

# Eat or heat?

# Unity!

## Take power

Unity! news team

### ENERGY

It is time to take power and energy into public ownership.

This month's gas and electricity price hikes will plunge another two million households into fuel poverty, making a total of six million across Britain by the spring.

Yet the Big Five energy monopolies are making even bigger profits from energy supply, and production or both.

Centrica-British Gas almost doubled its profits in the first half of 2021.

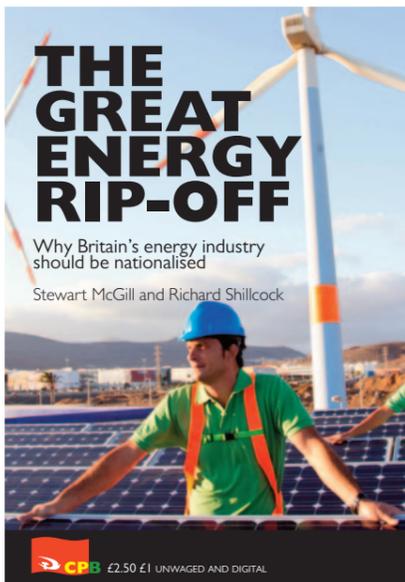
Britain's Communists demand strict price controls, a windfall tax on the fossil fuel giants, the permanent abolition of VAT on household energy bills – which is now made possible by our exit from the European Union.

Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer has ruled out public ownership of the energy industry but without democratic control of energy all consumers – working people, public services and industry – are in hock to profiteering and at the mercy of the big energy monopolies backed by Boris Johnson's government.

The answer lies in taking energy generation and distribution back into public ownership.

A new Communist Party pamphlet right on energy policy, with the political arguments for freezing prices, a windfall tax on the Big Six, and detailed proposals for nationalisation of Britain's energy sector, is available in print and online. ★

<https://shop.comunistparty.org.uk> ★



## Unite around a bold, left and progressive alternative to the Tories' pro-big business agenda

### COMMUNIST PARTY

BORIS JOHNSON has turned Downing Street into the equivalent of an American speakeasy during Prohibition, Communist Party general secretary Robert Griffiths told the party's newly elected executive committee at its first meeting in January.

'Of course, he's unfit to be Prime Minister – but what many millions of people need more than a change of tenant at Number Ten is a government that will challenge monopoly power – not protect and subsidise it, including with a battery of new anti-democratic laws to suppress dissent and protest,' he said.

'The ruling capitalist class is in a prolonged political crisis as the result of divisions and setbacks over austerity policies, relations with the EU and responses to Covid,' Rob Griffiths argued, 'but in the face of Labour Party timidity it falls to the wider labour movement to unite around a bold, left and progressive

alternative to the Tories' pro-big business agenda.'

The leadership pledged Britain's communists to take part in joint community campaigning initiatives by trade unions and the Peoples Assembly for jobs, pay and public services.

The meeting elected the party's officers for the next two years. Ruth Styles is chair with Tony Conway and Mollie Brown as vice chairs.

Robert Griffiths was elected general secretary, Andy Bain as trade union organiser, Carol Stavris as women's organiser and Kevan Nelson as international secretary. They will be joined on the new political committee by Alex Gordon, Lorraine Douglas and Young Communist leader Johnnie Hunter.

Following a wide-ranging discussion on strategy, the party leadership warned against trade union disaffiliation from the Labour Party and proposals for a new party of the left and called for trade unions to challenge the Tory government and the Labour Party leadership with left and progressive policies.

'Levelling Up', the executive committee agreed, is an extension of state-monopoly capitalism to the benefit of big business.

The party is to initiate a wide-ranging discussion on new ruling class strategies and how best to define and characterise 'austerity' on basis of Marxist political economy. ★



Workers of all lands, unite!



Communist Party February 2022

2 Indian communists in Britain

2 Young Communists in mass trespass

12 EVENTS&IDEAS&ACTION

INSIDE Irish communists on Bloody Sunday 1972



# Unity!

## Tories to tax trade unions

Andy Bain

### ANTI UNION LAWS

THE GOVERNMENT has imposed a 2.5 per cent tax on the income of trade unions. With minimal scrutiny by parliament the government used secondary legislation to compel unions to pay for the regulatory body which scrutinises union elections and finances.

This is in contrast to broadcasting where monopoly media firms are not compelled to pay for Ofcom. With this charge in place unions involved in an upsurge in militancy can be threatened with an increase in the tax.

The regulations will also allow complaints from employers and members of the public which could result in five figure fines. Trade unions will have to use their own members' contributions to fund any investigations following on from complaints, some of which may well be vexatious.

Former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn told the *Morning Star*: 'We need a firm pledge from the Labour Party that they will reverse and repeal this as soon as coming into office.'

Faced with this new offensive trade unions are upping the ante. Steps are being taken to put into effect the New Deal for Workers, which has been TUC policy for three years. Discussions are taking place around planning a series of town hall type meetings all over the country to build for mass events in May or June.

The Communications Workers Union's leader Dave Ward hopes to build a social movement joining together trade unions and community and national campaigns.

As localised disputes grow over fire and rehire, job cuts, precarious working conditions unions are moving to work together and coordinate their actions. Central also to the demands of the New Deal are the issues of decent housing for all, green jobs and anti-racism, recognising that community unity is needed if we are to beat big business and their government. ★

ANDY BAIN IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S TRADE UNION ORGANISER

INSIDE SUPPLEMENT  
Communist Party  
Congress Resolutions  
as amended  
Pages 3-11



# STRUGGLE

*I have always hated war and am by nature and philosophy a pacifist, but it is the English who are forcing war on us, and the first principle of war is to kill the enemy.*

*'Dress suitably in short skirts and sitting boots, leave your jewels and gold wands in the bank, and buy a revolver.*  
**Countess Markievicz** Her advice to female rebels thinking of taking up arms in the 1916 Irish Rising.

## Bloody Sunday 1972 Imperialism's response to peaceful demands for democratic reforms Communist Party of Ireland

Anniversaries are an opportunity to dwell upon and learn from past events and struggles, to identify past successes and failures. Fifty years ago the British state carried out an organised and sanctioned attack on the anti-internment civil rights march in Derry organised by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, in which the CPI played a central role, helping to establish and build that mass movement of working people.

Bloody Sunday was imperialism's response to peaceful demands for minimum democratic reforms—inevitable given its undemocratic origins. This British assault on a peaceful demonstration resulted in the murder of thirteen people on the day of the march, and another one dying some weeks later on injuries received. This was a deliberate act of state-directed killings in order to break working-class people's resistance.

The march had been called to demand basic civil rights and to oppose internment, which had been imposed in August 1971 by the Unionist regime, in collaboration with the British state. Hundreds of innocent people were arrested without any evidence and detained without charge in prisons as well as on the prison ship Maidstone and in number of British military camps around the Six Counties.

Internment was the repressive response by unionism and the British state to the growing challenge flowing from popular resistance to defend nationalist areas from assault by sectarian forces of the Orange state and from the rising civil rights movement demanding their rights against decades of repression, discrimination, and gerrymandering. The British and Orange state saw the resistance of the people and continued demands for civil rights as a direct challenge to the very existence of the British-imposed political settlement of 1922, which partitioned Ireland.

Repression has always been the default position of unionism since the British established the sectarian entity they call 'Northern Ireland,' by means of which they have maintained their control through the widespread use of sectarianism, discrimination in employment and housing, the gerrymandering of elections, and the use of the most draconian legislation and one of the worst regimes of repression anywhere in the world.

Unionists and their street gangs regularly encouraged and carried out pogroms against nationalist working-class communities. The Protestant working class had largely been co-opted by imperialism through the use of political unionism and material advantages in work, housing, and other social, cultural and political aspects of Northern society.

The activities of the Parachute Regiment in Derry on 30 January 1972 followed the state-organised killing of at least nine people in Ballymurphy in Belfast between 9 and 11 August 1971, all part of Britain's military strategy of 'low-intensity conflict,' a strategy for quelling and subduing local working-class resistance to its political, economic and military strategies of control. The British state and military applied their 'low-intensity conflict' strategy from experience gained in fighting against anti-colonial forces in Kenya, Malaya, Oman, Cyprus and other countries where British colonial occupation had been challenged. Bloody Sunday proved to the world that the state founded on imperialist-inspired sectarian division cannot be reformed—just as imperialism itself cannot be reformed.

Under intense political pressure, both here in Ireland and globally, the British state carried out two inquiries into what happened on Bloody Sunday, 1972. Firstly they set up the Widgery Tribunal, which was a complete whitewash of the role of the British army on the day. Following public pressure, the Saville Inquiry was established.

Anti-imperialists should not be deceived or misled by these inquiries: British law and British justice have nothing to offer by way of solution to the social and political ills of imperialism.

The British-imposed political settlement of 1922 was designed to uphold the interests of imperialism in Ireland, north and south. It divided the democratic forces and the working class; it entrenched unionist hegemony in the North; it provided a state in the South in which nationalist capitalists and big business could advance their class interests; and it secured both parts of a divided Ireland for imperialism. It offered nothing to the working class, anti-imperialists, or democrats.

The present political structures, operating in the form of the Belfast Assembly and Executive, are only further entrenching sectarianism and have little to offer.

We need to move beyond the failed institutions that bolster partition, division, and sectarianism, which allow the pretence that Britain is a neutral observer, a non-partisan participant in finding a lasting solution, when in fact the continued British involvement in Ireland lies at the heart of the problem. It prevents the achievement of the national democratic demand for the establishment of an independent, sovereign all-Ireland state.

Unfortunately Bloody Sunday was but one of a long list of acts of violence and repression carried out by British imperialism against the people of Ireland, which will continue to take place so long as it remains an active political and military occupation force.

It was also the moment when the Southern ruling class and its political servants took fright at the mobilisation of Southern anti-imperialists, democrats and workers in solidarity with nationalists in the

North. Thereafter the full weight of the propaganda and ideological apparatus of the Southern state was employed to discredit anyone who challenged or questioned events and struggles unfolding in the North, instead promoting and encouraging 'voices of moderation,' such as the SDLP and the anti-republican 'peace groups.' Instead of pursuing the formal national objective of ending partition, the Southern establishment increasingly bolstered British rule in the North, thereby protecting their own class interests in the South.

It is up to the people of Ireland to decide their future, not imperialism, whether British, US, or EU. The best way to remember the victims of imperialism is to struggle to end imperialist control and domination, to take up the challenge and struggle bequeathed to us by James Connolly, to struggle for and build a Workers' Republic, from Derry to Kerry.

<https://socialistvoice.ie>



▲ In a prelude to the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of India Marxist the Association of Indian Communists in Britain and Ireland marched with their flags to the tomb of Karl Marx via the Marx Memorial Library. <https://www.facebook.com/CPIMAIC/>

## Commons to debate NHS dentistry crisis

### NHS DENTISTRY

Toothless in England's runaway campaign to compel government action to provide universal access to NHS dentistry has scored a success with the news that a parliamentary debate on access to NHS dentistry will be held in Westminster Hall on Thursday, February 10. More than 40 MPs have backed the scheduled debate.

ITV Anglia reported on the visit by the mainly Third World medical organisation Dentaid's visit to Leiston in East Anglia. Over 40 patients were seen, all had been suffering acute dental pain and had no access to an NHS dentist.

Last year 6000+ Leiston residents were left without a local dentist since both practices had closed their doors for the final time.

Toothless in Suffolk campaign was launched and has quickly grown into a national campaign. The whole country is in a dental crisis, with NHS dentistry in danger of becoming extinct.

Toothless campaigns are springing up wherever there is a shortage of NHS dentists.

★ For more information contact@englandsteeth.org



### ACCESS

Scottish young communists have carried through a mass trespass on the privately-owned Ardnamurchan Estate in the West Highlands. Businessman and landlord Donald Houston owns 17,867 acres of land.

The action was taken in solidarity with Ramblers Scotland which is involved in a legal dispute with Houston and facing legal costs of up to £82,000.

Houston wants to make the land exempt from Scotland's Right to Roam legislation, and deny access to the land by the public.

The action included a ten kilometre walk on the estate before an educational talk on the Kinder Scout Trespass of 1932 and Scotland's need for a radical land reform.

<https://twitter.com/yclbritain/status/1488145701963976707>



## Straight left from Stewart McGill

MIT professor Daron Acemoglu testified at a select committee hearing to the US House of Representatives in November that automation is responsible for 50-70 per cent of the economic disparities experienced between 1980 and 2016. Why? Basically, post-1945 automation "increased worker productivity in a diverse set of industries and created myriad opportunities for them", as Acemoglu said in his testimony, "what we've experienced since the mid 1980s is an acceleration in automation and a very sharp deceleration in the introduction of new tasks".

He ignores the class dynamic here. Post-1945 the unions were strong and ensured that working people secured their share of the benefits of the productivity improvements, this increased their spending power and helped maintain growth. The capitalist class fought to destroy the unions and now arrogate the entirety of the benefits of automation and invest it in tax dodges etc.

This is the real nature of capitalism, accumulation by the few to the detriment of the many. And remember, the Luddites were right, the real wages of the working man tumbled after industrialisation and did not recover until the closing decades of the 19th Century. Join a union, join the fightback."

STEWART MCGILL IS CONVENEOR OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S POLITICAL ECONOMY COMMISSION.

In his new monthly column for *Unity!* martial arts expert and former finance sector professional Stewart McGill revives the hard-hitting Straight Left column from the 1920s Communist Party's paper, the *Workers Weekly*, the fore runner of the *Daily Worker*..



# FASCISM MEANS WAR

*Don't you forget—and let no one forget—that if today it falls to us to resist Fascist aggression the struggle does not end with Spain. Today it is our turn, but if the Spanish people are allowed to succumb, it will be your turn—all of Europe will be compelled to face up to aggression and war.*

**Dolores Ibárruri** 'La Pasionara' General Secretary Communist Party of Spain 1940-1962

## CONGRESS DOCUMENTS

**Address by  
Robert  
Griffiths  
Communist  
Party  
general  
secretary**

**6 November  
2021**



Comrades, esteemed guests from overseas, from embassies in Britain and from Communist and workers' parties domiciled here,

Our 56th Congress opens today in a world ravaged by exploitation, oppression, militarism, war and the crisis of global warming and climate change.

