



What we stand for

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Communist Party

Workers of all lands, unite!

 CP BRITAIN

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WHAT WE STAND FOR

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

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

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

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

Communist Party Aims and Constitution

INTRODUCTION

Communism did not start with Karl Marx or with the October 1917 socialist revolution in Russia. In Britain, a rich historical seam of communist ideas dates back to the Middle Ages and before.

At times of great crisis, socialist and communist views often come to the fore. The desire for a future based on peace, co-operation, solidarity and sharing the Earth's wealth in common has long inspired the peoples of England, Scotland and Wales.

A REVOLUTIONARY OUTLOOK

The Communist Party is guided by the ideas developed by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Vladimir Lenin. 'Marxism-Leninism' is a scientific outlook which analyses human society in order to understand and change it.

In *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), Marx and Engels explained how 'the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles'. They analysed the development of capitalist society.

In Britain, much of the capital needed for industrialisation arose from the international slave trade. The Industrial Revolution proceeded on the basis of brutal exploitation of labour at home and the super-exploitation of colonies around the world.

Marx and Engels showed that the dominant structures and ideas of capitalist society reflect the monopoly ownership, by a minority class, of the means of production (the machinery, tools, materials, power, industrial and commercial land, etc.). The capitalists exploit those who work these means of production because, across the economy as a whole, they pay the working class less than the value created by its labour.

This surplus value is the source of normal capitalist profit.

Vitality, the monopoly capitalists use the power of the state apparatus to defend and promote their interests. The ownership and control of the mass media by giant monopolies and the state ensures that pro-capitalist and anti-socialist, anti-communist ideas are propagated day-in, day-out.

Revolutions take place when the system of capitalist ownership holds back the full development of society's productive forces (labour plus technology and the means of production). The working class and its allies, representing the forces of the future, take state power from the ruling class defending the old order.

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

Today, the private ownership of industry, finance and commerce by a narrow section of the population stands in contrast to the vast, inter-related social process of production carried out by working people.

A minority of people – less than a tenth – own most of the private capital in industry, finance and commerce. Their income from dividends, interest and rent means these capitalists own more than two-thirds of all the personal wealth in Britain, while workers and their families (around three-quarters of the population) own less than one-tenth. They take business decisions chiefly in the interests of themselves and fellow shareholders.

In competition with one another for market share and profit, the companies squeeze as much surplus value out of the workforce as they can, investing in more capacity, raising productivity and holding down real wages which limits workers' purchasing power. In the public sector, too, wages are held down and productivity is driven up as vast amounts of public money are channelled into the private sector.

Periodically, therefore, more commodities are produced than can be sold at a profit. In response to this crisis of 'over-production', the capitalists cut back investment, production and employment, plunging the economy into a downward spiral. The stronger companies survive, displacing weaker rivals and reinforcing capitalism's tendency to forge monopolies in each branch of the economy.

New technology is introduced in order to maximise market share, exploitation and profit - not to enhance people's experience of work, raise their living standards and increase their affordable leisure time.

But the advance of mechanisation, information and communications technology, robotics, etc. tends to reduce the rate of profit in the economy as a whole, because surplus value is produced by exploited labour power - not by machinery and technology on their own. This tendency can be offset for a time by intensifying exploitation and expanding and cheapening the supply of labour power. Privatising state and public services also provides new opportunities for direct profit-making.

Increasingly, the owners and holders of capital have turned to trading and speculation in financial services (currencies, bonds, debt-based assets etc.) in order to boost their profits. Thus we see not only the periodic crises in industry, but also booms, shocks and slumps in the financial sector which owns or controls a large part of the productive economy. The result is the kind of combined economic and financial crisis that broke out in 2007-08.

The economy only begins to recover when companies find it more profitable to invest, produce and employ. In the meantime, society's productive forces are destroyed on a huge scale, in conditions of misery and despair.

