

THE COMMUNIST



VOICE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY!

LAUNCH OF THE
REVOLUTIONARY
COMMUNIST
PARTY
LONDON, 3-6 MAY



FORWARD TO THE BRITISH REVOLUTION! FORWARD TO THE RCP!

Rob Sewell,
Political Editor

Over the May Day bank holiday, hundreds of delegates and visitors from all parts of the country are gathering for the founding congress of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP).

The launch of the RCP comes at a time of collapsing living standards and complete disenchantment with the old order. British capitalism is in terminal decline. All the gains of the past are being systematically destroyed. The working class is facing an existential crisis.

The rich are getting richer, while working people are being driven into the ground, burdened with rising debts, rents, and bills.

But the only thing on offer from the main political parties – both Tories and Labour – is more of the same. No wonder there is a profound disillusionment with all the establishment politicians and parties.

It is time for a radical break. We must stand up to the onslaught facing us. A revolutionary party is needed to fundamentally transform society, and put an end to this relentless barrage by the capitalists and their representatives.

The aim of this landmark congress is to found a party in Britain on the lines of Lenin's Bolshevik Party, which

led the Russian working class to power in 1917.

The RCP will be the British section of the new Revolutionary Communist International, which is being launched at a world conference in June.

The establishment of such a party is necessary preparation for the titanic events that impend.

The founding congress is due to discuss the draft theses on the coming British revolution, which was circulated to branches nearly two months ago, and published in *The Communist*.

This document outlines the world crisis that forms the background to

events in Britain. We live in an epoch of unparalleled upheaval and turbulence. The long-term decay and demise of British capitalism has dramatically accelerated.

British imperialism has been relegated to a third-rate power, of little global importance. The ruling class has demonstrated its complete senility and bankruptcy. Britain has become one of the weakest links in the global chain of capitalism.

The economic collapse of 2008 ushered in a period of plummeting living standards and austerity for the working class. The corona-crash of 2020 intensified the crisis, which will

sharpen even further in the years to come.

Already, local councils are going bankrupt. Essential services are being scrapped, especially hitting the most vulnerable.

The Tory Party has been completely discredited. Labour under Starmer, meanwhile, has shifted sharply to the right, and has become the willing lackey of capitalism.

Given the hatred towards the Tories, Starmer – this admirer of Thatcher – will be thrust into power. In Number 10, however, the Labour leader will be even more enthusiastic than his predecessors in carrying out the dictates of big business.

Continued on page 3



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! •

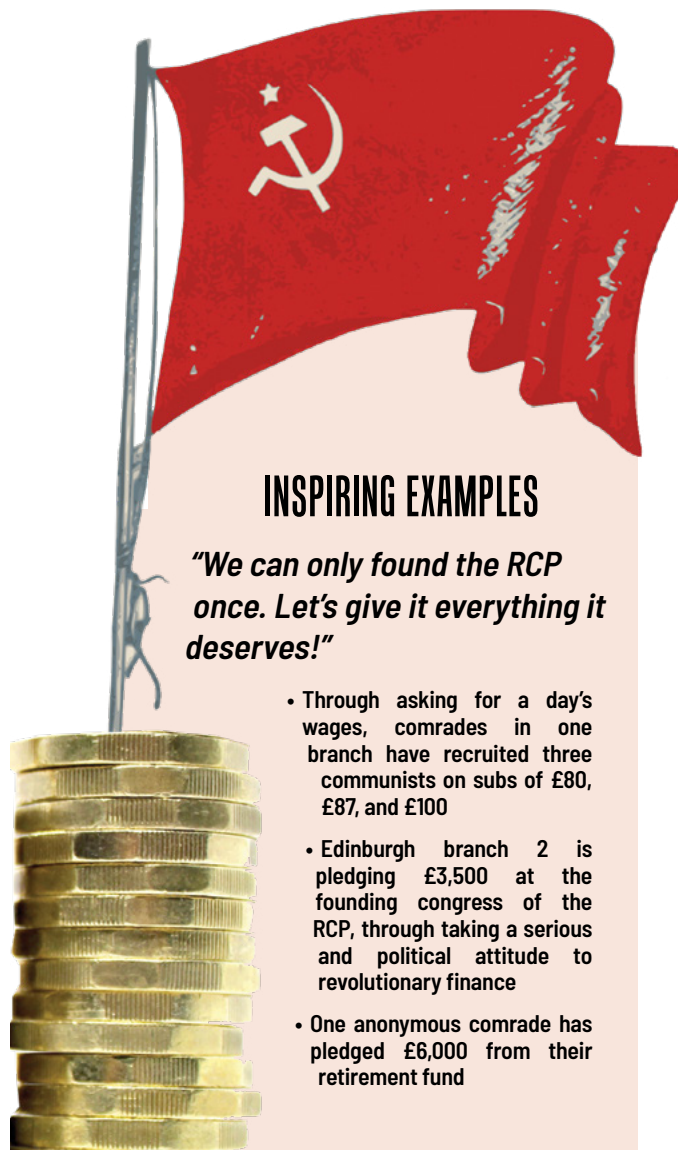
BUILD THE RCP

"Politics may be defined as the art of taking advantage of favourable situations... at present, you have an exceptional situation, full of opportunities. It is necessary to know how to take advantage of it. That means not to try to stay in this calm bay, but to take to the open sea."

Leon Trotsky, *The Crisis of the French Section*, 21 November 1935



REVOLUTIONARY FINANCE



INSPIRING EXAMPLES

"We can only found the RCP once. Let's give it everything it deserves!"

- Through asking for a day's wages, comrades in one branch have recruited three communists on subs of £80, £87, and £100
- Edinburgh branch 2 is pledging £3,500 at the founding congress of the RCP, through taking a serious and political attitude to revolutionary finance
- One anonymous comrade has pledged £6,000 from their retirement fund

Capitalism is in a profound crisis on a world scale. The system has reached its limits. The most fundamental needs of people and the planet can no longer be met by this dying system.

The conditions of the working class are under attack in every country. In the political sphere, the establishment is losing control.

Britain is no exception. 2024 is a general election year. But in our lifetimes, there has never been a larger gulf between the mood amongst ordinary working-class people – especially the youth – and the political choice on offer.

Regardless of the outcome of the next election, capitalism will continue to exist. And that will inevitably mean more crises: more cuts to public services, more council bankruptcies, more attacks on working conditions, more unemployment, more housing shortages, more war, more climate destruction – and of course more and more anger building up, and more and more desire to fight for change.

This anger needs a home; a point of reference. That is why we are launching the Revolutionary Communist Party next month. For workers and youth wanting to fight for an alternative, this party is your party. And we need your help!

We have set ourselves the target of raising £20,000 for our party launch fund. Finances are the sinews of war. And we are building a battle-ready organisation for the class war. Every donation, large or small, makes a huge difference to our ability to campaign, to grow, and to strengthen our party.

We can only launch this party once. And the stronger our take off, the faster we can soar to the heights needed to become a bright reference point for the working class, as the crisis of capitalism pushes greater numbers to draw revolutionary conclusions. •

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WRITE FOR THE COMMUNIST

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.

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

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LAUNCHING THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY FORWARD TO THE BRITISH REVOLUTION!

Continued from front page

Explosive events

The growing turmoil internationally, combined with the collapse of British capitalism, is preparing an era of storm and stress.

"This is the worst combination of problems at home and abroad that any government will have taken on since the Second World War," remarked Lord Ken Clarke, a former Tory chancellor.

This is the backdrop to a massive attack on the working class. The Starmer government will become one of the most hated governments of all time, as it attempts to place the burden of the crisis on the backs of workers.

But the working class has had enough. It will not lightly tolerate further impositions.

The situation has dynamite built into its foundations. Yet all the accumulated anger and discontent finds no outlet.

The scene is therefore being set for a massive explosion of the class struggle. Even the strike wave of the past couple of years will pale in comparison, compared to the fierce battles that loom.

Under these conditions, the Tory Party will pass rapidly over to the side of extreme reaction. The ruling class will be forced to lean on the likes of Starmer. In turn, the attacks meted out by a right-wing Labour government will serve to burn away any lingering illusions in reformism.

Crisis of leadership

Without doubt, a pre-revolutionary period is being prepared in Britain.

Rather than mobilise workers to radically change society, however, the trade union bureaucracy acts as a huge brake on the workers' movement.

Even the supposed 'lefts' offer no real alternative. They believe in trying to make capitalism more humane. But this is utopian. Lacking any confidence in the working class, they too will attempt to keep the struggle within the confines of the system.

This is why we are launching a new party – a revolutionary party. It is

necessary to break the logjam. Our task is to resolve this crisis of leadership.

Reformism vs revolution

We are not sectarians. We do not stand on the sidelines, but boldly turn towards militant workers and the youth, who are looking for a way out.

Why have we adopted the name *Revolutionary Communist Party*?

We have done this to raise the genuine banner of socialist revolution; to differentiate ourselves from the so-called 'Communist' Party of Britain, which has nothing in common with communism or revolutionary change.

They are reformist and nationalist to the core. They very much cling to their Stalinist heritage. Their paper, the *Morning Star*, is simply the mouthpiece for the trade union bureaucracy and left reformists.

These 'lefts' only seek to reform capitalism, as seen in the Corbyn movement.

The collapse of Corbynism was a reflection of this political weakness. They defended Labour as a 'broad church'. When it came to the fight to drive out the Blairites, the 'lefts' simply capitulated, crumbling to the pressure of the Labour right wing.

Likewise, other politically similar formations, such as the *People's Assembly*, seek to divert the energy of the working class into harmless reformist channels. They produce a lot of hot air, but little else. Like the Grand Old Duke of York, they march activists up to the top of the hill and then back down again.

It is a time for a fundamental break with such weak, woolly politics; to present a clear revolutionary programme, capable of pointing the way forward.

Youth and communism

The RCP poses sharply the need for revolutionary change, in Britain and internationally.

The reformist leaders have provided nothing but betrayals. In fact, there is a colossal vacuum on the left.

Hundreds of thousands of workers and youth are questioning the entire system, and are wide open to the ideas of genuine communism. It is our task to win over as

many of these as possible – as quickly as possible.

There are no shortcuts to revolution. But the stormy events that lie on the horizon will radically transform consciousness, making even broader layers receptive to revolutionary ideas.

Heritage and ideas

Our young and determined forces are gathering at this founding congress to declare that genuine communism is back!

Our pre-history – of assembling the ones and twos, and developing a national presence – is over. A new stage is opening up.

We recognise that we are still a small party. The delegates and visitors to the founding congress of the RCP, however, are looking to the future with confidence.

A new chapter is being turned in the history of the British working class. We are entering into uncharted waters.

The tasks are great. But we have an important advantage over those in the past. We have accumulated an enormous theoretical heritage, in the form of the ideas of revolutionary Marxism, supplemented with the lessons passed down by those who have fought before us.

This equips us with the understanding, strategy, and methods needed to change society.

Join the RCP!

The system is at an impasse. Capitalism is undergoing a prolonged death agony. We base ourselves on such a perspective. History will provide us with ample opportunities to build; to prepare the working class for the conquest of power.

Our task is to patiently explain to workers and youth the nature of the epoch – and the tasks required. Our objective is the building of a revolutionary party in Britain, before the revolutionary wave breaks.

We know this will not be easy. On the contrary, there are huge obstacles we need to overcome. On the basis of the hammer blow of events, combined with clear ideas and flexible tactics, this will be entirely possible.

All experience has shown that only the building of a mass revolutionary party can resolve the crisis of capitalism, and put an end to the nightmare facing the working class.

Never in the history of the workers' movement has so much depended upon this endeavour. We do not have all the time in the world. We must make haste! So join us, and help build the RCP! •

“ May Day is the day when the workers of all lands celebrate their solidarity in the struggle against all coercion and oppression of man by man; the struggle to free the toiling millions from hunger, poverty, and humiliation...”

Let us prepare with redoubled energy for the decisive battle that is at hand!... Let the celebration of May Day win thousands of new fighters to our cause and swell our forces in the great struggle for the freedom of all the people – for the liberation of all who toil from the yoke of capital!”

- Lenin, May Day 1904



INTERNATIONAL GREETINGS

USA

The Revolutionary Communist Party is back, retying the knot of history with the RCP of the 1940s!

When Marx and Engels published the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848, they said: "A spectre is haunting Europe, the spectre of communism." Today, communism is back on the agenda.

The Revolutionary Communists of America take great pride in the British section. We shout from the rooftops: "Long with the Revolutionary Communist Party! Forward to a World Socialist Federation!"

Tom Trattier, *Revolutionary Communists of America*

Sweden

The founding of the RCP in Britain and the Revolutionary Communist International is a battle-cry to communists all over the world: join the party that the working class needs to take power.

In Sweden, we have grown by more than 100 comrades over the last year, to over 240 members. Our target is to be 500 strong by the end of 2024.

The British congress will be a milestone in the development of our international. Let an avalanche of bold initiatives be unleashed in its wake!

Forward to 10,000 comrades in Britain! Long live the Revolutionary Communist International!

Oscar, *RCP Sweden (Revolutionära Kommunistiska Partiet)*

Switzerland

We send enthusiastic greetings from the communists in Switzerland! In the country of the banks, Big Pharma, and multinationals, just one week after you, we are founding the Revolutionary Communist Party.

We have the goal of soon reaching 1,000 organised communists in Switzerland.

With a bold approach, based on the best ideas and experiences of the whole international, we want to send a clear message: even in the Swiss Alps, the communists are coming!

Sereina, *RCP Switzerland*

Canada

Greetings from the Canadian section of the Revolutionary Communist International!

We are extremely inspired by your work, and have learned much from studying your growth.

Our ruling classes are exchanging notes as well, with Britain and Canada racing to be bottom of the OECD countries.

By contrast, we are racing to deal the final blow to the British monarchy, through communist revolution. The sun will set on the British Empire – and we'll make sure that the red star rises over its remains.

Julien Arseneau, *RCP Canada*

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WHY I'M JOINING THE COMMUNISTS

HR, Norwich:

"The capitalist system can never be reformed. It is fundamentally flawed. We need a global revolution. And I want to strive to realise this aim."

AS, Taunton:

"I'm fucking sick of this system. I'm sick of the rich exploiting our labour. And I'm sick of the politicians who just let it happen. But above all, I'm sick of just idling around waiting for something to change."

ZX, Liverpool:

"I have been reading Marxist books since I was a child. There is so much going on in the world right now. US imperialism is creating division and war. And the British bourgeoisie is complicit. It's time to change all this."



A SPECTRE IS HAUNTING THE TORIES: THE SPECTRE OF TRUSSISM

Adam Booth

It is cynically said in bourgeois politics that "every nation gets the government it deserves". It would be more appropriate to say that every ruling class gets the leaders it deserves.

In recent years, British capitalism has certainly had a leadership befitting of its degenerate state: firstly, with the chaotic Boris Johnson; and next, with the deranged, deluded Liz Truss.

