

THE COMMUNIST.RED • ISSUE 6 • 10 APR 2024 • £2/£5

THE COMMUNIST



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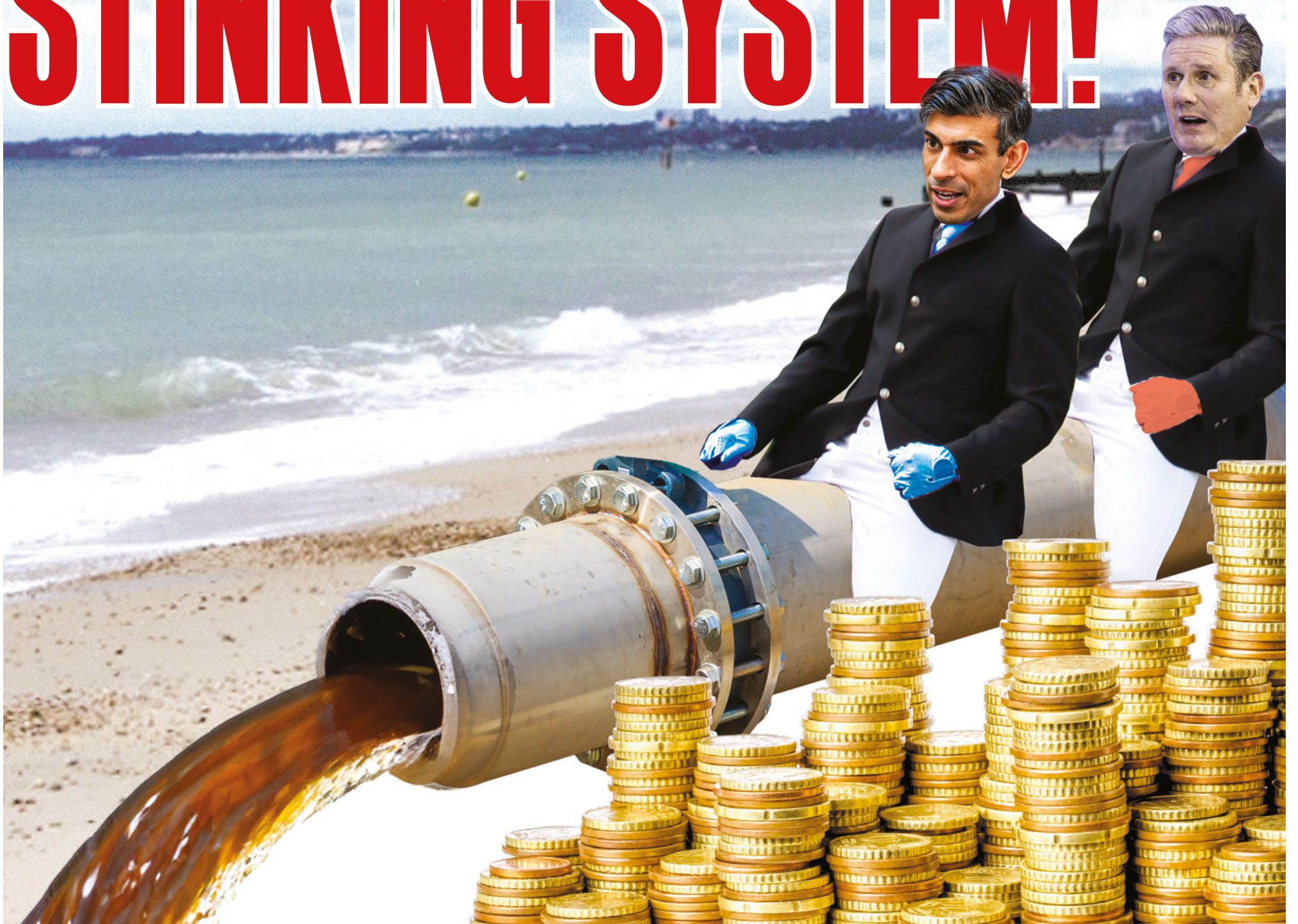
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TOWARDS A REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY!

BILLIONS FOR THE BOSSES, CRAP FOR THE REST OF US

CLEAR OUT THIS STINKING SYSTEM!





WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

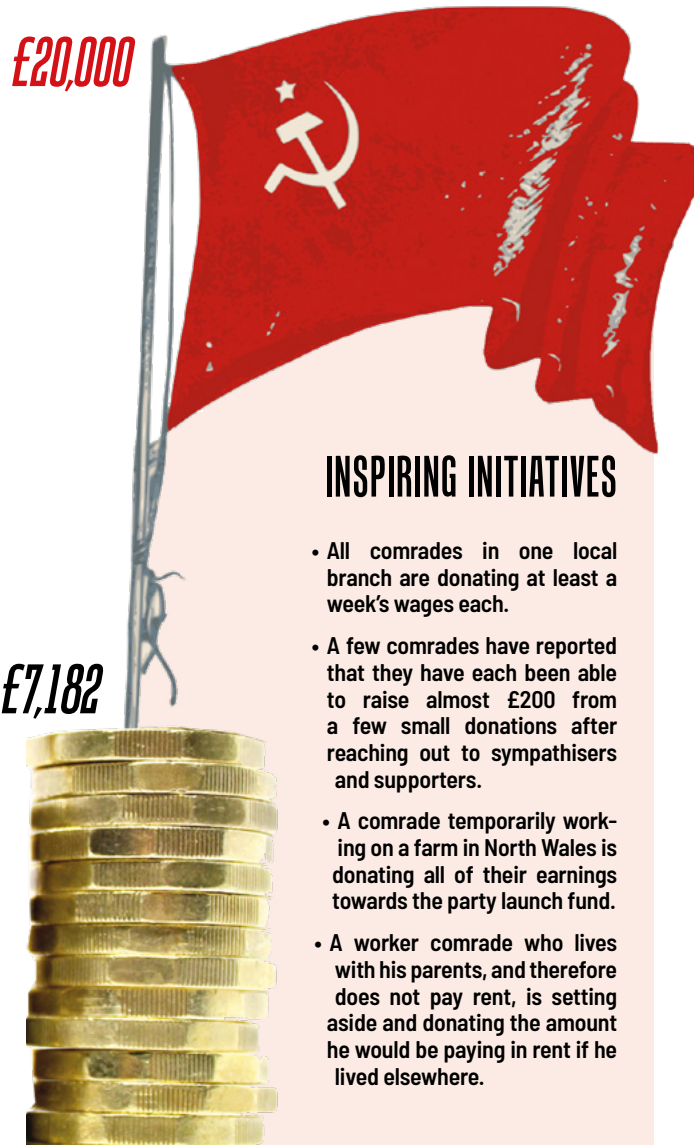
FORWARD TO THE RCP

"Everything in Britain is heading for a revolutionary explosion. There is no way to salvation through capitalism. The coming into power of the Labour Party will have only this meaning for progress, that once more it will show the bankruptcy of the methods and illusions of parliamentarianism amidst the crumbling ruins of the capitalist system. And so the absolute need for a new, a truly revolutionary party will stand forth clear-cut before our eyes."

Trotsky, From 'Where is France Going?', La Verité, 9 November, 1934



REVOLUTIONARY FINANCE



INSPIRING INITIATIVES

- All comrades in one local branch are donating at least a week's wages each.
- A few comrades have reported that they have each been able to raise almost £200 from a few small donations after reaching out to sympathisers and supporters.
- A comrade temporarily working on a farm in North Wales is donating all of their earnings towards the party launch fund.
- A worker comrade who lives with his parents, and therefore does not pay rent, is setting aside and donating the amount he would be paying in rent if he lived elsewhere.

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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KICK OUT THE TORIES! BUT NO TRUST IN STARMER!

Rob Sewell,
Editor of *The Communist*

Given the writhing death agony of the Tory government, it now seems inevitable that Starmer's Labour will come to power at the next election with a considerable majority.

Most of the public will welcome the defeat of the Tories. At the same time, the prospect of a Starmer government generates little enthusiasm amongst workers and youth.

Can you blame them? Starmer and his Blairite team are determined to pour ice-cold water over any hopes of reform from an incoming *Labour* government. "The cupboard is bare," they cry. "Don't expect anything from us."

The working class are told to suffer in silence, while Starmer and his acolytes fawn over the bankers and capitalists.

It is to these creatures – Britain's ruling class – that Starmer and his clique have sold their souls. They will do whatever their rich masters demand of them.

Above all, this means making the working class pay for the crisis of British capitalism, through greater austerity and cuts in living standards.

Bankruptcy and betrayal

In the past, the right-wing Labour leaders would at least make some promises in order to get into power – then they would betray. But Starmer wants to get his betrayals in before he even gets the keys to Number 10.

At a recent event in Leicester, a Labour-controlled city facing potential bankruptcy and massive cuts, Starmer was asked what he could do to help. The answer was *nothing*.

"I'm not going to make promises I can't keep," the Labour leader asserted.

While campaigning in the West Midlands, he was asked again about the £4 billion gap in local authority funding. "I can't pretend that we could turn the taps on," he replied callously. "There's no magic money tree that we can waggle the day after the election."

In other words, councils on the brink of catastrophe will have to fend for themselves, no matter the disastrous consequences.

The new Labour leader of Stoke city council similarly complained about having to make "unpalatable decisions that will hurt our sense of what is right and wrong".

But such crocodile tears will bring little comfort to millions of vulnerable working-class people struggling to make ends meet.

Elsewhere, the town of Port Talbot in South Wales is facing destruction akin to that seen following Thatcher's closure of the coal mines, with the shutting down of the local steelworks' blast furnaces.

Yet Starmer has refused to nationalise the steel industry in order to protect jobs. Instead, he has merely suggested pouring more money into the pockets of the bosses.

Reassuring the ruling class

There is not a week that goes by without a new announcement from Labour about watering down or reneging on its promises. Pledges around green investment, raising taxes on the rich, and scrapping tuition fees: all of these have been broken.

Scandalously, shadow health secretary and arch-Blairite Wes Streeting has even written in Murdoch rag *The Sun* recently, proudly stating that a Labour government would encourage parasitic private providers to feed off the NHS.

Under pressure from his new chums in big business, meanwhile, Starmer is now also toying with the idea of diluting his party's programme on workers' rights.

The Labour leadership's talk about economic 'renewal' and 'growth' is all hot air on the basis of a crisis-ridden British capitalism.

"Fiscal responsibility is non-negotiable," parrots shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves, as she prepares the ground for austerity. She says that a Labour government will be profoundly "pro-business" and committed to financial discipline.

No surprise then that Starmer and Reeves have announced their admiration for Margaret Thatcher, the most hated figure in working-class communities. This is a signal to the ruling class to say that the capitalists' interests will be completely safe in their hands.

The Labour leaders' support for Israel's slaughter of the Palestinians also underlines their subservience to US imperialism, the most counter-revolutionary force on the planet.

Scandalously, the resignation of councillors in protest over Gaza has been described by senior Labour figures as the party "shaking off the fleas".

Class war

These ladies and gentlemen will go to any length to appear respectable in the eyes of the establishment. Labour is therefore no longer "a party of protest", but a *sensible* government-in-waiting, led by a knight of the realm.

In preening and grooming themselves for government, they act no differently to the Tories. Once in office, as night follows

day, Starmer will continue with the Tories' anti-working class policies.

But the working class will not take this lying down. Given the accumulated anger in society, a Starmer government will face an avalanche of struggle, and will become one of the most hated governments in recent history.

Their attempts to revive British capitalism will simply provoke greater radicalisation and further polarisation in society. There will be swings to the left, but also to the right. A defeated Tory Party will certainly shift even further rightwards, as its most frenzied layers take over.

Young workers, and the youth in general, meanwhile, will be open to revolutionary ideas and the need to overthrow this rotten system.

The deepening crisis of capitalism globally is therefore preparing revolutionary explosions in Britain, as elsewhere. Class war will be on the order of the day.

Prepare for revolution

The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) will intervene in these movements and struggles, arguing for communist policies. We will fight for every reform and against every attack. But we will also link these battles to the need to overthrow capitalism.

Only by the working class coming to power and taking over the giant monopolies, banks, and insurance companies – by expropriating the capitalists – can the crisis be resolved in our favour.

There is no half-way house, as the 'lefts' in the trade unions and Labour Party argue. Capitalism needs to be overthrown, root and branch.

The task of our party, the RCP, is to skilfully link the programme of revolution with the real movement of the working class. There are no shortcuts. We must patiently explain our ideas.

The British revolution is certainly maturing within the depths of society, as the crisis of capitalism bears down on the working class.

We must make haste, and prepare ourselves and our party – organisationally, politically, and theoretically – for the great events that impend. We must rise to the challenges posed by history. There has never been such an important or worthy task.

As Marx said: "Philosophers have interpreted the world. The point, however, is to change it." •



"Choose wisely at the next election"

WHY I'M JOINING THE COMMUNISTS

RZ, Manchester:

"I believe in abolishing the system that oppresses us... it has failed everyone but the rich. I really want to connect with a cause such as this from the bottom of my heart."

J1, Basingstoke:

"I've been working a full time job and a weekend job for almost 10 years, and I still struggle to make ends meet. We need change and we need it now."

TZ, Sheffield:

"Everything is going downhill. The rich are getting richer. The working class and minorities are getting shafted. The 'official' left wing party is no longer for the working class. The past decade has seen the working class being financially and economically castrated. The only recourse for the working class is revolution."

BLACKPOOL BY-ELECTION: WE NEED A REVOLUTIONARY ALTERNATIVE

A by-election is due to take place in Blackpool South on 2 May, following the resignation of Tory MP Scott Benton, who was caught offering paid lobbying services to a fake gambling company in a journalistic sting.

This is another blow to this crumbling Tory government – the 11th by-election Sunak has faced since becoming prime minister.

Workers going to the polling station will be confronted with poor odds, however. There is no prospect of progress for Blackpool residents under either the Tories or Starmer's Labour.

Elected back in 2019, Benton promised to 'level-up' the town. Since then, however, local residents have since seen Blackpool South become the 17th most-deprived constituency in the country.

Nearly half of the area's neighbourhoods are amongst the 20 percent most income-deprived parts of the country, with the eighth-worst level of employment and crime rates, and the worst life expectancy in England.

Blackpool has also suffered a £1bn drop in the tourist trade: an industry that accounted for 40 percent of Lancashire's entire economy in 2018.

Of course, none of this concerned Benton. His only mistake, from the Westminster establishment's perspective, was being too obvious in his prostration towards big business.

Even then, the former MP was in no rush to resign. It took him a whole year after these revelations emerged to finally fold and leave the table.

Both Sunak and Starmer will be anxious not to see a repeat of the embarrassment of the Rochdale by-election.

At the moment, there are no wild-cards like Galloway. Yet the two major parties and their leaders are indistinguishable from each other. Workers and youth might therefore hedge their bets elsewhere, or not at all.

One thing is certain: under the present crisis of capitalism, further austerity, degradation, and misery is the only hand being dealt to the working class.

We must prepare to fight back. Workers can put no trust in these capitalist politicians, whether they wear blue or red.

Instead, we must build a revolutionary alternative. The Revolutionary Communist Party is the ace up our sleeve.

William Gedling,
Lancashire Communists



WATER INDUSTRY IN CRISIS: MAKE THE BOSSES PAY!

**Bogdan Farcas,
Whitechapel Communists**

Thames Water – the UK's biggest water distributor, serving 15 million households – is facing imminent collapse.

The company is in the throes of a scandalous debt crisis, after its biggest shareholders, the Macquarie investment group, left it laden with £14 billion in debt, all while pocketing juicy dividends.

After sucking the company dry, shareholders are now pulling the plug on further funding, complaining that investment is no longer profitable.

Thames Water has until next year to find new investors. After that, the company is sailing into uncharted waters.

Outrageously, Thames bosses have said that bills must be hiked up by 40%, in order to keep the company afloat and pay for much-needed improvements. Another firm, Southern Water, has forecast for bills to go up by 70%!