This contradiction between capitalist profit and greed on one side, and public consumption and need on the other, means that capitalism will always generate insecurity, inequality and crisis.

Furthermore, capitalism's largely unchecked drive to plunder the Earth's natural resources in order to maximise production and profit is now threatening the future of the planet and its people. Global warming and climate change are having an increasingly damaging impact, especially on the world's poorest and most marginal communities.

As the UN International Panel on Climate Change points out, big changes are needed on an 'unprecedented scale' in industry, transport, energy, construction and land use, if the human race is to avoid catastrophe.

Only massive state intervention and investment through public ownership and economic planning, carried out at national level and coordinated internationally, can rescue our eco-system.

The contradictions of modern society will only be resolved by abolishing capitalism and building a socialist society based on social ownership and planned, sustainable production.

IMPERIALISM IN THE WORLD TODAY

Lenin analysed imperialism as the parasitic, moribund, final stage of capitalism, where economic and political power is concentrated in the hands of enormous monopolies and cartels. Their struggle for the domination of natural resources, markets and territory breeds conflict and war as each imperialist state fights for the interests of its own monopoly capitalists.

He showed how the fusion between the economic power of the capitalist monopolies and the political power of the state had produced the modern system of 'state-monopoly capitalism'. Lenin emphasised the need for the working class and its allies to take state power in each country, guided by a revolutionary party and its revolutionary programme, creating their own form of popular working class rule.

Early in the 21st century, the major imperialist states act through international institutions such as the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank and NATO to enforce the collective interests of their own transnational corporations (TNCs or multinational companies).

These agencies impose austerity and privatisation programmes on whole economies and countries in the name of 'globalisation' (a new phase of imperialism).

On a global scale, the rich get richer as billions of people around the world go without adequate food, shelter, clean water or health and education services. The drive to exploit the Earth's natural resources for the quickest maximum profit threatens the planet's very eco-system. Capitalist exploitation and oppression intensify inequalities of race and gender as well as those between nations and regions.

That is why Communists and other Marxists point to the 'general crisis' of capitalism, a system in turmoil and conflict on every front: economic, environmental, social, political, cultural and moral.

Thus the battle for popular sovereignty – for the rights of workers and peoples to exert their interests over those of monopoly capital – is central to the political class struggle in the 21st century. Only Communists and the left can combine demands for popular and national sovereignty with the need for international working class organisation and solidarity to confront monopoly capital.

Failure to do so opens the door to far right conservative and fascist forces, whose bogus appeal to ‘patriotism’ is based on racism or narrow nationalism.

Only the working class has the capacity, with its allies, to challenge and overthrow capitalism by taking and using state power in each country. But to do this, workers must become conscious of the need to organise for socialist revolution.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

The Communist Party has carried Britain’s living, revolutionary tradition into the 20th and 21st centuries. Its roots lie deep in our trade unions, socialist societies and other working class organisations.

Founded in 1920, inspired by the world’s first workers’ state in Russia, the Party brought together militant socialists and trade unionists who understood the need for a revolutionary change in society. They had been repelled by the mass slaughter of the 1914-18 Great War, when the leaders of the labour movement sided with the British ruling class against rival imperialist powers.

Since then, Britain’s Communist Party has been in the frontline of the fight for working class interests against exploitation and oppression, in favour of human liberation and socialism.

Despite the imprisonment of its leadership, the CP played an outstanding role in the 1926 General Strike. Throughout the 1930s, it organised mass movements of unemployed workers and housing tenants.

The mass trespass on Kinder Scout in 1932, led by Young Communist League members, eventually changed the law to allow rights for ramblers on private landed estates.

The Communist Party led the movement against the British Union of Fascists and sent two thousand volunteers to fight fascism in Spain.

During the Second World War, Communist local councillors broke into London Underground stations and helped many thousands of people to safety. Together with Aneurin Bevan and other left-wing MPs, the CP led the giant campaign to open a 'second front' against Hitler in western Europe.