Lettuce Liz's madcap decisions certainly acted as a catalyst in tanking the UK economy. But in truth, Truss' antics only revealed what a fragile shambles British capitalism had already become.

From schools and hospitals, to bankrupt water firms: the country's public buildings, utilities, and infrastructure are literally crumbling to pieces. The whole system stinks.

Losing control

The perennially unhinged, ever-oblivious Liz Truss is now attempting a comeback.

First there was her unironic launch of a new Tory faction for anti-woke warriors called 'Popular Conservatism'. More recently, the 49-day-long ex-PM has released a memoir-cum-manifesto,

in which she sets herself and her supporters a modest task: to "save the West" in the next ten years.

This may seem an ambitious target. But just think: if she can simultaneously crash the British economy and the Conservative's polling figures in a mere matter of weeks, then just imagine what Liz could achieve in a decade.

To most ordinary people, Truss' behaviour would indicate that it may be time for the supposed "only conservative in the room" (the subtitle of her new book) to consult a psychiatrist. But no, in the Madhatter's Tea Party that is the Tories, the Margaret Thatcher / Alan Partridge tribute act is considered a hero and a saviour.

Such is the insanity that has gripped the Tories: an accurate reflection of the irrational, rotten system they defend; and a sign of how much the British establishment has lost control of its primary political representatives.

Rabid ranks

Truss may be long gone from Downing Street. But her spectre haunts the Tory Party.

Rishi Sunak is still attempting to pick up the pieces following her brief-but-destructive stint in office. But he is proving to be just as ill-fated as his predecessor.

Tory backbenchers have been in a mutinous mood. And its rabid ranks are demanding lashings of red meat - most recently in relation to the government's Rwanda deportation plan, which recently gained parliamentary approval.

The Prime Minister has promised that asylum-seeker flights will be heading for Africa by the summer. But even this will not be enough to appease the most ferocious headbangers in the Tory Party, who are determined to pick a fight with the courts over 'restrictive' human rights legislation.

Rogues' gallery

With local elections approaching on 2 May, along with yet another by-election, this time in Blackpool South, things are not looking good for Sunak and the Tories.

Years of scandal and sleaze are taking their toll. Mark Menzies is the latest reprobate Tory MP to bring the party into disrepute; this time, over alleged misappropriation of Conservative campaign funds.

With a humiliating performance expected in the upcoming local elections, rumours are circulating of another Tory leadership challenge. Whatever the outcome, it is clear that Rishi Sunak is merely a squatter in Number 10 by this point.

Revolutionary leadership

When judgement day eventually comes for the Tories, it will be brutal.

In fact, the title of Truss' autobiography could end up being more of a prophecy than a boast. According to one study, after the next election, the Conservative Party could end up with just one MP in Parliament.

Workers and youth have had enough of this entire capitalist circus. It's time to give all these criminals, cretins, and charlatans the boot, and build a party - the Revolutionary Communist Party - that can give the working class the leadership it deserves. ●



MAYORAL ELECTION OFFERS NOTHING FOR WORKING LONDONERS

Alen Yerinkov, New Cross

On 2 May, Londoners will vote in the latest mayoral election. Labour incumbent Sadiq Khan is running for a third term against rabid Tory candidate Susan Hall.

Despite the capital's shiny reputation, the crisis of British capitalism means that London's streets are more likely to be paved with a food bank queue than with gold.

The situation for Londoners is bleaker than ever. The city has the highest rate of child poverty and homelessness in the country, with 39% of children in the city growing up in poverty, and 1-in-50 Londoners homeless. The housing crisis runs rampant.

In his eight years in City Hall, Khan hasn't advanced the conditions for London's workers one inch.

He previously pledged to build 40,000 new homes by the end of the decade. But

under his watch, house building in the capital hit a record low. 350,000 people are waiting for affordable housing, and thousands are left homeless. At the same time, 87,000 properties sit empty in London, lying idle as cash-cows for the rich.

Khan regularly trumpets his working-class credentials as the son of a bus driver. But the reality is he is no friend of working Londoners.

The Labour Mayor was able to conjure up £30 million for Transport for London back in January. But this was only after workers voted to strike. And this extra funding will certainly be paid for by workers with cuts elsewhere.

After all, this is the same careerist who, in 2016, declared he would be the "most pro-business mayor ever". Meanwhile, Khan is happy to allow the Met Police to harass protestors opposing Israel's genocide in Gaza.

The Tories' candidate, Susan Hall, has even less to offer.

Attacking Khan for the city's rise in crime, Hall promises £200 million extra for the police, in order to "bring order" to London's streets.

In truth, this election will solve none of these questions: neither increasing homelessness and the exorbitant housing crisis, nor the scourge of crime.

The root of all these problems lies with the poverty and deprivation that is deeply entrenched in the capitalist system. And neither Khan's hollow promises nor the Tories' 'tough' rhetoric will tackle this.

This explains why ordinary Londoners have no enthusiasm for this upcoming election. Workers understand that none of the options on the ballot will make a fundamental difference to their sinking living standards.

Only through united class struggle to overthrow this decrepit system can we end this crisis once and for all. ●



"I do believe that, at the start of this year, we have turned a corner after the shocks of the past few years, and we are in a new economic moment. . . [people] are seeing that things have turned."



CAR INSURANCE

2021: £529

2024: £995

^88%



BREAD

2021: £1.03

2024: £1.36

^32%



BANANAS

2021: £0.88

2024: £1.09

^24%



RENT

2021: £968

2024: £1,223

^26%



ENERGY

2021: £1,333

2024: £2,578

^93%



WAGES (WEEKLY)

2021: £611

2024: £682

^12%

PRICES RISE WHILST WAGES STAGNANT

Highway robbery

In the last year, car insurance has gone up by 34 percent on average. Many car drivers, particularly young drivers who have seen a doubling in costs, have quoted £5,000 or more for a year's cover!

Travel expenses have become a huge burden, exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis. A 2023 study shows five million Brits (8 percent) live in "transport poverty". This means they cannot move around solely due to the price of transportation.

Insurers cite increased payouts as a cause of premiums rising. But these have only gone up 20 percent. They also cite increased costs of repairs. But in Europe, premiums have only gone up by 3-6 percent.

The Financial Conduct Authority has ruled out the possibility of any investigation into these crooks. *Quelle surprise!*

In reality, Britain's crippled and gutted transport infrastructure has left people with no option but to drive

in many places. This leaves motorists ripe for looting by insurers.

Until this entire sector is fully under public control, in workers' hands, with full funding, we will continue to be gouged.

Deep Sohelia, Barking

Food for thought

Ken Murphy, Tesco Chief Executive, has offered a glimmer of hope to ordinary shoppers. "Inflationary pressures have reduced substantially," he says. "We've cut prices on 4,000 products." But he recognises that "things are still difficult for ordinary shoppers".

There's been no mention from Ken about Tesco bosses making any sacrifices though. In fact, the company has seen an increase in profits from £882 million to a stunning £2.3 billion in just one year!

These people live on a completely different planet, convinced that a press release can hide the staggering profits they're squeezing out of working people.

Greg, Leeds

LOATHED AND LAMENTABLE: CAPITALISM'S SORRY STATESMEN

It is clear that the political leaders of the advanced capitalist countries are catastrophically unpopular.

According to a recent poll published by the New York Times, Olaf Schultz in Germany has a public disapproval rating of 73 percent. The German Chancellor is closely followed by Emmanuel Macron in France, on 71 percent; Rishi Sunak, on 66 percent; and Joe Biden, on 54 percent. The list goes on.

In Britain, another entertaining (but telling) poll asked ordinary people: "Who of Rishi Sunak or Keir Starmer would be best at...?", followed by a number of simple everyday tasks that just about anyone could carry out - or so you might think.

Not according to the British public. When it came to which party leader could "put up a shelf", only 13 percent of the public believed Sunak could rise to this challenge. Given the videos of the PM trying to use a hammer or a contactless card, this should come as no surprise.

What about making a Sunday roast? Or putting out a kitchen fire? Less than 20 percent believe that the current Tory leader is capable of these tasks. For his Labour counterpart, the figure is just over 40 percent.

Another question from this poll was about "hosting a party", with Sunak and Starmer tied at 33 percent. Maybe Boris Johnson, lead actor in the notorious #partygate scandal, would have scored better on this one?

The disastrously high disapproval towards the world's leaders, combined with this tongue-in-cheek survey about Britain's primary politicians, highlight the problem facing the ruling class: they have no competent leadership.

For workers and youth in Britain and across the world, the task is clear: to build a revolutionary leadership that can help kick out these clowns, overthrow their rotten system, and put the working class in charge!

Sol, Hull

LAUNCHING THE RCP ON CAMPUS

Lubna Badi,
RCP youth organiser

A whole generation of young people have known nothing but crisis. They have grown up in a world full of instability, war, austerity, and climate catastrophe. For many, decent housing, a good job, and a comfortable life seem like a far-fetched fantasy.

This crisis is felt sharply in education. Schools, stuffed with asbestos in the walls, are literally crumbling. Conditions for students and staff are deteriorating.

In recent years, teachers have gone on strike over pay and conditions, with more action likely to take place this year. School students are now learning about class struggle from as early as primary school.

Things aren't much better in universities. 44 institutions have planned redundancies. This will directly harm the quality of education, adding yet more pressure on staff.

To make matters worse, rents are skyrocketing, with a 9% increase in just the past 12 months. This applies to student housing, as well as renting in general.

As of last year, the majority of students now work part-time alongside their degrees – no doubt to compensate for their meagre student loans, which in many cases barely cover the cost of rent.

This is all a recipe for explosive anger and struggle on campuses across the country.

Revolutionary theory

Young people, and students in particular, have always been a barometer for the mood in society. Unhindered by the defeats of the past, they are wide open to radical ideas.

It is precisely for this reason that we decided to focus on the youth when we launched the Marxist Student Federation around ten years ago.

Beginning with three societies, we now have a presence at over 50 universities. Today, more and more students are coming to us already calling themselves communists.

Given the objective conditions, it's no surprise that young people are not only questioning

the system, but drawing revolutionary conclusions. Consciousness is developing rapidly under the hammerblow of events.

We aren't interested in just building an amalgamation of student societies. We are building branches of the Revolutionary Communist Party on campus.

The communists can be found organising stalls, door-knocking, holding public meetings, doing lecture shout-outs, and making speeches. Our main aim with all of this is to discuss with as many students as possible about Marxist ideas and getting organised.

What sets us apart from other student groups is our serious approach to studying genuine Marxist theory. This is not out of academic interest, but as a *guide to action*.

As Lenin famously remarked: "Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement".

This is especially relevant at universities, which are hotbeds for academic ideas that try to slander and distort Marxism in defence of the rotten status quo.

Our campus branches, therefore, form our first line of attack in our war against the ideas of the ruling class.

Class struggle

Recent years have seen students taking action against the marketisation of education, and in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

In many places, the communists have led the charge: calling Palestine solidarity rallies, and putting forward motions calling for 'intifada until victory' in student union meetings.

On the basis of our bold approach and revolutionary demands, we have recruited and organised scores of new students.

But students alone can only do so much. Only the working class has the power to overthrow capitalism.

Nonetheless, students can play an important auxiliary role in the

class struggle, as seen with struggles like May '68 in France (see p7).

Our comrades are heavily involved in supporting strike action by the UCU (lecturers), NEU (teachers), RMT (rail workers), and BMA (doctors). Our activity includes attending picket lines, organising solidarity meetings, and raising strike funds.

Most recently, in South Wales, we have organised students to support the working-class community fighting the closure of the Port Talbot steelworks.

We need to be prepared for the titanic events coming our way. Only the communists have the clear, revolutionary ideas and programme capable of leading the movement.

The faster we can build the RCP, the more we will be able to lead united struggles of students and workers.

We know that the only way to save our education is to kick capitalism off campus, as part of a revolutionary fight to overthrow the system entirely.

If you agree, then join the communists on your campus! ●

GLASGOW UNI BOSSES ATTACK PRO-PALESTINE RECTOR

Students at the University of Glasgow rallied on 17 April to demand that the uni administration speak out in defence of Dr Ghassan Abu-Sittah, the democratically-elected, pro-Palestine Rector.

Instead, the bosses are "investigating" Ghassan, and disavowing his radical speeches. This is a direct concession to the anti-Palestine agenda emanating from the Tories and the ruling class.

Dr Abu-Sittah stood on a platform of divestment from arms companies and the fossil fuel industry; funding the reconstruction of academic institutions in Gaza; combating gender-based violence on campus; and fighting student poverty.

The struggle to defend Abu-Sittah could kickstart a broader student campaign in solidarity with Palestine, which could unite with university staff who are demanding the same things.

Ultimately this attack raises the question of who should run our universities: students and workers, or the bosses and shareholders?

Glasgow Communists

TOWARDS THE RCP NEW PODCAST EPISODE: BUILDING ON CAMPUS CLICK HERE

CARDIFF COMMUNISTS ORGANISE TO KICK JACOB REES-MOGG OFF CAMPUS

Cardiff University's Conservative Society has invited Tory MP Jacob Rees-Mogg to give a talk on 26 April.

In response, the Cardiff University Communists are organising a rally against his visit, at 17:30 outside Cardiff University Students' Union.

There is a deep anger amongst students about this visit, due to the rabid, reactionary politics that Rees-Mogg represents.

Last November, students overwhelmingly passed a motion to cut ties with Israeli interests and for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. Around the same time, the Conservative Society invited Tory politician Natasha Asghar to speak, days after she voted against a ceasefire in the Senedd.

Students were similarly angry at this provocation, but there was no medium to voice this.

So this time, the communists are taking action. We are calling out the situation for what it is: another example of university bosses turning a blind eye to imperialism and genocide.

Working alongside other anti-imperialist and pro-Palestine groups on campus, we have spent weeks posterizing, leafleting, holding lecture shout-outs, and discussing the best way forward.

In doing so, we are raising the banner of the RCP, and connecting the struggle against imperialism with the need for revolution.

We call upon the students' union to stand up and join us!

- Tories not welcome!
- Kick imperialism off campus!
- Down with the warmongers!

NO BUDGET, NO STAFF, NO STUDENTS: LINCOLN UNI BEGINS TO CRUMBLE

Staff member,
University of Lincoln

It's no secret that UK universities are under threat, facing mass budget cuts and job losses, and with the enrolment of international students nosediving.

At the beginning of the year, it was announced that Lincoln University must save 20% of its budget – a whopping £20 million in the 2023/24 academic year, with a further £10 million of cuts in 2024/25 – to stay afloat.

There is an atmosphere of unrest amongst staff, with day-to-day stretched smiles, tired eyes, and an acknowledgement that we might all lose our livelihoods within the coming months.

The story coming from university management is ever-changing. We know we are not being told the full picture.

Earlier this month, we found that the bosses have quietly slashed budgets that they previously agreed to keep intact.