In other words, the working class will be made to foot the bill for the shareholders' reckless mismanagement and pillaging, squeezing ordinary households' living standards even further.

Pollution catastrophe

All of this occurs while a water pollution catastrophe is unfolding throughout Britain. Raw sewage discharges in UK waterways have hit a record level of 464,056 spills in 2023 – up by 54% from 2022.

Various sites have been spilling sewage almost every day of the year. Southern Water alone has dumped sewage overflows for a continuous 273 days.

Swimming and watersports are now off-limits in many places, due to effluent in rivers and coastal areas. Figures reveal that hospital admissions for waterborne diseases like dysentery have increased by 60% since 2010.

At the same time, 'rainy' Britain is at risk of another hot and dry summer, driven by the climate crisis. With water infrastructure literally crumbling apart, leaking thousands of gallons every day, another water shortage is on the horizon.

This chaos is down to one thing: the chronic underinvestment and mismanagement of Britain's water infrastructure – a disastrous outcome of Thatcher's privatisations in the 1980s, and a reflection of British capitalism's senile decay.

Clean up your own mess!

Given the extent of this carnage, the Environment Agency has called on the government to declare a 'national environmental emergency' and take action.

But the only thing that the establishment parties can come up with is banning bonuses for the water bosses.

These slaps on the wrist and impotent regulations have become par for the course in the water industry. Investors are making a killing, knowing full-well that they can ignore the consequences.

With collapse looming, the Tories are coming under increasing public pressure to renationalise Thames Water, and bring it under 'special administration'.

But such measures are just another way to make the public pay for the bosses' crisis. As soon as the company gets back on its feet, it'll be sold off to the next gang of profiteers. As ever, it'll be a case of nationalising the losses, and privatising the profits.

Instead of handing out more blank cheques to the fat cats, the labour movement must fight for nationalisation without a penny in compensation. To properly fund much-needed investment in utilities, we should seize the wealth of the billionaires and bankers.

Neither the Tories nor Labour are interested in improving Britain's infrastructure or easing the burden on working-class households. They only care about the bottom line of the bosses.

What's more, the crisis of Thames Water is far from an isolated case. The total debt of the water

industry stands at around £60 billion, with four other companies also facing dire straits. None of the main parties have a clue how to deal with this mess.

In one of the wealthiest economies in the world, dependable clean water is becoming a privilege rather than a right. This is nothing short of economic and environmental vandalism at the hands of the profiteers.

We say:

- **No to water bill hikes! Make the bosses pay for their mess!**
- **Reverse privatisation! Nationalise the water industry – without compensation and under workers' control!**
- **Expropriate the super-rich to invest in quality infrastructure and utilities!**
- **For a democratically planned economy! •**



“What a shit-show”



BRITAIN'S CRUMBLING INFRASTRUCTURE: THE CAPITALISTS ARE RUNNING OUT OF ROAD

James Kilby

'A stitch in time saves nine', so the old saying goes. Now, after years of avoiding essential repairs and maintenance, the fabric of Britain's infrastructure is beginning to unravel.

Last year it was revealed how the lives of thousands of children are at risk from collapsing schools, due to the use of cheap crumbly concrete.

But it turns out that tackling dodgy concrete and making schools safe is merely a pricey starter on a very costly bill when it comes to patching-up broken Britain.

The cost of fixing-up the 600 or so schools with this bubbly concrete is estimated to be over £150 million. Yet billions more is needed for the 700,000 pupils who go to school in buildings that need 'major rebuilding or refurbishment'.

The Department of Education estimates that it needs £5.3bn a year just to maintain school buildings and mitigate the 'most serious risks'. But it was given just £3.1bn by the Treasury last year. Clearly maths is not the Tory government's strongest subject.

This is dwarfed by the costs of fixing Britain's hospitals. NHS England put the bill for essential repairs of the hospital estate at nearly £12 billion last year, yet

received only a fraction of this money. It's as if the Tories think they can cure cancer with an aspirin.

As for the UK's roads, the Asphalt Industry Alliance predicts more than half the local network – 107,000 miles – could fail in the next 15 years.

£8.3bn previously earmarked for cancelled sections of HS2 has now been reallocated for road maintenance. But this is only enough to resurface 5,000 miles. Yet 34,000 miles have been identified as 'structurally poor', with fewer than five years' life remaining.

Having kicked the can for years and years, the capitalists are finally running out of road!

None of this is simply the result of carelessness by individual Tory ministers, however. It is the nature of capitalism itself that results in the short-sighted prioritisation of profits above all else.

Whilst millions of us are forced to see our services decay and go to ruin, the multi-millionaires are laughing all the way to the bank.

Starmer's Labour will inherit this mess. And since they accept capitalism, the rot will continue to spread.

With Britain literally falling apart, it's only a matter of time until the working class reaches its limit – and presents the bill to the bankers and billionaires. •

BROKEN BRITAIN

Private ambulances

While waiting times for NHS ambulances soar, private companies have taken the opportunity to drain as much profit as possible from those nervously awaiting medical attention for themselves or loved ones.

For the price of £99, you can skip the queue with a swanky new 'MET medical' ambulance – a company claiming to offer a solution to waiting times, while simultaneously intensifying our two-tier system for healthcare.

In December 2023, patients suffering from suspected heart attacks or strokes

were waiting an average of 93 minutes: five times higher than the target response time of 18 minutes.

These target times are set with the aim of preventing brain damage and unnecessary deaths. Every minute without intervention increases the chances of disability.

Those desperately sacrificing their money on private ambulances are preyed upon for profit. Those who cannot afford this, meanwhile, are forced to wait in long queues, risking permanent damage to their health.

Rather than improving NHS infrastructure to meet targets, workers are

once again being forced to foot the bill for capitalism's failures.

*Leah Harthill,
Lancaster Communists*

Cuts to parks

When parents want to spend time outside with their children, or a group of teenagers need somewhere to meet, they may head to their local park. Yet for those living in Slough, this may soon become an impossibility.

As part of their 2024-25 budget, Slough's council has decided to cut play-ground spending by 156%. Not 56%, not even 100%, but an unbelievable 156%!

This announcement came after the closure of two local parks and an appalling council tax rise of over 8%.

So where is the council spending all their extra money? It's not going towards public housing, children's services, or

public health – all of which received budget cuts. Instead, it's going to further fund the police.

With one-in-five councils heading towards bankruptcy in the coming year, the cuts and added police funding in Slough are not exceptions, but premonitions.

How long is it before your council cuts its funding for key services? How long before the only thing they provide is the police walking around your community?

*Jessie Small,
Reading Communists*

Rail closures

Capitalism's crisis, like a row of dominoes, is knocking everything down. Port Talbot is a notable case. Now Alstom, a major train producer and owner of the UK's biggest rail assembly site, has announced that it is ceasing production,

putting thousands of jobs at risk. The Labour leaders have suggested that the Tories are to blame; that the government has created an unstable environment for big business, with job losses as a result.

In reality, Alstom bosses are closing production not because there's no money for rail-related companies, but because there's not enough profit to be made.

If Labour takes power, they will follow every dot and comma of the capitalists' orders. They will not defend jobs, but will protect profits.

The only way to secure a stable environment for workers is by fighting for a democratically planned economy. We have the resources to feed, house, and employ everyone. What we don't have is enough to satisfy the rich!

*Ben Cownley,
Manchester Communists*

NORTH OF IRELAND: DONALDSON GONE, DUP STARES INTO THE ABYSS

Lennie Mc, Belfast Communists

Like a bolt from a clear blue sky, Unionism has been struck a mighty blow. The ranks of the Democratic Unionist Party have been left in total disarray by the shocking arrest of DUP leader Sir Jeffrey Donaldson, who has been charged with historic sexual offences.

Shortly after the news became public, Donaldson was suspended from the party and from the Orange Order, "pending the outcome of the legal proceedings", in an immediate attempt to avoid reputational harm. Gavin Robinson MP was unanimously appointed by party officers to fill the void as interim leader.

In a public statement, Donaldson said that he will be "strenuously contesting the charges". But the political fallout has already begun.

DUP civil war

Donaldson only rose to the leadership position in 2021, after a vicious power struggle inside the party between him and Edwin Poots, following the coup against Arlene Foster. Poots himself was subsequently overthrown by DUP officials after a whopping 21 days as leader!

Donaldson was his chosen successor, in a bid to smooth over the impending civil war in the party. He attempted to reconcile the irreconcilable: on the one hand, between Northern businesses that were clamouring for the post-Brexit Windsor Framework, which gives them all the benefits of access to both the British and EU market; and on the other, the Frankenstein's monster of hardline Unionism blocking the return of Stormont.

At the same time, Sir Jeffrey wanted to appease his Tory masters in Westminster, who were pushing for the return of the Stormont Assembly as a celebratory win for Rishi Sunak. In return, it seemed that the UK Prime Minister might even have been able to reserve Donaldson a spot in the House of Lords.

A mere eight weeks after Stormont's return, all that lies in tatters.

Unionism in crisis

The rise of Sinn Féin as the leading party in both the local and Stormont elections had delivered a historic blow to Unionism. Meanwhile, the DUP had shed votes to the non-sectarian, liberal, Unionist-lite Alliance Party.

On the other side, they are increasingly being outflanked by the overtly sectarian, hardline-Unionists of the Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) and under pressure from Loyalist gangs.



Jeffrey Donaldson, Image: UK Parliament, Flickr

The legitimacy of the DUP leaders was already in terminal decline. The arrest of Donaldson for such heinous charges will only push the party further into the abyss, exposing the rotteness that has festered in an organisation that claims to champion 'Christian family values'.

The potential implications cannot be overstated. The inevitable ensuing leadership contest will determine the future trajectory of Unionism, the DUP, Northern relations with Westminster, and ultimately of the Stormont Executive.

Having just returned after three years of collapse, Stormont could be shut down once again, if the hardliner layer of the party regains prominence.

For a Socialist United Ireland

These dramatic events are just the latest twist in the crisis of the regime in the North of Ireland, which lurches from one disaster to the next.

The whole system is being discredited by scandal upon scandal. Each twist is like a hammer blow to the consciousness of the masses, convincing wide layers that the whole setup is rotten.

In the midst of this, the most advanced workers must come together and present an independent class alternative.

This can only come from the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in Ireland - North and South - and the formation of a 32-county socialist republic. ●

IRISH MARXISTS FOUND THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNISTS OF IRELAND

Joe Russell, British visitor to the Irish congress

The Irish Marxists met on the weekend of 5-6 April for their very first national congress.

The International Marxist Tendency hasn't yet had a consistent presence in Ireland. The congress was therefore a generational event.

Over the past year, the group has gone from a study circle of five comrades, to 35 paid-up members organised in six branches: from Belfast,

to Dublin, to Galway. What was most striking was the quality and clarity of the discussions, the palpable enthusiasm for the ideas of Marxism, and the unshakeable optimism in the struggle for a Socialist United Ireland and world communism.

This was reflected in an inspiring financial collection, which smashed through the target of €1,000, raising a total of €4,317.

The comrades elected their first central committee, unanimously passed political and organisation documents,

and pledged themselves to a target of 50 members by the summer.

They also pledged to campaign towards their first self-funded full-time revolutionary for the Irish organisation, and to have 100 subs-paying members by next year's congress.

Finally, the congress voted to apply for affiliated membership of the soon-to-be Revolutionary Communist International.

The work being done by these fearless young communists is an example to us all. ●



Unions protest Glasgow education cuts

On 26 March, trade unions EIS, NASUWT, Unison, and GMB rallied at Glasgow City Chambers to express their anger at the council's recent announcement of more budget cuts.

The council's plan for education cuts of £27 million, whilst schools are already under significant strain, was met with outrage by teachers and parents, who gathered to stage a demonstration and demand no more cuts.

Unions have estimated that, across the city, 450 teaching positions will be slashed over the next three years. 172 are expected to go this autumn, with one protesting headteacher being left with "8.8 teachers for a school of 150 pupils".

Despite assurances by the Scottish government to increase the number of teachers in Glasgow, numbers have continued to drop for the past two years.

With classrooms becoming crowded, and teachers struggling from increasing workloads and an epidemic of school violence, unions are arguing that more teachers, mentors, and specialised support services are desperately needed - not fewer.

Why must education always be the target of budget cuts, when we know that classroom support, mentoring, expanded curriculums, and a positive teaching environment are paramount for the next generation's future?

Teachers that we spoke to said that they simply feel as though they are not being allowed to do their jobs properly, and that more school strikes are inevitable.

Nathan Brown,
Glasgow Communists

Child poverty: A 'national scandal'

Figures published last week show that the SNP is failing to meet its flagship promise of reducing child poverty. In fact, child poverty levels in Scotland are actually increasing - rising from 24% to 26% this year. This falls abysmally short of the Scottish government's target of under 10% by 2030.

There is a very simple way to end child poverty: make sure families have enough money!

SNP policy is to do this through a weekly 'Scottish Child Payment', which First Minister Humza Yousaf proudly defends. But at just £26.70 a week, this falls far below what families need to survive.

The Poverty Alliance condemns this situation as a 'national scandal', insisting that the payment needs to be raised to at least £40 a week if there is to be any progress amidst the spiralling cost of living.

But where will this money come from?

Social justice secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville is clear that the Scottish government simply does not have the budget to increase the payment, as they barely manage to keep existing public services afloat. She has called on the Tories to increase Universal

Credit instead. But everyone knows that helping out the SNP is the last thing on Westminster politicians' minds!

Wedded to the capitalist system, and with the prospect of independence tossed into the long grass, the SNP is left with no way to provide the 'fairer Scotland' that it promises the working class.

Ellen Morton,
Glasgow Communists

Culture cut to pieces

Capitalism is constantly taking away from workers: through a regime of low wages and rising prices, while essential public services are run-down and cut-back by austerity budgets.

Art and culture are also victims of these corrosive attacks, starving the working class of leisure and creativity.

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) burned down more than six years ago. This dealt a heavy blow to the city and to the Scottish art world.

Taken as collateral damage in the blaze was the O2 ABC, a popular club and concert venue, which also sits in ruins along Sauchiehall Street.

Despite the time elapsed and the huge insurance payouts, there is no sign yet of when either institution will be rebuilt or reopened, as covered by a series of special reports in The Herald.

Speaking to Herald journalists, former senior GSA figure Sam Ainsley lamented that the "sense of community" at the art school had been lost, due to the destruction of the infamous Mackintosh building and the marketisation of academia.

Lecturers are dealing with huge workloads, while cuts to bursaries make it "nearly impossible" for working class students to study at GSA.

At the same time, Creative Scotland, the nation's main arts body, has refused funding for Glasgow's Aye Write book festival.

The cancellation of the festival has been denounced by many authors, including Darren 'Loki' McGarvey, who has praised the event for being more accessible for working-class people, and for basing itself in community venues around the city.

While refusing £77,500 for Aye Write, Creative Scotland initially awarded nearly £85,000 to a controversial short-film project involving sexually explicit acts. This led to a backlash, with many questioning how public art funding is decided.

This furore distracts from the real class questions, however. Why are arts festivals and bursaries being cut in the first place? And who controls the wealth and resources needed to allow culture to flourish?

There is enough money in society to fully fund the arts, and to make culture and education accessible to the entire working class. The problem is that this fortune sits in the hands of the billionaires and bankers.

We must organise and struggle to seize this wealth from them. Only then can we release humanity's full creative potential.

Shaun Morris,
Glasgow Communists

ISRAEL MURDERS AID WORKERS: BRITISH IMPERIALISM IS COMPLICIT

The Communist

On 1 April, seven aid workers, including three British nationals, were killed in Gaza when their jeep was bombarded by the Israeli military.

The Israeli government has deployed every excuse to evade responsibility: from calling the strikes 'unintentional'; to claiming that the aid convoy was accompanied by a Hamas militant. This is all blatantly false.