From 1945, the election of Communist MPs and hundreds of local councillors demonstrated people's appreciation of the Party's role in the political class struggle. Communists were elected to leading positions in some of Britain's major trade unions.

With its allies in the labour movement, the British Peace Assembly and the World Peace Council, the CP opposed the Cold War, the establishment of US military bases in Britain, membership of NATO and a massive rearmament programme.

In 1951, the first edition of the Communist Party's programme, *The British Road to Socialism*, was published. This stated that Britain must achieve socialism by its own path, using mass struggle to transform Parliament into a democratic instrument of the will of the vast majority of the people.

As Marx and Engels had put it, the working class had to win the battle of democracy. Only in a socialist society could the people as a whole govern for the benefit of all, controlling the economy and sharing its wealth.

Britain's Communists supported the enormous efforts to build socialism in the war-torn countries of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe. Great economic, social and cultural advances were made in the most difficult conditions.

For the first time, many of those societies experienced industrialisation, mass literacy, universal healthcare and rights for women and small nationalities for the first time. Yet, in that process, facing imperialist aggression and subversion, Communist regimes also committed serious violations of democratic and human rights.

This confirms the need for the mass of the people to participate in decision-making in every field, to create a vibrant socialist democracy in place of the narrow, distorted and corrupt political systems found in capitalist society.

In post-war Britain, the CP played a major part in campaigns for more and better housing, comprehensive education for all (in place of selective schools for the few), and public health and social care services funded from progressive taxation.

Communist women and their allies have fought long and hard for equal rights and full entitlement to pay, benefits, pensions and legal status. Through bodies such as the National Assembly of Women (affiliated to the Women's International Democratic Federation), they have campaigned for equal pay, price controls, community and workplace nurseries, measures to combat domestic violence, and for full and free access to contraception and abortion facilities.

Over the decades, Communists engaged in anti-racist and anti-fascist activities and helped to found Searchlight magazine, the Notting Hill Carnival, the Campaign Against Racist Laws and the Anti-Racist Alliance.

Almost alone in the labour movement for many decades, Britain's CP called for parliaments for the peoples of Wales and Scotland. Communists have translated and published Welsh and Cornish language editions of *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels.

Party members and supporters have always included prominent writers, artists, sculptors, film-makers, actors and musicians. Communists took the lead in establishing the Unity and Everyman theatre companies, the Edinburgh People's Festival (forerunner of the 'Fringe') and the South Wales Miners Eisteddfod.

Based in the working class movement, the CP has often led the fight against anti-trade union laws. The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions – which included many militant workplace representatives – launched mass one-day stoppages, compelling the TUC to call a one-day general strike to defeat legislation in the early 1970s.

Communists also provided leadership in the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' work-in and the 1972, 1974 and 1984-5 miners' strikes. Powerful Communist and broad left organisations were built in many workplaces and unions, in the public services as well as industry.

These advances intensified state and ruling class efforts to weaken and divide the Party. In 1988, Communists still committed to revolutionary class politics re-established the Party on the basis of its Marxist-Leninist rules, principles and programme.

Today, the Communist Party of Britain is widely recognised at home and around the world as the authentic representative of the communist tradition in England, Scotland and Wales. That is why the CP emphasises the importance of the battle of ideas in our society, between the ideas of capitalism and imperialism and those of liberation and socialism.

We publish a monthly broadsheet *Unity!*, the quarterly theoretical and discussion journal *Communist Review*, members receive a weekly *Party Organiser* and the topical *Party Line* and organise a range of schools at branch, district, nation and central levels. A new generation of highly skilled media workers have transformed the party's digital communications and social media operation.

The Party also supports the activities of the Marx Memorial Library and Workers' School in which our members play a major role.