Yet only two decades ago, US President George Bush Sr and other Western leaders were telling us that the human race stood on the threshold of a new era of cooperation, peace and development.

The Soviet Union had disintegrated. Supposedly Western values of 'democracy' and 'free enterprise' had triumphed. The world's poorest peoples would henceforth benefit from a 'peace dividend' now that the so-called 'Red Menace' was no more.

The World Doomsday Clock, once set at three minutes to midnight, was turned back to 17 minutes.

But today, according to the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, the human race stands at just 100 seconds to midnight – closer than ever to Armageddon.

How different the prospects for planet Earth and its peoples are today!

Why? Because, in reality, this remains a world still dominated by giant monopoly corporations and the states that protect and promote their interests.

These are the same forces of capitalism and imperialism that prompted Rosa Luxemburg to pose the question from her First World War prison cell: what shall be the future for humanity: 'Socialism or Barbarism'?

The contradictions of a system driven by the need to maximise corporate profit erupt at every level, from the global to the continental, the national, the regional and the local.

In a world that has the capacity to feed, clothe, house, educate and care for everyone, billions of people go to bed hungry, hundreds of millions – the majority

of them women and girls – are illiterate, many millions die every year of preventable or curable diseases. Hundreds of millions of migrants have abandoned their homes and communities in order to escape famine, oppression or war.

Even in the wealthiest countries of Europe and North America, problems of poverty, unemployment and inadequate or unaffordable housing are rife. Yet the super-wealthy are richer than ever.

The Covid pandemic has starkly exposed these inequalities and injustices. Even in the most developed societies with their health and welfare systems, the poorer and more vulnerable sections of the population have been struck down in their millions.

Among the 30 countries with the highest rate of Covid deaths per head of population are the US, Britain, Italy and Belgium as well as Tunisia, Brazil, Peru and Argentina. Most strikingly, former socialist countries comprise half of that 30, their public health and medical services slashed or privatised.

Altogether, more than 230 million people have been infected around the world and five million have died. Meanwhile the 'Big Pharma' drug corporations have grown ever fatter on the public money pumped into them to produce life-saving anti-virals.

For example, AstraZeneca, Pfizer-Biontech and Moderna have received Western government subsidies amounting to more than £2bn while making profits so far of at least £10bn from sales totalling £30bn (mostly to public authorities).

Although the Covid pandemic will pass, the predatory interaction between human beings and the natural world seems bound to create more – and quite possibly deadlier – viruses.

Where once the time on the Doomsday Clock was determined primarily by the threat of nuclear war, today that minute-hand is being relentlessly pushed forward by greenhouse gas emissions, global warming and the looming prospect of calamitous climate change.

Comrades, Let's face the truth. Communists and socialists have – with honourable exceptions – been slow to recognise the extent of this threat to many of the world's poorest and most marginalised peoples.

Yet it is the ruthless drive of the capitalist monopolies to maximise profit, depleting the Earth's natural resources without thought to conservation, recycling or renewability, that has ruptured what Karl Marx called the 'bond of union' between humanity and nature.

In particular, he wondered why in London, 'they find no better use for the excretion of 4.5 million human beings than to contaminate the Thames with it at heavy expense'.

One hundred and fifty years later, and Thames Water is still doing it.

But now the environmental crisis is even more serious than the pollution of our rivers and oceans. It encompasses deforestation, soil erosion, desertification, melting polar icecaps and rising sea levels.

Over the past week in Glasgow, we have seen the COP26 summit of world leaders attempting to address the climate emergency. But they cannot resolve this crisis, because they dare not take the necessary measures to do so.

The 15th Report of the UN Panel on Climate Change spelt out what was urgently needed to cap the increase global warming at 1.5% since the Industrial Revolution and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The one thousand and more scientists who composed or reviewed the report called for 'rapid and far-reaching transitions ... on an unprecedented scale' in industry, transport, energy, land use and construction.

Many of the measures they proposed would require extensive state intervention, planning and public investment.

And the reality is that the big industrial, transport, energy, agribusiness and

construction monopolies would never allow such degrees of state control, direction and accountability. Nor could they and the financial monopolies permit such high levels of taxation.

That's not what they pay Presidents Biden, Bolsanaro and Macron, or Prime Ministers Johnson and Fumio Kishida for.

Capitalism's business leaders and politicians know full well that the levels of state intervention, planning and investment required to avert climate disaster would point in only one direction ... to widespread public ownership and socialism.

Then there is the other force propelling the Doomsday Clock towards midnight – war and the preparations for war.

Collapse and counter-revolution in the Soviet Union and the former socialist countries of eastern Europe delivered a brief peace dividend as military budgets were reduced in the West.

But the imperialist drive to domination and war has reasserted itself with a vengeance, from the former Yugoslavia to Iraq and from Libya to Afghanistan.

Now the main targets for containment and coercion are China and Russia. The US, Britain, France, Japan and Australia are all greatly expanding their military budgets. They are backing up their economic sanctions with military provocations in the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea and the Asia-Pacific region generally.

The Second Cold War has been declared. The new US-UK-Australia military pact is limbering up for future confrontations.

Of course, none of this has been mentioned in Glasgow this week. Yet armaments production, military exercises and wars contribute massively to carbon emissions and global warming.

Whose profits cause carbon emissions? The capitalist monopolies!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



# THE CRISIS IS CAPITALISM TAKE THE ROAD TO SOCIALISM

**COMMUNIST  
PARTY  
NATIONAL  
CONGRESS  
NOVEMBER  
2021  
LONDON**

**Domestic  
resolution as  
amended**

**D**OMESTICALLY, four critical issues have shaped the current economic, social and political situation in Britain: the election of a new Conservative government led by Boris Johnson and committed to completing Britain's departure from the European Union; the impact and repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic; the renewal of a wide ruling-class offensive against working-class living standards and democratic rights; and the escalation of the global warming and climate change crisis caused by monopoly capitalism's unfettered drive to maximise profit – a crisis that now threatens the future of humanity.

Understanding these factors, their dynamics and their inter-connections is the only effective basis on which the labour and progressive movements, the left and the Communist Party can determine a short- and medium-term strategy to challenge and turn back this offensive and take the road to the only real and sustainable alternative, namely, socialism.

#### The December 2019 General Election

The election of Johnson's government in December 2019 began to resolve a political crisis that had threatened to destabilise the British state. A period of divisions within the governing party, stalemate in the Westminster parliament and disputes between the government and the judiciary was finally brought to an end. The threat of a Labour government headed by Jeremy Corbyn and elected on a left manifesto was eliminated. A clear parliamentary majority was won for a negotiated exit from the EU that would protect the vital interests of monopoly capital and British imperialism.

The two biggest factors in favour of the Conservative victory were the character assassination of Corbyn by the mass media — assisted by many Labour MPs — and Labour's change of policy on Brexit from honouring the 2016 referendum result to demanding a second referendum. Although an outstanding and consistent opponent of all forms of racism including anti-Semitism, Corbyn's principled support for the national and democratic rights of the Palestinian people prompted an unprecedented smear campaign against him.

As a result, Labour's vote fell by two million in December 2019 as the party lost 52 Leave-voting seats to the Conservatives and Johnson's slogan to 'Get Brexit Done'. Even so, Labour's left and progressive policies to invest in British industry, tax the rich and big business, extend public ownership and strengthen workers' and trade union rights retained much of their popularity.

Now, the objective conditions are developing that make a major fightback against state-monopoly capitalism and its Conservative government both necessary and possible. These arise, firstly, from the government's disastrous responses to the Covid crisis and its strategy for dealing with the economic and financial fall-out; secondly, from the re-emergence of British monopoly capital's structural crisis; and, thirdly, from the lifting of Covid-related restrictions. The subjective conditions — including the lines and strategy required for advance — need to be built and that is our role as Communists.

#### The Covid crisis

In the two years preceding the outbreak, the Communist Party had been warning of a new and gathering crisis in the capitalist economy — and with it growing job losses, increasing unemployment and the threat

of further government attacks.

The Covid-19 pandemic from the early days of 2020 confirmed that Britain's economic and political system is designed to meet the needs of monopoly corporations, not those of the people. This is perhaps demonstrated most clearly in a major public health emergency. A decade of deep austerity cuts and privatisations had fatally weakened the capacity of the NHS, elderly care and civil emergency services to protect lives despite the heroic efforts of staff and other front-line and key workers. Paying down the public debt incurred by the bailout of the Royal Bank of Scotland, Lloyds, HBOS and Britain's whole financial system from 2008 had taken priority over preparations for a massive public health emergency, even though that debt was smaller than at any time during two-thirds of the 20th century.

In 2016, Public Health England's Exercise Cygnus indicated the need for contingency planning, extra intensive care unit (ICU) beds and substantial supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and medical ventilators to deal with a serious epidemic across Britain. Yet civil emergency planning resources continued to be cut, ICU beds disappeared, surplus stocks of PPE for hospital staff were sold off and Britain's capacity to manufacture medical ventilators continued to dwindle.

Confronted with the Covid-19 outbreak, the Conservative central government put the interests of business above those of workers, their families and the general public. The first general lockdown was not imposed until late March 2020, two months after the World Health Organisation had proclaimed a worldwide emergency and after China had shown that only the most drastic measures could control the coronavirus. The British government failed to close borders to international travel early enough, to coordinate travel restrictions with the Scottish and Welsh governments and to introduce a locally-managed public sector 'Find, Test, Trace, Isolate and Support' system. Instead of following the Welsh Labour government's example of delivering a 'Test, Trace and Protect' programme through the NHS and local councils, the British Conservative government handed its 'Test and Trace' scheme in England to companies such as Deloitte, Serco, Sitel, Mitie and G4S, creating a costly fiasco until local authorities and health bodies stepped forward. Beyond the level of presentation, the response of the SNP government has been little better. This exposed the underfunding of Scotland's health services, the failure to respond to its own public health exercises and the diminishing role of Scottish local government.

Other contracts to supply desperately needed equipment were awarded to organisations linked to Conservative government and party members and supporters, through a system of 'fast-track' access to ministers denied to others. In many cases, the equipment was over-priced or unfit for purpose, or both. The cost was billions of pounds transferred from the 'public purse' to the pockets of capitalist chancers and government cronies — and more unnecessary Covid deaths.

The hasty discharge without a Covid test of 25,000 elderly patients from hospitals to the privatised care homes in order to free up NHS beds contributed to the catastrophe. In the absence of testing, adequate safeguards and of PPE, residents and staff died in their thousands. The central and devolved governments, the NHS

and care home managers had to turn to China and other countries to buy PPE, ventilators and other vital equipment as troops and local council workers built makeshift ICU units.

As the Communist Party argued, private medical facilities should have been commandeered immediately and private sector manufacturing, pharmaceutical and R&D resources directed towards the struggle against Covid. We also demanded that government and the Health & Safety authorities compel employers to create a safe working environment in workplaces remaining open, in partnership with the trade unions, and called upon workers to take industrial action where necessary to stop the job and protect the health of themselves, local communities and the general public.

More than 40,000 people died in the first wave of the coronavirus between March and October 2020. Britain had one of the highest Covid mortality rates in the world. As infections and deaths soared, the second general lockdown in England was delayed until early November — two weeks behind Wales — and then lifted too early as a third wave gathered momentum in December 2020.

By summer 2021, there had been more than 152,000 Covid-recorded deaths across England, Scotland and Wales. More than one million people had contracted Long Covid, NHS waiting lists topped five million, and more than one million workers had lost their jobs amid a total disruption of daily life.

The isolation, uncertainty and confusion caused by the Conservative government's approach to the pandemic and to public health generally has exacerbated an already existing public mental health crisis in Britain, which accounts for a quarter of the health burden as a whole. This will have long-reaching negative effects, as those most prone to mental health issues are those in precarious work and poor living conditions, the unemployed, the young, women and minority groups.

Moreover, measures such as the proposed increase in National Insurance Contributions, the re-opening of workplaces without regard for employee safety and the removal of some safeguards against unemployment and destitution will also have a negative impact on people's mental health.

More effort should be made to bring mental health funding in line with physical health funding. This allocation of resources should be based on a study examining how health facilities work at various levels of the NHS. In order to help decide the best allocation of extra resources, the Department of Health and Social Care's Vanguard Project should expand its study on the integration of mental health treatment with the other aspects of healthcare.

The Covid crisis has also had a disproportionate impact on disabled people, who account for 60% of the Covid-related deaths despite constituting only 20% of the population. Many reported a worsening of their physical and mental health as social care was reduced or stopped altogether and access to education for disabled children was not guaranteed. This comes on top of the austerity measures following the 2008 financial crash, when the Independent Living Fund was abolished, other social benefits cut and almost all Remploy factories closed.

More generally, the Conservative government's responses to this crisis have created confusion and a massive lack of trust. Some people understand the pro-big business logic behind them while others have

strayed into conspiracy theories against lockdowns, masks and vaccines, seeing them only as repressive mechanisms of control. It is important that those who adopt such views are persuaded against them by scientific evidence and reasoned argument, thereby separating them from the reactionary forces that propagate many conspiracy theories.

Most other developed and developing countries have fared much better during the pandemic, especially those — notably socialist China, Vietnam and Cuba — that mobilised their people behind early and sweeping public safety measures. The Conservative government's disastrous record in Britain must be fully exposed in the forthcoming public inquiry into its handling of the Covid crisis.

The cost of the pandemic is not just to be measured by the number of deaths or the amount of lost production; it is also to be gauged from the damage to the education and social development of children, young people and students; the treatments delayed or missed in the health service; the distress felt by those unable to visit their loved ones, even on their deathbed; the increase in mental illness, particularly among those denied social contact for months on end; the impact of delays in the criminal justice system on the victims of crime and those accused of offences; and the harm to prisoners of prolonged confinement to their cells. All of this resulted from the Tory government's mishandling of Covid.