The vehicle, clearly labelled 'World Central Kitchen', was travelling in a non-combat zone, and had shared its coordinates with the Israeli Defence Forces.

Far from being the result of a 'miscommunication', one IDF source revealed that "the General Staff know exactly why WCK were bombed – because in the Strip, everyone does whatever they like." In other words, entire IDF units are targeting civilians with impunity.

This was cold-blooded murder – part of a deliberate strategy by the Zionists to starve Gaza by making it impossible for aid agencies to operate.

Far from being the 'sorrowful accident' portrayed in the capitalist press, this attack was in fact a great success in the eyes of the Israeli ruling class, despite the negative press.

Ships carrying 300 million tonnes of supplies have been turned back, and several aid agencies have ceased working in Gaza.

This will have catastrophic consequences for Gazans, who are already suffering widespread malnutrition, starvation, and disease. The massacring of aid workers sends a clear message to the world: we intend for thousands more to starve.

Blood on their hands

Now that British citizens have been killed, however, the UK government finds itself in an embarrassing position.

Rishi Sunak and 'Lord' David Cameron are complaining about the need for an 'independent investigation', and have decried the 'humanitarian crisis' in Gaza.

'Sir' Keir Starmer has denounced the strike as "outrageous and unacceptable", and has called for those responsible to be "held to account" in line with "international law".

But we aren't fooled. The Tory government – with the full backing of Starmer's 'opposition' – has supported the slaughter in Gaza every step of the way.

They've sent millions of pounds worth of weapons to Israel. They've turned a blind eye to genocide.

And now they feign shock when British citizens are caught in the crossfire. What foul, stinking hypocrisy!

These mealy-mouthed statements won't wash the blood from their hands.

Down with imperialism!

The truth is that the western leaders – Sunak, Biden, Scholz, Macron, and the rest of this warmongering cabal – did everything short of ordering the strike themselves.

They provided the political cover, the financial and military means, and have promised the Zionist government that they will have its back, no matter what.

No amount of independent investigations, or toothless denunciations from the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, will stop the Israeli imperialists from committing war crimes.

While our ruling class scrambles to conceal its open barbarism, the communists will continue to wage a tireless struggle to bring down this entire blood-soaked imperialist system.

- **No trust in Sunak or Starmer!**
- **Down with the Tories! Down with imperialism!**
- **Intifada until victory! For a Socialist Federation of the Middle East! •**



ISRAELI COMMUNIST LIVING ABROAD STRIPPED OF CITIZENSHIP FOR REFUSING TO SUPPORT GAZA SLAUGHTER

An Israeli communist

As an Israeli and a communist, I have felt the immense pressure the Israeli ruling class exerts on Jewish workers to bind them to their imperialist ambitions. My life has been a constant tug-of-war between my convictions and the expectations imposed upon me.

My journey towards communism has been one of defiance and sacrifice, leading to a heart-wrenching separation from my family and homeland.

Israel has always enforced compulsory military service for most citizens. It was ingrained in me from a young age that serving was not just a duty, but a badge of honour. Through studying Marxism, I came to understand that the 'noble' facade of military service was an instrument of the imperialist elite.

When I reached military service age, I made the decision not to serve. As an isolated communist, I saw it as the only way to defy the ruling class, and a step towards building a world free from oppression and exploitation.

In the eyes of this ruling class, refusal is seen as an act of betrayal, a threat to their authority.

The consequences of my decision were severe. I had to jump through so many hoops to visit Israel that it amounted to practical exile.

The emotional toll cannot be overstated. Picture the profound sadness of not being able to bid a final farewell to a loved one at a funeral, or the frustration of missing out on family gatherings.

However, this was far from the full extent of the state's repression, which became painfully clear when I attended a Palestine solidarity protest.

Unfortunately, I got into an altercation with the police and was arrested. I was released with a caution. However, the Israeli embassy was notified, and things took a dark turn.

I was stripped of my democratic rights, with the near-immediate revocation of my citizenship and a refusal of entry into Israel. This abrupt expulsion from my homeland shows the lengths to which the Israeli state will go to silence dissent and maintain its grip on power.

We are told that Israel is 'the Middle East's only democracy'. But what kind of democracy *revokes a person's citizenship* merely for protesting?

As Israelis, we are told that the state ensures our security. But the Israeli

government is deliberately destabilising the region. Thousands of Israelis have been displaced from their homes along the border with Lebanon.

Far from guaranteeing Israeli Jews a secure life, this state is creating ever-greater instability, whilst the capitalists continue to plunder, exploit, and enrich themselves.

For their own benefit, the ruling class deliberately creates a siege mentality in Israeli society. Through their brutal policies, they feed enmity across the region towards Israelis, and then use it to rally the Israeli working class around themselves.

Despite state intimidation, I am more determined than ever to stand in solidarity with the oppressed everywhere.

I call upon all working class Israelis to reject the state's oppressive, militaristic policies, to refuse to be complicit in the oppression and slaughter of the Palestinians, and to rise against the ruling class.

Only a socialist federation of Israel-Palestine, as part of a socialist federation of the Middle East, can create the conditions for a genuinely peaceful and prosperous existence for all the peoples of these lands. •

BIDEN SHEDS CROCODILE TEARS WHILE SUPPORTING GENOCIDE

Fred Weston

The term "to shed crocodile tears" derives from the fact that crocodiles shed tears as they consume their victims.

Today, we have crocodiles in human form – they are called Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Secretaries, newspaper editors, and so on. But Biden stands out as the Chief Crocodile.

Biden's tears are a calculated ruse to fool the world that he cares about the plight of the Palestinians. He clearly does not. He actively collaborates in Netanyahu's genocidal war, providing much of the weapons being used to butcher.

Biden's administration has been making a lot of noise about avoiding a humanitarian disaster in Gaza, where there is a real risk of mass starvation.

We have seen the US aid airdrops on TV, as well as news of plans to construct a temporary port in Gaza to allow aid deliveries by sea. This is nothing but a show for media consumption.

Biden's concerns are not about the suffering of the Palestinians, but his own electoral prospects, which are dwindling in part down to his handling of the Middle East crisis.

Biden and his advisers are also concerned about the destabilisation of the Middle East and the further weakening of US imperialism in the region.

If Biden was serious about his 'humanitarian concerns', he would have cut off arms to Israel long ago, and demanded that it reopen all the border crossings to allow aid into Gaza. But that is not what crocodiles do.

All the talk of aid is mere theatre. The delivery of weapons to Israel, however, is real and without limits.

After several western governments froze funding to the UNRWA aid agency at the US's bidding, the pressure on the

Palestinians has been ratcheted up even further.

Last month, precisely in a moment of dire need, the US Congress passed a bill that totally defunds the agency until March 2025.

The same bill contains a clause which guarantees the \$3.8 billion dollars in military aid that the US provides to Israel every year.

In this bill we find Biden's cynical hypocrisy fully encapsulated: no money for the starving Palestinians, but billions of dollars for the bombs that are killing them every day.

It is self-evident that the Israeli military has been committing war crimes. Unarmed civilians have been killed in cold blood. Aid workers have been targeted. Hospitals and schools have been bombed.

A serious investigation would no doubt reveal many more crimes. But the recent Congress bill contains a clause that specifically threatens a cut in aid to the Palestinian Authority if the Palestinians initiate or support any investigation against Israeli nationals for war crimes.

Biden is brazenly telling the Palestinians that they have no right to any kind of justice, even after the war is over.

These are the people who rule over us today: cynical, cold-blooded, calculating butchers, whose only concern is to protect the profit-making machine called capitalism; to preserve the wealth and privileges of the billionaires, whatever the cost to humanity.

If it means wading through the blood of innocent civilians, of women and children, to achieve their aims, they will not flinch from doing so. Biden and Netanyahu are both drenched in the blood of the Palestinians.

In *Capital*, Marx stated that "capital comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt." This is even more true today. •

MAKING A KILLING

"Britain is still making a killing from Putin's war machine." This is not a headline from *The Communist* but *The Sunday Times*!

In a recent article, a Sky News editor revealed the hypocrisy of the capitalists' crocodile tears over the war in Ukraine.

Before the war, UK exports to Russia amounted to £3bn a year. This trade supposedly came to an end in February 2022, when sanctions were imposed on military hardware and 'dual use' technology that can be repurposed for military means.

The remnants of missiles have given up their ghostly secrets, however, with many containing components made in the USA and UK, long after "the most severe sanctions".

British exports of products containing 'dual use' components to Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia are up by more than 500 per cent since 2022.

As the author points out: "Even as we provide Ukraine with drones, we seem simultaneously to be selling drone parts to Russia and making a packet on the way... Money, it seems, always wins."

From the point of view of the profiteers – who don't do the fighting and dying – a 'good war' is a lucrative one. As Lenin once observed: "War is terrible, yes. Terribly profitable."

Kevin Ramage,
Falmouth Communists



BITCOIN IS BACK: CAPITALISM'S CRYPTO CHAOS RETURNS

Rob Sewell

The capitalists are once again piling into Bitcoin and other cryptocurrency tokens. Yes, Bitcoin is back!

The infamous cryptocurrency hit a record high of \$72,000 last month, on 14 March, having tripled in value in the past year.

Other tokens have also benefited, such as Elon Musk's beloved 'Dogecoin', with an estimated value of over \$2.7tn for the first time in two years.

There's a lot of talk of the next token going "to the moon". Like thin air, however, these so-called 'digital assets' have no intrinsic value. All this trading is simply speculation.

It is amazing to think that some people are getting phenomenally rich on this stuff. It brings to mind the 'tulip mania' of the 17th century, and the Florida land speculation of the 1920s, where vast sums were won and lost.

So far, the cryptocurrency craze is not as obvious a danger. Nevertheless, it is clear that such scams are built into the capitalist system. And given the fragility and uncertainty in the global

economy, the fallout from these bubbles bursting could cause wider damage back in the real world.

Pure speculation

There have been 11 Bitcoin-based exchange traded funds approved by the US Securities and Exchange Commission this year.

Big investors are getting in on the act, such as BlackRock, the world's biggest asset manager. Some of the world's biggest banks – Morgan Stanley, Wells Fargo, and Bank of America – are lining up to get involved. They want to 'diversify'

their assets, you see. The experience of the crash of 2007-2008 – and the solemn promise to avoid high-risk toxic assets – has seemingly been forgotten about altogether. The capitalists are just like the drunk who repeatedly vows "never again!" the morning after.

But why spoil the party? When an 'asset' is valuable simply because people believe it is, then the more believers the better!

The divide between pure speculation and 'sound' finance is again breaking down.

As one commentator on the Bitcoin focused podcast *The Wolf of All Streets* recently stated: "TradFi is just as degen as the crypto community is."

This is jargon for: "Traditional finance capital is just as reckless and degenerate as the 'crypto community' of speculators" – which is true.

Trump cashes in

Another hyped-up stock that has attracted attention is the Trump Media and Technology Group, trading under the ticket 'DJT'.

This is the owner of Donald Trump's struggling social media platform Truth Social. It

became a public company after merging with a 'blank cheque' company, known as a 'SPAC', which acquires companies through mergers and acquisitions.

These stocks attracted a *multibillion* dollar valuation, several billion dollars in a single day, with their value soaring by 56% upon trading markets opening. A few days later, the same stocks fell by more than \$1bn. But Trump, as a majority shareholder, has made billions on the deal.

The whole thing is a pyramid scheme. The company does not make any money. In fact, it loses a great deal of it. And its main product, Truth Social, is haemorrhaging users.

At this point the company is valued at around \$5.7bn, which means that it is trading at a preposterous 1,400 times its revenue!

A company trading at 10 times or 20 times its revenue would be bad enough. 1,400 times is out of this world. It has no basis in reality.

But why let the facts ruin a good story? The reality doesn't matter: it's the 'feeling' or 'sentiment' that matters – a bit like Bitcoin, which has no intrinsic value.

Casino capitalism

Speculation, parasitism, and gambling has always been an intrinsic feature of capitalism – a further indication of the rottenness of the system.

It's not only tech-bro investors who will lose out in this casino, however. Given the instability in the world economy and the global financial system, such recklessness could bring the whole house down. ●



• The world's 2,781 billionaires collectively own \$14.2 tn - more than the GDP of every country except the USA and China

• They have seen their wealth increase by 120% over the past decade, whilst living standards for billions have decreased

• 1,000 members of the super-rich elite are expected to pass on \$5.2 tn to their heirs over the next two decades

COMMUNISTS ON THE MARCH ACROSS THE WORLD

Spain: Founding of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation!

On 15-17 March, the founding congress of the Revolutionary Communist Organisation (RCO) was held in Madrid, with the largest presence and participation of any previous congress.

Present were members from all the areas where we are organised: Madrid, Euskal Herria, Catalunya, País Valencià, Andalucía, Illes Balears, Salamanca, and Murcia.

Also present were a delegation of comrades from Portugal, a guest from the RCP in Britain, and Jorge Martín, a representative of the international leadership of the IMT.

Today, all of the reformist parties in Spain – the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, Podemos, Sumar – have discredited themselves in the eyes of radical workers and youth. The field is wide open for the forces of genuine communism.

Launch of Revolución Comunista in El Salvador

On 23 March, during a Marxist School on Lenin's life and ideas, Revolución Comunista was officially launched, a new organisation which aims to organise communists in El Salvador and found a Revolutionary Communist Party in the near future.

Alongside this, the comrades held a press conference to announce the launch, which drew the attention of all manner of right-wingers and reactionaries. But this has only served to shine an even bigger spotlight on our comrades' bold initiative, and has led dozens more people to sign up to join!

Capitalist press and politicians react to the Danish RCP

Our Danish comrades are making a big splash with their plans to found a new Revolutionary Communist Party.

The reaction by the bourgeois political and media establishment to this news has ranged from bemusement to open fury.

Everyone from Liberal government ministers to right-wing MPs has chimed in on social media, spewing typical anti-communist drivel. As ever, we welcome the free publicity!

The undeniable popularity of communism and buzz around our comrades' new party even led the state media service, DR, to conduct a radio interview with Rasmus Jeppesen from the Danish comrades' executive committee.

We encourage our comrades to read the interview in full at communist.red/denmark6

World school of communism

The global crisis of capitalism is pushing workers and young people in one country

after another towards revolutionary communism.

As a result, we've received well over one thousand sign-ups to participate in the World School of Communism, which will also be the founding conference of the Revolutionary Communist International.

Messages have been flooding in from over 100 countries on every continent: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Chile, China, Egypt, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Myanmar, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Zimbabwe – the list goes on!

This landmark event for world communism will take place 10-15 June. Sign up today at schoolofcommunism.com

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THIS FORTNIGHT IN HISTORY ...



Good Friday Agreement

On 10 April 1998, the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) was signed in Belfast.

The British and Irish governments – as well as the Americans who brokered the agreement – heralded it as nothing less than a new era of harmony and prosperity for the North of Ireland. But fast forward a quarter of a century, and these honeyed words have left a sour taste.

The North is one of the most deprived areas of Europe. The Stormont Assembly resembles a pantomime (on the rare occasion that it meets, that is). And the menace of sectarian violence is constantly lurking in the shadows, ready to flare up at any moment.

At the time, the IMT rejected the GFA as an instrument of British imperialism, designed to preserve the rotten partition of Ireland. Today, our comrades in the Irish Marxists are continuing the struggle for a Socialist United Ireland (see p5).

Read more: communist.red/gfa6

Defeat of Venezuelan coup

On 13 April 2002, the Venezuelan masses successfully defeated an attempted counter-revolutionary coup against the popular left-wing government of Hugo Chávez.

Backed by US imperialism and the Venezuelan capitalists, right-wing generals kidnapped Chávez, arrested a number of his MPs, ministers, and supporters, and attempted to install a puppet regime.

The coup plotters did not anticipate the enormous mobilisation of the masses in defence of Chávez, however. Militant mass demonstrations took place

immediately, and sections of the army began to swing over to the side of the revolution.

