

Britain's working class is imposing its will on the government and employers

FIGHTBACK

BILL GREENSHIELDS

The National Education Union overnight changed government lockdown policy on the Covid-19 crisis after thousands joined its online protest.

Just hours after Boris Johnson declared schools were a safe working environment education staff forced a 'health and safety' delay in fully opening schools.

Royal Mail workers have won a pay deal that ended a two-year

dispute on job security, pay and working hours.

The Communications Workers Union won a two-year pay deal backdated to April 2020, worth 3.7%, and a one-hour reduction in the working week. The company said it would increase workers' pay by 2.7 per cent from April 2020 and by another 1 per cent from April 2021.

CWU general secretary Dave Ward said: 'This is a landmark agreement that means that even in these incredibly difficult times,

when members stand in solidarity with their union, it is entirely possible to plan a future that can still benefit workers, customers and the company.

Communist Party industrial organiser Andy Bain said: 'The working class movement is the driving force for progressive change in Britain and these signs of a mounting tide of industrial action can blunt the ruling class offensive.'

P3 Communist Trade Unionists

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Unity!



Rolls Royce workers win strike



'Our members at Barnoldswick have voted to secure a long-term future – a future we couldn't have

negotiated if it wasn't for the determination and solidarity they've shown, with their families and an entire community alongside them on the picket line.

I want to say how proud I am of each and every one of them. We always say there's power in the union, but that's really only true when we are well organised, confident, and led by such lions with that same drive and determination to win.

So, I want to thank our shop stewards, Mark Porter our convenor, and Ross Quinn, our regional officer, without whose leadership and ability to inspire and motivate our members we wouldn't be where we are today.' UNITE's Steve Turner

CAPITALISTS ARE interested principally in profit – this is why jobs are exported to super-exploit cheap labour.

This was the aim of Rolls Royce when – last August – it announced its intention to sack 350 workers at the Barnoldswick plant in Lancashire and export aircraft engine jobs to Singapore. This threatened thousands of additional jobs in the supply chain

Rolls Royce expected the workforce and the community to lie down and take it. They got a lesson in class power.

Rolls Royce workers have a deep pride in their skill and work, and in their tradition of solidarity and organisation in the factory and the community.

Lancashire County Councillor Azhar Ali said, 'This is not just about jobs in Barnoldswick, but the heart and soul of manufacturing in Lancashire'.

For nine weeks the workers took all-out strike action during which the blustering management threatened to sack an additional 140 workers and transfer their aero-engine structures

work to a Spanish company – a 'risk and revenue sharing partner' of Rolls Royce. Monopoly tentacles reach near and far.

The response of the workers and their union UNITE was to strengthen their solidarity, winning and consolidating the support from the local (and the not-so-local) community. The picket line – solid throughout – welcomed reinforcements from family, friends and local trades union councils.

The workers developed their own plans for the future – not based on profit and greed – but on the future needs their community and the nation and the well-being of our class.

They put together demands and plans for repurposing the plant for new socially useful products.

In the face of such solidarity Rolls Royce threw in the towel and agreed:

- ★ A 10-year manufacturing future guarantee for the site
- ★ A guaranteed minimum headcount of 350 workers
- ★ The creation of a training 'centre of excellence' of advanced manufacturing

★ The development and manufacturer of zero carbon technologies

★ A plan to develop advanced manufacturing work, supporting carbon free energy generation, along with synthetic fuels and green technologies.

★ A guarantee of a two year no compulsory redundancy agreement to allow this to happen

UNITE has shown what unions can do. Facing challenges, with well organised, informed and supported workforces – who call the shots in their struggles.

Rolls Royce workers at Barnoldswick know how to fight. We all have to fight the same battles for jobs and skills, for security and pay over and over again for as long as capitalism rules the roost.

But some struggles, coming at this particular time inspires us for that coming battle.

BILL GREENSHIELDS IS A FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIbj1Dyd7gl&feature=youtu.be>



RENT STRUGGLE

Student occupation victory

NICK WRIGHT

Late last year students at Manchester University occupied an empty tower block on campus to put pressure on university authorities to reduce student rent charges.

After two weeks of an innovative – and socially distanced – occupation they forced the university authorities into conceding a 30 per cent reduction.

Student activist Hannah Philips says the £12 million payout is the largest ever win for a university rent strike.

Hannah took time out from revising for her biochemistry finals to give Unity! the background to the dispute.

Coronavirus crisis conditions at the university were putting enormous pressure on student she says.