The immediate impact of the virus on the British economy was to cause the deepest recession since before the Industrial Revolution. During 2020, GDP fell by 11%, more than in any of the advanced capitalist countries and more than in the Depression of the 1930s or in the wake of the 2008 financial crash.

To stave off complete collapse, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced measures costing £407bn, at least £182bn of which consists of grants, loans, debt write-offs, subsidies, tax cuts and a rates holiday for business. This also includes £8bn for taking back control of the railway network and — following trade union pressure — at least £64bn for the Job Retention (furlough) Scheme to pay most of the wages of 11m workers, more than one-third of them employed in large companies.

This provided vital income for millions of families but should not be seen as wholly philanthropic, as it had the simultaneous effect of defending the interests of monopoly capital by securing consumer demand in the economy.

This amounts to the biggest state bailout of British capitalism in peacetime history. Although £1,100bn was made available to rescue the City of London's banks and markets from 2008, two-thirds of this was recouped or never used. The question today is: who will pay for this latest bailout?

#### A renewed ruling-class offensive

The Communist Party has repeatedly warned that, as we overcome Covid, the peoples of Britain face a ruling-class onslaught on jobs, living standards and democratic rights to slash government borrowing, sustain the pound sterling, boost corporate profits and fund a new Cold War.

Throughout the pandemic, the monopoly corporations have been protected, nurtured and directly supported by the Johnson government, including through 'cronyism' — the awarding of government contracts without tender to pro-Tory companies. Most small businesses and the genuinely

self-employed have been left to swim or sink. This has accelerated the monopolisation of the economy and contributed to the renewed ruling class offensive.

The 2021 Spring Budget signalled the Conservative government's intention to pay down much of its fiscal deficit from taxes on the mass of the population, initially by freezing tax allowances. Significantly, the introduction of a higher rate of Corporation Tax — with special protection for bank profits — was not scheduled until 2023. That has given the capitalist monopolies two years to conceal, minimise and transfer their profits elsewhere and the Conservative government 18 months to dilute, delete or further delay the rise.

The 2021 Budget initiated a real-terms cut in public spending of around £16bn a year, although military expenditure will rise as the Trident nuclear weapons programme expands to cost around £205bn. Military plans include a new 'Space Command'. The biggest cuts in public services, benefits and the value of the state retirement pension will remain under wraps until after the next General Election, which itself may be brought forward after repealing the Fixed Term Parliament Act.

The Conservative government has allocated less than £2bn to help school pupils catch up with lost education, in contrast to the £13bn plus proposed by policy specialists. This inadequate award should be measured against the ongoing cuts in many local authority and school budgets. The level of school funding must be increased in real terms finance to cover all losses over the past decades. Academies must be taken back into Local Education Authority control so they return to public accountability.

The impact of an increase in National Insurance contributions, suspension of the 'pension triple lock' and withdrawal of the Universal Credit uplift on poverty underlines the need to fight for a more progressive regime of taxation on income and wealth, including the introduction of a Wealth Tax on the super-rich. The Communist Party's Political Economy Commission will develop a more detailed scheme for such a tax.

Aside from the damage done to people and their communities, there is no economic case for a fresh wave of austerity. Interest rates on debt are historically low. British government debt after World War Two was reduced by a sustained period of economic growth based on massive public investment in industry and transport — not by cuts and privatisations.

Austerity is a political and not an economic decision, used as a way for the ruling class — through Conservative and Labour governments over more than 30 years — to punish the working class while preserving both its own wealth and power. As Communists, one of our jobs needs to be to dismantle the idea portrayed by the bourgeois media that 'we are all in this together' and that austerity is 'necessary' to get the country out of debt.

Today, terminating the furlough scheme threatens the jobs of millions of employees — especially young workers — at a time when the British economy is still struggling to recover to pre-Covid output levels. Although most agencies predict accelerated economic growth in 2022, they also anticipate a slowdown in 2023.

This is because the British economy continues to suffer the same structural imbalances and weaknesses that contributed to a bigger crash and recession in 2008-09 than every G7 country except Japan.

Production and construction industries comprise only one-fifth of British GDP, on a par with France and the US but far behind Germany, Japan, Russia and China. Financial services account for more than 6%, significantly higher than in France, Germany and Japan. This means continuous pressure from the City of London to maintain the value of sterling, when necessary through higher interest rates which disadvantage British exports and make borrowing for domestic investment more expensive.

Britain's international balance of payments has been continuously in deficit since 1984, increasingly reliant on income from overseas investments and the sale of financial and business services. Since 2012, a net outflow of investment income highlights the continuing dependence on inward foreign investment in the British economy as British capital finds more profitable destinations overseas.

Even after recovering from the 2008-09 recession, business investment had stayed flat for four years before the Covid outbreak, after which it slumped by one-fifth (the biggest fall of any G7 country). Productivity remains one of British capitalism's biggest problems, growing more slowly than in all but one of the other G7 economies, at barely one-quarter of the rate before the 2008-09 recession. Among the factors responsible for low investment in technology is the diversion of capital into financial assets as 'fictitious capital', making profits without producing any additional real value.

In addition, monopoly corporations such as BP, Standard Chartered, Barclays, Balfour Beatty, Unilever and Diageo are buying back shares from wealthy shareholders instead of investing in their workforce, new equipment and technology.

Big employers will be looking to cut jobs and intensify the exploitation of remaining workers, especially in non-union workplaces. Companies usually introduce automation, robotics and artificial intelligence to win a bigger market share, capturing some of the surplus value made by the workers of their competitors. This will also impact on public-sector workers due to a requirement for intensification and displacement of labour as the result of increasing financial constraints. But the displacement of human labour power across sectors and the economy as a whole tends to depress working-class purchasing power and the general rate of profit.

Furthermore, the big capitalist corporations will also use their monopoly power to maintain and increase profits through higher prices, compelling many millions of people to borrow more in a desperate effort to defend their living standards. Unsecured debt already exceeds the value reached on the eve of the 2007-08 financial crash.

These factors jeopardise the prospects for a sustained recovery. As a consequence, unemployment could climb rapidly; tax revenues are unlikely to rise enough to keep down the government's fiscal deficit, forcing an increase in public sector borrowing; and the City of London might demand higher interest rates to maintain the value of sterling and as compensation for buying Treasury bonds.

The capitalist monopoly corporations and their government, backed by the power of the state, are using the post-Covid conditions to go on the offensive against terms and conditions of employment, workplace health and safety, workers' and trade union rights, progressive taxation and pensions.

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Non-unionised, immigrant and young and inexperienced workers can expect to be targeted.

The government's 'Build Back Better' or 'levelling up' programme is a propaganda device, an opportunity to directly fund monopoly corporations from public money. Johnson asserted that economic recovery would be driven by infrastructure development, housebuilding, health and education modernisation and the like — but also made it very clear that this would not be a job for the state but for the private sector; the role of government is to provide the private sector with the tools to do it. Furthermore, his government believes that impediments to profit-making such as workers' rights, trade union organisation and 'red tape' regulations should be removed wherever possible.

This economic offensive will be accompanied by a political and ideological one. The politics of collectivism, class solidarity, socialism and communism will continue to be misrepresented, ridiculed and condemned as outdated, impractical and dangerous. Differences within the working class of sex, race, religion, nationality and other aspects of identity will be used to promote diversions and division. Progressive efforts to challenge various types of prejudice and discrimination will be mocked and dismissed, assisted by sectarianism which does not recognise the need to win the battle of ideas within the working class and its labour movement — the most powerful force opposed to the interests of the capitalist monopolies and their state, to state-monopoly capitalism.

**Johnson's Post-Brexit Britain**

The Conservative government is working to create a new post-Brexit Britain to facilitate this renewed ruling-class offensive.

The UK-EU Withdrawal and Trade & Cooperation Agreements have already incorporated the EU's capitalist free-market provisions into UK law, including the free movement of capital. Freedoms to regulate trade with most of Europe, extend state aid to industry and ensure that public sector procurement contracts favour local suppliers are severely restricted when permissible at all.

To enforce these new restrictions on government subsidies, the Conservatives' Internal Market Act has withdrawn the powers of the Scottish and Welsh parliaments and governments to operate their own state aid policies.

These agreements with the EU serve the common interests of monopoly capital, not those of the workers and peoples of Britain and Europe. Sovereignty has been secured for British state-monopoly capitalism and is fundamentally different from the popular sovereignty championed by the Communist Party and Lexit: the Left Leave campaign in 2016. A left-led Labour government might have tried to negotiate more progressive arrangements, without free trade agreements that threaten public health and environmental standards while still granting extensive rights to transnational corporations.

But the Conservative government is using the opportunities provided by Brexit to offer a vision of progress, redirecting industry — particularly in such advanced areas as electric cars, batteries and other low-carbon energy solutions — into traditional Labour-supporting areas. Temporarily stunned by the loss of hegemony resulting from the Brexit referendum and the popularity of Labour's policies under

Jeremy Corbyn, Britain's ruling class is now seeking to establish a new hegemony while advancing the interests of monopoly capital.

In order to enforce this post-Brexit economic model, Johnson's regime is reshaping Britain's political model: state power is being recentralised, the coercive arms of the state apparatus strengthened, local government weakened, democratic rights of protest, assembly and expression further restricted and trades unionism undermined. As militarism and British nationalism are promoted in an ever-closer alignment with US and NATO foreign and military policy, militarism and imperialist war remain a real and present danger. Building the peace movement including such organisations as CND, the Stop the War Coalition and the British Peace Assembly is a vital task in the construction of an alliance aimed at British state-monopoly capitalism and imperialism. The need for Britain to withdraw from NATO and for that imperialist, Cold War, anti-socialist alliance to be disbanded is underlined by every new aggressive and provocative act on its part.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill expands police and court powers to restrict and punish non-violent protests. The Certification Officer has been given new powers to levy taxes and impose fines on trade unions. The provisions of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill will be used to protect 'free speech' for supporters of neoliberalism, neoconservatism, oppression and imperialism. Communists will continue to promote the maximum broad-based unity in opposition to these measures.

At the same time as the Spycops Inquiry was exposing the widespread infiltration and disruption of legal political and campaigning bodies by undercover state operatives, the Johnson government was promoting legislation to extend immunity to intelligence officers engaged in criminal activities.

As it is, Labour's embrace of a second EU referendum in the 2019 General Election has enabled the Conservative Party to make political inroads into previously Labour-supporting working-class areas across swathes of the Midlands and North of England. The Conservative leadership and its mass media supporters are using this to whip up a reactionary English and British nationalism with anti-foreigner and anti-immigrant undertones, while pretending to take seriously the concerns of people about jobs, pay, housing and the NHS.

Political unity has been restored in the Conservative Party, although this could prove fragile as significant differences persist on relations with the EU, civil liberties, foreign aid, standards in public life and even attitudes towards China. The proceedings of the promised Covid Inquiry could also prove to be a destabilising factor for Boris Johnson's leadership.

In any event, unless the labour movement and its allies provide an alternative, progressive and left response, the Labour Party's loss of its electoral base in many working-class communities could last for at least a generation. Keir Starmer's strategic objective of making Labour acceptable to the ruling class as a party of government will almost certainly entail the adoption of policies unacceptable to large sections of the working class in the face of the ruling-class offensive.

In addition, the vast majority of Labour MPs and the party's machine do not wish to threaten the ruling class and monopoly

capitalism; indeed they choose to uphold it. With the leadership's continued expulsion of long-standing and committed socialists from the party, it is clear that their class interests are in stark contrast to those of the working class and wider labour movement. The Communist Party cannot and should not support such a position.

#### Progressive federalism

The demand for progressive federalism answers two key aspects of this challenge. On the one hand, it addresses the profound and justified feelings of loss and disempowerment felt in many working-class communities across Britain. On the other, it addresses — specifically in Scotland and Wales — the related conviction that some form of national independence would provide a solution.

Communists defend the right to national self-determination but believe, in the era of capitalism and imperialism, that this must be genuine self-determination for working people rather than strengthening the power of big business and capital and weakening the ability of workers to build a wider alliance against it. Currently, the dominant nationalist parties are closely aligned to big business interests; in Scotland and Wales, both the SNP and Plaid Cymru support re-joining the EU and therefore the full re-imposition of its pro-big business regulations which provide the basis for further monopoly capitalist penetration of local economies. Progressive federalism, on the contrary, seeks progressively to unite and empower working people as a cumulative process, against the predominant power of British finance capital and its international allies.

Economically, our regions and nations do not exist in isolation, but in mutual co-dependency. For example, almost two-thirds (60%) of Scottish and Welsh exports go to elsewhere in Britain while 19-24% go to the EU and 16-21% to the rest of the world. No persuasive case has been made for disrupting this pattern, let alone for splitting the political class struggle against British state-monopoly capitalism into three separate parts.

Workers have organised on an all-Britain basis for more than 150 years, in addition to maintaining their own national and regional organisations. The Communist Party will continue to advocate working-class, labour movement and progressive unity across the nations of Britain in a united fight against a largely united monopoly capitalist class.

At the same time, the Scottish and Welsh parliaments and governments together with the English regions and Cornwall must have the full economic, legislative and financial powers necessary to intervene decisively in the economy, to exercise popular sovereignty over monopoly capital and market forces.

This must include restoring to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd the powers over industrial and economic policy granted in 1998, subsequently overridden by the EU but which Johnson's 2020 Internal Market Act has seized for central government — most seriously the powers over state aid to industry, control over public sector tenders and related aspects of public ownership. These are precisely the powers needed for the exercise of economic democracy by national parliaments and by democratically elected regional assemblies. They are essential for reconstructing national and regional economies in ways that are publicly accountable and which progressively give working people a belief in their collective ability and power, if united on class terms, to determine their future. In the face of finance capital's parasitic and piratical character, these powers are the only way in which coherent regional and national economic development can be secured.

