

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ★ **ANTI RACIST**extra
- ★ **COMMUNIST WOMEN**
- ★ international bulletin

Unity!

FOODBANK BRITAIN NEEDS A PAY RISE

Nick Wright
Cost of Living

WORKING CLASS Britain faces a tsunami of price rises. A big element in the rising cost of living are energy prices. Ofgen limits on energy tariffs were increased by 17 per cent for gas and nine per cent for electricity last Autumn and are set to be raised even higher in April this year.

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies the Bank of England expects the caps to increase from their current level by 20 per cent for electricity and 35 per cent for gas. This will make the year-on-year energy inflation rates of 31 per cent and 58 per cent for gas and electricity next month.

Inflation overall is expected to rise by six per cent. Especially for people dependent on benefits or on low pay this is a disaster that adds to the burdens they already bear.

Rising inflation means a three per cent real cut in benefits year on year – and this even before the removal of the temporary £20 per week uplift in Universal Credit, and the equivalent in Working Tax Credit, which took place back in October. Without a boost to their incomes people on benefits face a £290 cut.

The TUC argues that to end the longest pay squeeze in 200 years the Chancellor must fund real pay rises across the public sector and raise the minimum wage to £10.

For the trade unions a key issue is strengthening workers' bargaining rights so that unions can win higher wages.

Food prices are shooting up. The Office for National Statistics reports that the retail prices index (RPI) rose last year by 7.5 per cent. And supermarket bosses warn of more price rises to come.

These price rises bite deeply into the household budgets of all working people,

those on benefits and on low wages and in insecure work.

Foodbank charities report that the average cost of a parcel of groceries has gone up 7 per cent last year. If price rises continue at the present rate millions more workers will be pushed into absolute poverty.

And this while energy companies are making millions and banker's bonuses are at the highest level since the financial crisis of 2008. As Bank of England boss Andrew Bailey calls on workers to lay off pay claims 3,519 City bankers trousered more than £1 million each in bonuses and 27 'earned' more than £10 million each.

Communists say freeze prices, raise wages, end anti union laws, raise benefits and pensions, tax corporate profits and nationalise the banks. ★

NICK WRIGHT IS EDITOR OF UNITY!

For peace and a just solution to the conflict in Ukraine

The Communist Parties of Britain and Ireland have issued a joint statement on the situation in Ukraine and have invited sister parties to add their support.

We the undersigned political parties welcome the statement of the World Peace Council of February 25, 2022, which:

Calls on all sides to the Russia-Ukraine conflict to restore and secure peace and international security through constructive political dialogue, noting that the Russian and Ukrainian people, as well as the peoples of the region, have nothing to gain from this military conflict.

Condemns the political and military manoeuvres of the USA, NATO and the European Union since the Euromaidan coup of 2014 after which reactionary forces took power in Kyiv with the open support of the Western imperialist powers.

Reiterates opposition to NATO's eastward expansion, its military build-up in Eastern Europe and the encirclement of the Russian Federation.

Declares that the unilateral recognition of the independence of the Ukrainian provinces by Russia not only undermines the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations, but also creates justification for the future abuse of such methods by the imperialist powers against other nations.

Recognises that this conflict is related to the control of energy resources, pipelines, markets and spheres of influence.

On this basis, we the undersigned call for an immediate ceasefire and a halt to all military operations in Ukraine which threaten to escalate the war.

We urge the UNSC and neutral and non-aligned countries to convene talks aimed at de-escalating the conflict and laying the basis for a permanent, stable and peaceful settlement of all the substantial issues damaging Ukraine-Russian relations.

Continued overleaf

Stop the war, start the peace

Communist Party
Ukraine

THE WAR between Russia and Ukraine is part of a wider conflict between capitalist powers, between Russia on one side and Ukraine and the expansionist NATO powers on the other.

Neither side in this war stands for the real interests of the peoples of Russia, Ukraine or of Europe more widely, which include living in peace and determining the future of their own society free from outside domination.

Putin represents the interests of Russia's big business oligarchs who profit from the theft of that country's economic assets from the Russian working class. Far from wishing to restore the Soviet Union, he rejects socialism and has explicitly attacked Lenin's policy of federalism and autonomy which guarantees the rights of nations and nationalities.

The Ukrainian government represents the Ukrainian oligarchs who, like their Russian counterparts, stash their stolen wealth in Western banks such as Credit Suisse and launder much of their money through the City

of London. The Ukrainian Communist Party and its MPs – who uphold Ukraine's national sovereignty – have been banned and the country thrown open to Western capital.

NATO is an alliance of imperialist powers, dominated by the US, with a long history of bombing, invading, occupying and partitioning sovereign nations up to the present day including Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Libya and Syria.

The eastwards expansion of NATO and the EU in breach of documented pledges to ex-President Gorbachev and ex-Foreign Minister Shevardnadze; NATO's military build-up in eastern Europe and the Baltic states and in the seas and oceans around Russia; the US- and fascist-backed coup to replace Ukraine's democratically elected president by pro-Western politicians in 2014; the unpunished massacre at the Odessa trade union HQ; the refusal of the Ukrainian government to implement the UN-backed Minsk II Agreement including autonomy for the Donbas region; and in recent days – as recorded by observers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

(OSCE) – the escalating attacks on the 'People's Republics' in Donetsk and Lugansk ... all have created the conditions for today's war.

However, none of this justifies the widespread military offensive launched by President Putin on February 24. This onslaught further destabilises Ukraine and will strengthen the hand of those elements in eastern Europe, Britain, the US and NATO who prefer expansionism, militarism, provocations and war to negotiation and the peaceful settlement of problems between and within states.

Already, the giant oil and armaments corporations of the US, Britain and Western Europe are making enormous profits out of this conflict.

The Communist Party of Britain, therefore, calls for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine, a halt to all military operations and the beginning of negotiations to bring about a just settlement of the Ukraine question.

Where necessary and by agreement, UN peace-keeping forces should be stationed in Ukraine to protect communities from further attack. Western governments in the OSCE

should reverse their withdrawal of observers from the country.

Sanctions against Russia will not only make any progress more difficult. They will also damage the well-being of the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and the rest of Europe including Britain, while making Europe more dependent on energy supplies from US corporations and Middle East dictatorships.

Instead of war-mongering and sending yet more military forces and armaments into eastern Europe and the Baltic states, the British government should be using its permanent membership of the UN Security Council to work alongside China for peace and a negotiated settlement.

The objective should be a demilitarised and neutral Ukraine whose sovereign borders are respected and guaranteed internally and externally.

The Communist Party of Britain stands in solidarity with all peoples and movements who demand an immediate end to military action in Ukraine and condemns any moves to silence anti-war voices whether in Britain, Ukraine or Russia. ★

Statement issued by the political committee of the Communist Party 25 February 2022



EVENTS & IDEAS & ACTION

It is necessary that at your factory, which bears the name of the great revolutionary Clara Zetkin, a woman who fought passionately for the emancipation of women-workers, it should be a matter of honour for all factory organisations to see to it that not a single person remains illiterate at the factory, that every working woman should become more literate. Nadezhda Krupskaya 1935 to Komsomol, to party members management and workers.



Straight left from Stewart McGill

A common argument against windfall taxes on excessive profits and taking the utilities into public ownership is the supposed impact on workers' pension funds. 'Much of the oil and gas companies' profits go back to their shareholders, and BP and Shell shares provide important dividend income for many UK pension funds. . . .'

As ever the facts tell a different story from right-wing apologia:

- only a tiny proportion of UK dividends and buybacks accrue to UK pension funds;
- the proportion of UK shares directly held by UK pension funds fell from 33 per cent per cent in 1990 to less than 4% by 2018;
- the proportion of UK shares owned by overseas investors rose from 12 per cent in 1990 to 55 per cent in 2018;
- in total UK pension funds own directly or indirectly under six per cent of UK shares;
- the richest twenty per cent of UK households by income own 49 per cent of pension wealth in the UK;
- just 41 per cent of low-paid private sector employees working full-time belonging to a pension scheme, in reality, the poorest depend on the state rather than private pensions for their retirement income.

So remember, when Tories oppose windfall taxes they're really not thinking of working people's pensions. . ★
See this TUC report:
<https://tinyurl.com/3z48xmkc>

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

We call upon Russia to begin withdrawing its forces from Ukraine, that the United States and the European Union to commit themselves to a demilitarised and neutral Ukraine.

As members of the United Nations Security Council Britain, Ireland and other states should be working for a ceasefire and peace instead of supporting one-sided resolutions that ignore the record of the Western powers and NATO when it comes to launching wars that violate international and humanitarian law, UN resolutions and the right of nations to sovereignty and self-determination.

It is notable that such a war is still being waged by Saudi Arabia and its Western backers against the near-defenceless people of Yemen, while northern Cyprus remains occupied by NATO member Turkey following its illegal invasion in 1974 and the British government continues its long history of denying the Irish people's right to sovereignty and independence.

The best basis for a settlement of the Russia-Ukraine war would be one that takes full account of the Minsk II Agreement, including permanent recognition of Ukraine's sovereign borders and autonomy for the Donbas region within Ukraine.

In order to create more favourable

Stop the war Start the peace

Statement of the Communist Party
@cpBritain

The war between Russia and Ukraine is part of a wider conflict between capitalist powers, between Russia on one side and Ukraine and the expansionist NATO powers on the other.

Neither side in this war stands for the real interests of the peoples of Russia, Ukraine or of Europe more widely, which include living in peace and determining the future of their own society free from outside domination.

Putin represents the interests of Russia's big business oligarchs who profit from the theft of that country's economic assets from the Russian working class. Far from wishing to restore the Soviet Union, he rejects socialism and has explicitly attacked Lenin's policy of federalism and autonomy which guarantees the rights of nations and nationalities.

The Ukrainian government represents the Ukrainian oligarchs who, like their Russian counterparts, stash their stolen wealth in Western banks such as Credit Suisse and launder much of their money through the City of London. The Ukrainian Communist Party and its MPs - who uphold Ukraine's national sovereignty - have been banned and the country thrown open to Western capital.

NATO is an alliance of imperialist powers, dominated by the US, with a long history of bombing, invading, occupying and partitioning sovereign nations up to the present day including Iraq, Afghanistan, Yugoslavia, Libya and Syria.



▲ New A4 leaflet available contains the Communist Party statement on the Ukraine crisis in full

CommieCast

Agitprop

A new series of Communist Party podcasts in the CommieCast series will feature the Ukraine crisis features and interviews on housing, education, transport, community building and fighting crime, the state of health and the battle for democracy and a progressive federal solution to Britain's nationality question.

In the first podcast Communist Party general secretary Rob Griffiths talks with **Unity!** columnist Stewart McGill.

They discuss - in a comprehensive analysis that mainstream media will not provide - the unfolding crisis in Ukraine how we got here and how we can work for peace. ★

conditions for a ceasefire, negotiations and a permanent settlement, we reject sanctions against Russia, which is war by other means and will harm the well-being of the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Europe generally.

We express our solidarity with the working classes of Ukraine and Russia who will pay the heaviest price for this instance of Russian military adventurism.

We call for the unbanning of the Communist Party of Ukraine.

We call for united action by all progressive and peace forces in campaigning for the disbandment of NATO.

The EU is an active protagonist in events unfolding in Ukraine. We oppose the growing militarism and increased military spending by the EU under its PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) programme as a growing threat to peace in Europe and globally.

We reject all efforts to silence voices for peace and reconciliation, whether in Russia, Ukraine or elsewhere, and oppose bans on media outlets that do not propagate the world-view of Western imperialism and NATO.

Stop the war, start the peace! . ★

Proposed by:
Communist Party of Britain
Communist Party of Ireland

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION

Britain's communists have a vital role to play in educating, organising, and campaigning on long and short-term environmental issues.

A reformed party Environmental Commission for district and nation delegates will meet on 16 March 7-8 pm via Zoom.

To participate, contact convener Richard Hebbert at environment@communistparty.org.uk.

CYBERSPACE REDS

The party's Communications Network is asking for volunteers to help with Search Engine Optimisation and analytics. Comrades with such skills are asked to contact info@communistparty.org.uk subject line 'Analytics Support'



Johnson's post-EU Britain or progressive federalism

John Foster a new democratic settlement for Britain's nations. £2.50



▲ 1972 Communist Party general secretary John Gollan with the party's election manifesto

Election campaign launch

Phil Katz Elections

With May elections in England, Scotland and Wales the party's election commission met in late February to plan the party's work.

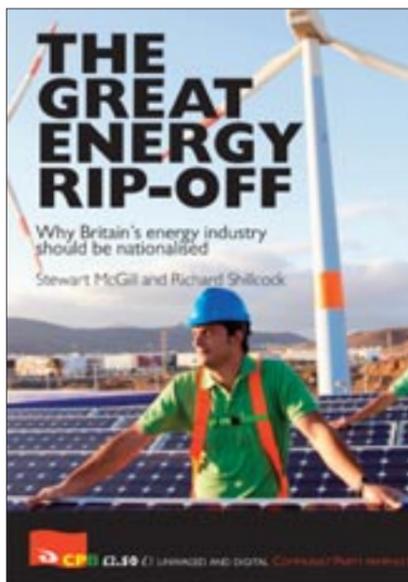
The campaign will include film and podcasts, social media promotion, posters, and an all-Britain manifesto. Additional manifestos are being written for Scotland, Wales, and London. The party's Communications Network will be helping with the design and production of local candidate's brochures for use in door-to-door canvassing and high street distribution.

The election commission has gone into 'weekly meeting' mode and party branches are urged to discuss where they may stand candidates and to let the commission know via info@communistparty.org.uk with the subject line "May Election".

Branches, districts and nations are now selecting candidates and seats to contest.

The party's policies and slogans follow on from the elections of 2021, which brought the party its biggest public vote since the 1980s. The cost of living, benefit cuts, attacks on pensions and local services will feature in hard hitting campaign points aimed at making basic working class issues the centre piece of the election

The economic situation in Britain has deteriorated further with this corrupt and centralising Conservative government bringing the anti-Covid measures to a premature end with frontal attacks on living conditions and threats to our democratic



and employment rights and to peace.

