



WHAT

WE

STAND

FOR

The Communist Party



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

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

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

from Communist Party Aims & Constitution

INTRODUCTION

Communism did not start with Karl Marx, or with the Russian Revolution of 1917. In Britain, a rich historical seam of communist ideas dates back to the Middle Ages and beyond. The desire for a future based on peace, co-operation, community, solidarity and common wealth has long inspired the peoples of England, Scotland and Wales.

At times of great crisis, such as the Peasants' Revolt (1381), the English Revolution (1640) and the Chartist uprisings of the 1830s and 1840s, communist ideas have come to the fore, voicing the hopes of working people.

The Communist Party continues that living, revolutionary tradition. Our party is a product, first and foremost, of the British labour movement. Its roots lie deep in Britain's trade unions, socialist societies and other working class organisations.

OUR HISTORY

When founded in 1920, Britain's Communist Party brought together militant socialists and trade unionists who understood the need for a revolutionary change in society. They were inspired by the world's first workers' state, Soviet Russia, led by V.I. Lenin.



But they were also repelled by the mass slaughter of the 1914-1918 Great War. Britain needed a party that would fight capitalism and imperialism, unlike the labour leaders who preferred collaboration and surrender.

Since then, the Communist Party has been in the frontline fighting for the interests of the working class. Despite its small size and the imprisonment of its leadership, it played an outstanding role in the 1926 General Strike. Throughout



the 1930s, it led the unemployed workers movement and the fight against fascism. During the Second World War, it campaigned tirelessly for the opening of a 'second front' to confront Hitler in the west.

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

The importance of democracy was further underlined by revelations, at the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party in 1956, about the crimes and injustices committed during the Stalin era. The Communist Party recognised that, in popularising the achievements of socialism and in combating anti-Soviet hysteria, it had in some cases tried to defend the indefensible.

In the post-war period, the Communist Party took the lead in opposing the Cold War and nuclear weapons. Almost alone in the labour movement, it called for parliaments for the peoples of Wales and Scotland. Based in the working class movement, it led the fight against anti-trade union laws. The Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions united Communist and non-Communist militants in mass one-day stoppages in 1968, 1970 and 1971. The last of these moved the TUC to call a one-day General Strike, thereby defeating the legislation.

Alongside other left-wingers, Communists also gave the lead in the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders' work-in and the 1972 and 1974 miners' strikes. Powerful Communist and broad left organisations were built in many workplaces and unions.

These very successes of the Communist Party made it a particular target of the capitalist class. Having failed by 'red scare' techniques to isolate the Party from its roots, the ruling class worked to undermine it from within. Their strategy was clear: destroy the Communist Party, and the working class movement will be disarmed and rudderless. Unfortunately, the old Communist Party leadership failed to recognise and

withstand this attack. It succumbed to reformist ideas, drifting away from its class basis, even attacking the leadership of the 1984-85 miners' strike and expelling many of the Party's finest militants.

Before this tragedy could run its full course, the Communist core of the Party had recognised the danger. In 1988, a large number of comrades expelled by the revisionist leadership came together to re-establish the Party as the Communist Party of Britain (CPB), on the basis of the rules, principles & programme which the previous leadership had abandoned.

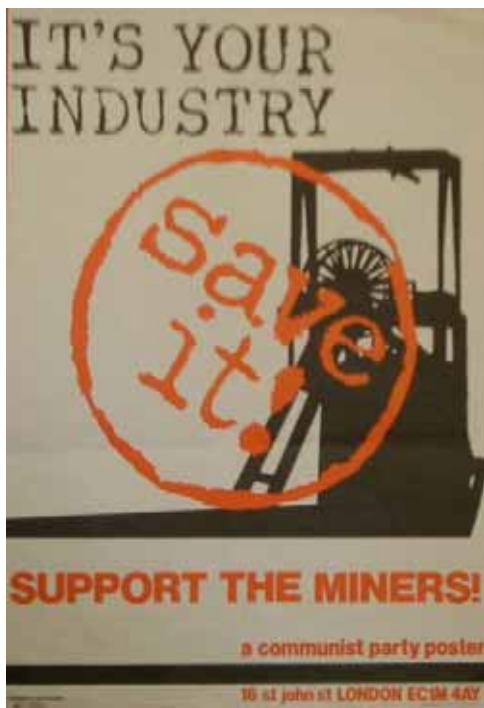
The revisionist element within the CPGB dissolved their section of the party in 1991. The overwhelming majority of genuine communists in the CPGB at the time of its dissolution have subsequently rejoined the CPB.

