

# Unity!



Workers of all lands, unite!

Communist Party

December 2021

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## TORY DOUBLE WHAMMY HITS THE NORTH



NICK WRIGHT

TORY LIES

**T**WO BETRAYALS in one week. The Tory government has delivered a double whammy to working people in the North of Britain.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps told the MPs that the Leeds leg of the HS2 high-speed rail line, touted by Tories to connect northern England and the Midlands with London, is to be scrapped.

Shapps pulled the usual Tory trick of announcing a £96 billion spend much of which has already been pledged including £360 million to upgrade ticketing and introduce a contactless system.

A new Trans-Pennine rail route between Manchester and Leeds — originally touted as part of the Northern Powerhouse Rail project to improve links between the North's biggest cities — is scaled back.

And in a move that would hit people in the North extra hard the government's reform of the social care system is set to impose an

unfair and discriminatory burden on people living in areas of cheaper housing.

The Tory scheme subverts the original system designed to ensure that people needed social care would avoid overwhelming costs. It included a means-tested component to make sure that it would not favour the rich and people living in very expensive housing.

Dilnot told the Treasury select committee that the changes, which his commission originally excluded as 'unfair', that anyone with assets of less than £186,000 — the majority of people who needing social care — would be worse off.

The original scheme covered everyone. With no one having to pay more than £86,000, people with smaller assets and cheaper houses would benefit from a lower cap on their private expense for social care. This was because any means-tested state support they were entitled to when their assets fell below £100,000 would be included in the £86,000 cap.

The Tory's new trick ends the relation

between the means-tested system and the cap, so that all assets get taken except for £20,000 in care costs, until the private expenditure of people needing care reaches the cap.

Rich people with large assets are more or less unaffected, but those with assets below £100,000 have to keep whittling them down until they fall to £20,000. At this point the state picks up the full cost.

The Tories are showing their contempt for the North, the Midlands and for working people as a whole said the Communist Party.

Party general secretary Rob Griffiths said: 'The yawning gap between Boris Johnson's election promises and the reality of these two policy reversals is the space where Labour should be standing up for working people.'

'Caught between the expectations raised by the government's sunshine stories and the reality of Rishi Sunak's creeping austerity policies the government is revealed even more clearly as a confidence trick on the British people.'

## End violence against women

Throughout the world, 25 November is recognised as the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

World Health Organisation research estimates that one in three women globally experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. Most violence comes from an intimate partner.

In poor regions of the world, in war zones and in countries with authoritarian regimes, women's health, wellbeing and safety are badly compromised.

In countries with histories of misogyny, levels of femicide — the killing of women because they are women — have always been high. Some progressive governments, for example in Mexico, are now recognising this and attempting to change their cultures.

Despite inconsistencies in data collection from country to country, it is also clear that rape is a major issue across the world.

In some developed countries, including Britain and the US, levels of prosecution and conviction for rape have fallen sharply within the past five years.

In Britain, evidence is emerging that most girls face some sexual harassment from an early age at school.

The outbreak of Covid-19 has intensified all forms of sex-based violence in what the UN-Women organisation describes as a 'shadow pandemic' in particular, there has been a global rise in domestic violence.

None of this is inevitable. It can be ended. The Communist Party of Britain demands:

- Immediate government action to challenge and prevent violence against women and girls at work, in society and in schools and colleges.
- Zero tolerance of all sexual harassment and sexual exploitation within our society.
- Action to provide and fund essential life-saving services for women and girls who have endured sex-based violence.
- Real commitment and urgency to tackle institutional misogyny, sexism and racism within our police forces.
- Investment in measures to change the culture which tolerates, exploits and so perpetuates violence against women and girls.
- Immediate ratification of the Istanbul Convention and its enshrinement in British law to give support and protection - free from discrimination - to migrant women.

The Communist Party reaffirms its revolutionary commitment to the struggle against the oppression of women, for women's rights and for socialism.

## On the threshold of growth

ROB GRIFFITHS

COMMUNIST PARTY

**T**HE COMMUNIST PARTY is on the threshold of substantial growth in size and influence in the labour and progressive movements. Our congress in November marked the party's emergence into a new phase after the long struggle to re-establish it since 1988.

The weekend's debate and decisions reflected a unity and confidence that will stand the party in good stead over the next two years. There were many more younger delegates than previously, itself a product in part of the great progress being made by the Young Communist League.

The congress was attended by around 150 voting and consultative delegates,

representing a party membership that has risen by almost two-thirds to more than 1,200.

International guests included representatives from China, Cuba and Vietnam and from Communist and workers' parties in Afghanistan, Greece, India, Iran, Ireland, Portugal, the Russian Federation and Spain.

Decisions were taken to campaign on the climate crisis and public ownership of energy and against the 'New Cold War' declared by the Western imperialist powers against China.

Other important policy areas discussed by delegates included the 'New Deal for Workers', women's rights, a progressive federal state for Britain, racism, housing and homelessness, transport, the 'Green New Deal', gender politics, anti-Semitism, Afghanistan,

Israel and Palestine and Britain's nuclear weapons.

The congress also elected the party's executive committee for the next two years comprising Nisar Ahmed, Sonya Andemahr, Andy Bain, Mollie Brown, Andrea Burford, Sean Cannon, Ben Chacko, Andy Chaffer, Tony Conway, Mary Davis, Lorraine Douglas, Alex Gordon, Bill Greenshields, Moz Greenshields, Robert Griffiths, Jonathan Havard, Richard Hibbert, Johnnie Hunter, Bernadette Keaveney, Tam Kirby, Hugh Kirkbride, Gawain Little, Sarah McDonough, David Morgan, Tommy Morrison, Kevan Nelson, Evan Pritchard, Carol Stavris, Ruth Styles, Robin Talbot, Jade Welburn.