In April, millions of people will be shocked when they receive their gas and electricity bills. A new Party leaflet can be downloaded from our website and will be available in print shortly. A new Communist Party pamphlet, *The Great Energy Rip-Off*, can be ordered at: <https://tinyurl.com/2sw64n5c>

There is a real alternative - but we do not expect Labour to campaign for it in the run-up to 5 May. That's why we need the maximum number of Communist Party local election campaigns - and not only to put forward policies that serve the interests of the working class instead of big business today.

Never has there been a greater need for communists to put the case for socialism.

We can fight an election campaign to revive the labour movement, bring support to local community campaigns and enthuse

those fighting 'Fire and rehire' attacks.

Candidates will have the support of the Party, financially and organisationally. Our Communications network has been meeting for some time already, to plan campaigning in print, on social media and - at last - on the streets.

The Communist Party's Election Commission will coordinate local campaigns. Branches are selecting candidates now - but we need more to do so. Manifestos for England, Scotland and Wales will be produced, together with street posters, local leaflets and meetings. Training can be given as required.

We especially want to see candidates from under-represented groups such as women, youth and black workers. We will work closely with the Young Communist League to ensure that our younger candidates receive support.

Now is the time to select candidates and take the arguments out into our communities. Seize the moment! . ★

PHIL KATZ IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Peace leaflet/Energy rip off leaflet
Each leaflet costs £35 per thousand and is mailed to the address you nominate.

Email your orders to info@communistparty.org.uk marked 'Leaflet Order' with numbers required (multiples of a thousand) and address for them to be sent.



COMMUNIST WOMEN



Welcome

Ruth Styles

Hello sisters and comrades!

I was elected as chair of the Communist Party at the first executive committee meeting following our Congress and I am grateful for the confidence shown by comrades in my ability to discharge this role. I have big shoes to fill, following the sterling work done by Liz Payne!

I also chair the housing and anti racist and anti fascist commissions of the party.

I was lucky: I was born into a communist household, with active trade unionist parents, my father was a prominent trade unionist in the Union of Postal Workers. My mother was a leading tenant and community campaigner and became the national women's organiser for the party. My formative years were heavily influenced by the experience of working class life and the political discussions and activity going on around me. I was taught to speak publicly and how to organise and manage meetings, even though I did not appreciate the importance of these things at the time.

Women have always played a key role in political work and have been the backbone of community organising in Britain, historically

campaigning around the key issues of the day and leading and organising workers. This essential role is amply demonstrated by the Russian and Cuban Revolutions. In Russia on February 23 1917, (8 March in our calendar), International Women's Day was marked by strikes and huge demonstrations of women.

The Bolshevik paper *Pravda* reported that this led to revolution: '...the first day of the revolution was Women's Day...the women... decided the destiny of the troops; they went to the barracks, spoke to the soldiers and the latter joined the revolution... Women, we salute you.'

Women were active in the revolutionary movement in Cuba, composing at least 10-15% of the Rebel Army fighters and taking a number of key leadership positions. In a speech on 1 January 1959, Fidel Castro proclaimed that "when a people has men who fight and women who can fight, that people are invincible."

Women in modern Britain have very busy lives, they juggle work, home, low pay, low household incomes, and all the pressures that present-day life places upon them. This often means that they have limited opportunity to engage in politics. They may also feel let down by a political system that does nothing to alleviate the struggles they experience. It was ever thus, yet women were and still are key

organisers in local communities, tenants organisations, and at their workplaces. They often do not take the roles that are in the public eye, but their work is central and crucial.

Women may know about the Suffragettes, but little about labour movement history and the important role that women have played to bring about change, e.g. the Match Girls strike or the Triang Factory strike – where they struck for equal pay.

The Communist Party in Britain is small, but growing. A party with a unique political programme and role to play in the labour movement. It is essential that we recruit more women members and have women in leading positions. This entails active, rather than passive, recruitment to show what communist policies offer women. We need to talk about working class women's history and we need to be where they are and not wait for them to come to us. The language and words we use are important – always accessible and understandable when explaining who we are and what we stand for.

We can never underestimate the value of working class women's experience. We can offer Marxist Leninist education and show that there is a way to end women's oppression and build a society where women have true equality. ★

Charter for Women

The Communist Party supports the Charter For Women, developed by the National Assembly of Women in which Communists and allies play a prominent part. The charter is as follows:

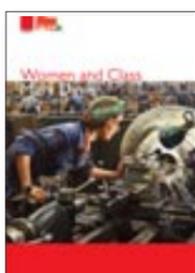
- In society:
- ★ Highlight the feminisation of poverty and campaign to reverse cuts in welfare state and public services
 - ★ Expose the ideologies that are used to perpetuate women's inequality (for example, the notion of "family values" and the "family wage")
 - ★ Draw attention to the role of the media and other cultural agencies in shaping gender identities that reinforce the unequal relationships between men and women
 - ★ Campaign for greater support for lone mothers, carers and women fleeing domestic violence
 - ★ Improve access and rights to abortion
 - ★ Ensure that women and girls are entitled to the full range of free and high-quality educational provision (from nursery to university) and subject choice
 - ★ End women pensioner poverty by increasing the State pension in line with average earnings

- At work:
- ★ Campaign to end institutional and other forms of racism and ensure that the status and pay of black women workers is a bargaining priority
 - ★ Campaign to reduce the gender pay gap and highlight its causes
 - ★ End job segregation by improving training and opportunities for women
 - ★ Ensure that unions fight more equal value claims
 - ★ Campaign to change equal pay law to permit "class action" (group claims) and remove employer "get out" clauses
 - ★ Campaign to raise the level of national minimum wage to at least half — and rising to at least two-thirds — of male median earnings
 - ★ Demand statutory pay audits
 - ★ Equalise opportunities and improve conditions for women workers.=
 - ★ Demand full-time rights for part-time workers
 - ★ Root out bullying and sexual harassment
 - ★ End casualisation and especially zero-hours contracts.
 - ★ Reduce job segregation by providing training opportunities for women in non-traditional sectors
 - ★ Campaign for affordable child care including pre-school, after-school and holiday provision
 - ★ Campaign for a shorter working week for all
 - ★ Improve maternity leave and pay, including paid paternity leave
 - ★ Campaign for a change in the qualification criteria in the Industrial Injuries/Disability Benefit scheme, to end discrimination against women and in particular to extend the list of disorders in the prescribed disease schedules

- In the labour movement:
- ★ Tackle the under-representation of women in the labour and trade union movement structures by proportionality and other measures
 - ★ Ensure the accountability of women's structures to women
 - ★ Maintain and extend women's committees, women's courses and other measures to ensure that women's issues/concerns are collectively articulated and actioned
 - ★ Campaign to raise the profile of the TUC, STUC and Welsh TUC's women's conferences as the 'parliaments of working women'



Born to campaign
East End antifascist, tireless worker for the *Daily Worker* and *Morning Star*, Co-op activist, peace campaigner, Cuba partisan and pensioners' leader and an exemplary craftswoman – whose work with fabric and thread made her famous – Rita Weiss's autobiography, with additional material by her daughter



Women and Class
A new and updated edition, for the first time in book form. Mary Davis sets out the basis of women's oppression, examines competing theories of feminism and argues for a materialist conception of sex and gender. This book is essential reading for activists in the women's and trade union movements. 80 pages. £4.50 communistparty.org.uk

A working class programme for women

Women

A pioneering project, initiated by communists in the East of England has resulted in a comprehensive analysis of the problems that affect the region and laid out a policies that enhance working class interests.

A key element of the *Eastern Rising* manifesto is a detailed and highly topical programme of policies that would advance the position of women and the whole of the working class.

COMMUNIST WOMEN presents an edited extract below.

Across the region, women constitute a leading and vital role in the work, community and political life of the area. This is especially the case in sectors such as retail, scientific research, food processing, social care — residential and in the community — health, the hotel and catering sectors as well as throughout skilled sectors of science, manufacturing and education.

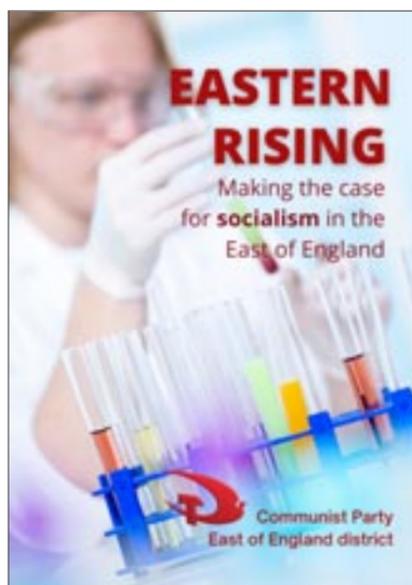
But in all areas they are underrepresented, which means that councils and the labour movement are missing a huge opportunity to tap the talent and ingenuity of this section of our society. Women's role as representatives has stalled, with about only 30-35 per cent of councillors being female. Very few councils have in place a maternity-cover arrangement for elected reps or other systems of encouragement and support. Many meet at unsocial hours.

There are 3.1 million women in Eastern England. Some raise children full time, or have to juggle this role with work or study. Thousands work in food processing, in fields and factories. Our unions have failed to expunge the gangmasters' system, so this growing sector has a workforce that is ill-paid, ill-treated and unorganised.

Many are migrant workers and some work illegally. For these workers, the Communist Party has campaigned for unionisation, an end to precarious working and an amnesty where appropriate. Unions and councils could work with our education system to support these workers with language courses tailored to their

needs and built around their often complex working hours.

While the advance of women, their wellbeing and rights are too often blocked by the Conservatives, they also experience relegation to "minority" status on the political left, even though they are a majority in all the regions of Britain, including our own. This cannot be allowed to continue and the Communist Party in the Eastern district has taken a self-critical position on this question.



At 20 per cent of our membership overall, we know that far too few women are joining the Communist Party. So we have begun an internal process, led by female activists and local women leaders of the party to better understand how we can improve representation and membership at all levels.

At this time, while the government fights its culture wars, the rights of women have also come under attack.

In order to campaign for the Charter for Women (reproduced below) we as Marxists recognise the material reality of sex and that mental or spiritual processes arise only as the product of material conditions.

We therefore call for the protection of

women's spaces and protection of distinct services to protect women from violence and abuse.

The party's recent policy-making congress discussed the fact that women's rights, won over decades of struggle, were "under sustained ideological attack," thanks to the "growth and ascendancy of neoliberal philosophy across a range of intellectual fields".

While defending female rights we support human rights for all — including trans people. Members of the LGBT+ community and women are ill-served by measuring identity against stereotypical behaviours defined as boys' or girls' roles and behaviours.

We recognise the danger of using language that distorts material facts as this results in an inability to recognise that women's socialisation from birth — their education, pay, employment and health — are real issues that must be addressed, as well as deflecting focus from the effects of crime and violence resulting from misogyny and women's unequal status.

The facts on which we rely in order to campaign for women's rights should be based on sex and so statistics need to be recorded accurately, whether in census records, medical data, crime figures and all the other areas in which decisions are made.

The Communist Party has traditionally drawn its support and following from the trade union movement. It has always been closely associated — where it hasn't actually initiated — with many of the major advances for women. It campaigned for women to not only be allowed to join unions (yes, at one point some unions would not recruit them) but lead them.

In recent years, the party played a major role in initiating the Charter for Women supported by 27 national trade unions. It led the struggle for war-time crèches and in the '60s and '70s it led the campaign, through strike action and lobbying, to establish laws for equal pay and to advance reproductive rights. However, we still have a long way to go.

At 3.69 million members — well over half of all TUC affiliated trade unions — women are a powerful force bringing new ideas to our civic and labour movements.. ★



WOMEN'S ROLE

If I have attained something in this world, it was not my personal qualities that originally brought this about. Rather my achievements are only a symbol of the fact that woman, after all, is already on the march to general recognition. It is the drawing of millions of women into productive work, which was swiftly effected especially during the war and which thrust into the realm of possibility the fact that a woman could be advanced to the highest political and diplomatic positions. **Alexandra Kollontai**



▲ RUSSIA 1917

Striking women workers sparked the February Revolution on International Women's Day in 1917.

Bolshevik leaders wanted to wait until Workers' Day on May 1 to launch the revolution, but women took to the street to demand bread and an end to the war, and their protests forced the abdication of the czar.

Lenin declared Women's Day an official Soviet holiday after the October revolution, at the urging of his commissar of social welfare, Alexandra Kollontai

In 1910, when women in the Socialist International voted to make 8 March a day for women workers in all countries to demonstrate their solidarity, it seemed to us that we had no chance of achieving this in Russia. It was a time of vengeful triumphant reaction. Workers' organisations were smashed. Socialist leaders had fled abroad or were in jail. There was no focus around which to gather our forces, not a single socialist newspaper survived. 1909 and 1910 were joyless difficult years.

But the laws of historical development are more powerful than the bayonets of the Tsar's bloody satraps, and the intolerable lives of the exploited masses led to a rekindling of the strike movement. Workers faced the choice between suffering in silence, or entering the battle against the double tyranny of Tsarism and capital. The Russian proletariat bravely chose the latter course.

Gradually the fight gathered momentum. Throughout 1911 and 1912, Russia was swept with strikes. Some were economic, against layoffs and pay cuts. Others were of a political, anti-capitalist nature such as the mass May Day strikes in 1912, protesting against the shooting of 200 striking miners in Siberia.

The two social democratic parties in the capital began to put out the newspapers again, which continued to appear daily over the next two years, with readerships of over 50,000. New socialist publications developed their work, and the trade unions came back to life.

The workers' movement in Russia still faces innumerable obstacles. Strikers are punished with jail and exile, and police tyranny knows no bounds. Laws are made for the rich, not the workers! Added to which are the normal daily inconvenience of banned organisations - confiscated presses, constant fines and the need to keep changing the names of publications and moving premises. Landlords are arrested for renting accommodation to socialist organisations and finding rooms for meetings and offices is far from easy.

It's a struggle to the death. But fighters' courage has not deserted them, and women are joining the workers' movement in unprecedented numbers. They are no longer passionate young girls from wealthy families, sacrificing themselves as village teachers. We now see proletarian women fighting alongside men in trade unions and in all the organisations of the working class, and we read their appeals and letters in the socialist press.

