



Workers of all lands, unite!
 CP BRITAIN
 CP BRITAIN
www.comunistparty.org.uk
 March 2021

Inside

- International Women's Day
- Housing for the people
- Unite against racism!
- Parents' and carers' charter
- Vote Communist!

Tories exhibit their contempt for workers

Rishi Sunak raises minimum wage by a miserly 21p

BUDGET

CHANCELLOR Rishi Sunak's Budget is for the profits of the few rather than the wellbeing of the many. He plans to dole out many more £ billions to big business but still refuses to admit who is going to end up paying for yet another eye-watering bail-out of British capitalism. He claims economic growth will generate some of the tax revenues needed, yet the Office for Budget Responsibility has now cut its economic growth forecasts for every year from now until the end of 2025 except the next one.

He could have granted NHS workers an emergency pay bonus and unveiled extra support for local authorities to prevent inflation-busting rises in Council Tax. He didn't. He could have

used our freedom from EU directives to slash and selectively abolish VAT. He didn't.

Funds for massive investment in health, social care, council housing and the civil emergency services could have been funded from immediate increases in corporation tax and capital gains tax and the introduction of a financial transactions tax.

Instead, he set a corporation tax trap for Keir Starmer and Labour's timid shadow chancellor which they fell into while rushing to defend astronomical profits in the City of London.

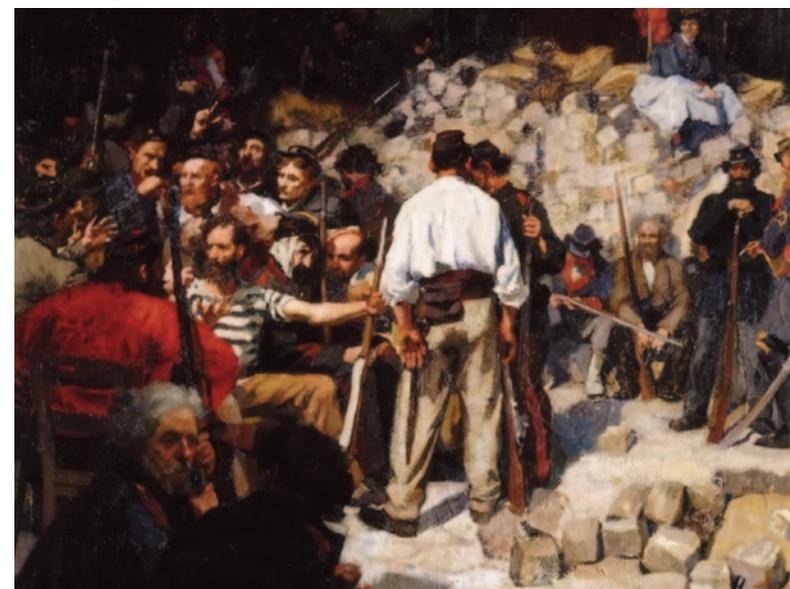
An extra 21p a week in the full National Living Wage and £19.24p a week in Universal Credit pale in contrast to the extra £65 billion announced for economic and business support.

In reality, the Covid pandemic

has exposed the contradictions of British capitalism. This Budget will do next to nothing to end chronic underinvestment in the NHS and the privatised elderly care system. Nor will it abolish poverty pay for key and front-line workers or halt the resurgence in child poverty.

The British economy, with its emphasis on financial services, privatisation, overseas investments and anti-trade union laws, has shown itself incapable of meeting the challenge of a public health crisis.

Only a planned socialist economy would have prioritised the production of hospital beds, medical equipment, drugs and communication networks to protect the people over huge public subsidies to protect corporate profits.



▲ Barricade, the Paris Commune, May, 1871 by André Devambez

2021 Marx Oration

Celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune

Marx Memorial Library & Workers School March 14, 2021 @ 2 pm – 3pm

Lydia Samarbaksh

head of the French Communist Party's International Department

Liz Payne Chair of Communist Party.

Chaired by **Alex Gordon**

To register go to tinyurl.com/MarxOration

Find out the facts on the Uyghurs

NEW COLD WAR

BRITAIN'S LABOUR movement have been challenged to not rush to judgment on the Uyghur question in China.

The Beijing government has been accused of 'genocide' against the mostly Muslim population of 13 million people in the Xinjiang autonomous region, in north-west China.

But Communist Party general secretary Robert Griffiths told the party's political committee that the charges of 'genocide' are ideologically motivated, lacked independent evidence, and are part of the new Cold War being waged against China.

'It is a strange sort of genocide which

has exempted the Uyghur people from China's one-child policy, so that their numbers have grown by 25 per cent since 2010, six times the rate for China as a whole and twelve times that for the smaller Han Chinese minority in Xinjiang itself', he said

A major programme of investment and training in the region have produced high levels of economic growth and lifted millions of Uyghurs out of poverty and unemployment.

Drastic security measures have put an end to a spate of terrorist attacks on Han and other ethnic minority people by fundamentalist and separatist elements in Xinjiang.

Rob Griffiths said the reports of

'genocide' from a network of right-wing institutes and pressure groups funded by the US, British and Australian governments are recycled uncritically in the Western media.

As one of many international delegations to visit Xinjiang, he had seen for himself that mosques are open, the Uyghur language can be seen and heard everywhere, and the majority of top state and political officials are Uyghurs, not Han Chinese.

The party urged labour movement organisations in Britain to undertake fact-finding missions to Xinjiang and other parts of China, rather than repeat the 'fictitious propaganda' of the labour movement's longstanding enemies.

BEIJING, 26 February (Xinhua)

China welcomes foreign people to visit and take a look at Xinjiang, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said.

Spokesperson Wang Wenbin was responding to a question on China inviting representatives from the EU and its member states to visit Xinjiang.

'In the past few years, more than 1,200 diplomats, journalists and religious figures from more than 100 countries have visited Xinjiang,' said Wang, adding that through field visits, they have learned the actual situation in Xinjiang and held that what they have seen in Xinjiang is completely different from the reports of some Western media.

China welcomes diplomats from the EU and its member states to visit Xinjiang and has sent out multiple invitations, said Wang, adding that China tried its best to make thoughtful arrangements for them in accordance

with their wishes and has shown the greatest sincerity and flexibility.

However, it is regrettable that the European side has kept delaying the visits and made some unreasonable demands including meeting with criminals sentenced for engaging in separatist activities, Wang said.

'It makes people feel that as long as China does not follow what the European side asked, they are not interested in visiting Xinjiang,' said the spokesperson.

'This is obviously a provocative move that ignores Chinese law and interferes in China's judicial sovereignty,' said Wang.

The door of Xinjiang is wide open, and China's invitation and sincerity remain unchanged; however, a visiting 'mission should not be an investigative mission' based on the presumption of guilt, Wang noted.



LIBERATION.

