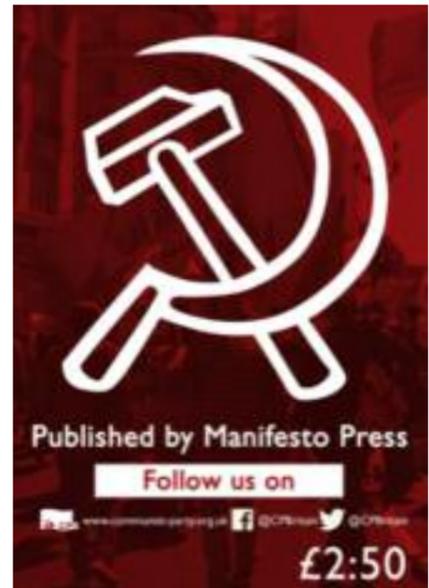


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April 2020

Unity!



Neo liberalism's deadly damage to our defences

CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

TEN YEARS of neoliberal economic and financial policies have done deadly damage to our defences against health and other public emergencies, the Communist Party has declared.

Reporting to an online meeting of the party's Political Committee, general secretary Robert Griffiths attacked the past ten years of spending cuts, tax relief for the rich and big business and the outsourcing and privatisation of public services. 'Almost every capitalist government is now compelled to use methods deployed so effectively by the Chinese authorities to counter the Covid-19 virus, based on state intervention, planning and control of essential industries and services', he said.

'Tragically, in Britain as elsewhere, the capacity of the public sector and our public and emergency services to meet the coronavirus challenge has been severely weakened by the profit-driven, market obsessed policies of recent decades'.

He pointed to the European Union as a prime example of the result of economic and financial neoliberalism. 'It was the EU Commission, European Central Bank and IMF 'Troika' which demanded public spending cuts so deep that even Italy's right-wing government resisted and was replaced by an unelected regime headed by

former EU top bureaucrats', he reminded the Political Committee.

Similar cuts had been demanded of Spain, Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Cyprus. 'Not surprisingly, the Italian government today has condemned the EU for failing to help the Italian people in their desperate hour of need, while socialist Cuba and People's China are sending medical teams and supplies there to assist them' he added.

Turning back to Britain, the Communist Party leader said the Tory government was still doing too little, too late to combat COVID-19.

'All necessary resources in the private-sector health, pharmaceutical, manufacturing and hotel sectors should already have been requisitioned to provide all the medical facilities, virus testing kits, safety equipment and accommodation for homeless people and victims of domestic violence needed in this crisis', he insisted, naming hospitals where front-line staff were still short of respirators and other protective equipment and clothing.

Some of the world's biggest pharmaceutical companies are based in Britain, Rob Griffiths pointed out, yet Cuba and China are leading the international effort to develop effective anti-COVID-19 vaccines and treatments.

He also urged the labour movement to prepare for 'huge battles ahead' in the forthcoming recession, when a Tory government

will try to make the working class pay the bills for today's crisis measures. Britain's Communists demanded that large workplaces not engaged in essential activities should close and applauded workers in Britain, Ireland, the US and other countries who have taken industrial action to halt unsafe workplace practices.

The Communist Party's Political Committee also called upon Britain's Tory government to extend its 80 per cent wage guarantee fully to all laid-off, contract and self-employed workers; test and release all non-infected non-violent prisoners; impose price controls on essential medical and food products; stop the roll-out of Universal Credit; and ban house evictions during the current emergency. Westminster MPs - many of whom had opposed plans to limit their time by a few days to further delay or sabotage Brexit - were criticised for going into recess for a month when the Tory government's seizure of emergency powers requires proper democratic oversight and scrutiny.

'One lesson that must be drawn from this crisis is that Britain's large military capacity has been useless to defend our people which is why a third of the military budget should in future be used to build a civilian emergency service with the trained personnel, equipment and materials that can be mobilised under democratic control to meet the storms, floods, forest fires and epidemics that lie ahead.'



Education in Cuba
edited by Gawain Little, Malcolm Richards, Aretha Green and Phil Yeeles
Forewords by Kevin Courtney General Secretary National Education Union
and Niurka María González Orberá General Secretary SNTCED Cuba



Immediate measures to protect the health and rights of the peoples
Joint statement of the world's communist and workers' parties
<https://tinyurl.com/stghk79>



Communist Party statement on the COVID-19 crisis

DECADES OF capitalist globalisation and neoliberal economic policies have left Britain and many other countries in a far worse condition to meet the challenge of a pandemic such as the Covid-19 crisis.

In particular, the failure to rectify the deep structural problems of an economy dominated by the banks and their financial markets means that the Covid-19 pandemic has broken out as the international capitalist economy is heading for the brink of another economic downturn made worse by financial speculation and panic.

Privatisation, financialisation, a disproportionate concentration of investment in the military-industrial sphere, huge tax cuts for the rich and big business and an obsession with extending free markets in commodities of all kinds - including capital and labour - have left the national and local state apparatus incapable of meeting the complex challenges now facing us all.