Likewise local authorities in England have, over the years of coalition and Conservative government, been starved of funds and stripped of decision-making powers. Johnson's flagship 'levelling up' agenda has been shown up for the meaningless, vote-chasing soundbite it is and

where funds are allocated to regions it is mainly to those with a Tory MP or a compliant mayor. Local authorities provide the structure for genuine local accountability and democracy and would represent a key element in a federal Britain. In order to assume that role, they must be restored and re-shaped.

The devolved authorities in Scotland and Wales must also be free to exercise the many other decision-making powers — more than 100 in total — that should come to them from Brussels as a result of Brexit. The SNP, Plaid Cymru, the Greens and the LibDems would send these powers back to Brussels by rejoining the EU.

Nations have the right to self-determination and the Communist Party accepts that the SNP-Green majority in the Scottish Parliament has a mandate to hold a second referendum on Scottish independence. Rather than support the constitutional status quo, or the SNP model of 'independence' under domination by the EU, NATO and the Bank of England, the CP believes that any referendum should have a third option on the ballot paper, namely, federalism. This would enable the Scottish people to vote for maximum powers for Scotland in domestic matters, while retaining the unity of the labour and progressive movements in the struggle against British state-monopoly capitalism.

A British federal parliament would have jurisdiction over foreign affairs, defence, macro-economic policy and National Insurance, also with the power to raise taxes on wealth and income. This will be essential for the redistribution of wealth from the capitalist class to the working class based on social need, and to enable investment in the economic and industrial redevelopment of the nations and regions of Britain. The federal parliament's upper chamber elected by the national parliaments and regional assemblies should have responsibility for upholding national and regional rights and revising legislation. The special status enjoyed by monopoly capital in the Isle of Man and Channel Isles, which are run as semi-feudal big business fiefdoms, will have to be ended. Their peoples and parliaments should be integrated into the new federal system.

The Communist Party reaffirms its view that parliaments should be elected by the Single Transferable Vote system in multi-member constituencies. This ensures that the elected members are broadly representative of the political preferences of the electors, but without breaking direct accountability to their constituents.

Communists and a growing number of socialists in the Welsh and Scottish Labour Parties advocate a federalism that is progressive. National parliaments in Scotland, Wales and England together with assemblies in the English regions and Cornwall should have the powers and resources to engage in economic planning, public ownership, state investment and public procurement. Powerful local and devolved government would be in a position to establish a programme of public works in the pursuit of full employment, helping to rebuild left-behind communities and narrow the stark economic and social inequalities between different parts of Britain, rooted as these are in class exploitation.

#### The anti-monopolies fightback

In accordance with its programme, *Britain's Road to Socialism*, the Communist Party is committed to building a broad, popular, democratic anti-monopolies alliance led by the organised working class.

State-monopoly capitalism and imperialism are the highest stage of capitalism — the fusion between the economic power of monopoly capital and the political power the state. It results in increased exploitation and super-exploitation of workers, the destruction of small businesses and livelihoods of the self-employed. As the role of the state in supporting and protecting monopolisation at all costs becomes increasingly clear, the need to build a mass movement led by the working class to challenge the

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system, its monopoly corporations and the state itself must become the urgent focus of the Party and the whole working class movement.

The developments of state-monopoly capitalism and imperialism progressively restrict and remove potential for significant social democratic reform of the economic and political system. This is an essential and irreversible feature of capitalism in Britain in the 21st century, underlying all the policies of 'austerity' cuts and privatisation, precarious work and super-exploitation, and resulting in the increasing rejection of social-democratic parties across Europe.

The question confronting workers more than ever before is not simply the replacement of one party in government office by a different one, but the use of state-monopoly capitalist class power against them and how to challenge it. This understanding needs to be developed throughout the working class movement. To deny it — deliberately or inadvertently — demobilises the mass movement that needs to be built to challenge capitalism itself.

This strategic task becomes even more urgent in periods of a ruling-class offensive, such as the workers and peoples of Britain experienced in the 1980s and early 1990s and following the election of the Tory-LibDem coalition in 2010.

Unity in action needs to be built between trade unions, trades councils and the movements representing women, tenants, the unemployed, anti-racists, young people, students, environmentalists, civil liberties campaigners, the LGBT+ communities and others. The objective basis for unity is that they all face the same vested interests which exploit, oppress or oppose them: the capitalist monopoly corporations, their 'market forces' and the state apparatus and mass media which protect and promote them.

In many cases, the response of the unions has been muted, with many trying to avoid the stark realities and attempting to deal with a frontal assault as if it were a series of unrelated and routine industrial disputes. Too often, for example, the priority has been to win redundancy payment deals for individuals rather than to oppose job losses for the workforce, local communities and young people.

Nonetheless, in a growing trend, workers and their unions are showing a willingness to fight to defend jobs, public services, pay and pensions. Recently, we have witnessed campaigns against factory closures at Rolls Royce (Barnoldswick), McVities (Glasgow), GKN Automotive (Birmingham) and elsewhere, and against 'fire and re-hire' threats to employment terms and conditions from companies such as British Gas, Manchester 'Go North West' buses, British Airways and Jacobs Douwe Egberts. Walkouts have forced employers to take protective measures against Covid infection. Victories have been won for union recognition, collective bargaining and higher pay. When workers organise and fight back, attacks can be resisted and advances secured.

The CWU's 'New Deal for Workers' adopted by the TUC provides the basis for a united fight-back that must include Days of Action, with a substantial pay rise for NHS workers and abolition of their professional training and registration fees to the fore in the campaign.

This approach is vital in the unfolding struggle to shape the world of work. Labour-saving technology can either be used to dump workers in the unemployment queue, or it can be introduced in a planned way, redistributing working time to suit the needs of all, allowing workers more time for family responsibilities, leisure, adult education and retraining with no loss of income. This perspective is at the core of the Unemployment Fightback initiatives taken by the Communist Party and its allies in the trade union movement. Communists will identify and work with trades unions to resist all attempts to police home-working by sophisticated electronic means.

The trade union movement should establish a jobs-led All-Britain Reconstruction Council with representatives of progressive and community organisations. Alongside the 'New Deal for Workers', such a body would research and promote the direction of investment into new and green industries and technologies. This could involve university, public, voluntary, labour movement and private sector research establishments. Such a major initiative would put pressure on government for funding and application. Major steps towards a new global infrastructure of digital privacy will also be needed to curb the harvesting and monetisation of data by social media giants such as Alphabet Inc. (Google) and Facebook Inc.

Unions must now put aside sectional and sectarian rivalry to cooperate in the recruitment of precarious, temporary, part-time, casual, young, immigrant and disabled workers and fight for the introduction of a universal status of worker, offering all those who work rights from day one of employment. When these workers take legitimate action, they deserve the support of the whole labour movement. Workers should have a right to a just share of the fruits of progress, as outlined in the International Labour Organisation's Declaration of Philadelphia (1944). Wages should not be determined by the market but by the social value that work has for the community as a whole, as clearly set out in the Institute of Employment Rights 2021 May Day 'New Deal for Workers' initiative.

For unions to succeed they have to be seen by workers as effective vehicles for defending pay, jobs and employment rights in the workplace. Achieving this objective requires a broad non-sectarian approach, including working with non-TUC unions such as the British Medical Association and the Royal College of Nursing within the health service, because even qualified medical staff can be subject to precarious employment. It must also include supporting smaller independent unions such as the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain. The Communist Party recognises the valuable work such unions are doing to organise precarious and immigrant workers.

Together with Labour-run and progressive local authorities, unions should make facilities available to unemployed workers to organise and campaign for jobs and higher, fairer and more comprehensive benefits. Unite the Union's Community membership initiative has helped bring many unemployed workers, carers and others into the trade union movement, highlighting the issues they face. Disabled People Against the Cuts continues to play a vital role in struggling for the specific rights of disabled people in and out of work. As we move towards overcoming Covid, it is vital that disabled people and their organisations are at the forefront of strategies for social advance and transformation, not least within the labour movement.

The 'Sheffield Needs a Pay Rise' and similar initiatives show how to unite low paid workers in local communities with the trade union movement. These efforts should be extended to many other cities. A network of 'workers solidarity centres' needs to be established in union offices or online, as the basis for a movement of the unemployed and workers in precarious employment across England, Scotland and Wales, with social media campaigning facilities wherever possible. These centres may have different funding sources and facilities, but it is important they are networked and campaign for the right to work.

A reinvigorated movement is needed to defend the value and universality of the state retirement pension, including its 'triple-lock' mechanism to maintain and improve its value. This is vital not only to secure a basic source of income for all of today's elderly people, free from the indignity of a Means Test, and to end poverty in old age; it will also benefit future generations who may not enjoy the benefit of a

substantial work-based pension. The rise in the state pension age must be halted, and over time reduced to 60 years of age.

Calls for a Universal Basic Income should, however, be resisted. It would be divisive and inadequate, diverting public money from public services and proposing a false 'utopian' response to fundamental questions of class ownership and economic capacity. It would provide a subsidy to low-paying employers and exploitative landlords, act as a disincentive to fight for higher wages and thus undermine trade unionism and collective bargaining. UBI is an idealist example of an attempt to replace the necessity of class struggle with the illusion of class cuddle. Furthermore, UBI could place sweeping new powers in the hands of the capitalist state and a right-wing government to cut living standards, depress wages and further weaken collectivism and the trade unions at a stroke.

No mass movement for change — let alone for socialist revolution — can be constructed without the mass participation of women. Encouraging, supporting and helping to enable their full involvement is the responsibility of all who want far-reaching change in our society. Much greater awareness is also needed of the triple oppression borne by black and Asian women workers.

Building a women's movement inclusive of Black, Asian, lesbian and immigrant workers and women not employed in traditional capitalist employment, and a stronger National Assembly of Women (Britain's affiliate of the Women's International Democratic Federation) promoting the Charter for Women at every level of the labour movement, would not only advance the struggle for justice and equality for women, for the health and well-being of children, and for peace. It would also enormously enhance the prospects for developing a broad, militant anti-monopolies alliance.

Critiques of capitalism, and a materialist understanding of women's oppression under it, are an essential part of Marxist-Leninist analysis. Much more study, discussion and education is urgently needed across the labour and progressive movements about the oppression and super-exploitation of women in class society and the importance of the fight for women's emancipation in the struggle for socialism. Setbacks to women's economic and social progress are setbacks for the working class and the class struggle as a whole.

Austerity policies place a disproportionate burden on women as workers, benefit claimants and users of public services, especially Black women and those from ethnic minority backgrounds. The Covid pandemic has further exposed and deepened inequalities in pay and security of employment. Furloughed into more unpaid work in the home and as carers and suffering increased levels of anxiety, loneliness and domestic violence, women have borne the brunt of the mishandling of the pandemic by a ruling class that puts business profits before women's welfare.

Unfortunately, the collective struggle to defend and extend women's rights is under attack from elements in the LGBT+ movement whose anti-class individualism erroneously conflates sex and gender and rejects women's lived experiences, women's self-organisation and women's safe spaces. Reactionary theories of gender identity have spread in the labour movement. Divisive ideas and theories about sex and gender are fuelled by parts of the mass and social media — some of them hostile to both women's and LGBT+ rights — to spread antagonism among sections of the working class. Capitalism, through its economic system and a hegemonic culture, attempts to divide our movements until we are all atomised, to suffer alone.

Attacks in the name of gender self-identification on advances in women's rights have to be challenged on the basis of class politics and the position of women in capitalist society. In recent years, the campaigning organisation Woman's Place UK has won a

wider understanding of the risks posed to women's rights and helped hold back proposed changes to the law that could be detrimental to women. It deserves broader support across the labour movement.

Furthermore, the Communist Party welcomes the recent Employment Appeal Tribunal decision in the Maya Forstater case, which concluded that the belief that a person's 'sex' is a material reality which should not be conflated with gender or gender identity is a belief that is 'worthy of respect in a democratic society' and is 'not incompatible with human dignity and not [in] conflict with the fundamental rights of others'.

The Communist Party recognises no antagonistic contradiction between the class-based struggle against the oppression and super-exploitation of women and the campaign to end discrimination against transgender people. Defending the gains made by the women's and labour movements should not lead to a rejection of the rights and progressive demands of people in gender transition to live without fear of discrimination and physical assault. Neither cause can be advanced by conflict and disunity within the labour movement; reasoned dialogue and debate are essential to progress.

As with women, setbacks to LGBT+ rights and progress are setbacks for the working class and the class struggle as a whole. More education and discussion is needed in the labour movement about the prejudice, antagonism and discrimination faced by LGBT+ people and the need to challenge it in the interests of working-class unity and advance.

The movement for LGBT+ rights has made major advances since the 1990s, including in law-based rights. While support has come from across the political spectrum, the policies adopted by large sections of the labour movement have brought a class-based approach to unity in the struggle against prejudice and discrimination. The Communist Party welcomes this progress, but recognises that rights in law do not necessarily end discrimination, which is still widespread and can be exclusionary and violent.

However, progress is now threatened by the co-option of LGBT+ events, imagery, language and rights training by big business, some voluntary organisations and the state. There are also ideological efforts to combat the progressive and radical politics of the LGBT+ movement and promote divisive gender identity politics. A small, privileged minority of LGBT+ people favour their own assimilation into mainstream capitalist society above anything else. Hollow 'Pride' events and the projection of 'rainbow capitalism' are a denial of the revolutionary origins of the Pride movement and are designed to erode a class-based solidarity and unity among LGBT+ people. Yet, as individuals and communities, LGBT+ people continue to struggle for access to healthcare, services, housing, or education, and many continue to face daily discrimination in workplaces and public spaces, where they may feel compelled to hide their true identities.

The Communist Party believes that only a socialist society can guarantee liberation for all LGBT+ people. As internationalists, we also recognise the struggles of LGBT+ people abroad in their struggles not only for acceptance and equality, but often for their lives. Fundamental human rights are indivisible and must apply equally to LGBT+ people everywhere.