'Black women have had to develop a larger vision of our society than perhaps any other group. They have had to understand white men, white women, and black men. And they have had to understand themselves. When black women win victories, it is a boost for virtually every segment of society.' Angela Davis

The female revolution in the socialist revolution!



CUBA

WENDY EMMETT

IT IS ALMOST impossible to talk about the future of Cuba or the work done over all these years to construct a socialist society, without mentioning the role of women in decision making and their contribution in key spaces since the triumph of the Revolution in 1959.

The high level of political, economic and social participation by women in Cuba and the guarantees within the Cuban Constitution, which explicitly give women economic, political, social, cultural and family rights and opportunities equal to those of men, have placed Cuba as one of the best countries in the world for women.

Pre-Revolution the experience of women, and particularly black women, was one of oppression, exploitation, and hardship. Few women worked or were educated and a strong culture of machismo permeated all aspects of female experience.

After the Revolution gender equality was seen as an integral part of the Revolution and a principle of the new Cuban society. Fidel Castro heralded the fight for women's rights as a "revolution within the Revolution".

The most prominent woman in the Cuban government after the Revolution was Vilma Espín. She was the founder of the Federation

of Cuban Women, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the party's Political Bureau. She, and many other women, played an important part in the triumph of the Revolution. Vilma was a leader in the guerrilla movement and was extremely close to Fidel and Raúl Castro.

Sixty years ago the Federation of Cuban Women (Federación de Mujeres Cubanas, FMC) was established to fight for equal rights and opportunities. Any woman over 14 can join and this non-governmental organisation now has more than three million members, (85% of the female population is over 14) and is the largest mass organisation in Cuba and the biggest women's organisation in Latin America.

Since the Revolution women have made huge advances in all fields of life, in health and education and both economically and politically.

Examples of the Revolution's success towards empowering women:

- The majority of judges, attorneys, lawyers, scientists, technical workers, public health workers and professionals are women.
- Save the Children has ranked Cuba first amongst developing nations in mothers' health care.
- The second highest percentage of female parliamentarians in the world (over 53% women MPs).
- Women receive 18 weeks maternity leave on full salary, followed by 40 weeks at 60%.

- The 1975 Family Code states women and men must share household and family responsibilities equally - this is definitely a work in progress!

- Abortion and family planning are freely available. A high value is placed on pre-natal care, and 'maternity housing' is offered to women before giving birth.

- 64% of university places are occupied by women.

- Female life expectancy in Cuba is 80.45 years – higher than in the United States and many developed countries.

The struggle for true equality and the ending of all violence toward women within socialist society is on-going - generations of entrenched stereotypical cultural attitudes towards women, machismo and the influence of the Catholic church have slowed progress.

However, the Cuban reality is clear: "socialism is the only system that permits the fullest democratic aspirations of the will of women and men" *Women and Class* (Mary Davis)

WENDY EMMETT IS A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF THE CUBA SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

In the Sierra Maestra, Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro and Raúl, flanked by the heroines Vilma (left) and Celia Sánchez Manduley. Photo: Archive



#JusticiaPorFlorescia

On the 12 October in the town of San Jorge, Buenos Aires, María Florencia Gómez Pouillastrou (known as Florencia Gómez) was murdered, and her body was abandoned in a field in the local area. The 35-year-old woman was an active feminist who had recently become a city councillor. Florencia was a comrade of La Fede – the Communist Youth Federation of Argentina. She was a militant socialist and member of the Communist Party in San Jorge.

In a Challenge TV interview Jessica Duggan spoke with her close friend and comrade, Ayelén Beigbeder, to find out more, and to explore the endemic violence against women in Argentina that led to her death.

View the interview at <https://tinyurl.com/bfmsv5nf> www.challengemagazine.org



COMMUNIST WOMEN

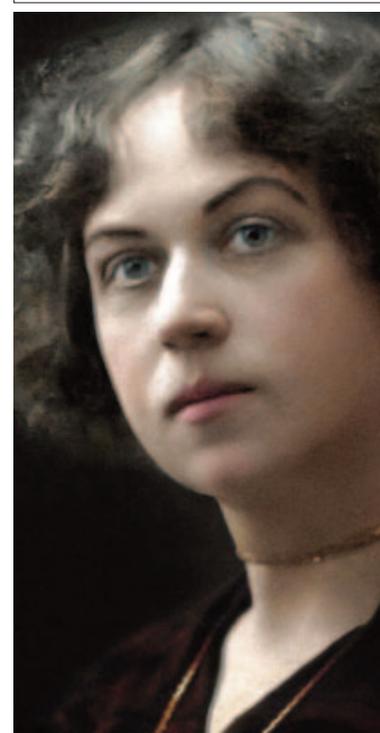
Number 3 now out

Contents include
Women and homelessness
Sisterhood, socialism and struggle
Health service in the pandemic
Time to get active

go to www.comunistparty.org.uk

There was a time when working men thought that they alone must bear on their shoulders the brunt of the struggle against capital, that they alone must deal with the 'old world' without the help of their womenfolk. However, as working-class women entered the ranks of those who sell their labour, forced onto the labour market by need, by the fact that husband or father is unemployed, working men became aware that to leave women behind in the ranks of the 'non-class-conscious' was to damage their cause and hold it back. The greater the number of conscious fighters, the greater the chances of success. What level of consciousness is possessed by a woman who sits by the stove, who has no rights in society, the state or the family? She has no 'ideas' of her own! Everything is done as ordered by the father or husband...

Alexandra Kollontai
 People's Commissar for Welfare in the first Bolshevik government





STRUGGLE

'We should try to link our personal lives with the cause for which we struggle, with the cause of building communism.' Nadezhda Krupskaya 1924

Women in the Middle East



LIBERATION

CAROL STAVRIS

FOLLOWING THE defeat of the Ottoman Empire and its centuries of feudalism, western imperialism has shaped the present map of what it terms the Middle East.

The agreements made between the colonial powers after WW1 created compliant new states, drew artificial boundaries, suppressed insurgencies, used military force and control to preserve western interests in the region, such as oil deals with Saudi Arabia. The continuing aim for imperialism from that time onwards is full geopolitical control.

Powerful, popular and secular forces (including Left and communist parties) which arose from anti-colonial struggle from the 1950's through to the 1970's promised progressive reform across the region especially for women (education, healthcare, equality of rights etc). Many of these progressive governments were subverted and crushed by imperialism, creating a power vacuum which allowed the growth of fundamentalist Islamic forces opposed to socialism and antipathetic to the needs of women.

The growth of political Islam has taken advantage of the decline of progressive and secular politics to promote reactionary religious practices and ideas which impact on the rights of working people, especially women.

The rapidly rising levels of violence, suppression and punishment of women for political and social reasons in many countries across the Middle East including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Turkey underline the repressive power structures that exist and contribute to violation of women's rights imposing limits on their freedom and their rôles in society.

