

THE COMMUNIST

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THE
COMMUNIST



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MANIFESTO OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY
COMMUNIST
INTERNATIONAL
ON P8-9

TOWARDS A REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY!

BRITAIN'S ROTTEN REGIME



SMASH THEIR SYSTEM!



WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

If you are a communist, and you want to overthrow this rotten system, then it's time to get organised! We are founding a new party: the Revolutionary Communist Party. And we appeal to you to join us!

Communism is not just a good idea or an identity. It means replacing capitalism, based on private profit and exploitation, with a new classless society based upon the principle "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need".

We put forward a communist programme to answer the problems faced by the working class:

- **Drive out this hated Tory government! No confidence in Starmer's Labour**, who intend to continue with the same Tory policies! The working class must resist all attacks, from whatever quarter.
- **Fight for a £20 per hour minimum wage, rising with prices.** If the capitalists say they can't afford this, we say: to hell with capitalism!
- **No to job cuts and redundancies.** Share out work without loss of pay, immediately lowering the working week to 30 hours or less.
- **For a fully publicly-owned and free health service**, under workers' control and management. Reverse all privatisation and outsourcing.
- **Nationalise the energy, rail, and water monopolies**, and the big supermarket chains and distributors, without compensation.
- **Build a million council homes a year.** Nationalise the land, construction companies, and banks to provide the resources to accomplish this. Expropriate the parasitic landlord class.
- **Repeal the anti-trade union laws.** No to class compromise. All union officials to be regularly elected, with the right of immediate recall by the members. Officials should receive no more than the average wage of a skilled worker.
- **For the real emancipation of women.** End all forms of discrimination. Equal pay for work of equal value. For free, quality public nurseries and social care.
- **Abolish the monarchy and the House of Lords.**
- **Scrap tuition fees and student rents.** For free education and full maintenance grants for all.
- **No to austerity! Reverse the cuts! Expropriate the bankers and billionaires!**
- **Nationalise the 100 biggest banks and monopolies** – under workers' control and management – without compensation, as part of a socialist economic plan

The capitalist system cannot be reformed. It must be overthrown. We fight for world revolution: for a Socialist Federation of Britain, linked to a Socialist United States of Europe and a World Socialist Federation, in order to plan resources internationally for the benefit of all.

To be victorious, we need a fighting, communist leadership in the working class. That is what we are building. We have made outstanding progress in the recent period, growing by leaps and bounds. But we still need to massively expand our forces.

That is why we are calling on you to join us. The revolution needs you! With your help and sacrifice, we can succeed! •

FORWARD TO THE RCP

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Editor: Rob Sewell
Layout: Nye S & Jonny H

newsdesk@communist.red
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"To decide once every few years which members of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament – this is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics."

Lenin, *The State and Revolution*



DONATE TO THE FIGHTING FUND

We are launching a Revolutionary Communist Party – a party that can represent the revolutionary aspirations of workers and youth in Britain.

We need a fighting fund for campaigns; to get our newspaper, *The Communist*, out on the streets; and to make our founding congress in May the most successful event for revolutionary communism in a generation.

Donate today and help us form a sturdy material foundation for the revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

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Comrades! You are the eyes and ears of *The Communist*! Only with your help can we bring the workers' press to life.

We place the following pages at your disposal: fill them to bursting with quotes, reports, experiences, and lessons from the frontlines of the struggle.

Have you got any questions for *The Communist*? Do you have a bastard boss? Do you want to share a day in your life at work? Or do you have any suggestions as to how *The Communist* can be improved?

Then don't delay! Send your contributions to the editorial board of *The Communist*!

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THE GREAT STINK OF 2024: FLUSH AWAY THIS ROTTEN SYSTEM!

Adam Booth,
The Communist editorial board

In the summer of 1858, mounting effluent on the banks of the River Thames combined with unusually high temperatures to produce the infamous 'Great Stink'.

So potent was the stench that it could apparently be smelt across central London. Overwhelmed by the noxious fumes, MPs inside the House of Commons complained that they were unable to conduct important parliamentary business.

Today, a similarly foul smell emanates from Westminster. But the source is no longer the pollutants in the water, but the rancid occupants in Parliament itself.

Putrid institutions

The organs of the British establishment have become a collective cesspit of corruption and cronyism; of scandal and abuse.

Tabloid front pages distract readers with headlines about the Royals' latest ailments. But in truth, the whole monarchy is a cancerous parasite: leeching off the public purse, while providing a sanctuary for suspected sex-pests and predators.

The police – tasked with protecting the property and privileges of the rich and powerful – are just as reprehensible, offering a home to countless racists and rapists. No wonder public confidence in the Met is at rock bottom.

Yet it is the institutions of bourgeois democracy that seem to have putrefied the most. The so-called 'Commons' is stuffed full of crooks and careerists. Every week seems to bring with it new allegations of misconduct by MPs, with constant revelations about harassment, bullying, and sleaze.

As a result, there is a widespread hatred towards all the traditional parties and politicians. One recent survey by the ONS put Parliament and political parties at the bottom of the pile when it comes to the public's faith in the bodies of the British state.

Similarly, a recent Ipsos poll suggested that politicians are the least trusted profession in Britain, behind bankers, landlords, and estate agents – the lowest of the low.

British capitalism is rotting from the head down.

Stinking hypocrites

The overriding waft on Downing Street, meanwhile, is the reek of desperation.

Wracked by endless by-election defeats, internal plots, and backbench rebellions, Rishi Sunak and the Tories are eager to manufacture all manner of distractions: from whipping up panic about supposed 'mob rule'; to conducting ridiculous culture-war skirmishes over the England football kit.

Every attempt by the Tory government to divert attention from its crimes, however, seems to blow up in its own face.

Within days of Sunak warning the nation about the dangers of 'extremism' on Britain's streets, the Tories were ensnared by reports of abusive remarks by one of their most prominent benefactors, Frank Hester, who stated that left-winger Diane Abbott makes him "want to hate all black women" and "should be shot".

Our comrades have had their mugshots plastered all over social media by the Met, accused of 'inciting hatred' for showing solidarity with Palestinians and chanting 'intifada until victory'. Millionaire Tory donors, by contrast, barely get a slap on the wrist for saying that a black female MP should be murdered!

Sunak has noted Hester's apology and stated that his "remorse should be accepted". At the end of the day, the Prime Minister knows that for many in his party, the Tories are not racist enough!

Former Conservative deputy chair Lee Anderson, for example, has defected to professional migrant-bashers Reform UK, after refusing to apologise for his Islamophobic comments.

At the same time, a swathe of Tory MPs are up in arms over judicial blocks to their Rwanda deportation plan, which has become the latest shibboleth for the most rabid layers of the Conservative Party.

For these Tory headbangers, the 'hostile environment' cannot be hostile enough.

Zombie government

Aside from speeches about asylum-seekers and Islamists, and complaints about perversions of parliamentary

procedure, it seems that this shambolic government does little else.

Rishi Sunak has been accused of presiding over a "zombie parliament". His government certainly resembles the living dead – stumbling from one calamity to the next, just waiting to be put out of its misery at the next general election. The only uncertainty that remains is when the execution date is.

Unfortunately for the working class, however, the 'alternative' is no better. Starmer's Labour has nothing to offer the exploited and the oppressed.

Whether it be the closure of industry, like the steelworks in Port Talbot; the slashing of services in bankrupt councils such as Birmingham; or the suffering facing millions in Gaza: the right-wing Labour leaders remain completely silent in the face of these injustices.

Workers must therefore trust only in themselves. They can have no confidence whatsoever in these charlatans.

Sick system

Faced with this choice between Tweedledee and Tweedledum, many workers and youth are understandably looking elsewhere when it comes to casting their vote. And they will have a variety of options to choose from at the next election.

George Galloway and his Workers' Party of Britain are looking to capitalise on their recent victory in Rochdale. Jeremy Corbyn is likely to contest his current Islington North seat, possibly in coordination with allies in other constituencies. And left-wingers such as journalist Owen Jones are canvassing support for Green candidates and pro-Palestine independents.

Given the burning anger towards the political establishment, there is a possibility that some of these protest votes could actually win.

Even if this transpires, however, it will not be enough.

Globally, the capitalist system has nothing to offer but crises, wars, and climate catastrophe. British capitalism is completely bankrupt. Just last week, official data from the DWP revealed that a quarter of children are now living below the poverty line.

Only a root-and-branch transformation of society will suffice. But such a revolutionary perspective is not on the agenda for any of these 'lefts', who cling to the mistaken idea that capitalism can be patched up and reformed.

That is why we are launching the Revolutionary Communist Party and the Revolutionary Communist International.

Today, the entire system stinks. Capitalism is killing us. A degenerate Tory Party leads a decrepit government on behalf of a rotten establishment.

It is time to flush away all this capitalist crap, and cleanse society of this feckless, foetid filth. ●

Working hard...

BBC

With reports of long hours, chronic stress and exhaustion rising among sections of the workforce, it might be time to reframe the burnout narrative.

FINANCIAL TIMES

MPs clock off early as length of Commons work day hits record low

...or hardly working?

WORD ON THE STREET

Overheard in Sunderland train station:

"I'm old enough to know that this country isn't going to the dogs. It's already in the dogs. Everywhere you look..."

Heard in Leeds:

"The media is full of lies. We need an alternative like *The Communist*."

Taxi driver in Milton Keynes:

"The world is falling apart. Who knows what will happen tomorrow."

From a Romanian woman met at Euston Station:

"I grew up under communism. I believe things were better than here in Britain. I'm surprised to see communists in this country, but I'm glad that you are here."

From a young worker in Woolwich:

"(The material in *The Communist*)...it's exactly what I've been thinking myself. It's just really nice to see it in print!"

CHILD POVERTY REACHES CHILLING LEVELS

Recently released statistics about child poverty are a damning indictment of the Tories' austerity agenda, and of British capitalism more widely.

According to the government's own figures, one-in-four children in Britain is now living in absolute poverty. This equates to 3.6 million children across the country.

The rise in child poverty over the last year is the largest increase since records began almost 30 years ago. According to UNICEF, on almost every available measure, the UK is bottom of the table compared to other advanced capitalist countries.

Other data highlights that one-in-six British children live in families suffering

from food insecurity – an increase on the previous year's figures. And 1-in-40 children live in a family that has visited a food bank in the past month: a doubling compared to a year earlier.

Despite their own tight budgets, schools are attempting to paper over these cracks, providing food, showers, and clothes washing to children from deprived households. But this is little more than a sticking plaster for an ever-widening wound.

And there is no sign of improvement under a Labour government, given that Sir Kid Starver has refused to scrap the Tories' two-child cap on benefits.

Alex Baxter,

Farringdon Communists

WHY I'M JOINING THE COMMUNISTS

Sixth-form student in Ely:

"I'm just another angry, powerless young person who doesn't want everything I know to die. I have wanted to participate in (radical) leftist activism for a long time, and just stumbled upon this opportunity."

DN, Bury:

"I want to get organised to overthrow our rotten system."

OA, Middlesbrough:

"I want to be able to make a contribution towards the liberation of our own class. And after speaking with many of your party's representatives, I have found that not only is the RCP firm on its Marxist principles, the party also provides a suitable alternative to the mainstream parties of capital."

G, Bristol:

"Angry about what is happening in the world. Angry about how hard it is to succeed; about how expensive the world is. Angry about homelessness. How my parents think they know better, and I struggle with the arguments needed to argue or critique their right-wing views."



SOLIDARITY WITH DIANE ABBOTT: FIGHT RACISM! FIGHT CAPITALISM!

**Daniel Morley,
Hackney Communists**

On Friday 15 March, around 1,000 local residents demonstrated outside Hackney Town Hall in East London in solidarity with Diane Abbott, following Tory donor Frank Hester's disgusting, racist remarks.

This was a huge crowd for a local demo called at short notice. The mood was one of fury and disgust at the racism and hypocrisy of the British establishment and the Labour Party.

What was clear is how popular Diane is with many constituents, and how strongly people want to defend her.

This was reflected in chants such as "stand with Diane" and "if you mess with Diane Abbott, you mess with us".

Extremism

It is well-known that Diane Abbott receives far more abuse than any other MP.

Throughout the rally, people in the crowd declared that Frank Hester should be arrested for inciting hatred. This got a real echo.

This is absolutely correct. The Tories' double standards highlight the disgusting hypocrisy and injustice of capitalist society.

Recently, Tory ministers have claimed that the country is descending into 'mob rule'; and that demonstrations should be banned. And Michael Gove has

just 'redefined' extremism, in order to make it easier for the government to ban organisations and protests.

Frank Hester, meanwhile, the largest-ever donor to the Tories, said that Diane Abbott makes him "want to hate all black women", and that she "should be shot".

It is an open and shut case that Hester is promoting "an ideology based on violence, hatred, or intolerance that aims to negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others", as Gove's definition of 'extremism' states.

But we all know that, despite the businessman's abusive words being plastered all over the media, he will face no action of any kind. He will remain a rich and powerful man.

Indeed, Hester's influence over the Tory Party shows no sign of waning. Not only has Rishi Sunak refused to return the donor's £10 million in contributions from the last 12 months, but reportedly the Conservatives have accepted a further £5 million offer from the CEO.

In capitalist Britain, you can say and do whatever you like, if you are wealthy enough to donate millions to the party in power.

Opportunism

Not to be outdone, Keir Starmer and the Labour establishment have given a masterclass in two-faced hypocrisy and opportunism. They have exploited this scandal for all it is worth, demanding that

the Tories hand back Hester's money, and posing as anti-racists.

But the Labour leaders have done nothing to support Diane. She currently sits as an independent, refused membership of the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP). Starmer has ignored requests from Abbott for the party's whip to be restored to her.

Then there is the case of Neil Coyle – another Labour MP suspended from the PLP for racism. He was guilty of actual racist abuse against journalists, and of bullying staff members.

Strangely, however, Coyle has had the whip restored. Could this have anything to do with the fact that he is a right-wing, pro-Starmer MP?

This goes to show the cynical attitude of the Labour right wing towards the question of racism. In reality, Starmer and co. have no genuine interest in fighting oppression.

Abuse

Many people will say that Diane receives this abuse because she is a black woman. That is undoubtedly true. But it is *also* because she is a left-winger.

This is why Abbott is vilified, insulted, and denigrated far more than, say, Kemi Badenoch – a black, female member of the Tory cabinet, and a prospective candidate to replace Sunak as PM.

This is why disgusting reactionaries like Frank Hester feel emboldened to say such blatantly racist things about Diane. And it is also why Jeremy Corbyn, a white man, also receives so much violent abuse.