In Britain, a reinvigorated, independent and non-sectarian LGBT+ movement will itself be strengthened by making its own constructive contribution to the anti-monopolies alliance.

A resurgent tenants movement is springing up in localities in response to the ongoing, severe housing crisis in many parts of England, Scotland and Wales.

The Communist Party's *Charter for Housing* proposes a range of policies to meet the needs and aspirations of millions of people who lack a home of their own or

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live in overcrowded or sub-standard housing. Their interests are directly contradicted by the capitalist housing market with its super-profits for the real estate, property development, construction and banking monopolies. The 'Right to Buy' scheme has hugely reduced the stock of council housing, much of which is now open to exploitation by private landlords.

The Grenfell Tower inquiry has exposed how putting cost and profit first produces criminally dangerous housing conditions for working-class people, underlining the need for strong tenants' organisations, responsive local authorities, the restoration of council direct labour departments and strict regulation of the construction and housing sectors.

All the different forces drawn towards an anti-monopolies alliance have a direct interest in the fight to overcome Britain's housing crisis. A renewed drive is urgently required to build at least 350,000 new homes a year — at least 200,000 of them in the public sector — to meet current needs. This would give an enormous stimulus to the economy and jobs. A broad movement is needed to campaign for more social and council housing, tenants' rights and rent controls and against unwarranted evictions, empty properties and the spread of second and holiday homes.

As part of the broad movement, the Communist Party will campaign for an end to 'Right to Buy', the re-establishment of local authority direct labour organisations and the outlawing of the holding of land options by developers. Additionally, we will argue for and the re-establishment of a national training board with trade union involvement to identify skills training needs in the construction sector, and meet those needs with skilled, well-paid and unionised jobs.

Similarly, campaigners who oppose NHS privatisation, the priorities and profiteering of pharmaceutical monopolies such as GSK, AstraZeneca, Pfizer UK and Spire, and who call for a comprehensive NHS including eye and dental services, would find additional support in an anti-monopolies alliance. NHS privatisation is already well underway. Campaigns to stop this process must be given full support. Indeed, the 'Toothless in Suffolk' campaign to bring back NHS dental services to the county is a prime example of a developing movement, initiated by the Communist Party, that has been highly successful in uniting communities against the private monopolies.

The upsurge in anti-racist campaigning has been sparked by police brutality and murder in the US and to a lesser extent in Britain. This has created a new Black Lives Matter movement alongside previously existing campaigning bodies, exposing and opposing structural racism. The Windrush scandal had already laid bare the institutional racism so long denied by defenders of the British state. Protests by inmates in asylum and immigration detention centres have highlighted another aspect of the same problem.

What is needed now is greater unity and solidarity between anti-racist campaigners and the labour movement. This will be all the more prolific if it is based on a growing understanding of the roots of racism in the transatlantic Slave Trade, colonial conquest and plunder and its subsequent development during the imperialist stage of capitalism. Britain's racist immigration, asylum and nationality laws are a surviving legacy of this history. They have been extended to regulate the huge flows of people set in motion by imperialist super-exploitation and war. The fight against them — and for a fair and equitable non-racist immigration, asylum and nationality system — must become a higher priority for the labour and anti-racist movements and the other forces that would comprise an anti-monopolies alliance.

Although non-state racist and fascist organisations are at a low ebb, their capacity to terrorise black and minority ethnic communities should not be underestimated; neither should their potential for regeneration in conditions of mass unemployment and a rise in reactionary nationalist senti-

ment which targets immigrants and foreigners. The recent wave of anti-Semitic attacks in Britain is a cause of concern. Building on the 2021 statement on Anti-Semitism by the Communist Party's Executive Committee and the exemplary historical record of our party in fighting it, we will initiate a programme of anti-Semitism education within the Party, coordinated by our Anti-Racist Anti-Fascist Commission in conjunction with Jewish members. The Communist Party aims to play a leading role in winning an understanding of this vexed and misunderstood question within the labour movement.

The Communist Party reaffirms its view — confirmed by experience — that fascist organisations are best denied a platform by mass action based on working-class and local community unity against divide-and-rule and the super-exploitation of cheap labour. The disadvantage and inequality experienced by ethnic minority groups arise from the very nature of class society, capitalism and imperialism; identity politics which do not recognise this will be used by upholders of the status quo to perpetuate disunity, division and therefore the capitalist system itself.

Many young people have struggled with the impact of Covid on their daily lives, on their sense of well-being and their mental health. In other respects, they are the main victims of violent crime, drug abuse and gang wars. Many of tomorrow's workers face the prospect of low-paid and unfulfilling work, inadequate apprenticeships and precarious employment in the gig economy. Students have paid tuition fees for little or nothing in return and many work long hours to support themselves during their studies, only to face years of debt after leaving college. A generation of young people face the prospect of never owning or renting an affordable home with security of tenure.

Yet still young people mobilise and fight to change society for the better, marching to save the planet, walking out of school to demonstrate that 'Black Lives Matter' and in solidarity with the Palestinian people, protesting against Conservative attacks on civil liberties and occupying college buildings to demand education justice.

The labour movement and the Communist Party must prioritise campaigns — including direct action — for policies in education, employment, housing, youth and community services and cultural facilities that can guarantee a productive and fulfilling future for our young citizens.

In particular, Communists will help promote the Young Communist League's Youth Charter, which sets out the specific policies required.

In addition to building working class unity, an anti-monopolies alliance can seek to exploit divisions within the capitalist class, isolate the monopolies and draw large sections of smaller, regionally based business into struggles against monopoly domination. The pandemic is entrenching the power and extending the reach of many big businesses, while smaller ones — often rooted in communities — are under increased economic pressure. The basis exists for widening anti-monopoly alliances at local and regional level and winning a greater popular understanding of the need for alternative policies. The Communist Party will seek to win greater understanding of the need for this perspective within unions, trades councils and the People's Assembly.

**Building an anti-monopolies alliance through discussion, debate and action must now be the top strategic priority of the labour and progressive movements and the left, including the Communist Party.** It already exists in embryo in the People's Assembly, which now needs to strengthen and broaden the involvement of trades unions and progressive campaigning movements at central, national, regional and local levels. Over the coming period, the main focus needs to shift from organising national demonstrations to building the movement in every town and city, not only against cuts and privatisation but also in favour of alternative policies.

The Communist Party proposes that this

perspective be taken forward by an Anti-Monopolies Convention in 2022 or early 2023, sponsored if possible by the People's Assembly, the *Morning Star* and a range of trade union, campaigning and political bodies.

#### The climate emergency

The environmental movement has responded with vigour and imagination to the threat of a global climate change catastrophe caused by the continued extraction and burning of fossil fuels. In the face of the climate emergency, the Communist Party reaffirms its support for the transition to a low-carbon economy with massive investment in wind, tidal, geothermal and solar power. The moratorium on fracking for shale gas should be made permanent.

Communists also reject the reliance of successive British governments on nuclear fission of uranium and plutonium. It is a costly, dangerous and hugely irresponsible option that exists primarily to maintain the specialised skills and plutonium production needed for nuclear weapons. Instead, research and development not only of nuclear fusion but of a new generation of smaller, safer thorium fission reactors should continue and remain within the public sector rather than being opened up to speculative business consortia.

Numerous ambitious policies would enable a symbiotic reinvestment in our environment, natural resources and population. Projects such as the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon must be developed urgently within the public sector in order to help arrest climate destruction and create skilled jobs.

A 'Green New Deal' would enable workers in carbon-intensive, nuclear fission and armaments industries to utilise and enhance their skills for civilian and socially-useful production. The over-reliance of Britain's industrial base, exports and R&D on military production by big monopolies such as BAE Systems, Airbus and Rolls Royce must end. A series of studies has shown how workers in the aerospace factories, shipyards, submarine bases and atomic weapon establishments could all be securely employed producing the goods so badly needed at home and abroad.

A top priority must be to build an integrated, cheap and energy-efficient public and freight transport system at local, regional and national levels, using clean and renewable energy. A sustainable home-building programme could use recycled materials and the latest conservation technology for water use, heating, cooling and energy supply.

The 'Green New Deal' would create more than 500,000 new jobs spread across every nation and region of Britain. But it is not achievable without extensive investment in technical education, skills training and retraining. Measures of social ownership in the transport and energy sectors dominated by overseas and British-based monopolies would also be essential, together with integrated democratic planning and control at local, regional and national levels. As the UN International Panel on Climate Change proposed in its 15th Report, 'rapid and far-reaching transformations' in the world's energy, transport and food systems are vital by the year 2030.

Social ownership and workers democratic rights are central to how a green socially-orientated economy will work. Workers need to be convinced that their needs and views will be at the heart of the new economy. This means challenging Capital's ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange and its direction of the technology that has massively increased the control and alienation of workers.

For its part, in the wake of the COP 26 summit, the Communist Party supports the development of mass campaigning for the 'Green New Deal' to deliver new green jobs, against a Conservative government which has no real, deep and urgent commitment to resolving the current climate emergency. More specifically, the CP will support the Stop Cambo Campaign against oil extraction off the coast of the Shetland

Isles. We emphasise that: the monopoly corporations play a major role in using the natural world to extract fossil fuels and profit from dirty energy; capitalism is responsible for the climate emergency and is destroying the planet; a system based on profits for the few will not deliver on its promises and will not commit to resolving the climate crisis; a just transition to low-carbon renewable energy solutions is the only way forward; and only a socialist economy will find long-lasting solutions to the climate crisis.

This is the political analysis that needs to be won in Green movements such as Extinction Rebellion, whose unelected leaders appear to be reluctant to draw the necessary anti-monopoly capitalist conclusions from their campaigning.

#### The Left-Wing Programme

*Britain's Road to Socialism* explains the value of formulating a Left-Wing Programme in order to highlight the key demands that challenge state-monopoly capitalism. These should be policies that can unite the broadest range of forces in the direction of an anti-monopolies alliance, for example to:

- Tax the rich and big business with wealth and financial transaction taxes.
- Defend small businesses and the self-employed against monopoly pressure and takeover by the big corporations.
- End the use of British overseas territories as tax havens by the super-rich and capitalist monopolies.
- Cut military spending to average European levels, cancel Trident, support the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and promote an independent foreign and defence policy for Britain.
- Invest in the NHS, education, emergency and other public services — eject the profiteers and return these services to full public ownership, under democratic control.
- Build a million more energy-efficient homes in the public sector over a five-year period and legislate to end the scandal of empty and under-used properties.
- Halt privatisation, outsourcing and deregulation — take the utilities, transport, banking, pharmaceuticals and armaments into public ownership.
- Develop tidal, solar and offshore wind power and other safe, renewable energy sources.
- Cut energy consumption: reduce non-essential road-building and air travel (without favouring the wealthy), insulate homes and business premises, promote local food production and plan new development to minimise essential travel.
- Link the minimum wage to earnings, end discrimination against young workers and impose universal equal pay audits.
- Consolidate the Universal Credit £20 uplift into the basic allowance, extend it to the associated 'legacy benefits' and end the harsh terms and conditions imposed on claimants.
- Replace Universal Credit with a Social Security system based on the principle of universality not Means Tests.
- Reintroduce selective price controls where rising inflation threatens to undermine working-class living standards.
- Replace the anti-union laws with a legal framework of rights in line with International Labour Organisation standards.
- Redress the imbalance of power in the workplace by reintroducing sectoral collective bargaining and removing the restrictions on the right to strike.
- Eliminate zero-hours contracts, regulate casual and agency work, outlaw fire and rehire practices and ensure full rights for all workers from day one.
- Uphold the principle of full employment as the central aim of economic policy.
- Refund tuition fees and restore maintenance grants for all students.
- Abolish Britain's racist immigration, asylum and nationality laws and replace them with a fair, equitable and non-racist system.
- Build a federal Britain with economic powers and financial resources for Scottish, Welsh and English parliaments, local

**Rather than embrace a Marxist understanding of class society, sections of the Labour left immersed themselves in identity politics of a narrow and divisive kind. Instead of confronting the realities of capitalist exploitation and state power, escapist ideas gained ground such as Modern Monetary Theory**

CONTINUED

Who profits from militarism and war?  
The capitalist monopolies!

Who profits from wars of domination and conquest? The capitalist monopolies!

That's why the struggle for peace is the struggle against global warming.

That's why the struggle against global warming is the struggle for peace.

And who loses? The dead, the injured, the displaced, their families and friends. The countries and communities stripped of their young people.

Many millions of people also lose in the developed capitalist society. In Britain, hundreds of billions of pounds are lavished on almost doubling our nuclear arsenal that could be invested instead in our public services, in doubling our overseas aid budget, in a 'Green New Deal' to create jobs in sustainable and socially useful production.

And let us never overlook the plight of the Palestinian people. The struggle for their national rights must be to the 21st century what the struggle against South African apartheid was to the 20th century.

We as a party are very clear about what the current stage in that struggle has to be, taking our line from the Palestinian Peoples Party, the PLO, the Communist Party of Israel and the Communist and workers parties of the wider Middle East. We demand a sovereign state of Palestine alongside the state of Israel in accordance with pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital.

If that sounds unrealistic in the face of Israeli intransigence, armed to the teeth by US imperialism, how much more unrealistic it is to imagine that Israel and the US would agree to a unitary state of Israel-Palestine in which the Palestinian Arab population could outgrow the Israeli non-Arab population within a generation or two.

Comrades,

In this Congress, we need to focus on those forces blocking progress on every front — economic, environmental, social and cultural — namely, the capitalist monopolies and the state power which serves, protects and promotes their interests.

These forces are more powerful than any 'here today, gone tomorrow' politician. Our analysis and our policies must be on the basis of class politics, not some obsession with Boris Johnson, Rishi Sunak, Priti Patel or 'the Tories'.

We urge unity in struggle to build a popular democratic anti-monopoly alliance against their policies and against the system they represent.

Boris Johnson may appear to be a dissolute character, but he's not a clown. He might not have any real convictions when it comes to EU membership or state intervention in the economy.