Since then, the CPB has worked tirelessly to rebuild membership & organisation in industry, public services and mass movements, carrying on the finest traditions of the Party and is recognised as the sole successor of the communist tradition in Britain by over 100 Communist and Workers parties across the globe.

A LIVING THEORY

According to its rules, the Communist Party is 'guided by the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism'. But this is far from being a fossilised set of ideas.

Marxism-Leninism is a science, starting from the understanding that: 'The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles'. In their *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), Marx and Engels analysed the development of capitalist society. They showed that the dominant structures and ideas of society reflect the ownership, by a minority class, of the means of production (the machinery, tools, materials, industrial and commercial



land, etc.) and that social revolutions take place when that system of property ownership prevents the full development of society's productive forces.



Such a situation exists today with the contradiction between the narrow private ownership of industry, finance and commerce by the capitalist class, and the vast and inter-related social process of production carried out by the working class.

In competition with each other, the capitalists squeeze as much surplus value (the source of profit) out of the workforce as they can, raising productivity, holding down wages and therefore workers' purchasing power. In the public sector of the capitalist state apparatus, too, wages are held down and productivity is driven up as vast amounts of public money are channelled into the private sector. At the same time, the capitalist monopolies invest in ever greater capacity and produce commodities which periodically cannot be sold above their cost, i.e. at a profit. The result is over-production, cut backs, redundancies and the destruction of productive forces.

This contradiction between capitalist profit and greed on one side, and public consumption and need on the other, ensures that capitalism is a system built on insecurity, poverty, misery and crisis. It is a contradiction which can only be resolved by abolishing capitalism, and building a socialist society based on social ownership and planned production.

Lenin creatively applied Marxism to the conditions of his time, when he analysed imperialism as the parasitic and moribund 'highest stage of capitalism', with economic and political power in the hands of enormous monopolies and

cartels, whose struggle for the re-division of the world leads to conflict and war. He emphasised the need for the working class and its allies to take political power, guided by a revolutionary party and creating their own form of popular working class rule.

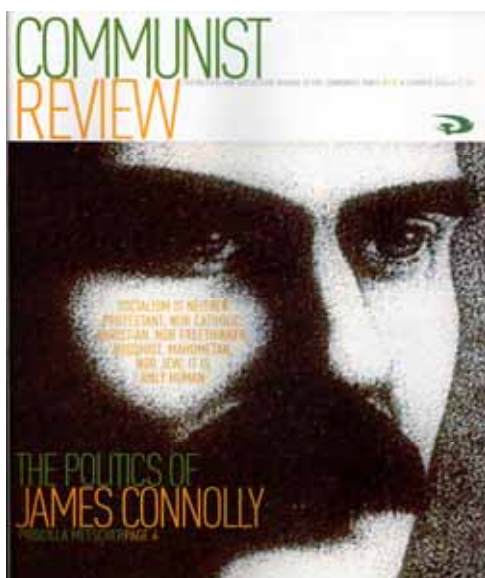
As the world has developed, so also has the science of Marxism-Leninism. And, as with other sciences, its theory is put to the test every day. Life continually throws up new issues to be addressed, and new questions to be answered. Such a relationship between theory and practice ensures that obsolete ideas are discarded and new insights and approaches developed.

Early in the 21st century, the capitalist world is dominated by trans-national corporations (TNCs or multinational companies), whose interests are promoted by their respective states which also act through international institutions such as the European Union, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation, the World Bank and NATO. The rich get richer as billions of people go without adequate food, shelter, clean water or health and education services.

The capitalist monopolies and their political representatives put profit before people and before the earth's environment. Capitalist exploitation and imperialism intensify inequalities of race and gender as well as those between regions & nations.

The need for popular resistance and class struggle, for the working class to take state power in fact, is as great as ever. But this requires theory as well as practice, through education and propaganda on the ideological front to inform and learn from action on the economic and political fronts.

That is why the Communist Party publishes a theoretical and discussion journal, *Communist Review*, three times a year; organises the Communist University of Britain annually, together with regional & national communist universities in the districts and nations; and holds an Industrial Cadre School every year for trade unionists.