There is no doubt that Diane Abbott receives an enormous amount of racist and misogynistic harassment because she is a black woman. But it is this fact, combined with being one of the most prominent left-wing MPs, that leads to this.

This is all aided by the hateful, racist, toxic vitriol that is constantly pumped out by the Tories and the capitalist press.

Capitalism

Hester's comments are a window into the real attitudes of the British ruling class; the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the bigotry that pervades the rotten establishment.

This latest scandal is fanning the flames of burning anger that millions of people in this country feel. Everyone can see the hypocrisy and injustice that is woven into the fabric of capitalism.

What is needed is a powerful organisation that can direct this fury at the cesspit of liars, hypocrites, and racists – the den of capitalists and their sycophants – that they call Parliament.

What is needed is a party with a programme to fight racism at its root: the capitalist system. ●



Lazy MPs get a tidy pay rise

I was unsurprised to read recently that, on average, MPs have been sitting in the Commons chamber for less time than in any other parliamentary period in the past 25 years. I'm sure they have much more important business to attend to than, say, running the country.

Equally predictable, but slightly more infuriating, was reading elsewhere that MPs will be receiving a 5.5% pay raise from April, bringing their basic salary to over £91,000.

But even this is not enough for the out-of-touch Tory chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, who says that such a sum "doesn't go as far as you might think".

Sunak's government has cracked down on local councils moving to a four-day working week, and has discouraged similar practices across the country. Yet it seems that MPs can work fewer hours *and* receive a pay increase too! Parliament truly is a farce.

Our demand that elected representatives should only be paid the wage of an average skilled worker, and should be subject to immediate recall if they fail to meet their duties, has never been more relevant.

It's time all these careerists were replaced with genuine class fighters. And while we're at it, we should abolish the House of Lords and the monarchy too!

Jo Bunkle,
Cambridge Communists

'Democracy' for whom?

The Tories recently announced plans to expand the legal definition of 'extremism', and to give the controversial Prevent unit greater powers to combat those who seek to "overthrow liberal, democratic principles".

This is merely a convenient tool for the Conservatives to repress those who threaten the interests that they defend.

The Tories have name-dropped reactionary organisations like Patriot Alternative as potential targets for these new measures.

But it is clear that the expanded definition of 'extremism' is really aimed at criminalising dissent against the British state and the capitalist system, at a time when millions are out on the streets protesting the establishment's complicity in the genocide in Gaza.

The Tories have also singled out the danger of 'Islamism' – a dog whistle attempt to stir up suspicion of Muslim workers and youth, who are rightfully angry at the imperialist slaughter in the Middle East.

Michael Gove has said that this push is targeted at "those who threaten liberal democracy" and "British values".

But under capitalism, "democracy" is really a dictatorship of the bankers and billionaires, who use their wealth and connections to influence elections and lobby politicians – all in the pursuit of profit.

Sam,
Northamptonshire Communists

Bastard MP of the week

I would like to nominate Mel Stride for the award of 'bastard MP of the week'.

The Tory MP for Central Devon has scandalously suggested that workers convince themselves of mental illnesses in order to avoid precarious jobs.

Better yet, he has a solution! If you suffer from anxiety, work from home!

Seems like a great idea, until you realise that many WFH roles involve sitting in front of a monitor all day, isolated from normal interactions with your colleagues.

Stride also has the audacity to say that work is good for us. But the 2022 Global Workplace survey found that 60% of workers worldwide feel emotionally detached at work. 19% regularly feel miserable; 59% feel stressed; 56% feel worried; and 31% feel angry.

Yes, work is good...when your job is to blame the poor for being poor, like the Rt Hon Mel Stride. He has a net worth of £4 million and an annual MP's salary of £91,000. Yet he has the cheek to tell struggling workers to simply suck it up and find a job that won't destroy their body and soul.

Roman Merker,
Birmingham Communists



**MPs debating the
living wage...**

**...MPs voting to give
themselves a pay rise**



GETHING ELECTED AS WELSH LABOUR LEADER: WORKERS MUST TRUST IN THEMSELVES

Cardiff Communists

Starmerite Vaughan Gething has narrowly won the Welsh Labour leadership election. He has also taken over as Welsh First Minister, at a time of explosive volatility – in Wales, in Britain, and internationally.

Thousands of jobs are at risk in Port Talbot. Junior doctors and consultants in the BMA are back on strike next week. Welsh farmers are in revolt. And rubbish is piling high on the streets of Cardiff, as bin workers continue their long-running dispute.

Yet in his campaign, Gething said nothing to address the problems facing workers in Wales. His manifesto did not mention Port Talbot, or of any of these struggles – despite the fact that he is a former president of the Welsh TUC.

So why did all six of the largest trade unions in Wales back Gething and pour significant resources into persuading their members to do so?

The unions have invested more time and energy into getting Gething elected than they have in organising a fightback against the bosses' attacks.

In Port Talbot, the rallying cry from Unite has been 'wait for Starmer'. This passive, timid approach has been disastrous. Tata has run rings around the union leaders, and has already begun shutting down the steelworks.

In contrast to Gething's Corbyn-supporting predecessor, Mark Drakeford, Keir Starmer knows he can rely on the new Welsh Labour leader, who has shown that he is also prepared to do the bosses' bidding.

During Gething's campaign, for example, he accepted donations

amounting to £200,000 from an owner of several polluting companies, for whom he has carried out political favours.

This shows where Gething's real allegiances lie. He is no friend of workers or the environment, but yet another politician in the pockets of the capitalist class.

Gething's victory has been celebrated in the establishment press. For his supporters, none of this controversy matters, because he is the first black head of government in Europe.

Gething can now take his place in the pantheon of 'diverse' opponents of the working class, alongside Rishi Sunak, Barack Obama, and Margaret Thatcher. No matter their identity, these leaders stand on the side of the ruling class.

Workers in Wales have no expectations in Gething, and any illusions that do exist will quickly be burnt away on the basis of events.

As the crisis of capitalism deepens in Wales, the battlelines will sharpen. In these conditions, workers must rely on their own strength. ●



Leeds Communists, photo taken during the occupation



SHUT DOWN RAFAEL: A COMRADELY CRITIQUE

Grace Dee and Matt Hutchinson, Newcastle Communists

The Shut Down Rafael (SDR) campaign aims to shut down an Israeli-state-owned arms factory in Newcastle. We were involved with it from its inception.

From the beginning, we argued that the campaign should aim to reach the workers in the factory, to engage them in the campaign.

Instead of attempting to shut down the factory from the outside, the campaign should seek to persuade the workers to go on strike on a political basis – to refuse to allow weapons to be manufactured in Newcastle that could feed the Israeli war machine.

We argued for campaign members to pass motions about it in our own unions.

Interest within the campaign for agitating amongst the workers was scant, however.

In a speech at a January SDR demonstration, a leading campaigner suggested the Rafael workers were complicit in genocide.

On more than one occasion, protesters chanted 'shame on you', seemingly aimed at workers trying to enter the factory.

When we challenged this method, a prominent activist responded by likening the workers in the factory to scabs in a strike.

Blockades of the factory started to occur involving, on occasion, the workers' vehicles being climbed on.

Anti-worker?

Our issue is that there has been *no attempt to reach the workers within the factory to explain what is happening or try to engage them in the struggle*. Instead, from day one, there has been an 'us and them' dynamic, where the campaign comes in from outside, and where the brunt of the antagonism is directed at the workers.

When the building is blockaded, for example, the workers are on the receiving end. This could be a golden opportunity to hand them some literature. However, they have been met by chants of 'shame on you'; or, in one instance, wrestled off their motorbike.

The campaign's key demand and name is to *shut down* the factory. This

would mean putting all the workers out of a job. With families to feed, and mortgages or rent to pay, it is unlikely that workers would be receptive to such an idea.

We demand that the factory should be repurposed, and the workers guaranteed their jobs.

We were pleased to see that in the last two weeks a leaflet has been produced for the workers, which puts forward the demand that "the factory and workforce are used to make technology that benefits humanity".

Almost six months after the campaign started, however, it feels as if bridges have been burnt with the Rafael workers.

Substitutionalism

If the campaign had communicated with the workers, won them to our cause, and encouraged them to strike, not only would this particular producer have been shut down, it would also have sent shockwaves throughout the Palestine solidarity movement – showing the potential power workers hold through their role in production everywhere, and enormously raising their confidence.

This would not have been an easy route to take. But it would have been the most effective, had all forces been pointed to this line of attack.

Instead, SDR has taken a path of substitutionalism. This is where a group of activists take action in place of the workers themselves.

Such groups often come into direct opposition with workers, and become frustrated with them for having not reached the same radical conclusions.

We are unsure who the SDR campaign is aiming their demands towards. Is the aim to place moral pressure on the owners of the factory to close themselves down?

Clearly there is no way a factory owned by the Israeli state will shut itself down on such a basis. The only force that can call a halt to work at the factory is the workers on the inside.

Historical precedent

There is a rich history of workers in Britain acting on international instincts and organising to defend workers abroad.

Following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia, 21 foreign armies, including British troops, were sent to Russia

to crush the Soviet government. British workers responded monumentally against their reactionary government.

Sailors mutinied at naval bases on the south coast. Soldiers shot military police and formed organisational committees. Wildcat strikes broke out. The military even began to come over to the side of revolution.

A 'Hands Off Russia' national committee was established, pledging to agitate and prepare for a general strike unless the Allies withdrew from Russia. This had huge support from across the working class.

Campaigners appealed to London dock workers, who struck and refused to load an arms shipment bound for Poland. A week later, the dockers' union decided to prevent all arms shipments destined for use against the Red Army.

But even in conditions of mass radicalisation, this campaign took months of patient work nationally: standing outside factory gates and agitating amongst workers. It wasn't a quick victory.

Where next?

It has been suggested that ours is not a realistic perspective. But is it realistic that a group of external activists will manage to shut down a factory owned by the Israeli state? Will this campaign budge the Israeli war machine one bit?

The occupation of Gaza and the genocide of the Palestinian people is a consequence of Israeli and western imperialism. The US funnels \$3.8 billion in military aid into Israel every year.

The only force that can seriously challenge these interests is the revolutionary movement of the working class – in the Middle East and across the wider world.

Here, we can fight 'our own' imperialists with revolutionary, class-based methods.

There is no shortage of disgust at capitalism. The ruling class is despised. What we need is a programme and an organisation that can harness this anger and direct it against them.

We are founding the Revolutionary Communist Party for this purpose. The role of our party is to go out into the class struggle and put forward these ideas. ●

UNIVERSITY OCCUPATIONS FOR PALESTINE – WHICH WAY FORWARD?

Leeds Communists

Throughout March, a number of students began occupying university buildings in solidarity with Palestine.

Such actions have been taken in Leeds, Bristol, Nottingham, Goldsmiths, UCL, and Manchester. In Leeds, in particular, our comrades have gotten stuck in.

For the movement to succeed, it's important to examine the effectiveness of occupations, and to look at our role in the struggle against capitalism and imperialism – on campuses and beyond.

Many of these occupations should be commended for opening up to the wider student body by holding regular teach-ins and workshops.

This provides a space for politics to be discussed, by staff and students. In the context of a persistent crackdown by the authorities on Palestine solidarity; this is welcome.

There can be limitations to this, if occupations are not linked to the task of *building and expanding the movement* beyond the confines of a single room or building.

Ideally, an occupation should only be considered once support has been built amongst the wider student body and its most active layers.

Then, once an occupation begins, those involved should spread the movement's demands. Convincing more students to join in and building wider support.

Positively, the Leeds occupation did shift towards drawing in new layers of students. When we held stalls, we found that students were often unaware of the occupation but were supportive – and even willing to join – once discussed with.

There's enormous potential for broadening the movement, given how wide the anger is against the British establishment for its complicity in the genocide in Gaza.

Demands in these occupations mainly concern cutting universities' ties with Israeli institutions, international banks, and arms companies.

These demands are about kicking imperialism and its influence off UK campuses. However, you cannot change a leopard's spots. Even if management relented on this or that demand, there is no guarantee of permanent concessions under capitalism.

After all, imperialism is present on campuses because Britain is imperialist – not vice versa. Universities' ties to big banks and arms manufacturers have also been entrenched by the marketisation of higher education.

We must instead build a militant movement to kick them, the bankers, and the death-dealers off campus for good!

This shows the need to connect our demands to the fight for free education, so that universities aren't reliant on the arms industry for funding, and to staff-student control of universities, so that workers and students can decide how education is run.

With this in mind, it is vital for occupations to connect with campus workers, upon whose labour universities are reliant. They alone possess the power to grind universities to a halt.

UCU branches across the country have generally expressed support for these occupations, as have other campus unions like Unite and Unison.

Going forward this must be converted into united action by staff and students. Students must link up with rank-and-file union members – convincing them to join occupations, and to even take industrial action in solidarity.

More occupations are likely after the Easter break. If they are to succeed, they must reflect on recent and historic experiences.

Ultimately, education will never be truly free from profiteering and imperialism so long as capitalism prevails.

To really kick imperialism off campuses, we must fight for free education under the control of students and staff.

This is the vision that our movement must fight for, and that the communists will continue to raise. ●

PRESTON COMMUNISTS CAMPAIGN FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PROGRAMME TO FREE PALESTINE

Inspired by George Galloway's victory in Rochdale, a Palestine solidarity group in Preston called 'Children of the Ghetto' recently ran a hustings to choose an independent, pro-Palestine candidate for the next general election.

The Preston cell of the soon-to-be RCP jumped at this opportunity to get out on the streets and connect our ideas with local residents who have been radicalised by the assault on Gaza.

Our forces are still modest, so we didn't expect to win this contest. Nor do we have any illusions that one pro-Palestine MP, in isolation, would be a solution.

We used this campaign to go door-knocking, hold stalls, and raise our revolutionary perspective with ordinary people.

Having secured enough signatures, we used our ten-minute presentation to a meeting of over one hundred people to expose the corruption and hypocrisy of our 'democratic' establishment, and to put forward a clear communist programme:

• **Intifada until victory! From Preston to Gaza, we need a mass workers' uprising. For a national campaign of strikes, occupations, and workers' boycotts!**

• **Down with the imperialists and warmongers in Westminster! No trust in Sunak or Starmer!**

• **Schools not bombs! Scrap all arms spending immediately. Spend those billions on education, the NHS, and pay rises for workers.**

• **For workers' control of the arms factories! Use industry for the benefit of society, not for weapons of destruction.**

• **For an international socialist revolution! Workers of the world – unite!**

This got an extremely positive response. While our candidate did not win, we have successfully planted the RCP's flag in Preston, widely circulated *The Communist*, and found people who want to help build the party.