He might appear to be in it only for the attention, the status and the office. But we must also understand that he is deeply ideological. He believes absolutely in the capitalist system and in its modern form: state-monopoly capitalism,

And he vehemently opposes socialism and Communism.

The former editor of the *Morning Star*, my dearest friend and comrade John Haylett, whom we have lost since our last Congress, once told me this from a mole inside the Mayor's office at the Greater London Authority. When Johnson moved in after defeating Ken Livingstone in 2008, one of his first acts as Mayor was to find out how many copies of the *Morning Star* were ordered by the GLA's press office every day — and cancel them.

Now he is the Prime Minister who delivered Brexit. But he has delivered none of the benefits of Brexit.

The Communist Party warned at our last Congress what would happen should the Labour Party abandon its pledge to respect the EU referendum result.

Labour campaigned in the subsequent General Election for a second referendum instead — and duly lost 52 of its Leave-

voting seats to the Conservatives.

So now we have a government that believes in the sovereignty of British state-monopoly capitalism, not in 'popular sovereignty' whereby the working class and the peoples of England, Scotland and Wales fight to exercise control over capitalist market forces.

The Conservative Party and its paymasters dare not let us enjoy the real freedoms that are available now that we have escaped the neo-liberal rules, treaties and institutions of the European Union:

- 1 The freedom to end the corporate super-exploitation of imported workers.
- 2 The freedom to control the movement of capital between Britain and the rest of the world.
- 3 The freedom to finance public spending and investment from Bank of England credit or bond purchases.
- 4 The freedom to impose selective import controls to protect strategic industries such as steel.
- 5 The freedom to abolish VAT, for example on sanitary products; and
- 6 The freedom to award local public sector contracts to local enterprise.

And the Scottish and Welsh parliaments have scores of new policy-making powers which, apparently, their SNP and Welsh Labour governments would have preferred to leave in Brussels!

Comrades,

We should draw no satisfaction from the failure of the Labour Party and its leadership to mount effective opposition to the Conservative government.

The labour movement, the working class and the peoples of Britain need a mass left-of-centre party that can campaign against the ruling-class counter-offensive and win the next General Election.

To the extent that Labour retains active, organic links with the trade union movement and engages in extra-parliamentary campaigning, the possibility remains that it can turn left once again.

But whatever happens in the immediate future, the labour movement needs a strong, influential Communist Party and a vibrant Young Communist League.

As the Executive Committee's Report of Work to this 56th Congress shows, our party is active on every front: in the trade unions, for full employment and decent housing, in the National Assembly of Women and the wider movement for women's liberation, in the struggle against racism, for gay rights, in the battle of ideas and in the peace and anti-war movement.

We combine a commitment to working-class and progressive unity across the British state, against a largely united monopoly capitalist class, with a commitment to progressive federalism.

The peoples of Scotland, Wales, England and the regions must have the democratic parliaments and assemblies with the powers and resources to defend and develop their economic, social and cultural life.

The Communist Party is growing, but we must ensure that new members are encouraged, mentored and given the opportunity to participate in campaigning activity and political education.

We are a democratic and a disciplined party, united around our strategic programme, *Britain's Road to Socialism*.

Now let us have a vigorous but comradely congress that will show people how this government can be challenged, how the ruling class counter-offensive can be turned back, and how they — the people — can open the road to a higher form of society, to socialism, in the struggles ahead.

Long live the Communist Party of Britain!

Long live the Young Communist League!

Long live the international Communist movement!



# HALTING IMPERIALISM'S DRIVE TO WAR

**COMMUNIST PARTY NATIONAL CONGRESS NOVEMBER 2021 LONDON**

**International resolution as amended**

## The impact of covid

The Covid pandemic has exposed the systemic weaknesses and contradictions of imperialism — particularly in contrast to those countries that have embarked on a socialist road.

Among the countries that have weathered the COVID-19 pandemic the best are those which have developed and produced their own vaccines, followed by those which did not allow themselves to become dependent on the advanced capitalist countries. The imperialist powers led by the US, Germany and the EU have made strenuous efforts to ensure a global monopoly for the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines. A mixture of medical regulatory bodies, 'aid' regimes and unrepresentative studies and scare reports in order to limit the options of other countries — although the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are useless for administration at small community sites due to their stringent storage requirements. Even the British-Swedish AstraZeneca vaccine, which was licensed for production in India, was excluded along with Sputnik V (Russia), Sinovac (China), Soberana (Cuba) and others. Efforts to discredit the safety or efficacy of vaccines developed and produced outside the West continue, even while developing nations struggle to source enough vaccines to immunise their populations before the end of 2021, or even 2022.

Nonetheless, the socialist-oriented countries, despite their relative lack of development, have demonstrated a potential for social mobilisation and rapid response that has sharply restricted the virus. Equally, their public health care systems have proved far more resilient than those in the main imperialist countries ravaged by privatisation and austerity.

The biggest contrast is, however, international. The socialist countries, led by China, have provided vaccines and protective equipment on a mass scale. The imperialist G7 countries have hoarded vaccines, banned the export of crucial components and, in large measure, refused to relax the patent controls demanded by the pharmaceutical monopolies.

Women, in particular, will suffer the worst consequences of the pandemic. Although global infection, hospitalisation and fatality rates have so far been a little higher for men, these have also added to the burdens carried disproportionately by women as carers at home and in employment. The reallocation of the scarce resources previously dedicated to women's healthcare is further compromising their overall health and welfare.

Following the lockdowns women are also facing the disappearance of their livelihoods, driving them further into abject poverty. This is combined with rising levels of domestic and gender-based violence and the harassment or imprisonment of activists fighting for women's rights. The crisis has increased the risk to their lives across the globe.

The wider economic impact of the virus now leaves our world even more divided. For most of the world's population, economic recovery will be slow, halting and problematic. Worldwide monopolistic domination has increased at the same time as capital flows to poorer economies have drastically decreased. The inflationary pressures created by the monetary stimulus to the monopoly sectors in the United States and the European Union are already creating hyper-inflation, soaring interest rates and economic crisis across much of the developing world.

## The climate crisis

The August 2021 report of UN International Panel on Climate Change has confirmed that the climate crisis is reaching the point of no return, with little time left to avert disaster. We are now seeing extreme weather events and environmental degradation almost certainly linked to climate change. They pose an especially serious threat to further development in countries with the poorest and most vulnerable economies.

Following the failure of the 2021 G7 summit to agree on detailed targets and financial provision to reduce global carbon emissions reduction, the UN Climate Change Summit (COP26) in Glasgow provided an important opportunity to agree on action. Britain should set an example by reversing current plans to produce more fossil fuel through coal and gas extraction.

The interests of accumulative capitalism are in enduring conflict with vital and meaningful measures to reduce or reverse climate change. Monopoly capitalism's exploitation of our planet has driven us to the brink of biodiversity collapse and destruction, and shows no sign of abating despite the urgent need for system change. As the crisis deepens, the working classes are bearing the brunt of the increasing privation and insecurity. The ruling classes will use wealth and privilege to mitigate the situation for their own short-term benefit, while continuing to endanger the planet for the whole of humanity.

## The New Cold War

It is against this background of deepening poverty, global crisis and increasingly uneven development that we need to understand the preparations for a new Cold War, one even more dangerous for humanity than the first. As Communists, we have to explain why this is so and, based on this understanding, mobilise opposition.

This new Cold War is, first and foremost, driven by the Dollar's approaching loss of primacy as a world currency — and hence of the ability of US finance capital to control world markets; to develop and maintain leading-edge technologies; and to extract super-profits from across the world. As always, it is the internal contradictions of monopoly capitalism that drive imperialism — that is, its incessant need for external sources of super-profit. China's rapid rise towards becoming the world's biggest economy directly threatens the ability of US finance capital, through the Dollar's world primacy, to extract super-profits in this way.

China's rise also threatens the relationships between the US and the subsidiary agents of imperialist power in countries such as India, Brazil and Turkey whose higher rates of labour exploitation remain essential for the global operation of US finance capital. This is equally so for its current allies, the dominant finance capital interests within the EU, Japan and Britain. None of these relationships is without contradictions. As the Dollar's primacy declines, these contradictions are likely to become more intense.

Within the European Union itself, the ability of its dominant powers — Germany and France — to play a wider imperialist role depends on an internal hierarchy of exploitation and political domination. The extraction of super-profit from member countries in eastern and southern Europe is essential to the EU's international standing and role. However, as internal resistance

to this rises, so also do the pressures for the EU's external expansion. Today it is actively pushing its economic dominance further east into Eurasia, Africa and the Middle East in ways that sometimes complement — but sometimes also conflict with — the interests of the US.

It is this understanding of the imperialist nature of the new Cold War that must be the particular contribution of the Communist Party in mobilising the forces for peace in Britain.

At the same time, as in the first Cold War, Communists must be able to identify and explain the different social system of China and other socialist countries. To a greater or lesser degree, they all utilise markets within the framework of country-wide planning. To a greater or lesser degree, internal capital operates to generate profit. Yet the processes of capitalist accumulation are themselves politically subordinated to state power that is aligned to socialist goals. Mass communist parties, and their wider potential for popular mobilisation, remain the basis of this state power.

Their power to mobilise this support to sustain a growth in living standards and welfare — growth which benefits the great majority — has been the basis of the rapid economic expansion in China and Vietnam. It has also been critical for Cuba's survival as a socialist country despite US imperialism's blockade.

The ideological challenge posed by these economic and social achievements, most recently demonstrated by their response to Covid, is also a key dimension of the new Cold War. It represents a second and no less important aspect of the understanding that we must take into our own working-class movement. The strengthening of our relations with the Communist parties of China, Vietnam and Cuba remains an important part of our international work.

## China and India in the world balance of forces

The People's Republic of China has been the only major economy that has continued to grow during the past two years, despite the Covid crisis. It has eradicated extreme poverty and living standards have been rising steadily across all social groups, although income inequality — both personal and regional — remains a central concern. China's overall status is still that of a developing country, facing major challenges in overcoming the negative social and environmental effects created by what the Communist Party of China (CPC) itself describes as 'unbalanced and inadequate development', in order to complete 'socialist modernisation' over the next decade and a half.

That China, along with other developing countries, is developing its economy while simultaneously addressing the vital need to reduce carbon emissions should receive more recognition. Western economies were able to industrialise prior to having full knowledge of the consequences of human-driven climate change. Indeed, the United States alone is responsible for a quarter of historic carbon emissions, historically — twice the emissions of China, whose per capita CO2 emissions are on par with New Zealand and nowhere near those of advanced Western economies like Canada and Australia. Recognition of these facts is a matter of global climate justice.

China's successful independent development in the areas of advanced technology — ranging from 5G telecommunications to its space programme — is noteworthy,

as is its ambitious long-term international vision of the many projects making up the Belt and Road Initiative. By abolishing absolute poverty, China has already met the first of its major targets for the 2021 centenary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, which in turn positions it to meet the longer-term development goals set for 2035 and 2049. Cumulatively, China's successes are shifting the centre of gravity of the global economy away from the previously dominant Transatlantic economies of North America and Western Europe.

In response, the new Biden administration is seeking to recreate a US-led united front of the major imperialist powers, alliances and institutions, (G7, NATO, the EU and the Pacific 'Quad') to counter China's continuing rise. The September 2021 AUKUS pact, expanding the deployment of nuclear and cyberspace armaments, represents a dangerous escalation of imperialist aggression in the Asia-Pacific region. However, at the same time, it exposes the conflicting interests of US and British armaments monopolies against those of France, while for several major capitalist countries and blocs (the EU, Japan, South Korea) China has already become their major trading partner, countering US leverage. As part of the efforts to isolate China, the country faces a daily barrage of hostile Western propaganda campaigns which have two key aims.

- First, undermining the territorial unity and sovereignty of the PRC itself, currently centred on the regions of Xinjiang and Hong Kong, as well as over Taiwan (including the wider South China Sea area). The latter provides the single most dangerous possibility of the new Cold War leading to actual military conflict and presents a threat to regional and global peace.
- Second, a renewed anti-communist crusade focusing on the global ideological challenge posed by the Communist Party of China to the so-called 'market democracies'.

In Britain, these propaganda campaigns are already in full swing, often bringing together an unholy alliance of forces from the ultra-left to the right. These campaigns are also likely to entrench and intensify Sinophobia and anti-Asian racism in Britain, as well as revive Cold War-style anti-communist prejudices. We should organise opposition to attempts by the US and EU to restrain China's exports artificially, particularly in the field of advanced technology.

We oppose the attempts of the imperialist powers to enforce a new division of China and greater militarisation of the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, we reject the British government's neo-colonialist attempts to continue to interfere in Hong Kong, which returned to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 after 150 years of anti-democratic British rule. We oppose the revival of the deliberately dangerous and provocative use of British naval forces in the South China Sea, which is an unmistakable echo of the very 'gunboat diplomacy' that led to Britain's aggressive Opium Wars against China 180 years ago.

Communists insist that improved British-China relations are in the material interests of the overwhelming majority of people in Britain through improved trade, economic, cultural and scientific bilateral cooperation. Our party will continue to promote among the wider labour, democratic and peace movements a better understanding of the actual situation inside China itself. As part of this process we

will use and develop our channels of communication with the Communist Party of China to regularly disseminate to our members relevant information and examples of socialist planning.

India poses a stark and instructive contrast with China.

A big business-controlled state, closely shackled to Western finance capital, India has failed to generate comparable growth and has left almost 100m people in absolute poverty. Covid has exposed the magnitude of social-system difference and thrown a spotlight on a ruling elite that has increasingly relied on racist ideology and fascist thuggery to sustain its rule. We pay tribute to India's two allied Communist parties, the CP of India and the CP India (Marxist), for their steadfast defence of democracy and socialism and to the mass organisations of peasants and workers who have led the revolt against attempts to open the rural economy to full domination by transnational corporations. Equally, we pay tribute to the work of the mass anti-imperialist All India Peace and Solidarity Organisation affiliated to the World Peace Council. As Communists in Britain, we will continue to work with the Association of Indian Communists to win solidarity within the trade union and labour movement for their struggles and to expose the continuing role of British finance capital.