While telling us we need to 'stick together', we are being blackmailed with warnings that criticising the institution could further harm student enrolment.

And when we asked, at an all-staff meeting, why management is still looking to open a London campus, the question was brushed aside.

Lincoln is not the only university facing hard times. 40% of UK universities are forecasting a budget deficit in 2024/25.

Fewer international students are applying to study in Britain than ever. And who can blame them? If sky-high tuition fees weren't enough to put them off, Tory immigration restrictions are nailing the coffin shut.

It is safe to presume that, without decisive action, more universities will go under, and more workers will be kicked to the curb.

We need a mass campaign of staff and students, aimed at reversing marketisation, and kicking capitalism out of education for good! ●



'DEFIANCE: FIGHTING THE FAR RIGHT' — LESSONS FOR COMBATING RACISM TODAY

Ravi Mistry

Channel 4's three-part series *Defiance: Fighting the Far Right* explores how Asians fought racism and the far-right groups like the National Front (NF) in the 1970s and '80s.

The documentary graphically depicts the reality of life for British Asians through archival footage, images, and interviews of those involved in the struggle.

Activist Balraj Purewal explains: "We knew that the whole of the Asian community, up and down the country, was under siege, and we knew the police were against us."

Asians and black Britons had the lowest paid jobs, and faced racial slurs, physical violence in schools and on the streets, and even the petrol-bombing of homes.

The struggle against the far right was driven primarily by Asian youth, who rebelled against the conservative leadership of organisations like the Indian Workers' Association.

Following the murder of Gudip Singh Chaggar and Altab Ali in the late 1970s, the documentary shows youth storming meetings demanding action; ousting the NF from Brick Lane; and rejecting civil disobedience in favour of militant, direct action against the far right.

In the course of this struggle, Sikh communities in West London joined hands with the Muslim Bengali community in East London. Trade unions and left-wing activists were also drawn into the movement.

Defiance links the fight against racism to the fight against the police, who, by defending the NF and refusing to investigate

racist murders, are shown to be racist to the core.

Other pillars of the establishment – the judiciary, the media, the Conservative Party – are all explicitly shown to be institutionally racist. Hatred was whipped up against Asians from the highest levels of the system.

Most angering of all is that justice has never been served for so many of the victims. Asians were dubiously jailed, given criminal records, and had their lives destroyed. Despite the real victories won, the fight against racism is far from over.

There is an irony in watching the series in 2024, under the first UK prime minister of Asian descent, who spouts the same dog-whistle racism as Margaret Thatcher did 40 years earlier.



Sunak – alongside the likes of Suella Braverman, Priti Patel, Sajid Javid, and Kemi Badenoch – illustrates that, although the form has changed, the essence of an institutionally racist Britain has not.

The lessons of those who fought racism yesterday are crucial in understanding

how racism can be fought today. In this respect, the series is a must-watch.

As *Defiance* demonstrates, only militant mass action by workers and youth, aimed at the entire oppressive establishment, can curb racism and the far right. ●

IRAN ATTACKS: NETANYAHU'S DANGEROUS GAMBLE

Alan Woods

On Saturday 13 April, Iran announced that it had launched an attack on Israel with over 300 drones and missiles.

Like a broken record, Biden's public response was immediate: "Our commitment to Israel's security against threats from Iran and its proxies is ironclad."

In private, however, he was not happy, since even someone of his limited intelligence knows that reprisals from Israel heighten the risk of a regional conflict that could directly draw in the US and other countries.

Such a scenario, which would have catastrophic effects on the world (and US) economy, wouldn't greatly enhance Biden's diminishing chances of winning the November election.

He would certainly like to 'deal with Iran' – and there are those in his administration who are itching to launch an attack – but has chosen to avoid an open clash with Tehran since the start of the Gaza conflict.

Sensing his weakness, the Iranians – who have no wish to be pushed into a war with the USA – calibrated their reaction to what was a blatant provocation by Israel.

Netanyahu's agenda

The Iranian attack was the long-anticipated response to the Israeli strike on 1 April on the Iranian Embassy in Damascus, which killed seven Iranians, including two veteran commanders.

Netanyahu has been banking all along on provoking a regional conflict, which would force the US to become directly involved on Israel's side.

Israel's military campaign in Gaza is not going as expected. Six months on, Hamas has not been smashed, and the hostages have not been rescued.

Netanyahu's support has collapsed. Protests in Israel are growing, with tens of thousands demanding early elections in which he would certainly be unseated and possibly face trial.

His situation is desperate. He has effectively run out of military options in Gaza, which has been mostly reduced to rubble, and has even been compelled to pull out most of his forces.

Looking around for another target, his attention was drawn ever more intensely on Iran.

It was necessary to provoke Iran into attacking Israel, which would then call upon its American friends to rush to its aid. The Israeli strike on the Iranian consulate was a deliberate provocation, designed to bring about that result.

Netanyahu is quite capable of plunging the whole region into war just to save his skin. If that causes a few difficulties for Joe Biden, that is his problem.

Tehran's manoeuvres

In the run up to Iran's attack, several countries urged Iran 'to exercise

restraint'. But there was no condemnation of Israel's strike in Damascus: no UN resolutions, no sanctions, nothing at all.

Here, once again, we see the double standards of the 'international community'. Countries like Iran, Russia, and China are constantly being accused of attempting to destroy the 'rule-based international order' – where the rules are simply made up by the US.

For a long time, Iran showed considerable restraint in the face of other provocations by Israel. But this time, Tehran could not afford to lose face.

The Iranians first raised the matter with the United Nations, which had a

The overwhelming majority of the projectiles were intercepted, many by the USA. There were hardly any casualties, and only one military base suffered damage.

The attack must be seen as a warning to Israel: 'this is all we intend to do for now, we do not want this to escalate further, the ball is in Israel's court.'

Hypocritical chorus

Biden has stated that he does not want an escalation. What he really means is 'we will continue to back Israel's massacre of the Palestinians, we do not want any other countries to impede that'.



duty to condemn the attack. But when a resolution was put before the Security Council, it was vetoed by the USA, Britain, and France.

The Iranian regime therefore had no alternative but to respond in a manner that would be seen as proportional to the Israeli provocation.

Despite all the hysteria surrounding the attack, it was indeed proportionate. Iran is known to possess highly sophisticated rockets and missiles. But the projectiles used were very basic models, normally used only to test air defences.

Advanced warnings were given to both the Americans and the Israelis before the attacks were launched. This enabled the Americans to greatly minimise the damage.

But it is precisely the continuation of the genocidal campaign against Gaza that is constantly provoking the people of the region.

The same disgusting hypocrisy is displayed by America's allies, including Britain and the European Union, who obediently responded to the Iranian attack with a well-rehearsed chorus of condemnation.

Rishi Sunak fell over himself to fall into line: "I condemn in the strongest terms the Iranian regime's reckless attack against Israel," which he said, "[risks] inflaming tensions and destabilising the region. Iran has once again demonstrated that it is intent on sowing chaos in its own backyard."

"Alongside our allies, we are urgently working to stabilise the situation and prevent further escalation. No one wants to see more bloodshed," he continued.

And to further the cause of world peace, Sunak announced that he was sending the RAF to the region in order to bomb anyone who disagreed with him.

His remarks were immediately echoed by his partner-in-crime, the 'Labour' leader Sir Keir Starmer.

The end of the affair?

Iran's mission to the UN said that "if Israel makes another mistake, the response... will be considerably more severe." But the statement also added that it regards the matter concluded. This is by no means clear.

The Israeli cabinet has promised a "significant response" to the Iranian attack, but so far none has been forthcoming. The response from the Biden administration has been tepid and far short of what Netanyahu expected from Washington.

There are some in Washington who would love an excuse to attack Iran directly. But that would have a massively destabilising effect in the whole region.

US diplomacy will now be frantically striving to perform a balancing act to get themselves out of a mess of their own making.

On one hand, they need to support Israel, which is now virtually their only reliable ally in the region. On the other, they need to prevent a regional war that could spiral dangerously out of control.

A very important element in the calculations of US imperialism is the need to prevent the growing anger of the masses in the region from reaching a point where it could lead to the overthrow of reactionary Arab regimes which are meant to be US allies.

There are clear signs that at least some of those regimes are feeling nervous about the whole situation. The Gulf states, for instance, publicly declared that the US should not use its bases on their territory or their airspace for any eventual attack on Iran.

Both the US and the UK have increased their military presence in the region. For its part, the IRGC has warned that any threat by the United States and Israel or from any other country would receive a reciprocal and proportionate response from Iran.

The flames of war are burning brightly in the Middle East. And there are not a few people who are anxious to whip them up to the point of a general conflagration. ●



Images: Hudson-Institute, Rajanews - Flickr

READ BETWEEN THE LINES

Young people should be grateful

"Young people must realise Britain needs to spend more on defence to protect their freedoms." So claims David Lockwood – one of the Ministry of Defence's top contractors.

In an interview with *The Telegraph*, the boss of the Babcock arms company alleges that our right to protest over issues like the climate crisis is under threat from the likes of Russia and China.

But the last time I checked, it was the *British* government that was passing laws restricting democratic rights, and beefing up the powers of the police to clamp down on peaceful demonstrations.

Perhaps, by Lockwood's logic, the working class should begin stockpiling weapons to defend our rights from Tory ministers?

This comes after a YouGov poll revealed that only 6% of young people back higher defence spending.

It's not hard to understand why. We can see that public money is being syphoned from hospitals and schools towards bombing innocents in Gaza and Yemen. We can see the imperialists and arms dealers enriching themselves on the back of genocide.

And yet, despite this, Lockwood – chief of a £2.5bn company that actively arms the Israeli regime – determines that it's these naive younguns that "don't know their freedom is at risk".

Young people's freedoms are under threat, Mr. Lockwood: by the likes of you and your cronies. And we do need war to defend ourselves: *class war*.

M Adia, Mile End

Whistleblower found dead

On 9 March, John Barnett was found in his car with a single 'self-inflicted' gunshot wound, on the day he was meant to testify against Boeing, his previous employer of more than 30 years, for knowingly fitting substandard parts on their aeroplanes.

A close friend, Jenifer, recalled John stating very clearly: "If anything happens to me, it's not suicide." The true cause of his death will likely never be determined.

What we do know is that ill-fitting door panels on Boeing's 737 planes have led to a number of fatalities. In 2018, 346 passengers were killed when a plane entered an uncontrolled nosedive.

Another whistleblower, Ed Pierson, explained that it was a "disaster waiting to happen", with engineers working overtime without the correct testing equipment and substandard parts.

Even after 2018, management refused to look into their own factories, choosing instead to place the blame on the airlines, despite what on-the-ground staff had been reporting.

Boeing recorded profits of \$19 billion directly after two fatal crashes. The failure to properly address safety concerns reveals the reckless nature of capitalism.

John Barnett's death will remain a mystery. But the logic of capitalism is not. This system incentivises shortcuts, to maximise its profits for the benefit of a few.

Tom Fowles, Norwich

US IMPERIALISM FAILS TO CURB HOUTHI ATTACKS IN RED SEA

Shaun Morris

Beginning last November, the Yemeni Houthi movement has effectively strangled maritime traffic coming through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, much to the dismay of US imperialism.

Despite hastily assembling an international coalition to fight the Houthis – including secret partners among the Arab states – the US-UK mission is showing itself to be a costly failure.

The Bab-el-Mandeb Strait once carried 15-20% of world trade through its waters. This has been throttled by 70-90% since December 2023.

This has had an enormous impact on shipping lines, doubling global shipping costs, and directly impacting Israel, whose economy has slumped since its latest war on Gaza began.

The Israeli Red Sea port city of Eilat has been hit particularly hard, with economic activity down by 80% and up to half of the port workers threatened with sudden layoffs.

Since October last year, Houthi forces have launched 99 attacks against ships off Yemen's coast, the overwhelming majority of which are linked to Israel or the United States.

To date, there have been only three deaths. Compare this to the US-UK bombing campaign, which only since January has made over 424 strikes in

Yemen, killing approximately 37 people – including civilians.

While the imperialists are keen to present this as all going according to plan, and is 'degrading' the Houthis' ability to attack, the truth is quite different when we peer beneath the surface.

For one thing, the attacks have not been stopped. The Houthis are adamant that the Red Sea will be closed to enemy vessels until there is a permanent ceasefire in Gaza and humanitarian relief for millions of starving Palestinians.

Bogged down

Moreover, the US military – despite being the biggest and best-equipped in the world – is unable to keep up.

It has long been known that the economics of the US's highly-sophisticated expensive weaponry being deployed against poor countries armed with old Soviet guns and cheap mass-produced drones doesn't add up.

In just a few months, this has been made abundantly clear in the Red Sea. Since October, the US Navy has accumulated a \$1 billion black hole in its budget according to the Navy Secretary.

The crew of the USS Eisenhower have complained of being overwhelmed by the Houthis' drone and missile bombardment, with Captain Dave Wroe calling it "relentless" and the most intense aircraft carrier deployment since WWII.

F/A-18 fighter jets take off from the deck of the Eisenhower over 100 times each day, costing \$22,000 per hour.

It costs the US treasury over \$2 million a month just to feed the crew, who are rumoured to be demoralised by having already spent seven months at sea at their battle stations almost every day, with no end in sight.



Image: Gage Skidmore, يبرح ل مال عال



Swedish imperialism welcomed into NATO

In March, Sweden was officially accepted as a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the US-led military alliance of western imperialism.

For decades, it was more or less possible for the capitalist nations to defend their interests without direct military confrontation. But with the global imperialist system in crisis, competition is ramping up. Trade wars, protectionism, and militarism are on the order of the day.

The US' interest in reducing the influence of its rivals coincides nicely with the interests of the Swedish bourgeoisie, which has major interests in the Baltics.

The US now has full freedom to access Sweden's military bases, airspace, waters, and infrastructure, providing it with total control over the Baltic region.

What's more, the shareholders of Sweden's well-developed arms industry will be rubbing their hands together with glee at the prospect of juicy contracts flooding in from its NATO partners.

Over the past four years, the Swedish government has doubled its spending on defence, and this is expected to rise further. All the while, Swedish workers

have had to endure deep cuts to schools, hospitals, and social services. So much for being a socialist paradise!

Shamefully, the reformist parties have failed to lift a finger to oppose this move. In fact, the Left Party is even trying to play it up as a positive thing!

Our comrades in the Swedish RCP have taken a firm anti-imperialist position: "We are not just fighting for withdrawal from NATO – we are fighting for the destruction of NATO. There is no friendly imperialism – imperialism needs to be crushed. To the global ravages of imperialism, our answer is a revolutionary internationalist struggle."

Read more:

communist.red/sweden7

Indian elections: Down with Modi!

Elections to India's parliament started on 19 April, and will continue throughout the whole of May.

The reactionary BJP-led Modi government has been in power for two terms. In this time, it has failed to meet any of its promises to the masses.

It has sold swathes of public property to multinationals; stirred up chauvinist hatred towards minorities and women; and backed Israel's slaughter in Gaza.