WHY ISRAEL HAS DELAYED ITS ATTACK ON RAFAH

Fred Weston

The 10 March deadline for the attack on Rafah has come and gone, and there is no attack yet. Could it be that Netanyahu is having second thoughts?

The answer to that is clearly, no. The Israeli government is manoeuvring under pressure from outside, in particular from the US administration, while at the same time being internally divided.

Is the US pressure due to humanitarian concerns on the part of Biden? The answer, again, is no. The US continues to support Israel in its genocidal onslaught on the Palestinian people, as testified by its increased military aid. So why the delay in the attack?

Negotiations involving Israel and Hamas that aim to achieve some kind of ceasefire, albeit 'temporary', are ongoing.

The problem is that Israel has openly stated that it rules out any permanent ceasefire, and that once all the hostages are released, it would recommence its war with the aim of the total destruction of Hamas.

As we can see, things do not at all look optimistic for an end to the war any time soon. Netanyahu has very little popular support inside Israel, and the only way he can remain in office is to keep Israel in a state of war.

Hamas, on the other hand, cannot accept anything but the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza.

Attack delayed but not called off

However, even some of the obtuse hardline Zionists in Netanyahu's cabinet are being forced to consider where they are going with the present war. They believed that they could deal with Hamas in a quick, sharp war. This is very far from being achieved.

To totally destroy Hamas as a fighting force would require a much longer and more drawn-out military campaign. This would inevitably involve

far higher civilian casualties than we have seen so far.

Attention is being focussed on the Israeli Defence Force (IDF)'s plans to go into Rafah, and what their consequences would be.

Combined with this, we have reports coming out about the terrible suffering of the Palestinian people in Gaza, with talk of widespread famine affecting large numbers.

If this is allowed to continue for much longer, the anger of the Arab masses across the region could reach breaking point. And the US would see all its plans to keep the region under control in tatters.

As if this were not bad enough for US imperialism, there is the ongoing conflict on the border with Lebanon. There is open talk that once the IDF has dealt with Gaza, their attention would turn to Hezbollah.

Hezbollah is far better equipped than Hamas ever was, and such a war has the potential to truly become more generalised, with the risk of pulling the US directly into it.

All this explains why Biden keeps piling on the pressure to get Netanyahu to rethink his strategy in relation to Hamas.

At the moment, the only concession Netanyahu seems to be prepared to make is to *delay the attack*, and to promise that he will allow for a massive evacuation of refugees from Rafah to take place before the IDF goes in.

Netanyahu on a tightrope

Netanyahu is also facing different pressures at home. In February, trust in the government fell to 34 percent, and 63 percent of Israelis now believe new elections should not wait until 2026. 36 percent are of the opinion that early elections should be held within the next three months.

The outcome of such elections is clear to everyone: it would mean the end of Netanyahu. He is walking on a tightrope, and he himself doesn't know where this war is going, whether he can continue his war, or whether his opponents will move against him before he can complete his plans.

All he does know is that the longer he draws out this war, the longer he can stay in office.

For now, the stalemate situation continues. The IDF is preparing its offensive on Rafah, and the negotiations are being dragged out as a delaying tactic to allow for the necessary time to put everything in place before they go in.

The butchery continues

And while all this is going on, the butchery continues. 32,000 people have been killed, and 74,000 have been injured, a large percentage of them

children. Added to this, we now have the prospect of mass starvation affecting large parts of the Gazan population.

We can have no trust in any of the western governments to end the 75-year nightmare the Palestinian people have been suffering.

A ceasefire would be a temporary respite, but would in no way represent an end to the continued danger Gazans face of being bombed to pieces whenever the Zionist ruling class of Israel deem it necessary.

Israel today is a powerful capitalist regime, backed by the strongest imperialist nation in the world, the United States.

It is surrounded by other capitalist regimes, most of which stay in power through despotic methods, and are also fully backed by US imperialism. That explains why none of them lift a finger to help the Palestinians who are being pummelled into the ground.

The Palestinian people are in the front line of the international class war, and we, the revolutionary communists, stand in full support of their demands for a homeland, for a place where they can live in peace, where they have full citizenship and full democratic rights, together with decent jobs and housing, decent education for their children, decent healthcare for their sick and elderly.

That can only be achieved in a worldwide struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society, in which capitalist rule is brought to an end, and where the workers of all countries will have power in their hands. ●

IDF BARBARISM IN GAZA

A video circulating online shows the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) deliberately targeting four unarmed civilians in Khan Yunis, southern Gaza.

In the leaked footage, you can see a drone tracking four men, who are walking up a hill side by side. The first drone strike kills two of the men, while the other two manage to escape on foot in different directions. Each of them is then targeted and killed by two additional drone strikes.

This terrorist act of complete, gratuitous barbarism puts to bed all the claims that the Israeli army isn't targeting civilians.

Such an assertion is clearly absurd, given that over 30,000 people have already been slaughtered – the majority of whom are women, children, and elderly people. The reality of the situation is laid bare by this gruesome footage.

While the ladies and gentlemen at the United Nations – that worthless imperialist talking shop – busy themselves with meaningless votes and toothless pacifist blather, the IDF is casually murdering civilians.

The Palestinian masses, and the workers of the world who stand in solidarity with them, can only trust in their own strength. They need to take matters into their own hands.

Down with Zionist barbarism! Down with imperialism! Intifada until victory!

Rui Cardoso,
Hammersmith Communists



Image: mosreg.ru

THE MOSCOW MASSACRE: WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE?

Alan Woods

On Friday 22 March, the world was shocked by reports of an appalling massacre at a packed concert venue in Moscow.

At the time of writing, at least 137 people were killed, and three out of four of the assailants have pleaded guilty to terrorism.

The Islamist terrorist organisation ISIS-K immediately claimed responsibility. It is now evident that ISIS at least had some involvement.

Was this the work of ISIS?

The attack had some hallmarks of ISIS methods. But there are other aspects which contradict this.

Immediately following the assault, the assassins fled from the building. This is at odds with the normal procedure of Islamist outfits, who as a rule do not flee, but fight to the death or blow themselves up.

And when the terrorists were intercepted by armed forces, they surrendered without a fight. This is very strange.

Interestingly, one of the arrested men admitted that he had been paid for his work. This also contradicts the traditional methods of Islamist organisations, whose recruits aren't lured with cash, but with the prospect of a martyr's death and a trip to paradise. To accept cash for murder is not characteristic of religious fanatics, but of mere mercenaries.

ISIS has suffered serious defeats in Syria and Iraq. The Middle East must be awash with unemployed former terrorists, anxious to sell their butcher's trade to anyone with plenty of cash.

If these men were paid, then who was the paymaster? To answer this, we must look at the broader picture.

The war is lost

After the fall of Avdiivka, every reasonable person will have concluded that the Ukraine war is lost.

Yet instead of seeking a deal with Moscow that might preserve something resembling an independent Ukrainian state, the panicked western leaders are scrambling to send Kyiv more money and arms.

But even this would not change anything fundamental, since the West is unable to meet Ukraine's demand for shells, rockets and air defence systems. In this regard, Russia has overwhelming superiority.

And crucially, Ukraine lacks available fighting forces. Their losses have reached horrific levels this year – up by three times compared to last year. The outlook is critical. The West is prepared to fight to the last drop of Ukrainian blood. But they are not prepared to sacrifice their own soldiers.

If there is panic in the West, the mood in Kyiv is one of absolute desperation. And desperate men do desperate things.

Desperate measures

The Ukrainians have been stepping up talk of 'asymmetrical' war (i.e. terrorist

attacks) this year, which makes sense, as they are being defeated in 'normal' war.

Kyrylo Budanov – Ukraine's adventurist intelligence chief – was behind a spate of recent drone attacks that extended as far as St Petersburg, targeting key infrastructure. Last year, Ukraine's parliament established a special committee for interactions with small and indigenous national movements within Russia.

The so-called decolonisation policy aims to break up the Russian Federation, and is designed to appeal to nationalist tendencies, including the most reactionary Islamic fundamentalists in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

In the murky world of espionage, Budanov will have contacts with like-minded people: terrorists and assassins, willing to offer their services to the highest bidder.

As yet, there is no proof of Ukrainian involvement in this attack. But someone like Budanov would no doubt be capable of resorting to such desperate measures, intended to create maximum havoc and sow panic, with the aim of weakening support for the war.

However, if that was the intention, this attack has achieved precisely the opposite. It has caused a wave of fear and revulsion, further strengthening Putin's hand, and making him more popular.

NATO's aggressive actions, and the barrage of anti-Russian propaganda churned out by our so-called 'free press', convinces Russians that the West is the enemy.

In such a climate, people will naturally unite around the government – at least temporarily – in the interest of national security. Putin will be able to carry out a further curtailment of democratic rights, and inevitably there will be severe retaliation against Ukraine.

What did the CIA know?

The US was extremely quick in declaring that ISIS was responsible, and that the attack had nothing to do with Ukraine.

In fact, soon before the attack, the US had warned its citizens of the likelihood of terrorist attacks in Russia, and warned them to avoid large gatherings like concerts and malls. To this day, it is not clear how much information American intelligence services possessed, nor where they got their information from.

So far, there are two main hypotheses: a) that this was a terrorist act perpetrated by ISIS, and b) that Ukraine's secret services were involved.

In reality, there is no contradiction between the two. ISIS may have been the material authors of the crime, but it is possible other forces were behind it.

Both the Ukrainians and Islamists had reasons to be involved. We must await further evidence to shed more light on this affair. Whoever did it, Ukraine is going to pay a heavy price for it. ●

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HAITI: PRIME MINISTER HENRY RESIGNS AS REGIME COLLAPSES

Rob Lyon

A gang-led coup in Haiti has led to the resignation of Prime Minister Ariel Henry. US imperialism is scrambling to regain control of the situation and has organised negotiations to create a transitional council to take power.

But with the Haitian state in utter disarray, the gangs are moving to solidify their control of the capital Port-au-Prince.

Bwa Kale

There had been a brief decline in gang-driven killings and kidnappings after the emergence of the Bwa Kale movement in April last year; a spontaneous uprising of neighbourhood self-defence groups that erupted across the country to defend against the gangs.

But the decentralised and heterogeneous movement was unable to coalesce into a national movement with a united political programme. In some areas, the neighbourhood self-defence groups got caught up in the gang wars. Others have even transformed into gangs themselves.

Some of the gangs have threatened and retaliated against Bwa Kale. Others have taken a different approach, such as G9, the most powerful gang alliance led by Jimmy 'Barbecue' Chérizier.

Since May of last year, he has tried to co-opt Bwa Kale, and has even encouraged people to join and support the movement. He would love nothing more than to bind

A new gang alliance, 'Viv Ansanm', emerged and quickly launched a coordinated assault on the Haitian state while Henry was out of the country.

Within days, the gangs had attacked and torched some 30 state institutions, more than 600 homes, and over 500 vehicles. Thousands were left homeless and tens of thousands were forced to flee the capital in the wake of the attack.

Chérizier announced his plans to capture the chief of police and government ministers to prevent Henry's return.

Attacks by gangs at the country's main airport and cargo port had more or less shut the country down, stranding Henry abroad.

At this point, US imperialism had concluded that the situation was untenable. Thus, Henry announced his resignation on 12 March 2024.

US imperialism announced a plan for the creation of a transitional council to replace Henry and take power. But it seems unlikely that it ever will. Even if it did, it is less likely that it will be able to stabilise the situation.

The proposed council would be composed of the discredited establishment political parties. Moreover, in terms of special armed bodies of men (the real basis of political power) the gangs are more powerful than the forces of the state.

It would be immediately faced with attacks from gangs. In fact, the plans are already falling apart, with many of the

mission left in their wake a sex abuse scandal and cholera outbreak.

The imperialists are particularly concerned about getting bogged down in a long-term occupation. The gangs are well-armed and entrenched in Haiti's cities. This means urban warfare against an enemy that is difficult to identify, with no clear front lines. Such a conflict could easily escalate and mean opposition at home.

Open warfare with the gangs on the streets could also spark mass opposition, foreign military support would likely also mean conflicts with the mass movement.

However, a UN mission to Haiti cannot yet be entirely ruled out. The imperialists also worry that the political instability could spread throughout the region.

Overthrow capitalism

The problem of the gangs and the social collapse cannot be resolved through police and military action. There is no solution to the problem of the gangs under capitalism, which has allowed the gangs to grow and metastasise like a cancer.

Politicians and the bourgeoisie have backed the gangs to further their own interests. The corruption runs so deep that the entire establishment has become gangsterised.

Imperialist troops might be able to defeat the gangs militarily, at great cost to the Haitian masses. However, even this will provide no long-term solution to the problem. An occupation by imperialist troops will not provide jobs, decent wages, housing, education or healthcare.

Even if an imperialist military intervention can defeat the gangs, with no fundamental change in Haiti's economic and political situation, the gangs would arise all over again.

This would mean a potentially long-term and brutal occupation by imperialist forces to keep the gangs in check.

It is possible that Chérizier's gang will take control of the capital, although the establishment of a national regime based on the power of the gangs seems unlikely at the moment.

Chérizier has presented himself as a sort of 'revolutionary' strongman who can save the country from the crisis. But he is no saviour, and no stable regime will ever be established under the control of the gangs.

What is needed is a total revolutionary sweeping away of all the corruption and rot of Haitian capitalism.

The Haitian ruling class must be expropriated and their failed regime overthrown. The expropriation of the ruling elite will be a key step in overcoming the powerful connections of the gangs.

An insurrectionary mass movement in Haiti must develop a programme that can eradicate the misery that leads many to join the gangs.

Imperialist troops will defend the status quo of capitalism and the continued rule of the elites and their imperialist allies.

Overthrowing the entire capitalist system in Haiti is the task of the Haitian workers and poor themselves.

The time is now to build a united revolutionary organisation and to develop a revolutionary programme. This is the only way out of the crisis for the Haitian masses. •



Ireland: Varadkar steps down

The Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Leo Varadkar has unexpectedly stepped down after five years in office, vaguely citing "personal and political" reasons. This came as a shock to even his own colleagues in Fine Gael.

This surprise resignation has been portrayed as a "political earthquake" by the establishment and the media. Varadkar's premiership was hailed as one of stability and progress.