ROB GRIFFITHS IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S GENERAL SECRETARY

Communist Party Statement 25 November 2021



# SOLIDARITY

*Solidarity among the male and female workers, a general cause, general goals, a general path to that goal - that is the solution to the "woman" question in the working-class environment.*

*Nadezhda Krupskaya writing in Rabotnitsa (The Woman Worker) 1913*



## Capitalism equals corruption

UNITY! NEWS DESK

SLEAZE

COMMUNISTS HAVE demanded that corporate and state funding of political parties should be outlawed and MPs should work full-time for their electors and the general public with political parties compelled to rely on their own members and supporters.

'Big business has a built-in tendency to corrupt public, parliamentary and political life. Hiring MPs as consultants and directors is just one of the ways in which capitalist monopoly corporations use their wealth and power to influence political decisions Communist Party general secretary Rob Griffiths told the party's late November political committee meeting.

'One basic fact is missing from media coverage of the latest scandals at Westminster is the systemic link between capitalism and corruption' he said.

Dozens of Conservative and Liberal Democrat MPs derive income from outside business interests that exceeds their basic parliamentary salary of £82,000 a year.

Tory MP Owen Paterson was paid £100,000 a year to lobby public agencies and government ministers on behalf of two companies. After the Commons standards committee recommended Paterson's suspension for improper conduct, Boris Johnson's government and most Tory MPs had tried to block it before the MP resigned his seat in disgrace. One of Paterson's paymaster companies had received two Covid testing contracts worth £480m, neither of them put out to competitive tender despite the first one resulting in massive failures.

Former Attorney General Sir Geoffrey Cox received £1m a year from business interests, including £700,000 for advising the British Virgin Islands government facing corruption charges. The BVI is one of the world's biggest

centres for shielding wealth, registering 'shell' companies and laundering money on behalf of big business and the super-rich.

'Successive British governments have failed to drain that swamp and the others under British jurisdiction', Rob Griffiths said.

Former Conservative prime minister David Cameron received around £7.2m over 30 months in fees and share sales from Greensill Capital, since collapsed after lending money to the US coal industry and the Gupta family empire which includes Liberty Steel.

Cameron's lobbying of top Tory ministers failed to keep the company afloat long enough to repay up to £400m borrowed from the public sector British Business Bank.

'All efforts to halt the financial corruption of political life have been obstructed, flouted or circumvented because the economic power of the capitalist monopolies has fused with the political power of the state', Rob Griffiths said.

## Justice now

JOGINDER BAINS

FEMALE INHERITANCE RIGHT

PATRIARCHY DOES not dominate in India alone, it is deeply rooted in every country. It is embedded in the psyche of every society.

Unfortunately some progressive groups, political parties, individuals and even societies that propagate ideas of female emancipation, female liberation and gender equality and claim to oppose gender discrimination, are not immune to patriarchal ideas. Heavy social pressure and fear of social alienation weaken their desire to challenge the age-old and meaningless traditions of male domination. Hence they do not always practice what they preach because it is too painful and mentally draining to challenge the dominant male culture. Moreover, these reformist groups, political parties and individuals often lack knowledge, and understanding of women's experiences of physical, mental, sexual and financial exploitation. Their work, activities and demands primarily remain in the boundaries of equalities in waged labour.

Unquestionably the reformists sincerely advocate female economic independence, a tool to empower women that would enhance their status. They believe that once economic independence is achieved, social and political inequalities and patriarchal ills would automatically melt away. They advocate female inheritance right but surrender to social pressures and hesitate to give their daughters the liberating right to property. Ironically they passionately argue in favour of protecting the property holder's rights and wishes. Without doubt the property holder must have a full right to choose how he/she wishes to dispose his/her property, so long as their decision does not favour one gender over another. Unfortunately, in most patriarchal societies including in advanced capitalist countries such as India and Britain, daughters are prevented from claiming their legal right to inherit ancestral property. The Indian constitution, Hindu Succession Act 1956 (amended 2005), and Britain's Equality Act 2010, all grant women an equal right to inherit parental property but in practice, patriarchal norms and values have erected social and cultural firewalls ensuring only sons are granted heirloom not daughters.

The Ancient Hindu Laws particularly the

Manu Smritis, Arthashastra and other Dharmshastras pushed women into a subordinate position where they are considered to be an inferior being who must be dependent upon and controlled by male relatives. Hence, women are prevented from holding property or becoming financially independent. They must rely on males even for their basic needs and necessities.

However, the Hindu Succession Act does pave the path to break the chains of gender dependency and cracks the patriarchal system by granting women a right to an equal share in parental and husband's property and in other assets. (There are some discrepancies and weaknesses in the Act, for example it does not apply to Muslims and Christians) The Act sought to put an end to gender discrimination, to enhance women's socio-economic status and empower them socially, economically and politically. The right to access family assets provides women with better economic security and advances their bargaining power and enjoyment of full citizenship rights.

Available evidence indicates that the ownership of property reduces the threat of violence, abuse, exploitation and other inequalities within the household.

Unfortunately, strong and deeply rooted patriarchal social norms and values in Indian society prevail and despite the country's radical laws, women are still denied the legal right to inherit parental property. In fear of fragmentation of agricultural land or other assets or losing it altogether when a girl child gets married, Indian fathers use every method possible to discourage daughters from claiming their legal right. Huge social and cultural pressure is placed on them. They are blackmailed, ostracised, socially boycotted, hated and even killed should they exercise their legitimate right to ancestral property. They are left with no one to turn to at a time of need. They have much to lose. Fearing damage to family relationships, violence and threat of violence, daughters usually opt to give away their right in favour of their brothers. Many studies have discovered that instead of empowering women, the right to inherit has led to increased female foeticides and higher female infant mortality rate. Girl children are considered by many a liability, since the inherited property falls into the hands of their in-laws as does the dowry - a practice that has become a curse in the Indian society. A traumatic fear for parents and for the girls.

The reasons for not asserting the right to inheritance or disclaiming it is rooted in misogynistic customs and traditions. These include early marriage, financial dependency, lack of awareness especially in rural and tribal communities. Lower levels of literacy among women deter them contesting matters in court. The religious laws and patriarchal practices conditioned the mindset of Indian society - men and women - believing that only sons are entitled to parental property. According to Census data of 2010, only 13% of farmland is registered in women's name.