Britain needs a left wing programme

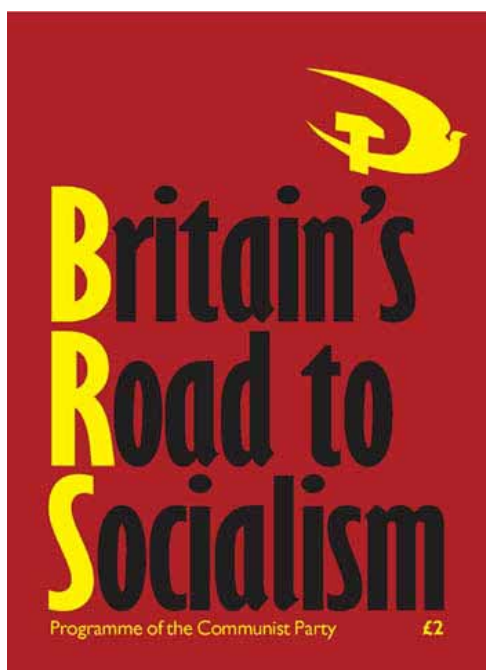
THE LEFT WING PROGRAMME

The Communist Party works with its allies to promote the Left Wing Programme, part of an Alternative Economic and Political Strategy to open the road to socialism. Key policies of the Left Wing Programme are to:

- Redistribute wealth from the rich and big business to working people and their families with a wealth tax, higher corporation tax, cuts in VAT and higher pensions and social benefits.
- Set the national minimum wage at half median male earnings rising to two-thirds, with no exemptions, and enforce equal pay through compulsory pay audits.
- Immediately restore the link between the state retirement pension and earnings at its original value and introduce a second state pension which includes contributions from employers and the state.
- Halt all forms of privatisation and invest in public services and their staff, with a massive programme in particular to build more council and sheltered housing.
- Integrate all religious, private, trust and city academy schools into a unified secular education system under democratic local control.
- Protect and develop manufacturing industry through public investment, measures against the export of jobs and capital, and expanding fair trade with People's China and other developing countries.
- Restore public ownership in the energy and transport sectors – including the electricity, gas, coal, water and railway industries – so that we can plan to meet future needs by developing clean coal technology and tidal, solar and offshore wind power.
- Match public subsidies to failing private companies with a public shareholding and take banking and key industries such as pharmaceuticals and armaments into democratic public ownership.
- Cut military spending to average European levels, switch military R&D and production to meeting social needs and

scrap plans to replace Trident with a new nuclear weapons system.

- Oppose all steps towards a military, monopoly capitalist United States of Europe including an EU constitution, the EU services directive and EU labour law reform.
- Repeal all anti-trade union, anti-democratic and racist immigration laws with full employment rights and trade union participation for migrant workers.
- Strengthen the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly and restore powers and resources to local government.
- Abolish the House of Lords, break up the media monopolies, scrap plans for ID cards and bring the police and intelligence services under democratic control.
- Cancel all Third World debt, promote genuine trade-and-aid policies and oppose the GATS plan to privatise public services across the world.



OUR ROAD TO SOCIALISM

The Communist Party's programme, now called *Britain's Road to Socialism*, applies a Marxist-Leninist analysis to conditions as they have developed in Britain. The latest, sixth edition calls for mass activity and campaigning in favour of policies which challenge the capitalist monopolies and extend democratic rights.

In the course of struggle, a democratic anti-monopoly alliance can be built up which draws together a wide range of social forces (including pensioners, students, the unemployed, ethnic minorities, women, peace and environmental campaigners) around the organised working class.

Such a militant mass movement can help produce and sustain a left government based on a Labour, socialist and Communist majority, committed to the Left Wing Programme and the Alternative Economic and Political Strategy (AEPS) developed by Communists and socialists. At local, national and

all-Britain levels, this combination of parliamentary and extra-parliamentary struggle can put Britain on the road to socialist revolution. This would have to be a democratic and popular transfer of political powers, transforming the state apparatus and utilising the strength and creativity of the working class and its allies.

For Britain to take the road to socialism, however, a strong and influential Communist Party is vital – a Marxist party which is both internationalist and rooted in the British labour movement.