Varadkar has attempted to uphold this reputation, stating that he "led Ireland from unemployment to full employment, from budget deficit to budget surplus, from austerity to prosperity."

But this is a far cry from the daily reality experienced by Irish workers and youth, who face an unprecedented housing crisis, and with 670,000 living in poverty.

In truth, Varadkar's resignation has largely left the majority of people indifferent. They feel completely detached from the establishment parties, and see straight through the so-called 'progressive' credentials of the government.

This was revealed by the overwhelming defeat of two recent referenda organised by the government,

which sought to tinker with the wording of the constitution on the question of the family and care.

Ordinary people saw straight through this empty, cynical attempt to shore up support.

It is likely Varadkar will be replaced by the new Fine Gael leader Simon Harris, who is already lurching to the right, attempting to connect with the party's traditional reactionary base. This will be a recipe for further unpopularity.

The two-party system is in deep crisis, reflecting the impasse of Irish capitalism. This won't be resolved by a change at the top. The future heralds further instability and class struggle.

READ MORE

Portugal: Far right advances in elections

The Portuguese snap elections of 10 March were a political earthquake.

The left and centre-left parties that dominated the country's politics for almost ten years have suffered a painful defeat.

The conservative Democratic Alliance (AD) won the elections, although by a very narrow margin.

The real victor, however, was the far-right Chega party, which more than doubled its share of the vote.

Impressionists warn that this heralds a turn to the right in Portuguese society. In reality, this defeat is a product of the bankruptcy of the left reformists in power. It is a harbinger of instability and of major class battles to come.

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the Bwa Kale movement to his own powerful gang.

In late September 2023, as plans were being made to send Kenyan paramilitary police to Haiti as part of a United Nations mission, Chérizier called for an armed uprising to overthrow Henry's government.

By January 2024, the gangs were in control of around 80 percent of Port-au-Prince.

Henry overthrown

Henry's regime had become increasingly weak and isolated. He had assumed power in the wake of the assassination of Jovenel Moïse, but had never been elected.

His regime had no legitimacy in the eyes of the people, with the exception of the imperialists. The police and the military were outmaneuvered and outgunned by the gangs, and were unable to stem the rising tide of gang violence.

The last lifeline of the Henry regime was a potential international force organised by the United Nations, which US imperialism has been trying to organise for years to stabilise the situation.

political parties refusing to participate, and rival councils being declared.

Hands off Haiti

The situation rests on a knife's edge. The gangs have essentially taken control of the capital and are spreading their reign of terror throughout the rest of the country.

Following Henry's resignation, Kenya's plan to send paramilitary police as part of a UN security force is now on hold.

US imperialism is still looking to organise a force, but doesn't want to send its own troops. Canada, France, and other powers have already rejected the idea of sending police or troops.

As the situation continues to deteriorate, US imperialism will find it increasingly difficult to organise this international force.

Everybody can see that a UN security force would face an impossible situation, there is little financial reward and plenty of risk. A UN force would be forced to go to war with the gangs and prop up a non-existent regime.

The UN also has zero legitimacy in Haiti; UN troops involved in the MINUSTAH

THIS FORTNIGHT IN HISTORY ...



NATO formed

On 4 April 75 years ago, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was formed by various western powers. Its defenders herald it as a purely 'defensive' pact – a guardian of democracy, freedom, and other high-sounding western values.

In reality, NATO was founded not as an instrument of peace, but as a weapon to fight the Cold War against the Soviet bloc. It has remained a weapon of western imperialism ever since.

The military alliance – which gets three-quarters of its funding from the USA – has engaged in numerous aggressive interventions, including in Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Libya.

For decades, NATO has been expanding towards Russia's borders, and engaging in various provocations against Russia, culminating in the current bloody war in Ukraine.

Those on the left have no business supporting NATO. Communists must expose the predatory role of our own ruling class, and fight for revolutionary, working-class internationalism.

Learn more: communist.red/nato5

Falklands War breaks out

40 years ago, on 2 April 1982, war broke out between Argentina and the UK over the Falkland Islands.

The ruling classes of the two countries hypocritically justified the conflict with phrases about national freedoms, the interests of the Falklanders, etc.

In reality, as leading Marxist Ted Grant argued at the time, this was an imperialist war on both sides.

Just like today, the so-called 'Left', including the 'Communist' Party, responded to war with pacifist phrase-mongering, calling for the withdrawal of the British fleet, and even for the United Nations to step in!

Our tendency alone had a class-based, revolutionary position, calling for an internationalist struggle of British and Argentine workers to overthrow both the imperialists of both countries.

Read Ted Grant's pamphlet: communist.red/falklands5

Margaret Thatcher dies

To end on a positive note, on 8 April 2013, former Tory Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher kicked the bucket, eliciting joy and celebration from workers across these Isles and beyond.

There is not enough space in this issue to catalogue the crimes and villainies committed by the 'Iron Lady'. Suffice to say she was a faithful representative of a barbaric class and a barbaric system.

Read our obituary written at the time: communist.red/thatcher5

LAUNCH OF THE MANIFESTO OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

Our comrades are launching revolutionary communist parties across the world: from the USA to Switzerland. Join the communists in Britain for the founding congress of the RCP on 3-6 May.

Rob Sewell,
Editor of The Communist

The recent launch of the *Manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist International* marks a historic event. It is a clarion call to draw together the genuine communists of the world.

At the outset, the *Manifesto* deals not with secondary questions, but the fundamentals facing the revolutionary movement. It is being launched at a time when world capitalism finds itself in an existential crisis. This crisis is an expression that the system has reached its limits. Such situations are by no means unusual in history.

"Unable to carry society further", states the *Manifesto*, "it has now reached the point of no return".

Crisis

The present crisis is an existential crisis, expressed not only in the stagnation of the productive forces, but also in a general crisis of culture, morality, politics, and religion. A gulf has opened up in society as never before, between rich and poor, a symptom of the pervasive sickness of capitalism.

The system has become rotten ripe for overthrow. "Its eventual downfall is inevitable and cannot be avoided", explains the *Manifesto*. The bourgeois attempts to get out of the crisis only produce new insoluble contradictions.

"The 2008 financial crisis was a major turning point", it explains. "The truth is that world capitalism has never recovered from that crisis."

They have pushed the system far beyond its natural limits by flooding the world economy with liquidity. This, in turn created massive inflation and colossal debts.

"The global economy is faced with the prospect of a perfect storm in which one factor feeds upon another to produce a sharp downward spiral", explains the *Manifesto*.

We have entered an epoch of crisis, wars, collapse, and increasing misery.

The main causes of capitalist crises are, on the one hand, private ownership of the means of production and, on the other, the straitjacket of the national market, which is far too narrow to contain the productive forces that capitalism has created.

They were partially and for a time able to overcome the crisis through 'globalisation', the expansion of world trade and an intensification of the international division of labour. But this has now given way to protectionism. In the USA, it is expressed under the slogan of 'America First', where the rest are left far behind.

This, states the document, "has inevitably led to an enormous exacerbation of the contradictions between nations and the proliferation of military conflicts and protectionism".

Horror without end

As a consequence, instability reins everywhere. The violence of imperialism is expressed in terms of devastation, death, and destruction. There has never been such an unstable situation in history.

"The cold cruelty of US imperialism, and also its repulsive hypocrisy, was clearly exposed by the horrific events in Gaza", states the *Manifesto*. "It was an active participant in the atrocious massacre perpetrated on helpless men, women, and children by the monstrous Israeli regime."

There has been a major shift in world relationships between the powers, with the rise of some powers and the decline of others.

We see the rise of Turkey as one of the dominant powers in the Middle East. Russia and China, having entered the capitalist road, have emerged as formidable imperialist powers with a global reach. This brings them into direct conflict with American imperialism in regard to markets, spheres of influence, raw materials, and profitable investments.

"The wars in Ukraine and Gaza have provided graphic proof of the limits of the power of US imperialism", states the *Manifesto*.

The document refers to the threat of war, but explains that world war is ruled out for the present. The capitalists wage war for profit and gain, not for 'democracy' and such. In the age of nuclear weapons this would lead to mutual destruction.

Another decisive factor against such an outcome is the mass opposition to war, particularly (but not exclusively) in the USA, given recent experiences.

However, that certainly does not rule out 'small' wars, such as in Ukraine. Even then they have a major impact, increasing global instability. Gaza is also an example of this. The *Manifesto* quotes the words of Lenin: "capitalism is horror without end".

'Democracy' discredited

There is a crisis of bourgeois democracy. Instead of the rule of the majority we have the rule of a barely disguised plutocracy, of the bankers and capitalists. This reality is becoming obvious to many, where there is a contempt and rage against the ruling elite and its institutions.

"As the class struggle intensifies, these institutions will be increasingly exposed and lose whatever respect and authority they may once have possessed", explains the document.

The attack on democratic rights will intensify as the crisis intensifies. At a certain point, the ruling class will move towards a 'bonapartist' solution, that is to say, the installation of a 'strong man' to rule by the sword. However, given the balance of class forces, this could only come after a series of severe defeats of the working class.

Well before that, the working class will face many opportunities to take power.

Is there a risk of fascism?

The *Manifesto* correctly attacks those who hysterically warn of the dangers of fascism at every turn and who confuse what is happening.

The victory of right-wing populism here and there is not fascism, which is based on the mass mobilisation of the enraged petty bourgeois as a battering ram to destroy the workers' organisations.

The ruling class burnt its fingers with fascism in the 1930s, and will not lightly repeat the experience.

Above all, the changed balance of forces worldwide means that the social reserves of reaction are far weaker than in the 1930s, and the specific weight of the working class is far greater. The peasantry has largely disappeared in the advanced capitalist countries. White-collar professionals have drawn closer to the proletariat and become unionised.

The students, who in the 1920s and 1930s provided the shock troops for fascism, have swung sharply to the left and are open to revolutionary ideas.

"The bourgeoisie finds itself faced with the most serious crisis in its history, but because of the enormous strengthening

of the working class, it is unable to quickly move in the direction of open reaction", explains the *Manifesto*.

Capitulation of reformists

The crisis facing mankind is a crisis of leadership, wrote Trotsky. This sums up the situation today.

The right-wing reformists have gone over completely to capitalism, which is no surprise.

However, the experience of the left-reformists has been just as lamentable. They too have capitulated to the pressures of capitalism. We saw this with Tsipras and

Syriza in Greece. The same process can be seen with Podemos in Spain, in the USA with Bernie Sanders, and in Britain with Jeremy Corbyn.

In all these cases, these leaders aroused the hopes of the masses, but then dashed them. This arose from their extreme political weakness.

They believe they can reform capitalism, but in doing so they capitulate to the pressures and laws of capitalism.

Instead of 'capitalism', they talk vaguely about 'neoliberalism' – that is to say, 'bad' capitalism, as opposed to 'nice' capitalism – although they never say exactly what this imaginary nice capitalism is supposed to be.

Their refusal to break with the system, inevitably means they search for an accommodation with the ruling class. This explains their obstinate refusal to break with the right wing – the open agents of the ruling class inside the labour movement – which they try to justify on the grounds of the need to maintain unity.

The logic of left-reformism always leads them to capitulate to the right. However, when

the right gains control, they do not display the same timidity, but immediately launch a vicious witch-hunt against the left.

"Thus, cowardice here is not a question of the personal character of this or that individual. It is an inseparable part of the political DNA of left reformism", explains the *Manifesto*.

Ideological struggle

While the communists fight against all oppression under capitalism, we utterly reject identity politics, which, under the guise of defending the rights of a particular group, plays a reactionary and divisive role that ultimately weakens the unity of the working class and provides invaluable assistance to the ruling class.

The labour movement has become infected with all these alien ideas, which prove to be a most effective weapon in the hands of the bureaucracy in its struggle against the most militant class fighters.

Lenin laid stress on the need for communists to fight on all fronts – not just the economic and political front, but also the ideological front. We stand firmly on the solid foundation of Marxist theory and the philosophy of dialectical materialism.



This stands in complete contradiction with philosophical idealism in all its forms: whether the open, undisguised mysticism of religion, or the cynical, disguised and no-less-poisonous mysticism of postmodernism.

Communists stand firmly on the ground of class politics and defend the unity of the working class above all divisions of race, colour, gender, language, or religion.

"The only requirement for joining us", explains the *Manifesto*, "is that you are prepared and willing to fight for the only cause that can offer genuine freedom, equality, and genuinely human relations between men and women: the sacred cause of the fight to emancipate the working class."

Shift in consciousness

The era of class peace has vanished. In the trade unions, what is needed is a leadership based upon a full-blooded militancy and a revival of the class struggle. These organisations therefore need to be transformed from top to bottom.

The struggle against reformism does not mean that we are opposed to reforms. We do not criticise the union leaders because they fight for reforms, but on the contrary – because they do not fight at all.

"They seek accommodation with the bosses, avoid taking militant action, and when they are forced into it by the pressure of the rank-and-file, they do everything in their power to limit strike action and reach a rotten compromise in order to end the movement as soon as possible.

"Communists will fight for even the smallest reforms that represent an improvement to the workers' living standards and rights. But under present conditions, the struggle for meaningful reforms can only succeed to the degree that it acquires the widest and most revolutionary scope."

The working class is the only genuinely revolutionary class in society. It is the duty of the communists to make conscious the unconscious or semi-conscious striving of the working class to change society. Only the working class has the necessary power to overthrow the dictatorship of the bankers and capitalists.

The masses are desperately trying to find a way out of the crisis. And they are testing one option after another. One government, party and leader after another is put to the test and found wanting and discarded.

But arising out of this, we see a change in consciousness. It is not the kind of slow, gradual change one might expect, but sharp and abrupt changes in consciousness. This especially affects the youth.

As a result, we see a growing interest towards communist ideas among the youth. These young people call themselves communists, although many have never read the *Communist Manifesto* and have no knowledge of scientific socialism.

But the betrayals of the 'Left' have made the very word 'socialism' stink in their nostrils. It does not resonate any more with the best people. They say, "we want communism. Only that and nothing less than that."

Is the time right for a Revolutionary Communist International?

The ruling class and its strategists look with dread towards an uncertain and turbulent future. The scene is being set for revolutionary explosions everywhere.

It is in this context, that the need for a revolutionary party with a clean banner and clear revolutionary policies is posed. This must be a world party.

Ever since the Stalinist degeneration of the Communist International, no such organisation has existed.

The *Manifesto* boldly declares: "Now is the time to launch a Revolutionary Communist International!"

It is rooted in a clear understanding of the objective situation.