Today's shortages of key medical staff (including 40,000 vacancies for nurses), critical care facilities and specialised equipment in the National Health Service are the direct result of decades of under-investment. At the same time, austerity policies have slashed Scottish, Welsh and local government provision of social care, public health and civil emergency services.

Although the Tory government has promised to end austerity and boost investment with a £16bn fiscal stimulus and £175bn extra for infrastructure, this does not begin to compensate for decades of lost public funding. The March 11 budget's pledge of £5bn more for the NHS and an additional fiscal stimulus of £12bn to combat the Covid-19 crisis, and even the £330bn promised on March 17 to shore up businesses during the pandemic, still fall far short of the £1,300bn allocated by the British state to rescue City of London banks and markets during and after the 2007-8 financial crisis.

Boris Johnson's government has no intention of abandoning the economic and financial interests of the business monopolies which dominate the British economy and bankroll the Tory Party. Why not? Because to do so would strike at the core of the monopoly private ownership, the profit motive and capitalist market forces.

Hence the government's reluctance to take the kind of decisive and far-reaching measures necessary to protect the population from the full dangers of the new coronavirus.

Such measures should include:

- The immediate formation of national and regional forums bringing together representatives of central and local government, health and medical bodies and trade unions and employers' organisations to coordinate, plan and ensure the implementation of anti-crisis measures.
- Building new intensive care hospitals and directing the medical, human and material - including medical - resources of the private health sector and the armed forces into the

struggle against Covid-19 and its effects. Unless essential, military personnel should not be in formal military uniform.

- The requisitioning of private sector technology and production of all equipment and materials needed by hospitals and medical centres, including respirators.
- The urgent provision of protective equipment, materials and specialist training to all medical and frontline staff dealing with diagnosed or prospective Covid-19 patients.
- State direction of the pharmaceutical industry in Britain, where two of the world's biggest corporations are based (GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca), to ensure that production, research and development priorities reflect the needs of the population during and immediately after the current Covid-19 crisis and that shareholder greed for profit does not render the cost of life-saving medicines unaffordable for the NHS.
- A far more rigorous testing and quarantine regime applied to everyone with symptoms and their traceable contacts. Comprehensive testing of all people arriving in Britain from heavily infected countries and regions abroad and urgent preparation for entry and exit virus checks as people move to and from areas of high infection.
- State direction of companies manufacturing materials for public purchase (soap, anti-bacterial gel, alcohol) essential to combating the spread of the virus.
- Closure of colleges and schools for teaching purposes, with state and requisitioned private sector schools used for childcare to assist parents working in frontline and other essential occupations.
- Legislating, if necessary, both to enforce the rationing of purchases of essential goods (including over-the-counter medicines; cleaning and disinfectant products; storable foodstuffs) and to combat price hiking and corporate profiteering in the event of shortages in the shops. There must be heavy penalties for those engaged in illicit market activities.
- Taking immediate steps to eliminate homelessness, hunger, poverty and fear of such, including by abolishing Universal Credit and providing full benefits to all; substantially increasing statutory sickness pay and child benefit and reforming of statutory redundancy pay to raise the levels, remove most disqualifications and apply it to temporary lay-offs resulting from measures to suppress the spread of the virus.
- Implementing a coordinated strategy to ensure the distribution of vital goods and services to vulnerable people with underlying health problems, without local support or in remote areas.
- Taking control of the armaments industry in order to utilise its advanced technology and production capacity to develop and manufacture medical equipment and other necessities arising from the crisis. This would include the freeing-up of £billions currently allocated for the development and production of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction.

At the same time, measures that seek to prohibit political criticism and activity, increase state surveillance on non-virus related activities, prolong the term of office of the central

government and 'normalise' the presence of uniformed armed forces personnel in civil society must be opposed and resisted. So, too, should attempts to use the current crisis to cover up the failings of capitalism with its inherent cyclical and structural crises.

International cooperation, coordination and solidarity have a major and vital role to play in combating the spread of Covid-19 and developing antidotes to contagion and infection.

In particular, China has demonstrated how decisive state intervention and control can - especially in a planned economy with key sectors in public ownership - contain the virus and save lives through a dramatic expansion of public health and medical provisions. Not surprisingly, the People's Republic is now at the forefront of the efforts to develop a vaccine for Covid-19.

Cuba has developed an antiviral drug which has been produced in China in a Cuban-Chinese collaborative project and used to treat hundreds of coronavirus patients there and in several other countries. Cuba has sent medical teams and supplies to Italy and is now responding to similar requests from Caribbean countries and Chile. Bans and restrictions on such solidarity must be lifted at once, together with embargos and import sanctions placed on virus-hit countries, not least those instigated and enforced by the US government without regard to international and humanitarian law.

The Covid-19 crisis confronts not only this Tory government but the capitalist system with an existential acid-test: can they safeguard the mass of the population when faced with potential catastrophes of this kind?

Already, the European Union is demonstrating the inability of its 'free market' laws and unelected, unaccountable institutions to defend the people of Italy and other member states. National state intervention, planning and controls are replacing the neoliberal obsession with corporate freedoms, including open borders and so-called free markets.