#### **The European Union — an unstable imperialist project**

As Communists, we welcome the fact that Britain has officially left the EU, even though this has taken place through the self-serving manoeuvres of a neoliberal government. The arguments for genuine popular sovereignty, socialism, workers' democracy, anti-racism, migrant rights and internationalism as put forward by Lexit: the Left Leave Campaign must continue to expose the contradictions, the imperialist belligerence and the repressive domestic policies of the EU. We must work alongside Communist and workers' parties within current EU countries to promote and support socialist alternatives and to work towards a rupture from the EU stranglehold.

The European Union has faced a decade of unprecedented existential threats: the self-inflicted European debt crisis, the resulting Greek debt crisis, the migration emergency, Brexit and a surge in popular support for anti-EU parties. At the same time, the internal political equilibrium of the EU has shifted. Since the founding of the European Parliament, a grand coalition of social-democrats, liberals and conservatives had consistently held a parliamentary majority and over 60% of the vote. Over the past decade, European social-democratic parties following Blairite 'Third Way' policies have suffered dramatic decline. The new grand coalition is instead an even more openly militaristic and reactionary alliance of Western conservatives and Eastern far-right nationalists. There are ongoing moves to end the national veto on EU foreign policy that has so far impeded the anti-Palestinian policies of France, Hungary, Austria and Germany. There is also a heightened level of military integration with the NATO alliance and the consolidation of a Franco-German military-industrial complex.

We note the increasing awareness of the EU's essentially imperialistic character throughout Europe and that Switzerland has recently pulled out of talks to establish a far-reaching Institutional Framework Agreement with the EU that was seen to infringe that country's internal democracy. This awareness is now developing, though unevenly, within trade unions across the EU — particularly in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece.

The EU is responding to its political and economic insecurity by stepping up Cold War rhetoric against Russia and China, and by a neo-colonial expansion of the European 'sphere of influence' in Ukraine, Belarus, Africa and central Asia.

The Ukrainian government — which

incorporated the fascist paramilitary Azov Battalion into its armed forces and outlawed the Communist Party of Ukraine — enjoys the active support of the EU, US and British governments. It currently receives hundreds of millions of dollars in US military aid as well as hosting a symbolic contingent of British troops. Regime change in Ukraine was followed immediately by a wide-ranging Association Agreement with the EU, the removal of EU tariffs, and coordination on the free movement of labour.

Against the background of stagnant economic growth, the EU now sees opportunities for market expansion in Belarus, the only remaining European member of the Non-Aligned Movement. Alongside new markets for goods and labour, the successful state-owned industries of Belarus are in the sights of EU, British, and US monopoly capital.

We view with particular concern the rapid development of an EU military-industrial complex, integration with NATO and the militarisation of the European Arctic. Abuses of migrants and asylum seekers by the EU border agency FrontEx — itself infiltrated by far-right groups — continue.

Across the European continent, working people suffer the consequences of EU imperialism. The response to Covid has intensified existing differences in economic development. Unemployment in Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal runs at three and four times the level in Germany. The dramatically different amounts of Covid-recovery finance allocated to business will further deepen developmental contradictions. Germany, with only 4% unemployment, has been able to provide a massive €3,100bn in state aid grants to its firms, 51% of all state aid grants allowed by the EU Commission. By contrast, the Spanish government, with 16% unemployment, has only been able to afford a minimal amount (€280bn, 4% of the EU total). The same is the case in Italy with over 10% unemployment.

In the midst of these contradictions, Ireland is caught in a proxy war between British, EU and US imperialisms and we reaffirm our solidarity with the Irish people. It is the partition of Ireland and the continuing colonial domination of the northern part of Ireland by British Imperialism that result in the political and economic problems said to be caused by Brexit — a glaring reality avoided by all parties in the British parliament.

It is time to end partition once and for all and to demand from the British state a declaration of intent to withdraw from Ireland.

- We support the demand and will campaign for a 'Border Poll' in Ireland to allow the people of Ireland to decide their own future.
- We oppose the British government having a veto on the timing of such a border poll and on the outcome after the result.
- We will work to encourage the British labour movement to give maximum support to the democratic demands by progressive forces in Ireland for an all-Ireland and universally free Public Health Service; an all-Ireland Bill of Rights for workers; and all-Ireland free and universal public services. These would be concrete steps towards building an all-Ireland economic, political and social infrastructure.
- We reaffirm our solidarity with the Communist Party of Ireland and its demand for the British government to disengage from the affairs of the north of Ireland. We condemn the British government for seeking to extend immunity to members of the British armed forces and security apparatus accused of crimes against international law in the north of Ireland (as in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere).

Meanwhile, British military occupation continues in its historic colonies of Cyprus and Gibraltar while US bases are scattered across the continent. We call for the im-

### **The EU is responding to its political and economic insecurity by stepping up Cold War rhetoric against Russia and China, and by a neo-colonial expansion of the European 'sphere of influence' in Ukraine, Belarus, Africa and central Asia.**

mediate removal of British troops and in Cyprus the handover of base territories, as part of a general de-occupation of the Mediterranean. We also call on the British government to play a constructive role, as one of the UN guarantor powers, in the continuing UN-sponsored negotiations to end Turkey's illegal military occupation of northern Cyprus and establish — through a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation — a united and sovereign country.

#### **Challenges in the Middle East and obstacles to progressive development**

Imperialism's historical domination in the Middle East after the First World War has been continually reinforced through coup d'état, as in Iran, or through destabilising military interventions as in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya. The aim has been to assert and maintain the hegemony of the US and its allies over the region's natural resources, cheap unregulated labour, energy and trade routes, and growing consumer markets.

In recent years, the Middle East has been turned into an arena of struggle between the interests of the US and its EU allies and those of China and Russia. Against this backdrop, there has taken place a deepening of attacks against labour and social rights and the looting of public resources — including mass privatisation of public services and strategic sectors of the national economies previously established in the 1950s, '60s and '70s by mass-based, anti-colonial and overwhelmingly secular political movements. We pay tribute to the Communist and workers' parties in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Iran and Egypt who played a key part in securing these advances and continue to defend them.

However, in explaining these setbacks we should not ignore the significance of historic and localised determining factors and simplistically dismiss them as imperialist constructs designed to maintain backwardness and hence exploitation. We must also consider that today global capitalism needs buoyant markets and a modern bourgeois class. On the one hand, keeping the Middle East in perpetual backwardness may not tally with the current needs of imperialism; on the other, the geopolitical strategies of a hegemonic US imperialism have contributed to perpetual instability.

Therefore, while recognising the specific and localised character of reactionary ideologies in the region, it is a fact that the conditions of exploitation and domination imposed by imperialism have formed a permanent backdrop to attempts at national development and modernisation. The extreme conservative and reactionary content of the ideologies espoused by ISIS and al-Qaeda have not emerged entirely autonomously from the effects of imperialism.

Political Islam is a phenomenon that ultimately channels the people's demands away from those genuinely concerned with progress and anti-imperialism. Over the last half-century and certainly from the early 1980s, this has led to the balance of forces being tipped overwhelmingly in favour of 'Political Islam' both materially (financially and militarily) and subjectively (ideologically). This process has been quite amenable to imperialist interests and designs for the region. It has seen the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Shi'a theocracy in Iran, the Mujahideen followed by the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, ISIS and IRI-backed Shi'a militia in Iraq following the Shi'a-Sunni fragmentation, and the post-Gaddafi jihadi and takfiri militancy in Libya.

Most recently, the withdrawal of US and British troops from Afghanistan and the transfer of power to the Taliban represents a severe blow to potential social progress, democratic liberties and in particular the rights of women, gays, lesbians and minority groups such as the Hazaras in that country. The contrast between today and the gains and prospects enjoyed by people under the rule of the People's

Democratic Party, backed by the Soviet Union, could not be clearer. In their new struggle for democratic rights and development, the Afghan people will need all the support that communist and other progressive forces in China, India and around the world can extend to them. The past five decades confirm that imperialist intervention has no progressive role to play in Afghanistan.

Additionally, there has been the development of crude ethnic and tribal alignments often translating to petty reactionary nationalism at regional level and leading to inter-ethnic and sectarian strife — a situation which can be easily manipulated by regional and/or imperialist powers and made worse by the addition of Political Islam to the equation.

This has been combined with a century of continual attack — both physical and ideological — upon progressive forces, the left and secular nationalists by colonial powers, imperialist proxies and Islamist forces. This has significantly weakened the connection between the left and its traditional social base among working people, with cumulatively detrimental effects on civic and social movements, trade unions and women's organisations.

The development of a national bourgeoisie and national productive forces has not, therefore, been a classic process and has been further deformed over the past generation by the advent of neoliberal economics and globalisation. As a result, the Middle East remains a prime focus for imperialist manipulation, particularly by the United States whose control of the region's petrochemical resources, traded in dollars, remains a critical element in US global hegemony.

Over the past decade and a half, as part of its military 'pivot to Asia', the US has sought to maintain that hegemony along new lines. Its 2009 'new plan' for the Middle East envisaged 'balancing' regional powers in ways that enabled the US to maintain overall control with minimum military commitment. This State Department plan involved co-opting the leading and most reactionary regional powers: Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Iran and, not least, Israel. As an overall strategy, it has been maintained ever since despite minor deviations under Trump. It has spawned violent and genocidal proxy wars in Yemen, opened lucrative markets for US and British arms and particularly targeted secular states with anti-imperialist traditions, such as Syria, and any genuinely secular and progressive movements for national liberation such as the PLO. Today, Syria faces de facto partition and destabilisation with the loss of most of its oil and water resources to a new political entity in the country's mainly Arab-populated east controlled by Kurdish forces armed, financed and directed by the US.

Israel has exploited this new balance of power to consolidate its grip over the whole of the territories illegally occupied since the 1967 war, building illegal settlements and shifting its capital to Jerusalem — all in defiance of UN resolutions but with the support of the United States. This right-wing realignment of forces has created circumstances in which the US-allied Arab dictatorship has given recognition to Israel under its now amended and specifically Jewish constitution.

The Israeli government's recent proposal for a 'settlement' of Palestinian territorial demands within a 'single' Israeli state underlines the need to step up international support for the PLO's demand for the enactment of UN resolutions. These require Israel's withdrawal to its pre-1967 boundaries and the creation of a viable Palestinian state, with the right of return for refugees and its capital in East Jerusalem, alongside the state of Israel. It is a demand backed by our sister parties — the Palestine Peoples Party and the Communist Party of Israel — to whom we extend our solidarity.

**Africa: a focus of imperialist expansion**  
Sharpened by the economic crisis which was gathering pace pre-pandemic and in anticipation of new opportunities for extracting super-profits in the aftermath of Covid-19, imperialist interest in the continent of Africa remains unabated.

In geopolitical terms, the scramble to deepen hegemonic control of the vital oil route through the Red Sea and off the southern coast of the Mediterranean — from Egypt in the east to Morocco in the west — is likely to be a catalyst for continuing imperialist interference, destabilisation and conflict initiation in all countries along those strategic seaboard. The ongoing fate of Libya serves as a potent warning that all such interventions must be resisted, as does the continuing stream of migrants driven to make the dangerous sea-crossing from Africa to Europe in search of stability and security.

The intention to intensify the looting of Africa's rich resources, especially by former colonial powers including Britain and France, has been made plain in both policy-making and practice, and the continent promises huge returns on investments.

The Conservative government's new 'Global Britain' approach in respect of Africa sets out a stall that barely falls short of a return to colonial plundering, in cooperation with the big bourgeoisie in many countries and their reactionary regimes. Inter-imperialist rivalries will continue to play out on the continent, with challenges to the US from the EU and others encouraging Washington to strengthen its alliances while destabilising rivals economically, politically, and militarily.

With the rapid development of a new Cold War, the involvement of China in Africa as a provider of technological investment and major infrastructure developments, as well as becoming the continent's largest trading partner, will be opposed directly and indirectly by imperialism. Africa's newly expanding and lucrative business, governmental and consumer markets are the much sought-after prize.

As well as retaining troops and bases in Djibouti, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Somalia, Britain continues its colonial occupation of the Chagos Islands, including Diego Garcia, declared illegal by the UN. The population of Diego Garcia were forcibly deported, before the entire island was given over to the US as a mega-military base for bombing missions and surveillance activities across East Africa, the Middle East and Asia. To date, there has still been no effective reparation or even remuneration for the exiled Chagossians.

The Islands must be demilitarised and returned to the Republic of Mauritius, as stated unequivocally by the UN General Assembly in May 2019. This is urgent because Britain's holding of the territory serves to endorse other unlawful occupations such as that of Western Sahara by Morocco, backed by the US in exchange for Morocco's endorsement of Israel's occupation of Palestine. The struggle of the Sahrawi people for full sovereignty and of the Chagossians to return to their land must be supported.

The peoples of many countries of Africa continue to endure the long-term effects of colonialism and racism; they face corrupt governments, failing economies, collapsing or non-existent public services and the associated destitution. Wars and Islamic terrorist insurgency continue to create havoc and suffering for millions.

The struggle for peace and freedom is, however, taking place on many fronts. In South Africa, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the South African Communist Party is leading an intense struggle against state capture and neoliberal austerity. The SACP continues to pursue its strategic aim of deepening and extending the people's liberation from the legacy of apartheid in order to take forward the national democratic revolution.

In Sudan, the Communist Party and

progressive left allies are standing firm against a return to military dictatorship. In Swaziland, communists are at the forefront of the struggle to overturn half a century of British-imposed Mswati tyranny. Organised protests are gaining momentum in Algeria, challenging the status quo and urging a deepening of democracy. International solidarity against imperialism, and in particular in support of our sister parties, will be essential if the people of the continent are to achieve liberation and the right to determine their own just and peaceful future.

#### US domination of the Americas

Across Central and South America a variety of progressive forces are fighting to improve the lives of the people while right-wing and centrist forces continue to push through pro-US neoliberal agendas which would see every element of their nation being sold to the highest bidder.