Within 48 hours, the coup had collapsed like a house of cards. This proves the enormous power of the masses when mobilised. This is a lesson that is doubly relevant today, as the Maduro government undoes all the gains of the Bolivarian Revolution, with the working class paying the price.

These events are brilliantly captured in the documentary *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised*.

Read more: communist.red/venezuela6

American Revolution

On 19 April 1775, the American Revolutionary War against British colonial rule began.

Most historians, and even some so-called Marxists, present a caricatured version of the American Revolution. Some even deny that it was a 'real' revolution at all.

In reality, however, these events were pushed forward by the masses of artisans, labourers, craftsmen, shopkeepers, and farmers, whose radicalism terrified the rich landowners and merchants who placed themselves at the head of the movement.

This was a bourgeois revolution for national independence, aimed at uprooting colonialism and clearing the way for the development of American capitalism. Nonetheless, this rich, inspiring episode in the class struggle is full of lessons for communists and class-fighters today.

Read more: communist.red/america6

TIMELINE

- 1600** - British East India Company founded
- 1757** - Battle of Palashi (Plassey) where Robert Clive led the East India Company forces to a decisive victory establishing control over Bengal
- 1857** - First War of Indian Independence. This leads to an end of company rule and the formal establishment of India into the British Empire.
- 1909** - Separate Muslim electorates granted under the Minto-Moreley Reforms
- 1919** - Jallianwala Bagh massacre
- 1920** - Non-Cooperation movement
- 1925** - Founding of the Communist Party of India
- 1928** - Simon Commission Protests
- 1935** - Government of India Act introduces devolution of local affairs to Indians
- 1937** - Provincial Elections. Congress wins a majority with the Muslim League and Jinnah winning only 5% of the Muslim vote
- 1939** - Outbreak of WW2. Absolute British rule was established again for one last time.
- 1940** - Jinnah's Lahore Resolution
- 1941** - Communist Party of India changes policy from anti-war to supporting the British war effort
- 1942** - Cripps Mission, Quit India movement, Indian National Army founded
- 1943** - Bengal Famine which killed an estimated three million people
- 1945** - Labour government comes to power. Congress leaders released from jail. Indian National Army Trials
- 1945/6** - Provincial Elections where Muslim League win large swathes of the Muslim vote
- Feb-Mar 1946** - Indian Sailor Mutinies, mass general strikes in Bombay
- 1946** - Plan A agreement between Congress and Muslim League for a loose united federation of India with a weak centre
- Aug 1946** - Muslim League 'Direct Action Day' (Calcutta Killings)
- Feb 1947** - Clement Attlee announces British will leave India no later than June 1948 and Louis Mountbatten appointed Viceroy of India
- June 1947** - Congress and Muslim League leaders agree final plan for partition and Mountbatten brings forward the date of partition from June 1948 to 15 August 1947
- 8 July 1947** - Sir Cyril Radcliffe arrives in India to draw the partition line
- 14 Aug 1947** - Pakistan granted independence
- 15 Aug 1947** - India granted independence
- 17 Aug 1947** - Partition border announced publicly



PARTITION OF INDIA

A CRIME OF BRITISH IMPERIALISM

Across the world, the historic crimes of British imperialism have left devastating scars. The consequences of these can still be felt today: from the Middle East to Ireland. Ravi Mistry examines one of the most heinous of these atrocities: the partition of India.

"At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom." Jawharlal Nehru, Tryst with Destiny Speech, 14 August 1947

These famous words of Jawaharlal Nehru could not have been further from the grim reality. India's independence took place via partition with what became Pakistan, in which up to two million people were killed, and 80,000 women were abducted, many of whom were raped.

14.5 million refugees crossed the newly formed border in what was the largest peacetime mass-migration of people in human history. Families were torn apart. People who had lived in their ancestral homes for centuries, were forced to leave based solely on their religious identity.

Partition was not pre-planned, but the product of: British divide-and-rule policies; the inability of national-bourgeois parties to fight a genuine revolutionary struggle against colonialism; and the failure of the Indian Communist Party to play a decisive role in events.

Divide and rule

Britain first came to India in search of trade and the prized spice market. They established the British East India company in 1600. It grew enormously wealthy and soon began to interfere in Indian political affairs to protect British trade interests. This led to military and territorial claims, most famously with Robert Clive's victory in Palashi (Plassey) in 1857.

India's native industry, exports, and

independence were destroyed at the behest of British business interests, as Karl Marx noted in 1853:

"It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian hand-loom and destroyed the spinning-wheel. England began with driving the Indian cottons from the European market; it then introduced twist into Hindostan, and in the end inundated the very mother country of cotton with cottons. From 1818 to 1836 the export of twist from Great Britain to India rose in the proportion of 1 to 5,200." (Karl Marx, New-York Daily Tribune, 25 June 1853)

In 1857, a tipping-point was reached with the great Indian Uprising, later described as the 'First War of Indian Independence'. The rebellion was triggered by new rifle cartridges - which had to be bitten into to release powder - rumoured to be laced with both pig and cow grease, offensive to both Hindus and Muslims.

The uprising was brutally put down. Company rule ended and India formally entered the British Empire under direct rule from London. But the event had a profound impact on India's colonial rulers. They were subsequently careful not to upset religious sensibilities and became acutely aware that *unity between Hindus and Muslims could bring down their rule.*

As late as 1940, Winston Churchill argued at a cabinet meeting:

"that he did not share the anxiety to encourage and promote unity between the Hindu and Moslem communities. Such unity was, in fact, almost out of the realm of practical politics, while, if it were to be brought about, the immediate result would be that the united communities would join in showing us the door. He regarded the Hindu-Moslem feud as a bulwark of British rule in India." (War Cabinet Minutes 30 (40) 4, 2 Feb 1940)

The British tried at every point to foster communal divisions. They officially categorised Indians by monolithic identities of religion, caste, and tribe in census reports which gave status and hierarchies to communities where previously there had been none. The 1871 Criminal Tribes Act for example made mostly nomadic tribes criminals from birth.

Where communal violence did break out, police would stand back and be slow to intervene. When Indians jointly protested against the British, however, ruthless violence would be used to put down protesters. The most bloody example was the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919 where up to 1,500 innocent people were killed.

Fear of revolution

In 1909, the Morley-Minto reforms introduced separate electorates and reserved seats for Indian Muslims at the request of a small layer of elite Muslims who wanted to preserve their privileges and status.

The 1935 Government of India Act developed this formalisation of sectarian divisions by dividing the country into separate electorates via religion. This created the illusion of local democracy, whilst all power in regards to defence and external affairs were kept in British hands.

Elections were held in 1937. They only represented between 11-14 percent of the population because they required property qualifications, meaning rural landholders had an outsized say.

The Indian National Congress party won just shy of half of all seats. The Congress Party was the main national-bourgeois party of India, whose leaders were Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad, and Vallabhbhai Patel. It claimed to speak for all Indians. Whilst they did have mass support, their main backers were wealthy Hindu landowners and businessmen.

The Muslim League was the other main bourgeois party. They were utterly trounced

in the elections, winning only five percent of the Muslim vote. Their main support bases were in areas which would not go on to become modern-day Pakistan. It was led by Muhammed Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan.

The Indian bourgeois leaders were totally incapable of leading a successful revolution against British colonialism because of their fear of the working class and poor peasants. The native capitalists and landlords were in fact tied to British capital and the City of London.

J.P. Srivastava, an industrialist, told Viceroy Wavell that he and other leading industrialists, mainly Hindu, started financing the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha (a right-wing Hindu revivalist organisation) in 1937. This was because they feared the Congress Party might threaten their profits if put under pressure from the masses.

A revolution which could mobilise workers and peasants (the majority of the nation) against British rule would logically threaten the private property of Indian capitalists and landlords. This explains the fundamental weakness of the Indian nationalist movement.

The bourgeois Indian leaders always accommodated themselves to British divide-and-rule tactics. They accepted offers of round table talks, invitations to the Viceroy's house in Delhi or Shimla, and the meekest reforms.

The Indian bourgeois leaders did not fight for independence. Instead, they fought for a negotiated settlement in the backrooms of Delhi, Shimla and London.

The 'Pakistan' demand

India was a patchwork of religious groups, ethnicities and castes. There were no clear monolithic religious or cultural identities despite the British rulers' best efforts to divide and rule.

The idea of Pakistan initially appealed to wealthy and elite Muslims, especially after the Muslim League's terrible performance in the 1937 election.

Jinnah's response was to transform the Muslim League, whip up communal feelings, and warn Indian Muslims that Congress was a totalitarian Hindu party. His transformation into a mullah held a great degree of irony. Jinnah was the perfect English gentleman, wore English clothes, ate pork, drank whisky, spoke aristocratic English, and barely knew any Urdu.

The real reason Jinnah whipped up communal sentiments was to preserve the interests of elite Indian Muslims to land, government positions, and privileges.

In March 1940, the All India Muslim League adopted the Lahore resolution, widely regarded as the 'Pakistan demand'.

1942: The beginning of the end

In the last years of the British Raj, what became clear was that only when the Raj faced imminent danger of overthrow did the British rulers offer any serious concessions towards independence.

In 1942 for example, British colonies across South East Asia were toppling. Hong Kong, Singapore, British Malaya, and Burma all fell to the Japanese. The Japanese imperial army was right on the doorstep of the Raj.

The War Cabinet in London reluctantly sent out Sir Stafford Cripps to offer future independence after the war, in return for continued support for the Empire during the war.

Importantly, a provision was included that any province which wanted to secede, could. Therefore it can be said that as early

as 1942 the British considered the partition and balkanisation of India.

Talks failed, with contradictory messages sent from the War Cabinet and Cripps.

The cynical Cripps Mission only compounded the simmering convulsions within India. There were price rises, the Japanese on the border, and refugees from fallen British colonies telling stories of devastation.

Indian capitalists vacillated, sensing that the Raj could collapse. At this moment, Gandhi, for the first time in his political career, launched a 'do or die' nationwide uprising against the British to 'Quit India'.

Beginning in August 1942, this was the gravest threat to the Empire since 1857. Up to 100 army battalions were needed to quell the uprising with brute force. Torture, rape, and mass fines were all used. Official statistics reported 91,836 arrests and 1,060 killed. 208 police stations, 332 railway stations, and 945 post offices (all symbols of colonial power) were destroyed or severely damaged. 216 policemen defected.

The Bengal famine of 1943 went on to kill approximately three million people as the War Cabinet in London refused food relief.

Subash Chandra Bose, the former Congress President, went on to form the I.N.A. (Indian National Army) from 60,000 Indian POWs. They fought alongside the Japanese in Burma against the British under the slogan 'Delhi chalo'.

The British Raj was under siege. It was the beginning of the end.

A mention should be made of the Indian Communist Party, who throughout all these tumultuous and historic events gave unconditional support to the British. Initially anti-war, the party u-turned and supported the war after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union.

The British rulers even legalised the party for their support in 1942, but they were deemed traitors in the nationalist press. Their u-turns and appeals for a popular front with both the Muslim League and Congress disoriented their cadre base and failed to offer Indian workers an independent class position.

Divide and quit

At the end of WW2, the British understood it would be impossible to hold onto India. Britain was bankrupt, owed India money, soldiers wanted to return home, the Indian army and police could no longer be relied upon, and unrest exuded from every pore of the subcontinent. This reality had to be reconciled with defending Britain's short term imperialist interests.

A secret report outlining postwar plans, written by Churchill's joint chiefs of staff for the War Cabinet in 1945, illustrates their thinking.

The report shares Cold War fears of the Soviet Union potentially invading India and spreading communist influence, especially through the North West. They stress the need to have "An Imperial Strategic Reserve", meaning British military bases and airfields. Partitioning Baluchistan from the rest of India is given serious consideration. They state in regards to future wars:

"It is of paramount importance that India should not secede from the Empire or remain neutral in war." (Report on 'Security in India and the Indian Ocean', IOR/L/WS/1/983. Folio 84)

This explains Britain's independence offers to the Indian leaders.

In July 1946, 'Plan A' was negotiated, which involved a weak central state which

only dealt with communications, defence, and foreign affairs (to be de facto controlled by the British). Three autonomous regions would then govern, grouped into two smaller Muslim majority areas and one larger Hindu majority area, alongside further provincial autonomy.

The essence of the offer was clear – keep India divided via religion and Britain would continue to rule through her superior industry, banks, and military.

But the divide-and-rule tactics which Britain had fostered for over a century backfired in their face. No agreement was forthcoming. It was events on the ground which changed the course of events, and left the British to push through 'Plan B' – partition.

Unrest

The British rulers and bourgeois Indian leaders had to negotiate a settlement, or they faced civil war.

On 18 February 1946, a naval mutiny of Indian soldiers on HMS Talwar spread all over the country. At its height, 78 ships, 20 shore establishments, and 20,000 ratings mutinied, cutting through communal divides.

The naval strike committee consciously elected both a Muslim and Sikh leader. In Karachi, Hindu and Muslim students and workers supported the mutiny and jointly fought against the police and army.

In Bombay, a general strike of 300,000 workers in support of the mutiny was led by the Communist Party. The British rulers, Congress Party and Muslim League joined hands to crush the uprising. Vallabhbhai Patel, representing the Congress Hindu right, and Jinnah pleaded for the strikes to end. Gandhi condemned the action, declaring:

"A combination between Hindus and Muslims and others for the purpose of violent action is unholy." (Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India* (1989) p. 425)

This mutiny directly triggered the Attlee Labour government to send a Cabinet delegation to India to offer independence in the form of their Plan A.

Unprecedented unrest continued whilst negotiations in the backrooms were taking place. In April, police strikes occurred in Delhi, Bihar, Malabar, Dakha, and the Anadams. The summer brought all-India railway strikes and nationwide postal strikes. Overall, two million workers went out on strike during 1946 and 12,717,762 working days were lost.

The events clearly illustrated that the communal divisions could be overcome at the barricades in a revolutionary movement to oust the British rulers once and for all. But the Indian bourgeois leaders refused.

Impasse

The pawns of the British rulers, Nehru and Jinnah, instead fostered communal violence as frustrations grew at the negotiation table.

Nehru became Congress President and scrapped Britain's Plan A for a weak central state.

Jinnah, who had been largely happy with Britain's communal plan, was furious and launched 'Direct Action Day' for Indian Muslims on 16 August 1946. This call-to-arms initiated mass communal violence in Calcutta, which then spread across the country. At least 10,000 people were killed in a certain raiser for partition.

What came to be known as the 'Calcutta Killings' of 1946 cemented hatred between the Muslim League and Congress.

They hated each other more than their British rulers. But they jointly feared the masses and a revolutionary uprising even more. This led to an impasse.

By 1947, the British rulers were fed up with the Indian leaders and understood they were losing control of the situation with both labour unrest and communal violence spreading. To cut across the revolutionary mood and protect its interests, drastic measures were taken.

Partition

In February 1947, Clement Attlee announced Britain would leave India no later than June 1948, and Viceroy Wavell was sacked in place of Lord Louis Mountbatten, the King's cousin, who was given free-reign to get the job done.

With Plan A at loggerheads, the British resorted to implementing plan B. Initially Mountbatten offered the complete balkanisation of India with every province and princely state able to succeed and become independent. This was fiercely rejected by both Jinnah and Nehru.

The second option offered was the only one left – partition. On 3 June 1947, Nehru and Jinnah sealed the deal.

The British wanted none of the blame for what was to come, hence in June 1947, the transfer of power was brought forward a year to August 15, to a matter of weeks later. Sir Cryril Radcliffe, a man who had never been to India, was flown in to draw the partition line. He was only given five weeks.

Pakistan was granted independence on 14 August and India on the 15th. Yet, the border was not announced until two days later!

The result was an absolute bloodbath. The uncertainty of where the new border fell led to extreme religious violence and ethnic cleansing by armed communal gangs to secure the border for each nation based solely on religion. This uncertainty and Britain's botched exit greatly exacerbated all the communal tensions to the extreme.

