece and Cyprus now have conservative governments. The Act ends existing sanctions on US supply of arms to Cyprus and enables the upgrading of the country's military potential as part of the NATO alliance and cooperation with Israel and Greece in the exploitation of regional energy resources.

The Act followed the November 2019 agreement between Turkey and the UN recognised (Moslem Brotherhood) government in Tripoli on shared maritime borders in the East Mediterranean. This agreement challenges the maritime claims of Greece and Cyprus and cuts across the route of a planned pipeline to Europe.

The US Security and Cooperation Act and the earlier Turkish Tripoli agreement provided the context for the calling of the Berlin conference on 19 January involving the US, Turkey, Russia, France, Britain, Greece, Cyprus and the two rival governments of Libya (Haftar in Tobruk backed by France and Russia and Fayed al-Sarraj in Tripoli notionally backed by the UN). While the outcome was to agree steps to minimise the conflict between the two rival governments, the militarily dominant Tobruk government, backed by France, Russia and Egypt, refused to sign the agreement and just before the commencement of the Berlin conference, on 19 January, Turkey started drilling in a maritime block currently allocated to the French and Italian national oil companies.

Cyprus's party of working people, AKEL, which led the pre-2015 government in Cyprus, condemns the current Cypriot government for agreeing to what is described as a 'protectorate' over Cyprus by the US and Greece and locking Cyprus into aggressive plans by Israel and US for the control of gas reserves across the East Mediterranean. Cyprus still has economic agreements with Russia and China which the US Act now requires to be ended. The new alliance also prejudices future prospects of securing peace within Cyprus which avoids an increasing militarised territorial division and secures a bi-cameral, bi-zonal federation which can restore the unity of the people of Cyprus.

Britain is directly involved because of its continued control of sovereign territory along a 24 miles stretch of southern Cyprus. The Communist Party of Britain views these developments with grave concern. It urges the British government to disassociate both from the US Act, which gives Israel maritime rights in the East Mediterranean, and instead support the process of demilitarisation. A first step must be the evacuation of its military base in Southern Cyprus and the return of this remaining colonial territory to the government of Cyprus. ★