By continuing sales of armaments, giving vast economic and political support, the US and Britain (particularly) maintain the State of Israel to act as their forward base, re-enforcing their domination of the region by interference and armed might. Due to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and its siege of Gaza, Palestinian women endure extreme deprivation and hardship.

Women throughout the region bear the brunt of the effects of conflict and forced displacement. Rape is often used as a weapon of war. Restrictions to family healthcare, undernourishment of pregnant and lactating women and shortages of the essential food items that are necessary for child development contribute to women and children paying a heavy price in war zones.

The prospects for women in the region are tied up with geopolitics - US and western strategy seeks to create instability and uncertainty in order to maintain its hegemony. The future for women will depend on whether the progressive forces that do exist in the countries of the region can grow strong enough to challenge the imperialist narrative.

We have to help that process by understanding the nature of the struggle and by giving active support to those political and social movements. Our sisters in those regions need us to act with them in their struggle for liberation as well as offering our solidarity and comradeship.

CAROL STAVRIS IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY NATIONAL WOMEN'S ORGANISER.

FIGHTING BACK: BRAVE TEENAGER AHED TAMIMI SERVED EIGHT MONTHS FOR SLAPPING AN ISRAELI SOLDIER

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2021
VICTORY THROUGH STRUGGLE
- WOMEN IN ACTION

MONDAY MARCH 8TH 2021
7PM - 9PM
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/1HF2QDSX](https://tinyurl.com/1HF2QDSX)

This online meeting is organised by communist women in Belfast and London to celebrate International Women's Day. Its focus is on the ongoing fight for women's liberation for which women have dared to struggle and have sometimes won victories along the way!

CHAIR: JOANNE RUSSELL

Speakers:
MARY DAVIS
 - CPB-LONDON WOMEN'S ORGANISER
 OUR HISTORY: WHAT WE HAVE AND HAVEN'T WON

KELLIE O'DOWD
 - NI ABORTION RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER
 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & ABORTION RIGHTS

LYNDA WALKER
 - BELFAST NI AREA WOMEN'S SECRETARY,
 COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRELAND
 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN IRELAND

Celebrate International Women's Day
Saturday 6 March 2021 06:30-09:00 pm online
Guest international speakers, music and poetry.
All women and men welcome.

Organised by the Coordinating Committee of Communist Parties in Britain.
No advance registration needed <https://tinyurl.com/5kywd5b8>

Organised by North West CPB Womens Commission for International Womens day

A CELEBRATION WITH OUR SISTERS
SATURDAY 13 MARCH 5.30PM -7.30PM

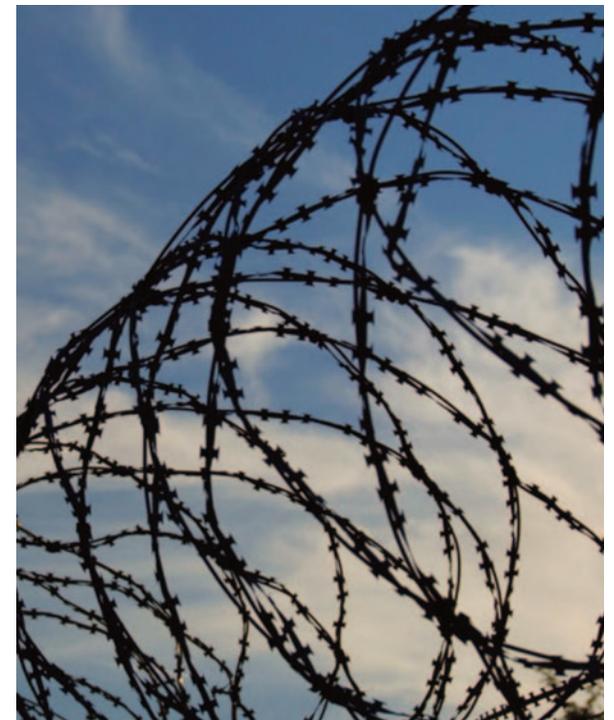
Chaired by Vicky Knight featuring:-

MAXINE PEAKE <small>Actress/Writer</small>	CARLA HENRY <small>Actor/Poet</small>	PAULA BARKER <small>Labour MP Wavertree</small>
MARY DAVIS <small>Marxist Historian</small>	HANNAH PHILLIPS <small>Student Activist</small>	



SOCIALISM

'In Russia I felt for the first time like a full human being. No color prejudice like in Mississippi, no color prejudice like in Washington. It was the first time I felt like a human being.'
Paul Robeson, actor, singer, film star and activist



Let us make racism history

RACISM

TONY CONWAY

THE DEATH of George Floyd and the continuing victimisation of the Windrush Generation has exposed, in the US and UK, the repressive actions of the state and the continued operation of the *hostile environment*.

This environment – created under Labour but continued even more aggressively by the ConDem and Conservative governments – has seen many people imprisoned.

Regulations are changed at whim. People are sacked, lose their homes and access to public funds, all because the state says that people – after years of living, being educated and working in the UK – have no right to be here.

Priti Patel, the home secretary said that she would implement the findings

of the Wendy Williams review but has yet to do so. Government spokespersons use incendiary language designed to divide our class and divert us from challenging capitalism

For a moment the government is on the defensive. The Black Lives Matter movement has put governments on the back foot across the world.

While many people's organisations have joined the fight against racism the Labour leadership have chosen to see Black Lives Matters as 'a moment' rather than as a movement that needs solidarity and support in parliament.

The Communist Party, from its foundation a 100 years ago, argued that the super-exploitation of slave labour in the colonies provided raw materials, super profits and fresh capital to accelerate Britain's industrialisation in the late 18th and 19th Centuries.

Indeed, as shown by a recent report

by English Heritage the proceeds of slavery and super-exploitation are evident in every town and county.

Racism underpins exploitation today and in tackling it we challenge the capitalist power to exploit.

In the immediate term this means standing against the *hostile environment* and scrapping the 2014 and 2018 Immigration Acts along with stopping deportations, allowing Windrush workers, migrants and refugees to work and have access to public funds and health care.

In the longer term it means defeating racism in our communities and workplaces. In building our popular struggles against racism and austerity we build our socialist future.

TONY CONWAY IS COVENOR OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S ANTIRACIST, ANTIFASCIST COMMISSION

Unfair and racist

IMMIGRATION LAW

EVAN PRITCHARD

The experience of the 'Windrush' victims and the uncertainty facing those who came to Britain from the EU prior to Brexit is just one face of our oppressive legal system.

The scandalous conditions in the detention centres shows that Britain does not honour its responsibilities to refugees

And this is getting worse under the current government. The 2020 Immigration and Social Security Act adds to the problems contained in legislation already in existence. It is estimated that 300,000 EU citizens living and working here will not have been granted fully citizenship by the June cut off date.