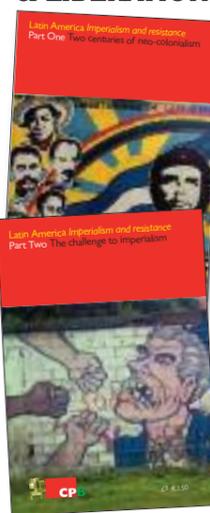
Here is the answer to the pro-EU, ultra-Remain lobby which is cynically trying to use this crisis to argue for extending the transition period, while raising bogus scares about Britain's exit from various EU agencies.

The Communist Party of Britain demands that the needs of humanity must triumph over the interests of the capitalist monopolies. We extend our condolences to all victims of the coronavirus in every country and to their relatives and friends. We salute the courage and dedication of our NHS staff and of medical and other front-line workers everywhere. We will play our part in ensuring that the ruling class and their system in Britain are held to account for their share of responsibility for this mortal crisis and their response to it.

Our message to Communist Party members and supporters, the labour movement and to the working class and peoples of Britain is: 'Fight together now for all measures necessary to protect the people! Be vigilant in the defense of our democratic freedoms and of our right to struggle for a better society and socialism!'

Issued by the Political Committee Communist Party of Britain March 18 2020

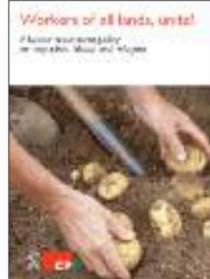
AGITATION & PROPAGANDA FOR SOCIALISM FROM THE PARTY OF WORKING CLASS POWER & LIBERATION



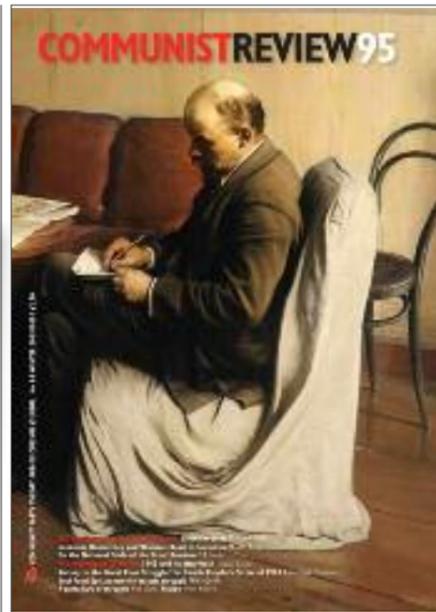
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Communist Party theory and discussion journal No 95 Spring 2020 £2.50

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Centenary update

PHIL KATZ

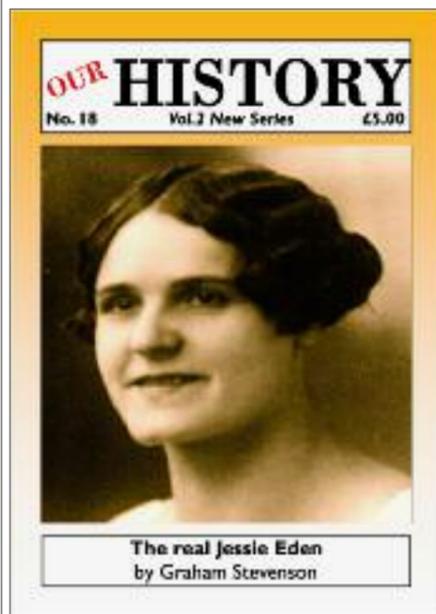
Communists are continuing to organise the centenary programme - '100 years for socialism'. But the Covid-19 pandemic has forced a change of emphasis for now, with public-facing events put on hold.

Work continues behind the scenes so that we can deliver our bigger events and campaigns as the situation allows. We urge you to continue to register your interest for the centenary weekend so we can let you know any change of dates.

Go to 100yearsally.eventbrite.com

For now, we encourage you to go to shop.comunistparty.org.uk and to look out for major publications including *The Real Jessie Eden*, a new history of the Communist Party, a book *Red Lives - 100 years for socialism*, and a 24 page supplement to the *Morning Star*. Every purchase provides funds that go towards celebrating our communist centenary.

We hope that you are well and taking measures to protect yourself, your families and extended communities and workmates.



Live streamed lectures to celebrate Lenin's 150th

2020 marks 150 years since the birth of Lenin, one of the great theorists of Marxism and pivotal revolutionary leader during the Great October Revolution. Marx Memorial Library is streaming two lectures free of charge to celebrate.

On 23 April Jonathan White examines the historical significance of Lenin and his seminal work *State and Revolution*, written in the midst of Russia's revolutionary turbulence. What did it mean for the masses of people who made the revolutions of the 20th century? What does it mean today?

On 30 April, Jonathan White examines the challenges facing the working class movement in Britain today. What are the issues we face and to what extent can Lenin's life and work guide our actions?



Marx Memorial Library
www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk

Both lectures start at 7pm on Zoom details <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lectures-for-lenins-150th-live-streamed-tickets-101712902028>