Britain to blame

India, like the former British colony Ireland, was left partitioned along communal lines, created and fostered by British colonialism. As in Ireland, the British unleashed a Frankenstein's monster of communal hatred among people who had previously lived together in relative harmony.

Since partition, the two nuclear armed nations have had three wars, multiple military skirmishes and terrorist attacks, with religious minorities persecuted and left as second-class citizens in both countries.

Britain bears the ultimate blame for this calamity. Throughout, Britain fostered communal divisions which, once unleashed, produced a logic of their own. Their hypocritical statements about minority rights, had at their heart the preservation of colonial rule. The design of every inch of authority handed over to Indians had religious division at its core.

The history of partition illustrates graphically how these divisions can be overcome at the barricades in militant class struggles, mutinies, and mass uprisings of the people against their common oppressors.

Revolutionary class struggle respects no borders and cuts through all religious and sectarian barriers. That is why we must fight for revolution and a Socialist Federation of South Asia as the only way to undo the crime of partition. ●

HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PRESS THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

Nye Shaw

By the 17th Century, the deep rot within the feudal system had become terminal. The budding bourgeois class was being hemmed in by the limitations of feudalism, and was beginning to vie for political power. This brought them into conflict with the absolute monarchs of Europe.

The first great expression of this process was the English Revolution, which led to the beheading of the King, the establishment of a short-lived republic, and the path being cleared for unbridled capitalist development.

The press, a relatively new invention, played a pivotal role in allowing revolutionaries to spread their ideas, as well as to organise the most radical elements of the revolution.

Pamphlet wars

Despite a royal monopoly and strict censorship, there were an estimated 28,000 illegal pamphlets and similar materials printed between 1640 and 1661.

These ranged from satirical ballads about political scandals, manifestos of utopian societies, to predictions of the end of the world depicting King Charles I as the antichrist – all expressed in vivid biblical imagery.

Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, a 1648 pamphlet penned by Gerard Winstanley – the leading figure of the Diggers, a utopian communist group – is an example of such an illegal publication:

"Weep and howl, ye Rich men ... the People will no longer be enslaved by you, for the knowledge of the Lord shall enlighten them."

Another of the same year, named *The Mournful Cries of Many Thousand Poor Tradesmen*, illustrates the mood of the masses, keen to prevent parliament from compromising with the King:

"O Parliament men, and soldiers! Necessity dissolves all laws and government, and hunger will break through stone walls."

Clashes between parliament and the monarchy weren't isolated to the battlefields of the Civil War, they were also fought in print. In February 1649, a week after the execution of Charles I, *Eikon Basilike*, an autobiographical account of the civil wars in which Charles states that he did absolutely nothing wrong, was published.

In response, *Eikonoklastes* was released in October of the same year, a riposte by John Milton that answered the royalists point by point, defending the Commonwealth.

The Moderate

Cromwell's New Model Army became an epicentre for this. The Levellers, a group organised around radical-democratic principles, skillfully used the revolutionary press to agitate within the army.

At their peak from 1648-49, the stormiest days of the revolution, the Levellers

had a wide influence, seen in papers such as *Mercurius Militaris* – the official paper of the army – as well as their own weekly paper, *The Moderate*.

The pages of *The Moderate* were full of scathing criticisms of both the King and the compromising Presbyterian elements in parliament. Following the execution of Charles, its main editorial declared that:

"Not death, but the cause makes a Martyr ... Surely, that man was most miserable, whose life the wicked did so much desire, and at whose death the righteous much more rejoice."

The Moderate had correspondents all across England, allowing for the Levellers to have a national influence and do far more than comment on events from the outside.

In the decisive moments, in which the Presbyterians of parliament were selling out the revolution, papers such as *The Moderate* were rallying points for the masses to intervene.

Each issue ruthlessly exposed the betrayals of parliament and the weakness of its leaders. *Mercurius Militaris* proudly displayed "After parliament's second purge" on its masthead following the army's purge of the Presbyterian ministers in the Long Parliament.

This would intensify after the execution of Charles as the new Commonwealth sought to turn against those radical layers that now served as a cause of instability for bourgeois rule.

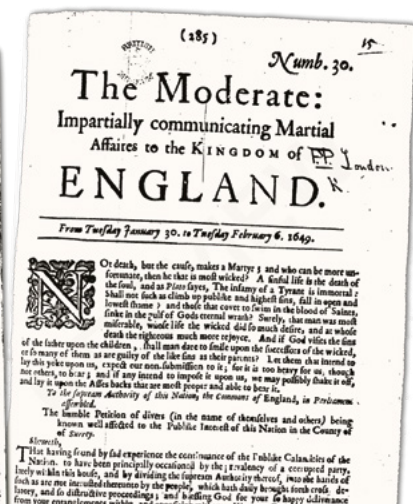
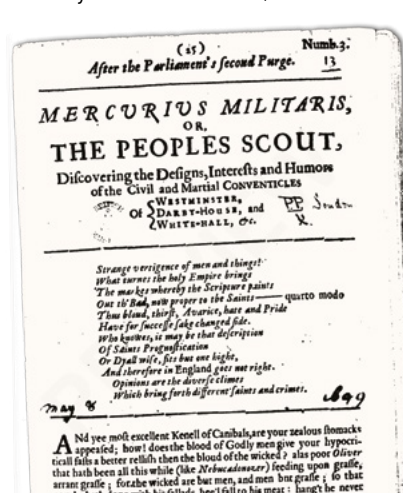
When John Lilburne was arrested during the purge of the Levellers in 1649, over 10,000 were mobilised outside the Tower of London through a petition carried in *The Moderate* demanding his release, something that was granted soon after.

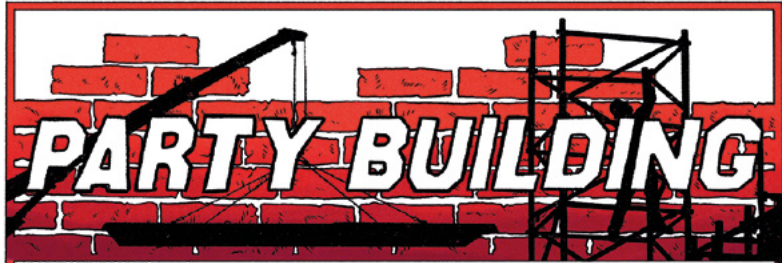
Radical traditions

Despite these successes, the Levellers were ultimately defeated, their papers closed down and one-man rule was established under Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector. This was the beginning of the end of the English Revolution. However, it had served its purpose, for feudalism had been dealt a blow from which it would never recover.

Due to the low level of the productive forces, this revolution could only ever be filled with a bourgeois content. The fate of those most radical elements was therefore sealed. The bourgeois reached a rotten compromise with King Charles II, however, this time with the bourgeois firmly in the saddle.

Despite this, their revolutionary traditions live on. A century later another rotten feudal regime would be toppled by revolution, this time more completely. The revolutionaries of the French Revolution picked up the baton left by their English counterparts, and the revolutionary press lay at the very heart of it. ●





USING OUR TOOLS

We are now just under four weeks away from the founding congress of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). Our comrades are working hard to build for it up and down the country.

Some of the essentials of building the RCP include recruitment, fundraising, and education. This issue's reports demonstrate all of the incredible tools at our disposal for these when building the revolutionary party.

Several public rallies and many recruitment stalls took place across the country over the weekend. These drew large crowds towards us, and even the local press in some areas.

The excellent initiatives below demonstrate the two key reasons why so many workers and youth are now drawn to the banner of the RCP: our bold and fearless organising, and the strength of our Marxist theory and ideas.

All of the tools we use, and the activity we undertake, are designed to draw people towards our ideas, the orthodox ideas of Marxism, which are the only ones which can explain the crisis of capitalism.

Theory without action is stale, but action without theory is blind. The RCP is neither a talking shop nor an academic discussion club. We are a fighting revolutionary organisation that unites theory and practice, like Lenin and the Bolsheviks did before us.

If this sounds like your kind of party, join today and help us build the RCP where you are!

Ely cell building

After recruiting our initial school student comrade, we consolidated the cell and announced our emergence by painting the town red; the central streets were plastered with stickers.

We've made various public appearances using the paper. On one busy weekend, we sold 16 papers and made three contacts, one of which we recruited the following week! We have also surpassed 200 followers on our Instagram page.

For some weeks running, we have been meeting in person to discuss political theory and tactics for further growth. We have been organising regular reading groups, recruitment stalls, and poster sessions.

Lancaster recruiting with perspectives

Recently, Lancaster made a recruit on the strength of our document *Theses on the coming British revolution*.

That same brand-new recruit has paid £150 in order to make it along to congress. The comrade did not want to miss out on such a historic event, and that the document instilled a sense of urgency, immediacy and responsibility in them.

All that was needed was an inspiring discussion!



Cambridge RCP launch

Cambridge recently had our RCP launch meeting, with around 30 comrades and soon-to-be comrades in attendance.

We discussed our perspectives for the coming British revolution and the role our party is planning to play in it. One person was so inspired that she asked to join during the discussion!

A real highlight of the day was the lunchtime march and rally in the centre of Cambridge, to loudly proclaim that the RCP has arrived!

We drew the ire of a few reactionaries, furious that the youth is turning towards communism. They were drowned out by our lively chants.

At the rally, comrades spoke about why we're founding the RCP, and why they joined. We spoke to many interested and sympathetic bystanders at the rally, selling 10 copies of *The Communist* and meeting people interested in joining our brand new party.

On the back of inspiring discussions, comrades raised their monthly contributions to the party by a collective £100, alongside £500 in direct donations and contributions from our comradely social at the end of the day.

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

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

We spoke to the local press about our party, and a comrade who joined two weeks ago produced a fantastic video of the day.

Soon, we will be an unmissable presence. Cambridge, watch out! The communists are here and we're painting the town red.

Newcastle RCP launch

Thirty comrades from around the North East gathered in Newcastle city centre for the historic launch of the RCP in Newcastle.

The day's plans had been extensively discussed by comrades in the lead-up to the event.

We kicked the day off at 12pm with recruitment stalls and sales all over the city. This was followed by an agitational mini-rally with comrades giving speeches through a megaphone addressing the crisis of capitalism and how it applies to Newcastle.

We had many passers-by talking to comrades around the rally, a few hanging around to listen to what comrades had to say, and a lot of leaflets were distributed.

The launch event consisted of two talks, one on the founding of the RCP, and the other on the life and ideas of Lenin.

Both sessions were followed by breakout rooms allowing comrades to specifically address the contacts present and convince them to Marxist ideas.

The two sessions ended with a financial appeal and an inspiring rendition of the internationale by all comrades present.

Norwich door knocking

Comrades in Norwich have been out door-knocking as an alternate route to making local contacts.

Where recruitment stalls are highly visible, which is paramount in our work, they require workers and the sympathetic public to approach us at our stall or in the street out of their own volition.

Door-knocking puts the onus on us to convince those members of the public that do not fully understand what we represent, to join, or to buy a paper.

Secondly, people at home aren't usually busy, especially if you arrive on their doorstep at say, 4pm on a Sunday.

Anecdotally, we in Norwich noted a markedly positive shift in attitude when door-knocking as opposed to recruitment stalls in public centres.

Where people were sympathetic, they had more time to listen to us, and more time to search for loose change or to grab their card, even on some occasions going to their car down the street to get change.

The historic founding of the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) is within touching distance.

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

Wherever you are, you can help us. Be on the lookout for workers and youth who want to get organised, and help us further build up our forces. Recruit them to your local branch...

and if there is not yet a branch of communists in your area, then it is up to you to build it!

But to do that, you'll need tools. The communist cell starter pack, which you can get from shop.comunist.red, has everything you 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! ●

In Defence of Lenin

In Defence of Lenin, our newly published biography of the great revolutionary, is not meant to sit gathering dust on a shelf. Like the rest of our material, it is a practical tool to be used in the building of a Leninist party.

Comrades across the country have had immense success in organising around the book, and using its lessons to wage the struggle today.

For example, in Preston, a study of the book has given an electric impulse to the work:

"We have now had an old comrade return who was out of activity and have made a recruit for the first time in months.

"We now sell the paper, poster, and door knock nearly every day. This would not have happened so quickly and inspirationally if it wasn't for the *In Defence of Lenin* book."



RECRUITING FOR REVOLUTION

Over the last 12 months we have had spectacular growth across the country. Every member of the RCP, from the moment they join and even before, must see themselves as a recruiter.

Every sympathiser we meet should be treated as a potential new recruit. Many of them have been actively looking for a party like ours to join. All we need to do is explain who we are and ask them to join.

Recruitment is a process, however, and not everyone will be convinced of the need to join immediately, or in the same way. Some potential recruits will require a more patient approach, and comrades need to make the effort to have political discussions and answer questions they have.

The ideas we need to answer virtually every question a potential member has are contained in our paper, on our websites, and in our publications. The key is condensing those ideas, and explaining them simply and clearly to contacts, without waffling or pretending to know.

You should aim to directly and immediately speak to all contacts that you make. The comrades in Austria aim to speak to a contact within one hour of receiving their details.

When on the phone, match the energy and enthusiasm of the potential recruit, and tailor the discussion to them. Knowing details about each contact is essential for this. Do not respond like you're reading from a

In Lancaster, comrades have taken the initiative to get the book stocked in the university library as a magnet for young communists.

Comrades in Cambridge have also been using it as a focal point of their activity, and regularly meet to discuss their own successes and trials in relation to those of the Bolsheviks.

They aim to train comrades to think like Lenin, and to ask themselves "What would Lenin do?"

Whether you're a veteran or a freshly recruited communist – get your copy today from wellredbooks.co.uk



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HERE**

script. Speak as if you are speaking to a friend.

Use what they say as the basis for a political discussion. There's no need to discuss in depth or at a high level. This is where you can put forward the position of the party on certain questions and explain what the party is and why they should join.

People interested, like all new comrades, should immediately be asked to join and be involved with the work, sometimes even before they have formally joined the branch. They should be given tasks, such as postering or selling papers. Ask them if they know other people who might be interested in joining us, or ask them if they can build in their workplace or school.

When pitching the party, be bold in stating that we are the Revolutionary Communist Party that is fighting for revolution in Britain and across the world, and we need help!

Make clear that we base ourselves on the ideas of Marxism, as outlined by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky. Our serious attitude towards theory underpins everything we do as an organisation, and guides our activism.

The key to successful recruitment and contact work is to be bold and confident in our ideas, friendly, and enthusiastic. Throw aside any hesitations or inhibitions when trying to recruit new comrades. The attitude we need to have is that this party is what the contact is looking for, and I just have to help them realise it! ●

3 weeks to the

RCP

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY



Click here to get your party building materials from shop.comunist.red

LENIN'S APRIL THESES: REARMING THE BOLSHEVIKS FOR POWER

Nelson Wan

Lenin's famous 'April Theses' represented his fight to politically re-arm the Bolshevik Party, whose leaders had been swept off course by the February Revolution in 1917.

It was nothing short of a political bombshell. At a time when the overwhelming public mood was of jubilation at the overthrow of Tsarism, Lenin soberly analysed the stage at which the Russian Revolution was passing through.

The April Theses called for revolutionaries to decisively break with the bourgeois Provisional Government installed following the February Revolution. Instead they should demand "All Power to the Soviets": the councils of workers' and peasants' deputies which represented the embryo of workers' power.

The response of the other Bolshevik leaders was utter shock. Lenin found himself in a minority of one amongst the Bolshevik Central Committee.

But such was Lenin's political authority and genius, that he single handedly managed to win over the Bolshevik Party to his political line.

Dual Power

On 23 February 1917 a spontaneous strike of women workers in Petrograd

initiated a wave of revolt. It resulted in the overthrow of Tsar Nicholas II within just five days.

The masses, having learned from their experience of the 1905 revolution, immediately set up soviets. The soviets in reality held power in their hands.

The leadership of the soviets, however, was in the hands of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, who had no intention of taking power on behalf of the masses. Instead, they handed power to the bourgeois 'Provisional Government', which ultimately represented the old regime of landlords and capitalists.