Ever since the social democrats declared their support for our first International Women's Day in Russia, every political party, all sections of society have had their say. Some responded with ridicule and contempt. Others accused working women of joining forces with feminist organisations. So women decided that they must take matters into their own hands to make the day a major political event. They know they will face arrest and jail for this first attempt to voice their demands, but that others will be inspired by their courage and determination, and their sacrifices won't have been in vain.

On the agenda for the day are their demands for the vote and for state maternity protection. The latter is especially close to their hearts. Workers are arrested for demanding proper labour laws, and the socialist amendments to the Duma's Insurance Bill were passed only after angry demonstrations and battles with the police. Even in the Bill's revised version, the protection of working mothers and pregnant women is merely a supplementary clause, and its scope is extremely limited due to its last minute reworking. It is only working women themselves who will bring about the new laws they need as mothers and workers.

There are still those in Russia who object that Women's Day is a concession to the bourgeois women's organisations and threatens the unity of the workers' cause. Fortunately these objections are no longer heard abroad. Life itself has supplied the answers.

Women's Day is a link in the long chain of the proletarian women's movement in

Europe, which is growing stronger with every year that passes. Twenty years ago they were only a few women in the trade unions and scattered brightly here and there in socialist parties. Now there are over 500,000 women trade union members in England, Germany, France and Austria and 20,000 in the workers' parties. Working women are organising in Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Italy and Hungary. The socialist women's army is now almost a million strong - a mighty force!

And a force to be reckoned with when it comes to discussing the burning practical issues of maternity insurance, rising food prices, child labour and legislation to safeguard women's working conditions.

There was a time when working men thought they had to bear the burden of the struggle against capital on their own. But as increasing numbers of women enter the ranks of those who sell their labour - driven into the factories by need, or when a husband or father becomes unemployed - men see that leaving them behind damages the socialist cause and holds it back. The more class-conscious fighters there are the sooner we will be victorious. What consciousness can a woman have who stands at the stove, whose life is ordained by a husband or father, with no rights in her family or society and no ideas of her own? Women's "backwardness", their passivity and lack of rights, is of no benefit to the workers' movement and is indeed harmful to it. But how are they to be drawn into this movement?

Social democracy did not immediately find the correct answers to this question. The doors of the workers' organisations were open to women, but few joined. Why? Because the working class was at first slow to recognise their double oppression, as workers who sell the labour and as wives and mothers. They did not see that, as the most legally and socially deprived members of their class, exploited and intimidated over the centuries, they need a special approach to awaken their hearts and minds.

Working women in the different countries have done a huge amount to ensure that

men now understand the need for this work, and the workers' parties have been taking up the fight for women's interests, demanding their political rights and the proper protection of their labour. The more boldly socialists advance these demands, the more women will see us as their allies and the cause of women as a cause of the entire working class. The challenge facing the parties now is to attract more women as members.

Special committees have been set up to take this work forward, to campaign against rising prices, prostitution and infant mortality, and for new laws to protect pregnant women and nursing mothers. These committees draw women into the common struggle against war and exploitation, while at the same time encouraging them to raise their own specifically female demands.

The social democrats see these demands as fundamental to the entire workers' movement and they support Women's Day as a day for working women to stand up for their rights. And to those in Russia who still believe the "singling out" of women plays into the hands of the liberal feminists, we say they have completely failed to grasp the diametrically opposed class interests of the two movements.

Bourgeois women want the same privileges and advantages in capitalist society as are presently enjoyed by their husbands and fathers. The proletarian woman wants to abolish all privileges based on birth and class; for her it is a matter of indifference whether her employer is a man or a woman.

Bourgeois women demand equal political rights for women of their class, to allow them to make their way more successfully in a world based on the exploitation of others' labour. The proletarian woman demands political rights for all citizens, male and female, as a first step on the rocky path leading her to the kingdom of socialist labour.

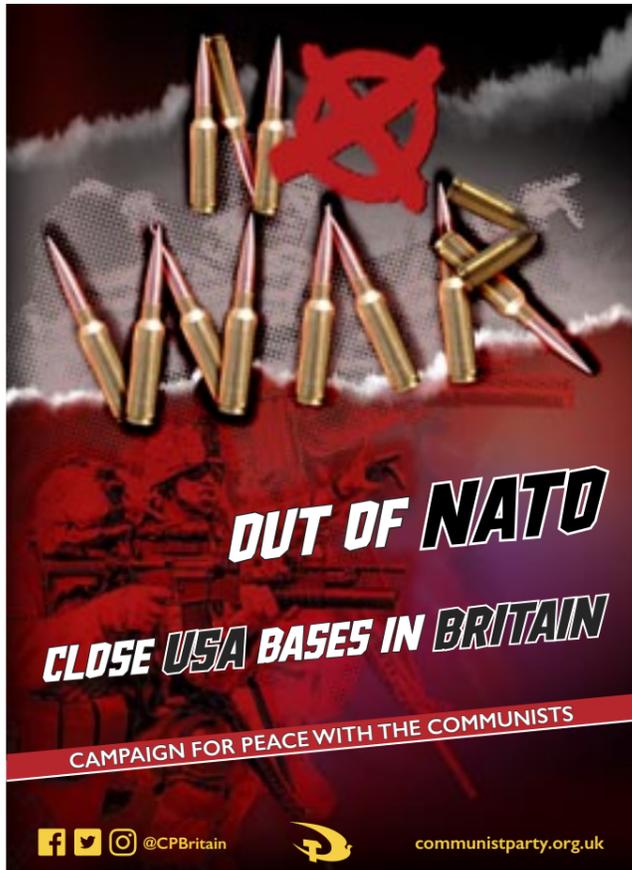
The differences life has put before the mistresses and their servants have proved insurmountable. Working women have seen that the "better society" the feminist dream of has nothing to offer them, and the two movements have long gone their separate ways. Working men have nothing to fear from Women's Day, or from special women's committees, conferences and publications. All these draw women into the ranks of those fighting for a better future. And the slow patient work of building them, far from dividing workers serves to unite and strengthen the movement.

Proletarian women in Russia face a hard struggle, but they are inspired by the support of their sisters throughout the world. The day is fast approaching when workers of all countries will advance in closed ranks against the capitalists to end the slavery of wage labour. So let us celebrate Women's Day joyfully in Russia, fighting for our emancipation and for the emancipation of the entire working class, bringing the day closer to our goal - the inevitable, longed-for socialist revolution.

From *Writings from the Struggle* (Bookmarks 2020) selected and translated by Cathy Porter.

A lifelong socialist, Cathy Porter has published 28 books on Russia, including *Alexandra Kollontai: A Biography*, and *Writings from the Struggle*. *The Writings of Larisa Reisner*, and *Larisa Reisner. A Life* (Historical Materialism Books) are due for publication soon.

international bulletin



▲ New poster available at www.communistparty.org.uk

CPB EUROPE GROUP Ukraine

As the international bulletin went to press talks – to take place in Belarus – were announced between Ukraine and Russia. If successful in ending the conflict this will be a valuable first step in decreasing tension. In the period since this crisis intensified we have seen a resurgence of Cold War politicking on a grand scale with a major assault on the left and a complete capitulation by social democrat elements from the German Chancellor Stolz's abandonment of the basic principles of German foreign policy through to a new police regime in the British Labour Party. The analysis below represents the results of discussions in the Europe sub-group of the Communist Party's International Commission before the Russian invasion and is a useful background to the present moment. In a disgusting echo of prior attacks on anti-

war and anti-imperialist movements (which history has since vindicated), anti-war campaigners in the Labour movement have been accused of siding with the 'enemy' by the leader of the Labour Party.

Starmer follows the British and US governments in portraying the situation in Ukraine as simple: a former Soviet state that invaded because of its recent democratisation. In truth, the situation is extremely complex – but we can point to a number of assumptions on which this jingoistic narrative rested.

That Russian calls for Ukrainian neutrality are a return to 'spheres of influence'

Firstly, neutrality – by definition – implies sitting outside of spheres of influence: nobody suggested close economic or defence integration between Ukraine and Russia on the Belarussian model. Neutrality was inscribed in the post-Soviet Ukrainian constitution until reforms between 2014 and 2019 by Poroshenko's government – this ended the 'non-bloc' policy which had first been established in the 1990 Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine ('a permanently neutral state that does not participate in military blocs').

The debate on spheres of influence, then, has been turned on its head: in truth the US and NATO sphere of influence expands aggressively. In 2020, according to Aljazeera, the US had 173,000 troops abroad in 159 countries; and permanent foreign bases in at least 80 foreign countries. Russia has foreign military bases in Belarus and other eight countries; according to the most recent announcements, 30,000 Russian troops will be stationed in Belarus. Contemporaneous events – the departure of French troops from Mali, the visit to the UK-occupied Chagos Islands (leased to a US foreign military base) – remind us of the imperialist nature of NATO's many spheres.

That NATO's intention is to protect Ukrainian parliamentary democracy against undemocratic states like Putin's Russia.

Rob Griffiths, the Communist Party of Britain's general secretary criticised Putin's illegal ballot-rigging in his 2022 New Year's address (so much for supporting 'authoritarian leaders who directly threaten democracies'). But the membership and history of NATO

make this notion ridiculous. In key NATO member-state Turkey, extensive ballot-rigging took place in the 2015 general election and is an example of a longer-term shift towards censorship and authoritarianism. These facts were widely established by the time the US green-lit the Turkish invasion of Syria in 2019; to say nothing of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 (Turkey had been a NATO member since 1952).

As for parliamentary democracy, Ukraine began to look much more like a one-party state now than it did before Euromaidan and the civil war in Donetsk and Lugansk. Because of the geographical distribution of party political support, the current Ukrainian state effectively disenfranchises most of the electorate which would oppose it. The vote-share majorities for parliamentary elections (i.e. the gap between first and second placed parties) since the start of this century were: 4% (2002); 10% (2006); 3% (2007); 4% (2012). In 2019, the leading party won 30% more than the second-placed party.

The second-placed candidate in 2002, and indeed the winner of the 1998 election, was the Communist Party of Ukraine. This is not a simple east-west split: in the 1999 presidential election, the CPU candidate Petro Symonenko (second overall) lost the Donetsk region, and won greatest support in the western Vinnytsia with 59% of the votes. In 2015, new decommunisation laws banned the CPU; and Symonenko was banned from standing as a candidate to the 2019 general elections.

The Ukrainian government has sought to rehabilitate and glorify fascist collaborators such as Stepan Bandera as 'anti-communists'; various government statues have been put up of Yaroslav Stetsko, head of the 'Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations', who openly endorsed the Holocaust. Then-president Poroshenko unveiled a memorial for Nazi collaborators of Babi Yar massacre during a ceremony marking its 75th anniversary. Zelensky (who is Jewish) was elected promising to turn away from divisive nationalism; though some of the most public rehabilitations have been reversed, the neo-Nazi Azov battalion continued to enjoy official status within Ukraine's armed forces. Recently, counter-terrorism police at British airports have been quizzing travellers to Ukraine, amid fears that far-right activists may travel there for military training.

That NATO is, in Starmer's words, a 'defensive alliance that has never provoked conflict'.

This refers to NATO's Article 5 ('an armed attack against one...shall be considered an attack against them all'); the only time this has been activated was after 9/11, rather than the invasion of a nation-state. Instead, NATO has bombed or occupied Yugoslavia (without UN security council backing), Libya and Afghanistan; and planned to occupy parts of Syria (before Russian intervention).

That NATO expansion is not negotiable, as Ukraine must have a 'sovereign right' to join.

NATO expansion was negotiated; as has been attested by Roland Dumas (French foreign minister at the time) and Jack Matlock (US ambassador in Moscow at the time), assurances were given to Gorbachev that NATO would not expand eastwards. In 1991, when quizzed in Moscow about eastward NATO expansion, John Major promised that 'nothing of the sort will happen'.

A number of other documented statements (from the former German foreign minister Genscher, the former US secretary of state Baker, etc) point in the same direction. In the years since, the opposite has happened (indeed throughout the 90s, there were even discussions of Russia joining NATO).

Urgent diplomatic action, not warmongering rhetoric, is needed to end this conflict. Where this should have included the immediate implementation of the Minsk II protocol, which involved the OSCE (rather than NATO) now a new machinery is needed.

Winning a ceasefire is the first step. Negotiations between the Russians and Ukrainian president Zelensky are reported to be under preparation. A withdrawal of Russian troops and a negotiated neutral status for Ukraine with the protections embodied in Minsk 2 is the best basis for peace.

The considerable economic and political influence of Western countries on Ukraine should be used to encourage the Ukrainian government to respect Minsk II, which – through its provisions for self-governance in Donetsk and Luhansk – would effectively make NATO membership for Ukraine impossible.. ★

No to NATO, No to a New Cold War

Kevin Nelson AUKUS

Groundbreaking co-operation has been forged between the communist parties of Australia, Britain and the United States forged in opposition to the AUKUS military pact for the Asia-Pacific region (agreed by the three governments in September 2021). In February the Communist Party of Australia convened an international webinar on the New Cold War against China with speakers from three parties.

The event was chaired by CPA president Vinnie Molina who stated that the meeting was a response to imperialist propaganda based on lies and misinformation. The advent of the new cold war has seen massive increases in US military expenditure and pressure on the capitalist countries allied with the US to do likewise. Progressive peace and anti war movements must mount a campaign for peace and mutual cooperation with China for the benefit of working people.

Andrew Irving, CPA general secretary

outlined the continuities in imperialism's cold war strategies since 1945 for economic, military and political domination. NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg sums up imperialism's stance with his statement that 'the rise of China poses a security threat to NATO'. China's commitment to eradicate poverty, combat climate change and promote peaceful cooperation and development through the Belt and Road Initiative stands in stark contrast to the exploitation characteristic of imperialism.

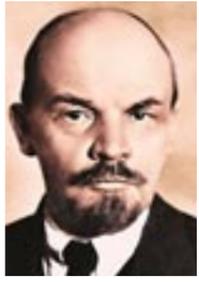
Duncan McFarland of the CPUSA stated that Biden had doubled down on a strategy for maintaining US global hegemony by identifying China as a key adversary. The US trade war against China has been ineffective and China's economy remains strong. Now a full spectrum attack on human rights is central to the US ideological and propaganda war alongside provocative military exercises and punitive sanctions. Weapons manufacturers and the military industrial complex profit massively when there is a feared enemy. Biden is committed to alliance building on the basis

of defending 'democracy and freedom' as per the Cold War playbook unlike Trump's go it alone policy. December's so called 'Summit for Democracy' engaged 111 countries but little follow up action. The US policy may be working well in the anglosphere but not elsewhere. US public opinion has been affected by the mass corporate fearmongering leading to rising racism against Chinese Americans. AUKUS represents a bonanza for US defence manufacturers. Although NATO is subservient to the Biden doctrine, France and Germany are demonstrating some independence in relation to the Ukraine crisis and the Winter Olympics diplomatic boycott. Meanwhile China is building new alliances in South America and Africa.