The Manifesto Press and Praxis Press publishing houses are politically aligned with the Communist Party and Party members also help organise the Culture Matters collective, which hosts a website and numerous events as well as producing books and pamphlets.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

When the *Communist Manifesto* declared 'Workers of all lands, unite!', it recognised two important principles: firstly, that working people have different national identities, languages and traditions; and secondly, that they have a common interest in supporting each other against exploitation and oppression.

From its foundation, the CP opposed British imperialism in Ireland, India and the other colonies, exposing the brutalities of British imperialism and demanding the liberation of all oppressed peoples. Through the Communist International and the League Against Imperialism, Britain's Communists helped build the trade union and national liberation movements across the empire.

At the end of World War Two, the Party opposed the use of British military forces to suppress the Communist-led anti-fascist movement in Greece. At the height of the Cold War, the Communist Party and its allies campaigned against the genocidal US-led interventions in Korea and Vietnam.

As well as helping to lead and sustain the Anti-Apartheid Movement in England, Scotland and Wales, members of the Young Communist League carried out clandestine work for the ANC in southern Africa.

Similarly, Communists from Britain organised open and covert solidarity with the Communists and socialists of Chile after the US-backed coup against President Allende in 1973.

More recently, Britain's Communists have helped build and maintain solidarity organisations with the peoples of Iran, Iraq and Colombia against repression and dictatorship, and with those of Cuba and Venezuela against imperialism.

As well as helping to sustain the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Communists have been to the fore in the peace movement against imperialist intervention in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and the Middle East. The CP and its members helped found and lead the Stop the War Coalition and are also involved in the reinvigoration of the anti-imperialist body Liberation and British Peace Assembly (affiliated to the World Peace Council).

We support the right of the Palestinian people to an independent sovereign state alongside Israel, based on the pre-1967 borders, and demand the release of all Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli gaols.

Despite the so-called 'collapse of Communism' the early 1990s, ruling or mass Communist and workers' parties exist or are growing again in China, Cuba, Vietnam, South Africa, India, Brazil, Portugal, Chile, Greece, Cyprus, Guyana, Russia, the Czech Republic, Korea, Nepal, Japan and other countries. China's planned economy, the key sectors of which are in public ownership, has been one the fastest growing in the world for three decades, lifting more than 800 million people out of absolute poverty.

The Communist Party of Britain enjoys comradely relations with more than 90 Communist and workers' parties and national liberation movements throughout the world. At home, we participate in the Coordinating Committee of Communist Parties which brings together those from overseas who are domiciled in Britain. We use our extensive links to strengthen relations between the revolutionary, trade union and peace movements of different countries.

OUR ROAD TO SOCIALISM

The Communist Party's programme, now called *Britain's Road to Socialism*, applies a Marxist-Leninist analysis to conditions as they have developed in Britain. The latest edition (2020) calls for mass activity and campaigning in favour of policies which challenge state-monopoly capitalism.

A popular, democratic anti-monopoly alliance can be built around the organised working class, drawing together a wide range of social forces including pensioners, students, the unemployed, ethnic minorities, women, peace and environmental campaigners.

Our alternative economic and political strategy argues that such a militant mass movement can produce and sustain a left government based on a Labour, socialist, Communist and progressive majority, committed to a left-wing programme (LWP). Winning such a government would be vital not only at Westminster, but in the Edinburgh and Cardiff parliaments as well.

Such a combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle can put Britain on the road to socialist revolution. But it would have to be a democratic transfer of political power, transforming the state apparatus from an instrument of capitalist control into one of popular and mass democracy, utilising the strength and creativity of the working class and its allies.

This process would need to involve workers and their allies directly in the exercise of political power, including through the establishment of new democratic bodies. These would help ensure that all attempts at counter-revolutionary sabotage and violence are defeated.

For Britain to take the road to socialism, however, a strong and influential Communist Party will also be essential – a Marxist party that is both internationalist and rooted in the British labour movement.