The intention of the Provisional Government from the start was to shipwreck the revolution by making cosmetic changes at the top, without fundamentally changing society.

Thus the contradictory situation known as 'dual power' emerged in Russia. Two diametrically opposed forms of government existed simultaneously. One representing the workers, one representing the capitalists.

Such a situation cannot last indefinitely. It is unstable and transitory by its very nature, and can only ever be resolved by the complete victory of one of the mutually antagonistic classes over the other.

Letters from Afar

The rank and file of the Bolshevik Party had a healthy instinctive distrust of the Provisional Government. The leadership, however, represented by Stalin and Kamenev whilst Lenin was still in exile, succumbed to the pressure of public opinion.

Pravda, the Bolshevik paper, refused to criticise the Provisional Government or its continuation of the imperialist war.

Lenin was shocked to hear of the Bolshevik response to the February Revolution, and demanded that workers break with the liberals and take power for themselves.

In his letters to *Pravda* at the time, (since known as his 'Letters from Afar') Lenin tried to bring the comrades to their senses as to the real dynamics of the revolution.

The official Bolshevik leadership was so embarrassed by Lenin's position, and its difference to theirs, that *Pravda* only published his first letter, after heavy censorship. The second, third and fourth letters were not even published!

The April Theses

Lenin finally arrived at the Finland station in Petrograd, where he was received with an enormous welcome by the Russian masses.

From here Lenin began a one-man struggle to

turn the course of the Bolshevik Party around, under the famous slogan 'All Power to the Soviets'. This was a struggle to prepare the Bolsheviks for power.

At a meeting of the Bolshevik Party in April, Lenin made the following points:

1. The Provisional Government, like the Tsarist one, is imperialist, therefore the war being fought is still an imperialist war.

2. The Russian revolution is in transition from the first stage, where power was handed to the bourgeois class, to the second stage, where power must be placed into the hands of the proletariat and the poorest peasants.

3. No support for the bourgeois provisional Government. It must be exposed as "a government of capitalists".

4. The Bolsheviks are at this point a minority in the Soviets, and therefore it is necessary for a "patient, systematic and persistent explanation" of the errors of the other parties, and of the need to transfer power completely to the soviets, which the masses will realise through experience.

5. Not a parliamentary republic but a republic of soviets of workers', agricultural labourers' and peasants' deputies. No standing army but an armed people. Elected officials subject to recall and paid an average worker's wage.

6. Confiscation of all landed estates and nationalisation of all lands in the country, which was to be allocated by the soviets.

7. Banks to be amalgamated into a single nationalised bank under the control of the soviets

8. Bring social production and distribution of products under the control of the soviets.

9. Call a party congress. Change the party programme on the imperialist war, the state, and the minimum programme, and change the name to the Communist Party.

10. For a new *revolutionary* International. The Russian Revolution was never just a national event for Lenin, it was the beginning of the world proletarian revolution, which would be the only way of guaranteeing success in Russia.

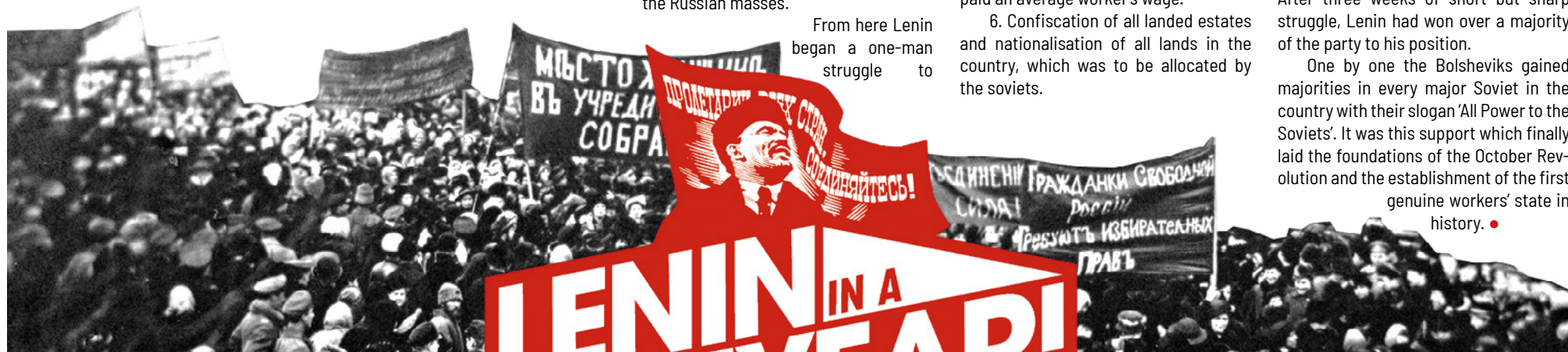
Lenin threatened to take his criticisms directly to the ranks of the party if he remained in a minority in the leadership. The April Theses was published in *Pravda* three days later, bearing only Lenin's signature.

The 'Old Bolsheviks' responded by quoting Lenin's old formulas by rote, formulas which had already been made redundant by events.

Lenin's appeal to the Bolshevik masses in the factories and the workplaces found an immediate echo. From there, his ideas reached the soldiers in the barracks.

Lenin's ideas were endorsed at a Petrograd conference of the Bolsheviks. After three weeks of short but sharp struggle, Lenin had won over a majority of the party to his position.

One by one the Bolsheviks gained majorities in every major Soviet in the country with their slogan 'All Power to the Soviets'. It was this support which finally laid the foundations of the October Revolution and the establishment of the first genuine workers' state in history. ●



As part of the International Marxist Tendency's 'Lenin Lives' campaign, lenin.red is publishing a series of introductions to his key theoretical works - some well-known, others less so.

The series aims to convey their enduring value to revolutionaries today, and to illustrate how polemical struggles were linked to the building of the Bolshevik Party.

Below are some of the highlights of what we have published so far.

What the 'Friends of the People' are and how they fight Social-Democrats (1894)

Lenin's first theoretical book, published in 1894 when he was just 24, targeted the declining Narodnik movement. Despite his youth, the work showcases Lenin's understanding of Marxist economics and historical materialism.

The Narodniks, having failed to overthrow Tsarist autocracy through 'going to the people' and political assassinations, began gravitating towards liberalism. They viewed capitalist development as unnecessary for Russia, and advocated for a path of 'peasant socialism'.

In contrast, Lenin, well-versed in historical materialism, contended that

Russia was already a capitalist society, despite its unique characteristics.

He argued that Russian revolutionaries faced tasks similar to those in the West: not to passively await capitalist development or follow the liberals, but to organise and politically empower the working class to lead the struggle against tsarism.

The Development of Capitalism in Russia (1899)

While in exile for his revolutionary activities, Lenin began analysing the economic conditions that were laying the groundwork for significant revolutionary events in Russia.

Lenin outlines how capitalist relations spread throughout Russia as a result of the 1861 Peasant Reform. This reform transformed large segments of the peasantry into wage-workers, leading to class antagonisms between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Lenin highlights the progressive aspects amidst the challenges of capitalist development in Russia. He notes the growth of capitalist industry, agriculture, and a domestic market.

Marxists like Lenin recognise the progressive nature of this

development. Capitalism, by generating large-scale industry and creating a robust working class, paves the way for the socialist revolution

What is to be done? (1901)

After leaving exile, Lenin sought to address the lack of organisation and clarity within Marxist circles in Russia. In *What Is to Be Done?* Lenin emphasises the critical need for an All-Russian newspaper to provide direction, clarity, and organisation to the party.

From the mid-1890s, Russian workers began to mobilise, with strikes erupting in major factories. However, these strikes often revolved around specific grievances with individual employers. Working under challenging conditions, some 'Marxists' started to fetishise the limited scope of the existing movement, rather than attempting to raise it.

Lenin pointed out that for the working class to effectively challenge the autocracy, it was essential to supplement economic agitation with comprehensive political agitation and

propaganda, aiming to transform this spontaneous movement into a revolutionary one.

To achieve this, a party of professional revolutionaries, well-versed in Marxist theory, was necessary. These revolutionaries would serve as 'tribunes of the people,' exposing all facets of the capitalist system and drawing revolutionary conclusions from everyday struggles.

Lenin argued that the paper *Iskra* could serve as a conduit to politically and practically train these cadres.

Two Tactics of the Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution (1905)

Following the revolutionary events of 1905 and in preparation for the third congress of the Russian Marxists, Lenin wrote this pamphlet wherein he clearly articulates the difference between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks.

He presented two distinct 'tactics' that epitomised these political tendencies. Either Marxists could wait for the Tsar to convene a Duma (a semi-parliament) and then attempt to 'influence' it while aligning with liberals in their pursuit of 'democracy'. Or Marxists could lead the struggle for an armed insurrection of the working class to overcome Tsarism.

Drawing on his deep understanding of historical materialism, Lenin steadfastly upheld the principles of Marxism and emphasised the necessity for the proletariat to have its own independent party and programme.

Materialism and Empirio-criticism (1908)

Lenin wrote this amidst the reactionary period following the defeat of the 1905 revolution.

A wave of books and articles emerged which accused Marxism of being outdated, and advocated for its 'updating' with the supposedly 'new' discoveries of 'empirio-criticism'.

Even within the Bolsheviks, this tendency found footing. Lenin's objective was straightforward: to elucidate the real difference between Marxist dialectical materialism and the subjective idealism of empirio-criticism.

This revision of Marx wasn't merely a scholastic question but, if embraced by revolutionaries, would undermine their ability to comprehend and transform the world.

Consequently, Lenin spared no effort in waging a determined struggle to safeguard the fundamental tenets of Marxism against revision. ●

POETRY

A Sonnet of Struggle

Under crimson skies, a fire stirred,
proletarians rose with revolution's
name to call.

Their hearts ablaze, their spirits
resolute,
They dared to dream, to rise, to
stand, to fall.

Through streets where shadows
wept, they marched as one,
Their cries for freedom pierced the
darkest night.

In Lenin's words, a guiding light had
spun,
A beacon in the storm, of a workers'
might.

Yet in the chaos, pain and sorrow
lay,
In the toll of struggle, in suffering's
knell.

Still, they pressed on, through each
tempestuous day,
Their fervent hearts aflame, their
souls compelled.

Though time may dim the tales of
their endeavour,
Their legacy remains, enduring ever.

Luke Rogers

COLONY

Shaun Morris, Glasgow Communists

If you are in the mood for a good near-dystopia sci-fi thriller that is easy watching at the end of a long day and has a bit of political spice to it, then I highly recommend the 2016 series *Colony*, currently on Netflix.

Set in a locked-down Los Angeles under an extraterrestrial occupation, *Colony* is not your typical aliens-versus-humans show, but mainly explores the personal and political conundrums surrounding life under a brutal, systematic oppression.

Through the struggles of the Bower family, clandestine rebels, regime apparatchiks, and other characters, we are presented with various choices throughout the first series: to collaborate with the occupiers, in the hope of bargaining with them for some concessions; to passively resist or seek individual escape beyond the occupation's walls; or to actively resist through joining an underground insurgency.

It is easy when watching to think of Palestine, and the same difficult choices being forced on the people there. How can you protect your family in the face of ruthless and total oppression? Is resistance worth it or does it only lead to reprisal? Is the only choice one has between the slow death of humiliation, and the quick death of martyrdom?

Despite its small scale, *Colony* manages to be quite thought-provoking viewing. ●

SOCIALISM AND MUSICAL INNOVATION: THE ORIGINS OF THE THEREMIN

Henry Williams

Many extraordinary advancements were made by the October Revolution, and this was especially true for the scientific field. The USSR went on to have more scientists per capita than the major western powers combined; scientific and technological endeavour became associated with Soviet power.

This is unsurprising when one looks at the outstanding individuals who advanced technology in the USSR, such as Lev Sergeyevich Termen.

Theremin

Better known today as Leon Theremin, Termen showed a great enthusiasm for science and music at a young age, impressing his classmates with experiments, performances, and inventions.

Like many of his generation though, he was sent to war. And like many of his generation, he came back a revolutionary and a supporter of the Bolsheviks.

After proving himself by heroically dismantling a radio station to stop the advancing White Army declaring victory, he was asked to help run the Physical Technical Institute. This was part of the Soviet government's nationalised programme of funding for science, art and technology.

Whilst working there, he developed a high-frequency oscillator that could very accurately measure gases; detect motion; and change pitch when he moved his hand around the device.

Daniel Morley

This film's provocative title could equally refer to the flippant lifestyle of its flight-attendant protagonist Cassandra, and to her Ryanair style employer, for whom bureaucratic indifference is the *modus operandi*.

Capitalists often defend zero-hours contracts on the basis they offer workers cherished flexibility, as if such bottom-of-the-ladder jobs really offer workers freedom.

This opinion (or illusion) seems to be shared by Cassandra. Near the film's beginning she is obstructed on her way to work by representatives of a strike at her employer, Wing Air. Pressed by the union members to realise how bad her conditions are, and to think of her future, she replies "I don't even know if I will be alive tomorrow".

Perhaps she means this in a life-affirming, 'live in the moment' way, but it clearly also implies a dark side to her hedonistic lifestyle. As a flight-attendant, Cassandra lives rootlessly: she sleeps in generic hotels, hooks up with random men from dating apps, gets drunk and high at mediocre-looking nightclubs.

She is depicted as having fun and meeting

and skillfully so – a remarkable contrast to the dry, uncultured, 'party man' that Lenin is normally described as!

In fact, Lenin and the Bolsheviks valued developing science and art very highly, and this is why they ensured there would be funding in order to facilitate this. Fighting for communism means fighting for the true freedom of humanity, to create, experiment and advance.

Freedom

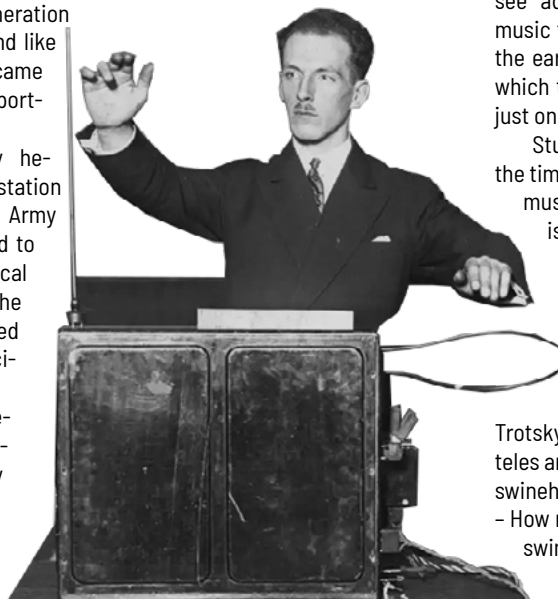
Sadly, once the October Revolution began to degenerate, Termen became a pawn in the Stalinist bureaucracy's game. He was arrested and his scientific prowess used for espionage, creating the audio device 'The Thing' which spied on the US ambassador's office for seven years!

Innovation

Nowadays, it is unlikely we will see advancements in scientific and music technology like those we saw in the early years of the Soviet Union, of which the invention of the theremin is just one amongst many.

Studies have found that since 1955 the timbral variety and pitch content of music has hugely decreased. What is produced is what is guaranteed to be profitable, leaving musical innovation of any kind to suffer under the stranglehold of the profit motive.

Talent and innovation are both wasted under capitalism. Trotsky said it best: "How many Aristoteles are herding swine? And how many swineherds are sitting on thrones?" – How many Leon Termens are herding swine today? ●



ZERO FUCKS GIVEN: ALIENATION UNDER CAPITALISM

people from all over the world, but the conversations appear mostly awkward and banal. We learn that she has a father and sister in Belgium, but she turns them down over Christmas in favour of more shifts.

In fact, she has used her job as an excuse to escape family tragedy, the reality of which is forced on her not by her father, but by the fact she must tell a call-centre worker her mother is dead in order to change a contract.