Kenny Coyle, speaking for the CPB, made an excellent presentation on halting imperialism's drive to war. He explained the historical legacy of China being carved up by colonial and imperialist powers. Kenny detailed Britain's (often understated) global military presence with 145 bases sited in 42 countries and territories around the world.

Britain has immense diplomatic power, economic power, military power, nuclear weapons power as well as a vast arms industry and intelligence gathering powers. The fact that British imperialism is in absolute and relative decline, the threat it poses to world peace in its own right should not be underestimated. Neo colonial designs on Hong Kong have led to sustained violence against trade unions and politicians who support the One China policy. There is much evidence of collusion between US imperialism and the self styled 'pro democracy' opposition.

Roland Boer of the CPA presented the history and political economy of Xinjiang. A region of strategic importance, with oil, gas and mineral reserves, it is experiencing rapid economic and social development. This explains why western imperialists have given up on the Dalai Lama and made Xinjiang the flavour of the month. In its eastern regions, China has succeeded in delivering on the fundamental human right to subsistence and freedom from exploitation.. ★



RUSSIA & UKRAINE

We stand for the closest union of the workers of the world against "their own" capitalists and those of all other countries. But for this union to be voluntary, the Russian worker, who does not for a moment trust the Russian or the Ukrainian bourgeoisie in anything, now stands for the right of the Ukrainians to secede, without imposing his friendship upon them, but striving to win their friendship by treating them as an equal, as an ally and brother in the struggle for socialism. VI Lenin Pravda No. 82, June 28 (15), 1917.

UKRAINE CRISIS

POSITION TAKEN BY VARIOUS COMMUNIST PARTIES

www.solidnet.org/news/

Communist Party of the Russian Federation

After the appeal of the leadership of the DPR and LPR, the Russian authorities launched a military-political operation aimed at forcing Nazi provocateurs to peace. The steps taken are intended to guarantee peace in the Donbas and secure Russia from increasingly acute threats from the United States and NATO.

The militarization of Eastern Europe after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact is evident. The aggressive intentions of Washington were clearly realized in the process of destruction of Yugoslavia. The goals of the US authorities and their NATO satellites to enslave Ukraine should not be realized. These aggressive plans pose critical threats to Russia's security. At the same time, they fundamentally contradict the interests of the Ukrainian people.

The United States is increasing its competitive capabilities in the global world at any cost. They are not embarrassed by the fact that sanctions against Russia, the torpedoing of Nord Stream 2 and the threat of war in Europe lead to heavy economic losses for the eurozone countries. Today it is especially important for the peoples of the world to realize the adventurism of Washington's policy and to remember the experience of the broad anti-war movement. The deployment of such a movement would ensure solidarity with the peace-loving peoples of Russia and Ukraine and protect their rights to their own development.

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation proceeds from the need to dismantle the results of many years of banderization of Ukraine. The real policy on its territory is largely dictated by rabid nationalists. They terrorize the Ukrainian people and impose an aggressive political course on the authorities. 'Caving in' under this pressure, Zelensky betrayed the interests of his fellow citizens, who elected him president of peace in the Donbass and good neighborliness with Russia.

In conditions when the Russian Federation stood up for the citizens of Donbass, it is necessary to provide all possible assistance to refugees and civilians of the DPR and LPR. We call on the entire society to provide them with the necessary assistance and support.

The pressing imperative of the time was to force the Kiev provocateurs to peace and to curb the aggressiveness of NATO. Only the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine will ensure sustainable security for the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and all of Europe. In the struggle for peace and preventing the revival of fascism, we consider it important to widely use the methods of people's diplomacy and humanitarian cooperation.

In strategic terms, the position of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation is well known: the main guarantee of peace, creation and development is the movement along the path of social progress and

Cyprus AKEL

AKEL denounces Russia's invasion of Ukraine and calls for an immediate ceasefire and the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Ukrainian territories. The developments of the last few days constitute a backtracking from the Minsk Agreements. We stress that the respect for the independence and territorial integrity of states and the non-interference in their internal affairs constitute rules of mandatory international law. As such, they must be respected by all states of the international community.

The intense militarisation that has been developing in recent months in this region, centred on the deeper geopolitical tug-of-war between the US-NATO-EU on the one hand and Russia on the other, has created enormous dangers for security and peace in Europe and internationally. Responsibility for the non-implementation of the Minsk Agreements package of measures lies with all the involved parties, including the violations of the individual and collective rights of the citizens living in Eastern Ukraine by the Ukrainian government.

Once again, it has been demonstrated that the double standards practiced with regards the respect for international law sooner or later turns against all those who engage in such practices. Even more so, they hurt the peoples, something that we in semi-occupied Cyprus, unfortunately, know all too well.

We address an appeal to all the involved parties to return to the path of diplomacy and dialogue. The disastrous consequences of the spreading of a war confrontation will also affect Cyprus, with immediate economic and energy consequences at a time when the whole of humanity is already plagued by the effects of poverty and pandemic social justice, along the path of socialism.

Communist Party of Spain

The President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, has ordered an attack on Ukraine choosing an unacceptable war solution. This is a collective failure for all peoples interested in Peace and the fulfilment of the United Nations Charter.

The Communist Party of Spain, in light of this aggression, calls for an immediate end to all military operations initiated by Russia in Ukraine. PCE will support all initiatives that promote a peaceful and definitive solution to resolve the shared security of Ukraine and Russia outside of military logics and responses.

Such aggression should have been avoided if instead of the logic of military tension pushed by Russia, the US and NATO over Urania, the choice had been made to defend an Integrated Continental Security as approved in 1990 in the so-called 'Charter of Paris' by the CSCE (now called OSCE).

Europe needs to move towards a Shared Security System that overcomes the logic of the Cold War, initiates verifiable disarmament processes and manages to become a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Spain should not be part of this conflict and should support intense diplomatic initiatives to put an end to Russian aggression and contribute to the construction of a Continental Shared Security System.

The PCE stands in solidarity with all political and social forces in Ukraine, Russia and Europe that defend a peaceful solution to war.

Following the logic and the letter of the 'Charter of Paris', it is urgent to hold an International Conference under the auspices of the UN and the OSCE to build a Shared Security that gives security to Ukraine, Russia and all European people.

NO TO WAR!

Greece KKE

Russia's unacceptable military intervention and invasion of Ukraine is the typical start of a war that has been prepared in recent years and involves the rivalry of two imperialist camps - the US-NATO-EU and Russia - for profits, for the sharing of markets, territories.

The interest of the Greek people, of the peoples as a whole, is in their own struggle against the war and not in choosing an imperialist camp.

Under the responsibility of all the governments of ND, SYRIZA, KINAL, Greece, from Alexandroupolis to Souda, has been transformed into a vast NATO base, but also a magnet for retaliation, as Russia has admitted.

We paid a lot for NATO equipment, we pay a lot with high precision, energy poverty drowning our people. That's enough!

★ Sovereign are only the peoples who must condemn the bourgeoisie and the governments of their countries, which lead them to slaughter, both in Ukraine and in Russia, everywhere.

★ Stop Greece's involvement in US-NATO-EU imperialist plans to encircle Russia. ★ Close now the US-NATO military bases in our country. ★ Intensify the struggle for liberation from the imperialist alliances of NATO and the EU, with the people in their place.

Communist Party of Ireland

End the war in Ukraine- Dismantle NATO Today the world is closer to global war than at any time since 1962. The two largest countries in Europe are at war. The immediate cause of this situation has been the expansion of NATO and its project to constrict its imperial competitor, Russia, by establishing large bases of troops and mass-destructive weapons along its western and southern borders and the massive arming and training of Ukrainian forces and paramilitaries especially by the British.

The situation is aggravated by the fact that overt fascism is well ensconced in the political system of Ukraine and in its military. In the last few weeks US and British arms have been imported on a massive scale to the Baltic countries without regard to the financial or human cost.

It is clear that it will be the working classes of Russia and the Ukraine that will pay the heaviest price in this on-going military conflict. The CPI expresses its solidarity with the working classes of Russia and Ukraine and with communists in both countries and we share the heartbreak of soldiers and their families, victims of inter-imperialist warfare.

These developments show the baneful consequences of the expansion of the NATO war alliance. They also represent the need for the governments concerned to draw attention away from their political and economic failures. The European Union in particular played a major role in the coup of 2014 to undermine Ukraine and continues to work to subsume that country into its construct.

Democratic forces in Ireland and across Europe must find unity and united action to demand the dismantling of the aggressive military alliance of NATO and to oppose the EU-PESCO military build-up. The hypocrisy of the western imperial power knows no bounds, in particular that of British imperialism and its role and interference in the affairs of the Irish people for centuries and which continues to deny the right of the Irish people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent sovereign united Ireland.

The current situation confronts us with the spectre of an inter-imperialist nuclear war. There is an urgent need for neutral and non-aligned states to join together to work for nuclear disarmament and the dissolution of war alliances. There is a great opportunity for Ireland to use its membership of the UN Security Council to take

an independent stand appropriate to a sovereign state.

In these dark days in Europe it should not be forgotten that western powers are pursuing their warring activities such as supporting Saudi Arabia in its continual slaughter in Yemen and supplying it with bomber aircraft and armaments resulting in the devastation of urban areas. Like the wars in Africa that conflict is largely ignored by western media. Supporting proxy wars both large and small, as well as using illegal sanctions and subversion to advance and protect its economic, political and strategic military interests globally.

Hypocrisy and double standards are standard elements of imperialism. They have waged numerous illegal wars across the globe to advance and defend the interests of global corporations and monopoly capitalism. War and threats of war are constant tools of imperialist powers for both economic and strategic reasons. Attempting to undermine the sovereignty of Venezuela, Nicaragua, Iran and DPR Korea in particular, states of different ideological basis are subject to continual threats and harassment. Sanctions applied to these and other countries inevitably damage the lives of the very poorest of citizens. Such sanctions are often of dubious legality especially when imposed by the EU.

The Communist Party of Ireland calls for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine and a political solution within the UN-negotiated Minsk Agreements of 2014. Such a solution would encompass a demilitarised, neutral Ukraine, with all foreign forces and mercenaries removed and the dismantling of neo-fascist para-military groupings.

In this critical period in world affairs the Irish state has abandoned all pretence of an independent foreign policy and takes its orders from a European Union which aims at making itself an even greater power within imperialism. A seriously neutral Ireland could play a positive role in fighting war hysteria and in working for global disarmament.

Our neutrality must be enshrined in Bunreacht na hÉireann to this end. Ireland must align itself with the peace-loving peoples of the world not the armies of imperialism.

Communist Party of India (Marxist)

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) expresses its grave concern at the armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine. It is unfortunate that Russia took military action against Ukraine. There should be an immediate cessation of armed hostilities and the establishment of peace.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the United States led NATO has been steadily expanding eastward, contrary to the assurance given to Russia.

The efforts to get Ukraine to join NATO would pose a direct threat to Russia's security. Russia is also concerned about its security due to the threat posed by the presence of NATO forces and missiles at its borders in Eastern Europe. Hence the Russian demand for security guarantees, including Ukraine not joining NATO, is legitimate.

The refusal by the U.S. and NATO to meet the Russian security needs and the belligerence of the US in sending troops to the region have further escalated tensions. For peace to be established, the genuine concerns of all the peoples, including of the Donbass region in eastern Ukraine, should be addressed. The process of negotiations should be restarted and the earlier agreements reached by both the parties should be adhered to.

The CPI(M) urges the Indian government to immediately take steps to ensure the safety of the thousands of Indian citizens, mainly students stranded in Ukraine and undertake measures to evacuate all Indian citizens.



CUBA & THE USSR

The Revolution did not assume a socialist nature because of support from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; it was the other way around: support from the USSR. was produced by the socialist nature of the Cuban Revolution. To such a degree, that when the USSR disappears, Cuba keeps on being socialist. Fidel Castro



▲ A mass rally in support of the Cuban revolution was reproduced through the global media and falsely described as an oppositional rally

CUBA DEFENDING THE REVOLUTION

Bob Oram

SOMETIMES, it pays to be patient. China-Cuba relations are longstanding and Chinese investments are not new, but by signing on Christmas Day 2021 a new cooperation plan, part of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to promote construction projects, Cuba's prospects are seriously enhanced. China's top economic planner, head of the National Development and Reform Commission, He Lifeng and Cuban deputy prime minister Ricardo Cabrisas, signed off the agreement, clarifying key cooperation content and projects for China and Cuba under the BRI, including infrastructure, technology, culture, education, tourism, energy, communications, and biotechnology. This was coordinated as many BRI agreements have been, to fit alongside Cuba's short and longer-term development plans, and came with a proposed timetable and implementation roadmap.

It is important. The last two years have been seriously difficult for the Cuban people. The economy shrunk by 11% in 2020, and the government says it only began to grow slowly last year. Aside from Covid-19, the 60 year old blockade (Thursday 3 February 1962 was when proclamation 3447 was signed by Kennedy) and the total collapse of tourism, it was also a year of economic readjustments and changes necessary to move the island towards a stronger economy which can deliver sustainable development over time. China's support in this will be critical.

Cubans went into 2022 with the state still prioritising the medical care of those infected with Covid-19 above everything else. But 2021's shortages saw long lines waiting to buy food as part of daily lives, amidst a tremendous scarcity of all basic goods. On top of this you had the major changes in the financial and economic order of the country. Salaries dramatically increased, the Cuban peso became the only legal currency after the elimination of the CUC (the old second currency linked to the dollar), private sector activities were broadly extended, and the

state's regulation over the economy was loosened, except for public services, which remained as a symbol and cornerstone of the humanitarian character of the Revolution. The purpose of this transformation was to make Cuban socialism more efficient and sustainable into the future.