Many women, however, especially educated urban women have successfully challenged the patriarchal perception that only men have capabilities and skills to possess and manage property. They are rejecting dowry for right to inherit.

Indian girls are denied a Right to Inherit in Britain - 21st century

With better socio-economic conditions in an advanced capitalist country like Britain, Indian girls, compared to their sisters in India, have taken advantage of available education opportunities that has enhanced their socio-economic independence. Unlike their sisters in India, British Indian women are not dependent on the income of their male relations. The welfare state is their safety net to turn to for financial support at the time of need. Unlike in India, there is no reason to fear the segmentation of property, as the people in Britain primarily possess a house and/or movable property.

Despite Indian women in Britain being aware of their rights, not being dependent on males income and have a safety net from the state, they are not willing to assert their right to property. Hence the cycle of the gender inequalities and discrimination in the family perpetuates and is reinforced. The notion of patriarchy is planted in the psyche of females and males alike from birth. A girl is reminded at every opportunity and conditioned to believe that she does not belong in the parental house, she will leave and build a home of her own elsewhere with her husband after marriage.

Patriarchal traditions and values are so strong that despite being socially and economically independent Indian girls do not wish to risk damaging the family relationship with their parents and brothers. Many have been subject to honour killing and/or have been alienated by their families. So the practice of dowry and denial to inheritance right continues. I once asked a

young woman the reason for accepting dowry and not practicing her right to inherit to which she answered that the risk is too high if she claimed her right to parental property. She said through means of dowry she receives something from her parents property otherwise that too will go to her brothers. By doing so she saves her family relationship.

I asked another four well educated and economically independent girls what they thought about gendered distribution of family property. They answered that ideally the financially weakest member should be helped but they were strongly opposed to parents disposing of their property in favour of sons. They said they would defy this practice.

I asked some ten older ladies how they felt when they wrote off their rights to their brothers. They said they did not favour such a practice but there was too much to lose and said it felt like their heart went with the piece of paper they had signed.

So what is the solution? It is to demand strengthening the British inheritance law to ensure zero tolerance to gender discrimination in property distribution. Such practices should be a criminal offence in the eyes of the law. Raising awareness and changing attitudes among all communities, empowering girls to assert their right to inheritance. We must not treat gender discrimination as part of Indian culture and an internal family matter. We must ensure that the ancient religious laws and patriarchal practices are not used to blackmail girls by their parents and brothers and dowry does not handcuff them in demanding their legitimate rights. Right to Inherit is a monetary benefit but also a fundamental human right that exists in equality with men.

In Britain we find encouraging evidence where some courageous women have and are challenging this discriminatory practice. Some parents have and are refusing to discriminate against their daughters. We must ensure our daughters are treated as equal to our sons. Denying our daughters their right to inherit is illegal.

Let us ensure the ancient Indian religious laws and patriarchy have no room in the 21st Century Britain.

JOGINDER BAINS IS A MEMBER OF THE INDIAN WORKERS' ASSOCIATION GB DERBY BRANCH



'India is very patriarchal society, changing attitudes and mind set is extremely difficult and it is a slow process but we need to fast forward it.'

Leila Seth, India's first woman chief justice



# COMMUNIST WOMEN

## End violence against women



LIZ PAYNE

### VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

THE RECENT publication of the Georgetown Institute's *Women, Peace and Security Index 2021/22* (GIWPS) makes grim and shocking reading.

Women around the world are shown to have been at greater risk of intimate partner violence during COVID, while at the same time being less able to extricate themselves from domestic violence due to loss of independent income and pandemic lockdown restrictions. The full picture is yet to emerge.

Women's predicament is compounded in many countries by years of austerity cuts to the support services on which those fleeing abusive relationships rely.

A survey of 2,500 women in Iran showed that an already high rate of domestic violence (54%) before COVID rose to 65% within the first six months of the pandemic and highlighted the increased likelihood of abuse where either the woman or her partner had lost their job.

Large numbers of women reported being subjected to intimate partner violence for the first time in this period, while already abused women reported an increase in the severity of attacks. The GIWPS noted, that across the world "measures to address violence against women have been uneven and often inadequate" and stressed the vital

role that women's organisations, taken shape and developed during the pandemic, have played in supporting women and girls. We have heard much about their work through our international contacts. They need our support and solidarity.

Women's perceptions of being safe in their own neighbourhoods is a major factor affecting everything. It severely restricts women's lives and their potential to participate in the economic, political, social, and cultural spheres if they feel unable to go freely about their everyday lives. For example: which routes to take to reduce the risk of attack and how to alert friends and family if they are in danger.

In Latin America, the majority of women do not feel safe to be out alone in their own locality after dark. Afghanistan was shown by GIWPS indicators to be where women felt least safe out in their immediate surroundings. Here, some of the most misogynistic attitudes to women appear. In parts of the country between 67% and 97% of men considered wife-beating 'a norm' and, unsurprisingly, a correspondingly large number of women reported domestic abuse within the previous twelve months. This was before the US-negotiated Taliban return to government and highlights that the years of occupation and conflict did nothing to alleviate but much to entrench the oppression of women in Afghanistan, whatever the mass media may say.

Wars and conflicts at state and sub-state level worldwide have increased in the past year and this has taken a huge toll on women and children both in and "beyond the battlefield". Intimate partner abuse in the home is much higher in war-ravaged zones, with women's exposure to violence being exacerbated by disruption of their means of livelihood, food shortages and breakdown of public services.

Where there is displacement (women and children make up the majority of the world's 90+ million refugees and internally displaced persons) the risks of all forms of gender-based violence is higher, with huge risks to women in camps and temporary shelters.

The struggles for peace and women's equality must remain inseparable.

Research for the GIWPS applied indicators to the experience of women in 170 countries. Of the twelve countries in which women fared the worst, nine were ex-British colonies and/or have been the targets of its economic and military strategies - Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Palestine, and Somalia.

