Bristol communists welcome the toppling of Edward Colston’s statue writes Ken Keable. This is a man whose fortune from stealing and selling human beings, used race to justify his actions. The people of Bristol have, at last destroyed the symbol of the city’s racist, slave-trading elite, which had the Merchant Venturers Society at its core.

Hand off China’s sovereignty

Communist Party general secretary Robert Griffiths, has slammed the former foreign secretaries seeking to stir up further social unrest between our countries. The hypocrisy of their confected outrage is staggering – one can only imagine their response had a gang of violent protestors broken into the Commons chamber and smashed it up. Even more ominous is their veiled threat to plunge China into the same division and destruction which British, US and NATO intervention fomented in the former Yugoslavia” he said.

COMMUNIST PARTY

MOLLIE BROWN

THE VICIOUS killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis has highlighted the racism that still pervades developed capitalist societies and their state institutions. Mollie Brown told the June meeting of the Communist Party’s executive committee: ‘Recent examples of the deaths and serious injuries of black detainees in police custody in Britain, the US and France were linked to the use of dangerous restraint techniques that were used disproportionately against black and working-class people she said. ‘Our response must include recognising the class basis of prejudice, discrimination and racism in Britain and other imperialist countries, and urge black and white to unite in the fight against them’. The party leadership agreed a range of proposals from the party’s Anti-Racism Anti-Fascism commission including the early publication of a pamphlet on Covid, Class and Racism.

BREXIT warning

Responding to the collapse of the fourth round of Brexit talks between the British government and the European Union’s chief negotiator Michel Barnier, Mollie Brown warned against attempts by the EU and British big business to force an extension of the ‘transition period’ with its EU rules and jurisdictions beyond the end of the year. ‘Barnier’s insistence that future British governments should not be allowed to intervene in the economy to protect key industries and enterprises, regulate private investment and end competitive tendering is unacceptable and intended to frustrate any settlement this year on future UK-EU relations’, she said. ‘Likewise, the bid for full EU access to Britain’s already depleted fishing waters is a deliberately provocative demand that the EU has never insisted upon in trade deals with Canada and other countries’. Britain’s communists urged the Labour Party leadership not to repeat previous mistakes by supporting an extension of the ‘transition period’ and siding with those ‘anti-democratic elements’ in the Tory, Labour, LibDem, Green and nationalist parties who have never accepted the 2016 EU referendum result.

Save Britain’s industry

The party’s executive also received reports highlighting the massive threat to what remains of Britain’s industrial base, including recent announcements of tens of thousands of job losses around Gatwick airport and 6,000 redundancies at Rolls-Royce beginning in Derby, Inchinnan near Glasgow and Lancashire. Rolls Royce and British Airways have both taken public money on the pretext of saving jobs and should not be allowed to cut and run, said the party trade union organiser Andy Bain. Trade union organiser Andy Bain called for broad-based community campaigns led by the trade unions and local trade councils to resist these devastating blows. Both companies should be returned to the public sector and protected in the public interest regardless of EU state aid rules, he said.

MOLLIE BROWN IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY’S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Austerity and Covid-19 crisis

HEALTH COMMISSION

THABO MILLER

The government response to the Covid 19 pandemic has been one of mismanagement and incompetence from the start said the Communist Party’s newly established Health Commission in a statement following its launch meeting. ‘The roots of this were laid in the decade of austerity, cuts, privatisation and under resourcing of our health and social care services across the four nations, as well as a political doctrine which promotes individualism and lack of community responsibility that has resulted from the capitalist economic system.’ “The question of where to go from here is, therefore, one with no easy answers. Any steps forward must be based on the evidence of potential benefits and harms for all, rather than on narrow political ideology.”

The commission identified two pressing questions that need to be answered:

- What are the costs and benefits to health across the nations associated with lockdown?
- Looking at other countries in the world who have had a more successful response to the pandemic than the UK, what can be learned as to the criteria necessary before lifting lockdown?

The party’s Health Commission covers a wide range of expertise in health and social care. These include professionals working in the health and social care sector as well as individuals with direct experience of the wider provision of health and social care across the country. The commission is planning to use the expertise of its members to address questions relating to health and social care policy, in a rigorous and evidence-based way. It will advise the executive committee of the party and the party membership on best practices within the services. The commission intends to analyse existing practices from a class-based perspective in order to understand why those practices and policies currently occur. Progress requires our class and our party to not merely be reactive to the actions and policies of the bourgeois class and of monopolies, but to develop a clear, detailed and specific alternative.

“Over the medium to longer term, the health commission will draw up a specific vision for the NHS of the 21st century based upon the principles that patients need an ambitious public health system which is democratically accountable,” said the commission.

THABO MILLER IS CONVENOR OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY’S HEALTH COMMISSION

Red Wedge success

Over a hundred new and prospective members of the Communist Party took part in a nationwide series of 10 online meetings at the end of May. Feedback on the meetings showed that all the 34 Red Wedge course leaders felt the sessions were a success and all the new and prospective members rated the sessions five out of five stars. Building on the success the party’s Red Wedge team is planning the immediate launch of Communist Party women members training courses and a Zoom public launch of the party’s new Women and Class pamphlet and political education classes at the Communist Party Centenary Red Wedge event on Saturday 1 August.

The same date will see a major Red Wedge event for trade unionists and prospective party members active in trade unions.

- The Young Communist League has set up new branches in East Anglia and Kent and is planning to set up new branches in Greater London localities, Brighton, Liverpool, Stirling and Warrington reports YCL general secretary Johnnie Hunter.

Joint statement of the world’s communist and workers’ parties

https://tinyurl.com/stgkh79

Workers of all lands, unite!
Phil Katz

T H E W E E K E N D O F 3 1 J u ly a n d 1 A u g u s t 2 0 2 0 marks 100 years since the historic gathering of delegates at the Cannon Street Hotel in London, to form the Communist Party.

Plans to celebrate the centenary are being stepped-up as we near the date, with the organising team having to take into account radically changed circumstances, resulting from the lock-down.

The recent growth of the Communist Party, with a rapid rise in membership and the formation of new branches, means more is expected of the celebration.

The first response to the COVID crisis was the rebuiding of an entirely new party website, which allowed meetings and organisation to continue. The will waves now positively hum with Communist Party activity. Public meetings are regularly held and members, there are a growing range of online training courses. A major centre for political education, including the use of video tutorials for new members, on the party programme Britain’s Road to Socialism, sits alongside a suite of ePublications. A social network to put members in touch with each other, for discussion and mutual aid, has helped.

Communist teachers are keen to use this momentum to further increase the profile of education unions.

London District of the Communist Party held a successful online meeting on the theme Covid-19: Safe Schools: Safe Workplaces discussing the effect of school closure and reopening on working class and vulnerable students; the success of the NEU’s national and local action; and what the future holds for education policy. A recording of this meeting is available.

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The centenary publication

Our History

Phil Katz

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