There has been a transformation in the outlook, especially of the youth. Poll after poll from Britain, the USA, Australia and other countries provide us with a very clear indication that the idea of communism is spreading rapidly. The potential for communism is enormous.

The task as set out in the *Manifesto* is to make this potential a reality by giving it an organised expression.

"By organising the vanguard in a genuine Revolutionary Communist Party, by fusing it with a disciplined Bolshevik organisation, educating it in Marxist ideas, and training it in Lenin's methods, we will build a force that can play a key role in the development of the socialist revolution in the coming period", states the *Manifesto*.

That is our task. We must overcome all obstacles in order to achieve it.

Back to Lenin

Stalin carried out a political counterrevolution against Bolshevism, basing himself on a privileged caste of officials that rose to power in a period of the ebb of the revolution following Lenin's death. In order to consolidate his counterrevolutionary dictatorship, Stalin was obliged to murder all of Lenin's comrades and a huge number of other genuine communists. He destroyed the Communist International.

"Stalinism and Bolshevism, far from being identical, are not only different in kind: they are mutually exclusive and mortal enemies, separated by a river of blood."

The leaders of the so-called Communist Parties of today are 'communist' in name only. The leaders of those parties long ago abandoned the ideas of Lenin and Bolshevism. We say: Back to Lenin!

Flexible tactics

Of course, our immediate task is not to win the masses, which is something entirely beyond our present capabilities. Our aim is to win over the most-advanced and class-conscious elements. Only in this way can we find a road to the masses.

The new generation of workers and youth are looking for a way out of the impasse. The best elements have understood that the only solution lies in taking the road of socialist revolution. But their impatience can lead them to make mistakes.

That is why the questions of strategy and tactics must occupy a central place in the considerations of the communists. Both Lenin and Trotsky had a very clear idea about the relationship of the communist vanguard to the mass reformist organisations.

"We must turn our backs resolutely on this sterile sectarianism and face boldly towards the working class", states the *Manifesto*. "By patiently explaining communist policies to the masses and placing demands on the reformist leaders, it is possible to win the reformist workers over to communism."

Our task is not to snipe at them from the sidelines, but to go through the experience with them, side-by-side, helping them to draw the lessons and finding the way forward, as the Bolsheviks did in 1917.

Build a bridge to the workers!

"We must establish a dialogue with the working class, in which we are seen,

not as alien elements or enemies, but as comrades in struggle against a common enemy – Capital. We must prove to them the superiority of communism, not in words but in deeds."

We must base ourselves on flexible tactics, as did the Bolsheviks. These are determined by concrete conditions. Under certain circumstances, it cannot be ruled out that it may be necessary to send all our forces into the reformist organisations in order to win over the leftward-moving workers to a firm revolutionary position. At the present stage, however, that is not posed.

Even as an independent revolutionary party, the communists are duty-bound to face towards the mass organisations of the working class, pursuing a united front tactic wherever possible, in order to find a road to the masses. In this, we are guided by the advice of Lenin and the theses of the first four congresses of the Communist International.

While the Communists will intervene in the class struggle using the appropriate transitional demands, such a list of demands would be out of place in a manifesto of this nature.

The *Manifesto* concludes with the words:

"The communists fight for the total emancipation of the working class, for freedom from oppression and agony of toil. This can only be achieved by the destruction of the bourgeois state, the expropriation of the means of production and the introduction of socialist planning under democratic workers' control and management.

Upon this the future of humanity depends. In the words of the great Irish Marxist James Connolly:

"For our demands most moderate are, We only want the earth."

Under communism, for the first time in human history, the doors will be flung open to the masses to really grasp the world of culture which has been denied to them. The road will be open for an undreamed-of blossoming of art, music and culture, such as the world has never seen.

For a new world, in which life will acquire an entirely new meaning. And for the first time, men and women will be able to raise themselves to their true stature on the basis of complete equality. It will be humankind's leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom.

No longer will men and women have to direct their eyes to the clouds in search of a better life after death. They will experience a new world, in which life itself, purged of oppression, exploitation and injustice, will acquire an entirely new meaning.

That is the wonderful thing for which we are fighting: a paradise in this world." •



CANADA



UNITED STATES



SPAIN



DENMARK



SWITZERLAND

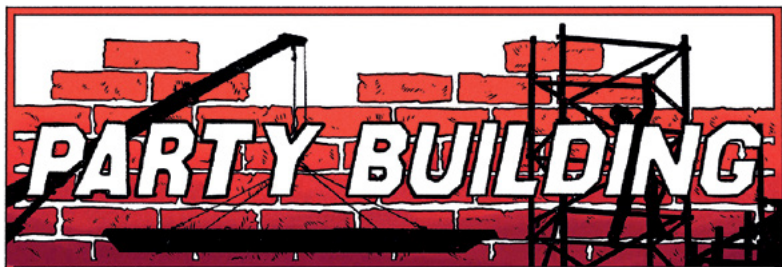


SWEDEN

10-15 June 2024

WORLD SCHOOL OF COMMUNISM

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REALISING POTENTIAL

With just under six weeks to go until the founding congress of the Revolutionary Communist Party, our comrades are stepping up recruitment to reach our target of 1,400 members.

The excitement and enthusiasm of our comrades for building a fighting revolutionary party is palpable. Each issue we've been reporting on fantastic growth across the country, and right now we are awash with hundreds of contacts who want to join!

The efforts of our comrades have proven that there is no place we cannot build in, provided we have the correct ideas. But there is still much work to be done for us to fulfil our potential!

The reports in this issue have several key lessons for communists looking to organise today.

Firstly, our newest recruits are almost always the most enthusiastic and energetic recruiters, and we should learn to trust their suggestions and ideas. It's the initiative of these layers that will help us reach a new audience.

And secondly, this must be combined with systematic political education, as the Hackney branch has shown.

Marxist theory is the guide to all of our activities. If we educate our new recruits not just on the organisational tasks of building, but in the *political* ideas of Marxism (and how to speak to new contacts about them), then we'll go on to achieve great things!

If you're reading this and want to join us in the fight to build a revolutionary fighting party that is capable of overthrowing capitalism, get in touch today, and tell us how you can help us to build!

Cardiff

We realised the need to overcome our somewhat passive growth and ensure every comrade is an active recruiter. This will exponentially increase our rate of growth, as well as better involve new recruits immediately in building new groups across the city.

To do this, we're trying a new model – taking three comrades from existing branches (a mix of new and experienced) and immediately setting up a new cell, in a specific part of town or focused around a particular workplace. Contacts are being specifically invited to help set these up.

On this basis we recruited a college student, a Ukrainian refugee who came here with his family at the start of the war, specifically by appealing to him to help us build this new cell. He's very excited about this and is already coming with ideas of how to find more college students to recruit.

This is a prototype for building which, if successful, could be repeated three or four more times immediately with the number of experienced comrades in the district.

What initiatives are you taking to build the party? What lessons have you drawn from your successes and challenges?

Send in your reports for the next issue at communist.red/submit

across Britain.

New Cross (London)

New Cross has made two recruits in a week, with a third very close to joining! This came after we had a period of difficulty with recruitment and consolidation. Before branch, we had a contact meeting with an alumni from Goldsmiths uni involved in the occupation.

Max, who's only just recently joined, fervently explained the need for a fighting party like ours, saying that what won him over was our branch's blend of theory and practice – that we weren't just another discussion club.

He was drawn in originally by our posters, but it's the paper that's kept him around. He's not stopped heaping praise on the paper, eagerly joining us

We've recieved 396 applications to join us over the last three weeks!

So get recruiting!



The very next day we received a write-in from a worker who had come across one of these stickers outside their place of work. They expressed a desire to join a "serious revolutionary organisation", so that is what we offered.

The contact was called immediately and plans were made to meet in Warrington in the week to poster and talk about building a cell across the area. The contact was met and given materials, and has since joined on strong subs.

Matching the contact's energy and being bold and open about what was expected proved to be a successful approach here.

We met the two new and determined recruits again to discuss perspectives, recruitment, and the upcoming congress. Using their initiative, they are planning an open Palestine meeting in St Helens soon.

In a matter of just 12 days we have developed a cell from scratch using a bold attitude towards recruitment. We've now received another write-in from St Helens!

This area, of course, is no exception, but a snapshot of the potential that can be found

get the RCP a teach-out session, telling us that many of these students are quite open to Marxist ideas.

New Cross, having learned from the loss of some comrades, is taking seriously the need to educate these new layers. This was one of our previous shortcomings, however we're looking forward to merging with this radicalised layer at Goldsmiths and New Cross.

Hackney (London)

Hackney had our biggest branch ever recently, with one new recruit made at the weekend's aggregate, and three more contacts attending – all of whom said they would like to join!

This burst of growth can be attributed to two things: a few of these contacts have been on the periphery, but have been pushed by recent events into asking 'how' should we act, instead of 'should we'.

The other factor is one comrade has been reading a lot, increasing his political level, and it gave him the confidence and motivation to get in touch with and explain the importance of revolution to people in his circles.

It has reminded me of a fundamental lesson – that in times of apparent stagnation, turning to theory to give us revolutionary lessons and drive is one of the best things we can do.

The next step is to get these new layers educated and reading so that they can start to repeat the process!

Barnsley

Two comrades recently visited Barnsley to follow up on a college contact. When we arrived he bought £30 of material and will be setting up his paper and membership subs ASAP.

We went stickering together around Barnsley, focusing on the two colleges, the uni, and the arts centre. We put up some posters as well. There are no other stickers or posters anywhere, and the colleges are massive.

The new recruit has an in at one of the colleges through his old philosophy teacher who got him into Marxism. Through this he could get an invite to speak at the other colleges too. I plan to call regularly, and go there to help with a college paper sale. I can go across for their first cell meeting when he recruits someone.

The Barnsley comrade will be visiting one of the Sheffield branches tomorrow to meet the comrades and discuss the congress documents. But I emphasised the most important thing is to get

things going in Barnsley rather than seeing himself as a Sheffield comrade.

Reading

After a difficult period, Reading has recently recruited three new comrades. The key lesson is to instil the urgency in recruiting and getting new comrades involved.

All three comrades were write-ins, and I contacted them as soon as I'd gotten their details. One of them attended branch within an hour of the call.

In recruiting, we've been very clear about what we're building and why we



need the help of new comrades. It is a necessary step to let new comrades take the reins and cut their teeth on organising.

New comrades make their own mistakes, but that's an important part of learning.

Treating branch meetings as what they are – the meetings of a fighting organisation – has been crucial to conveying to both comrades and contacts that we are serious about what we are fighting for. This means weekly reviewing each item on the agenda and its purpose.

The next steps are to get comrades more comfortable with agitating for the paper on the streets, and carrying out contact work. So we will be doing several training workshops for new comrades and contacts on this, as well as writing a lead-off and articles for *The Communist*.

Reading has also trialed using the eye-catching designs and slogans from the front and back pages of old issues of *The Communist* by sticking them up as posters. I believe part of our explosion of growth is due to bolder and more expansive 'advertising' for the RCP: word on the street is people have seen our posters before they approach us on stalls.

Bristol

This week, Bristol 2 branch experimented with bus stop sales! We were met with many people who were interested, selling five papers and gaining several contacts.

On the walk to branch, enthused by our success, I held up my paper and spoke to another man walking beside me. He was interested in what I told him and agreed to come with us to branch!

He contributed well and enjoyed the meeting, picking up a copy of the Leninist handbook to go over with a few of the newer comrades. We took his contact details and will try to get him involved!

Kingston

This weekend, I made a trip to a bookshop. As soon as I stepped outside, I was swept up in a Palestine protest! Fortunately I had copies of *The Communist* in my bag. I dived in, put forward the revolutionary program of the RCP and ended up selling eight papers and making two contacts. Always be prepared!





Rob Sewell

As previously reported, the mis-named 'Communist' Party of Britain (CPB), worried about the impact we are making, issued a statement falsely accusing us of coming from an "anti-communist" tradition.

We have in fact consistently defended genuine communism. But we reject the tradition of Stalinism, which played – and still plays – a disastrous role in the workers' movement.

From 'ultra-leftism'...

In the last issue of *The Communist* we dealt with the 'Communist' Party's insane ultra-left period between 1928 and 1934, which played a pernicious role in splitting the German working class. This directly led to the victory of Hitler and prepared the way for the Second World War.

Despite this catastrophe, the Stalinists maintained their policy was 100% correct. They said the Hitler regime would soon collapse, to be followed by their turn in power! In reality, the party was smashed and its members were being led to the concentration camps.

For the first six months, Stalin hoped to keep on good terms with Hitler, but Hitler rebuffed him. Stalin therefore began to look to France and the other 'democracies'.

...to the 'Popular Front'

From denouncing everyone, especially the Social Democrats, as 'fascists', Stalin now shifted 180 degrees to seek a broad alliance that included bourgeois and even right-wing groups. This new Popular Front 'line' was adopted at the Seventh (and last) Congress of the Communist International (Comintern) in 1935.

The Popular Front was the opposite of Lenin's *United Front*, which envisioned a bloc of workers' organisations, made with concrete aims. It was in effect to 'march separately, strike together'.

In contrast, the Popular Front was a replica of the class-collaborationist position of the Mensheviks in Russia, which Lenin attacked. It was a case of 'march together, and get cut down separately'.

It acted as a trap for the working class. So as to avoid alienating their new 'friends', the bourgeois liberals were effectively given a veto over the actions of the workers' parties.

Patriotism

In Stalin's interview with Roy Howard (1 March 1936), he abandoned any pretence of Marxist analysis and simply dropped class concepts for those of "the friends of peace" and the "enemies of peace". This is much in the same way as the present-day Stalinists refer to 'peace-loving' nations, etc.

When Stalin was asked about the USSR's "plans and intentions for bringing about a world revolution", he replied that "we never had such plans and intentions". The idea, he said, they had was "a tragi-comic misunderstanding".

'Socialism in one country' was being interpreted as 'revolution in no country'.

STALINISM AND 'POPULAR FRONTISM': A TRAP FOR THE WORKING CLASS

The 'Communist' Parties had become mouthpieces for Moscow's foreign policy, and adapted their policies accordingly.

Patriotism was now being fostered in the Communist Parties, with the French Stalinist leader Thorez offering his hand to the fascist Croix de Feu on a 'patriotic', anti-German basis. The French tricolour replaced the red flag. In Britain, the CPB was to offer a similar appeal to Churchill's Tories.

Today, patriotism and 'sovereignty' permeates the nationalist programme of the *British Road to Socialism* of the CPB.

France

The radicalisation of the 1930s led, under the influence of the Stalinists, to the formation of Popular (Coalition) Front governments in France and Spain, which acted as a brake on the revolutionary movements of the working class.