US, British and other imperialists' focus on investment and profits at the expense of all else, and their collaboration with the most reactionary regimes to secure resources, cheap labour and markets including by military means, leaves the women of many countries trapped in a cycle of misogyny, cruelty, oppression, and exploitation.

Violence against women need not continue for another day but if it is to be eradicated as the United Nations Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women calls, then its true origins in the insatiable greed for profit must be recognised and called out and solidarity built with women's and progressive organisations everywhere which are finding new strength and developing new strategies in the struggle for equality, justice, and socialism.

LIZ PAYNE IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S WOMEN'S AND INTERNATIONAL COMMISSIONS

LEFT: The Soviet woman who works for the building of socialism, fights against religion and domestic violence, 1931.  
BORIS GRIGORYEVICH KLINCH (1892-1946)

## Challenging the depiction of violence against women in popular culture



▲ Artwork for the United Nations International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women



▲ Arendse Lund takes the Staunch Short Story Prize and Ros Thomas takes the Staunch Flash Fiction Prize with *How to Leave Your Childhood Behind*. See the rest of the shortlists at [bit.ly/3nFdHFh](https://bit.ly/3nFdHFh).

The winners were announced on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and was followed by 16 days of activism on social media.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) is one of the most serious challenges to health and social inclusion for women and girls worldwide, with UN Women among the global organisations taking a lead in the drive to highlight and combat the issues.

Yet while countless organisations work tirelessly towards ending violence against women, little attention is given to the fact that in popular culture – books, films and television drama – fictional violence against women has seen a massive upsurge.

To help highlight this, the Staunch Book Prize was set up in 2018 by writer and editor Bridget Lawless as an international award for thriller novels in which no woman is beaten, stalked, sexually exploited, raped or murdered.

News of the prize was met with an instant backlash from female crime writers who accused the organisers of censorship, denying women's lived experiences and damaging writers' livelihoods. None of these were the case and no one was being silenced, but a new conversation was sparked simply by an unusual set of entry criteria.

The controversy took news of the

Prize around the world and in fact, it has been widely welcomed by readers, authors and publishers across the globe.

The Staunch prizes (now including short form thriller fiction) are awarded on 25 November every year, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

In 2021, the Staunch team addressed the increasing depiction of physical and sexual violence on screen. Why, they ask, has showing women being brutalised in film and TV drama, night after night, week after week become so normalised we barely even question it? Given its prevalence, should we be concerned about how this level of exposure affects viewers? Shouldn't we also consider representation, and its impact on the way women are viewed and treated in society?

Might it not unintentionally contribute to the unconscious bias women face when seeking justice for violent physical, psychological and sexual assaults by perpetuating rape myths and exaggerating serial killers over the reality of the much greater danger from known assailants, including current or ex-partners?

We have an epidemic of male violence towards women and girls, and prosecution rates have never been lower. Trivialising and monetising this issue is cynical exploitation, and not without consequences.

So the Staunch Test was launched – a system for rating or checking whether films and TV dramas contain violence against women, using Pass, Fail and Debate criteria. Debate is reserved for titles that contain VAW, but challenge it in a genuinely original manner as the central premise, as, for example, Michaela Coel's award-winning series *I May Destroy You*.

A crowd-sourced database of films and TV dramas is also being built using the Staunch ratings.

The book prize and Staunch Test rating system have been brought under the umbrella of The Staunch Group, a non-profit organisation which will also commission research on the wider effects that the excessive depiction of violence against women in popular culture has on women in real life. Challenging commissioning bodies is also on the agenda. It's time they started to monitor and genuinely consider their contribution to society when repeatedly presenting women's suffering as entertainment.

# BLOCKS

Christiane Ohsan looks at the obstacles to Black women accessing specialist services in cases of violence and abuse

Between March 2020 and June 2021 Black women were 14% less likely to be referred by police for support to **Refuge**, a UK charity providing specialist support for women and children experiencing domestic violence, than white survivors of domestic abuse. [www.refuge.org.uk](http://www.refuge.org.uk)

Refuge found that Black survivors were 3% more likely to report abuse they experience to police than white survivors of domestic abuse over the same period.

Refuge's data shows that during the pandemic Black women supported by Refuge were 3% more likely to have experienced physical abuse and 4% more likely to have experienced sexual abuse than white women survivors.

**Sistah Space** (an organisation set up to support African heritage women and girls who experience domestic abuse or sexual abuse) have highlighted the many ways the police fail to recognise or address abuse against Black women. <https://www.sistahspace.org>

**Women's Aid Federation** England's **No Woman Turned Away** (NWTVA) project which provides dedicated support to women who face barriers in accessing a refuge place, reported in June 2020 that almost half the women supported by the NWTVA project were from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds (103 out of 243 - 43.2%)

<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/no-woman-turned-away/>

The situation is even worse for those women with **No Recourse for Public Funds** (NRPF). Just 5% of refuge spaces listed in 2020 were accessible to women with NRPF. Some women with NRPF may be eligible for support under the Destitute Domestic Violence Commission, but there remain several challenges to accessing this route.

As Southall Black Sisters have highlighted, these rules do not extend to migrant women workers with non spousal visas and who are subject to NRPF. <https://southallblackisters.org.uk>

CHRISTIANE OHSAN, HACKNEY AND TOWER HAMLETS COMMUNIST PARTY



## A tale of two cities

LAURA MILLER  
PHILADELPHIA AND HAVANA

WHEN I WAS young and living in Philadelphia, the police chief firmly believed the police could do no wrong. He was elected mayor a few years later and put what he believed into practice.

Violence against young men, white and black was constant. One young man, picked up going to the store, was beaten so badly he lost his testicles. The Move community, a relatively peaceful black commune with many children, was bombed out of their home – 40 streets around burned down because the police refused to let the fire department attend. If young people like me demonstrated against the Vietnam War or anything else, the treatment was brutal.

Gradually, violence against women on the part of the police became whispered about, too. Sex workers were the first victims. Any women seen in the so-called 'red light district' were arrested on sight. Of course, they could get out of the arrest with bribes. That was 'normal', according to testimony from the women.