But the opposition parties are all rotten. The Stalinist Communist Parties have all abandoned Leninist principles and betrayed the masses.

The Indian workers, peasantry, and youth must rely on their own strength. Our comrades, organised in 'Bolshevik – IMT India', have called for a nationwide general strike of workers and peasants, aimed at bringing down Modi's regime and the capitalist system it upholds.

Read more:

communist.red/india7

Colombia: constitution or revolution?

The left-wing President of Colombia, Gustavo Petro, has recently called for a constitutional assembly to 'transform the state's institutions', as a proposed solution to the obstacles his government has faced trying to carry out reforms.

Predictably, the oligarchy and the right wing have raised a hullabaloo over this question, hysterically claiming that Petro is launching a 'coup d'état'!

In reality, the President's proposal is a reflection of the crisis of reformism. His government has been unable to implement any of its promised health, pension, or labour reforms due to the limits of capitalism.

There is no denying that the Colombian state and its 1991 Constitution are undemocratic and corrupt. But fighting for a new constitution, while leaving private property and the power of the oligarchy untouched, will not fix anything.

Petro's party, *Pacto Histórico*, thinks that the main task of the left is to fight for a more 'fair', 'rational', 'democratic' capitalism, before we can even think about posing the question of socialism. This reformist perspective is false to the core, and can only serve to confuse the movement.

Our Colombian comrades are arguing in favour of a mass revolutionary movement of the workers and peasants, ready to smash the capitalist state and replace it with its own democratic organisations; to disarm the paramilitary thugs of the oligarchy; and to nationalise the banks, land, and monopolies, and bring them under workers' control.

Read more:

communist.red/colombia7

THIS FORTNIGHT IN HISTORY ...



Easter Rising

On 24 April 1916, the Irish Citizen Army, together with the Irish Volunteers, rose up in arms against the might of the British Empire. This insurrection sent shockwaves around the world, and preceded the first Russian Revolution by almost a year.

James Connolly, one of the insurrection's leaders, was first and foremost a militant workers' leader and an outstanding Marxist.

For Connolly, the struggle for national liberation was inseparably tied to the founding of an Irish Workers' Republic and the emancipation of the labouring classes.

Due to unfavourable conditions, and the betrayals of the middle-class leaders of the Volunteers, the occupying British troops were able to swiftly suppress the Rising, executing its leaders.

Over a hundred years later, the fight for a Socialist United Ireland continues. It is the job of communists to defend the real traditions of Connolly and the Rising.

Read more: communist.red/easter7

Saur Revolution

On 28 April 1978, the People Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) took state power, overthrowing the oppressive regime of Mohammad Daud Khan, a member of Afghanistan's royal family.

The PDPA had no perspective for revolution, but were provoked by Daud's political suppression. Having built a base of support within the military, the party took charge of the country in a military coup.

The revolution brought about a number of progressive reforms, including sweeping land reform, nationalisation of

US diplomats call this an 'off-ramp' for the Houthis, but the need to de-escalate is mutual, and the US is prepared to concede everything except official recognition of the Houthi government.

These 'terrorists' – that the US has sworn never to negotiate with – have the upper hand, forcing the US to offer some kind of normalisation. This once again exposes the overstretched and weakened state of US imperialism in the Middle East. ●

industry, and measures to liberate women. But US imperialism could not tolerate a progressive, pro-Soviet power in the region. By 1979, Afghanistan became a battleground in the ongoing Cold War.

The Saur Revolution was unlike the Russian Revolution, where power was taken by a mass uprising of workers and peasants. Instead, it was an example of what Ted Grant called 'proletarian Bonapartism', where in this case capitalism was abolished by a section of the military.

Read more: communist.red/saur7

The 1968 French Revolution

On 2 May 1968, a revolutionary mass movement erupted in France. Beginning with a student occupation of the Sorbonne university, within weeks, a general strike had spread across the country, with strike committees beginning to establish workers' control.

Until this point, many on the left, including some so-called Marxists, concluded that the western working class had no revolutionary potential, due to the long period of upswing and prosperity following the end of WWII. They were soon forced to eat their words!

At the height of the movement, ten million workers were occupying the factories. A despairing President Charles de Gaulle reportedly told a US ambassador: "The game's up. In a few days the Communists will be in power."

In reality, the working class *could* have seized power, had it not been for the cowardly betrayals of the labour leaders – particularly the Stalinists at the head of the French Communist Party.

Read more: communist.red/may7

Fifty years ago, on 25 April 1974, the Portuguese Revolution began when a section of the military overthrew the dictatorship. This unleashed a workers' movement so powerful that capitalism could have been abolished had there existed a genuine communist leadership. Rui Faustino draws out the lessons from this inspiring but also tragic episode in history.

THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION OF 1974



In 1974 Portugal was a poor, isolated, and war-torn country.

Seven banks, dominated by seven families, controlled 83 percent of deposits, and 87 percent of commercial portfolios. Meanwhile, 75 percent of the active population were wage earners, with about a million working in industry.

Despite the wealth their labour created, these workers lived in miserable conditions under the boot of the brutal dictatorship in place since the 1920s.

Lenin used to say that war is the midwife of revolutions. In 1974, Portugal had been waging a war against the people of its African colonies for thirteen years.

This took a toll on the lower echelons of army officers who were forced to conduct this reactionary war. They quickly began to question the war and conspire against the dictatorship. Thus was born the Armed Forces Movement (MFA).

Revolution begins

On 25 April 1974, the MFA staged a coup d'état that the population immediately transformed into a revolution. In fact, it was the popular mobilisation that guaranteed the effective establishment of political and trade union freedoms.

Showing how decrepit and out of touch the regime was, no one lifted a finger to defend it. The revolution was one of the most peaceful in history.

A few days later, the May Day demonstrations – with the participation of millions of workers in brotherhood with soldiers and sailors – were an eloquent consecration of the revolution.

Soon, however, social unrest would spiral out of control. After May Day, the country experienced its biggest wave of industrial action until then.

Strikes, demonstrations, occupations, and even kidnappings of company directors were used as weapons of this spontaneous and explosive movement. These were often led by workers' committees, created ad-hoc in the companies.

This unstoppable tsunami of struggle won big wage increases (often 100 percent), reduced working hours, paid holidays, equal work, equal pay, expulsion of snitches from the workplace, etc.

Of course, from the point of view of the capitalists, this was a nightmare, but what could they do?

The revolution was stirring the depths of the country: domestic servants organised a union; high school students rebelled against exams; a pro-divorce commission was set up; political parties of the most varied tendencies were organised.

In short, the masses made the revolution.

In Portugal's colonies, the Portuguese troops fraternised with the 'enemy' and granted the right of self-determination to the African peoples. Five months later Guinea-Bissau was an independent country.

Masses defend revolution

General António Spínola, the Governor of Portuguese Guinea, assumed

the Presidency of the Republic after the coup with the assent of the MFA. The big capitalists were jubilant, thinking that he could stabilise the situation.

A demonstration of the 'silent majority' was thus called for 28 September, financed by the business oligarchy. Its aim was to provoke red Lisbon, giving Spínola the pretext so that in the midst of 'anarchy', he could proclaim a 'state of siege', assuming full powers.

The demonstration was stopped the day before when communists, socialists, and militants from other left-wing organisations erected barricades at the entrances to Lisbon, as well as surveillance posts all over the country.

In these checkpoints, shotguns and all kinds of weapons were discovered in the vehicles of the 'silent majority' demonstrators. The workers' mobilisation once again proved to be decisive, just as it was on 25 April. The initiative was entirely that of the masses and not with the MFA leadership. The failed coup ended with the resignation of General Spínola.

The MFA was now called upon to lead the revolution. The ranks of this military outfit were themselves radicalised by the political process, by fraternising with the masses.

Popular frontism

So powerful and widespread was the revolutionary movement, that even the newly created bourgeois parties such as the so-called 'Social Democratic Party' (PPD) and Democratic and Social Centre (CDS) felt it necessary to call themselves 'socialists'!

However, instead of organising the seizure of power by the workers, both the Socialist Party (SP) and the Communist Party (CP) entered the bourgeois provisional government to collaborate in the 'construction of democracy'. They moderated the demands of the workers, in the name of the 'anti-fascist alliance' with the so-called 'liberal' bourgeoisie.

Both the communist and socialist leaders justified this on the grounds that at that time fascism should be defeated and the democratisation of the country should be ensured. They argued that only (long) after the democratic revolution had been completed could there be a socialist revolution.

In reality this was a repetition of the same Stalinist 'popular frontism' that led to the defeat of the Spanish Revolution in the '30s.

More and more sections of the working class, however, were beginning to demand a radical transformation – not for the distant future, but for the present moment.

Forced by layoffs and the closure of companies, the workers took over their management. More than 1,000 firms would become self-managed over the course of 1975. Above all, it was the appeal of nationalisations that were gathering the most sympathy as a remedy for the crises in the large companies.

For example, on 2 January 1975, the General Assembly of the Bank Workers' Union in Lisbon demanded that the government nationalise the sector in order to "defend the interests of the Portuguese people against imperialism and the landowners".

In the same way, the estates in the Alentejo region were occupied by the rural proletariat.

Whole battalions of the working class had come to the conclusion that, in order to maintain the social advances of the revolution, they had to go all the way: the expropriation of the capitalists!

It is in this context that Spínola (already removed from the presidency) launched his last coup. But the coup plotters did not even have the support of the key military units.

Even the forces that responded to the call for sedition quickly faded away, surrounded by the workers that, once again,

took to the streets and the barracks in defence of the revolution.

With the failed coup, the provisional government made a sharp turn to the left, adopting some nationalisations as a weapon against the counter-revolutionary capitalists.

Workers take the initiative

Marx said that sometimes the revolution needs the 'whip' of the counter-revolution, i.e., that in a situation of stalemate, the attempts of the bourgeoisie to regain control can result in a further radicalisation of the process.

Contrary to what the leaders of the left believed, the workers proved that it was not necessary to wait years to implement the 'maximum programme', but only a few hours.

On 11 March 1975, without a plan or a central slogan, the bank workers decided to go on strike, occupy the banks, and freeze the movement of capital. They posted large posters on the façade of the bank premises proclaiming the "People's Bank", while demanding their nationalisation.

After the banks, it was the turn of the insurance companies. And since the banks and insurance companies owned or had a stake in a number of the country's basic enterprises, their total expropriation became not only simpler, but absolutely logical.

At the same time, workers' self-management was spreading among many small and medium-sized enterprises. In the countryside of the south, in a third of the country, the Agrarian Reform was advancing under pressure from below, with lands and farms being taken.

All over the country, especially in Red Lisbon and Alentejo, there were hundreds and even thousands of workers', neighbourhood, and soldiers' committees created to coordinate the struggles.

They were the embryos of workers' power. But no mass party raised the demand for the unification of the committees at a local, regional and national level.

Because of this lack of coordination, the nationalised enterprises continued to operate in a system of 'free competition', according to the rules of capitalism. Also, foreign capital was not touched, in order to avoid international reprisals.

Elections

The elections to the Constituent Assembly took place on the first anniversary of the revolution.

With a turnout of 90 percent, the SP was the big winner with 37.9 percent of the votes, followed by the liberal PPD with 26.4 percent. The CP came in third with 12.5 percent.

The right-wing CDS occupied fourth place with 7.6 percent, followed by the MDP (a communist ally) with 4.5 percent.

The results showed that even in 'red Lisbon', the socialists, not the communists, won. At the same time, they showed a deep cleavage between a conservative north and a revolutionary south, although the left (SP + CP + MDP + far-left) won by a wide margin.

The left had won the elections. But within the left, the political differences were great.

First of all, the weak result of the Communist Party stood out. At the beginning of the revolution, the CP possessed all the trump cards: the prestige of the anti-fascist struggle they had led, an organisation with a few thousand militants, experienced cadres, and a national structure.

The CP led the trade unions, had solid support in the media, and a clandestine military organisation.

Stalinism, however, no longer possessed the prestige and political authority of the immediate post-war period. Its opportunism during the revolution was however the key factor in its loss of support.

As for the Socialist Party, it was founded only in 1973. At first, it had only a few hundred militants. At the beginning of the revolution, without 'responsibilities' at the trade union level, and seeking to gain support among the workers, its leaders often acted to the left of the CP. At least in words they supported workers' self-management and nationalisations.

Divisions emerge

At the beginning of the revolution, the SP and CP were called to the provisional government in coalition with the PPD. This meant they took the flak for the policies of the provisional government.

However, with only the CP having a real influence on the working class at the beginning of the revolution, it was above all this party that had to bear the burden of moderating and stopping the 'excesses' of the workers' struggle.

On the other hand, the leadership of the SP, without deep ties to the working class, had a free hand to opportunistically overtake the CP from the left, at least in terms of its rhetoric.

After the elections, the working class began to appear politically divided. The growing hostility between socialists and communists condemned the workers to disorientation and inaction. In turn, the counterrevolution was now in a position to regain the initiative.

The MFA splits

With the workers' movement split into two blocs, all those who were opposed to the revolution, but had not had the courage to show it, began to emerge. A wave of assaults on the communist and trade unions headquarters in the north of the country was initiated.

During the following months, far-right terrorism, aided by the Catholic Church, put the country on fire, effectively eliminating the freedom to be communist in several parts of the country.

As for the MFA, it split along class lines. Some officers hesitantly fell to the side of the proletariat, but the vast majority resolutely went over to the side of the big bourgeoisie.

Until now, the MFA had relied on the workers' movement to resist the reactionary coups, but it could not remain immune to the conflicts that were now dividing the country.

In the middle of August 1975, the 'moderates' set out their views in the

'Document of the Nine'. This was signed by 80 percent of the army officers, who were tired of so much 'anarcho-populism'.

In early September 1975, there was a reshuffling of the MFA, giving a clear majority to the moderates.

Counter-revolution

A huge turning point had taken place within the armed forces. However, the conquest of a majority within the MFA by the moderates was important, but insufficient.

The radicals continued to control important military forces. Insubordination spread through the rank and file with the creation of the 'United Soldiers Will Win' movement, which demanded the expulsion of reactionary officers from the barracks and the destruction of the bourgeois army. They held huge demonstrations with thousands of soldiers.

A new provisional government was formed, this time dividing the portfolios according to the electoral influence of each party. The SP and the PPD were dominant. The CP was represented with a minister, thus having one foot inside the government, and the other in every demonstration against its policies.

From the beginning, it was clear that this new government would carry out a policy of open counter-revolution. Socialism was still the officially pursued 'goal', but they said it would not immediately save the country from crisis. Instead the government preached discipline and austerity.

This provoked great resistance on the part of the workers. Not least because the duality of power that continued to exist within the armed forces deprived the government of a reliable instrument with which to repress the workers' movement.

Coup

In spite of the political divisions within the working class, this period was marked by the third great wave of strikes against the austerity that the government intended to apply.