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

When the Communist Manifesto urged 'Workers of all lands, unite!', it recognised two important principles: firstly, that working people have different national identities, languages and traditions; and secondly, that they have a common interest in supporting each other against exploitation and oppression. A victory for one section of the international working class movement is a victory for all.

This internationalism characterises the Communist outlook. From its foundation, the Communist Party campaigned against British imperialism in Ireland, India and elsewhere, demanding the liberation of all oppressed colonial peoples. In the 1930s, it rallied to the cause of the Spanish Republican government, recruiting volunteers to fight in the International Brigades against the fascists. At the height of the Cold War, it stood out against the US-led invasion of People's Korea. It campaigned against apartheid and US aggression in Vietnam.

The Communist Party supports the right of self-determination of the Irish people and campaigns for Britain to renounce all claims on Ireland.

Despite all the efforts of hostile US administrations, the Cuban Communist Party still commands the support of the people. The CPB declares its solidarity with Cuba and campaigns against the illegal US blockade of that country.

Despite the efforts of US imperialism, Communist and workers parties are also still in power in Vietnam, Korea, Laos, Cambodia and Moldova. China's economy, most of which is still planned and in public ownership, has been the fastest

growing in the world for more than a decade.

In 2008, Communist Parties form part of the governing majorities in South Africa, Venezuela, Uruguay, Brazil, Cyprus and Belarus. They also govern three states in India and have the trust and support of millions more people in France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Portugal, Japan, Nepal and elsewhere.



Socialism as it existed in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe has certainly suffered a dramatic setback. But it will return, reinvigorated and without the 'bureaucratic command' distortions of the previous period. The people of Russia and eastern Europe are learning that capitalism creates more problems than it solves. That is why tens of millions of people vote Communist in Russia, the Czech Republic and eastern Europe today.

The Communist Party of Britain enjoys comradely relations with scores of Communist and workers' parties and national liberation movements throughout the world. In Britain, the CPB participates in the Co-ordinating Committee of Communist Parties which brings together Communists from overseas who are domiciled in Britain.

A DISCIPLINED & DEMOCRATIC ORGANISATION

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

The basic organisation of the Party is the branch. All members are allocated to the most appropriate branch for them. They are encouraged to participate fully in branch work, in order to pool experience, deepen their own understanding of political affairs and of Marxist theory, and develop to their full potential as Communists. Branch meetings are generally

open to interested non-members.

Through collective discussion and activity in branches, the Party intervenes in the political life of the workplace and community, projecting its policies and strategy, giving support to day-to-day struggles, and working to build a broad democratic anti-monopoly alliance for fundamental political and social change.

Each branch holds an annual general meeting at which a branch committee is elected to give leadership to activities for the forthcoming year. Branches are grouped within Nations and Districts, established on the basis of coherent geographical areas. Workplace and industrial branches also exist. The role and responsibilities of the branch and Party members is set out in detail in our *Branch Activists Handbook*.

In each district and nation, a congress is held every two years comprising delegates elected from the various Branches. The district congress decides the broad perspectives for Party activity within the district for the next two years, and elects a District Committee to carry that work forward. The Welsh and Scottish Congresses elect their own leading committees and formulate policies for their respective countries in accordance with the general lines of the Party's programme and approach.

The all-Britain National Congress, composed of delegates from branches and national and district committees, is held every two years. This decides policy for the Party as a whole, and elects an Executive Committee to carry that policy forward and direct the Party's work between national congresses. In turn, the EC elects a Political Committee to provide leadership in between EC meetings. A number of advisory committees, incorporating delegates from nations and districts, also exist to help develop policy and assist the Party's work in particular industries or areas of activity (for example among women and pensioners, in the peace and anti-racism movements and on the economy, housing, the environment and international affairs)

Democracy underpins the decision-making process throughout the Party. But without discipline that democracy would be undermined. Decisions of higher organisations are therefore binding on lower bodies – although this is not a simple one-way process. The EC and national and district committees have a duty to explain their decisions to lower

Party organisations, who in turn have the right to make their views known to the higher committees.

These procedures are set out and explained in more detail in the latest edition (1997) of the document *Inner Party Democracy*.

An essential element of Party discipline is that members pay their dues regularly. Membership dues are based on ability to pay and are set currently at £12 or £6 per month for waged comrades and £2 or £1 for unwaged. In addition, members may pay a regular voluntary contribution.