Barebones distance teaching, lockdown conditions on campus, 'rubbish' mental health support for isolated and stressed-out students combined with the 'provocative' erection of a two metre high fence to cage student in the campus produced an explosive situation.

A spontaneous night time protest resulted in the barriers being removed but the sense of collective power enthused the students.

CONTINUED Page 3



BREXIT

'The UK-EU trade agreement is a compromise between the interests of British state-monopoly capitalism, on the one side, and those of German and French monopoly capital – represented by their states and the EU – on the other.' Communist Party

UK-EU TRADE DEAL

Sovereignty still compromised

Communists have consistently pointed out that the big monopoly capitalists of Britain and the European Union have sufficient interests in common to reach a deal, however unlikely the prospect at any particular time.

ROB GRIFFITHS AND JOHN FOSTER

SUCH AN Agreement was never intended by either side to benefit the working classes and peoples of England, Scotland, Wales, or the other countries of Europe.

This new deal frees Britain from the sovereignty of the EU but not from the sovereignty of big business, whether British, European or US. It seeks to maintain the domination of capitalist free market rules and policies across a European single market, enforced through British law, World Trade Organisation rules and new UK-EU arbitration mechanisms.

Under the new agreement (Title IV), capital will remain free to shut down operations and invest anywhere in Britain and Europe, regardless of job losses, regional inequalities or the requirements of balanced economic and social development. However, access rights for the City of London to Eurobond and other EU financial markets remain to be worked out in detail (Title II).

Importantly, in the case of public procurement contracts and compulsory competitive tendering, the agreement (Title VI) ratifies full operation of the WTO's Government Procurement Agreement for public services. This means opening them up to full competition, with the EU and UK agreeing to extend such regulations mutually to gas and heat distribution, private utilities, telecoms, education and 'other business sectors' across Britain and Europe.

On the capitalist free-market

'level playing field' and competition law, the agreement (Title XI) commits both sides to maintain 'the present high standards' including legal enforcement under their own sovereignty and through their own respective courts – with resort to the WTO and mutually agreed settlement procedures between Britain and the EU.

At the same time, the new agreement certainly improves on the terms set out by Theresa May's Tory government, which would have tied Britain – locked in by Northern Ireland arrangements – to the Customs Union, to Single Market rules under the jurisdiction of the anti-trade union European Court of Justice, and to large general contributions to EU funds. The anti-Brexit scares about planes not flying, imports of food and vital medicines stopping, cooperation against terrorism coming to an end and the imposition of a hard border across Ireland have all proved baseless, as the Communist Party has declared they would.

Normal sovereignty has been secured for British state-monopoly capitalism – which is fundamentally different from democratic, popular sovereignty for working people. The new agreement does not, for example, lawfully permit a future left government in Britain, Scotland or Wales to plan economic development and direct the policies of the big capitalist corporations.

Leaving the EU and its Customs Union fully on January 1, 2021, may make it easier in the long-run to achieve these objectives. Obviously, this is not what the Tory government

has in mind. Instead, Johnson's UK Single Market Act (2020) seizes economic and industrial powers from the devolved parliaments of Scotland and Wales, challenging the limited regional and national economic democracy won by their peoples over the past three decades.

The labour movement and its trades unions must now begin a united struggle for popular sovereignty at all levels in face of a wider economic and social crisis that is already reaching unprecedented proportions – a crisis which Britain, as currently subjected to 'free market' big business sovereignty, has proved woefully unable to control.

Big battles lie ahead in the fight for jobs, incomes and public services. Free trade agreements between Britain and other countries which include provisions for greater privatisation of public services, or for incoming investors to overturn the democratic policies of the central and devolved parliaments, must be resisted.

Arising from the UK-EU deal, we also need to ensure that government spending on regional, social, scientific and agricultural support is maintained; that standards for workers, consumers and the environment are defended and extended; and that scores of policy-making powers repatriated from Brussels are devolved as promised to the Scottish and Welsh parliaments.

ROB GRIFFITHS IS SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY. JOHN FOSTER IS THE PARTY'S INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY

COMMUNIST PARTY

Trade unionists organised!

The Communist Party is bringing together members who are active in the trade union movement or intending to become active trade unionists.

ANDY BAIN

The aggregate meeting is open to members of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League. A big turnout by communist trade unionists early in the year, to plan campaigns and struggle, will be a real boost to the labour and anti austerity movements.

The online event is on January 23, 2021 @ 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm. It will be educational and aims to improve party organisation and increase agitation and propaganda in workplaces and trade union organisations. It's a chance for you to let us know where and how you are active and what campaigns you are involved in.