Every strike was a small war. And in an unprecedented action, the government itself went on strike, protesting against the strikes and the climate of unrest.

When construction workers surrounded and kidnapped the deputies of the Constituent Assembly on 11 November - so that the government would stop 'striking' and sign the collective bargaining agreement - the latter could do nothing but concede.

The government had ordered troops to 'liberate' the parliament, but when they got there, the soldiers fraternised with the workers, sharing bread, sardines, and red wine.

It was a classic dilemma: neither the bourgeoisie could dominate, nor the proletariat had the leadership to create a new order.

Why was this? Because there was no mass revolutionary party with an anti-capitalist programme capable of overcoming the sectarianism and division that existed in the working class.

Such a programme would have included the multiplication of the workers', residents', soldiers', sailors, and student committees. Above all, it would have called for their unification and coordination at the national level as organs of struggle and management capable of overthrowing the bourgeois state.

This situation could exist for a while, but it couldn't last forever.

Under the cover of a protest by paratroopers, a coup was consummated on 25 November. Led by 'moderate' officers and the SP, and accepted by the CP (in exchange for its full participation in the bourgeois-democratic 'normalisation' that would follow), hundreds of radical officers were arrested in the process.

The dismantling of the military left and the restoration of military discipline were ultimately achieved by this coup. This endgame was the result of the absence of a united and resolute command of the military left. It was successful because, unlike the previous coups, there was no mass movement against it.

Crisis of leadership

Throughout the revolutionary period, political leadership was lacking. The revolutionary workers and soldiers defeated several coup attempts, occupied land, factories, houses, forced nationalisations, and forged powerful unions and parties.

At one point in 1975, *Time* magazine wrote: "Capitalism is dead in Portugal". Unfortunately it wasn't.

It was not for lack of mobilisation or consciousness or spirit for sacrifice that the revolution was lost. What more could have been asked of the workers at that time? What the movement was missing was a leadership that could rise to the occasion!

Fifty years later capitalism is once again in deep crisis. This is having an impact on the consciousness of the masses.

Revolutionary times loom before us! With the collapse in the credibility of both Stalinism and social democracy, however, there are today incomparably more favourable conditions for the construction of a revolutionary current within the workers' and youth movements. This is our task today. ●



Rob Sewell

Instead of telling the truth, the leaders of the so-called Communist Party of Britain (CPB) attempt to downplay the horrors of the Moscow Trials of the 1930s, where Lenin's closest collaborators, together with countless others, were systematically murdered by Stalin.

The main defendant at the Trials, Leon Trotsky, Lenin's closest collaborator, was subsequently assassinated by a Stalinist agent in 1940.

Between 1936 and 1938, a series of frame-up trials were held in Moscow, the first being the 'Case of the Trotskyite, Zinovievite Terrorist Centre'.

In these trials, false confessions about heinous crimes were beaten out of defendants by the Stalinist betrayers of the revolution. Apart from the confessions, no other evidence was produced. They were then condemned and shot as 'saboteurs', 'Gestapo agents' and 'counter-revolutionaries'.

Out of Lenin's Central Committee, only Stalin and Kollontai remained (she capitulated and was sent off to Norway as a diplomat). The rest were dead.

Stalin, who was portrayed as a great 'war leader', shot most of the General Staff of the Red Army at this time, including the great Tukhachevsky.

Bloodbath

The gulf between Stalinism and Bolshevism was so great that Stalin needed to destroy all the vestiges of the past beyond the Oppositionists. It created a river of blood between Stalinism and Bolshevism.

In trying to place the responsibility of Stalinism on one man, Khrushchev revealed in 1956 that many loyal Stalinists were murdered:

"It was determined that of the 139 members and candidates of the Party's Central Committee who were elected at the 17th Congress [1934], 98 persons, that is, 70% were arrested and shot... of 1,966 delegates with either voting or advisory rights, 1,108 persons were arrested on charges of anti-revolutionary crimes..."

Countless people disappeared in the bloodbath. But the British Stalinists, even today, play down these mass murders and the destruction of Bolshevism.

"The show trials of former Soviet and Comintern leaders such as Kamenev, Zinoviev and Bukharin did little to check the growing popularity of the Communist Party and Marxist ideas in Britain", comments Robert Griffiths, the present general secretary of the CPB, in his book *The Gleam of Socialism*.

THE MOSCOW TRIALS COVER-UP

"When respected lawyers, politicians and diplomats from the US, Britain and elsewhere attended the Moscow show trials and confirmed that the defendants had indeed confessed to being members of a 'Trotsky-fascist' campaign of espionage and subversion, Britain's Communists were not alone in believing that such a plot had indeed existed."

He then states: "There is no serious evidence that the British CP leadership knew the full extent of the purges, or the degree to which the incarceration of several million Soviet citizens - many of them loyal communists - lacked any justification."

Complicit

They knew alright. The British CP leaders blindly accepted everything and joined in the filthy slanders on a daily basis. They were Stalin's allies.

The "respected" lawyer was D. N. Pritt, KC, a Stalinist fellow traveller. "None can challenge either Mr Pritt's integrity or his competence to understand the significance of court procedure and the value of evidence", wrote the *Daily Worker* glowingly.

J.R. Campbell, a leading member and former editor of the *Daily Worker*, had been in Moscow during the purges and admitted what had been going on. But he maintained he could do nothing given the approaching war.

This may have been some crude excuse for silence. But Campbell was not silent. He wrote a book, *Soviet Policy and its Critics*, published in 1939, which defended every action of Stalin and argued that the purge trials were genuine.

The *Daily Worker* was full of attacks on the accused, in which Pollitt wrote of the "whipping out of the bureaucratic degenerates associated with fascism." (16/6/37)

On 14 June 1937, the paper announced: "Red Army Traitors Executed", with the comment "the workers of Britain will rejoice." It routinely denounced "the fascist agent Trotsky". According to Pollitt, "the trials in Moscow represent a new triumph in the history of progress". (DW, 12 March 1938)

Cover-up

The horrors under Stalinism are merely dismissed as 'mistakes', 'violations', and 'excesses' by the British Stalinist leaders, who have attempted to identify the regime with 'socialism' and 'communism'.

But this is completely false. While they had nationalised economies, they were ruled by a bureaucratic elite. They had nothing in common with Bolshevism, socialism or Lenin.

This leads the CPB to cover-up its real history, its justification of Stalinism. Only by breaking with this heritage can genuine communists find the road to real Bolshevism and the spotless heritage of Lenin and Trotsky. ●

Lenin's General Staff of 1917

STALIN, THE EXECUTIONER, ALONE REMAINS



Read Ted Grant's 1975 analysis of the revolution at communist.red/portugal7

JOIN THE RCP IN YOUR AREA!



Branches

1. Ashington
2. Birmingham 1
3. Birmingham 2
4. Brighton
5. Bristol 1
6. Bristol 2
7. Cambridge 1
8. Cambridge 2
9. Cambridge 3
10. Cambridge 4
11. Canterbury
12. Cardiff 1
13. Cardiff 2
14. Cardiff 3
15. Cardiff 4
16. Chelmsford
17. Cornwall
18. Coventry (City)
19. Coventry (Warwick University)
20. Cramlington
21. Durham
22. Edinburgh 1
23. Edinburgh 2
24. Glasgow (Central)
25. Glasgow (West)
26. Hexham
27. Hull
28. Ipswich 1
29. Ipswich 2
30. Lancaster 1
31. Lancaster 2
32. Leeds 1
33. Leeds 2
34. Leeds 3
35. Leeds Arts
36. Leeds Beckett
37. Leicester
38. Lincoln
39. Liverpool
40. London (Balham)

41. London (Barking)
42. London (Bermondsey)
43. London (Bloomsbury)
44. London (Brixton & Tooting)
45. London (Camden)
46. London (Croydon)
47. London (Ealing)
48. London (Farringdon)
49. London (Finsbury Park)
50. London (Fulham)
51. London (Greenwich)
52. London (Hackney)
53. London (Hammersmith)
54. London (Harrow)
55. London (Holborn)
56. London (Holloway)
57. London (Kensington)
58. London (Kilburn)
59. London (Kingston)
60. London (Kingsway)
61. London (Lincoln's Inn)
62. London (Mile End)
63. London (New Cross)
64. London (Newham)
65. London (Strand)
66. London (Stratford)
67. London (Uxbridge)
68. London (Whitechapel)
69. London (Woolwich)
70. Loughborough
71. Manchester 1 (Fallowfield)
72. Manchester 2
73. Newcastle 1
74. Newcastle 2
75. Norwich (City)
76. Norwich (NUA)
77. Norwich (UEA 1)
78. Norwich (UEA 2)
79. Nottingham
80. Oxford 1
81. Oxford 2

82. Plymouth
83. Portsmouth
84. Reading
85. Salford
86. Sheffield (City)
87. Sheffield (Hallam)
88. Sheffield (UoS 1)
89. Sheffield (UoS 2)
90. Southampton
91. Surrey
92. Swansea
93. Tyneside
94. York 1
95. York 2

Cells

96. Barnsley
97. Bury St Edmunds
98. Cardiff 5
99. Cardiff College
100. Cheltenham
101. Chester
102. Colchester
103. Ely
104. Godmanchester & Huntingdon
105. Halifax
106. Harrogate
107. Hartlepool
108. Huddersfield
109. Livingston
110. London (Elephant & Castle)
111. London (Leyton)
112. London (Wood Green)
113. Luton
114. Middlesbrough
115. Northamptonshire
116. Preston
117. Scunthorpe
118. Stevenage
119. St Helen's
120. Windsor

RCP FOUNDING CONGRESS AGENDA

Friday

Why we're founding the RCP: Launching the RCI manifesto 18:30-21:00

This session will be a rally to present the manifesto of the Revolutionary Communist International; the founding document of a new International.

are connecting Marxist ideas with the movements of the working class.

Learning from Lenin 15:30-17:30

For the RCP, our political ideas always come first. This session will be a report on our education work and our strategy to educate an organisation of revolutionary Marxists.

Saturday

Theses on the coming British revolution 10:00-17:00

Delegates will discuss these theses and amendments which form the basis of our perspectives and tasks for the coming period.

Building a Revolutionary Communist International 18:00-19:30

This session will provide a report on the current state and work of the International and underline the need to build revolutionary communist parties in all countries (not just Britain).

Financing the RCP: financial report & fighting fund collection 17:30-19:00

Delegates will review the RCP's finances and proposed targets. They will vote on the targets and the auditors' report and be followed by a historic financial collection.

Monday

How the RCP works: adopting a new constitution and electing a leadership 10:00-12:00

In this session delegates will debate amendments, vote on the party's constitution (its rules and political structures), and elect our Central Committee.

Sunday

How communists are preparing for power in Britain 10:00-17:30

Our biggest priority is to find, convince, and recruit the thousands of potential revolutionaries out there. Delegates will discuss the report and relevant amendments and contribute reports of their own branches' recruitment work and growth.

Climbing the next peak: a paper each week 13:00-15:00

As the pace of events increases and the RCP grows, we should set our sights on moving on from a fortnightly to a weekly publication to connect our ideas more widely. This session will explain what needs to be done to go weekly.

Training class fighters 13:00-15:00

Delegates will discuss the report and contribute reports of how their own branches'

Closing remarks 15:00-15:30

We will draw together the most important threads of the discussions and set out a perspective for building the RCP as we return to our branches.

**CLICK
HERE
TO JOIN US
TODAY!**

DON'T SEE YOUR AREA ON THE MAP? THEN HELP US BUILD!

We know that there are millions of young people and workers in Britain today who are open to communist ideas: all we have to do is find them!

Wherever you are, you can help us. But you'll need tools. *The Communist Cell*

Starter Pack, which you can get from shop.com-munist.red, has everything you'll need to find other communists, as well as to educate yourself in revolutionary theory.

Don't delay: if we want to overthrow capitalism, we'll have to get to work! •

Get your party building materials at shop.com-munist.red or click here



HOW COMMUNISTS ARE PREPARING FOR POWER IN BRITAIN

The following statement, drafted by the Central Committee, outlines the tactics and methods that party members will use to find, recruit, and organise a new generation of young communists in the coming year. It will be discussed and voted on at the Revolutionary Communist Party's upcoming founding congress.

We resolve to found the Revolutionary Communist Party. We do so standing on the brink of the most tempestuous years ever faced by British capitalism.

The bourgeoisie plan to navigate the rising storm with barbarous attacks on the working class. Detonations of popular anger are inevitable, but will dissipate like steam unless channelled by proletarian organisations and directed against their root cause: the capitalist system.

The 'left' - in its various reformist and sectarian shades - is organically incapable of turning anger into change. They re-trace well-trodden tracks of opportunism, ultra-leftism, and identity politics, which have been shown to lead nowhere. They have no revolutionary perspectives for Britain.

We are founding the Revolutionary Communist Party as a clean break from the so-called 'left'. We aim far higher, in words and in practice. Our mission is to lead the working class to the overthrow of capitalism in Britain, and to the conquest of power by the working class, as part of the struggle for a world socialist federation.

Recruitment

Our doors are open to workers and youth who are realising that the fight for communism is the only guarantee of our future.

Every party member must use their initiative, as part of their branch's strategy, to locate these workers and students, in workplaces, schools, and campuses, and recruit them to the Party.

Our doors are also open to those who are entering into politics over specific issues, such as industrial action or Palestine solidarity, and drawing revolutionary conclusions.

Every party member must become skilled at linking particular struggles with the general fight for socialism, and recruiting new party members on that basis.

For recruitment, *The Communist* is every party member's most formidable weapon. We should use it as a banner to attract as-yet unorganised communists; as a handbook of facts, figures, and arguments, linking the particular with the general; and as a demonstration of the revolutionary work that the communists are doing, in Britain and internationally.

Every party member should carry copies of *The Communist* at all times, use it on recruitment stalls, and utilise it in all our fields of work - whether that be workplaces, universities, or schools. We aim to double our sales by the 2025 congress.

With party members as intrepid recruiters, we can grow from a small force to a mass organisation on the waves of the coming British revolution.

This congress resolves that every party member should recruit and consolidate at least one new member over the next 12 months. We agree on a target for party membership of 2,000 by the 2025 congress.

If we do our work properly then this is a modest aim. The 2,000 must be used as a launch pad to 5,000 and then 10,000 members. This is entirely possible and necessary in the next few years.

Every new recruit must be trained in carrying out party work. Our party is too small for passengers. We're not a friendship circle, a charity, or a support group. We're a cadre organisation of active, pioneering, professional revolutionaries.

Party members must responsibly delegate tasks to new recruits as fast as possible, and train them on the job. As Trotsky once explained: "revolutionaries grow as their tasks become greater."

Every branch should have the ambition to build a new branch of the party around a workplace, school, university, or local area, and to educate and train the necessary new members to be able to do so. This congress resolves that our party should have 200 active branches by the 2025 congress.