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants says that basing the process on limited online access makes things particularly difficult for young, disabled and older people. This is the reality of the *hostile environment*. Adding yet another piece of primary legislation will only add to the already over-complex regulations that are drafted by Home Office officials that are not even subject to Parliamentary scrutiny.

The Communist Party rejects the use of immigration as a tool to divide working people and spread hatred. We condemn politicians who pander to racism.

Migrant workers fill the ranks of key workers in our country, and routinely face super exploitation. Low paid migrant workers miss out on employment rights and are often forced to live in poor housing laid on by bosses at exorbitant rents.

A legacy of racism dating back to slavery and colonialism means our nationality laws give different rights to people.

Not surprisingly some think the key to opposing racism is to campaign for abolition of immigration laws entirely. This is utopian and, however well intentioned, can undermine the positive battle for a fair and non racist system.

All working people must have equal rights, including proper rates of pay and access to decent housing and to the benefits that they pay for through taxation. No one is illegal and everyone living and working here must have right to apply for a single category of citizenship without undue expense, irrespective of their ethnicity or country of origin.

We ask all trade unionists, socialists and anti racists to join us in this campaign!



Campaign resources from the Communist Party

<https://shop.comunistparty.org.uk/?q=collection/books-pamphlets>



CAPITALISM

'Under capitalism, the oppression of other races and ethnic minorities has reaped super-profits and helped the ruling class to maintain control by ensuring that the working class remains divided.'
 Young Communist League 2020

Vaccine amnesty not enough



CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

JOGINDER BAINS

THE HEALTH MINISTER, Edward Argar, has invited everyone, regardless of their immigration status, to come forward for a vaccine. No one, he assured us, will face repercussions when seeking registration with GPs who have been told not to ask for ID documents.

Argar said that no action will be taken against undocumented migrants. He said that the purpose of this policy is to address the health emergency and minimise infection and the loss of life. Every citizen and resident, regardless of their immigration status, must be vaccinated.

It is estimated that the number of undocumented migrants could be as high as 1.3 million people in Britain.

The British Medical Association has been worried that many of those undocumented migrants would be scared to come forward, as in the past the government had required the National Health Service (NHS) to report those without a defined migration status.

The BMA says immigration data sharing between the health service and the government should be suspended during the coronavirus pandemic.

John Chisholm, the chair of the BMA ethics committee said: 'For the vaccination program to be successful it is crucial that we get as many people vaccinated as possible.'

However, Argar has offered no guarantee that data will not be shared with the Immigration department nor has the government abolished NHS surcharges of £400 per person per year that are a deterrent to registering with a general practitioner.

Welcoming the government's test and treatment amnesty, the Indian Workers Association GB has stressed the

limitations of the policy and made its concerns known to the prime minister.

The IWA's concerns are well founded with many horror stories of super exploitation and modern slavery.

When subject to forced labour, undocumented migrants are unable to follow government's guidance or to take advantage of the health amnesty. They fear the risk of repercussions if exposed to the authorities.

As a consequence the virus spreads in crowded workplaces and in the community while the high street shops and clothing suppliers make fat profits.

The Indian Workers' Association GB – along with over a hundred other campaigning organisations – fear the current vaccine amnesty does not go far enough to win the trust of the undocumented migrants.

People with insecure immigration status see the policy a trap to detention and deportation, a risk they are not prepared to take.

The government has given no guarantee that the data sharing will not be exercised at least during the epidemic. It has failed to learn lessons from the previous policies that prevented people registering for GPs, and accessing test and treatment.

The IWA (GB) believes that undocumented migrants will not come forward for a vaccination unless and until the aggressive immigration policies, the NHS charge and data sharing regime has been removed. We, therefore, repeat our call for regularisation of all undocumented migrants and echo the calls for suspension of the health surcharge of £400, and for setting up a firewall between healthcare and the Home Office.

JOGINDER BAINS IS THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE INDIAN WORKERS' ASSOCIATION GB

Time to take on the far right



TRADE UNIONS

TONY CONWAY

IN DECEMBER 2020 at a well attended Zoom meeting the TUC launched its report into the rise of the far right in Britain and world wide.

Communists call upon trade unionists to take this report seriously. The far right is often treated as a fringe issue, dismissed as isolated groups lurking at the margins of politics and society.

However, not only has the far right grown in strength but its ideas and influence have been mainstreamed and are now reflected in mainstream political discourse.

Narratives of division, exclusion and blame have been normalised and appear all too frequently across society, in political debate, in the media and in our workplaces.'

Throughout our history, trade unions have been at the forefront of the

struggle against the far right and its attempts to divide working people.

However, in order to effectively combat the far-right threat today, we need to understand it has mainstreamed its messages, worked across international boundaries and used online spaces to organise, recruit and promote its ideologies.

A trade union analysis must also take into account the structural factors that have led to the growth of the far right. We do not just have our rich history of fighting the far right to draw upon.

There are examples of the union movement across the world leading progressive coalitions and effectively combatting the current threat that we face. We need to learn from and build on this work and vitally, just as the far right has gained strength from cooperating across national borders, our response must also be firmly rooted in internationalism and solidarity.

The 'far right' umbrella today

encompasses a variety of parties, movements, networks and communities (online and offline), which have followed different historical trajectories and can differ in policy and agenda.

Although the biological racism of old is still very much with us, especially in the form of white supremacist organisations and networks, increasingly the far right has adopted what is known as 'nativism' or 'ethnic nationalism'.

This ideology holds that non-native (or 'alien') forces – people, institutions or ideas – pose a fundamental threat to the native population or native culture.

One important factor has been the process of 'mainstreaming' that has legitimised and normalised far-right parties and ideas. This is not only a result of the far right rebranding itself for electoral purposes but also traditional centrist parties embracing radical right-wing rhetoric and policies for reasons of political expediency.

Thus far-right parties have become acceptable government coalition partners or been able to influence government policy on questions such as immigration.

Growing economic insecurity, increasing inequality and alienation from 'politics as usual' have fuelled widespread disaffection and anti-establishment sentiments. Attacks on trade unions and the absence of a perceived alternative to austerity or effective action to tackle inequality have helped the far right present its solutions as a more plausible-sounding alternative.

Lets just not have another report that gathers dust!

www.tuc.org.uk/TheRiseoftheFarRight

Unions take anti-racist action

TRADES UNION CONGRESS

NICK KELLEHER

The new TUC Anti-Racism Taskforce reports back to Congress 2022 on work to promote race equality and combat racism within workplaces and across the trade union movement.

Patrick Roache, NASUWT teachers' union general secretary chairs the Task Force. He says: "Twenty years ago, the TUC Stephen Lawrence task group was set up to root out racism at work. There has been some progress since then, but the reality is that there remains much more to do....Change is coming."

There are four work streams
 ● looking at how unions recruit and

organise Black workers and creating a leadership development system for Black workers; how they deal with race discrimination in the workplace and anti-racism education for trade unionists.