Things did not go as hoped for. The pandemic ground the country to a halt which together with some internal obstacles and mistakes and the unfavourable international economic context meant the reform was not as successful as it was planned to be. Inflation grew constantly – reaching at least 80% at the end of 2021, (some would say a lot more) hitting Cubans' pockets hard. Therefore, some claimed the reform had failed, but this is not universally accepted.

The situation before couldn't go on and some economists believe the changes kept the Cuban economy afloat, since there were little chances for Cuba to survive the pandemic without them. As of today, inflation is still on the rise, but many Cubans do have more purchasing power, especially those from the public sector, which still accounts for the largest part of Cuba's working population.

Taking advantage of these difficulties the United States government fostered dissent and tightened the blockade. Biden blatantly went back on his promise of reviewing and changing Trump's strategy towards the island and inhumanly chose to keep applying sanctions and even impeded shipments of humanitarian aid and medicines to Cuba. The propaganda war against Cuba was intensified, and counterrevolutionary activity sponsored to ferment anger across social media. Biden allocated millions of dollars from American taxpayers to oil the decades old destabilising machinery. In September, the US Agency for International Development awarded \$6,669,000 to projects aimed "at tracking human rights abuses in Cuba, assisting political prisoners, exposing labour exploitation, funding independent journalists and building common goals for democracy." Six of the 12 grant recipients are based in Florida; four are in Washington DC, one is in Texas and one in Spain.

Anti-Cuban Florida politicians and the international right joined forces to portray internal chaos in Cuba, precisely when the country was going through the worst of the

pandemic. Thousands of 'bots' were bought to swamp social media encouraging Cubans to protest. Some Cubans believed the hype, joining demonstrations in over a dozen places around the country on 11 July. Curiously, simultaneously they all had prepared posters and common statements; despite the mainstream media efforts calling them "spontaneous". However Cubans' revolutionary spirit and historic determination to win or lose by themselves soon became evident as pro government supporters flooded onto the streets. The destabilisation manoeuvre failed, along with the pathetic repeat performance they tried to re-enact on 15 November, the day Cuba reopened its borders to tourists. Cubans reaffirmed that those who vowed to defend them from Florida and the White House do not care about them at all, and are only looking for a chance to eradicate the Cuban example. Cuban foreign minister Bruno Rodriguez denounced the attacks against his country and offered irrefutable evidence of the hypocrisy of the United States government and its role in the action against Cuba.

Who would have then thought it would be the *Guardian*, CNN and the *Financial Times* raving about Cuba's astonishing achievement in producing not one, but five vaccines for COVID-19; the smallest country in the world to successfully develop and produce its own. Cuba has done consistently better than the UK and USA fighting Covid-19 because its campaign was based around its socialist health care system that sees health as a human right, given equally to all, with active public participation, collectivism and solidarity.

Cuba started vaccinating on 12 May 2021 by reaching 70,000 people. By the end of May one million people had been done. As of the 6 February 2022 10,581,273 (93.4%) have had one dose, 9,843,728 (86.9%) are fully vaccinated and 5,613,068 (49.6) given a booster. The renowned scientific journal *Nature* recently featured Cuba's self-developed vaccines, referencing an efficacy of 92.4% against symptomatic infections caused by Delta.

On Tuesday 25 January 2022 Cuba announced the plan to get tens of millions of doses into the arms of those who need them in the Global South and help end what WHO chief Tedros Adhanom described as "vaccine apartheid". Cuba has recently sent donations to countries that requested assistance such as Syria and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In addition, it has exported doses and negotiated tech-transfer deals with other countries including Argentina, Iran, Venezuela, Vietnam and Nicaragua. Cuba is in conversation with more than fifteen other countries regarding production in their own countries. Cuba's vaccines are based on protein antigens, which makes them easy to produce at scale and simple to store, as they do not require freezing temperatures. Cuba is also working with the national regulatory agencies of all the countries interested in acquiring the Cuban vaccines, as well as sending its Henry Reeve Medical Brigades to countries in need of support with vaccine distribution, both for immediate deployment and longer term training of personnel.

Summing up a tumultuous year President Miguel Diaz-Canel said "The pandemic was something new for Cuba and the world, but the country's response was extraordinary, and when I speak of the country, I am referring to the people and the talent of Cubans. All the potential of our health system is thanks to the Revolution."

■ Support the Cuba Solidarity Campaign by adding your name to the open letter to President Biden '60 Years Too Long' by going to the website www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk

YEMEN FALSE PROMISES TO NOT INTERVENE

Saad Musa

THE SITUATION in Yemen has continued to deteriorate, with the UN stating 55% of the country is approaching starvation levels and dozens of civilians continually being murdered, all the while food aid from the British government was cut by half over 2021. Ending the war in Yemen is quickly becoming an even more urgent necessity than it was previously.

Many hoped that, given his campaign promises, Joe Biden would unilaterally end western support for the war in Yemen. In February 2021, Biden announced his foreign policy positions and made two very telling statements. The first statement was "We are ending all American support for offensive operations in the war on Yemen". The operative word is "offensive" operations, the problem being that the US considers the war in Yemen be a defensive war for Saudi Arabia. This was confirmed when he followed that up with promises for continued support for Saudi forces against "Iranian supplied forces". Biden's national security advisors later stated that operations in Yemen in accordance with the war on terror would continue.

His second statement was a promise to end all "relevant sales" of arms to Saudi Arabia. Relevant in this situation referring to arms used in offensive operations but, as discussed above, the Pentagon considers the war in Yemen to be almost entirely defensive so this is meaningless. This farce becomes even more clear when we look at subsequent arms sales in April 2021 of \$23,000,000,000 to the UAE and in November 2021 of \$650,000,000 to Saudi Arabia. Britain itself has sold £17,600,000,000 worth of arms to Saudi Arabia since 2015 through BAE systems alone. In January 2022, the Quint meeting between the US, UK, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the UAE reaffirmed the same position of support for Saudi Arabia and the UAE for their "defensive wars" and condemned Houthi retaliatory attacks.

But why did Biden acquiesce to peace in Yemen in words at all? It is due to direct action by activists and unions. The week before Biden's speech activists in Canada blocked the delivery of armoured cars aimed for Yemen. In 2019, Campaign Against Arms Trade in the UK caused a judicial review to consider licensing of military equipment to Saudi Arabia as unlawful. The strategy is clear, we must continue to push for direct action as well as working within the legal system to prevent the government from supporting a criminal war. The Communist Party of Britain has a proud history of engaging in direct action for anti-war efforts, with Harry Pollitt himself leading dockworkers on strike to prevent the loading of munitions onto SS Jolly George for a foreign war nearly 100 years ago. We must revive that anti-war spirit and tradition and fight for peace in Yemen.

We have seen that vague promises from US/ UK are worth nothing, any move that does not end the siege and aggression against Yemen is merely a smokescreen for covering duplicity in this tragedy. We must push for the sovereignty and independence of Yemen to be respected and guaranteed, and consequently its right to self-defence as well. We must campaign for an end to all military attacks on Yemen and any interference in the internal affairs of Yemen by any foreign power, Arab and others to be regarded as criminal and illegal.

THE CHALLENGES OF THE AMERICAS

Benn Lunn

THROUGHOUT 2021 there were numerous success stories for the left in Central and South America, most notably Boric's victory in Chile, victory of Peru Libre, return of Ortega and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, and Castro's victory in Honduras.

These victories have been lauded as signals of a grand "Pink Wave" however, these advancements are positive – but sadly not assured, yet. Victories in Peru and Chile were won on very narrow margins, meaning leadership have been forced to make decisions to either maximise on their support within the left, or try to curry favour with the right of the respective nations. This is a noble form of diplomacy however compromise often means the right-wing win out while the left loses the support they gained.

This particular diplomatic dance is made all the more difficult with the continuing loom of the imperialist interests of the US. With Biden's ascension to power, American foreign policy has returned with a vengeance. Threats or implementation of

sanctions are weaponised to strangle any advance of progressive forces are choked out, due to the resulting poverty and insecurity, or act as a prerequisite for intervention, with nations like Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela, and Bolivia being particularly emphasised targets of the US war hawks.

For progressives in Britain, the challenge we face take numerous forms but can be reduced to the following:

- Looking past the ideology of imperialist forces, and see the good being done by leftist governments across Central and South America
- Challenge attempts to expand war efforts – be it sanctions, or intervention – if we in the heart of imperialism can slow the advance, the chances of victory are greater
- Learn the particular challenges of each state. The nature of historic imperialism have dealt a certain deck to each nation, meaning each nation has to approach their situation differently and we must understand why this is the case.

Since independence in 1966 Sandra Mason stated 'we have built an international reputation anchored on our characteristics, national values, stability and success, with a clear sense of who we are and what we are capable of achieving.

Barbados has gone into a Republic with two strong women leaders at the front leading the way for the Country to grow, develop and show the International community that they can achieve all that the Barbadians have aimed for and wanted for their country and people, it will be great to see how this develops over the coming years.

BARBADOS, BECOMING A REPUBLIC

Tracy Delaney

In 1966 Barbados gained Independence and on the 55th Anniversary of this date, 30th November 2021 was the day Barbados began its Republican status with the first inauguration of Sandra Mason as the President and the fourth country in the Caribbean to remove the British Monarch as Head of State.

On 19th January 2022 Mia Mottley of the Barbados Labor Party (BLP) was re-elected for a second term as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Barbados with the Party winning all 30 seats in the House of Assembly repeating a clean sweep of the May 2018 elections. There will be many challenges in the Country over the next 10 – 15yrs however, Mia stated 'that they still have aspirations to achieve from when the Country became independent in 1966 which include closing the development gap, eliminating Poverty from our landscape, ensuring children can be educated to the maximum and best of their ability, ensuring that our people have affordable, equitable access to health care and above all else our people shall remain owners in their land not tenants.' Leaders from across the Caribbean were amongst the first to congratulate Mia on her re-election and to reached out to strengthen their ties of brotherhood and cooperation from the Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, Saint Lucia's Prime minister Philip Pierre

It was during Mia's first term that the Barbados Parliament unanimously voted to amend the constitution to end the Countries association with the British Crown and acquire the new status of a Republic. Mia Mottley also received widespread recognition for her firm stance on Climate change, during the COP26 in Glasgow she told world leaders of the largest economies 'to try harder' to avert catastrophic climate change and proposed to create an international financial settlement for addressing climate change, from those countries that are most responsible to pay those on the frontline of the climate crisis. Barbados is one of the country's most vulnerable to the climate crisis and global heating poses an existential threat to the small island.

Internationalism

Are you interested in supporting our Party's international work? International solidarity - against imperialism, for peace, in support of peoples fighting for self-determination and countries building socialism - is a hallmark of the Communist Party. Many comrades are already active in international work through the peace movement, solidarity campaigns, and trade unions.

The Party's International Commission coordinates this work through five area groups: Africa, the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the Middle East.

in 2018, though hospitals are reluctant to release details about his current condition.

With regard to what a potential third Lula term would look like, his former foreign minister Celso Amorim stated in an interview with Reuters that a future Lula administration would "not seek a preferential relationship with China over and above its good ties with the United States, the European Union and Latin American neighbours", though did stress that Brazil's relationship with China would vastly improve from where it currently stands on troubled waters under the far-right Bolsonaro.

Elsewhere, a 24-year-old Congolese refugee was beaten to death on 24 January on a beach in Rio de Janeiro, where onlookers did nothing to step in as three men struck Moise Mugenyi Kabagambe repeatedly with a rod. Demonstrators protested what is believed to be a racially-motivated murder on 5 February in multiple cities including Rio and Sao Paulo.

CHILE

Robin Talbot

At the end of 2021, Gabriel Boric, who was the chosen candidate of the Approve Dignity coalition, won the presidential election and ushered in a new democratic and left-orientated stage in Chile's governance.

The Approve Dignity coalition comprises the Communist Party, the Christian Left and various other progressive and left-wing forces. Gabriel Boric had beaten Daniel Jadue, Communist mayor of Recoleta, to the overall nomination.

Boric is a former student leader whose programme has called for an end to student debt and private pension schemes in addition to health and tax reform.

He can be considered part of the younger generation of student activists, including many communists, who have helped to build a huge popular movement against anti-people policies and for political reform, such as establishing a constituent assembly to rewrite the Pinochet era constitution.

On 28 January 2022, the new Constituent Assembly approved text for the new constitution that abolishes the bureaucratic Senate and establishes a Plurinational Congress with representation guaranteed for women and different social groups.

The new majority-women administration under Boric includes three Communists as government spokesperson and ministers for labour and science and technology. There are also six Communist under-secretaries. The administration includes a variety of radicals, social democrats and some independents, including people from outside the Apruebo Dignidad alliance.

However, the government does not yet have the support needed in parliament to achieve their progressive programme.

Although Boric has opposed Minera Andes Iron's Dominga iron-copper-gold project and promised to create a state-run lithium firm, mining companies are relying on the balance of power in parliament to maintain their interests, while keeping an eye on the progress of the Constituent Assembly and new constitution.

Mining also has a key role in Chile's economy. Chile has the foremost supplies of copper and extensive lithium resources.

Gabriel Boric will be inaugurated as president on 11 March 2022.

Chile reform gets going as new ministers appointed | Morning Star (morningstaronline.co.uk)

Socialist candidate Gabriel Boric wins Chilean presidential election – Challenge Magazine (challenge-magazine.org)

Convención. Se avanzó hacia Parlamento unicameral – El Siglo

Teillier: "Ninguna 'exigencia' del PC ha mediado en nominaciones" – El Siglo

Se acabó el misterio: Boric entregó la lista de subsecretarios/as – El Siglo

Chile's mining industry unfazed by leftist Gabriel Boric's victory | S&P Global Market Intelligence (spglobal.com)

NICARAGUA

Wendy Emmet

In November 2021 Nicaragua held elections for President, National Assembly and the Central America Parliament, with electoral participation of 65% of eligible voters. President Ortega's and the Sandinista's decisive re-election with 76% of the vote was due to the social and economic advances of the last years as well as the current stability and peace in the country. Specifically, Ortega's popularity among young people was partly due to improvements in education, as well as the inclusion of youth and women at all levels of political power. The economy grew by more than 9% in 2021, one of the best growth rates in the Americas and there were also record exports and increased foreign investment.