Key reports from Executive Committee and Political Committee meetings are disseminated via a monthly *Political Letter* and the bimonthly *Communist News*. Branches, districts and nations are encouraged to send in reports of their activities for inclusion in this bulletin. The EC, national and district committees and many individual branches produce pamphlets and leaflets on topical issues. Write, phone or check www.communist-party.org.uk for a list of current publications and links to other Communist Party sites.

THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE



The Communist Party's youth organisation is the Young Communist League (YCL). Its age limits are 12 to 28. Although the YCL supports the Party's programme, *Britain's Road to Socialism*, it is organisationally independent, deciding its own policy and activities, controlling its own finances and electing its own leadership. The YCL's magazine, *Challenge*, appears quarterly.

THE MORNING STAR

The capitalist press barons produce 10 million newspaper copies every day. The *Morning Star* alone provides an



Top party figures contradict each others' excuses

New Labour sinks deeper into the mire

alternative daily viewpoint.

The *Morning Star* is not the property of the Communist Party. The People's Press Printing Society (PPPS), the co-operative which owns the paper, was established by the Communist Party in 1945 to enable the *Daily Worker* (as the paper was then known) to broaden its base of ownership and support. Today, thousands of supporters – individuals and labour movement organisations – own shares. However, a special relationship remains between the Party and the *Morning Star*, based not only on history but also on the fact that successive Annual General Meetings of the PPPS have agreed that the editorial policy of the paper is guided by *Britain's Road to Socialism*.

Communist Party Rule 15(b) states that members have the duty 'to read the *Morning Star* and to help in every way the circulation of the paper'. This is a top priority, as increased circulation is crucial in the battle of ideas and in organising resistance to attacks on living standards, jobs and democratic rights.

Communists and our allies also seek to establish and sustain broad local *Morning Star* Readers & Supporters Groups and campaign committees in order to build the circulation and finances of the paper, and to stimulate political discussion in the labour and progressive movements.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Britain's Marxist party of the labour movement

- Based on the class & internationalist principles of Marxism-Leninism
- Organised for socialist revolution, rooted in the working class, working for unity.
- Democratic, drawing upon the initiative and creativity of its members.
- Centralised, to act as a disciplined and united force.
- Internationalist, enjoying close relations with scores of communist parties and movements for peace, progress and national liberation.

Join with the Communists!



Join the fight for peace, socialism
working class & people's power

name

address

Age if under 30

E-mail

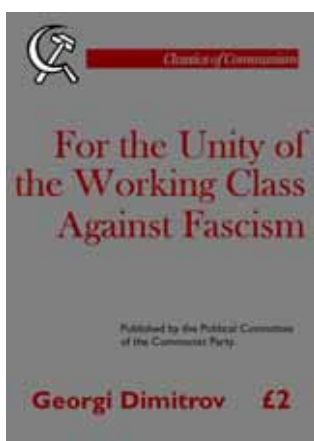
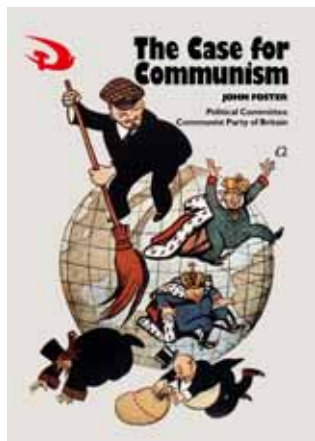
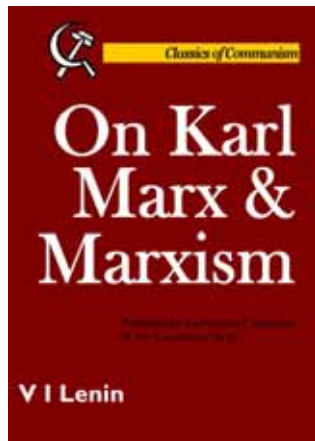
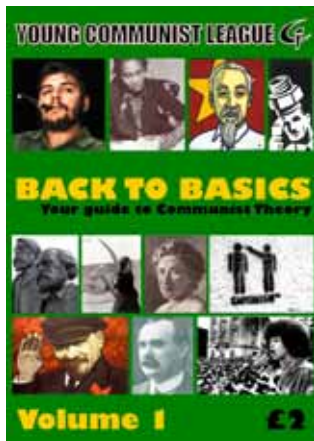
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