For newly active trade unionists it will be a chance to hear how the party organises in the

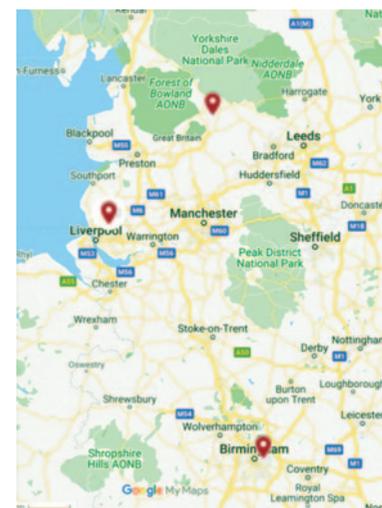
workplace and the trade unions, the practical aspects of fighting for the leading role of the party in developing union and TUC policy and helping shape the mass movement for the future.

Topics under discussion will include:

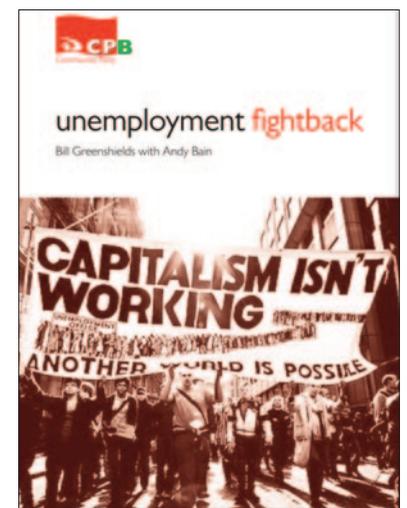
- ★ Unemployment and building the movement
- ★ What's wrong with Kickstart?
- ★ Arms diversification and alternatives
- ★ Where to after last years 'Future of work' conference?
- ★ Anti-racism and anti-fascism
- ★ Communist Party priorities looking towards the 2021 union conferences.

Register at www.comunistparty.org.uk

ANDY BAIN IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S INDUSTRIAL ORGANISER



▲ Guest speakers from the 'strikemap' web page will explain how to use the new online solidarity site.



▲ New pamphlet at £2.50. Print copy comes with a downloadable pdf, get it at www.shop/communistparty.org.uk

RED APPEAL

£100,000 'Centenary for Socialism' Appeal

- The appeal will help fund:
- ★ digitalised IT infrastructure at Party Centre
 - ★ bulk email and phone bank facilities
 - ★ Renovation of our premises
 - ★ election fund for English local, Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd elections
 - ★ a new unemployment campaign

Please give what you can by bank transfer to Unity Trust, Communist Party of Britain, 60-83-01 account number 50725694; by cheque (CPB) or online at www.comunistparty.org.uk or p/o to CPB (Dept CFS) Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon CR0 1BD

UNITY! IS THE ONLINE AND PRINT NEWSHEET OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY PUBLISHED MONTHLY WITH SPECIAL, LOCAL AND UNION CONFERENCE EDITIONS AND WITH DAILY EDITIONS AT THE TUC

COMMUNISTPARTY.ORG.UK



YOUTH

'The lives of young people in Britain are characterised by insecurity, uncertainty and poverty, regardless of the path we choose or are forced into. A decade of austerity has left our public services, the education system and our NHS stripped to the bone.' Young Communist League



EDUCATION

YCL calls for safe schools

The latest debacle over the reopening of schools despite the unsafe levels of COVID-19 infection in Britain is just another example of the Tory Government incompetence and mismanagement says the Young Communist League

Students victorious

>> Hannah (pictured below), who plays a leading part in the ad hoc 9K4What? Campaign says burdensome £9000 student fees are a big problem for students who see their job prospects dwindle whilst they face a heavy debt burden.



'Of course these issues bear down especially on working class students but for all students they are a constant worry and this is the background to student anger.'

Occupying the Owens Park Tower – which had stood empty for two years – was an inspired move she says. An occupation of administration buildings – which were almost empty of staff during the lockdown – would be an empty gesture but the visually dominant residential building offered a dramatic backdrop for the students' propaganda campaign.

High vis banner drops were coupled with a well executed social media offensive which dramatised the difficulties students faced, mocked the university authorities for their inadequate response – which included an insulting offer of a five per cent rent reduction.

Hannah is proud of the role communist students are playing across the city.

Moving on from their initial propaganda offensive the students began to target key management figures who

were proving resistant to the student demands.