The World Bank and the United Nations Development Program report that employment in Nicaragua has already recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Budget priorities include education, health and social protection. Covid vaccines have been obtained from China and 80% the population over 30 were vaccinated by the beginning of December.

New sanctions were imposed by the European Union and the United States just hours before President Ortega's inauguration, at the same time as denouncing the result of the elections as a sham, despite hundreds of international observers describing them as free, fair and transparent.

Whilst the election results were welcomed by the ALBA countries, the leftist Chilean president Boric has stated, and restated, his opposition to the Sandinistas, offering his solidarity to opposition leaders, and Gustavo Petro the leftist presidential candidate in Colombia has said that "Ortega transformed the Sandinista revolution into a banana dictatorship that does not respond to the needs of the people." The election results suggest these two individuals are on the wrong side.

On 9 December 2021, Nicaragua announced the resumption of diplomatic relations between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Nicaragua. There is enormous scope for the two countries to advance economic cooperation, particularly in infrastructure construction and renewable energy. Following the announcement of bilateral relations, the two sides signed several cooperation agreements, including the Belt and Road Initiative. Another important action was the decision to leave the US-dominated Organization of American States.

The Western media and Amnesty have continued to try to undermine the achievements of Nicaragua over the years since the Sandinistas re-took power, and US interference continues. The Nicaraguan agents of the United States are on constant trips to Washington to receive their orders, and their millions of dollars to finance new coup attempts. These are the same agents who carried out the 2018 US-funded coup attempt, handing out the money and the orders.

Starting in 2007, the US war against Nicaragua has included the funnelling of millions of dollars to foreign agents and organizations, a failed coup attempt in 2018, illegal unilateral sanctions (the 2018 Nica Act and the recently passed RENACER act), and a pre and post-election USAID destabilization plan called RAIN that began in 2020.

ALBA general secretary Sacha Llorenti said the 10-member regional alliance rejects interference by the US in Nicaragua's domestic affairs.

He reminded Washington of UN resolution 75/181 adopted in December last year which declares that "no state may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another state in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights."

HONDURAS

David McKnight

Last November, twelve years after President Manuel Zelaya was deposed in a US-backed coup, Xiomara Castro was elected President in a landslide victory. This is a very important and symbolic victory in the region. The coup against Zelaya – husband of the new President – was followed by widespread repression, extra-judicial executions, and death squads roaming the streets and countryside massacring indigenous activists, environmental campaigners and trade unionists.

Despite two hundred years since gaining independence, Castro is Honduras' first female president. She played a key role in the resistance movement against the hated authoritarian and right wing government that overthrew her husband. The November election saw the highest voter turnout in Honduran history and is largely attributed to committed organising in labour and social movements who coalesced in resistance to the 2009 coup. With 51% of the vote - significantly more than her main rival on just 36.9% - President Castro has a clear mandate for change. In a speech where President Castro used the term 'democratic socialism', she pledged a swathe of social, environmental and economic policies and measures to deal with economic inequality, endemic corruption and environmental degradation. These include free electricity for the poorest, reductions in fuel prices, agricultural development and food sovereignty, fighting corruption, ending concessions in mineral and forest exploitation, the release of political prisoners and environmental activists, as well as free school enrolment and free school meals.

However the new president has inherited severe economic problems from the narco government of Juan Orlando Hernandez. In her inauguration speech on the 27th January, Castro described the situation as an 'economic catastrophe', which is 'unparalleled in the life of the country and its impact on the lives of the people is reflected by an increased in poverty of 74% making us the poorest country in Latin America'. One of the most significant obstacles to implementing her programme is the 'odious debt' left by the US sponsored coup regimes. Honduras' external debt stands at \$9.25 billion, an increase of 373% in twelve years of right wing neoliberal narco government. With a GDP of \$23.8 billion, the debt is almost 70% of the size of the country's economy. Castro has stated this is simply unpayable.

However, on top of these grave economic difficulties, Castro already faces serious political challenges from the right, with attempts to destabilise her presidency and undermine her ability to govern Honduras. Even before her inauguration, twenty deputies from her own Libre party colluded with the right wing, Partido Nacional (National Party) to elect Jorge Calix as the head of Congress, causing chaos and strengthening the right wing following their defeat in the Presidential elections.

On the day of her inauguration, Castro re-established diplomatic relations with the constitutional government of Venezuela's elected President Nicolas Maduro. Her predecessor, Juan Orlando Hernandez, had recognised US-backed coup plotter Juan Guaido. Honduras is also likely to form good relations with its southern neighbour, Venezuela ally, Sandinista-led Nicaragua (Manuel Zelaya was welcomed as hero by Nicaraguans following the 2009 coup which overthrew him). It will be interesting to see whether Castro follows Ortega's lead and severs ties with Taiwan and builds a new political and economic relationship with China. The US empire will not want another Central American country moving away from its sphere of influence in what it sees as its own 'backyard'. In a sign of how the US views the election of Castro, former ambassador to Nicaragua (2015-2018), Laura Dogu, a graduate of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces at the US National Defense University has been appointed as the new ambassador to Honduras.

The US provided political, military and economic support to the 2009 military coup

and its neoliberal regimes mainly headed by the corrupt Juan Orlando Hernandez. However, in what many Hondurans view as a highly hypocritical move, it has now revoked Hernandez's visa and named him on the United States' Corrupt and Undemocratic Actors List in relation to a trial in which his brother was sentenced to life imprisonment in the United States for cocaine smuggling. The former president Hernandez's name appeared over a hundred times in the trial linking him with one of the cartels.

Honduras thus faces significant problems with an entrenched and well-resourced right wing backed by the US. Anti-imperialist solidarity with the new government of President Xiomara Castro will be much needed in the months and years ahead.

PERU

Steve Johnson

Following a narrow electoral win on 6th June 2021 Pedro Castillo took office on 28th July. The victory for Castillo and his Peru Libre Party was widely seen as another win for progressive forces in Latin America. Claiming Jose Mariategu founder of the Peruvian Communist Party as it's ideological forbearance the party received wide support from different sections of the left including the PCP.

However, since taking office right-wing opposition forces and media have made constant attacks on Castillo making accusations of electoral fraud and constantly seeking to remove newly appointed cabinet ministers. Peru Libre only command 37 of 130 seats in the parliament. The right-wing Popular Force Party of defeated candidate Keiko Fujimori accounts for 24 seats and 8 other parties control the remaining seats.

In this precarious situation Peru Libre has had little opportunity to fashion a consistent programme and Castillo has just sworn in his fourth cabinet since taking office. Opposition forces succeeded in forcing the resignation of foreign minister Hector Bejar a former guerrilla and political prisoner. More recently the right forced the resignation of Prime Minister Hector Valer only 4 days after taking the oath and after the resignation of previous Prime Minister Mirtha Vasquez.

Such destabilisation attempts have resulted in some accommodation with more centrist forces causing some criticism from the left and the risk of further divisions. Clearly however there is a continued need for solidarity with progressive forces in Peru against destabilisation from it's own right-wing aided by reactionary forces outside in the OAS and the United States.

COLOMBIA

Oliver Todd

While the Colombian state continues to be strongly aligned with US imperialism in military, political, and economic terms, the legal left is preparing to give Colombia a much-needed dose of social democracy through upcoming Senate, House, and Presidential elections.

The Colombian Communist Party (PCC), Comunes (formerly FARC-EP until a peace agreement was signed in 2016), alongside other left-wing forces (including Unión Patriótica), are organising around a Gustavo Petro presidency as part of a coalition of progressive centre-left and left-wing forces, called the Pacto Histórico.

Gustavo Petro, a former member of the left-wing guerrilla group M-19 which demobilised in 1990, a former Mayor of Bogota, and having run for the presidency twice, has previously been criticised by communists as being too personalistic in his leadership style.

However, this time round there is a broad basis of popular support and a coalition of left-wing forces providing the basic foundations for Petro's candidacy, including trade-unions, social movements, and political parties.

As part of Pacto Histórico, with Petro

campaigning for the presidency and many other leftists for the House and Senate, this is a much more solid basis for the legal left to launch a campaign of social change in Colombia than in the past.

While Pacto Histórico is more of an electoral coalition currently, Comunes and PCC are actively working to make it a grassroots organisation that extends beyond upcoming elections. They recognise that for structural change to be implemented, this will depend upon a broad movement of workers and peasants demanding change from outside parliamentary frameworks.

Petro came second (receiving 8 million votes – 43%) in the 2018 elections against current right-wing president, Ivan Duque. For the presidential elections this May, Petro is currently leading the polls with around 30%, although he faces a plethora of elitist candidates that will likely unite against him to try to prevent his victory in the final hurdle of elections (likely to be the second round).

Gustavo Petro and Pacto Histórico are seen to be harnessing widespread anger over neoliberalism and threatening the traditional political and economic elite, with many of them looking to populist candidates as a way to appeal to the masses - illuminated by the campaign of Rodolfo Hernández, a "self-financed" businessman who has made "tackling corruption" the hallmark of his campaign.

In Colombia, a country that has never had a left-wing president, a Petro victory could open some much-needed political space for the labour movement to manoeuvre.

Colombia is notorious for having the highest homicide rate of trade-unionists globally. The state actively cooperates with right-wing death squads and drug cartels to target leftist forces, especially communist guerrillas, as was revealed in a leaked audio by a senior ranking commander, Major-General Hernando Herrera Díaz, in February 2022.

In addition to extreme concentrations of land and economic inequality, Colombia also has a highly rigid political system designed to resist structural change.

For these reasons, communists are working to hard transform Pacto Histórico into a grass-roots organisation.

Desperate to counter the threat from the political left, Colombia's ruling class has been exploiting the controversy over Ukraine to make out that Russia is covertly backing a possible invasion of Colombia by Venezuelan forces.

In reality, the movement of Venezuelan military forces to the border is in response to actual incursions of Venezuelan sovereignty by Colombian special forces. Between May and December 2021, three of the Farc's (Segunda Marquetalia) Secretariat members were assassinated in Venezuelan territory by special commandos sent by the Colombian state and likely acting upon US intelligence.

The ruling class are divided because of the grave political situation, alongside the management of the economy by the present right-wing government.

Armed conflict affects much of the country, worrying investors, especially transnational corporations that want access to untapped resources in guerrilla-held territories.

Urban protests last year swept the country in more than 500 cities, threatening to bring down provincial governments and motivated by spiralling poverty and inequality. More than eighty protesters were killed by police, as the military were called in – a show of force that even Washington called "disproportionate".

US strategic planners are especially concerned because of the growing threat from the left in Colombia, which follows recent trends in Latin America. Colombia has at least seven US military bases (that we know of), acts as the gateway to Central and South America (as well as borders the Panama Canal), and is central to imperialism's hybrid warfare strategy against Venezuela.

Victories for Petro and Pacto Histórico in upcoming 2022 elections could begin to turn the tables on the traditional elite, including US imperialist influence, leading to a much deeper structural transformation of the country.

VENEZUELA

Paul Dobson

CONTRADICTIONS between the popular and revolutionary forces (including communists and swathes of the PSUV grassroots committed to building socialism) on the one hand and the now clearly pro-capitalist, neoliberal economic policies of PSUV government circles led by Nicolas Maduro on the other, have increased of late in Venezuela

The government's response to the crisis of capitalism has been tax cuts for the rich, privatisation of key industries and public services, concessions to foreign capital, institutionalised corruption, pro-large landholder policies in the countryside, increasingly deregulated workplace conditions, and wage policies which still limit minimum salaries to less than £5 a month (all under the government's Orwellian banner of "building socialism"). As such, the Venezuelan Communist Party's recent decision to distance itself from the Maduro government and, alongside a number of other revolutionary organisations, focus on building a Popular Revolutionary Alternative (APR) looks increasingly justified.

This decision has drawn the ire of the State and newly formed bourgeois players, with anti-communism springing forth in government circles now entirely dominated by reformist or reactionary elements, especially the National Assembly presided over by Jorge Rodríguez. Added to this is the ongoing persecution against labour and revolutionary leaders who channel popular discontent or denounce corrupt officers. These highly efficient manoeuvres to silence criticism have been coupled by a blanket of impunity over calls for justice for fallen revolutionaries, including the assassinations of communist leaders José Urbina (Jan 2022), Oscar Rangel (2021) and Luis Fajardo (2018), all of which have so far gone without response.

All the while, the government focuses on signing deals with the rancid rightwing led by the still-free Juan Guaido in the "talks" in Mexico (a pact between elite sectors). Legitimate cries from the working class for indexed wage increases, counter-inflation measures, devolution of powers to communities and agrarian reform (amongst others) are, however, ignored.

While the PCV and elements of the government continue to coincide in their anti imperialist stances, especially in the need to fight against the criminal US and European blockade, differences concerning the correct way to counter this blockade are increasingly stark, with Caracas betting on oligarchic exploitative moguls such as Alex Saab or overtures to Chinese, Iranian, Turkish or Russian private capital rather than revolutionary policies

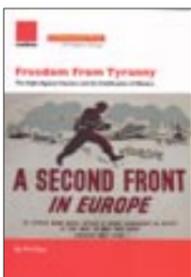
The organisational, financial, and logistical difficulties of building a Popular Revolutionary Alternative, as well as helping the working class organise and struggle to regain rights won under Chavez (and rolled back by the current government), are many. These difficulties have been accentuated in the context of a coordinated media blackout, as well as frequent attacks and disqualifications against APR candidates. On-the-ground organising conditions are also difficult, with dire public services (privatised, costly and poor internet and phone services, power cuts, elevated transport costs), the generalised necessity to hold multiple jobs, and ample disenchantment, demotivation, and demobilisation of key actors.



The Empire and Ukraine

Andrew Murray on imperialism's manoeuvres and the revival of fascism in Ukraine

manifestpress.coop



Freedom From Tyranny

Phil Katz on the fight against fascism, the falsification of history and historical revisionism

manifestpress.coop

Iran-US Vienna talks 'The moment of truth'

IRAN-US Vienna talks

Mid-February saw the sensitive negotiations to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) reach their climactic and most sensitive stage. The original agreement was signed in July 2015 between China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK, and the US, with Iran pledging to limit its nuclear activities to non-military purposes in return for the lifting of economic sanctions by the EU, the UN, and the US.