In June 1936, following the election of the Popular Front government in France, two million workers took part in a spontaneous general strike. Factory occupations spread like wildfire. It was the mightiest movement of the French working class since the Commune.



Mass Communist Party demonstration at Clerkenwell Green, 1942. In the pictures surrounding Lenin's banner: Roosevelt, Chiang Kai-shek, Stalin, and Churchill.

"From the start", explained Jacques Fauves, "the movement assumed a two-fold revolutionary aspect, attacking both authority and property".

The leaders of the trade unions and the workers' parties were taken completely by surprise and sought to undermine the movement. This included the so-called Communist Party.

"We are concerned about two things", stated the French Communist Party (CP) leader, Duclos, "first, to avoid any disorder, and second, to get talks going as soon as may be, with a view to a quick settlement of the conflict."

At its height, the Communists of Paris were assembled and ordered to use their influence to end the strike:

"While it is important to lead well a movement for economic demands, it is necessary to know how to end it. There is at present no question of taking power," stated Thorez.

The party put forward the slogan: "The People's Front is not the revolution."

Betrayal

The revolutionary movement of the French workers was betrayed. The Socialists and 'Communists', in alliance with the bourgeois liberals, acted as a

colossal brake, which sabotaged the developing revolution.

This policy was not, of course, decided by the French 'Communist' leaders alone, but was the policy of the Comintern and Stalin.

The French CP leaders acted to betray in the same way as they betrayed the revolutionary general strike of 1968.

The bourgeois liberals (the Radicals) acted as a Trojan horse within the Popular Front, who represented the interests of big business.

But rather than leading the workers to power, the Socialist and 'Communist' leaders used their prestige to act as a cover for the liberals. They could not allow anything to frighten away their new 'allies', as they argued this would play into the hands of the fascists. But this prepared the way for the defeat of the movement.

Spanish revolution

Trotsky correctly described the People's Front as a "strike-breaking conspiracy".

The victory of the Popular Front in Spain in 1936, also propelled the masses into action. They took control of the streets, and occupied the closed factories and estates, without waiting for the government to act.

But again, the Popular Front government, with the connivance of the Stalinists, acted as a massive brake.

When the workers seized the factories in Catalonia following the fascist rebellion of General Franco, the 'Communists' held them back. They adopted a two-stage theory: first win the war against Franco, they said, then the workers could talk about socialism later.

Once again, this was a direct reflection of the Menshevik 'two-stage theory', which Lenin attacked.

The real choice was not between a fascist dictatorship or a bourgeois democratic republic, but fascism or proletarian revolution.

The only way to defeat Franco was to give land to the peasants, and factories to the workers. That meant carrying out the socialist revolution and waging a revolutionary war against Franco.

But the Spanish 'Communist' Party, under orders from Stalin, vehemently opposed this and became the bulwark behind the lines of the bourgeois counter-revolution. The Stalinists became the greatest defenders of 'law and order' and private property.

They deliberately sabotaged the Spanish Revolution on the orders of Moscow. Stalin betrayed the revolution to smooth the way for a diplomatic deal with the capitalist 'democracies'. But it only prepared the way for the victory of Franco.

Throughout this period, British 'Communist' Party leaders justified every twist and turn demanded by Moscow. The CPB became a willing tool of its foreign policy. This clearly demonstrates the gulf between genuine communism – on which the RCP stands – and Stalinism. ●

JIM BROOKSHAW: 65 YEARS OF BEING A REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST

Jim Brookshaw joined the Communist Party (CP) in 1959, and has remained a revolutionary ever since. He was won over by the ideas of Marxism, and the seriousness and friendliness of the local party, who consistently showed themselves as real class fighters.

Getting stuck into all manner of campaigns, Jim was soon asked to move down to Brighton and start building the Young Communist League (YCL).

From two comrades in Brighton, he quickly built up a group of ten solid communists around him. The comrades sold the youth paper *Challenge*, organised country walks to discuss theory, intervened in the workers movement, and organised against the remnants of Moseley and the increasing presence of the National Front.

Communist Parties in crisis

For his work Jim had soon risen to the ranks of National Chairman of the YCL; but one day he encountered a tall young man selling some obscure Trotskyist paper: the *Militant*.

Intrigued, Jim approached and began discussing. Jim said bluntly "Why are you wasting your time on a tin pot organisation when the Communist Party has tens of thousands of members?"

The man replied in a thick Welsh accent: "Well it's not all about the members you know! It's about your politics. What do you discuss? What ideas do you have?" That was the first time Jim met Alan Woods.

Alan's group struck Jim differently. He spoke to Alan for hours, even going to his flat for dinner.

These people were not the raving madmen he had imagined, accusing rank-and-file CP workers of betraying the workers movement. They were not petty-bourgeois dilettantes, who only sold the paper out of guilt or treated branch meetings like a student soiree. There was actually very little Jim could find to disagree on.

But it takes more than a single conversation to break a man from his party.

A few years had passed by, and Jim was now in London. The crisis in the Communist Parties was becoming apparent.

The invasion of Hungary in 1956, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Sino-Soviet Split, and the increasing degeneration of the Communist Parties into national reformist organisations was taking place just as Trotsky had predicted three decades prior.

Jim saw this first hand whilst part of the YCL's international conference. Young comrades from across the world were taking part, but as the representatives from Czechoslovakia tried to enter the meeting hall they were barred by Moscow officials.

When Jim intervened and pointed out the YCL was opposed to the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the bureaucrat retorted "What invasion? There is no invasion!" and proceeded to give a long list of silly threats.

Trotsky was right!

All of this had encouraged the Militant to begin entry work within the YCL to win over its best members. A leading member of the CP, Monty Johnstone, decided to grab the nettle by the thorns and publish a theoretical attack on Trotskyism.

Alan Woods and Ted Grant welcomed this and responded with the book *Lenin and Trotsky - What They Really Stood For*.

Jim first came across this text by accident. Walking through London, he passed some Militant supporters who were holding the pamphlet in their hand. "What do you have there?" Jim asked.

"Just this little booklet, you wouldn't be interested", the members of Militant replied playfully. Not to allow any unjustified smugness, Jim cornered them and made them sell him a copy of the booklet so he could demolish their arguments. Coming home to his wife he loudly proclaimed "This will be a load of bollocks."

Instead, Jim was stunned. The crises of the Communist Parties, the limitations of the Russian Revolution, the requirement for internationalism were all revealed as clear as day within a few hundred pages.

In the evening he turned to his wife and said, "You've got to read this."

"Why?" she replied.

"Because I can no longer be a member of the Communist Party."

A few days later, Jim invited Alan and Ted to his home. Two days passed of almost non-stop discussion and questioning. By the end, all questions were settled: Jim was now a Trotskyist.

From Militant to the RCP

Ideas move people to fight. Even in the late 1960s, the membership of the Communist Party was around 30,000. Militant had barely 1% of that membership, with just two branches in London, and not the most solid ones at that.

But it was the correct ideas that kept Jim going.

The Labour Party, the Communist Party, Militant, and Socialist Appeal, have all been the political home of Jim at various points throughout his life.

Now he eagerly awaits the founding of the Revolutionary Communist Party.

A proud communist for 65 years, the fact the genuine ideas of communism – the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, and Grant – are being sought by a new generation of working class militants, shows that a better future, a communist future, is possible. ●



THE ASSASSINATION OF FRED HAMPTON:

'HOW THE FBI AND THE CHICAGO POLICE MURDERED A BLACK PANTHER' BY JEFFREY HAAS

Wade Tucker,
Liverpool Communists

Fred Hampton – for a time the deputy national chairman of the Black Panther Party (BPP) – stands out amongst his contemporaries. Armed with his charisma, sharp mind and tongue, and voracious appetite for political literature, he became the best figure to emerge from the BPP, all before his murder by the state at the age of 21.

Relatively little has been written about Hampton, and his murder robbed him of the chance to build his own body of work. So, when I found this book, the closest thing to a biography, I had to read it.

What made Hampton?

Hampton was not born the revolutionary we know him as today. In the four years up to 1968, Hampton went from campaigning in his high school for allowing black homecoming queens, to openly calling for revolution as the chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panthers.

Haas captures Hampton's infectious revolutionary zeal and commitment to political development. He trained himself to become a skilled orator and spent two hours each morning reading before facing his day; all while under increasing harassment from the police.

Hampton read eclectically, stating "[I] take things from Mao Tse-Tung and Martin Luther King or anybody else applicable to what we are after". Unfortunately, Haas is not interested in appraising these various ideas' effectiveness in building a revolutionary party.

Tackling oppression

Nonetheless, Hampton was politically advanced compared to his contemporaries. He understood that the struggle against racism was a class question, remarking that so long as the black nationalists "[are] dealing with a race thing, they'll never be involved in a revolution".

Hampton put class unity into practice when he formed the Rainbow Coalition, which sought to bring together various groups struggling against police brutality and poverty.

Meanwhile, in seeking to unite workers and the oppressed, Hampton was ready to stand up against sexism within the BPP. West Coast Panthers visiting Chicago requested 'sisters' be sent to their hotel. Hampton told them "Panther women in Chicago are working

on Panther programmes, not as whores for Panther leaders."

Role of the state

As the attorney representing Hampton's family, Haas is well-placed to deliver an intimate detailing of the actions of the state. Far from just physical repression (and murder) the capitalist state used its laws, and any manner of chicanery, to besmear and be rid of Hampton.

Haas' book does have its limitations. Hampton's legacy is reduced to a vague fight for 'justice', 'equality', and 'freedom'. This wooliness reflects Haas' illusions in the legal system to deliver justice; the same repressive state machine that spawned Hampton's murderers.

Luckily, Haas provides ample room for Hampton's own words on revolutionary socialism to shine through.

Legacy

Sadly we never got to see Fred Hampton develop into the great revolutionary that he could have become. Although his ideas were ultimately eclectic, and even at times reformist, he was denied the opportunity to fully develop them. It was his revolutionary potential that struck fear into the hearts of the ruling class, and that is why they killed him.

We can honour the life of our martyred comrade by learning from the inspiring legacy he established, despite his short life. Part of this means learning from his life and fighting for what he paid the ultimate sacrifice: the building of a genuine revolutionary party. •



ROYAL BALLET: DANSES CONCERTANTES / DIFFERENT DRUMMER / REQUIEM

Sylvia Léo, Stratford Communists

The Royal Ballet is currently showing their homage ballet to Kenneth MacMillan; one of the best choreographers of the twentieth century.

MacMillan was from a working-class Scottish family, and his works often touched on the theme of feeling like an outsider in the world of ballet.

The show has three of MacMillan's one-act projects.

Danses concertantes was his first and acclaimed work. It is a display of primary colours, and the modernised technique from the Russian emigres, like George Balanchine; whose technique was pushed out by the tide of 'socialist realism' under the Stalinists.

Pointed fingers, straight arms, parallel positions, and pirouettes abound; a sharp contrast to the round and open classical technique.

The second act is *Different Drummer*, a harrowingly masterful adaptation of George Büchner's 'working class' tragedy *Woyzeck*. Woyzeck is a soldier during the first world war who participates in a scientific experiment and performs menial tasks for his sergeant to support his family.

Under these conditions, Woyzeck's life falls apart as he is haunted by the war and all its consequences. The class differences of the characters is

shown through the colour and quality of the fabric in their costumes, as Woyzeck toils naked across a grey, run down stage.

Lastly, *Requiem* is a piece in honour of John Cranko, a collaborator of MacMillan's. As you'd expect from the title it deals with death and grief. The number depicts a corps (a ballet company) dealing with the loss of their leader (Cranko was directing the Stuttgart ballet at the time of his death).

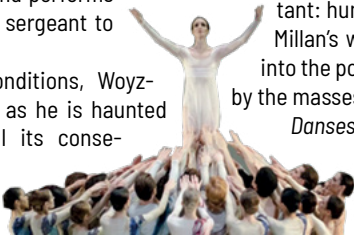
The score, the *Fauré Requiem*, is performed live by the talented voices of the Opera House.

A minimalist stage shows the corps growing out of sync, failing to land grand leaps, and mourning their much-loved leader.

The simplistic costumes showcase the movements and the weight on the dancer's bodies. sharp cuts between variations, and heavy running onto stage, showcase an amateurishness of the corps without Cranko.

MacMillan took ballet beyond fairytales and used the language of dance to express something much more important: humanity and struggle. MacMillan's works are a mere glimpse into the potential of art transformed by the masses and vice versa. •

Danses concertantes / Different Drummer / Requiem is on at the Royal Opera House until 13 April.



WHAT WE'RE LISTENING TO:



THE MARY WALLOPERS

Very lively and very political songs, with Palestine flags and free Palestine chants ringing around. Huge roars from the crowd for lyrics like 'the rich are fucking cunts'. This wasn't only a brilliant concert musically, but I actually left feeling inspired too. I'd really encourage comrades to give them a listen!

Will Collins, York Communists



POETRY

In Carnage

Situations like a crime scene – fire, ashes, debris. Villains arrive to the party, what is in it for me?

A pair of shoes for a footless child, that will fix everything. Stoking the stores of our rage, coiled taut like a spring.

Where we see blood they see money. In carnage they trust.

Charlotte Bowes, York Communists

NYE: HOW THE NHS WAS BORN

Deep Sohelia,
Barking Communists

Nye details the life of Nye Bevan (played by Michael Sheen), documenting his personal struggles and the founding of the NHS.

The play is far from a dry historical piece. Sheen pumps it full of heart-warming, childlike wonder.

The play begins in the South Wales NUM library. Here Bevan practically leaps about the stage, astounded by the ideas they have available to him, including the works of Marx and Engels.

Bevan is shown as an honest trade unionist, driven by the appalling conditions in the mines where he worked as a teenager.

His dedication strains his home life, as Bevan neglects his father who is dying from black lung. The scene depicting his father's final moments is particularly harrowing. It alone justifies a trip to see the play.



Michael Sheen talking to a reader of *The Communist* after a performance of *Nye*. He offered his solidarity to the workers of Port Talbot.

CAPRICORN / GEN-X COPS BY VAMPIRE WEEKEND

Olive Ruadh,
Walthamstow Communists

Indie-pop ensemble Vampire Weekend have unveiled their latest EP, *Capricorn / Gen-X Cops*, offering a tantalising preview of their upcoming album, *Only God Was Above Us*.

This EP marks a notable evolution for the group, transitioning from the playful eclectic indie pop of their earlier works to more introspective and politically charged.