Then the police became more open in their venality. They did not care who saw them or who they arrested or brutalised. Working class, especially young, women became targets.

I am from a Communist family and have been working politically since I was 10. I was used to the police taking photos of me on demonstrations, and thinly disguised FBI men asking questions about my family and friends. I was not used to receiving innuendo and sexual threats.

At 18, in between studying and working

my way through university, I helped an independent member of the city council in his campaign. We went to a party in a two story walk-up one night with a group of black activists. The councilman was in a wheelchair so had to be carried up.

It was a normal 60's left wing party – a gigantic pot of spaghetti in the middle of the floor, plates and forks around. Nearby were bottles of beer and various types of cigarettes. The music was loud and there were lots of hot and sweaty bodies dancing.

All at once, a voice yelled 'Fuzz' and everyone dived out of windows, doors and into the next apartment. Left in the room were me and the councilman in a wheelchair with a pot of spaghetti and beer enough for 200.

In came five policemen with truncheons drawn, and saw a girl with a man in a wheelchair. One of them looked at me with devouring eyes. 'Oh' he said, 'So you're with a cripple? Where's the others?' I smiled and said 'Others? We're just very hungry.' At that point, the councilman introduced himself, and the police attitude changed. They told us to keep the music down, and left.

Fast forward a week. I was walking out of my house and going shopping when I saw a police car parked nearby. It was the same policeman from the party. 'You better come over here and make me happy' he said, from his police car. 'Otherwise you know what will happen.' What he meant was that I would be arrested for prostitution if I did not have sex with him. What struck me was his belief that he could do what he wanted from his police car with the number emblazoned on it and that no one would touch him. I managed to get out of that situation unscathed, but I never found out how he knew who I was or where I lived.

Nevertheless, every time I walked down the street alone, the hairs were raised on the back of my neck and my eyes swivelled constantly (even now, when I visit, and police authority is not so total, I don't like being on the street alone. There are other men around who deliver threats).

Many years later I was a volunteer teacher in Cuba, living with a family in a quiet area of Havana. They gave me breakfast, for other meals I was on my own. Electricity in Havana is unreliable, street lights are few and far between and the pavements are potholed. After-dark walking is a little difficult. The closest restaurant was four blocks away, and I would go there for dinner whenever I could.

The thing was, I was always at home on the streets of Havana. I had very open conversations with men and women in Spanish and never felt afraid. I never felt threatened or insulted. I knew that there was some crime I was told to keep my handbag on the floor of any car I was in, because there are bag snatches from stationary cars. But violence against women? Everyone, including women, said that it was very rare. Equality between the sexes is enshrined in the constitution. However, even now the sharing of housework is not equitable.

Cuba, as we know, has been under an oppressive American blockade for many decades. Infrastructure is rickety and distribution problematic because of petrol shortage, so food supply is unreliable. It's not an easy place to live. But I never had or saw an incident of sexual threat or male posturing. If only Philadelphia and Havana could exchange their weather.

LAURA MILLER IS A MEMBER OF HACKNEY AND TOWER HAMLETS COMMUNIST PARTY

## Communist women going forward!

CAROL STAVRIS  
PARTY CONGRESS

The 56th Congress of the Communist Party of Britain, held in November 2021, was always going to be noteworthy – not least because it was three years since the last one.

For women in Britain, these three years have not been good. The ruling class offensive sharpens as the economic crisis deepens. The Women in Work Index 2021 reports that, despite some advance, it will take at least 112 years to close the average gender pay gap at current slow levels of progress.

The effects of working from home because of the Covid-19 pandemic have resulted in less job security for women despite the furlough scheme. Recent data from the scheme shows that more women's jobs are at risk than men's. Unpaid care and domestic work, on the rise during the pandemic, have added to the burden carried by women.

On top of this, all types of violence towards women, especially domestic violence, are increasing. UN Women, the organisation delivering programmes, policies and standards that uphold

women's human rights, describes it as a shadow pandemic.

Racism and discrimination towards Black and Asian women continues unabated and they bear disproportionately greater financial and psychological consequences from the Covid-19 crisis than their white sisters (Fawcett Society research).

These are the material realities faced by women every day.

As well as electing a significantly higher proportion of women comrades to its Executive Committee, the 56th Congress accepted there was much to do to attract and recruit women, especially Black and Asian women, into party membership.

The crucial rôle being undertaken by women comrades campaigning in their Unions and communities for better pay, conditions and services gives opportunities for communication, interaction and solidarity, and raises the potential for recruitment

Understanding the nature of women's oppression and recognising that the liberation of women is integral to the class struggle is key. We need to develop ourselves politically in order to contribute to building a women's movement which will strengthen and defend women's rights alongside the fight for socialism.

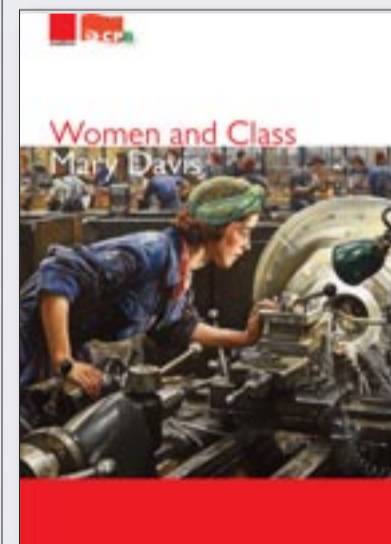
The main points of the Resolution on Women's Rights passed by Congress to take our struggle forward are:

- Advance the understanding that the fight for women's liberation is integral to the class struggle by encouraging all comrades, male and female, to study the classics of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the position of women in society; feminist writers including Alexandra Kolontai, Sylvia Pankhurst, Rosa Luxembourg, Claudia Jones and Angela Davis as well as *Women and Class*.
- Highlight the triple oppression of Black and Asian women in its activities and its publications on women's struggles.
- Promote the work of women comrades in local community organisations fighting against cuts to the services that women need and use.
- Raise and support the demands of the National Assembly of Women's Charter for Women within the labour movement and progressive women's organisations.
- Confront and combat by political argument those reactionary liberal ideas which undermine, challenge and attack advances in women's rights.