When she is forced to embark on training for a promotion with Wing Air, she is told by the instructor to "leave

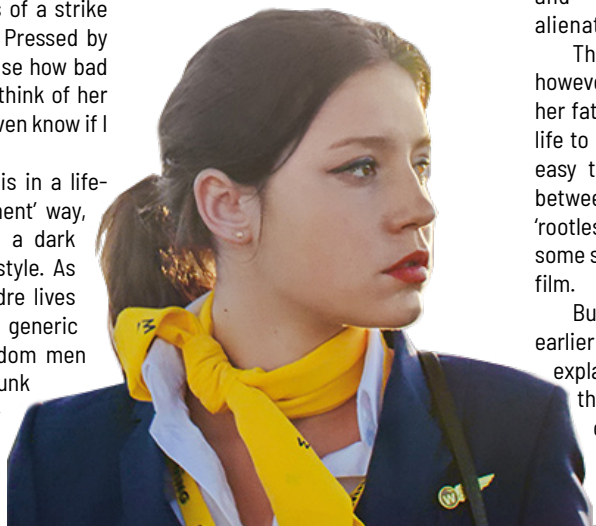
her emotions behind". We are treated to the blackly comic awkwardness of close-ups of trainees as they show their ability to smile (in reality grimace) non-stop for 60 seconds. Cassandra is even reprimanded for showing genuine humanity to passengers (because this involves personal initiative beyond the formal procedures) and for 'rating' her fellow workers well even when they fail to sell much perfume. The stiff, bureaucratic tone of her boss is spot on for this environment.

The point is clear: this 'flexible' and 'empowering' job is deeply alienating.

The film is not depressing, however. Cassandra's eventual visit to her father and sister reveals her home life to be warm and loving. It would be easy to conclude from this contrast between her local 'roots' and her 'rootless' international job, that this is some sort of 'anti-globalist' reactionary film.

But the striking workers she meets earlier prove this is not the case: They explain that their strike is global, and they make the case that they can only win on a global level.

That is to say, this is an anti-capitalist, not an anti-globalist, film. ●



DEFIANCE: FIGHTING THE FAR RIGHT

This new three-part documentary series details how the British Asian community fought back against a campaign of violence from the far right, standing tall amidst the rising prominence of the National Front.

Covering the years 1976 to 1981, a mixture of archival footage and new testimonies shed light on key events such as the Southall protests, the death of Blair Peach, the Battle for Brick Lane, and the story of the Bradford 12.

All episodes are available now at channel4.com

MONKEY MAN

Wade Tucker, Liverpool Communists

In this violent, cathartic revenge thriller set against a backdrop of gross inequality and corruption, Dev Patel delivers more than just your usual action movie.

Speaking to the BBC, Patel stated that he 'wanted to create a story about the underdogs challenging the untouchable status quo.' His aim was to cast a critical light on the corruption of the police, politicians, and religion (i.e. the state).

The popularity of this movie and the hype surrounding it certainly reflects the fact that workers and youth wouldn't mind giving some individuals in the establishment a quick one-two to the chin.

This 'challenge against the status quo' takes the form of Kid, a man living in the slums and hell-bent on exacting revenge on those who wronged him. Scratching beneath the radical veneer of the movie, its political message falls flat in places.

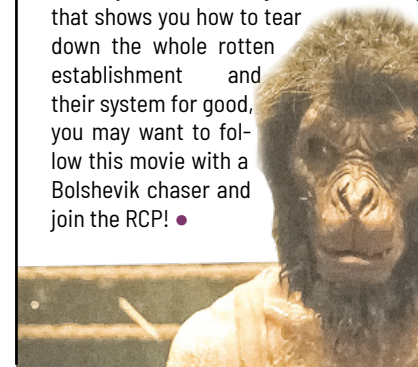
Reflecting Kid's focus on his campaign of individual terror, the role workers and youth can play in overthrowing the establishment is neglected.

When the masses appear in the movie, it is either as bloodthirsty gamblers or as a reactionary mass under the spell of sectarian politics. Kid is restricted to taking on the whole establishment with methods that amount to beheading a many headed-hydra.

This film is definitely entertaining, and there is some cathartic value in watching Kid carry out his rampage against the rich.

Yet the reality is while this or that vile figure can be removed, if the social system that created them remains, they will have any number of replacements.

If you are looking for something that shows you how to tear down the whole rotten establishment and their system for good, you may want to follow this movie with a Bolshevik chaser and join the RCP! ●





LETTERS

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

More effective stewards

Cash-struck county councils fall back time and again on selling off 'assets'. As more councils find themselves 'looking down the barrel' of bankruptcy there seems to be no limit to what they'll consider flogging off.

These assets might be money-making opportunities, e.g. car-parks, or 'liabilities', such as public conveniences. Just as I was becoming numb to these announcements, Cornwall County Council have added "beaches" to "2000 assets" on offer." They justify their proposals with "there are more effective stewards".

The council claims that the sales will not be to private individuals, but to parish councils and institutions, such as the National Trust. So, "more effective stewards" imply management through largely local voluntary labour or by charitable set ups who invariably charge entrance fees.

Living in Cornwall reminds me of the huge social divide in the county. Even basic living accommodation is beyond the means of most of its workforce. One silver lining has always been the beautiful coast.

Taking a dip in the sea has lost its lustre since we've learnt what's being pumped into it. Now even the golden sands are being brazenly commodified.

So, to Cornwall's County Councillors, a message: you're right, there are more effective stewards. They're called the working class. We'll happily decide priorities and forward plans. We'll manage the budgets on the basis of a planned economy, under our ownership.

Jayne Pascoe,
Falmouth

Palestine flags

Since the start of the atrocious genocide in Gaza, there has been a deep mood of unrest in London.

In Tower Hamlets, a borough with a young, impoverished, and enraged population, the support for Palestine has been massive. We've had regular rallies and walkouts at colleges and at Queen Mary University.

Until 14 March, Palestinian flags on traffic lights, street lights, and sign poles began appearing in the borough.

But, even the act of raising the flag for a people who are suffering, is considered too extreme by the 'UK Lawyers for Israel'. Inexplicably they have the power to pressure the Tower Hamlets mayor into taking the flags down.

And even though the flags are gone, the yearning and passion will continue to burn hot in the borough, making it important for us to put forward our revolutionary perspective.

Ben,
Whitechapel

Care worker recruitment

Recently what was essentially an ad for becoming an adult social care worker popped up on my feed.

Based on this video, you'd probably think it's quite the career! Flexible hours, training on the job, "no two days the same", quality time off to spend with friends and family...

Meanwhile, a careworker I know is currently facing her third year in a row being (illegally) denied holiday pay!

Yes, the qualities they look for are kind, caring and patient - because those people are easy to exploit!

Care workers (like all workers) deserve better, and the vulnerable adults being supported deserve better.

Anais,
Cambridge

Criminalising homelessness

According to the news Rishi Sunak faces a revolt by Tory MPs against plans to criminalise homelessness.

The new Criminal Justice Bill, would give the police powers to fine or imprison people who are "nuisance rough sleepers" or just "look like they are intending" to sleep on the streets.

Even some Tories object to this cruel and cynical attack on the people most neglected and mistreated by capitalism. According to the charity Shelter, 309,000 people are homeless in England, a 14% increase in just one year.

As rents, interest on mortgages, and the cost of living rise, the risk of rough sleeping increases. No threats of fines or prison will reverse that.

The incredible thing is there are more than twice as many empty homes as homeless people in the UK. The real criminals are those who profit from and maintain a monopoly on housing, not the victims of it.

Alex Charlton,
Harrow

Bed crisis

In a stark illustration of systemic shortcomings within our NHS, Jonathan Harris, a 52-year-old battling paranoid schizophrenia, tragically took his own life in June 2022 as result of psychiatric bed shortages in Surrey hospitals.

Harris's death could have been prevented had an inpatient psychiatric bed been available just days earlier. The bed shortage extends far beyond Surrey, reflecting a nationwide crisis.

One report found that over 562,000 people who would normally be treated were turned away due to a lack of beds.

Mr. Harris's journey through the mental health system was marked by obstacles and neglect. Despite receiving care, he faced delays and inadequate treatment.

NHS England's pledge of £1.6bn to support mental health services pales in comparison to the tens of billions that have been cut from the NHS in the past decade.

Until we dismantle the system and prioritise the wellbeing of all individuals, tragedies like Harris's will continue to plague our society.

Luke Russell,
Surrey

'Progressive' patriotism

Labour MP David Lammy has written an article defending his party's Union Jack-worship in *The S*n*. How many more ways can you spit in the face of workers?

Lammy claims that for the Windrush generation, the Union Jack apparently "was the symbol of anti-fascist forces in World War Two".

For millions of colonised workers and peasants, however, the British flag was a symbol of vicious oppression and systematic loot. In the ashes of Nazism, it was the USSR's hammer-and-sickle which flew high.

I'll leave the last words to the great Caribbean communist, C.L.R. James: "Property-owners are the most energetic flag-waggers and patriots in every country, but only so long as they enjoy their possessions: to safeguard those they desert God, King and Country in a twinkling."

Dara Sorrentino,
Wood Green

Cost cutting?

The bourgeois exploitation within the education system has once again been demonstrated, this time by the University of Surrey.

A BBC article recently stated the uni's consideration of over 140 job redundancies as a means of 'cost cutting'. The university is reportedly running a £10 million deficit, blaming the cost-of-living crisis, yet failing to address the exorbitant salaries of its administrators.

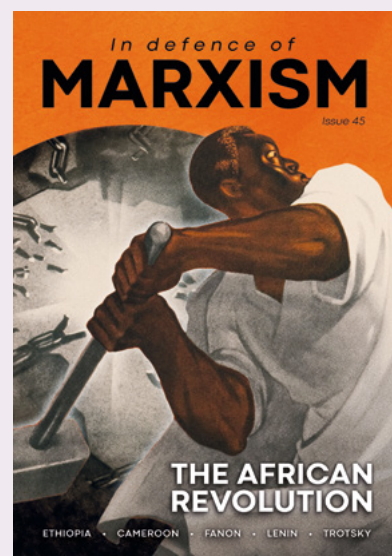
Despite the Vice Chancellor, Gaoqing Max Lu, promising to maintain the quality of education we are already feeling the effects of the cuts.

Because of the need to increase income, they have over-accepted freshers for 2024, meaning second and final year students are being denied affordable student accommodation and are now forced to rent privately.

Meanwhile, Max Lu, with his £419,000 salary (2017-18) dares to blame inflation and living costs for the university's deficit. This is an insult to us students while he squanders university expenses on £2610 membership fees to elite London clubs and £1600 on relocating his dog.

The silence from the student union and the UCU in the past weeks speaks volumes. It is now on us to organise and demand accountability from the Vice Chancellor.

Lucy Davidson,
Surrey



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In defence of Marxism

Mutilated and strangled by imperialism for centuries, Africa is today the world's youngest and fastest growing continent. Under the impact of the world capitalist crisis, it is being transformed into a cauldron of revolutionary anger.

A study of the history and lessons of revolutionary struggle in Africa is therefore a topic of vast importance for communists preparing for the world revolution.

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.

There is no resource in the world like *In defence of Marxism*. For revolutionary communists, these articles are not academic exercises or historical curiosities but important and hard-won lessons with which class fighters can arm themselves for the revolutionary struggles to come.

All those who are serious about changing the world should get a copy today and actively study its contents. ●



A reader in Newcastle asks "Are we wasting our time trying to build the RCP with workers in Britain? Are workers in the West capable of revolution?"

The argument goes that workers in Western countries are far from the most downtrodden people on the planet. In fact, some say, they even benefit from imperialism. Therefore, they can never really be revolutionary communists.

That is rubbish. Try telling someone on minimum wage, with skyrocketing bills and a bastard boss, that they're actually 'very privileged' and 'benefitting from capitalism and imperialism'. The answer you'll get is exactly what you deserve.

A revolutionary mindset doesn't just appear when things reach some arbitrary absolute low point. Living standards in Britain don't have to collapse to the level of Palestine before workers start thinking revolutionary thoughts.

It's enough to see that the rich are getting richer while the rest of us are getting poorer to provoke that kind of anger. And if no matter how hard you work, who you vote for, or how much you give to charity, life is still getting worse - it's going to provoke you to search for a deeper solution.

People's political ideas are, in the first place and in their raw form, the product of their own experience of life. Not the experiences of past generations or people living halfway around the world.

If their experience is that the capitalist system isn't working, which is true for millions of people, then they can be won over to the ideas of the RCP.

Writing-off workers in Britain as 'backward' and 'reactionary' is a terrible mistake. Not a lightbulb shines in this country without them. They hold the power of life and death over British capitalism and imperialism. The RCP aims to help realise this potential. ●

Ask *The Communist* via our submission form, at communist.red/submit

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SHARON GRAHAM'S UNITE, PALESTINE, AND IMPERIALISM

The Communist

With the conflict in Palestine entering its seventh month, the question of how to bring an end to Israel's genocidal massacre is becoming ever more pressing.

Many workers are desperate to see action that can stop the slaughter, and are therefore looking to their mass organisations – the trade unions – to offer some direction and take a lead in the Palestine solidarity movement.

Many unions have issued statements. Some have even encouraged lunchtime walk-outs and other symbolic 'action'.

Unfortunately, however, there has been little in the way of more serious action from the trade unions.

In truth, the labour movement has barely lifted a finger when it comes to directly opposing British imperialism – a key ally of Israel, and the main enemy at home, against whom workers in Britain should primarily be aiming their fire.

Unite's failures

As the catastrophe in Gaza escalates, debate has intensified around this question. In recent

months, this has revolved around the question of arms factories in Britain, including criticism of the two major unions that organise workers within these: GMB and Unite.

Most of the ire has been directed at Unite, as one of the largest trade unions in Britain, and as an influential organisation on the left of the movement.

GMB is generally viewed as a more 'moderate' union. Under Sharon Graham's leadership, by contrast, Unite has increasingly moved to take more militant industrial action. This has understandably built up Graham's authority in the eyes of many workers.

Graham's prior stance on the industrial front has made the disappointment over Unite's passivity on Palestine all the greater. Her union organises workers in factories that make weapons that are sold to the Israeli military. Yet the Unite leaders have completely failed to utilise this potential power at their fingertips to halt the imperialists' war machine.

This has led to various initiatives by rank-and-file members angered by this inaction. The union has come out in favour of a ceasefire – but members clearly want more.

Open letters are circulating, garnering hundreds of signatures. And with the formation of the group 'Unite4Gaza', this anger has gained an organised expression.

This discontent is correct and legitimate. The Palestine solidarity movement more broadly must organise union activists to channel this energy into their organisations, in particular Unite, in order to demand real action.

Factional struggle

This issue has also been weaponised by critics of the Graham leadership, however – most notably, those supportive of the old United Left (UL) bureaucracy within the union.

Having been dethroned following Graham's election in 2021, UL has consistently played a wrecking role against her leadership: both from within the union, and via the *Skwawkbox* blog that is loosely affiliated to their faction.

This sabotage is no doubt motivated, in part, by investigations that have either been launched or strengthened by Graham into various instances of potential corruption that took place under UL's tenure at the top.

UL's attacks on Graham are completely cynical. After all, the old Unite leadership also did nothing to mobilise members during previous Israeli military campaigns against Palestinians.

In reality, these bureaucrats are simply trying to throw whatever they can at the union's current leaders, for their own factional interests.

Imperialism

This does not mean that the Graham leadership should have a get-out-of-jail-free card on the question of Palestine, however.

In Britain, Graham has overseen a surge in industrial militancy. But on international issues, her time in office has been consistently characterised by parochial nationalism and pro-imperialism.

In 2022, for example, under her leadership, Unite backed a TUC Congress

motion that called for an increase in defence spending. Graham has also been vocal in her support for the NATO-backed regime in Ukraine.

In one recent letter, responding to criticisms originating from *Skwawkbox*, Graham implicitly attacks activists who have been targeting arms factories, including sites where workers are organised with Unite.