Marxist theory

The bourgeoisie smothers society with its ideas and outlook. The so-called 'left' gives these ideas varying degrees of 'progressive' cover.

The Revolutionary Communist Party resolves to wage a ferocious struggle for Marxist theory in its ranks, and for revolutionary ideas amongst the working class.

The iron core of our party is the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. It's the highest responsibility of every party member to perpetually study, conquer, and apply these ideas, with a particular focus on the ideas and methods of Lenin in 2024.

It's the duty of party members to organise high-quality political education of new recruits, as the basis for the party's agitational work amongst the working class.

This congress resolves to use the *In Defence of Marxism* theoretical magazine and the centre pages of *The Communist* as the spine of our party's political education. We should double the subscriptions to both publications by the 2025 congress.

A fighting party

We are founding the Revolutionary Communist Party, not as a propaganda circle, but as a fighting party sinking roots among a broader layer of the working class and youth.

Every party member is responsible for attending

demonstrations, picket lines, and meetings to promote the party's programme, under the direction of the branch.

All party members should strive to reflect this activity by submitting reports to *The Communist*.

Social explosions giving rise to big movements are approaching. Party members must break with the psychology and methods of the past.

Communists must win over the most revolutionary layer of these movements to the party through the bold and skillful use of agitation, alongside an ability to patiently explain our programme and perspectives.

If we grow and educate, our party will be the decisive factor in the coming revolutionary situation. The key to world history lies in our hands.

Finance

The tasks and targets of the Revolutionary Communist Party are ambitious, and require material means to give them material force. This means funds.

We urgently need to raise the subs. All comrades and new joiners should aim to pay at least one day's wages every month.

All members should take personal responsibility for raising funds from the party's periphery in a systematic way.

We resolve to expand the party's apparatus as fast as possible in line with our financial means. We aim to raise the funds for a weekly paper and a nationwide regional full-time apparatus by the 2025 congress.

Revolutionary audacity

Our relatively untested party will, within the next five or ten years, be hurled into the turmoil of the British revolution.

The target of building, educating, and training our forces is imposed upon us by history. We resolve to meet this historical challenge.

Revolutionary audacity and fearless optimism are key characteristics of Revolutionary Communist Party members.

We are shattering the old mentality of the past period. The RCP is building a force that will lead the working class to the conquest of power. We are raising our sights to this future. ●

BUILDING THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY

Cheltenham

Last week, within the space of a couple of days we had formed a group of four potential recruits in Cheltenham in a WhatsApp group who were ready to build a cell.

The first two had written in, we called immediately and asked, 'Do you want to help build the RCP?'. When they answered yes, they were asked 'Do you know any other communists?'

Both of them did, and so we went from two to four and created a WhatsApp group to plan when we could meet and discuss.

To top it all off, we then found out that there was already a cell of five in Cheltenham that had been up and running for two months!

This means that the branch launch will have somewhere between nine and twelve comrades and potential recruits in attendance.

From nothing in Cheltenham a few months ago to potentially two branches, this is the kind of explosive growth we can get everywhere!

Sheffield

Four Sheffield comrades had a recruitment stall today outside the Uni of Sheffield SU and sold nine copies of the paper.

What was particularly exciting was that there was a school trip of sixth form students who were desperate to get their hands on a communist paper.

Most of them did not have cash so we gave away old copies as well as selling new ones. Their enthusiasm was well summed up when one of them said "yeah exactly! Smash the system!".

We had a similar experience a few weeks ago where one comrade just stood with the paper and amassed a crowd of around 20 school students listening to what he had to say.

A teacher had to push to the front to see what the hell all the students were looking at. After listening to the comrade speak she actually ended up buying a paper herself!

It was very funny hearing the school kids got told off for holding up the paper in their school photo.

What both experiences ultimately show is that each year the youth seem to be getting more and more radical!

Liverpool

Branch building is not linear. In fact building branches, like any process, has its ups and downs.

We recently went through a stale period where some comrades fell out of activity and recruitment was slowing down. So as a branch we reflected on what we could be doing better.



Sheffield comrades

After a review of our work, we were able to turn things around quite quickly. We have been able to get people in the door, but we need to keep them there.

This did not involve anything particularly herculean or unique. It simply meant walking before we could run.

We have advised against leading comrades substituting themselves, and are working to transform all comrades into recruiters.

Comrades held recruitment stalls in completely new areas for us, like Birkenhead, and write-ins flooded in.

The results of our new efforts are that we have recruited three new comrades.

Crucially, we have made sure that comrades are following up with new recruits individually and placing initiative for recruitment with them.

Whether it is giving new comrades lead offs, speeches, or encouraging them to intervene, our job is not to leave them on their own, but to coach and help them develop.

Network Rail

I have just managed to sell two copies of Issue 6 of *The Communist* in my workplace at Network Rail. I have always carried and read the paper at work, and participated in any political discussions, but these are sometimes infrequent.

However, the centre page of Issue 6 on the partition of India caught the attention of two co-workers independently of one another.

The first provoked a discussion on imperialism and war, which eventually drew in the whole of the team. The next day the second co-worker asked me about the article and the paper, and we discussed the attitude of communists towards religion for an hour.

Both are interested in communism more broadly, and already asked when the next issue will be - so with luck they will be reading all about themselves in Issue 7! In the meantime I look forward to discussing the contents of Issue 6 with them.

More importantly, this could hopefully be the breakthrough required to begin engaging the whole depot in political discussions and eventually recruiting them to the RCP.



CIVIL WAR: THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF IMPARTIALITY

Stan Laight

The USA is no stranger to war, as the preeminent imperialist power for the last century and outcome of two revolutionary wars in 1776 and 1861.

Today, the global crisis of capitalism has again placed wars and revolutions on the order of the day. The American ruling class is increasingly nervous that social polarisation could erupt into armed conflict.

Against this backdrop, writer and director Alex Garland's depiction of a future US civil war appears timely and prescient.

Blurred battlelines

Civil War follows a quartet of journalists travelling across the USA, through combat zones, to interview the president, hiding in the White House.

Several 'succession' states are battling against the US government. But beyond hints and allusions it is never explained why or how the conflict began, or what it's about.

Art should be judged on its own terms, and not necessarily criticised for any lack of class analysis. However, as is often stated, war is the continuation of politics by other means.

It is therefore a missed opportunity that *Civil War* actively goes out of its way to avoid offering any explicitly political content, as

this could have provided a richer, more meaningful and insightful story.

For example, there is a tense scene where the protagonists encounter a group of armed men burying dead bodies in a mass grave, but it's not actually evident which side of the war they are on. Without knowing their motivation or interests, the potential ramifications for the characters are muddled.

Realist art, by contrast, benefits from reflecting and bringing out the contradictions inherent in class society.

'Neutrality'

The focus of the film is on the journalists and their attempts to document the war. They are shown as being neutral in this conflict, with their press badges acting as 'access all areas' passes.

By purposefully omitting the political character of the civil war, Garland intends to portray journalists as the real victims – as liberal journalists 'just trying to do their jobs'.

But this message misses the mark. In Gaza, Palestinian journalists attempting to tell the truth have been murdered by the Israeli Defence Forces. Meanwhile, western media outlets have acted as propagandistic mouthpieces for the imperialists.

The idea of 'neutrality' in this context is a farce.

In the words of the late John Pilger, however: "It is not enough for journalists to see themselves as mere messengers, without understanding the hidden agendas of the message and the myths that surround it."

The same is true for cinema. By refusing to take a position, Garland's latest feature lacks any real substance or meaning.

There is much more that could be said about *Civil War*. But in the absence of any genuine political content, there is this: if you like big explosions and graphic scenes of the war dead, then this movie is right up your street. ●



FALLOUT – CAPITALISM NEVER CHANGES

Thomas Soud and Luke Rogers

(WARNING: THIS REVIEW CONTAINS SPOILERS)

Fallout is the first on-screen adaptation of the post-apocalyptic RPG video game franchise. It is rooted in a divergent reality, where the cheery optimism of the 1950s never died but the rest of the world did.

In this world, the USA is dominated by four big monopolies, controlling the strings of their puppet state while locked into a bitter, Cold War-esque imperialist struggle against a Stalinist China.

Unchallenged and unchecked, the warmongering monopolists make the decision that nuclear annihilation would increase their respective share prices.

In the year 2077, they start the Great War and wipe out 95 percent of humanity in the process.

Human nature

The bulk of the show takes place 200 years later. Violence, robbery, and cannibalism are commonplace. Humanity has been reduced to barbarism, clinging to life in the unforgiving nuclear wasteland.

This is contrasted with the underground 'Vaults'; bunkers designed to keep the rich and powerful safe during the apocalypse. They are worlds of plenty.

In Vault 33, private property has been eliminated and a form of communism has developed.

Its dwellers abhor violence, love education, and live in harmony.

Far from a Hobbesian stance on human nature, *Fallout* makes clear how far the conditions people live in can shape their behaviour.

Productive forces

This interplay between the productive forces and the social structures that exist on top of them is the driving force of *Fallout*.

In contrast to the video game's infamous conclusion that "war never changes", the television series points out it is *who* controls the productive forces that makes all the difference.

It is the same nuclear technology that brought the end of the world in the hands of the imperialists, which now provides near super-abundance for Vault 33.

The monopolies still closely guard access to this technology, thwarting attempts to share this prosperity.

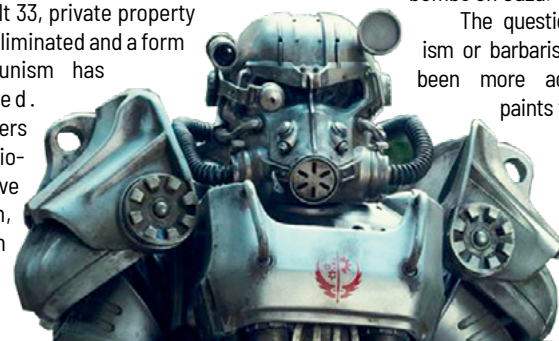
Prepared to wipe out the last sliver of human civilisation to ensure complete control, the point is clear: it is the capitalists who are the greatest barbarians of them all.

The world on fire

There are countless parallels between the world depicted in the show and our world today. At the same time as *Fallout* dropped, so did hundreds of bombs on Gaza.

The question of socialism or barbarism has never been more acute. *Fallout* paints for us a clear,

cautionary picture of what this barbarism could look like. ●



DEFEND CULTURE FROM CAPITALIST CUTS!

BRENTFORD ARTS CENTRE GETS THE AXE

Rob Walsh and Joe Attard, Ealing

Hounslow Borough Council is forging ahead with plans to close the Watermans Arts Centre in Brentford – another casualty of capitalism's war on the arts.

This historic venue has hosted such legendary artists as Ravi Shankar and Elvis Costello, and is a beacon of culture in a borough with one of the highest poverty levels in London.

After being saved through crowdfunding in 2020, Hounslow Arts Trust says Watermans must close because of rising costs and falling revenue.

Profits vs culture

In 2018, Hounslow's Labour-controlled council approved a plan to relocate the arts centre and "redevelop" the site into flats. It will be at least five years before the "replacement" starts – if it is ever built at all! – and dozens of staff will be laid off.

The final notice period was also a mere 22 days, undercutting any attempts to forestall it. Everyone suspects that behind these bureaucrats in the council and Arts Trust lie the private property developers, who stand to make millions.

Local fightback

The short notice, lack of consultation, and disinterest from Labour councillors, have all angered local people.

At a hastily arranged public campaign meeting to save Watermans, over 80 attendees expressed their deep frustration and sorrow.

Wendy, a local artist, said to *The Communist*:

"We urgently need those in a position to reverse this sudden decision..."

The promise we were given from the council was that the Arts Centre would remain at its current location until new premises were created to house it."

Unfortunately, it seems the council lied.

Communists present raised the idea of an occupation to force the borough council back to the table. This was met with applause and cries of: "Hear hear!"

Arts under attack

Theatres, cinemas, and galleries are closing at a rate of knots, as the Tories slash funding. And if Hounslow is anything to go by, Starmer's Labour cannot be trusted to protect culture either.

Workers and youth must organise to defend the arts from the cynics and fatcats who understand the price of everything and the value of nothing. ●

SUNDERLAND GLASS CENTRE CLOSURE

Francis Murphy, Sunderland

Years of neglect has left the National Glass Centre (NGC) in Sunderland literally falling apart. Corrosion, leaks, and structural defects to the tune of £45 million are forcing the centre to close down.

Rather than undertake the necessary repairs, the University of Sunderland (UoS) has recently decided behind closed doors to demolish this internationally renowned institution.

Tradition

Sunderland has a long tradition of glass making, going all the way back to 674 AD.

The region became a major exporter of glass throughout Europe following the industrial revolution, until the capitalists ran the industry into the ground and commercial glass production ceased in 2007.

Despite this decline, Sunderland's glass production remains a source of local pride. The NGC was established in 1998 and is a vital resource for training new generations of glass artists.

Closure

Last month, UoS remained determined to close the NGC, informing

staff that relocating equipment is not financially viable, and the glass and ceramics course would be terminated by 2026.

The result is scores of jobs lost, and the creative potential of aspiring artists squandered. This is another devastating blow to the region's heritage.

With the Vice Chancellor of the University earning upwards of £260,000 a year, and millions being splurged on vanity projects, talk about 'lack of funds' feels like a slap in the face.

'Levelling-up'

These unelected, unaccountable UoS fat cats are stamping out the last remnants of Sunderland's industrial heritage.

Both the local Labour council and the Tory government have allowed this profiteering to go unchecked – all while waxing lyrical about 'levelling-up' the North, and Sunderland being a 'city of culture'!

We need a militant struggle and workers' control to save jobs, defend education, and wrest our heritage from the claws of capitalism. ●



LOETRY

From The Worker's Maypole

Your cause is the hope of the world,
In your strife is the life of the race,
The workers' flag Freedom unfurled
Is the veil of the bright future's face.

Be ye many or few drawn together,
Let your message be clear on this day;
Be ye birds of the spring, of one feather
In this—that ye sing on May-Day.

Of the new life that still lieth hidden,
Though its shadow is cast before;
The new birth of hope that unbidden
Surely comes, as the sea to the shore.

Stand fast, then, Oh Workers, your ground,
Together pull, strong and united:
Link your hands like a chain the world round,
If you will that your hopes be required.

When the World's Workers, sisters and brothers,
Shall build, in the new coming years,
A lair house of life—not for others,
For the earth and its fullness is theirs.

Walter Crane, 1894



LETTERS

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

'Sick note culture'

Sunak has launched an attack on workers who call in sick, in particular those with long-term mental health issues.

Britain is the only country whose workforce permanently shrunk after COVID, as thousands of workers failed to return to work.

Why? Because for a decade-and-a-half, the intensity of work has skyrocketed, and the cost of the crisis has been paid for by the mental and physical health of workers.

People's health and lives are collateral damage to these ghouls. Let's not forget how many people take their own lives when their benefits are cut.