- developing a collective bargaining agenda on race equality.
- identification of policy areas where coordinated campaigning can take place across the trade union movement e.g. tackling institutional racism, legislative and regulatory change, protection of Black workers from COVID-19, mental health and job security.
- how unions as employers employ and progress black staff

It's objectives are not just at national level. It will seek evidence gathering from Black workers and Black-led

organisations, evidencing the scale and impact of institutional and systemic race inequalities across the UK labour market and society more widely.

All trade union branches and bodies should look at how they recruit, organise and assist black workers and how their unions face up as employers. Any good practice should be shared.

The key thing now is not to rely on the TUC to deliver on this but take the opportunity to really make a difference. All trade union activists must raise the question: 'What are is being done how are members been involved?'

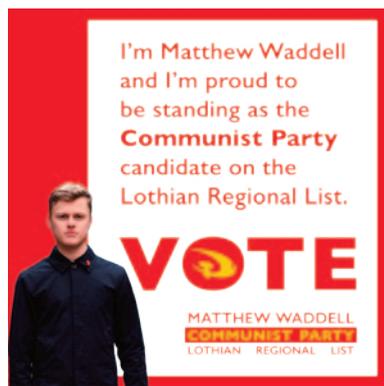
NICK KELLEHER IS SECRETARY OF WOLVERHAMPTON, BILSTON AND DISTRICT TRADES UNION COUNCIL



AGITPROP & EVENTS

'If high ranking officers in uniform can make political speeches and attack Communism, why should not rank and file soldiers in uniform make political speeches and attack capitalism, which the Minister knows is the enemy of co-operation?' William Gallacher Communist MP for West Fife 14 December 1949

The problem is capitalism, the solution is socialism!



VOTE COMMUNIST

NICK WRIGHT

BRITAIN'S COMMUNISTS have launched their biggest electoral challenge in many years. Candidates have been selected in key Scottish seats for the Scottish parliament. In Wales every elector will get a chance to vote Communist as the party puts forward a full list for the Senned election. And in London every voter can cast a vote for socialism and working class power as the party field a full list in the London Assembly election. In a host of local council seats throughout England communists are standing on their local record of campaigning against austerity and for peace and workers' rights. The 2021 communist election campaign will oppose austerity, mobilise workers against precarious work and unemployment, fight for public

ownership of local transport services and utilities, full funding for public and welfare services and pay rises. Our candidates will make the case for powers to be returned to local government where it can be made more accountable, with funding to support local economies and build council housing. We want working people to be the decision-makers, not the billionaire one per cent of the population who dominate our lives.

Says Communist Party general secretary Robert Griffiths: 'We will be asking workers to vote communist, get involved in our election campaign and join our party.'

'We will be talking to many hundreds of thousands through TV broadcasts, door to door leafletting and online. Our message is stark... the problem is capitalism, the solution is socialism.'

With many lockdown regulations still in place the campaign will be a mass media event and on social media but there are many plans to spring into action with street stalls and workplace canvassing if the situation allows.

The Communist Party will appeal to the millions who voted to leave the EU and now want to move forward as well as those who voted Labour because of its progressive programme in 2017 and 2019. The communists have no intention of laying down the Red Flag.

It falls to the left as a whole and to its most organised component – the Communist Party – to make a challenge on working class policies.

Britain's vastly undemocratic first-past-the-post election system has, over the decades, squeezed much of the life out of local politics, marginalising dissident and radical voices and leaving many local councils in the hands of self-perpetuating cliques long divorced from real life working class politics.

We see this in the destruction wrought on Labour in Scotland while recent events in Bristol and Liverpool where Labour Party bureaucrats wreck local party organisations and rig selection procedures to make a mockery of party democracy and local choice.

Nevertheless, the partly-proportional lists system in Scotland, Wales and London gives an opening and the party is geared up to make full use of its beefed-up social media operation.

Armed with a powerful set of policies – see the radical Housing for the People supplement in this issue of *Unity!* – the Communist Party is taking its socialist message and its call for working class power and liberation to working class communities throughout the country.

The next two bumper issues of *Unity!* will add strength to the Communist electoral challenge.

NICK WRIGHT IS EDITOR OF UNITY!

★ The *Unity!* April issue will showcase communist policies for the various election campaigns in the run up to the 6 May vote. The May Day issue will celebrate the reality and future of working class power.

Big Red Appeal

JONATHAN HAVARD

A MAGNIFICENT £44,745 has been donated so far to the Communist Party's Red Appeal launched as the party's centenary celebrations reached a peak. The appeal will help fund projects that are helping transform the growing number of communist militants into a more effective force for working class power and socialism.

A new digitalised IT infrastructure at Party Centre is already making a big impact on the level of organisation and political preparedness. We are investing in up-to-date bulk email and phone bank

facilities and allocating funds for the renovation of our premises. The money will help fund big electoral campaigns for the English locals, Scottish Parliament and Welsh Senedd elections and give a boost to a vital 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

JONATHAN HAVARD IS TREASURER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

A social wage and full state pensions for parents and carers

WALES ELECTIONS

CATRIN ASHTON

IF EVER THERE was a time when childcare, and care work more generally, has been thrown into the spotlight then the current pandemic is definitely it.

As the Bevan Foundation has pointed out, this "risks parents falling into significant financial hardship as a result of having to miss work due to childcare commitments and risks virus spread as a result of parents deciding to go to work or as a result of other family members and friends entering the household to look after the child."

Children in Wales - the national umbrella body for organisations and individuals who work with children, young people and their families in Wales

- has highlighted the heart-breaking nature of the situation here.

"Low wages are one of the major causes of child poverty in Wales. Many respondents to the survey, as well as participants at regional child poverty events held across Wales, spoke of the paucity of decent paid work in some parts of Wales."

The pandemic only exacerbated a problem that already existed and has pushed families that were just about managing to keep things together, over the brink. A progressive, radical response to this problem would be to pay parents a good wage to look after their own children, helping – along with other measures - to pull those children, and their families, out of poverty.

Along with considerably longer maternity and paternity leave, paying parents a decent wage for raising their

children would be a step towards allowing women a real choice when it came to working or being at home with their children.

As part of our election campaign, the Welsh Communists are proposing a Social Wage for Parents and Carers who have left waged work in order to look after children, family or community members. This would also ensure that all those who have worked as carers during their lives receive the full state retirement pension for their labour. Women (because the majority are overwhelmingly women) who cared for their own children without a wage, have often gone on in later life to care for elderly parents and sick spouses. Many of them do not even receive the full state pension for their lifelong care work.