What she fails to mention, however, is that activists have only resorted to such actions because of the lack of action coming from the trade unions – including Unite.

We have our own comradely criticism of the methods that have been used by activists – in frustration – to blockade such companies.

Graham, however, denounces such action on the grounds that the union's priority is "always the protection and advancement of our members' interests at work". This is reflective of her narrow, chauvinistic, reformist outlook.

Her letter also explicitly states opposition to "groups that look to build networks inside trade unions to undermine the defence industry or demand the disbandment of NATO and AUKUS".

This is a clear statement of support for maintaining the arms industry and, de facto, western imperialist alliances. And it is a betrayal of the working class internationally, justified with lip service to "British workers' interests".

Leadership

This has always been the Achilles' heel of Graham's leadership. Her syndicalist approach to trade unionism has brought with it positives, including backing

members to take bold strike action in many instances.

But this has always carried with it a supposedly 'apolitical' side. And this ultimately means falling in line behind British imperialism, for example on questions like the arms industry.

Instead of defending the status quo from behind the fig leaf of "members' interests", the trade union leaders should be fighting for a genuine socialist alternative.

In relation to the arms sector, Unite should demand the nationalisation of the industry, with factories repurposed to make socially-useful products, all while maintaining members' pay and jobs – as was suggested by workers themselves in the 1970s with the famous Lucas Plan.

Graham's failure to present such a programme is the result of her reformist politics: working within the confines of the capitalist system, rather than seeking to overthrow it.

Unite members therefore deserve a trade union leadership that is willing to be bold, outspoken, and militant politically, not just industrially, both on matters at home and abroad.

This does not mean a return to a UL-led union, which was equally reformist.

What is required instead is to build up a revolutionary communist leadership that is both fighting and democratic, based upon the militancy of the union rank-and-file.

This is what the RCP is aiming to do – in Unite and across the trade union movement. ●



Image by Mark Thomas [ALTERED], www.markthomasphotos.com

PORT TALBOT: THE WORD ON THE STREET AS STRIKE BALLOT DRAWS TO A CLOSE

Alex Falconer

For months now, the communists have called on Tata workers in Port Talbot to occupy the steelworks to save the town.

Some have blamed the steelworkers and the community for the lack of fight-back, saying the will for such action isn't there. But it's clear from the mood on the ground that it's the absence of bold leadership that's led us to this point.

Listening to workers and local residents, you understand how much the steelworks mean to them. In fact, it's hard to find anyone who doesn't have some kind of connection to the Port Talbot plant.

"Well, I don't think that it's Port Talbot without the steel, to be honest with you. What else is there?"

"All my family have been connected to it. And it's an element of shame. The fact that the blast furnaces are going to go, especially when you think it's going on my watch, so to speak, for want of a better way to put that.

"You've got youngsters who will have to move away, there is nothing here. There are no high-skilled,

good quality jobs for people to go into."

"It's unthinkable. This town will see a depression like it's never ever seen before. It'll kill South Wales."

Everything we've warned about for months is being expressed by the workers and people of Port Talbot.

The closures will lead to a mass exodus from the town, as workers desperately look for employment. This, in turn, will lead to the destruction of any remaining businesses that serve local residents.

Added to this will be the loss of skills, a loss of pride, and the stripping away of an identity integral to the town for over seven decades.

The people of Port Talbot don't want their community to be destroyed. And workers don't want to lose their jobs.

There is anger. There is frustration. And there is no faith in Tata.

"The problem is, the way it's been handled, and the way the plan has been put forward, there's no confidence in Tata to deliver anything."

We are where we are because the unions and Labour have failed to provide any leadership.

For months, union leaders have sown illusions in backroom deals with the Tata bosses. They have asked members to wait for a Labour government. But Starm-er isn't offering anything different to the Tories – just a bigger payout to Tata!

Despite all this, strike votes are ongoing across the unions. The ballot amongst Unite members is due to close as we go to press. If successful, this could see industrial action begin before the end of the month.

This can and must be a turning point for workers – a line drawn in the sand, and the beginning of a real fightback.

It'll take an almighty effort to win this struggle. But it begins by winning these ballots, then building for all-out united strike action,

as a platform for an occupation of the steelworks.

Workers hold an enormous potential power in their hands. They just have to rely on themselves and use it. ●



'MUTINOUS' MOOD AMONG NAUTILUS MEMBERS

Gavin Ribeiro

Royal Fleet Auxiliary workers, organised in the Nautilus union, have voted for strike action for the first time in history. These are civilian sailors who assist the Royal Navy.

The ballot saw a 60 percent turnout, with 79 percent voting in favour of strike action, and 85 percent voting for action short of a strike.

The Nautilus union said that a 4.5 percent offer was received, which falls well below inflation. These auxiliaries have had a real-terms pay cut of more than 30 percent since 2010, the union claims.

In a message to the Ministry of Defence, Martin Gray, director of organising at Nautilus said: "For this group of professionals to have reached a point that they feel their only option is to vote for strike action...it should be a huge red flag that something needs to be done."

As hard as the hated Tory government wants to put out the fires of the class struggle, the spectre of industrial militancy continues to haunt them.

These are technically civilian workers, so this doesn't class as a mutiny. Nevertheless, it probably feels the same to top brass. Behind every strike, they always glimpse a 'red flag' – of revolution. ●

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A ... MENTAL HEALTH NURSE

Arrive at the ward at 6.50am and check the staff list. I am the only qualified nurse on today. Again.

Deep breath. It's going to be a long day. Take handover from the night staff. They look destroyed from working 12 hours short-handed. Again.

The number of patients needing one-to-one care has gone up overnight. So that's a restriction on how many staff I have available. Not good.

Time to help the patients that need it with personal care. We need to move fast if the day isn't going to descend into chaos from the off.

Next up is the morning medication round. Normally, the nurse doing this is left alone. But seeing as I am the only qualified nurse, this is impossible.

I am continually dealing with requests from staff and patients. Obviously, this increases the risk of errors enormously. And it is extremely stressful trying to maintain concentration.

I try to catch up on important paperwork, like patients' care plans and risk assessments. But again, I am constantly interrupted by phone calls, requests, and events on the ward.

Patient care is paramount. So everything else falls by the wayside. No doubt I'll get a telling off. But I only have one pair of hands.

During lunchtime medication, a normally placid patient becomes agitated and lashes out at a staff member, scratching her face and drawing blood. After I patch her up, I offer to let her go home. A physical attack is a nasty thing. But knowing her removal would cripple the shift, she insists on staying.

I feel awful about this. It's not right. But I feel powerless. It feels all we can do as a team is react and firefight incidents, rather than implement planned care that could make a difference.

It's 2pm. I haven't had a bite of food or a drop of drink since I started. I grab a glass of water and ram a sandwich into my face as I walk over to ward round.

This is a weekly meeting with the consultants and other professionals involved in patient care. It's vital that I am prepared and can advocate for my patients in a coherent way.

Yet again, as I am the only qualified nurse on shift, this meeting is punctuated by interruptions. I am left feeling that I've let the patients down by not presenting clear arguments for their case.

The shift draws on: another medication round; dealing with families visiting the ward; preparing to transfer and receive patients for admission; writing notes for every patient; checking food and fluid charts. The list goes on. And it keeps on growing.

8pm. I fall out of the ward half-an-hour late. Again. And I head home, exhausted.

We go again tomorrow. And the next day. And the next.

Save our NHS. Join the RCP. ●



NEU CONFERENCE: NO MORE DELAYS – TIME TO FIRE-UP THE RANK AND FILE!

Tommaso Verga and Joe Broderick, London NEU (personal capacity)

In 2023, teachers all over the country went on strike to demand a pay rise, along with additional funding to match.

Rank-and-file members of the National Education Union (NEU) threw themselves into industrial action. The union leadership, however, failed to take advantage of the mood on the ground.

Sporadic action was announced one or two days at a time, with no threat to escalate. This resulted in a pitiful pay 'increase' of 6.5%, at a time when inflation was in double-digits.

Rubbing salt in the wound, this wage rise was only partially funded by money from the government, putting more strain on school budgets.

Indicative ballots

The government's 'unexpected' betrayal on funding motivated the NEU to launch online 'indicative ballots' for strike action earlier this year.

At the time of writing, the consultation amongst support staff is still ongoing. But initial assessments

indicate that turnout is nearing 50%, and support for strike action is well over 90%. And the figures are even higher for the teachers' indicative ballot.

Despite this, however, the union leadership – including 'left' general secretary Daniel Kebede – is dragging its feet.

During the recent NEU annual conference, Kebede argued on the basis of a slightly lower turnout that a postal ballot would likely fail and only serve to 'demoralise' members.

Suspicion is beginning to spread that the union's leaders are looking to wait until after the general election, in the false hope that things will be rosier for schools under a Starmer Labour government.

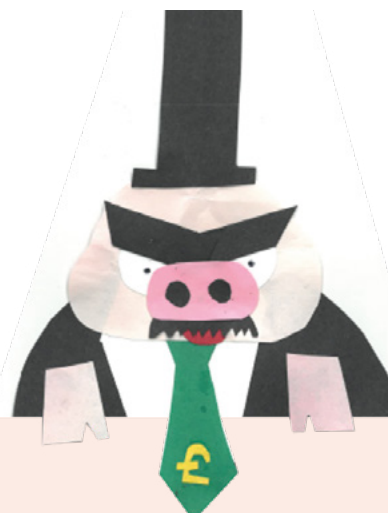
Organise the grassroots

The NEU is a major union, with strong traditions of militancy among its membership.

The weakness of the general secretary and the rest of the 'left' leadership has been equally on display, however. The only solution is to build from the bottom.

Teachers who supported a vote against last year's rotten deal are now calling for the union to 'fire up the reps' at each school, in order to build support for strike action.

- Revolutionary communists in the NEU are raising a bold perspective and militant strategy, linking our fight to defend education to the fight against capitalism:
- No trust in a Starmer government! We – the workers – must trust in our own power!
- Coordinate action with other unions! For unified strikes across the public sector!
- Overthrow the Tories and the rotten system they defend! ●



This teacher is now going to be jobless, with a family and bills to pay, like so many around the country. This just goes to show the inherent exploitation in this system, and how little bosses care about anything but their bottom line – even in schooling. ●

BASTARD BOSS OF THE WEEK

A family member is a teacher. When they tried to leave their previous job, they were contacted by the school's new management.

These people said that to fund the school, they required this teacher to withdraw their notice to quit, and stay on for another year. They were in their last month of notice. Had they not stayed, hundreds of school kids would have

needed to move school, and staff would be made redundant.

This same management quickly changed their tune once this was agreed, however. They now want this relative to reinstate their notice and leave sooner, or come to a 'settlement' under a lot of pressure, so as to avoid having to pay them for the 12-month notice they'd ordinarily have to give.

BMA WELSH STRIKES: ESCALATE TO BEAT FRUSTRATION

The most recent strike wave called by BMA Wales – starting 25 March, and lasting 96 hours – was the longest action yet.

This escalation in action by the BMA is a result of the Welsh government refusing to provide a proper pay deal, before or since.

Details of ongoing negotiations are opaque. The devolved government states that it is limited by the "finances available to us". Westminster, meanwhile, states that it is up to politicians in Wales to resolve the industrial dispute.

At University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff, our single day of picketing on 25 March saw a good turnout, with some new faces – a sign that new layers are being radicalised.

At the same time, however, there appear to be more middle-grade doctors strike-breaking, in an effort not to "frustrate consultants". Many doctors are also sceptical that any offer will come before a general election.

These worries stem from a lack of tactical and political leadership from the BMA. Doctors are wondering why only a single day of picketing was

announced, and why there has not been other tactics deployed, such as demonstrations in the city centre, like in the first wave of strikes.

While the BMA Wales junior doctors' committee has been working hard to galvanise doctors, the BMA as a union needs to step up its efforts to mobilise the membership more broadly.

This should include making concrete plans both to escalate the action, and to bring fresh layers into the fight. We have the strength to win – so let's use it!

A letter from three militant junior doctors in Wales



WHAT IS A WAGE?

The Tory government recently announced that it is pausing efforts to raise the minimum wage, in order "to offer a break to businesses in this period of inflation and stagnation".

As ever, then, workers are being made to pay for the capitalists' mess.

We will look at the question of inflation and stagnation in future columns. For now, we focus on answering the following: what do our wages really represent?

A wage is what capitalists pay workers in order to employ and deploy their labour-power; that is, their ability to work – whether that's making goods, like a new chair, or a service, like delivering said chair to your home.

Wages are broadly determined by the average living standard that the working class socially needs and expects. This includes the education and training that workers need to perform their role in production. And it includes the money needed to raise a family: to produce the next generation of workers.

In buying this labour-power, the capitalists are also entitled to whatever is produced in the worker's time – e.g. the working day or week – that they have purchased. These goods and services are then sold by the capitalist on the market for a profit.

We might have the right and freedom to refuse this-or-that job. Perhaps you don't really fancy working in that call centre. Legally, you're allowed to quit.

But we all have bills to pay. And without a steady income from a wage, most of us can't buy the things we need to live. So we're *absolutely not* free to refuse work in general.

That is why Marxists refer to capitalism as a system of *wage slavery*. The chains may not be as visible as they were in the days of chattel slavery, but they are every bit as real.

The task facing the working class is to organise and mobilise to break free of this bondage and exploitation. In the words of the *Communist Manifesto*: We have nothing to lose but our chains! We have a world to win!

How wages are linked to profits, meanwhile, and why the capitalists are always so keen to squeeze wages as a result, will be the subject of a future issue... ●

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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THE COMMUNIST

WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!



LAUNCHING THE RCP

REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST PARTY



3 WEEKS UNTIL LIFT OFF

When you take a look around, what do you see? Climate change, crumbling schools, sky-rocketing inequality, and falling living standards.

A whole generation growing up in Britain today is therefore asking themselves: Is this really it?

As communists, we aim to answer this burning question in the minds of workers and youth. No, this is not it.

Different ideas float around in society about how to tackle these problems. In the main, at best, such suggestions simply try to make life slightly more tolerable.

The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) has a completely different aim. We stand for the complete overthrow of capitalism.

Our goals go far beyond what the current system can offer. We fight for a society based on needs, not profits. If you share these revolutionary ambitions, then this is your party.

We are launching the RCP in just a few weeks time. At our founding congress, taking place

from 3-6 May, we will discuss our perspectives for the coming British revolution, and agree on the necessary strategy and tactics for the period ahead.

The main barrier to our success, at present, is our modest size. A serious recruitment drive is therefore underway.

The RCP is a cadre party. We are looking for workers and youth willing to steel themselves as dedicated Marxists, and become active leaders in the class war.

We need comrades who can go into their workplaces, universities, schools, and neighbourhoods in order to raise clear socialist demands, and to find others who want to help us build, spread the ideas of genuine communism, and fight for revolution.

No one is born with these skills. We must develop them ourselves, through theory and practice.

The launch of the RCP is therefore a declaration of intent: to educate and train a new generation of class fighters.

We welcome new members from every quarter, from any background, on one condition: that they commit themselves to the

class struggle, and the task of building the revolutionary party.

To do this necessarily requires time and sacrifice. But above all, it requires conviction; a determination not to let any obstacle stand in our way. No one else will do this for us.

In recent months, our comrades have intervened in occupations for Palestine, in campaigns against the closure of the Port Talbot steelworks, and in various local strikes and struggles up and down the country.

Through all of this activity, alongside our week-to-week recruitment stalls, we are meeting a steady stream of people looking for a revolutionary alternative to the crises they face.

The political and economic climate in Britain – and internationally – is producing thousands of potential new communists every year.

But we still need to grow further, in order to make an impact on, and eventually lead, these battles as communists – armed with a programme to unite the working class and bring it closer to its historic task: the conquest of power.

So, if you're a communist, it's time to get organised! Join the RCP today! Help us launch the Revolutionary Communist Party! ●