Nothing will come from begging the Tories. Nor can a Starmer government save us. Workers can only rely on their own strength, to overthrow the real sickness in society: capitalism!

Deep, Barking

NHS Staff Mental Health Services

It was announced last week that mental health services for NHS workers will not take on any new 'clients' for the next 12 months. The service was already on its knees, with its budget cut from £40m to just £2m.

Suicide rates are 24 percent higher amongst NHS professionals compared to the general population, and 66,000 NHS staff live with symptoms of PTSD (since COVID).

This will worsen the exodus of NHS workers. We'll see more staff burnout, suicides, and more pressure on understaffed services. Our patients will have to wait longer to see a health professional.

Meanwhile, UK arms sales hit a record-breaking £8.5bn last year. Our waterways are polluted, our hospitals and schools are crumbling, our children are starving and our taxes go to genocide in Gaza.

The bosses and bankers will always have money for war but never for the poor.

Raj, NHS worker

They're cutting the mental health service for doctors and nurses. One doctor commits suicide every three weeks and one nurse every week.

Really disgraceful from the Tories. And with Wes Streeting's recent gushing over private healthcare, this likely won't be reversed by Labour.

It's time to fight back!

Will, NHS Doctor

University rent racket

I live in university owned accommodation in a college that is known for its 'accessibility' to students from disadvantaged backgrounds. My rent is one of the highest in the city.

I was away for a month over the Easter holiday and let my friend who was asked to move out her accommodation over the holidays (so they can rent the rooms to non-students) stay in my room.

Somehow the university found out and we were told she'd have to get out of my room and pay for yet another room in the university.

Students deserve to be seen as students, not cash cows. We must organise workers and students to fight against the marketisation of education.

Tara, Oxford

Pro-Palestine conference shutdown

On 12 April, a congress in Berlin was violently shut down by the Police. The occasion? A conference to discuss the suffering of Palestinians.

The police informed the organisers that the Ministry of the Interior had blacklisted Ghassan Abu-Sittah, (a surgeon who was due to talk of his experiences in Gazan hospitals) and former Greek finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis.

Western Liberal democracy is simply a farce; all means including violence will be used to silence all those who speak out against the brutal imperialist Israeli regime backed by their allies in Europe.

We will of course continue to speak out against the oppression of the Palestinians and the ongoing genocide.

Paul Williams, Castleton

British values

According to Suella Braverman, a recent High Court decision expressed "British values".

This set of values, imposed on schools as part of the 2011 Prevent strategy includes; individual liberty and religious tolerance. So which of these lofty values are being expressed here? Let's see.

The decision in this case was to uphold Michaela School's ban on students praying after a muslim student challenged the ban in court, with accusations the school 'made being muslim seem toxic'. So not the individual liberty of students then, or tolerance for different faiths.

As usual 'British values' mean whatever the ruling class needs them to. It's easy to see which 'values' Michaela School enforces that Braverman would admire however.

The school is infamous for its draconian policies, requiring students to walk corridors in absolute silence. It even prohibits students from gathering in groups of more than four!

For the capitalist class this is the role schools should play: not expanding the horizons of young people, but forcing students to conform to produce an obedient, exploitable workforce.

Alex Randell, Manchester

Collapsing school roof

Are you a teacher at a school without reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC)? Are you feeling left out that your school isn't collapsing in on itself? Do you feel that your students are just too safe?

Well, have no fear! Under capitalism, it's sure that your school too will collapse at some point in the future!

In the case of my school, chronic underfunding has meant that neglected building repairs have built up for years upon years, to the point where entire corridors are collapsing!

As a teacher, I was utterly thrilled to find out that an entire quarter of the school is now shut off because it's way too unsafe for students or staff to enter.

All rooms in the school (including my classroom) have at least one water-damaged panel or crumbling walls. It's no surprise really that one of the roofs went, in the end.

Thankfully, the wise management at my school chose not to repair these aforementioned issues despite knowing about them.

The building which has not been fixed since the 80s? A splash of paint and nobody'll know the difference, right?

Mark Anthony, South London NEU (personal capacity)

My friend arrived a few minutes later, and naturally our discussion turned to the paper on the table between us. She'd seen the *Socialist Appeal* previously, so I was curious to see her response to the new paper.

To be honest, I was sceptical. I thought she might be put off by the bold-er communist messaging and imagery. Which is why I was surprised when she said "This is so much better!"

As she later clarified to me: "it's less intimidating and seems refreshed - more modern and similar to other papers. More inviting and accessible."

J, Falmouth

We want to hear what you think! Send in your feedback on *The Communist* at communist.red/write



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In Defence of Marxism

The latest issue of *In Defence of Marxism* is themed around the African revolution. It contains a wealth of articles on the struggle against imperialism, and the permanent revolution.

In *50 years since the Ethiopian Revolution*, Ben Curry analyses the complex and often contradictory events that laid the basis for the proletarian bonapartism of Mengistu.

Jules Legendre gives an account of the 'forgotten war' waged by French imperialism in Cameroon in the 1950-60s. And Jorge Martin subjects *Fanon's Wretched of the Earth* to a Marxist critique.

This issue also carries Lenin's draft theses on the colonial question, as well as Trotsky's letter to South African revolutionaries. Both show the genuine communist approach to the struggle of oppressed nations.

For revolutionary communists, these articles are not historical curiosities but important and hard-won lessons with which class fighters can arm themselves for the revolutionary struggles to come.

If you are serious about changing the world, then get a copy today and study! ●



A comrade in Manchester asks "How can I write for *The Communist*?"

What makes a workers' newspaper stand out from the bosses' rags is that it provides a genuine voice for the working class.

This is what we want *The Communist* to be, and every branch and cell has a role to play in that.

You - yes, you! - are *The Communist's* eyes and ears on the ground. You have a responsibility to ensure that this paper fully reflects the life, the experiences, the questions and concerns of workers and young people.

So keep your eyes peeled for things going on around you. Read the local press, look out for upcoming strikes and campaigns.

Talk to the people around you about what's going on in their workplaces and communities. That includes the people you meet while out recruiting on the streets.

Perhaps you overheard that someone has just been sacked for trying to unionise their workplace, or that students at the local college have been trying to organise in solidarity with Palestine.

Note this all down, and encourage your comrades to do the same. Then, during your weekly branch meeting, set aside ten minutes or so to discuss these ideas, and send people out to investigate.

If you're visiting a strike or a demonstration, introduce yourself as a

correspondent for *The Communist* and ask some key questions that get to the heart of the matter.

This can be a great ice-breaker for a wider discussion about politics, and it might well encourage people to buy a copy and learn more about joining the party!

If there's a more experienced comrade in your branch, ask them for help with drafting something up. If there's not, send it in anyway!

Our editorial team doesn't care if what you've written is worthy of a Pulitzer prize. It's the *content* we care about. We can send you feedback to help you hone your skills.

Given that there's only so much space in the paper, we also ask that you keep your submissions below 300 words in most cases.

Besides local issues, there's plenty more you can send in. Head to the link below to read our guidance on regular features like *Them and Us*, *Read Between the Lines*, and *Day in the Life*. You should also send in questions, feedback, and suggestions for articles.

Lastly, *The Communist* is more than just a newspaper, it's a tool for organising the party. And that means we need reports of all our on-the-ground activity, to share vital lessons on recruitment, education, campaigns, etc.

So there's plenty to be getting on with, and, as with all things, the best way to learn is by getting stuck in! ●

FEEDBACK ON THE COMMUNIST

I have been so incredibly impressed and learned so much from the last five issues of *The Communist*.

The last three issues in particular have had a wonderful range of topics with compelling analysis, and the papers' layouts have been attractive and intuitive. The cover art for Issue 5 in particular was beautiful!

E, Cotswolds

Recently I was able to sell a paper to a new work colleague who spoke of being a communist and wanting to get organised.

When we met up the next day, she'd read the whole paper in a day and spoke of how the paper is refreshing to see, with the ideas and language being perfect in highlighting the endless problems

of capitalism. She was immediately recruited on this basis.

R, London

It's been really nice to see the development of the aims section on the very first page. It began in Issue 1 very much being a side note in an already jam packed issue. Now it has become carved into the paper, drawing the reader's eye to it and allowing for our aims to be echoed by every reader and seller.

L, London

Recently, I met up with a dear friend of mine at our local Waterstones. I sat down to read *The Communist* feeling thoroughly revolutionary.

'MILITANT' TRADE UNION LEADERS AND THE COMING LABOUR GOVERNMENT

Sean Hodges

"The working class is back!" So declared Mick Lynch, RMT general secretary, in the summer of 2022, as a year-long strike wave began to rock the country.

After forty years of defeats and retreats, the working class in Britain had begun to wake up and flex its muscles. And during this upheaval, a layer of more militant leaders came to the fore of the trade union movement.

From Lynch himself, to Sharon Graham of Unite, to figures like Kevin Courtney in the NEU: these 'left' union leaders spoke defiantly about standing up to the Tories and the bosses, and fighting for workers.

The Tory government looked like it was on the ropes, especially when faced with coordinated days of action by public sector unions such as the NEU and PCS.

In the end, however, Sunak and co. were able to successfully splinter the movement, with many union leaderships encouraging members to accept somewhat desultory pay deals.

Now, having failed their members on the industrial front, union leaders are turning to the political plane, and are placing their hopes in a coming Starmer Labour government.

But we must be clear: there is no solution for workers down this path.

No trust in Starmer

From day one, Starmer and his cronies have made it very clear who they intend to represent: not the working class, but big business.

Every utterance from the Labour leaders has confirmed this outlook. Keir Starmer and his City sidekick Rachel Reeves have watered down their pledges and reneged on their promises in order to appease the capitalists. And there are rumblings that policies around workers' rights will be next to go.

The message is clear: a future Starmer government cannot be trusted to scrap the Tories' anti-union laws, or to take any steps in the interests of ordinary workers.

'Wait for Labour'

It is little surprise to see the more right-wing unions backing Starmer. Unison and GMB, for example, are infected through-and-through with a conservative, bureaucratic leadership that prides itself on 'pragmatic politics' (read: class collaboration). The same is true of the TUC leaders.

The miserable response of these unions to devastating council cuts across the country is proof enough of this tendency.

'Left' leaders, including those hailed as 'militants', are also falling into line, however.

On the picket line and at rallies, such leaders are happy to speak in bold terms, with appeals for class struggle.

Politically, however, their lack of a clear, independent class

programme leads them to default towards supporting right-wing reformists such as Starmer - just as the Labour leaders are looking to their right, cosying up to the establishment and the employers.

Indeed, Mick Lynch recently went so far as to call for activists to "grow up" and vote Labour.

Elsewhere, the 'left' NEU leaders, including new general secretary Daniel Kebede, have argued that "the time is not right" for another national strike ballot - despite a strong mood for such action amongst rank-and-file members in education.

Kebede may have officially distanced himself and the union from specifically endorsing any political party. Nevertheless, it is evident from their behaviour that the NEU leadership is waiting for Labour to take office, in the hopes that Starmer will fix the manifold problems facing the country's schools and teachers.

Unite leaders have taken a similar stance in relation to the crises confronting British industry. In Port Talbot, for example, the union's leaders have dragged their feet when it comes to calling for strike action. Instead, they have effectively told workers to 'wait for Labour' to come in and save the steelworks by handing over further massive handouts to Tata bosses.

Disarming the movement

Explicitly or otherwise, the trade unions are all hoping that a Labour government will provide more favourable conditions for them to negotiate a few extra crumbs for their members. But sowing such illusions is a huge mistake.

The Labour leaders have been unambiguous in their appeals to the capitalists. Any promises to workers, by contrast, have been either vague or entirely absent.

Far from being 'pragmatic' or 'sensible', then, placing any hopes in a Starmer government are at best naive, and at worst harmful - disarming the workers' movement precisely when it should be on its guard.

This shows the limits of even the most 'radical' of the trade union leaders.

Their reformist outlook lends them a completely narrow perspective. They only see the next strike, never the bigger picture; never the roots of the problem: capitalism.

Above all, they have no faith in the strength of the working class - either to win industrial disputes, or to change society. Hence their knee-jerk attempts to reach a compromise with the Tories and the employers, demobilising workers precisely at the moment when audacity is required.

Instead of trusting in the power of the working class, and giving confidence to workers, they place their fate in hands of the right-wing reformists, who in turn are desperate to appear 'respectable' in the eyes of the establishment.

The result is that all the leaders of the labour movement are clinging to the coattails of the ruling class - precisely at a time when the working class is stirring into action, being radicalised by the hammer blow of events.

Prepare for battle

Instead of waiting for Westminster saviours, it is vital that the trade union movement prepares for battle. This includes steeling members for those struggles that will erupt when Labour is in power, continuing the Tories' attacks on the working class.

Rather than holding off on national ballots, the unions should

be redoubling efforts to mobilise workers: not only to face down this ailing Tory administration, but to be ready to confront the right-wing Labour government that will succeed it.

Workers must trust only in their own strength. Neither Starmer's Labour nor the capitalist courts will protect the working class against the bosses' onslaught.

Above all, the political limits of these 'left' leaders demonstrate the need for a clear, class-conscious, genuinely-militant leadership across the workers' movement.

Rather than abandoning the domain of 'politics' to Starmer and the right wing, the trade union leaders should be advancing a bold socialist programme that links workers' industrial struggles to the political task of overthrowing capitalism.

For starters, this means taking the commanding heights of the economy - including the big banks and major monopolies - out of the hands of the bosses, and putting the working class in charge.

Only in this way can industries and councils be saved from ruin, with production and services run in the interests of ordinary people.

The communists of the RCP are striving to build such a leadership. •



Images by Mark Thomas (www.markthomasphotos) and Steve Eason ([flickr, steve_eason](https://www.flickr.com/photos/steve_eason/))

UNISON SERVICE GROUP ELECTIONS: TIME FOR FIGHTING LEADERSHIP

Unison Communists

Balloting in the Unison service group executive (SGE) elections takes place from 22 April through to 17 May.

These important elections take place against the background of a crumbling Tory government, a leap in inflation, and the prospect of a right-wing Labour government, which no one (except the trade union leaders) expects will deliver any change.

The public sector faces an unparalleled crisis. To pick just two examples: in local government, councils have barely enough money to cover their statutory duties; in the NHS, meanwhile, there are 40,000 vacancies in nursing alone.

Unison members are constantly being forced to work harder, with fewer and fewer people having to cover more and more work. There are huge gaps in provision. For much of the time, management relies on the good will of members to keep the wheels turning.

The Unison bureaucracy has consistently sought to avoid conflict with the government over these issues - even as other unions are taking to the field of struggle.

They pride themselves on their 'pragmatism'. But their conservative approach is leading the union, and the public sector it serves, directly over a cliff.

'Representatives'

Our union's political 'representation', meanwhile, involves characters such as Wilma Brown, who also serves on the union's health service executive in Scotland.