As communists, in Wales, we aim to

build a society on greater, more meaningful goals than financial profit. We make the following demands:

- ★ A Social Wage for all parents and carers who leave waged work in order to care for children, family or community members.
- ★ The full state pension for all parents and carers who have taken time away from waged work to care for their children, family or community members.
- ★ More extensive paid maternity and paternity leave for all parents: keep jobs open to parents until all their children are of statutory school age.
- ★ Free childcare from birth for those parents who wish to return to waged work after childbirth.
- ★ Paid Parental Leave from work for child-related emergencies.
- ★ A generously funded and robust National Care Service which would offer

services for care in much the same way as a generously funded and robust NHS can offer services for health.

- ★ A reorganisation of our society according to care – so that when we look after our children/ parents/ partners or vulnerable members of our communities, there are other people there to help us, along with an infrastructure that allows us the time to recharge emotionally and physically and the financial stability to make this possible in a happy, stress-free way.
- ★ Good homes for all with the option to live in your own community without being forced to leave because of inflated prices or a lack of council homes.
- ★ Green open spaces for all, with pollution-free air.

CATRIN ASHTON IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S WELSH COMMITTEE



COMMUNIST PARTY HOUSING CHARTER

A good quality, affordable home is a basic human right; one which is denied to millions of people.

The Communist Party of Britain campaigns for a new approach to housing designed to meet the needs and aspirations of the peoples of England, Scotland and Wales and eradicate homelessness, rather than creating super profits for landowners, developers, their shareholders and bankers.

Across the nations, progressive housing strategies are needed addressing finance, development, regulation, quality and standards, the utilisation of currently vacant properties, homelessness and tenants' rights.

The Communist Party supports organisations at local, regional and national level that campaign for improved tenants' rights and for housing development to be locally-controlled and based on assessed housing need.

HOMES FOR THE PEOPLE

■ HOUSING PROFITS VS HOUSING NEED

The 2008 financial crisis was precipitated by the sub-prime mortgage scandal in the US caused by the banks lending more than the value of property on an industrial scale.

This triggered an international financial crisis. House prices **collapsed** as they did in the recession of 1990/91 caused by high inflation and interest rates.

When housing is seen as a financial investment there is pressure to restrict supply in the hope of **raising prices**. This has led to decades of underinvestment and a huge imbalance between supply and demand, affecting millions of people in Britain.

Landowners profit from **speculative** land values, driven by developers whose prime motive is enriching their shareholders and who fight their obligations to deliver affordable homes with the threat of refusing to develop land they own.

In England, the Government sets targets on the number of homes to be delivered in each local housing area, and with the extension of rules on so-called permitted developments – the conversion of commercial buildings into housing – means English planning authorities and local communities are almost **powerless** to influence the shape of a built environment which is increasingly developer-led and determined by land availability, rather than local need. It results in the wrong homes, of the wrong tenure, being built in the wrong places, unable to meet assessed housing need. Different rules apply in Scotland and Wales.

In Scotland, the Scottish Government's social housing grants are welcome but the building rate by Councils and housing associations is only half of what is needed. Unfortunately, **social housing** is still seen only as a safety net because the SNP prioritises market provision and boosting the private rented sector.

Official statistics suggest that **325,000 new homes** per year are required simply to meet demand caused by demographic change. This would not tackle the current backlog, and yet this level of house building has not been seen since 1970.

Meanwhile there are over 240,000 homes which have been **empty** for more than six months throughout Britain. Social housing as an affordable option for the population as a whole has been completely undermined by successive governments despite a million plus households on Council housing waiting lists, indicating enduring demand for the security of low-cost, socially-run housing.

Most recently in England this has included the right of social landlords to replace secure and assured tenancies and succession rights for new Council and Housing Association tenants with fixed-term tenancies – with the provision to make this compulsory within the 2016 Housing & Planning Act. That Act also contains provision for social landlords to sell off vacant high-value homes on the open market resulting in an accelerated **loss of social housing** in areas where the market provides no affordable housing options for working class communities.

In Scotland and Wales, whilst life-time tenancies have been retained and the right to buy ended, social housing is still seen as a narrow welfare tenure rather than one of choice for a range of households.

Deregulation, outsourcing and privatisation culminated in the horrific loss of life at Grenfell Tower with further disasters waiting to happen in the new slums of permitted developments, while a decade of austerity has seen the loss of enforcement resources and expertise in local authorities. In Scotland and Wales, local authorities need to be given the financial clout to turn their notional powers on housing quality and the private rented sector into levers for change.

This crisis illustrates the **class basis** of inequality and oppression within our society.

Here we see exposed for workers the devastating impact of
CAPITALIST SPECULATION

UNITY!extra





HOUSING AS A COMMODITY

'The abolition of private sector rent controls and security of tenure created the conditions in which housing became a commodity for private investment rather than homes – accelerated by the de-mutualisation of building societies and an explosion of investment by banks into property ...'

THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S HOUSING POLICY PUTS THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES ABOVE THOSE OF PRIVATE DEVELOPERS AND LANDOWNERS.

THE PROPOSALS OUTLINED HERE HELP MEET THOSE NEEDS

LOCAL AUTHORITY POWERS

- Reform housing finance to enable a mass council housing development programme, including the regeneration and replacement of run-down council estates without placing new burdens on tenants in terms of rent levels.
- Stop the sale of public land to private developers; utilise Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) on privately-owned designated housing land where development is unreasonably delayed.
- Progressively tax owners of vacant land and properties.
- Require councils to use their compulsory purchase powers to acquire and refurbish long-term empty or substandard properties and housing land for social use, including unused retail and commercial space.
- Radically extend local authority powers to restrict the growth of holiday lets and second-home ownership in areas of housing need so strengthening fragile communities.
- Relax planning regulations to permit change of use from unsold low-cost home ownership properties to social and affordable rented on a permanent or temporary basis.
- Bring ex-Council voluntary transfer housing association stock and arms-length management organisations (ALMOs) back under the direct democratic control of local authorities; develop proposals for buying back ex-council properties sold under the Right to Buy (RTB) for social rent, including giving first refusal to councils and community-based housing associations on all ex-RTB properties that come up for sale.
- Ensure social rented housing is genuinely affordable by each local authority setting affordability levels within national frameworks.
- Restore council direct labour organisations and in-house design and development expertise



CHANGES TO HOUSING LAW

- Remove the provision to deny long-term security of tenure to social housing tenants in England.
- Amend planning and housing Law to make the provision of suitable sites for gypsies and travellers a legal duty rather than discretionary power.
- End the financial incentives for homeownership in favour of investment in housing for lower-income households and individuals.
- Give local planning authorities the power to ensure that all housing development is undertaken on the basis of assessed need, locally-agreed plans, environmental, economic and social sustainability objectives.
- Enhance space, environmental and building standards for both conversions and new build and in England tackle the abuse of permitted development rights.
- Remove tax benefits for international and corporate purchasers of residential property.
- Institute enforceable limits on the banking sector's involvement in, and exposure to, the property sector including commercial real estate. Establish national and local savings institutions that specialise in housing finance and support national and local housing strategies.