Frontman Ezra Koenig has delved into various political themes in past albums. Notably, the superficiality of radical politics on elite university campuses, the lasting consequences of the Balfour declaration, and his discontent with the American political landscape.

This was best exemplified in tracks like 'Harmony Hall', 'Finger Back', and 'Jerusalem, New York, Berlin'.

The newest EP continues this trajectory, opening with the solemn single 'Capricorn', which reflects on humanity's inability to reach past heights and the feeling of abandonment by God. Koenig's contemplation of solutions, from striving for wealth to seeking solace in the

The play goes through Bevan's life, including the creation of the NHS, which is shown as the product of his sheer will. This forms the play's biggest myth.

In reality, after World War Two the ruling class were faced with a revolutionary wave. Millions of discontented workers who had fought and seen their comrades die now demanded improvements to their conditions. The Attlee government was forced to grant concessions to save the system from itself.

On one hand Nye depicts Bevan as a working-class firebrand, delivering critical speeches in parliament of Churchill's leadership during the war. But it also looks favourably on his 'pragmatism' when he votes to keep Churchill in his post.

Following his evolution from the revolutionary ideas of Marx to a reformist trying to fix capitalism, the play ends with the usual saccharine lip service about how wonderful an institution the NHS is.

But Bevan's vision – for a health service available to anyone, anywhere, free at the point of service – was never fully realised. And since capitalism was left intact by multiple Labour governments, the NHS has been undermined year on year to the point where it is close to collapse.

We cannot wait for more ministers (like Bevan) to save us, but must use our own strength to defend and extend the NHS – to each according to need. •

Nye is showing at the National Theatre in London until 11 May, and broadcasting in cinemas now.

afterlife, reflects a broader sense of frustration and resignation.

With its equal number of lines, and repetition at the end of each stanza, the song is reminiscent of a hymn, befitting its theme of religious contemplation.

In contrast, 'Gen-X Cops' confronts the harsh realities of the present, critiquing the broken promises of the post-Soviet globalised world and the perpetuation of suffering by those in power.

Koenig acknowledges the shortcomings of movements of the millennial generation like Occupy and Bernie: "Each generation makes its own apology".

Yet, amidst this resignation, a call to action emerges in the lyrics of 'Capricorn': a plea for those who envision a future free from exploitation and suffering to unite and take an active role in shaping it: "Who builds the future?" he asks.

We answer: the future for humanity can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of this "eternally obscene" system by the working class united across generations. •





LETTERS

Send us your comments, views, and experiences at communist.red/submit

Neutrality

Working in the Civil Service, I was recently given "impartiality training", where it was explained to me that I must not show any preference towards Labour, the Tories, the Lib Dems or any other capitalist party while conducting my role.

Fortunately this will not be difficult for me. As a revolutionary communist, I despise them all!

Andy, Kingsway Communists

Labour's 'democracy'

The Labour Party has become embroiled in yet another scandal to get rid of parliamentary candidates who have even the slightest whiff of socialist credentials.

Fresh on the heels of meddling and manoeuvring to get rid of Apsana Begum in Tower Hamlets last year, Labour in East Croydon are now under investigation by the Met Police for vote rigging and tampering with members' personal data to allegedly favour right-wing candidates in the constituency!

The Labour Party under Starmer is clearly no friend of the working class and the party establishment will resort to any dirty tactics to keep its grip on power at the expense of genuine socialist policies.

The only party that represents the interests of the working class and not the bosses is the RCP!

Eve Rickson,
Newham Communists

'Unfixable' problems

I recently got a very hearty dose of schadenfreude from an article in the *Financial Times*. Janan Ganesh concludes: "Some problems can't be solved, just mitigated."

He lists off a series of endemic problems with Britain today: Westminster failing to develop anything outside of the home counties, collapsing birth rates in the first-world, the refugee crisis and austerity.

There are only two solutions, both of which are not possible. "With high public debt, the UK can't make... tax cuts or borrow much more."

To the author, I would have to say he is correct on all points! You cannot overcome austerity, develop the poorest areas of the world, and provide a suitable environment to raise a family *within the capitalist system*.

Whilst society is run on the basis of profit any attempt to resolve these problems will run against the limits of capitalism itself.

No wonder then, that communists are the most optimistic people in society: even the ruling class believe that a good life and world cannot be obtained under their system!

ED, Southampton Communists

Money, money, money

My manager said to me unexpectedly, "I know university is struggling with money but you don't need to worry about losing your job."

Well, that's good to know. Even better, I didn't know the university was struggling or that I needed to worry about my job.

You can imagine my surprise when my other manager said the same day, "We don't have money because we don't have foreign students, the prices for local students aren't covering everything." (I guess by "everything", she meant all the trips of our VC to other countries.)

Having suffered significant (metaphorical) whiplash, the vice chancellor finally reassured us via email the university has not run out of cash.

The question of money is old and boring at this point. They have the money. But we, the students, the workers, don't.

We are given scraps of the table and told that we should be satisfied. We don't want any scraps. We want to have control of our lives and genuine involvement in decision-making at the workplace. However, it can be done only through a fundamental change in the system.

Roman Merker,
Birmingham Communists

LETTERS FROM SCHOOLS

Minimum service levels

The government's Minimum Service Levels (MSL) was always an absolute mess in addition to being a very serious attack on workplace rights that would require unions to ask their own members to scab on strikes.

In education, the responses from academy bosses to government consultation has been scathing.

94% of members of the Confederation of School Trusts believe the proposals could further damage recruitment and retention. We can exploit this division in the ruling class and defeat this law.

We have to accept however, that union members are not yet widely aware of the government's intention to essentially ban strikes for primary school staff and swathes of others.

The NEU needs to mobilise against MSL not just nationally and regionally, but through a programme of educating reps and organising members to resist this law, up to noncompliance if need be.

Members should also be clear that the Labour Party is far from a reliable ally when it comes to anti-union laws. At NEU conference, 3-6 April, delegates will debate this among other key issues.

Joseph Flynn,
Croydon NEU Secretary

Private school strike

The staff at Dame Allan's, an independent school in Newcastle, have overwhelmingly voted to go on strike over a pension dispute.

Despite the phenomenal amount of money the school charges for student fees (£5,333 per term), the school is planning to reduce employer contributions to pensions by 40%.

If staff don't agree, they've threatened to fire and re-hire.

This school has taught Tory peers, journalists, and an Oxford University Vice-Chancellor – and yet, it is not immune to the crisis in education.

In order to cut costs – or fund new £8 million buildings – the bosses will attack the workers' living standards: even when these workers are educating their very own children.

Given the decline of even the most prestigious schools in the country, it's no surprise that education for the rest of us is in such a calamitous state.

Harry, Cambridge Communists

Ofsted outrage

Back in January, a day after the end of the pause on Ofsted inspections (due to an inquiry over related deaths) Ofsted had a visit at my school!

A lovely New Year's gift!

To prevent a downgrade in rating, staff started pulling 14-hour shifts in order to all dance to the fiddle of these suited

bureaucrats, most of whom have never taught a day in their life!

They arrive unannounced to your lesson, looking for anything that does not fit the government or academies' standards, to ensure education remains how the ruling classes want it.

Under capitalism, education is sidelined, and the 'Ofsted' whip used against the teacher.

As one teacher put it, "If you think management is bad now, wait until we drop down a grade. It'll be even worse."

If you don't appear to toe the line – spouting nonsense about 'British values' or 'democracy', or enforcing educational techniques which push away real understanding – Ofsted will be there to remove even more of your autonomy.

I stand for most teachers when I say that enough is enough!

Let us abolish Ofsted and put the real experts in control: the teachers who dedicate so much to the development of their students.

Only when management is democratically accountable to the needs of their staff and their pupils then can the real potential for education be realised.

Mark Anthony,
Kingston Communists



Steve Eason, Flickr



In Defence of Marxism #44

Equip yourself as a Leninist with the latest *In Defence of Marxism* magazine, our quarterly theoretical journal.

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A supporter from Northampton asks "What makes the RCP different from other groups on the left? Why don't you all band together?"

On the surface it seems like lots of groups use the same language and symbolism as the RCP. But if you look beyond aesthetics, you'll find the RCP is in a league of its own.

Firstly, we're revolutionaries. Our aim is the overthrow of capitalism and the conquest of power by the working class.

If reforms can be won along the way, we're all for that. But lots of today's left aim to compromise with the capitalists, which never works. We're for revolution, not compromise.

Secondly, we're class fighters. Workers keep the lights on and the country moving. When they're organised and ready to fight, they hold all the power. This is our focus.

Others on the left prefer to focus on charity work or identity politics. They moralise, complain, pull stunts, and do almost everything except fight in an organised way on class issues.

Thirdly, we're Marxists. Marx's ideas went far beyond narrow economics, into philosophy and history. These are an antidote to the worldview we get fed at school and in the media. Without revolutionary theory a revolutionary movement is impossible.

Unlike others, we have no interest in trendy, confused, and stupid 'new' ideas of self-important academics. We study Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky, and apply their ideas to today.

Finally, we're fully part of the working-class movement. We take the movement as it is and try to connect our ideas to it. We don't stand on the sidelines, trying to shape the working class according to preconceived ideas.

Sometimes we work on specific campaigns together with other left groups. But our general approach is distinct.

If you're looking for reformism, charity work, identity politics, narrow economism, or trendy ideas there are plenty of other groups out there for you.

If you're looking for revolutionary communism, join the RCP. •

Ask the Communist via our submission form, by clicking here

TOWARDS THE RCP

NEW PODCAST SERIES FROM MARXIST VOICE

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THE QUESTION OF WORKERS' CONTROL: WHO SHOULD RUN OUR WORKPLACES?

Dylan Cope

"Not a wheel turns, not a lightbulb shines, and not a telephone rings without the kind permission of the working class."

Ted Grant, founder of the IMT, often repeated these words. What it gets to the heart of is that the whole world keeps going thanks to the working class.

The construction of houses; lorries driving from point A to point B; the delivery of post: the working class keeps society running. Yet it does not run society.

All of this is done as part of an overall system – capitalism – in which the means of production (warehouses, factories, oil and gas rigs, supermarkets, etc.) are the private property of the capitalist class. They own this plant, equipment, and infrastructure. And that means they get to decide what's done with it.

The ongoing dispute at Port Talbot reveals this starkly. Several thousand steelworkers are being thrown on the scrapheap, despite the crucial role they play in production. Their livelihoods, and the whole town's fate, has been decided by the cruel logic of the market.

None of this production is planned according to the needs of society. Instead, the economy operates chaotically, dependent on whatever maximises profit for the capitalists. That's why we face redundancies, or are made to work longer, for less, while their profits get bigger year on year.

Nationalisation

In relation to Port Talbot, the demand for nationalisation has been raised by some workers, and in the pages of *The Communist*. Our comrades are calling for this on the streets and in the labour movement.

We have put forward this demand in conjunction with a call for workers to occupy the steelworks, in order to save it.

Such an occupation would prevent the bosses from rapidly closing the steel plant and asset stripping it. And it would also pose the question starkly: Who owns production? And who should control it?

These are important questions for the labour movement to answer. After all, the demand for nationalisation, while necessary, is not enough on its own.

Nationalised industries – past and present – do not automatically provide workers with decent wages and conditions; nor do they necessarily give workers a say in how the workplace is run, or over what is produced.

This was the case with old industries such as coal mining, for example. After all, the miners' strike of 1984-85 was against both the National Coal Board and the Tory government!

Even today, in the National Health Service, it is clear that state management, under a capitalist state, does not directly result in an improved system, either for patients or staff – as junior doctors, in particular, can attest to.

Quite a few times throughout history, however, workers have started to run their own workplaces under democratic control.

In Britain in the 1970s, there were several cases of this, including the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders in 1971, or the Fakenham shoes factory in 1972. There are many more examples from around the world too.

Business secrets

A first step towards workers' control begins with workers demanding the opening up and examination of the company's books. In doing so, workers find out in practice how the capitalists are completely unnecessary – that, in reality, they're like parasites.

This step is important for revealing what money is spent, and where; exactly how the workforce is being exploited; and how much wealth is being syphoned off to shareholders.

'Opening up the books' doesn't simply apply on a company-by-company basis, but must be carried out across the whole economy. As Trotsky explains in *The Transitional Programme*:

"The working out of even the most elementary economic plan – from the point of view of the exploited, not the exploiters – is impossible without

workers' control; that is, without the penetration of the workers' eye into all open and concealed springs of capitalist economy.

"Committees representing individual business enterprises should meet at conference to choose corresponding committees of trusts, whole branches of industry, economic regions and finally, of national industry as a whole."

Workers' participation and cooperatives

Sometimes when the demand for workers' control is raised, people view it as interchangeable with workers' participation or workers' cooperatives. But this confuses the matter.

Workers' participation is common in places like Germany, for example. This is where workers are allowed to put

forward representatives to sit alongside the capitalists on a business' board of directors.

In practice, this binds these workers to the class that exploits them, essentially giving them a limited say in exactly how they should be exploited in the interests of the company 'as a whole'.

The case of workers' cooperatives is slightly different. This is when workers may own and manage a company collectively, without any capitalist bosses. Ultimately, however, such enterprises exist within a market economy. And so their fate is still determined by capitalist laws.

This can result in cooperatives having to make redundancies in order to stay afloat, or lowering workers' wages – even though they own the business!

Ultimately, just as nationalisation must go hand-in-hand with workers'

control, workers' control must go hand-in-hand with nationalisation.

And nor can these steps be confined to just one or two industries. Instead, such measures must be applied to all the major monopolies and banks: "the commanding heights of the economy."

Planned economy

Linked together, this could form the foundations for a socialist planned economy. The entire economy would be democratically managed by the working class, for the working class; geared towards providing the maximum benefit for humanity, and actually meeting society's needs.

On this basis, workers' in obsolete, socially-unnecessary industries – such as fossil fuels or arms manufacturing – could be ensured a just transition to decent jobs in other sectors of the economy, instead of being forced into the dole queue.

Workers' control therefore acts as a stepping stone towards such a planned economy: raising workers' understanding of their power and essential role in production, and providing the working class with the experience of directly managing the economy in their own interests.

Again, as Trotsky explains: "*Workers' control becomes a school for the planned economy.*"

In such an economy, super-profits – currently being spent on luxury yachts, being used to buy football clubs, or simply being left to sit idly in the vault – would instead belong to us, and could be put to good use.

This could mean building decent quality housing, improving public transport and making it free to use, and properly funding healthcare and education.

This is the programme that the communists fight for.