Recent advances in Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, and Guyana have witnessed progressive forces either securing the political powers required to begin reshaping their nations or making strong advances towards their class-conscious vision.

In Cuba, Venezuela and Nicaragua, the threat of attack from the US remains ever-present and recent attempts to overthrow elected governments or force elections against the people's will show the urgent and continuing need for solidarity. We pledge our support for the Communist Parties of Cuba and Venezuela and progressive forces in Nicaragua. We must strengthen our work in this area and, in particular, win and maintain support in the trade union and labour movement. Despite the British government voting at the United Nations against the US blockade of Cuba, it fails to challenge the US on this. We must support all measures to ensure the removal of the blockade. Furthermore, the Communist Party of Britain recognises the importance of building support within our local communities for Cuba against US imperialism. CP branches are encouraged to work with solidarity movements in towns and cities across Britain to strengthen opposition to the illegal boycott and sanctions.

Colombia continues to be the harshest battleground and a significant key to weakening US influence across the continent. The constant attacks on trade unionists and socialists show that the US and the local elite have no regard for human life or democratic and trade union rights and will seek to block the possibility of any progressive movement gaining power. Those campaigning to liberate the people of Colombia need our support — with the understanding that victory for these forces would both help free the continent from US domination and see significant steps being made towards justice and progress.

While — apart from the Malvinas — Britain no longer occupies territory in Latin America, British-based petrochemical, mining and agri-business companies play a major economic role in Brazil, Chile, Peru, Colombia and Argentina and are responsible both for high levels of environmental degradation and political and social repression. Britain has closely supported US attempts to subvert the elected government in Venezuela — as witnessed by the Bank of England's illegal seizure of Venezuela's gold reserves. Britain's Communists and progressive forces must continue to expose and fight these injustices, knowing a defeat for British imperialism at home is also a victory for comrades thousands of miles away.

#### Solidarity and support for the international movement for peace

Imperialism, the exercise of monopoly capitalist exploitation and power globally, continues to be the fundamental threat to world peace. This has been demonstrated recently by wars and threats of wars across the world, including conflicts

in the Caucasus, eastern Africa, Syria and Yemen. Inter-imperialist rivalry, the competition to control resources and markets and to secure compliant neo-colonial relations, together with the endeavour to stifle socialist development and even the notion of socialism, are the underlying causes of war. Imperialist conflicts and occupations across the world, particularly throughout the Middle East, kill hundreds of thousands and displace millions.

There is an increasing drive to militarism and war from Britain, the EU and its constituent states and the USA with the intention of protecting imperialist super-exploitation in the global south, containing Russia and — most significantly — waging a new Cold War against China and its peaceful, people-centred model of development and cooperation. This military drive provides super-profits for the major arms manufacturers, all of which are directly sponsored by capitalist powers, and fuels ethnic and sectarian conflicts across the globe. We should redouble our support for the Campaign against Arms Trade (CAAT).

As the recklessness and destructive capacity of imperialism continues to develop in the coming period, so too must the determination and unity of the peace movement both in Britain and internationally. Our party must intensify work to mobilise support for the 2020 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW): working to get local authorities to pass resolutions in support of the Treaty, in line with the ICAN Cities Appeal; asking MPs to sign the ICAN Parliamentarians Pledge; and winning signatures for any petitions demanding compliance with the TPNW by the British government. NATO, as a nuclear-armed 'first strike' alliance, remains the biggest single threat to world peace and we must enhance the effectiveness of our demand for Britain's withdrawal and NATO's disbandment.

The US military presence in Britain, as part of the NATO alliance, prevents Britain having an independent non-interventionist foreign policy and undermines our sovereignty. The British state colludes with US imperialist actions and violations of international law emanating from RAF (USAF) bases in Britain and gives their personnel extensive diplomatic immunity.

Striving for Britain's withdrawal from NATO must also mean a vigorous campaign to rid Britain of the US military presence by explaining the political reasons behind the existence of USAF bases in Britain and their connection with NATO. This campaign should also include the demand to repeal the Visiting Forces Act and its extension covering non-NATO members participating in the so-called 'Partnership for Peace' plan.

Wars and military preparations add greatly to carbon emissions, thereby increasing global warming and — at the same time — preventing the level of international cooperation needed to halt climate change and to mitigate its inevitable effects. War and other pressures on our planet are the result of exploitative and imperialist ambitions. Transnational corporations — created by the capitalist class to act in pursuit of profit — operate almost with impunity across the globe. National governments are held hostage and cannot resist their quasi-legal agreements that exacerbate the evolving environmental disaster, hold back public interests and entrench inequality.

The Communist Party, which has always played a leading role in the struggle for peace in Britain, must deepen and strengthen the movement as a whole through our contribution, drawing on our links with Communist and workers parties and peace organisations across the world. The Communist Party will continue to work to promote and develop the activity of the World Peace Council and its affiliate the British Peace Assembly.

## Communist Party officers

The January executive committee elected the following members to the political committee

#### Chair

Ruth Styles

#### First Vice-chair

Tony Conway

#### Second Vice-chair

Mollie Brown

#### General secretary

Robert Griffiths

#### Trade union organiser

Andy Bain

#### International secretary

Kevan Nelson

#### Women's organiser

Carol Stavris

#### Treasurer

Jonathan Havard

#### Book-keeper & Accountant

Martin Graham

#### Morning Star organiser

Hugh Kirkbride

#### Membership organiser

Lorraine Douglas

#### Political education organiser

Bill Greenshields

#### Elections organiser

Andy Chaffer

#### Director of communications

Phil Katz

#### Communist Review Editor

Martin Levy

#### Assistant Communist Review editor

Jonathan White

#### Unity! editor

Nick Wright

#### National admin. secretary

David Pettifor

#### Office manager (temp)

Liz Payne

#### Political Committee:

Andy Bain, Mollie Brown, Ben Chacko (Alternate Member), Tony Conway, Lorraine Douglas, Alex Gordon, Robert Griffiths, Johnnie Hunter, Kevan Nelson (Alternate Member), Carol Stavris, Ruth Styles.

#### Organisation committee:

A Chaffer (until June 2022), Lorraine Douglas, Robert Griffiths, Jonathan Havard, Phil Katz, David Morgan, Liz Payne, David Pettifor, Ruth Styles, Nick Wright, Johnnie Hunter; other members to be confirmed.

#### Commission convenors:

Andy Bain (TU coordinating committee), Kevan Nelson (International), Carol Stavris (Women), Liz Payne (Peace), Bill Greenshields (Political Education), Sean Cannon (Anti-Austerity), Richard Hebbert (Environment), Lorraine Douglas (Housing), Tony Conway (Anti-Racism Anti-Fascism), Stuart McGill (Political Economy), Andy Chaffer (Elections), Hugh Kirkbride (Work), Mike Quille (Culture), Tam Morrison (Progressive Federalism); others to be confirmed (LGBT+, Health, Mental Health, Disabilities, History, Science & Technology, Popular Sovereignty).



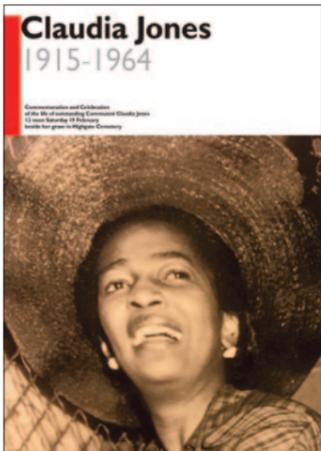
# EVENTS & IDEAS & ACTION

The claim (presented as an essential postulate of historical materialism) that every fluctuation of politics and ideology can be presented and expounded as an immediate expression of the structure, must be contested in theory as primitive infantilism, and combated in practice with the authentic testimony of Marx, the author of concrete political and historical works. **Antonio Gramsci** *Prison Notebooks*



## EVENTS

**Scottish communists** involved in trade union organising and trade union solidarity work are meeting via zoom on Wednesday 16 February at 7pm. Details in *Party Organiser*



Commemoration and celebration of the life of outstanding communist **Claudia Jones** 12.noon Saturday 19 February beside the grave of Claudia Jones in Highgate Cemetery.

The next meeting of the Communist Party's **Progressive Federalism Commission** is Thursday 21 February 7-8.30 pm.

The next meeting of the party's **Anti-Racist, Anti-Fascist Commission** for district and nation representatives is on Saturday 26 February at 10.30 am. More details to follow.

**State power, transitions and modes of production.** Marx Memorial Library has organised three lectures – to be delivered by Jonathan White and John Foster which set out and explain the different transitions from one mode of production to another across the centuries. Thursdays at 7pm 10 February, 17 February, 24 February [www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk](http://www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk)

**Midlands rally** The Midlands TUC and the Morning Star, have teamed up to host an **online rally**. Dave Ward general secretary of the CWU, Ben Chacko *Morning Star* editor, Lee Baron TUC Midlands secretary, and Dani Harvey, PCS midlands secretary will speak. Saturday 12 February at 11:00am <https://tinyurl.com/279cfp7y>

**Demystifying modern, socialist China: From Belt & Road to Xinjiang.** Kenny Coyle, Carlos Martinez, and Calvin Tucker are to speak at an online meeting organised by the new established Bedfordshire and the Northamptonshire Morning Star Readers and Supporters group. 2 pm on Sunday 6 March

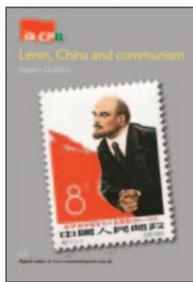
**International Women's Day meeting** organised by the Young Communist League Saturday 5 March

**50th anniversary of the victory of the 1972 miners' strike.** Monday 28 February

The Young Communist League magazine **Challenge** is now both a print publication and a web-based news hub. Expertly edited and designed with a wealth of original analysis and commentary it is a highly stimulating and visual addition to the YCL's innovative politics. Still available is the YCL's free centenary edition. <https://challenge-magazine.org>



**Edinburgh young communists** have started a campaign to press Edinburgh City Council to approve plans and funding for a Safe Consumption Facility (SCF) in Edinburgh; Glasgow has already approved these Edinburgh YCL's *Save Lives, Save Money, Safe Consumption Campaign* aims to spread awareness for alternative, healthcare-based approaches to Scotland's drug crisis. Scotland has the highest rate of drug-related deaths per capita in all of Europe, estimated to be three and a half times higher than in England and Wales. Drug use disorders are now the sixth leading cause of premature deaths in Scotland, with 1339 drug-related deaths in 2020, an increase of 5% from 2019, the highest recorded increase. Drugs were responsible for the death of 5 in 100,000 people; by 2016-20 this rose to 16 in every 100,000. The YCL says that these facts expose the gross negligence of public officials and government bodies whose policies have not only failed to curb spiralling drug deaths but caused immeasurable damage to Edinburgh's working-class communities in the process. measures. Hear Duncan of the Edinburgh YCL make the arguments. <https://tinyurl.com/3j27n4hf>



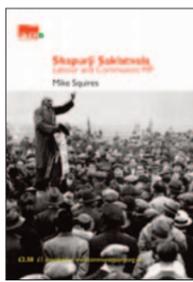
**Lenin, China and communism** Rob Griffiths responds to students in Bosnia Herzegovina and China. £2



**Johnson's post-EU Britain** John Foster on progressive federalism. £2.50



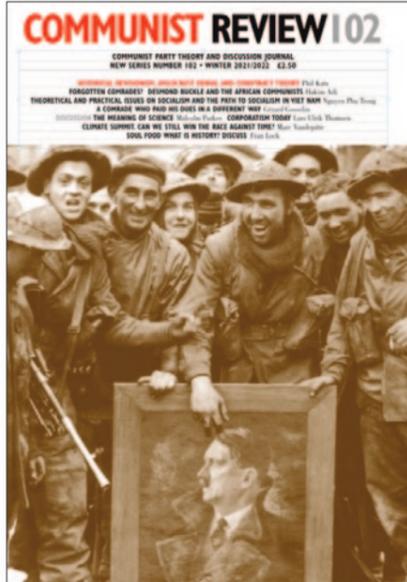
**Banks and banking** by the Communist Party's Political Economy Commission. £2



**Shapurji Saklatvala.** Out now! Dr Mike Squires' account of the life and work of the Communist and Labour MP £2.50 £1 download



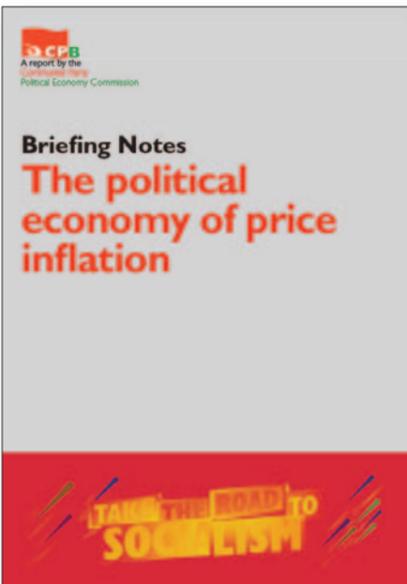
**Women and class** Mary Davis deals with current controversies. in feminist thought. £4.50



## COMMUNIST REVIEW

Theoretical and discussion journal Winter 2021/2022 Number 102

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Historical revisionism, Holocaust denial and conspiracy theory *Phil Katz*  
Forgotten comrades? Desmond Buckle and the African communists *Hakim Adi*  
Theoretical and practical issues on socialism and the path to socialism *Nguyen Phu Trong*  
Picasso: A comrade who paid his dues in a different way *Gérard Gosselin*  
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## A NEW BRIEFING ON INFLATION FROM THE COMMUNIST PARTY POLITICAL ECONOMY COMMISSION

Briefing number 4 on price inflation is prepared by the Communist Party political economy commission is now published. Expert and accessible this is ideal for branch study and for circulation to union representatives involved in pay claims.

Available at <https://tinyurl.com/yckk5nmj>

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