BUILDING DEMOCRACY

- Protect genuinely community and tenant led housing associations and co-operatives against take-overs by "not for profit" property companies.
- Underpinning these measures, build a truly independent tenants movement linked to the trades' unions and the Peoples' Assembly in their communities.
- Involve trades unions and communities in developing local housing and infrastructure plans.

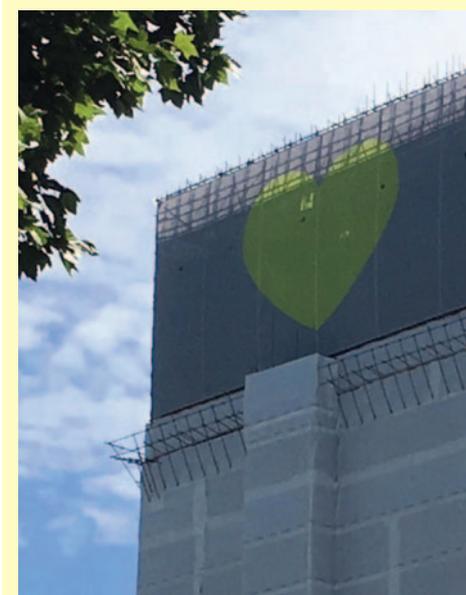
▲ Trellick Tower is a Grade II* listed tower block on the Cheltenham Estate in Kensal Town, London. Opened in 1972, it was commissioned by the Greater London Council and designed by the famous communist architect Ernő Goldfinger who fled fascism to find refuge in Britain.

The tower replaced outdated social accommodation, and designed as a follow up to Goldfinger's earlier Balfron Tower in East London. It featured various space-saving designs, along with a separate access tower containing a plant room.

All flats in Trellick Tower have a balcony and large windows to let in as much sunlight as possible.

Whilst the tower has become a very fashionable place to live through the commitment of its residents, it has also seen some flats lost to speculation, for instance a 2-bedroom flat previously sold under the right to buy was advertised for sale at £625,000 in 2020. We must resist the fate of the now listed Balfron Tower where its social purpose has been lost by its commodification as a design icon.

GRENPELL TOWER TRAGEDY



PRIVATISATION & GENTRIFICATION





HOUSING AS A RIGHT

Make the provision of suitable accommodation for all homeless households a real statutory duty, in order to end rough sleeping alongside a massive expansion in social housing. Repeal the Bedroom Tax and restore full housing benefit for all under 35s.

HOUSING SCANDAL

Tory-controlled Kensington and Chelsea Council stand accused of complicity in the neglect and unsafe construction of Grenfell Tower while the Fire Brigades Union says central government bears ultimate responsibility Tony Blair's New Labour government scrapped the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council which governed fire safety. Edward Heath's Tory government scrapped mandatory fire certification due to the "very considerable expenditure" involved.

The Thatcher government cut building regulations from more than 300 pages to just 25, ceasing a formal requirement to ensure buildings were "deemed to satisfy" fire safety regulation.

And the construction and cladding companies who were responsible for the work on Grenfell Tower knew the cladding was unsafe and a fire risk but said nothing. Seventy two died with more than 70 injured.

POST-GRENFELL

In England, require the freeholders of tower blocks to replace inflammable cladding within 12 months of original notice or transfer said blocks to local authority control. Contractors to pay the costs of removing inflammable cladding. Where this is unachievable, Government grant to be provided to complete this work within 12 months with no financial penalty to leaseholders. Ensure protection for leaseholders from unreasonable service charges.

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

Since Margaret Thatcher's election in 1979, the proportion of the British population living in Council Housing has fallen from around 40% to less than 6%, with the majority of residual Council Housing transferred to housing associations and arms-length companies in order to keep borrowing for social housing off the public sector borrowing requirement.

The PRS, which accommodated less than 10% of the population in 1979 – when rents were regulated and tenancies were secure – is now the second largest housing sector with a half million more tenants than Council and Housing Associations combined.

Some 2 million council homes have been sold since the introduction of the right to buy in 1981. Initially sold to sitting tenants with a public subsidy in the form of a 'discount' on the market value of up to £112,000, around 40% of these homes are now in the hands of buy-to-let landlords, charging up to 3 times the council rent for the same properties. The RTB has finally been abolished in Wales and Scotland under devolved powers. It is high time this is extended to England, which is continuing to lose up to 20,000 social rented homes a year under this legislation.

The abolition of private sector rent controls and security of tenure created the conditions in which housing became a commodity for private investment rather than homes – accelerated by the de-mutualisation of building societies and an explosion of investment by banks into property from the late 1980s onwards.

The fetishization of ownership of land, bricks and mortar has been rammed down the throats of ordinary people for decades, and yet since a 70% peak in owner-occupation in 2001, the proportion of the population that owns its own home has started to fall, with younger people virtually shut out of home ownership altogether, and some 30% of all 30-45 year olds now living in the PRS.

The loss of assured short-hold tenancy is now the largest cause of homelessness and the lack of rent regulation in the PRS the principal cause of the exponential increase in the housing benefit bill. It is clear the PRS can play no long-term role in meeting housing need under the current system.

The Communist Party therefore calls for a focus on raising standards and affordability by: n Imposing local caps on private sector rent levels, subject to national limits.

- introducing full regulation of the private rented sector, including landlord licensing, rent controls, compulsory registration, providing sufficient funding to local authorities to enforce minimum housing standards and ensuring security of tenure for at least five years.
- abolishing the Right to Buy in England

HOUSING AND WELFARE

Homelessness and the lack of affordable housing to rent or buy, for all age groups, is a chronic and growing political and social crisis across Britain today.

Since the election of the Tory/Lib Dem coalition government in 2010 the progress made under the Blair/Brown government to reduce homelessness and numbers in temporary accommodation has been reversed, with an explosion in rough sleeping, a 42% increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation in the ten years to December 2019. The number of homeless applications accepted by English local authorities in the final quarter of 2019 was 33,270; over three times the number accepted in the final quarter of 2009. In Scotland, the position is little better with 30,000 homeless presentations a year and 10,000 currently in temporary accommodation.

This is a direct result of cuts to housing benefit, the bedroom tax, the imposition of the overall benefit cap on unemployed households and cuts to housing benefit for single under 35s.

Devolved housing powers in Scotland and Wales have resulted in better legal rights for homeless people. In Scotland all homeless households have the same rights regardless of family status or 'vulnerability'. However, the definition of 'intentional homelessness' has been retained limiting the assistance provided to those deemed responsible for their homelessness, regardless of vulnerability.

The Coronavirus crisis has placed up to a million renters and homeowners at risk of homelessness as unemployment rises to unprecedented levels while housing benefit levels are capped under universal credit.