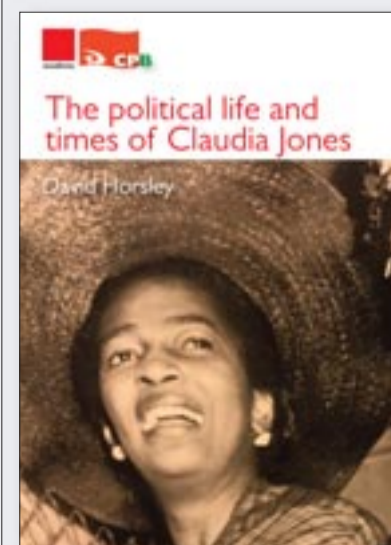
CAROL STAVRIS IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY WOMEN'S organiser



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# NATURE AND HUMANITY

Let us not . . . flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first. **Friedrich Engels 1876**



## Socialism or extinction

### CLIMATE ACTION

YOUNG COMMUNIST League members joined thousands of protestors in opposing the sham COP26 meeting in Glasgow. The YCL contingent was surrounded by a police line that engaged in arbitrary confrontations with us throughout the day. They opposed the YCL's right to march with no reason given to us or legal observers, clearly seeing us as a credible threat.

The YCL said: 'We would like to reiterate that we are neither intimidated nor surprised: as the state begins to see communist youth as a threat once again, as they see large numbers of young people actively confronting capitalism, we expect them to do everything they can to defend the wealth and privilege of the ruling class they serve.'

'While the planet burns and the custodians of power pay lip service to the problem by setting arbitrary targets for the future at COP26, the police maintain the status quo and preserve ideal market conditions for the parasites to continue killing our planet and all life on it. Inside the conference bought and paid for by the polluters themselves, the solutions proposed fail to entertain the idea that these market conditions are in fact the source of the problem.'

'An economy built on overproduction, on boom and bust, driven by irrational 'market forces' cannot rise to the vast economic challenge that climate change presents. Only a planned economy that makes real use of new technology can. Only a socialist revolution can deliver that economy and stop the ecocidal corporate machine from clinging on to power through bloody repression — and the young people who are now living through climate change are coming to the same conclusion.'

'People are sick of empty promises and open corruption, they are ready for confrontational and direct resistance to the death of our planet and the degradation of our communities. The people of Glasgow clapped and cheered for us as we marched through the city hours after everyone else, with heads held high.'

'The Young Communist League will continue to grow and continue to confront capitalism as part of the resistance of everyday, working-class people against the super-rich parasites who poison our skies and seas with private jets and luxury yachts. The working class will defeat capitalism and turn the planet back into a common treasury for all life on it.'

# Capitalism will not solve the climate crisis

## Communist Party statement in response to the COP26 summit on climate change

IT IS A MEASURE of the pressure on Western governments — not only from their own peoples but from the overwhelming majority of developing countries, and even from certain sectors of finance capital — that the COP26 summit has resulted in some international agreements so far.

In 2015, the Paris COP21 summit agreed the goal of keeping the global temperature rise to within 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. However, since then greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have grown steadily, with the main component, CO<sub>2</sub>, now at about 40 billion tonnes annually and the global temperature rise currently around 1.2 degrees C. To stay under the 1.5°C limit, GHG emissions in 2030 will need to have fallen by 45% globally compared with 2010. However, a recent UN climate change report predicts a 16% rise instead, which would put the world on course to be 2.7 degrees C hotter by 2100, conditions which would accelerate extreme weather situations, hit food production and destroy unique eco-systems.

Global warming is also leading to a rise in sea levels, due to melting glaciers and polar ice-caps. Even with a 1.5 degrees C temperature increase, the sea level will be at least a further 30 cm higher on average by the end of this century, compared with the 20 cm rise from 1880 to 2120. This will not only affect low-lying island nations, but also industrialised countries such as Britain and the USA, where a high proportion of the population lives in low-lying coastal areas.

Inevitably, it will be workers and their families throughout the world who will suffer most from such outcomes. Some sectors of finance capital in the advanced capitalist countries have woken up to the financial risks of carrying on as normal, but they want to limit their own contribution to the solution.

Against this background, such COP26 agreements as those on methane emission limitation, stopping deforestation and supporting South Africa in a transition from reliance on coal as an energy source are welcome but tiny steps forward. In fact, the first two are set to be achieved only by 2030, without any interim targets or penalties for failing to hit them, allowing plenty of scope for built-in failure. Likewise, in Britain, Chancellor Sunak's plan to require big firms and financial institutions to submit plans for hitting climate change targets lacks any teeth to make the commitments mandatory.

Behind all the grandstanding from Western leaders at COP26, it remains a fact that developed countries are responsible for 79% of historical CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Therefore, they should be making the biggest cuts now, while contributing massive resources to climate change mitigation in underdeveloped countries, and accelerating technology transfer to enable such countries to industrialise without contributing sig-

nificantly to global warming.

Attacks at COP26 on China by US president Joe Biden and others ignore the fact that China is a developing country, whose CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per head are half those of the USA, and whose solar and wind power generations have over the last seven years outstripped those of the whole European Union.

Britain alone cannot solve the climate crisis. But it could set the pace — although that would involve massive changes. A 2020 report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimates that keeping within the 1.5 degrees C limit means no more than 400 bn tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> being added to the atmosphere from that point onwards. That is about 50 tonnes per person on the planet as a lifetime limit. In those terms, Britain's fair share will be used up by 2025. Steps need to be taken now for a massive reduction in emissions.

In November 2020, Boris Johnson outlined a 'Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution for 250,000 jobs'. It aimed to mobilise £12bn of government investment, and to stimulate over three times as much private-sector investment by 2030. The Ten Points included: offshore wind-power; 'low-carbon' hydrogen production; new large-scale nuclear reactors and a generation of small modular reactors; accelerating the transition to electric vehicles; making buildings more energy-efficient; and becoming a leader in carbon-capture technology.