The campaign generated a big media interest with the university authorities on the back foot. The student social media campaign played heavily on witty memes and wickedly effective jokes and popularised the student demands well beyond the university.

Hannah stresses that the occupation fitted into a wider campaign which tied the demand for a rent reductions into broader student and staff demands.

'We were keen not to alienate staff. Ours was not a "consumer" refusal of inadequate services but part of a united effort with unions representing both academic and support staff on campus. Students gave lecturers solid support during the earlier UCU dispute and we were glad of their support this time.'

'The experience of being in the occupation, from the minute we secured the lobby with a barricade of sofas and stuck our legal rights on the front doors, to our victorious exit with flags flying and red flares, was inspiring. From the nights spent on watch by the doors to the days spent painting banners 20 metres long. From the press interviews, meetings and strategising, to the music-making. This experience showed me what it really means to be a young communist – to be at the forefront of a battle against a huge faceless entity like the University, and to win.'

'The fact that a small group of students (and their network of staff and supporters) were able to force a corporation that turns over more than a billion pounds per year to pay out such a sum is not an anomaly, but a small indicator of what class power can achieve.'

A LONG LIST of bungs has prioritised profit and so-called 'business as usual' over our education and jobs, our lives and futures.

According to the Government's own figures, at least 80,000 people in Britain have now died from COVID-19, with the real figure likely to be far higher. Infection and transmission rates are now at record levels and governments across Britain are implementing new lockdown measures.

Despite this, the Government is continuing an ideologically motivated battle with the trade unions and working people to keep schools open, claiming they are protecting the interests of students, whereas in fact their interests and livelihoods are being put at risk.

This is despite the fact that the reopening of schools had played a major role in this current spike and the planned reopening in January 2021 had threatened to aggravate it even more. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) has already warned that school pupils "tend to have a wide transmission circle which can endanger parents and grandparents".

Many schools are in fact partially open, operating on a minimal capacity to provide care and education for children of key workers and vulnerable pupils, while the vast majority of teachers and pupils are working safely from home.

The YCL calls on the youth of Britain to stand up and fight for a safe return to education as well as the safeguarding of our futures from the dangers of

Government mismanagement. We express our solidarity with school staff who are being forced to stand up against Government negligence in the interests of health and safety.

Young people will stand shoulder to shoulder with school staff in this battle. We need guarantees about our education and exams and a real national strategy for blended and online learning that involves and listens to teachers, schools, parents and young people, applauding the work towards this that many school staff have already done with little to no Government support.

Above all else, we need a strategy that protects the lives of young people, our families and working people, and puts an end to the unnecessary uncertainty and damage to people's jobs and livelihoods. This should include the continued closure of non-essential workplaces with protections for those workers.

Over 400,000 members attended a National Education Union online briefing on 3 January 2021, the largest meeting in trade union history, highlighting the strength of feeling among teachers and parents across Britain.

This combined and organised expression of solidarity has led to the defeat of the Government over what they initially planned: a disorganised and life-threatening complete reopening of schools.

The YCL encourages our members, school pupils and young people to support this movement by refusing to attend unsafe schools and lessons and by

organising with their classmates to do the same. Pupils and their families should send messages of support to school staff as they keep unsafe schools closed and provide online learning.

Britain's young communists call for:

- ★ continued closure of all schools (except for key worker and vulnerable pupils) until there has been a significant reduction in COVID-19 infections and transmission rates.
- ★ guarantees that British and devolved Governments will consult and obtain agreement with education trade unions and independent scientific advisors before moving to reopen schools – and only doing so when and where it is safe to do so.

- ★ online learning to be implemented for all students across Britain immediately with Government funding and support to be put in place to ensure all students have access to IT resources and school staff are able to implement this.
- ★ guaranteed meals across Britain for all children affected by closures who request them, without means testing.
- ★ guaranteed fair assessments for students across Britain affected by lockdown and school closures agreed in consultation with education trade unions and student unions.

Neither the pandemic, nor the reckless capitalist system that fails to protect us, will stand in the way of our futures.

Fight for safe schools and guarantees for our education!

YCL@100

ROBIN TALBOT

On 24 December 2020 the YCL launched a new online platform for celebrating our centenary. We are counting down 100 days towards the live launch of our 100 year celebrations, starting in April and reaching a finale in April 2022.

These celebrations follow on from the centenary celebrations of our glorious Communist Party in Britain and we would like to invite all friends, comrades

and allies of Britain's Communists to support us and get involved.