To do all of this, we need to fundamentally transform the way society is organised and run. We need a revolution.

But thankfully we – the working class – are very powerful. After all, without our kind permission, telephones don't ring, lightbulbs don't shine, and wheels grind to a halt. ●



PORT TALBOT: COKE OVENS TO CLOSE AS UNION LEADERS DITHER

Alex Falconer, South Wales Communists

On 20 March, Tata Steel closed the coke ovens at Port Talbot due to 'safety concerns', before the conclusion of a 45 day consultation. This comes after Tata bosses reassured union leaders at a recent meeting that their intention was to not only keep the ovens open, but to extend them.

Workers would certainly not be blamed for mistrusting Tata regarding such 'concerns'. If there are any issues about performance and safety, then the blame lies with Tata for not providing proper maintenance while they strip the plant and send all the profits abroad.

Of course, nobody in Westminster has responded to this latest attack. What does it matter if one more plant is added to the long line of industries that they've destroyed or sold off?

So-called 'Labour' leader Keir Starmer has also been quiet. This is shameful,

considering his reassurances last year when he visited the steelworks that Labour wanted "to ensure there's a plan that preserves the jobs and experience that we've got".

And where has the Welsh government been during all of this? There's been not so much as a whiff of resistance from incoming Wales First Minister Vaughan Gething – a former president of the Welsh TUC, who Unite backed with significant resources.

Instead of fighting Tata over this, the unions have openly said that they will not oppose early closures on safety grounds. In fact, our good friend Alun Davies from

Community has stated that "regretfully the coke ovens were always going to close during the transition period".

There you go. There's apparently no need to organise a fightback, because this was all inevitable. Of course it is, when the union's national steel officer so easily throws in the towel!

This is just the latest example of spineless union leaders accepting Tata's managed decline, instead of seizing the

opportunity to attack the bosses for letting the situation get so bad.

This latest move by Tata shows how pitiful the union leaders have been in Port Talbot.

They have dragged their feet and followed procedures routinely. Meanwhile, Tata bosses have been astute and decisive. Legal practices didn't stop them from putting out an illicit threat to withhold redundancy pay, in order to scare Community from balloting for action.

This latest move to close the coking ovens will now cut across – and highlight

the limitations of – the insufficient Unite ballot, which has come far too late.

Steelworkers are in this situation because union leaders tied their hands and told them to wait for negotiations – all while Tata bosses took their gloves off and rode roughshod over legality and 'gentlemen's agreements'.

No doubt steelworkers feel angry and betrayed. They must be wondering: how soon will it be before Tata starts closing the rest of the steelworks early?

Steelworkers cannot wait to find out. Now is the time to take immediate action, instead of waiting for their so-called leaders. If Tata won't play by the rules, then neither should workers. An immediate walkout should be organised to bring everything to a standstill.

Tata may have struck the first blow, but the workers are far from being knocked out.

It's time to stand up, build for a mass occupation of the steelworks, and save Port Talbot before it's too late! ●



WAGE THEFT PLAGUES GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Jack Jones, Cardiff Communists

Eight firms in Gloucestershire have been found to have not paid their workers the bare, legal minimum. One of these, Superdry, was found to owe around £75,000 in total to nearly 1,000 workers.

Of course, it's not just in Gloucestershire where this is happening. Across the country, more than 500 firms have been named as underpaying their employees – some by quite significant amounts.

Bosses push wages as low as possible, in order to extract maximum profits from their workers. From their point of

view, the less they spend on labour costs, the more goes into lining their pockets.

If this requires them to break the law, so be it. After all, being 'named and shamed' doesn't really cost them a penny.

In reality, it's the working class that creates the wealth that the capitalist class appropriates to maintain their power and influence in society. And yet all they get in return is low wages that can barely afford them the basics.

It's time that those who actually produced this wealth were put in charge. Only then can workers, in Gloucestershire and elsewhere, end wage theft – and all exploitation – for good. ●

JUNIOR DOCTORS RENEW MANDATE

Will Collins, BMA Junior Doctor (personal capacity)

Junior doctors in England have once again voted to continue strike action for full-pay restoration, with an overwhelming 97% Yes vote on a 61% turnout.

While this is a clear mandate for action, turnout worryingly dropped by 11 percentage points. This should be a warning sign to the BMA leadership. Fatigue is beginning to set in.

The last set of strikes saw proper pickets at only a handful of large hospitals. Those without a local picket line were told to "focus on their wellbeing" instead.

It is these kinds of soft tactics that have demoralised nurses and lecturers in their disputes. In the process, workers have lost their strike mandates due to low turnout.

The Tories' minimum service bill means that, at any point, our strikes

could be made illegal. They have thrown down the gauntlet. We must respond.

One doctor asked when speaking with The Communist: "Is there a reason why we can't indefinitely strike?"

This clearly reflects a mood of frustration among a layer of activists, who feel that the current methods are not enough.

The Tories are universally hated among the general population. Our strikes, meanwhile, have received widespread support.

This is an open goal for escalation. We need a mobilisation in every hospital, with ward walks and regular branch meetings to organise the most dedicated activists on the ground. This is absolutely achievable!

Another, similar drop in turnout would lose us our mandate – and with it all our bargaining power. There is a small window in which to turn this around. But turn it around we must! ●



NORTHUMBERLAND BUS DRIVERS GEAR UP FOR STRIKE ACTION

Mick O'Kane, Ashington Communists

Over 300 Arriva workers in Northumberland are now balloting for strike action. The drivers and engineers, based at depots in Blyth and Ashington, and organised in Unite, have rejected a miserly 4% pay increase – a real-terms cut given the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Arriva, owned by German transport company Deutsche Bahn, raked in profits of £2.4 million in 2022 alone, while continuing to offer its workers below-inflation pay rises year on year.

Unite says that the drivers are already the lowest paid of the three main bus operators in the North East. This latest insulting 'offer' is yet one more slap in the face for the workforce.

We spoke to a driver at one of the depots, who told an all too familiar tale of ever-increasing workloads, and ever-decreasing living standards.

He often has to work far in excess of his contracted hours due to staff

shortages, and is exhausted on shift. This has dangerous implications for passenger safety.

"Our pay and conditions have been chipped away at for years," he explained. "Morale has never been so low."

He and his workmates are determined to fight back against the bosses. The latest 'offer' is "the straw that broke the camel's back", this driver stated. "We're not gonna take it anymore!"

The Arriva workers have taken great inspiration from the recent victory of Go North East drivers, who fought a magnificent month-long battle against their employer, resulting in an 11.2% pay rise. This proves, once again, that militancy pays.

The stage is set for huge battles between workers and bosses in the period ahead. Ultimately, the only way to ensure decent conditions for these workers is a fully-nationalised transport system, run under democratic control by the workers themselves. ●

GREENWICH LIBRARY SERVICE STRIKE: MOBILISE THE MEMBERS!

Pat MacDonald, Unite Greenwich Libraries branch (personal capacity)

On 26 March, library workers in Greenwich and Bromley – employed by Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) and organised in Unite – went out on a one-day strike over pay, sick pay, and temporary contracts.

GLL have tried to downplay the strike with misinformation, provoking angry responses from Unite. This has sometimes left us workers bewildered and caught in the middle.

On the day, the actual turnout of staff was quite low because of the lack of communication and organisation on the shop floor. To win a strike, it's not enough to send emails from union HQ.

Nevertheless, the mood of the workers present was positive. Before the strike had even taken place, we'd already forced GLL to announce that they will scrap the 20% sick pay policy, whereby

workers are deducted this percentage from their overall wage.

This is a good start. But we can go further.

Shop-floor meetings should be called to discuss our demands with all members, and to encourage them to take part in solid pickets at all the flagship libraries. Crucially, we need to be more involved in tactics and strategy.

Library workers have the strength to beat GLL. So watch this space, and return those books you owe – unless we're on strike! ●



COVENTRY AMAZON WORKERS ON THE VERGE OF UNION RECOGNITION

Alex Hill and Jazir Mohammed, Coventry Communists

Amazon workers in Coventry are very close to achieving full union recognition. They last went on strike on 19-20 March, in order to bolster their unionisation effort, and to send a clear message to the company that they won't back down from their threats!

The workers on the picket line told us of the conditions they have to work in. They spoke of dangerous working conditions; of tough quotas that lead to frequent accidents, including workers having boxes fall on their faces.

One worker described the entire experience as 'mentally draining'. Another referenced how Amazon's rhetoric over safety has little to do with the actual experience of the job.

The workers recognise their importance in keeping day-to-day operations flowing, and are demanding to be valued for what they actually contribute, especially given the taxing conditions they face.

Amazon bosses have frequently deployed union-busting tactics against those struggling. Workers are constantly discouraged from joining

unions, with emails sent to employees on the day of strike action saying that 'union recognition may not be your best choice'.

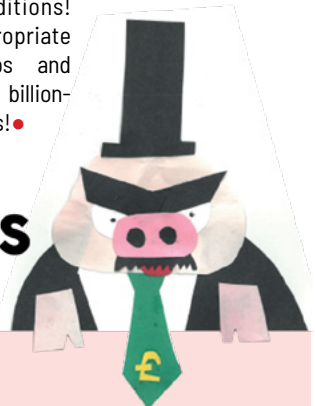
Barcodes that link to cancelling union membership are scattered across the warehouses. It is clear that Amazon is intent on doing whatever it can to stop workers from organising.

All this shows that Amazon is terrified of the power that these workers would have, if united and mobilised collectively. They want to be able to continue with these terrible conditions and exploitative pay – all so that they can make themselves richer at the workers' expense.

But the workers are fighting back.

Comrades in Coventry have been at almost every single picket in this struggle. We have witnessed the queues to join the union growing longer and longer.

We say: Stand up to the union-busting bosses! Fight for decent pay and conditions! Expropriate Bezos and the billionaires! ●



BASTARD BOSS OF THE WEEK

A friend of mine works for a company that sells bed headboards. They've been employed to fill the position of not one, but two employees.

This has left them with no choice but to play catch up with a huge workload, left behind after the previous two staff members handed in their notice.

At this same company, an 80-year-old lady is currently working

a very labour intensive job – filling in for the delivery packer they sacked!

These half measures and cut corners come as no surprise – especially once I learned that the company had been bought up by a globe-spanning megacorporation in the last few years! ●

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A ... COLLEGE TEACHER



I teach filmmaking and media at a college in central London. When I started working here last August, it was clear from the previous years' project descriptions that the course is focused on creating adverts and corporate videos rather than making art or cinema. This is outrageous.

Sure, students may need to use their filmmaking skills to make a living, by working on ads and so on. But as an educator, I want to inspire them; to raise their sights above vulgar TikTok videos and soulless Hollywood movies.

I'd love to show them the vast possibilities of cinema; to introduce them to the numerous schools of film theory and practice from history; to help them develop their voice as artists; to encourage experimentation and discovery.

Even accounting for the sorry state of culture under capitalism, I was surprised to see such blatant disregard for film as anything resembling an art form. My prior teaching experience had been fairly different.

Then I learned more about the socio-economic conditions of my students. One student, who has always been particularly difficult to deal with, turned out to have recently become homeless. A progress coach and social worker are trying to help her find somewhere to stay.

Another case requiring the intervention of social services was a student who hadn't been attending class for a while. It turned out she was pregnant. Since she lives alone in London, away from her family in Eastern Europe, she stopped coming in to hide her pregnancy, fearing the school would notify her parents if they noticed.

With the baby's father long gone, she ended up giving birth alone. She immediately put her baby up for adoption.

Earlier this week, I was informed that another student, who had stopped coming to college last term, had been the victim of a rape.

Other cases include a student who was taken out of school by his parents to be sent to the military; and another who suddenly started missing assignment deadlines because her family hadn't been able to afford electricity.

How can you expect students going through what I've described to concern themselves with the aesthetics, history, and art of cinema? Class society reserves privileges like expression and creativity for its upper strata.

There's nothing wrong with the intellect or inspiration of my students. They just come from the 'wrong' class.

As working-class children, they lack the material conditions that would allow them to fulfil their creative potential to its fullest. They are relegated to 'artisans' who know how cameras and editing software work. Meanwhile, the 'art' of cinema is left to the elite who can afford to contemplate and cultivate their ideas.

This is another expression of the age-old division between mental and physical labour, upon which class society rests. The only genuine way to change this – to open the gates to the kingdom of culture to my students, and to all working-class people around the world – is to overthrow capitalism, end class society, and fight for communism. ●



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WE NEED FIGHTING LEADERSHIP!

The working class is under attack on all fronts.

In the Middle East, Netanyahu's genocidal massacre in Gaza continues – aided and abetted by the imperialists in Washington and London.

Back in Britain, councils across the country are declaring bankruptcy. In Birmingham, devastating local authority cuts are decimating services. Arts and culture funding has been eliminated. And the city's street lights are even being dimmed in a desperate attempt to save money.

At the same time, as the crisis of British capitalism deepens, industry

is going to the wall. In Port Talbot, a jobs massacre is imminent, as Tata bosses begin to dismantle the town's steelworks. Thousands of workers are set for the scrapheap. The livelihoods of the entire community are at risk.

The blame for these catastrophes lies squarely with the capitalists, their political representatives, and the system they defend. The interests of imperialism and the anarchy of the market are responsible for all this war, austerity, and misery.

In the face of such disasters, it is clear that no half-measures will suffice.

As the old socialist saying goes: you cannot cure cancer with an aspirin.

The warmongers will not be persuaded to stop their slaughter by nicely-worded resolutions and appeals.

The Tories will not be morally pressured into bailing out local councils and reversing the cuts.

And no amount of negotiations or compromises will prevent steel bosses from relocating production in order to maximise their profits.

Unfortunately, however, the strategy – as much as there is one – put forward by the leaders of the left and

the labour movement goes no further than this.

The Palestine solidarity movement's leadership has no plans beyond calling repeated marches from A to B.

In Birmingham, Labour councillors continue to cling to their failed 'dented shield' approach, whilst holding onto false hopes for an improvement under a future Starmer government.

And in Port Talbot, the trade union leaders have dragged their feet at every juncture, failing to call decisive militant action, and seemingly resigning themselves to defeat.

On all these questions, the leaders of the labour movement should be bringing the weight and power of the working class to bear on the situation: mobilising workers and youth around a programme of bold socialist demands, and a strategy based on mass class-struggle methods.

This highlights the urgent need for fighting leadership. And that is what we are aiming to provide, by launching the Revolutionary Communist Party.

So if you're a communist: get organised, join your party, and help us build the RCP. •