It was a plan intended to provide opportunities for big business to make profits, including making the City of London the 'global centre of green finance'. There was no commitment, for example, to the domestic production of wind turbines, nor to elimination of fuel poverty. There was nothing about public transport except to invest in making it zero-emissions 'in the future'. There were no real steps to move aviation and maritime to reduced emissions, nor to move freight from road to rail. And the hydrogen production is to be 'low carbon' ('blue') — which means producing it from reacting natural gas or petroleum with steam and incompletely capturing the resulting carbon dioxide — instead of zero-carbon ('green') through the electrolysis of water with renewable electricity. It is no accident that the sponsors of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hydrogen include Shell, international energy company Equinor and gas network companies Cadent, SGN and NGN.

Nuclear power generation based on uranium is by no means carbon-neutral across the whole cycle of extraction, power station construction and operation, and waste storage and disposal. The British government's support for nuclear is largely about underpinning the supply chains and skills of firms that work on nuclear submarines. Meanwhile, Johnson's £12bn 'Green Industrial Revolution' budget over four years is dwarfed by extra spending of £24bn over the same period by the Ministry of Defence.

According to Scientists for Global Responsibility, Britain's annual military carbon footprint, including the arms industry and domestic and international supply

chains, is 11 million tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. For the US, it is 205 million tonnes. The world needs peace and investment to tackle the climate emergency rather than military expenditure and war. Workers in the energy-intensive and arms industries in Britain need a 'Just Transition' and the Green New Deal.

We salute those taking part in the many COP26 demonstrations throughout Britain this weekend. It is the Communist Party's view that Britain's contribution to solving the climate crisis has to start with energy saving. The most cost-effective measure by far would be massive government investment to reduce energy losses in domestic and industrial heating, insulating existing housing stock and requiring better designed new buildings.

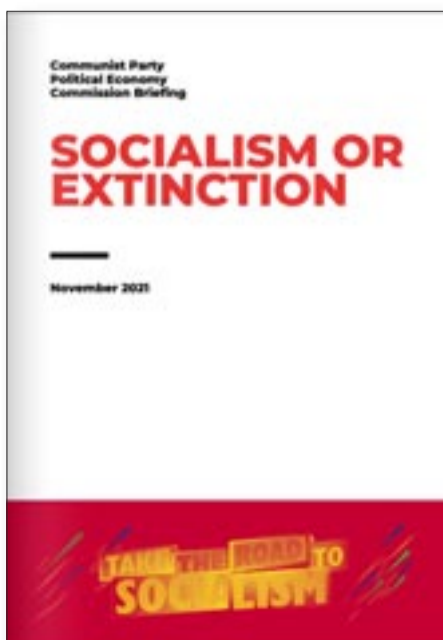
Road transport's use of fossil fuels — and likely electricity in future — is inherently wasteful. Currently, we have the 'just in time' method in industry whereby components are manufactured remotely and transported as needed; and food for retail consumption is shipped long distances, so that the energy consumed exceeds by many times the energy content of the food itself. We need local production in industry and agriculture, planned coordination of deliveries to supermarkets and a major shift of freight from road to rail. Local component manufacture would also help us gain a more transparent view of our energy consumption, so that we can reduce our overall carbon footprint.

We also need to reduce the use of personal transport. Car ownership gives freedom but job insecurity has made it a necessity for many. We need massive investment in high-quality and frequent, public transport and we also need to move jobs to where people are, not the other way round. We also need greater social equality and a redistribution of wealth. The poorest in our society are the least able to afford energy conservation — they suffer the worst housing and the oldest and least efficient motor cars.

None of these changes can be achieved without planning, and in turn without public ownership, which must also extend to energy production.

A planned and balanced energy strategy also means energy justice for developing nations: access to adequate supplies at reasonable prices and technology transfer so that they are able to maximise their use of renewable energies. Thus, we need a change in international relations so that control over energy resources and minerals, such as lithium for batteries — essential for the electrical transition — is not dominated by powerful imperialist nations.

We campaign for such changes under capitalism, but also as part of a broader programme of left-wing policies as our programme *Britain's Road to Socialism* points out. Some changes can be achieved as a result of mass pressure, but monopoly capitalists will resist the most decisive measures as they will affect their ability to extract profits. Ultimately, that means that capitalism has to be challenged and overthrown. Capitalism advances by increasing what Karl Marx called the metabolic rift with the environment. Socialism is essential for that rift to be overcome.





# EVENTS & IDEAS & ACTION

*All I was concerned about was that power was in the hands of lads like me and whatever conception of politics had made that possible was the correct one for me.*

Boilermaker and future Communist Party leader **Harry Pollitt** on the Bolshevik Revolution



## HEALTH

The Toothless campaign, launched by communists in East Anglia, has gone national. Toothless in England acts as a network hub for 'Toothless' campaign groups across England. Its facebook page shares news and events.

The campaign says that the public's oral, general and mental health is suffering in the face of a dental crisis brought about by successive years of government neglect and underfunding by HM Treasury of what is a critical NHS service. The campaign argues that community dental nurses can play a key role in reducing long term oral health problems through the delivery of educational and preventative care services to early years and young people.

Increasing knowledge and understanding of how oral hygiene can lead to healthier lives provides better outcomes for patients, the health service and society overall.

The campaign calls for:

- 1 An NHS dentist for everyone.
  - 2 Reforms to the NHS dental contract that will encourage dentists to provide NHS treatments.
  - 3 Revenue to cover the 50% of the population that are unfunded by the government.
  - 4 NHS dental treatments to be free at the point of use.
  - 5 People to be prioritised before shareholder dividend – no more privatisation.
  - 6 An end to the two-tier system – hygienists, routine check ups and preventative treatments must be a core NHS function.
- <https://m.facebook.com/pg/englandsteeth/about/>

## Latest on the Sudan coup

### from the Sudanese Communist Party

Tens of thousands of peaceful demonstrators took the streets of the capital and other major cities expressing their rejection of the political agreement reached and signed by the leader of the coup General Burhan and Prime Minister Hamadok.