Changes to housing and welfare benefits legislation are urgently required in order to end the scourge of homelessness once and for all:

- Extend the Coronavirus ban on evictions for at least twelve months.
- Ban bank and Building Society repossessions resulting from the coronavirus crisis and provide 100% benefit to all households for rent arrears caused by the Covid crisis.
- Take housing benefit out of Universal Credit and provide local authorities with 100% housing benefit subsidy.
- Repeal the Bedroom Tax and restore full housing benefit for all under 35s.
- Freeze Social housing rents for 12 months and peg future increases to Retail Price Index (RPI).
- Make the provision of suitable accommodation for all homeless households a real statutory duty, in order to end rough sleeping alongside a massive expansion in social housing
- Restore funding for supported housing and housing support services, ensuring the need for hostels, refuges, sheltered and other supported housing is assessed and incorporated into local housing development plans, restoring the 'safety net' for the most vulnerable in society. Make the local authorities once again the main providers and the benchmark for staffing levels and pay for other providers.
- Restore funding for housing advice services and ensure legal aid is accessible for all housing-related problems.

GEDY



RIFICATION



1979

Vicarage Gardens, Battersea SW11. Vicarage Gardens tenant's association chair Tony Ximines points out the leaking gutters, mould encrusted rooms and decayed brickwork that has made these purpose-built flats uninhabitable. Aided by the local advice centre the tenant's association took Tory Wandsworth Council to court. Instead of renovating the flats the council moved the tenants out, sold off the flats in a corrupt process that gentrified this solid working class area.

2021

Vicarage Gardens, Battersea SW11. For £450,000 this spacious one bedroom third floor flat is situated within this popular gated development located close to Battersea Square and the River Thames. Featuring a fully fitted kitchen, living room, double bedroom, bathroom, lift service, communal gardens and resident porter.





CAPITALISM

The housing shortage from which the workers and part of the petty bourgeoisie suffer in our modern big cities is one of the numerous smaller, secondary evils which result from the present-day capitalist mode of production. **Frederick Engels** *The Housing Question* 1872

working class power

We live in **capitalism** – a system of exploitation that generates crisis, inequality, corruption, environmental degradation and war.

Capitalism is innately incapable of solving the most **fundamental problems of humanity**. The capitalist monopoly corporations and the state apparatus which serves their interests are the main obstacles to progress on every front: economic, environmental, political, social and cultural.

Socialism is the only form of society that offers the potential for solving humanity's problems in conditions of personal and collective freedom. Because the working class has the most direct and immediate interest in putting an end to capitalism and replacing it with a socialist society, its own class interest also represents the interests of society generally.

In Britain, the potential exists to pursue an alternative economic and political strategy that challenges and ultimately defeats the ruling class. More specifically, a **popular democratic anti-monopoly alliance** can be built, led by the labour movement, to fight for a left-wing programme (LWP) of policies that would make inroads into the wealth and power of the monopoly capitalists.

Any such **strategy and programme** must include far-reaching policies and action to reduce carbon emissions, which contribute to global warming and cause climate change with disastrous consequences for humanity.

Through an upsurge in working class and popular action, a left government can be elected in Britain based on parliamentary majorities of Labour, socialist, communist and progressive representatives, and strengthened by the election of left majorities in Scotland and Wales.

To carry out the most advanced policies of a left-wing programme, the mass movement and its left governments will have to engage in a decisive struggle for **state power** (the means by which one class enforces its rule over other classes and in society as a whole).

A united challenge to British **state-monopoly capitalism** will require a high level of working class and progressive coordination and unity, maximising the democratic potential of national rights in Scotland and Wales and minimising the scope for division.

Achieving **state power** and minimising the opportunities for counter-revolution will create the conditions in which to dismantle capitalism progressively and lay the foundations for a democratic, environmentally sustainable and peaceful future in a federal, socialist Britain.

A **socialist society** can then be built in which wealth and power are held in common and used in a planned way for the benefit of all, with the working class and its allies liberating the people from all forms of exploitation and oppression.

Putting an end to **British imperialism** – the exercise of monopoly capitalist exploitation and power in other parts of the world – is the biggest contribution we can make to international liberation and socialism.

A **Communist Party** that exercises mass influence will be essential if Britain is to take the road to socialism in practice, through political class struggle.

what we stand for

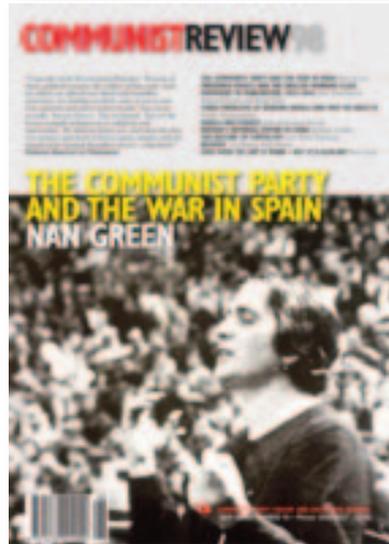
The aim of the Communist Party is to achieve a socialist Britain in which the means of production, distribution and exchange will be socially owned and utilised in a planned way for the benefit of all.

This necessitates a revolutionary transformation of society, ending the existing capitalist system of exploitation and replacing it with a socialist society in which each will contribute according to ability and receive according to work done.

Socialist society creates the conditions for the advance to a fully communist form of society in which each will receive according to need.

Only a socialist Britain co-operating with all other peoples of the world in close, friendly, free and equal association will be able to develop and plan the use of all Britain's material, productive and scientific resources, where every citizen will be guaranteed security, the right to work and leisure, a steadily rising standard of living, full democratic rights, and equal opportunity to enjoy a full and happy life.

Communist Party Aims and Constitution



COMMUNIST REVIEW is the Communist Party's quarterly journal of theory and discussion.

First published in 1921 the current series reached its 100th issue this Summer.

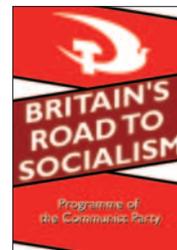
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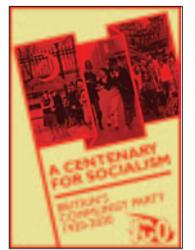
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Unity!

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

Inside

- EU-UK trade deal analysis
- Young communists call for safe schools
- NCL 100
- Climate change and Covid
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- Political education

Rolls Royce workers win strike

Student occupation victory

Rolls Royce workers win strike

Let's not overstate it. Rolls Royce workers have won a major victory. They have won a 30 per cent real wage increase. They have won a 30 per cent real wage increase. They have won a 30 per cent real wage increase.

FEATURE: VACCINE MUST HELP PEOPLE, NOT PRIVATE PROFIT

NEWS: JEWISH MEMBERS BACK LABOUR WHIP FOR COBBYIN

Richard Burgon MP on the countries left behind | PAGE 8

It was our decision to send him home

CRISIS LEAVES 2 MILLION OUT OF WORK

Sunak urged to act as long-term impact on workers exposed

Keats still a radical two centuries later

It was our decision to send him home

CRICKET

It was our decision to send him home

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