Picked to stand as a Labour candidate, the party soon had to withdraw its endorsement of Brown when her questionable social media activity was brought to light. This included likes of racially-charged tweets aimed at SNP First Minister Humza Yousaf.

Unison was ever-so proud of Brown when she first stood. But there's been no word on whether they feel the same way about her now.

The forthcoming SGE elections are therefore significant. These SGEs make the key decisions on pay campaigns and service conditions across the different parts of the union.

Leadership

Unison needs a fighting leadership at every level: from the NEC, down to every local branch. As such, the Unison Communists are calling for members to vote for the left candidates backed by Time for Real Change (TFRC).

We would, however, urge TFRC to grasp the nettle, in order to advance from the position it finds itself in going into these elections.

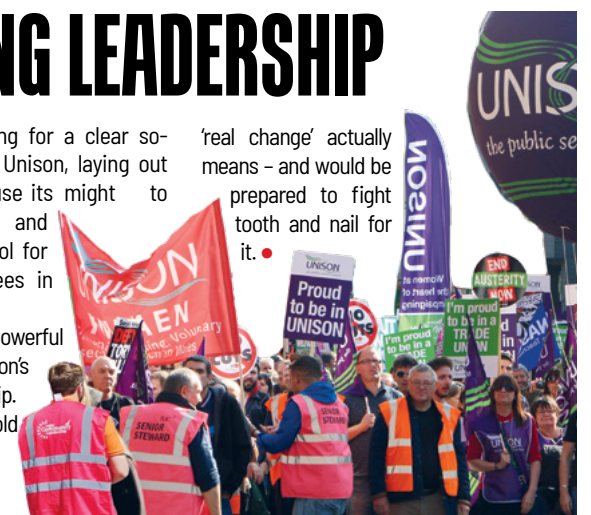
The union bureaucracy and the right wing have the weight of the establishment behind them, not to mention an army of 1200 full-timers. To successfully beat this machine, TFRC cannot afford to stick to purely organisational campaigning, but go for the jugular.

This means fighting for a clear socialist programme for Unison, laying out how the union could use its might to smash Tory austerity and bring about real control for public sector employees in the workplace.

This would be a powerful rallying cry for Unison's long-ignored membership.

With such a bold approach, members would finally see what

'real change' actually means - and would be prepared to fight tooth and nail for it. •



May Day Solidarity from Coventry TUC



**STOP THE CUTS
STOP THE WAR ON GAZA**

CIVIL SERVANTS CHALLENGE ARMS SALES

A Cardiff PCS member

The PCS union is currently contemplating legal action to defend its members in the Department for Business and Trade, in the context of Israel's onslaught on Gaza.

These workers are worried that by carrying out the work of the department, including handling arms export licences to Israel, they may be legally complicit in Netanyahu's war crimes.

PCS has been demanding to see the legal advice given to Tory ministers, following the International Court of Justice's preliminary ruling that Israel's actions may amount to genocide.

The response is unlikely to fill staff with confidence. The government has stated that "the question of criminal liability for civil servants is very unlikely to arise", but that further legal advice cannot be shared due to confidentiality.

How can these staff – who can see that the work they are being asked to

do is likely supporting atrocities in Palestine – have any trust in government lawyers and ministers?

It's clear that these same Tory warmongers who have been cheering Israel on since day one are defending their own interests by dragging their feet.

At the same time, trade unionists must be wary of purely legal routes of struggle. A battle in the courts is likely to be an uphill one. And there is no guarantee that judges will side with workers on this issue. At the end of the day, they are part of the same capitalist state that grants arms licences in the first place.

Legal action should be pursued. But PCS should also make use of the mood to utilise other, more militant measures at its disposal – including balloting members for action, if necessary.

If the Tories think they can make PCS members complicit in their crimes, they're going to get a nasty shock! ●

NEU RANK AND FILE ORGANISE FOR ACTION

Tommaso Verga, South London NEU (personal capacity)

On 15 April, an online meeting was held with the participation of over 70 districts of the National Education Union (NEU).

Last year, teachers were convinced by union leaders to accept a poorly-funded 6.5% pay increase. This means that further action is necessary.

Far from being demoralised, this meeting showed that rank-and-file NEU members are feeling more positive and militant than at any point in recent history.

The mood was energetic. The contributions focused on a range of subjects, but a debate over strategy is emerging.

One suggestion from several attendees was for reps and local leadership to actively initiate local disputes and campaigns over issues affecting their

schools. This shows a healthy desire to build grassroots organisation.

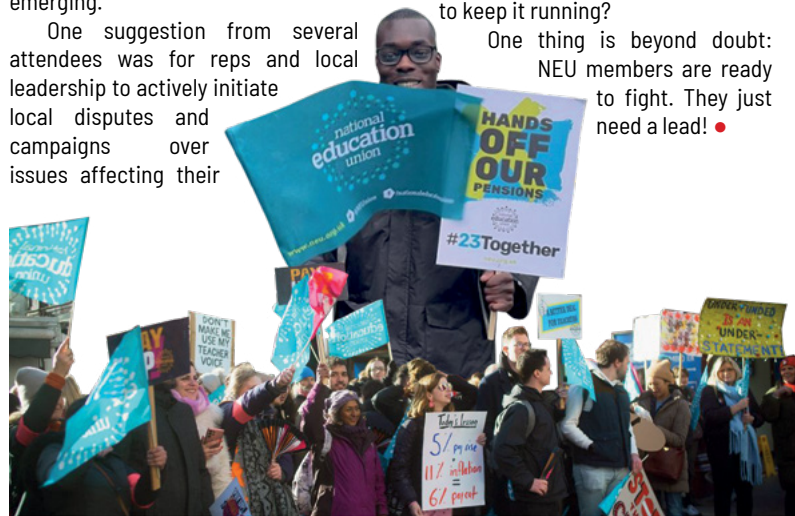
It is also true, however, that this energy has to be channelled at a national level. Local disputes, while often necessary, are not enough to tackle decades of chronic underfunding and cuts.

Nobody expects the next pay offer to be anything less than pathetic. The question, therefore, is whether the union leadership is ready to act accordingly.

We must mobilise the rank and file, and prepare for a serious campaign that links our fight to those of sister unions.

Ultimately, the question must be asked: who is best placed to save education – the people cutting it to the bone, or the people who work tirelessly to keep it running?

One thing is beyond doubt: NEU members are ready to fight. They just need a lead! ●



HIGHER EDUCATION UNDER ATTACK: KICK OUT THE BOSSES AND BUREAUCRATS!

Caleb Sharp, Greenwich UCU (personal capacity)

In light of the recent Tory restrictions on international student visas, senior management at universities across the UK have braced for large cuts in revenue.

As per usual, the bureaucrats in charge of higher education have opted for a strategy of coordinated mass redundancies across the country.

According to the UCU's website, 51 universities are experiencing "restructuring" programmes, aimed at cutting labour costs, without any relief for the remaining members of staff.

The UCU branch at the University of Kent reports a cut of 100 members of staff. At Goldsmiths University in London, a staggering 132 jobs are set to go.

According to a representative of Goldsmiths UCU, emails warning of redundancies were a carbon copy of those sent to staff at Kent Uni – even bearing the latter's logo and signature!

This episode not only shows how lazy campus bosses are, but how they coordinate with one another in their efforts to manage higher education on behalf of big business.

In a special UCU solidarity meeting held on 15 April, academic and support staff correctly concluded that the situation goes beyond problems with individual universities or managers.

We all know that this attack needs to be faced down nationally, not just locally. One UCU member voiced what many were thinking when she criticised

the union's leadership, stating: "If our leaders were braver, we'd already have a strategy for national action."

Indeed the betrayals of Jo Grady in the previous national campaign remain fresh in the minds of many union members.

UCU members do not have to fight this battle alone, however. Staff at Kent University mentioned that they have had great support from the student population, many of whom have already pledged to rally in the support of striking workers.

Representatives from Goldsmiths, Aberdeen, and several other universities also rightly recognised the need to win over students, and resolved to raise demands to this end, such as abolishing tuition fees.

The marketisation of education has gutted the sector at every level. From primary to higher education: structures, workers' rights, and even literal buildings are crumbling.

It's high time that the people who actually run education were in charge. That's why the communists call for worker and student control of universities.

Members of the UCU must link with students and sister unions to 'kick capitalism out of higher education', through coordinated, national strike action.

Such a strategy, based around a clear socialist programme that takes the commanding heights of the economy into public hands, can end this cultural vandalism for good.

As individuals, we are expendable to the bosses. But as a class, we are essential. We must utilise this potential power, and fight to put workers and students in control of our campuses. ●



ASLEF TRAIN DRIVERS PREPARE FOR FURTHER ACTION

Hugh, Oxford

ASLEF train drivers were out on strike across the country for several days in early April, in a long-running struggle over pay, which goes back to 2019. This will be followed by further action between 7-9 May.

A pay offer is on the table. But workers know that this comes with strings attached.

In the words of one ASLEF driver we spoke to: "[This deal] is a poisoned chalice that offers more pay while attacking conditions, eroding sick pay, and taking away our annual leave. Essentially, it isn't a pay rise, it's an increase in working hours."

Alongside job cuts to key roles that have been taking place for years, including to train guards responsible for passenger safety, overwork is a serious problem on the railways.

It's not uncommon to hear how train drivers – many of whom already work in excess of 40 hour weeks – are expected to break themselves in order to earn a pay rise in line with the cost of living.

The effects of current overtime bans highlights the rail companies' Achilles' heel. "The importance of overtime to the business models of these companies is massive," stated

one driver. "[So much so] that they often respond by reducing levels of service [when a ban is called]."

Without this extra work, the railways simply grind to a halt – as train companies have effectively been forced to admit, by cancelling services that they can no longer run.

That doesn't mean negotiations have been productive, however. While drivers battle to maintain their living standards, the fifteen (!) rail companies employing ASLEF workers pass the buck to one another, with the government "bankrolling it all", in the words of one union member.

As the battles drag on, ASLEF members are aware that the Tories are happy to let this struggle run out until the general election. Then it'll be Labour's problem to deal with.

Both train drivers and passengers want the same thing: expanded routes, more trains operating, and better services. But these demands are not on the agenda for the ladies and gentlemen in charge of Britain's infrastructure. They're too busy defending genocides and publishing crap memoirs.

It's time for workers to take charge, and run our railways properly for a change! ●



WHAT IS PROFIT?

In the last issue, we discussed the question of workers' wages. But if you've been reading the capitalist newspapers, you'll know that the bosses are always complaining, saying that high wages are undesirable.

At the end of the day, that's because higher wages for workers mean lower profits for the bosses.

In paying their employees, the capitalists are purchasing workers' labour-power: their ability to work. In return, they get to keep whatever is produced by these workers, be it goods or services, in order to sell these on the market.

If the value of this product was identical to that paid out in wages, then the capitalist would gain nothing from this process.

Equally, 'buying cheap and selling dear' wouldn't help. The capitalists would just end up trying to swindle one another. Collectively, they would be back at square one, without any overall increase in their total wealth.

So how do the capitalists make their profits?

Let's take a chef, working in a kitchen somewhere. They might get £100 in wages per day. But across that same day, the total amount of food they prepare in a day might be sold by the restaurant for thousands.

Now, it's the chef's work that has made the meal and provided something of value to hungry customers. Nobody goes out for a bowl of raw ingredients, especially not at current prices – they want a tasty cooked dish!

And yet, despite this, even after accounting for the costs of the premises, the equipment, the ingredients, other staff, and various overheads, the kitchen workers only get back in wages a fraction of the value that they've actually produced. The rest goes to the bosses: the restaurant owners.

This is where the capitalists' profit ultimately comes from: the unpaid labour of the working class.

Profits aren't the result of some 'trick', like a magician pulling rabbits out of a hat. Rather, the capitalists' fortunes derive from the fact that they own the means of production: the factories, machinery, and infrastructure needed to produce the things we all need, along with the hoards of money needed to invest in new productive capacity.

That is why communists call for these resources to be seized – expropriated – from the capitalists, with organised workers put in control instead. ●

Got a question about the capitalist system? Want to understand the economy and exploitation? Submit a question to us by selecting 'under the bonnet' at communist.red/write!



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DOWN WITH IMPERIALISM! DOWN WITH THE WARMONGERS!



Images: Gage Skidmore, UK Parliament, World Economic Forum, and Chatham House - Flickr

FOR A SOCIALIST FEDERATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Fiona Lali

Addressing Parliament, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak described the Iranian regime as 'despotic', after their launch of over 300 drones and missiles at Israel.

These are sanctimonious words from a leader with no democratic mandate; from a man who has abetted the murder of tens of thousands of innocent Gazans.

The British establishment have become faithful servants to those with real power on the world stage; to the most reactionary force on the planet: US imperialism.

President Joe Biden has funded and facilitated the ongoing onslaught against the Palestinians.

At the same time, as Netanyahu's war drags on, public support for Israel in the US is waning. The Israeli massacre is wrecking Biden's electoral hopes.

The US President is locked into a conflict that is unravelling beyond his control. Israel's provocative attacks on Iran and its proxies reflect this.

For his own narrow interests, to distract from the genocidal slaughter in Gaza, and to remain in power, Netanyahu is actively spreading the conflict across the Middle East. This will produce immense instability throughout the region, and across the world.

Netanyahu's reckless antics are designed to force Biden's hand; to pressure Washington to do more for its allies in the

Middle East. This includes getting the US Congress to agree to billions of dollars in military support for Israel, recently pushed through after a long logjam.

The representatives of 'our own' ruling class, meanwhile, including Rishi Sunak and loyal establishment lapdog 'Sir' Keir Starmer, have been falling over themselves to prove their fealty to British and US imperialism.

Both party leaders gave their backing to US-led efforts to intercept Iranian missiles, with RAF fighter jets helping to shoot down drones destined for Israel.

More recently, the Tory leader committed to increasing UK military expenditure to 2.5 percent of GDP. Sunak says he will put defence spending "on a war footing",

building mountains of bombs. And no doubt Starmer will chime in with "me too". At the same time, schools, hospitals, social care, welfare, and more are being cut to the bone.

Occasionally these hypocrites shed crocodile tears for those caught up in the carnage - like the aid workers killed by a recent Israeli attack. But in reality, they have aided and abetted this death and destruction. And they are intent on handing the working class the bill.

Biden and Netanyahu; Sunak and Starmer: every one of these imperialists have played their part in creating a wasteland.

Moralistic appeals to their conscience are fruitless. We cannot stop the war with

words. UN resolutions and International Court of Justice rulings 'challenging' Israel are toothless. These institutions are entirely beholden to the interests of the major powers.

The only force that we can rely on; the only force capable of halting the imperialists' war machine, is the mobilisation of the international working class.

All this conflict and barbarism is a product of capitalism, in its insatiable search for profits, markets, and spheres of influence.

To end war for good, in Gaza, across the Middle East, and worldwide, we must mobilise to kick out all the imperialist warmongers, and overthrow the capitalist system they uphold. •