On Tuesday 30 November, the Sudanese masses in their hundreds of thousands, marched and occupied the streets of the capital Khartoum, Omdurman, Atbara, El Obeid, Al Fasher, Gedaref, Kassala, and Zalingei demanding the immediate end to military controlled regime and calling for the establishment of full civil and democratic rule.

The peaceful mass actions were met with brutal and excessive use of force, resulting in dozens wounded demonstrators, some of them in very critical condition. The thugs of the repressive regime armed and in uniform, forced their way into hospitals, detaining some of the wounded and impeding the work of doctors and nurses treating their victims.

The Sudanese Communist Party salutes the steadfastness and resilience of the demonstrators and strongly condemns the repression unleashed against them. It calls on its members and all progressive forces to continue the struggle until the complete defeat and the overthrow of the present military dominated regime.

Furthermore, it appeals to all fraternal communist and workers parties to continue their solidarity action with the struggle of the Sudanese people for democracy, peace and social justice..

## Manifesto Press relaunch

### PUBLISHING

Manifesto Press, the labour movement non-profit publishing and editorial services cooperative has marked twelve years of work and its first fifty titles with a relaunched website and a new second hand left wing book sales service.

Manifesto Press publishes titles it commissions itself, provides editorial, design, marketing and publicity services to progressive and labour movement organisations with projects they want to promote.

To emphasise its cooperative status it is inviting new members to take out shares, join the coop and help with its work. The two websites run in tandem as the new improved fulfilment system beds in.

[www.manifestopress.coop](http://www.manifestopress.coop) [www.manifestopress.org.uk](http://www.manifestopress.org.uk)



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## COMMUNIST REVIEW

COMMUNIST PARTY THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL  
Autumn 2021 Number 101

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## Unity appeal

### Scotland

The Communist Party in Scotland is focused on getting its collective and public work back on track. Key support for this is the reactivation of the **Unity Office** – the Party's premises in Glasgow. Scottish communists want to see this once again as a venue for meetings, events and campaigning work and are committed to getting leaflet and pamphlet production going to relaunch **Unity Books**.

To do this we need to upgrade the office phone and wiring. If you can make even the smallest contribution to our fundraiser this will get us nearer our £750 target.

Payments go to **Communist Party of Britain (Scotland)** Sort code: 80-07-53 Account number: 00115558  
Reference: your name

## Political education

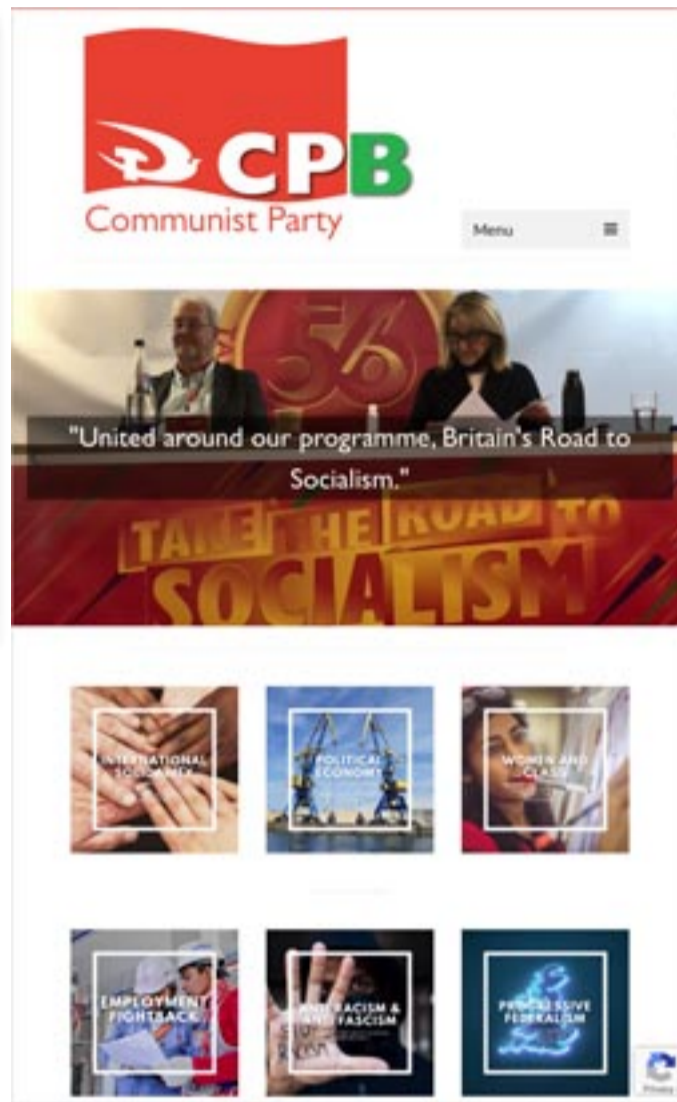
Available at [www.comunistparty.org.uk](http://www.comunistparty.org.uk)

**Britain's Road to Socialism** study guide for members and contacts includes study/discussion questions to integrate the party's political analysis with local activity.

The **Women and Class** course frames contemporary controversies in a rigorous materialist analysis.

**Introducing Marxism** includes three sessions: *The Marxist world outlook; Capitalist exploitation and crisis and Political struggle and revolution.*

**Taking the road to socialism** is an eight session accredited Stage 1 course in Marxism Leninism essential for new members.



## Website relaunch

### COMMUNIST PARTY

Unity! readers are invited to visit the Communist Party website which has had a significant revamp reports *Phil Katz*.

The homepage is now a staging page, which takes visitors to key political issues, each of which is linked to a specific party organisation, responsible for updating content. More than half the visitors to the site do so via a mobile device and across the party's communications and social media operations, this is now in excess of 80%. The new web2 edition is designed to optimise access on phones, tablets and iPads.

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