THE LEFT WING PROGRAMME

The Communist Party works with its allies to promote the policies of the Left Wing Programme. Together with trades unions we developed the People's Charter – a broad-based platform of policies endorsed by the TUC. It has since been adopted by the People's Assembly, an alliance of political, trade union, community and campaigning bodies in which the Communist Party plays a significant part.

The Charter for Women, drawn up by the Communist Party in 2002, puts forward policies to secure women's equality in the home, the workplace and trade union movement and is now supported by more than 14 national unions.

The Left Wing Programme proposes to:

- 1** Take the electricity, gas, coal, water, railways, banking, pharmaceutical and armaments industries into democratic public ownership and planning, to meet society's needs.

- 2** Develop tidal, solar and offshore wind power, clean coal technology, and other safe and sustainable energy sources.

- 3** Protect and invest in productive industry through regional development policies, public investment, and the direction of capital, while expanding economic relations with People's China and other dynamic economies.
- 4** Impose a levy on financial speculation, control the export of capital, and end all tax haven regimes under British jurisdiction.
- 5** Halt all forms of privatisation and invest in public services, with a massive programme to build more council and sheltered housing.
- 6** Redistribute wealth from the rich and big business to working people and their families through a Wealth Tax, higher corporation tax, cuts in VAT and higher pensions and social benefits.
- 7** Set the national minimum wage at two-thirds of median male earnings, with no exemptions, and enforce equal pay through compulsory pay audits.
- 8** Restore the link between of the state pension and earnings to its original value.
- 9** Repeal all anti-trade union, anti-democratic and racist immigration laws with full employment rights for all workers from day one.
- 10** Bring all schools into a secular education system under democratic local control, abolish students' tuition fees and reintroduce student maintenance grants.
- 11** Abolish the House of Lords, break up the media monopolies and bring the police and intelligence services under democratic control.
- 12** Guarantee far-reaching economic powers and financial resources for Scottish, Welsh and English parliaments, local government, and English regional and Cornish assemblies in a federal Britain.
- 13** Cut military spending to average European levels, convert military Research & Development and production to civilian use and abolish Britain's nuclear weapons system.
- 14** Cancel all Third World debt and promote genuine trade-and-aid policies in solidarity with developing countries.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Britain's Marxist party of the labour movement is based on the class and internationalist principles of Marxism-Leninism. It is organised for socialist revolution, rooted in the working class, working for unity. The party is democratic, drawing upon the initiative and creativity of its members. It is centralised, to act as a disciplined and united force and it is internationalist, enjoying close relations with scores of Communist parties and movements for peace, progress and national liberation.

A DEMOCRATIC AND DISCIPLINED ORGANISATION

Membership of the Communist Party is open to all people aged 16 and above who accept the aims, rules and programme of the Party, pay their dues regularly and work in a Party organisation.

The local or work-based branch is the basic organisation of the Party. Members are encouraged to participate fully in branch life, deepen their own understanding of political affairs and Marxist-Leninist theory, and develop to their full potential as Communists.

Through collective discussion and activity, the CP takes part in the political life of communities and workplaces, projecting its policies and strategy, supporting people in their day-to-day battles and working to build alliances for change.

Branches are grouped within nations and districts which reflect established patterns of political, trade union and progressive organisation. The role and responsibilities of Party organisations and members are set out in detail in our Party Activists Handbook.

In each district and nation, a congress of elected branch delegates is held every two years. The Scottish, Welsh and district congresses in England decide the perspectives and priorities for the Party's work in their area and elects a leading committee to carry it forward.

The all-Britain congress of branch, district and nation delegates is held every two years. It decides policy for the Party as a whole and elects an executive committee (EC) to lead the work. In turn, the EC elects its leading officers (including general secretary and chairperson) and a political committee (PC) to provide leadership in between EC meetings.

Communists place a high priority on trade union activity and hold many responsible positions at every level of the movement. The Party's work is guided by the central trade union organiser, a trade union coordinating

committee (TUCC) and sector-based advisory committees, with special issues of Unity! and similar broadsheets published for conferences and major events.