According to the IRI's Foreign Minister, Hossein Abdollahian, on 16 February 2022, Iran is in a 'hurry' for a 'good' agreement in Vienna.. This follows US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's signing-off of several sanction waivers on 5 February, essentially reversing former president Donald Trump's provocative move back in May 2018.

The official statements from both the US and IRI indicate concrete movement towards the final stage of the negotiations in Vienna. This is has meant that the IRI's representatives have had to relinquish all of their so-called 'redlines' and instead accept all of the US' main demands.

The unprecedented pressure brought about by three years of workers' protests and widespread unrest has badly shaken the theocratic regime and its infrastructure. This crisis and the resultant ever-narrowing social base of the regime has forced it to focus on the removal of economic and banking sanctions at whatever cost, ideologically or otherwise, in order to claw its way out and ensure the survival of theocratic rule in Iran..

a) However, the fact remains that the theocratic regime has placed Iran on a dangerous course with two inescapable factors still looming large: it is highly isolated internationally; and, owing to three decades of neoliberal restructuring, its economy is highly susceptible to the crippling effects of any US sanctions regime, whether now or in the future.

Thus, US strategists have given special consideration to Iran's economic system which is designed to run on policies that are broadly in line with the 'Washington Consensus' and global capitalism. Hence, they have adopted a negotiating stance designed to secure Iran's cooperation in a future Middle East order that is compatible with the US hegemonic interests as well as being agreeable to other key regional players - namely Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt.

Since early-December, when the IRI resumed the '5+1' negotiations in Vienna, originally halted back in June 2021 on the eve of Iran's presidential elections, it was understood that the regime had one goal: the removal of sanctions at any cost. To accelerate and optimise its efforts to this end, the regime's delegation in Vienna indicated through Mikhail Ulyanov, the Russian representative at the negotiations, that it would be receptive of the US/EU conditions right from the outset.

On 19 February, Ulyanov tweeted that, 'The ViennaTalks on #JCPOA can be successfully completed by the end of this month.'

On the same day, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told the Munich Security Conference: 'We now have the chance to reach an agreement that will allow sanctions to be lifted. But if we do not succeed very quickly, the negotiations risk failing [...] The Iranian leadership has a choice. Now is the moment of truth.'

Unions organising around the world

Kevan Nelson
Unions

TO MARK this year's #heartunions week the TUC organised a webinar event to showcase 'trade union and political victories from around the world'.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady opened the meeting and stated that the top priority for unions worldwide is 'organising and growing' although, ironically, the guest speakers from Chile, India, Spain and US, represented

AFRICA SOUTH AFRICA

Liz Payne

RAMAPHOSA'S JOB CREATION REMARK 'FATALLY FLAWED'

To say that South Africa faces a deep-seated unemployment problem is an understatement. Twelve and a half million workers are actively looking for jobs; most of them are black. The unemployment rate is 46.6%, the highest it has ever been in the post-1994 era. Many more women than men are without work, and young people are particularly badly hit with more than three quarters of 15 to 24-year-olds workless.

In this context, the South African Communist Party's criticism of President Cyril Ramaphosa's claim in his State of the Nation speech on 11 February that "We all know that government does not create jobs. Business creates jobs" was swift and harsh. The SACP said the "neo-liberal assertion" was "fatally flawed". The state is a key economic actor, influencing job creation through economic, industrial, and financial policy, as well as through the award of contracts, via state owned companies and as a direct employer.

The SACP is calling for a fundamental change in the country's economy and its macro-economic framework, which the Party says should be "a key aspect articulated in the social compact the President said should include all South Africans."

Read the full text of the SACP's initial response to Cyril Ramaphosa's State of the Nation Address <https://tinyurl.com/32fzfsh>

UPDATE SUDAN

Liz Payne

THE SITUATION for the people of Sudan following the military coup on 25 October last year remains extremely critical and the Sudanese Communist Party (SCP), at the heart of the country's revolutionary struggle to oust the military from government and establish democratically elected civilian rule, continues to play a leading role. It does so alongside the Sudanese Professionals' Association (SPA), which is working closely with the Resistance Committees and forces of the revolution to bring down the coup.

Faced with coup-leader General el-Burhan's attempt to halt the agreed process of transfer of power away from the army and into the hands of a democratically elected government, following the overthrow of the 30-year dictatorship of Omar Al-Bashir in April 2019, the position of the SCP and SPA remains steadfast, determined, and uncompromising. Together, they constitute the most progressive forces for change in Sudan, spear-heading the people's ongoing fight in every sphere, including on the streets, to ensure that there is no return to military tyranny.

A leading cadre of the CP Sudan, Sidgi Kabbalo, in a radio interview on 4 February 2022, stated unequivocally that the country had seen economic collapse and an unprecedented deterioration in living standards during the coup's first hundred days and that no solution to the economic and political crisis in the country could be found in dialogue with

union movements, as in Britain itself, operating long term in hostile capitalist conditions with very low and declining membership densities.

Cristina Faciabén, international secretary of the PCE allied Workers Commissions (CCOO), reported on a recent political victory reversing labour reforms imposed by previous right wing governments. The new laws will tightly regulate temporary employment, improve collective bargaining rights and strengthen job security. The context of the parliamentary advance in Spain being severe political polarisation and the rise of anti working class, hard right political party Vox.

Fred Redmond of the AFL-CIO (naturally) claimed a much needed boost from the election of the Biden administration – 'the most pro-union in US history'. The US union centre organises only 12.5m workers out of a

the military coup putschists. He argued that the only way forward is to establish a democratic civilian authority with the military completely excluded.

Huge demonstrations against the coup continue in the capital and other major cities. These have been met with lethal force, leaving scores dead and hundreds wounded and many subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture, since the beginning of 2022. This has confirmed to the millions on the streets that the military, and their backers at home and abroad, must play no further part in governing Sudan nor in arrangements for the immediate transition to democracy.

In recent developments, communists, together with left and progressive forces in Sudan, are vehemently opposed to the intervention of the UN in their country in a bid to get talks up and running again between the military and advocates of civilian government. They are adamant in their assessment that there can be no turning back of the revolutionary process and its demands for freedom, peace, and justice. This precludes any recognition of - or partnership, negotiation, or compromise with - the military, such as the UN wishes to advance. Unsurprisingly, UN brokerage is supported by the US - and backed by Britain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and other regional reactionary governments. None of them wish to see a fully democratic people's Sudan in being in this vital geostrategic part of East Africa and view the Sudanese military as protective of their interests.

The Sudanese Communist Party continues to provide the movement with updates, despite having only limited access to internet communication channels. It is calling for international solidarity action, including that we inform the labour movement and public in Britain of the truth about what is happening in Sudan and demand that the British government does nothing whatsoever to support continued military involvement in Sudan's government and everything to advance the establishment of just and democratic rule in that country.

WESTERN SAHARA

Robin Talbot

AFRICA'S LAST COLONY

The people of Western Sahara are in urgent need of international solidarity

Last November, I attended the International Youth Forum of Solidarity with Western Sahara, in Mollina, Malaga, Spain, co-hosted by the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and had the opportunity to meet Sahwari activists as well as supporters of their cause for freedom and justice from across the world.

Western Sahara is a disputed territory in Northwest Africa that has been occupied by the Kingdom of Morocco since 1975. This occupation began as a military invasion and occupation following Spain's withdrawal from its their former colonial territory.

The Sahwari people who inhabit this territory have been resisting the Kingdom's illegal occupation ever since. Their liberation movement, the Polisario Front, is considered the legitimate political representative of the Sahwari people by the United Nations.

Furthermore, their inalienable right to self-determination is recognised by the UN and the International Court of Justice. 41 UN member

workforce of over 150m. Fred reported a new energy in the US labour movement and massive efforts by affiliates to promote political action. As in Spain, labour reforms are being advocated by Biden in the political system but are currently stalled and likely to be blocked by anti union Senators including some Democrats.

Tamara Munoz, vice president of the Workers Unified centre of Chile (CUT) and CPCh militant, spoke of the hope of the unions in Chile for positive political transformation following the recent election of a left wing president. National strike action led by CUT had been instrumental in generating mass unity of workers and youth for constitutional change. Tamara raised the banner of feminism and the importance of challenging patriarchy.

Guatam Modi, general secretary of the New Trade Union Initiative in India spoke of the

states recognise their state, the Sahwari Arab Democratic Republic.

The Sahwari people carried out an armed struggle against the Kingdom until a ceasefire was brokered in 1991 by the UN Security Council, with a view to rectifying the lack of progress towards an independence referendum for the Sahwari people.

Nonetheless, the aspirations of the Sahwari people have been criminally denied for almost 50 years. Morocco has a longstanding strategy of "buying time", creating obstacles and frustrating the self-determination process.

The Kingdom cultivates sympathetic relationships in the media, tourism and other areas of influence and relies upon the complicity and sponsorship of Spain and France, in addition to the European Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and Israel.

The Kingdom has "settled" parts of Western Sahara and uses brutal violence against people. Its agents are responsible for systematic violations of human rights, gender violence and rape, targeting Sahwari activists and journalists in particular, according to the UN Human Rights Council and Special Rapporteur Mary Lawlor.

According to the Geneva Support Group for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Western Sahara, the Kingdom's actions may amount to "war crimes, crimes against humanity and cultural genocide".

Imprisoned and plundered by international big business

The struggle of the Sahwari people is not only for freedom and justice, but also that they may never be forgotten.

The labour and progressive movement in Britain urgently needs to raise the profile of and build support for this important and noble cause, organising cultural and political solidarity with the Sahwari people, as well as campaigning for a boycott of goods from the occupied territory.

These goods must include fish from waters that belong to the Western Sahara, which have been plundered by a multitude of international firms, as well as phosphates, which Morocco has exported from the illegally occupied territory to a value of 6.45 billion USD by December 2021.

Phosphate reserves from the region amount to 72 percent of the entire world's and are essential for modern food production.

Recently, the EU Court of Justice annulled EU-Morocco trade agreements due to their exploitation of illegally occupied territories, which the EU Council and Commission have appealed.

On 27 December 2021, OPEC approved a 14.3 million USD loan to the Moroccan Government to study a Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline that would cross the Sahwari territory.

International monopolies and their political representatives routinely sanction the Kingdom's illegal occupation of Western Sahara and its abuse of its people and natural resources.

Much more needs to be done as a matter of urgency to build concrete solidarity with the Sahwari people and disrupt the plans of the occupier and imperialist powers.

Morocco drives a war in Western Sahara for its phosphates
PAN AFRICAN VISIONS
Western Sahara Resource Watch

struggle to resist social and political rights as well as removal of union immunities and the right to strike. Guatam emphasised the independence of his small organisation from the mass battalions of workers in unions linked to India's mass communist parties. Nonetheless, he stressed that maximum solidarity and unity would be required for Indian unions to stand up to the hostile Modi led government.

A common theme of the webinar was the unrelenting global struggle to defend and extend union rights under attack from capital's political representatives. Frances O'Grady's concluding remarks included a commitment to 'peel off workers from right wing ideological influence'.

KEVAN NELSON IS INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Unity!extra

Workers of all lands, unite!



Each year on 21 March the United Nations calls a worldwide day for the elimination of racism. This date was agreed as a universal reaction to the 1960 killing and wounding of 250 black protesters by the South African state. It took another 34 years for apartheid to end. Racism continues which is why we have a responsibility to hold our government to account. Today we must protest but tomorrow we must build alliances against racism and discrimination and unite our working class to win a socialist world free of racism.

▲ Europe's shame

The body of three-year-old Syrian refugee Aylan Kurdi washed up on the shore
2 September 2015



On guard against fascism
Written by Tony Conway, John Foster, Robert Griffiths and Liz Payne of the Communist Party anti-racism anti-fascism commission. Available in Portable Document Format (PDF) only. £1



Workers of all lands, unite!
This pamphlet deals with contemporary racism, migration and the refugee question in the context of Brexit and British imperialism. Available in Portable Document Format (PDF) only. £1.00

Tony Conway Tory laws

THE NATIONALITY and Borders Bill is the latest in a long line of racist immigration policies pursued by all governments for over a century. In this latest case government focusses on 'traffickers' but some recent court cases concern people who are not traffickers but refugees fleeing persecution themselves.

We can go back to 2016 with the hostile environment. This latest bill, which has been widely condemned, overlays earlier racist legislation which is essentially an anti refugee law. It will breach our international obligations. The Wales and Scotland governments have already rejected the Bill as have a number of councils. Currently the bill is parliament and we must keep up the pressure to reject it in its entirety.

There has been a lot of commentary on the Bill and this is a snap shot of some of the issues:

- Asylum seekers arriving in the UK using methods deemed "illegal", such as by boat via the English Channel, could be liable for up to four years in prison.
- Refugees will be sorted into 'Group 1' and 'Group 2'. Refugees who have not complied with a very strict set of requirements (such as using 'legal' routes of arrival) will automatically be sorted into 'Group 2' and face an even more hostile environment.
- Offshore-processing centres for asylum claimants, have been slammed by human rights organisations. Concentration camp-style 'housing' threatens to become the norm.
- The Bill increases the standard of 'proof' needed by asylum seekers to show that they are in danger if they are deported to the country from which they came.
- The bill will place an even higher burden of evidence on those who have fled persecution, such as LGBTI+ people, who already have to jump through a humiliating series of hoops to 'prove' they are who they say they are. Those who hand in that evidence outside of a given time period face it being given "minimal weight" to further stack the odds against successful claims.
- There are various practical difficulties for refugees and asylum seekers to furnish their documents without enough notification. The legislation is therefore in variance with the international goal to combat slavery and human trafficking and clearly disadvantages those who have already fled from traumatic experiences, creating further stress and anxiety for them.
- Obstacles will be introduced in the appeals process, such as preventing the fast-tracking of specific cases or removing certain appeals stages altogether.
- It is proposed that there be a reduction of the threshold of what constitutes 'serious' crime (e.g. from a sentence of two years to

12 months, which could include non-violent offences) and thus removes protections an individual has under the Refugee Convention

The Indian Workers Association has stated that the Bill is premised on the idea that refugees should claim asylum in the first safe country they arrive in, but this is antithetical with the international obligation under the Refugee Convention 1951 and moreover, is contrary to international law where the primary responsibility for identifying refugees and affording international protection rests with the State in which an asylum-seeker arrives and seeks that protection. It is not a workable solution if the authority for checking immigration status lies solely on border agencies as individual's immigration circumstances are varied and complex.