The first thing you can do is visit <http://www.ycl100.org.uk>. It is much more than the YCL100 Countdown to our live launch and Special Appeal. There will be a whole host of social media and video messages.

You will be able to see what the young communists have planned for YCL100 from start to finish, from banner drops to murals, from international seminars to COVID-secure in person events, including our returned annual Summer Camp and 50th Congress.

Best of all, soon we will launch our YCL100 Expo and YCL100 Stories where we will tell the histories of our 100 years through old and new archives, art and memorabilia as well as direct testimonials from those of you who used to be in the YCL when you were younger.

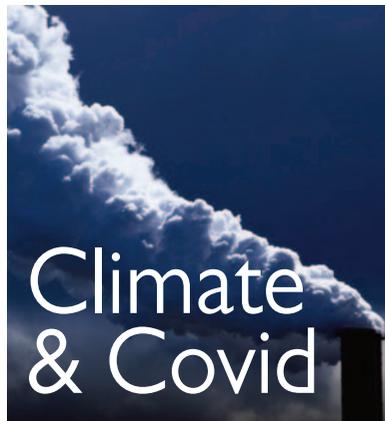
If you are one of those people or possess anything that you think we would love to see, or want to contribute some artistic work to our Expo, then please contact us via our website!

ROBIN TALBOT IS CHAIR OF THE YCL



AGITPROP

A newspaper is not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser. VI Lenin. *What is to be done?* 1902



ENVIRONMENT

OLIVIA PALMER

IN 1962 *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson was published, and this book drew attention to the environmental damage caused by polluting chemicals, and with it an implied attack on capitalism, which as a system depends on exploiting natural resources as well as workers. Opponents of *Silent Spring* attacked Rachel Carson personally accusing her of being radical, disloyal, unscientific, hysterical, and a communist.

The truth is that the assault on Rachel Carson was about defending one of the world's most dangerous and profitable industries, and the economic system in which it operated.

Today, nearly 60 years on, whilst pollution is still a serious environmental issue, that of climate change has become more urgent. The concentration of carbon dioxide (CO²) in our atmosphere is the highest it has been in human history and the five warmest years in the 1880–2019 records have all occurred since 2015. These have caused increase in incidences and severity of flooding and hurricanes, and of sea level rise. These in turn affect access to natural resources, farmed products, and living space, particularly in poorer communities and countries.

Women are increasingly being seen as more vulnerable than men to the impacts of climate change, mainly because they represent the majority of the world's poor and are proportionally more dependent on threatened natural resources. Women play a critical role in managing natural resources on family and community levels. In communities around the world, women manage water, sources for fuel, and food, as well as both forests and agricultural terrain.

But alongside women bearing the burden of the impacts of climate change it is important to recognise their important contributions as decision makers, stakeholders, educators, carers and experts across sectors and at all levels can lead to successful, long-term

solutions to climate change.

Women, particularly those living in countries where education and opportunities are available to them, have proven to be leading the way towards more equitable and sustainable solutions to climate change. Across sectors, women's innovations and expertise have transformed lives and livelihoods, and increased climate resilience and overall well-being.

The destruction of the environment and capitalism are entwined and self-perpetuating: mass consumerism drains the earth's resources and our drive to buy heavily marketed products pushes us to work in unsustainable industries, turning us towards an individualistic, neoliberal outlook. Many have faith in private enterprise to address environmental problems, indeed there has been some incredible innovation. However, in most of the world access to capital is more significant than excellent ideas in determining how prevalent a product or scheme becomes. We should rely on governments to restrict harmful practices and subsidise helpful innovation, but we have seen throughout the pandemic that the UK's Conservative government has favoured cronyism.

This is not inevitable. Analysing responses to the pandemic, we can contrast the responses of right-wing leaders like Brazil's Bolsonaro, USA's President Trump, and the UK's Boris Johnson who continue to see some of the worst numbers for Covid compared to the Communist led Cuba and Kerala. Cuba proudly exported doctors to help worse stricken countries during the beginning of the pandemic, the numbers of cases have increased since but to this day they have recorded fewer than 150 deaths. Likewise, Kerala, a Communist led state of India, has seen fewer deaths than anywhere else in the country with its female health minister, KK Shailaja, being widely praised. In light of Covid and Brexit, we must call for a strengthening, not weakening, of protection of our green spaces and oceans, we must fight de-regulation of polluting industries. We must give a voice to the people who have lost their jobs during this pandemic; a disproportionate number of whom are women. We must stand in solidarity with our sisters, in the UK and in the rest of the world, nurses on the front lines of the pandemic, and activists on the front line of the fight against climate change.

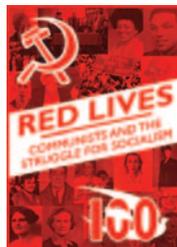
OLIVIA PALMER IS A FORMER GREEN PARTY ELECTION CANDIDATE

PUBLICATIONS



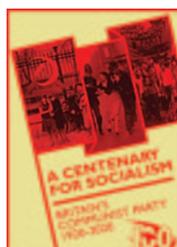
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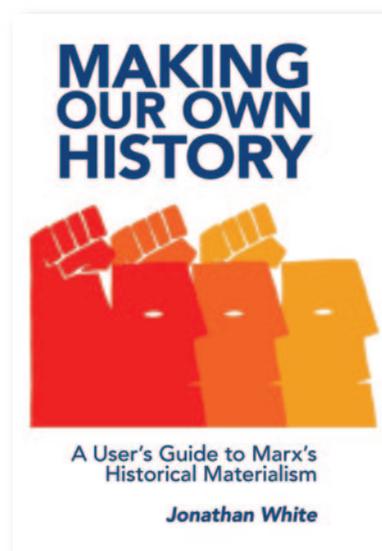
A Centenary of Socialism

The first ever, single volume history of the Communist Party. Edited by Mary Davis, with 20 contributors charting 100 years of struggle. £9.99



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THE DECLINE OF CAPITALISM Lars Ulrik Thomsen
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SOUL FOOD: YES, ART IS WORK – BUT IT IS ALSO ART Fran Lock
£2.50



Jonathan White's accessible and thought-provoking *Making Our Own History: A User's Guide to Marx's Historical Materialism* is published in conjunction with the Marx Memorial Library.

END NOTES

SURVEY The Communist Party has sent out a survey seeking views and ideas to thousands of people, including all Party members and those who registered and participated in its Centenary events in 2020. Please check your email and respond before noon on 26 January. Five returns will be drawn at random and the lucky winners will receive a bumper pack of centenary themed merchandise.

WOMEN'S COMMISSION The Communist Party Women's Commission met on 16 January to plan the postponed 'Sisterhood, Socialism and Struggle' conference to take place in the late spring or early summer.

ANTI-RACISM, ANTI-FASCISM The Party's ARAF Commission meets on 23 January (11.30-1 pm) to discuss how to build on the successful Cable Street and Claudia Jones events as well as considering the TUC's race task force.

POWER FOR THE PEOPLE The federation of Morning Star Readers Groups in Norfolk & Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Colchester are holding a public meeting on 10 February (7 pm) on Energy policy, and in particular the plan to build Sizewell C nuclear power station on the east Suffolk coast.

Communist Review editor and scientist Martin Levy joins Ann Pettifor (author of the 'Case for a Green New Deal'), Steve Turner AGS of Unite with responsibility for manufacturing, and Peter Wilkinson (past convenor of Greenpeace and chair of Together Against Sizewell 'C'). Register here: <http://bit.ly/PowerForThePeople>.

CLAUDIA JONES *The Political Life and Times of Claudia Jones* has received international recognition and review from a broad range of publications and websites. On behalf of the ARAF Commission, author David Horsley has agreed to speak at Branches, Districts and Nations about her life and work, and the exciting plans to mark her contribution.

To contact David and book a speaking slot, write to info@communistparty.org.uk and mark the subject line 'Claudia Jones meeting request'.

NEW PARTY/YCL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES There is a new season of free training starting soon, with 90-minute sessions on Making Short Films; Writing (how to write attention-grabbing and persuasive text); and Radio interviews and phone-ins (an effective and efficient way to reach local people on local issues).

Contact trainer Lynne Walsh – walshmediaworks@aol.com – to say you're interested; dates and times will be agreed. Women-only sessions also available.

MAKING OUR OWN HISTORY This eight-week course which commenced on 13 Jan 2021 studies Marx and Engels' theory of 'historical materialism' and how it relates to their revolutionary politics

The course studies Marx and Engels' theory of historical change – or 'historical materialism' – and how it relates to their revolutionary politics.

Students enrolling on this course will learn

- 1 The core concepts of Marx and Engels' 'historical materialism' and how they relate to Marxist theories of revolution;
- 2 How these concepts have been applied by historians and revolutionaries to understand the past and to transform the present and;
- 3 How to apply historical materialism to their own history and the current moment.

More information at www.marx-memorial-library.org.uk