Commissions of representatives from the nations and districts help develop policy and organise the Party's work in important areas such as the economy, housing, women, peace, anti-racism, the environment, science & technology and international affairs.

The Communist Party is a thoroughly democratic party in its structures and processes. All leading committees and positions are periodically elected and are accountable to the mass of Party members and their delegates.

Once a policy has been debated and agreed, democracy also requires that members put it to the test in practice and not undermine it. Maximum discussion must be combined with unity in action if the CP is to be an effective force. Therefore, the decisions taken by leading committees are binding on Party members, although they must be explained where necessary and be open to criticism and review within the Party. These and other procedures are set out in our document, Inner Party Democracy.

Members pay their dues according to their chosen income band. Additional contributions are strictly voluntary.

Key statements and reports from the Party are carried on our social media platforms, in Unity! and in our bulletins Party Line and Party Organiser. Party organisations at every level produce pamphlets and leaflets on topical issues. Communists also play a major role in the relaunched Country Standard, a left-wing journal for the countryside.

The Young Communist League (YCL) is aligned with the Communist Party of Britain. Its age limits are 12 to 28. Although the YCL supports the Party's programme, *Britain's Road to Socialism*, it is organisationally independent, deciding its own policy and activities, controlling its own finances and electing its own leadership. It publishes its own journal, Challenge.

Like the Communist Party, the YCL has grown in recent years. Many of its members are active in the students', women's and trade union movements. The YCL participates in the World Federation of Democratic Youth and enjoys close relations with youth organisations in many other countries.

THE MORNING STAR, THE PEOPLE'S PAPER

The capitalist press barons have printed seven million national newspapers every day. The *Morning Star* alone provides an alternative daily viewpoint from the left. Its coverage of national, international, political, trade union and cultural news, analysis and debate is unique. The paper was founded by the Communist Party in 1930 as the *Daily Worker*, since when it has survived wholesale and distribution bans, illegality, advertising boycotts and exclusion from the other mass media.

In 1945, the People's Press Printing Society (PPPS), the co-operative which owns the paper, was established to broaden its base of ownership and support. Today, thousands of individuals and labour movement organisations own shares in the *Morning Star* (as it was renamed in 1966) and seven national trade unions are represented on the PPPS management committee.

A special relationship also remains between the Communist Party and the *Morning Star*, based not only on history but also on the decision of the PPPS that the paper's editorial policy is guided by the principles of working class unity that are central to *Britain's Road to Socialism*.

Communist Party members are encouraged to read and sell the *Morning Star*. The paper is popular on the Left as a source of information and news, political features, cultural and sporting guides and analysis which is all too often not found in mainstream capitalist papers. Its editorials are powerful and thoughtful and have at important times, given a steer to the labour movement

Communist Party Rule 15(b) states that members have the duty 'to read the *Morning Star* and to help in every way the circulation of the paper'. Increased paper and website sales are vital in its role as a source of information, analysis, discussion and solidarity.

Communists and our allies also organise broad local *Morning Star* Readers & Supporters Groups and campaign committees in order to build the circulation, finances and influence of the paper.

JOIN THE COMMUNIST PARTY!

We do not believe we have a monopoly of truth and wisdom. Britain's Communists recognise the valuable role played by socialists in other organisations. But we also believe, as history demonstrates, that a stronger and more influential Communist Party strengthens the left and the labour and progressive movements generally. There will be socialist revolution in Britain without it.

Britain needs a revolutionary party rooted in the working class, internationalist, developing and promoting the ideas of Marxism in a non-dogmatic way, building principled unity and projecting a realistic strategy for socialist revolution. That party is the Communist Party of Britain.

Further reading:

CPB, *Britain's Road to Socialism* (2020 edn)

Introducing Marxism (2020 edn)

A Centenary for Socialism (2020)

Red Lives (2020)

Women and Class (2020 edn)

Marx's Das Kapital and Capitalism Today