The Bill also seeks to restrict the family members of Group 2 refugees to enter or remain in the UK. This is beyond immoral as the unity of the family is an essential right of the refugee under Human Rights Act 1998.

The Nationality and Borders Bill would not change the number of people eligible to be deprived of their citizenship, but rather would loosen the requirement on the government to notify people who have been stripped of their citizenship.

Stripping someone of their citizenship – just think Windrush where, due to Home Office blunders, citizens were told they had no right to remain in the UK as citizenship had not been given but was subsequently proved wrong – can have major implications for people. This particularly affects people from Commonwealth Countries.

Other aspects go against regulations safeguarding children.

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, in condemning the Bill, has stated that the Bill will not achieve its aims and will lead to additional costs for government.

The Communist Party argues that this Bill is anti working class as it seeks to scapegoat desperate people and will add to the hostile environment. People will be targeted and simply disappear.

We already see an increasing number of instances where people who have lived in the UK for generations are targeted by racists and fascists. This Bill creates a climate which encourages such people.

There are many cases where this act – as with immigration and nationality laws and regulations generally – will be challenged, often successfully, in the courts. An example of this was when a Home Office official decided that all Bangladeshi restaurants were takeaways and thus a Chef who had lived in Britain for five years and had been granted an extension had his right to stay in Britain removed following a recategorising of his place of work!

This piece of legislation cannot be seen in isolation. The Police, Elections, Surveillance, Judicial Review and Human Rights Acts are all designed to undermine the collective and

individual rights for all but, as seen over decades, such changes have a disproportionate impact on Black citizens.

Laws regulating trade unions are being changed making unions liable for actions taken by members. Non union complainees and employers will be able to take unions to court.

This recalls the Thatcher administration when the right-wing Freedom Association acted for the reactionary employers of mainly South Asian workers at the Grunwick photo processing plant.

The Communist Party calls for a recasting of Britain's immigration and nationality laws.

Justice demands that laws are fair and equitable and consistent with Britain's international obligations.

We call for the creation of safe routes of transit. There are thousands of people currently in Britain who lack even the protections of second class citizens and are subject to persecution and super exploitation by unscrupulous employers. If these people were given status – indefinite leave to remain; they would have the right to work, access to housing and health care. Full citizen rights should be given after three years. The Communist Party argues for the closure of detention centres and for full implementation of the Williams report into the Windrush Scandal.

These principles were reaffirmed at the party's congress in November last year and were enshrined in a document sent to the TUC as part of its work on anti racism.

We must now intensify the campaign. It is no longer sufficient to simply oppose laws before they are passed or rely on challenges in the courts. The campaign must be taken to our communities and to the streets. Unions must take up this issue.

The Communist Party argues that many of the workers affected by this Bill and other racist legislation work in unionised sectors and are super exploited.

Refugees and migrants come here precisely because of Britain's imperial history and its status as the junior partner of US imperialism in the despoilation of our planet and in climate change.

The welfare of immigrant, refugees and migrant workers is a class issue. Unions have an important role and must duck their responsibilities.

Unions working with community and anti racist groups will strengthen the fight back and develop an alternative based on class solidarity.

Let us end with a quote from a worker fleeing war and quoted by the British Red Cross:

"We know that people fleeing violence, war or persecution are often forced to make dangerous journeys – journeys that are made as an absolute last resort. They make them because of a lack of options for safe and 'official' routes to seek safety and, as we have seen before, sometimes tragically die on these journeys.

We know that women, men and children will continue to search for safety in any way they can, and many will risk their lives to come to the UK in doing so.

UNHCR records show that last year, the UK received just under a third of the number of asylum applications as Germany, and about two fifths the number of France. With one in 97 people in the world currently forcibly displaced from their homes, the UK must play its part in finding solutions.

Women, men and children forced to flee their homes should be able to seek safety without putting their lives at risk.

TONY CONWAY CONVENES THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-FASCIST COMMISSION



Emma Pearson Detention

AS OF 28 DECEMBER 2021, women have been imprisoned at Derwentside immigration removal centre. There is reason to believe there around around nine women detained, following the release of two.

From the outset, this immigration prison has always been advertised as an excellent employment opportunity for locals. The area needs investment and job creation, but these jobs are founded on the inhumane incarceration of innocent, already vulnerable women. At no point were locals asked what they wanted the site to be used for or what jobs they thought beneficial.

The fact is this is a prison for women and this is particularly concerning. Derwentside IRC facilitates state-funded violence against women who are simply seeking safety, sanctuary and security. The government does not tell the public that many of those detained have committed no criminal wrongdoing and are instead locked up for unjust and unnecessary administrative purposes. Hidden from the public is the fact that over half of those detained are ultimately released back into UK communities. In 2019, this figure was 70 per cent.

Opening this new Immigration Prison goes against previous government pledges to reduce the number of IRCs. It is an abuse of taxpayer money. It is an outrage for locals seeking good quality, status-secure jobs. And, it is a blatant racist attack on human rights, women's rights and international law. Many women inside are victims of unimaginable trauma including human trafficking, torture, gender-based abuse and sexual and physical assault. Detention renders women extremely vulnerable to further, disproportionate, gendered violence.

With women now incarcerated it is incredibly important that they know that we don't want them locked up, and that we support them. Raising our voices in the public domain will not stop until this site is closed and all the women are released.

Please join us and stand against this abhorrent facility. We gather at the site on the third Saturday of every month 12-2pm where we make as much noise as possible. On Saturday 21 May we are holding a national demonstration against Derwentside.

EMMA PEARSON IS FROM DURHAM PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY

From the Arizona desert to the English channel

Steve Cushion
MIGRATION

TODAY, the world is in crisis with poverty, famine and war forcing whole populations to seek a new life in richer areas of the world. Meanwhile, hard, militarised borders, such as the Mediterranean and the Arizona desert, are claiming thousands of lives every year. Much of this migration is caused by the detrimental effects of climate change.

The last hundred years has seen a dramatic hardening of borders and restrictions on free movement of labour, while free movement of capital and "free trade" have become the norm worldwide, making it easy for corporations to move production to ever cheaper locations and to dump their pollution on the Third World. Corporations operate across borders, while regulations and workers are contained by them. So, as long as oil and mineral extraction and the resulting pollution is controlled by corporations unbound by borders and protected by 'free trade', the real control of the environment will rest with those corporations. The structural violence of borders is not only to be seen in the victims of drowning in the English Channel or heat stroke in the Arizona desert. Hard borders and migration control will also concentrate the negative impact of climate change on the most vulnerable places, for example, the Bay of Bengal and the Caribbean, while at the same time preventing the people most affected within these areas from escaping.

The narrative about the increasing need for stricter border controls dates back until at least the start of the twentieth century and the Aliens Act 1905. It accelerated throughout the decades after the Second World War and during the years of Blair government. It has continued with the so-called Hostile Environment and looks set to get even worse with the current Nationality and Borders Bill.

It is built on the myth that the United Kingdom has no more space for migrants. The narrative has been used to mask a society that increasingly finds racism acceptable, in which governments have

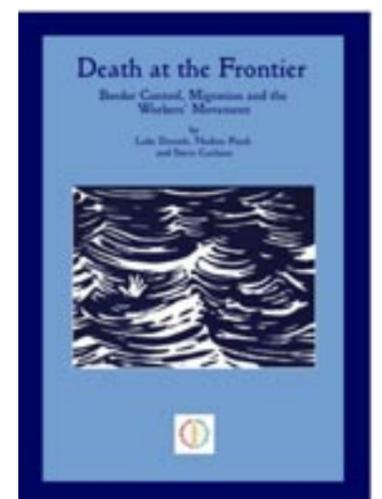
continued to play the divide and rule card to turn workers of different origins against each other.

Under capitalism there is an international division of labour with a hierarchy in which the most developed capitalist countries exploit the rest through the medium of finance capital and industrial corporations, backed by superior weaponry and fire-power.

Hard borders exist as much to prevent people leaving their country of origin as to prevent their arrival elsewhere. A cross-border, internationalist working class movement is needed to fight for a world-wide minimum wage and maximum hours of work, for parity with the best available. Why should a Haitian or Jamaican worker be expected to have a standard of living so much lower than the norm in Europe?

From a working class point of view, we should not be calling for restrictions on migration, but rather fighting to place the maximum restrictions on capital.

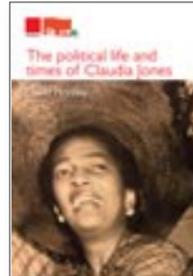
STEVE CUSHION IS A MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF CARIBBEAN LABOUR SOLIDARITY



Caribbean Labour Solidarity has published a pamphlet entitled *Death at the Frontier: Border Control, Migration and the Workers' Movement* more details on our website <http://cls-uk.org.uk/>.

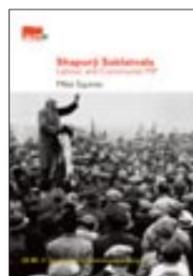
Death at the Frontier Caribbean Labour Solidarity meeting Border Control, Migration and the Workers' Movement

CLS is publishing our reply to the UK Government's Nationalities and Borders Bill, by Luke Daniels, Nadine Finch and Steve Cushion
Sunday 6 March 2pm London time.
Admission is free, but you must register:
<https://tinyurl.com/dha8rjum>



The political life and times of Claudia Jones
Sixty pages with colour photos, written by historian David Horsley.

The book charts her life from a child in Trinidad, her struggles in the USA, repression and deportation to Britain and her struggles here, against racism and imperialism. £4.95



Shapurji Saklatvala Labour and Communist MP
Today, anyone wandering the gentrified streets of Battersea in south west London could hardly imagine that almost one hundred years ago this area sent Labour's first non-white MP to Parliament. Or, that two General Elections later they returned him yet again, this time as a communist MP. His name was Shapurji Saklatvala.

Currently only available as a digital download in PDF format. £1.00

For a people's vaccine

Roger McKenzie
COVID-19

THE STARK reality is that of the more than five billion COVID-19 doses administered globally only 2% have been received in the continent of Africa.

In the USA around 52% of people are fully vaccinated and in the European Union it is 57%. Scotland and Wales have vaccinated around 90% of those aged 16 and over with at least one dose while England has reached around 88% and Northern Ireland in the region of 86%.

I have absolutely no problem with as many people as possible getting vaccinated. We are, after all, not safe unless everyone is safe.

Africans need more COVID-19 vaccination doses to be available and help to get those doses into as many arms as possible.

Countries, such as the USA and the UK, signed deals with pharmaceutical companies during 2020 for the vaccines even before the vaccines were available. This hoarding made it impossible for the Covax scheme, the African Union and individual nations on the continent to secure the doses they so desperately needed.

The picture across Africa is stark. The most populous country on the continent, Nigeria, has vaccinated less than 1% of its population and Kenya, in the East, only around 1.5%. Even as the vaccines become available it's somewhat debatable whether the necessary infrastructure to administer them at the speed required actually exists in these countries and across most of the continent.

While the rich countries of the Global North are offering bolster vaccines to their populations the continent of Africa is still gripped by the virus with few prospects of an end to the crisis anytime soon.

The role of Big Pharma is central in all of this. Johnson and Johnson, the giant US founded company produced vaccine doses in South Africa and then, promptly, exported them to Europe. After being denounced by the South African Government and others for this disgraceful behaviour, Johnson and Johnson finally agreed to make more vaccine doses available across African countries.

It is crystal clear that there needs to be a transformation in how COVID-19 vaccines are manufactured and distributed. It cannot be left to Big Pharma to decide how best to tackle public health emergencies such as COVID-19. The only real motive of Big Pharma will inevitably be profit.

That's why Liberation supports a People's Vaccine and not a profit vaccine.

Vaccines should be free of charge to people when they need it and there should be no monopolies held on them by Big Pharma. Much more needs to be done to develop the health infrastructure across the continent of Africa that isn't just about a response to whatever the latest global or, indeed, local public health emergency might be.

Only by building a radical movement for fundamental change that prioritises people over profits will it be possible to take on Big Pharma and those Governments who seem to dance to whatever tune they decide to play.

ROGER MCKENZIE IS A JOURNALIST AND GENERAL SECRETARY OF LIBERATION



The Institute of Race Relations
2-6 Leeke Street,
London WC1X 9HS

Housing privatisation means racial discrimination

Ruth Styles
Race and housing

THE DESTRUCTION of council housing undermined the ability to organise and network to combat racism and other issues. Forty years of policies designed to privatise council housing led to the fracturing of working class communities and their networks. Given that black and minority ethnic communities were very present in Council housing, this has had a significant impact on their ability to respond to discriminatory housing policies, repressive targeted policing, etc

It is no surprise to find that targeted repressive policing of black and brown

communities, especially youth, developed alongside the drive towards gentrification, a fancy word for the demolition and privatisation of council housing. Pictured left See <https://tinyurl.com/mwdwak22>

The exponential growth of private renting, with its increased insecurity, and the rise in s21 no fault evictions – now banned – has also affected the ability of white and black working class communities to organise, impacting more on the latter as they are over represented statistically in this tenure group.

All this has been exacerbated by the savage cuts to local authority budgets and services, undermining their ability to address the ever present and widening inequalities in

their localities. Living in the private rented sector, typified by high rents and poor housing conditions and the housing and welfare benefit cuts has led to less stable and a more transient population.

In consequence poorer white and black working class communities experience the very worst of the housing crisis.

The growth of organising in the private rented sector, e.g. Acorn and renters unions are to be welcomed, as are the organisations campaigning for the building of good quality council housing.

Is this is enough?

There is no substitute for democratically run and representative local community organisation giving voice to the needs and

aspirations of working class people. There is an urgent need to develop these. The historical tenants organisation on council estates is not the only model, wider Community associations/unions that encompass all tenures giving voice to the demands and needs of local people is an alternative. They could develop the voice of white and black working class communities demands on housing, policing, public services, education, transport, and other issues, but they must be built with unity and work with existing local black and minority organisations, other community groups and local trades councils.

RUTH STYLES IS CHAIR OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY