



Communist Party May Day 2023

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Unity!

MAY DAY CELEBRATES WORKING CLASS UNITY

Nick Wright
MAY DAY 2023

MILLIONS OF TRADE unionists and their families have passed through a tumultuous year of struggle that has transformed the working class movement.

These months of struggle have seen tremendous enthusiasm and organisation as workers in one sector after another balloted for strike action and took to the streets and picket lines with unity and determination.

Railway workers in the RMT were the first to challenge the government with a multi-faceted campaign for a pay increase and a defence of hard-won working conditions.

Railway workers fought a skillful and well-led campaign, taking on different railway employers bankrolled by the government.

A vital feature of these months of struggle has been the exceptional high level of popular support for strikers which came as a shock to the government, has changed the media representation of the strike movement and

forced the cost-of-living crisis to the top of the news agenda.

Every picket line has been a daily demonstration of solidarity with legal limits on the number of pickets disregarded as strikers and public mingled in joyful unity.

While in manufacturing, road transport and energy individual battles were fought and some exceptional pay rises won the public services – most particularly health, rail, mail and education have seen large scale industrial action and the most government resistance.

It is a demonstration of the depth of the governmental crisis and the economic crisis of contemporary capitalism in general that government and employers together have tried to ride out the strike wave with selective concessions, 'divide and rule' tactics and threats of all kinds rather than meet the legitimate pay claims of workers.

The Tory mantra that pay must be restricted to beat inflation convinces no one when it is runaway profits and the energy costs of NATO's proxy war in Ukraine that

underly the rise in inflation. The US sanctions policy imposed on Europe means Europeans pay the price for war.

Every strike ends in some kind of compromise and there will be many who think that not enough has not been won in this dispute or another. The strike wave continues to raise the level of organisation, increase union membership and shift millions to a deeper class consciousness and a higher level of political understanding and will sharpen the debate within each union.

Communists in each union will give their view on the course of each dispute and in shaping the new battles that press upon us.

The Communist Party itself argues that the wages battle is never ending until the means of production, distribution and exchange are held in common and the working class becomes the ruling class. But every working class advance within capitalism strengthens the fight for working class state power.

NICK WRIGHT IS EDITOR OF UNITY!



Eleanor Marx speaks at the first May Day

Hyde Park, 4 May 1890

We have not come to do the work of political parties, but we have come here in the cause of labour, in its own defence, to demand its own rights. I can remember when we came in handfuls of a few dozen to Hyde Park to demand an Eight Hours' Bill, but the dozens have grown to hundreds, and the hundreds to thousands, until we have this magnificent demonstration that fills the park today. We are standing face to face with another demonstration, but I am glad to see that the great masses of the people are on our side.

Those of us who have gone through all the worry of the Dock Strike, and especially the Gasworkers' Strike, and have seen the men, women and children stand round us, have had enough of strikes, and we are determined to secure an eight hours' day by legal enactment; unless we do so, it will be taken from us at the first opportunity. We will only have ourselves to blame if we do not achieve the victory which this great day could so easily give us.

There is in the park this afternoon a man whom Mr. Gladstone once imprisoned— Michael Davitt; but Mr. Gladstone is now on the best of terms with him. What do you suppose is the reason for the change? Why has the Liberal Party been so suddenly converted to Home Rule? Simply because the Irish people sent 80 members to the House of Commons to support the Conservatives; in the same way we must kick these Liberal and Radical members out if they refuse to support our programme.

I am speaking this afternoon not only as a Trade Unionist, but as a Socialist. Socialists believe that the eight hours' day is the first and most immediate step to be taken, and we aim at a time when there will no longer be one class supporting two others, but the unemployed both at the top and at the bottom of society will be got rid of. This is not the end but only the beginning of the struggle; it is not enough to come here to demonstrate in favour of an eight hours' day. We must not be like some Christians who sin for six days and go to church on the seventh, but we must speak for the cause daily, and make the men, and especially the women that we meet, come into the ranks to help us.

"Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
Ye are many—they are few."

No racist immigration and nationality laws

Tony Conway
FIGHTING RACISM

FOUR WORKING CLASS organisations have called for new anti racist immigration and nationality laws.

The joint statement by the Bangladeshi Workers Council, Caribbean Labour Solidarity, the Communist Party and the Indian Workers Association marks a new stage in the campaign against racism and discrimination.

The four organisations emphasise that the Labour movement must be central to the campaign for a new approach based on a recognition that Britain has relied on and benefited from immigration for centuries.

British governments and their apparatus have chosen to discriminate against

immigrant communities and black people.

The Joint Statement argues that the Labour movement must unite our communities and our working class in the months and years ahead.

Arguing for equality and not discrimination the four organisations oppose the hostile environment and call for the repeal of existing racist legislation.

"Attacks on refugees and migrants are being used to divide our communities. We must oppose this machination by fighting for a fair, anti-racist immigration system and the broadest unity amongst the Labour movement, democrats, socialists and communities" said chair of the Bangladeshi Workers Council Shahriar Bin Ali.

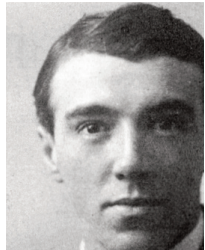
Caribbean Labour Solidarity president Luke Daniels said: "The Hostile Environment

created for the Windrush Generation and for refugees seeking safety in the UK is a scandal that must not go unchallenged. We call upon the labour and trade union movement to support our demands for human rights and justice."

Communist Party general secretary Rob Griffiths said: "In repudiating Britain's increasingly racist immigration and nationality laws British communists alongside our Indian, Bangla Deshi and Caribbean comrades in Britain make an appeal to the working class tradition of anti-imperialist and anti racist solidarity. to end these laws."

TONY CONWAY CONVENES THE COMMUNIST PARTY ANTI-RACISM ANTI-FASCISM COMMISSION

FULL STATEMENT PAGE 8>>>



NEWS & VIEWS

'The thing that mattered was that lads like me had whacked the bosses and the landlords; had taken their factories, their lands and their banks... that was enough for me. These were the lads and lasses I must support through thick and thin.'
The young boilermaker **Harry Pollitt**, later general secretary of the Communist Party on the 1917 Russian Revolution



Straight Left Stewart McGill

Capitalist commodity speculation costs lives

GREENPEACE'S investigative journalism unit Unearthed and the non-profit Lighthouse Reports, have backed up left-wing accounts of the damage inflicted by international speculative capital during the recent crises. After Russia invaded Ukraine last year, the prices of many key commodities – many of which had already been on the rise as the world recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic – shot up in response.

Olivier De Schutter, co-chair of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems and UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, said: "Hedge funds and financial speculators have made obscene profits by betting on hunger and exacerbating it. That cannot be right. At the start of the Ukraine war, financial investors piled into grains and commodities in large numbers, seeking to capitalise on uncertainty and rising food prices, and they hit the jackpot."

It can be difficult to disentangle the impact of speculation from other factors behind rising food prices, but De Schutter said speculation was likely to have played a key role."

"The signs are they helped inflate a price bubble, putting upward pressure on food prices – that were not in proportion to agricultural market fundamentals, to the actual supply of food – and this has affected hunger levels of the world's poorest people"

This problem has been around for decades and doesn't only affect food. Veteran oil analyst Philip K Verleger warned recently that supply and demand "fundamentals have been rendered almost irrelevant" for oil prices, a key determinant of the price of petrol and many related products. Little physical oil actually changes hands with trades in the oil marketplace. Instead the trade is in futures contracts, a commitment to purchase a set amount of oil in the future for a price agreed in the present. But because the virtual trading has come to dwarf the physical trade, it is crucial to determining the price of oil.

Michael Greenberger, a former US government trading regulator, estimates that "something like 13 times the physical amount of oil is traded" via these purely financial contracts. And commercial trades – those based on the actual use of oil – have been pushed out, he says, replaced almost entirely by speculators looking to make a quick buck, which in turn increases excessive speculation and volatility.

According to data provided by the CME Group, the amount of crude oil futures contracts traded daily on its platform rose significantly in 2022 over 2021, and is nearly double that of a decade ago.

Rising prices and volatility have been on display since the day before the war started, when the price of a barrel of oil was \$90. Since the invasion, despite limited changes in real supply factors, it vaulted to a \$124, fell to \$95, shot back up to \$114 and is \$87 at the time of writing.

And natural gas: in November 2021, Putin announced that Moscow might increase supply to stabilise prices on a day in which the international price of gas rose by almost 40% to 400p per therm in the morning; after Putin's announcement, it finished the day at 266p. That demonstrates how much speculation affects prices and stability.

There is absolutely no genuine social value created by the activities of these callous speculators: all they do is exploit the economic surplus, created by the global working class, to enrich the already wealthy with no regard for the implications for those on the boot-in-the-face end of capitalism. These are not victim-free crimes, people die from hunger and cold.

★ Find out more about commodities traders, check out my podcast with the Trademark Belfast team, Trademark podcast No.71, in which we explain why these people have to be among the first to go. <https://tinyurl.com/2rfas78v>



Solidarity

Communist Party general secretary Rob Griffiths presents Marc Wadsworth of the Liberation Movement, the Black-led campaign against racism, with a new computer system, paid for by party members

More about the Liberation Movement at liberationmovement.org.uk

RACIST IMMIGRATION BILL CONDEMNED

Unity! News Team
COMMUNIST PARTY

PEOPLE SEEKING to build a new life in Britain are being targeted by those who want to divide us, Tony Conway told the Communist Party's political committee.

'The Tory government at Westminster, the far right and the big business media are using every weapon to stigmatise migrants and asylum seekers instead of addressing the real economic and social problems facing working people and their families', he said.

Tony Conway spoke as Home Secretary Suella Braverman was steering yet another Immigration Bill through the House of Commons aimed at so-called 'boat people'.

The Bill brands people who enter Britain by unrecognised routes as criminals who will be deported and banned from Britain for life and therefore – as Ms Braverman freely admits – is regarded as illegal in national and international human rights law.

'Even the Tories are split on the Bill – between those who believe it will undermine modern anti-slavery legislation and those who wish to abandon the European Convention on Human Rights', Tony Conway said.

The convenor of the Communist Party's anti-racism anti-fascism commission pointed out that 160,000 migrants are currently awaiting decisions on their immigration status, yet 70 per cent of all asylum seekers are granted a right to remain once their cases are properly considered.

'The lack of investment in visa application points overseas, safe routes of entry and

the civil servants who process these cases is in sharp contrast to the money lavished on 400 commandeered hotels here and special detention camps in Rwanda', he said.

He criticised the Labour Party leadership's 'feeble' objection to Tory plans that they are merely 'unworkable'.

The political committee finalised the Communist Party's involvement in a new campaigning initiative against Britain's racist immigration, asylum and nationality laws being launched with the Indian Workers Association, Caribbean Labour Solidarity and the Bangladeshi Workers Council.

Reaffirming the party's commitment to black self-organisation, Tony Conway urged support for the Liberation Movement and this summer's Windrush Festival as



elements in the growing alliance of trade union, political, anti-racist and community bodies against exploitation and oppression.

Britain's Communists also demanded a 'root and branch' restructuring of the Metropolitan Police in light of the Casey Report, which found the force to be institutionally racist, misogynistic and homophobic.

'The Metropolitan Police has also long been a central part of the state apparatus aimed at trade unions, left-wing political organisations and other campaigners for reform and fundamental change', Tony Conway said.

ELECTION ADVICE

Andy Schaffer
LOCAL ELECTIONS

THE COMMUNIST PARTY has spelled out its advice to voters in the May 2023 local elections, urging support for non-sectarian candidates who fight for working-class and progressive interests in a non-sectarian way; who stand for policies that serve the interests of workers, their families and local communities; and who work to promote left and progressive unity.

The Communist Party stands for the interests of the working class, the labour movement and the people, against monopoly capital and its state power said the party in its pre election statement.

In wards where there are far-right racist or fascist candidates, the Communist Party will campaign against them – with allies wherever possible – and call for a vote for the candidate and party best placed to prevent them winning a seat.

Low turnouts often favour the chances of victory for far-right and fascist candidates, which is an important reason why Communists encourage people to exercise their hard-won right to vote said the party.

Elsewhere, local Communist Party organisations should assess the standpoint and record of the Labour, left and progressive candidates before deciding.

In many areas, where no Communist is standing, the advice may be to vote and urge support for local Labour candidates. This must be the first consideration for Communists. Where those candidates genuinely fight for left and progressive policies, the communists will offer them practical campaigning assistance.

The party warned that in too many cases, Labour candidates do not defend the interests of the people they were elected to represent and are content to impose austerity and privatisation measures without any effort to investigate or promote alternative policies, and frequently are neoliberal and even anti-socialist in their general outlook.

These Labour candidates often play a major part in causing the widespread disillusionment with politics that exists in many working-class communities.

In such cases, or where no Labour or Communist candidate is standing, there may be other left candidates who best represent working class interests and deserve CP support.

★ **The Communist Party has agreed to recommend support for Jeremy Corbyn if he stands in the next General Election.**

ANDY SCHAFER IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S ELECTION AGENT

for Peace and Socialism
Morning Star
Daily paper of the Left www.morningstaronline.co.uk



ELECTIONS IN ENGLAND

'Criticism—the most keen, ruthless and uncompromising criticism—should be directed, not against parliamentarianism or parliamentary activities, but against those leaders who are unable—and still more against those who are unwilling—to utilise parliamentary elections and the parliamentary rostrum in a revolutionary and communist manner.' **VI Lenin**



Unity! news team
LOCAL ELECTIONS

ELECTIONS ARE taking place in town, county and district seats across England on 4 May. Labour hopes that its poll lead of 42 per cent over the Tories 28 per cent means that victory is assured.

Turnout in local elections is usually very low at around a third of eligible voters. This makes the result a lottery.

This time round the Tory government has introduced new voter identification rules that discriminate against people without photo ID and against young people.

These voter suppression techniques are based on racist and anti-working class US systems and are designed to lower the turnout even further.

In most places a vote for Labour is the most useful ballot to cast but the performance of many Labour councils gives little encouragement.

Local councils are so lacking in power and finances that the main effect of winning an election is to be saddled with the responsibility for administering the cuts imposed by the government.

Where Labour councillors could lead campaigns to defend services and oppose cuts they remain quiet while Labour at national level is unwilling to distinguish itself from the Tories with firm policies that oppose the Westminster consensus.

The Greens expect to make gains while the Liberal Democrats hope that people will forget their partnership with the Tories in the disastrous austerity administration of Cameron and Clegg.

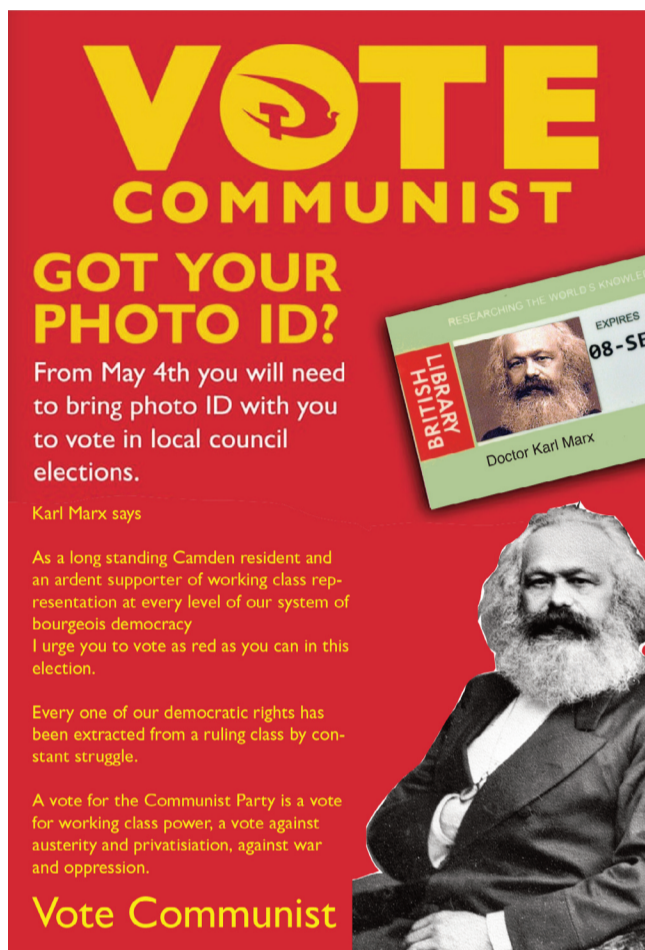
In selected spots in the South West and Cornwall, the North and North West, in Midlands, Yorkshire and East of England voters have a chance to vote for real change where Communist candidacies set out a radical alternative to cuts and failing local services.

The East of England has a history of communist councillors going back 80 years, indeed our annual commemorative lecture and our Marxist education evening school are named after past councillors Paxton Chadwick and Daphne Oliver.

To show the synergy of strike struggle, union building and election campaigning, we are standing in three wards in Felixstowe with a candidate who comes from Felixstowe docks and another who played a major role in developing solidarity with the recent strike. They were ever-present on the picket line and now they are knocking on doors around the dock area.

We are fighting the campaign based on *Eastern Rising* our programme for a "revolution in local governance establishing a powerful regional assembly, democratically accountable, changes to farming, food production and land ownership, for a public sector-led campaign of home building by local councils and quality jobs for the youth. We are also featuring solidarity with the strikers, popularising a Charter for Women drawn up by the National Assembly of Women, which is embedded in the programme and a complete rethink - preferably a joined up one - on combating climate change, soil and coastal erosion and a new approach to a publicly owned network of transport bringing together villages, towns and cities."

We are standing candidates in seven



Go to @CPBritain on our social media channels to see the communist challenge

wards at town, county and district level and would urge readers to get involved in the few days left before polling. We have established high street stalls and covered every home in every ward we are contesting, 35,000 in all. Candidates are standing in St Albans, Felixstowe East and West, Kempston West in Bedford and Bury St Edmunds.

Says Kempston West candidate and construction worker, Markus Keaney, "I'm standing as a candidate in Kempston West as I want Bedford Council to build housing that provides affordable homes with secure tenancies, and I am doing this as a representative of the Communist Party as I know that is supported by our programme, *Britain's Road to Socialism*."

Darren Turner a local leader of the CWU and secretary of the Communist Party in Suffolk says, "I'm a trade unionist that has taken 18 days strike action in the last 12 months. I have stood with dockers, teachers, nurses and Greene King brewery workers as they fight for a real pay rise. I will fight for you and your community's with the same passion." To get involved in our campaigns write to eastern@communistparty.org.uk

Do not forget your ID on 4 May. You cannot vote without it.

PHIL KATZ IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S EASTERN DISTRICT SECRETARY

CAMPAIGNING WITH GERRY SABLES



Better than a stroll along the cobbled streets of beautiful Barnstaple in the spring sunshine is strolling with campaigning communist candidate Gerry Sables.

He's standing in Barnstaple Central for the town council which is a one-party LibDem state. Labour have given up while Gerry flies the red flag against LibDem and Green candidates *reports Rob Griffiths*.

The 'independent' is keeping any political affiliation to himself.

In the neighbouring North Devon seat, Labour are making an appearance alongside the Tories, Greens and LibDems.

Contesting the ward for the 15th time, Gerry quadrupled his vote on the most recent occasion. He won 13 per cent of the poll, after leading local campaigns to save vital hospital facilities – successfully – and improve North Devon bus services (ongoing).

Saturday morning and the election team gathered at Gerry's terraced cottage in a quadrangle of 17th century almshouses. These are Grade I listed buildings ('like Buckingham Palace, but built for the poor not the rich', Gerry reminds us).

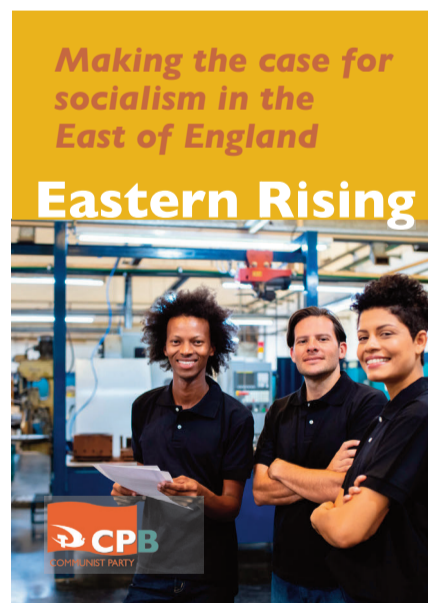
Outside the communal meeting room, he proudly points to the bullet holes in the old door behind which fleeing Royalists hid from a company of parliamentary Roundheads and their muskets.

It's a tonic walking to Barnstaple's busy town centre as local shopkeepers shout 'Hi Gerry!' and people want him to stop and chat. Anyone reluctant to take a brochure because 'politicians are all the same' meets with a sympathetic nod as Gerry urges them to read his own thoughts on the matter: 'The leaders of the three main political parties have the combined charisma of a dog biscuit'.

His election address lists his record of service to the local community and its trade union movement. Gerry reiterates his support for CND, recalling previous arrests at a US airforce base but Gerry acknowledges that ridding Britain of nuclear weapons is likely to take a little longer than upgrading Barnstaple's dilapidated bus shelters.

Nonetheless, his appeal to the electors is a serious one. He attacks the country's growing inequality of wealth, points out that two-thirds of the Tory Cabinet were privately educated, demands a strategy to build more homes and – as a member of the local trades council and regional TUC – urges solidarity with striking workers.

A straw poll of drinkers in his favourite craft beer pub has Gerry Sables ahead by a nose in the election stakes. Mind you, half of those present were Communist Party campaigners or Labour Party friends.



Phil Katz
LOCAL ELECTIONS

LOCAL CAMPAIGNING IS nothing new to the communists of the East of England – many members in our district have been on strike, some for as many as 18+ days. Dovetailing with our work of supporting members on strike, we have been raising funds this last year to contest elections and to host our district Red Festival in Cambridge.

More about that next issue.



MAY DAY 1890 & 2023

'What the numerous onlooking bourgeois politicians took home with them as the overall effect was the certainty that the English proletariat, which for fully forty years had trailed behind the big Liberal party and served it as voting cattle, had awakened at last to new, independent life and action.' **Frederick Engels** *Letter to Paul Lafargue* January 31 1891

On May 1st 1, 1890, demonstrations took place around the world at the behest of the Socialist International of left-wing parties. The main demand was for limiting the working day to eight hours.



Robert Griffiths
MAY DAY

FREDERICK ENGELS noted that, in all of continental Europe, 'it was Vienna that celebrated the holiday of the proletariat in the most brilliant and dignified manner'.

But, he added, even this dramatic revival of the Austrian trade union and socialist movement was 'thrown into the shade' by the 'most important and magnificent' London May Day march and rally three days later.

What had, in Engels' words, roused the English workers from almost 40 years of slumber to join the great international army?

He pointed his German readers to the previous year's docks strike – led by the likes of Tom Mann and Ben Tillett – and the founding of the Gas Workers' and General Labourers' Union, which had grown to embrace 100,000 members. Engels proclaimed the unionisation of huge numbers of unskilled workers and the fact that they wanted their unions to be led by socialists. This rise of militant, left-led 'New Unionism' could be contrasted with the aloofness and conservatism – both industrial and political – of the craft-based unions led by the aristocrats of labour.

Never slow to welcome the contributions of women, Engels also praised the role played by Eleanor Marx-Aveling, in raising funds for the dockers, organising a strike of young women workers in Silvertown, representing women gas workers and spreading socialist ideas through the Liberal radical clubs.

Not that the May Day procession and its eight or more rallies in Hyde Park had been free of problems.

In particular, the labour aristocrats who ran London Trades Council wanted to ban socialist organisations from the march

and preferred a negotiated eight-hour day (with voluntary overtime) to legislation, while the Social-Democratic Federation had a superior, sectarian attitude towards unions generally and those for the unskilled in particular.

Of course, many of the basic issues in 1890 – working terms and conditions, trade union recognition – remain the same today because we still live and work in a capitalist society. But others have changed, emerged and come to the fore.

This year, around the world, millions of people will march and demonstrate to mark International Workers' Day.

Across England, Scotland and Wales, the fight against the 'cost of profits' crisis, 'fire and rehire' and privatisation, for anti-inflation wage rises, pensions and public ownership, will feature on many banners and in countless speeches.

Freedom and equality for women is an aspiration more widespread than ever before, from Afghanistan and Iran to South Africa and the USA. There are yet mountains to climb. However, respect and rights for people of different sexual orientation can now be raised without brutal repression in a growing number of countries.

In a spirit of working-class and people's unity, there will be calls to reject the anti-migrant hysteria, open up legal routes for refugees and repeal Britain's racist immigration and nationality laws.

Nor should vital questions of war and peace be neglected. Over the past 150 years, millions of working people and their families have died as the imperialist powers strive to assert their control over markets, raw materials, transport routes, governments and whole countries and continents.

Until recently, public consciousness even in the oldest imperialist countries such as Britain – let alone in Latin

Winning political office in a General Election is not the same as achieving state power, although doing so on the basis of mass working-class action would complete an important first stage in the struggle for socialism.

America, Asia or Africa – has probably been more anti-imperialist and anti-war than at any time in history.

Tragically, this progress has been thrown back in the West by NATO-EU expansionism – now boosted by Russia's reckless and brutal invasion of Ukraine – and by the Cold War against China spearheaded by the US, Britain and Australia.

Shamefully – and for the first time in history – all Labour MPs have fallen silent on NATO's spreading tentacles and their own party's craven, criminal support for more nuclear weapons at a cost somewhere north of £200 billion.

How to stop the capitalist monopolies and their state power imperilling our planet's eco-system is a question that went unasked on May Days past, when inexhaustible supplies of energy were taken for granted.

Today, it is becoming clear that the global energy crisis will not be resolved on the basis of capitalist ownership and market anarchy.

International Workers' Day celebrates the gains of the trade union and left-wing movements and proclaims our determination to defend them.

In Britain, we have public services, the NHS, pensions, welfare benefits and employment rights to protect and extend. An urgent priority is to create the unity and militancy that can make the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill – or rather the Strikes (Maximum Scabbing Levels) Bill – unworkable.

Although our trades unions have advanced and retreated since 1890, they are better organised and more deeply entrenched in society today than they were then.

Despite its victories and defeats during the 20th century, the cause of socialism has many more adherents now than it had in any period before the Second World War. There are socialist and communist parties in almost every country today, with a wealth of experience from which to draw and learn.

Here is a major reason for studying the history of the labour movement.

In the present strike wave sweeping Britain, for instance, we need to understand how disunity between different unions in the same sector has often meant defeat for all. The British, Scottish, Welsh and regional TUCs should act as a powerful force for coordination and solidarity, as trades councils have done so magnificently.

History also teaches us about the failures and betrayals of social democracy. While many Labour Party members have supported workers taking action – and continue to do so – their leaders have rarely sided with strikers. Among the very few exceptions were Keir Hardie and Michael Foot.

The Communist Party's programme, *Britain's Road to Socialism*, analyses the experience of past Labour governments.

Winning political office in a General Election is not the same as achieving state power, although doing so on the basis of mass working-class action would complete an important first stage in the struggle for socialism. Instead, the low level of revolutionary political consciousness in the British working-class movement has produced Labour Party leaderships that have no commitment or strategy to making deep inroads into the wealth and power of the monopoly capitalist corporations.

Little or no attempt has been made to politicise and mobilise the mass of the people outside election time, let alone involve them and the labour movement in transforming the state apparatus. Valuable reforms have been enacted – usually after a period of mass extra-parliamentary action – only to be diluted or reversed by the next Conservative government.

Crucially, the British labour movement has failed to understand and oppose imperialism in its economic, political, cultural and military aspects, including the 'special' (*ie.*, especially servile) relationship with US imperialism. Similar confusion persists about the monopoly class character of the European Union, based as it is on big business market forces and aligned with NATO militarism.

Such muddled thinking has allowed every Labour government so far to be derailed by powerful forces within monopoly capital and the state apparatus. Nothing suggests that a government led by Sir Keir Starmer would break the vicious cycle.

Workers, their families and their communities will forever be on the same capitalist treadmill until they learn from their own history. Trade unions could do much more to organise classes, schools and publications on the history and politics of the labour movement, which would contribute enormously to the consolidation and politicisation of members' class consciousness.

Mass activity, political education and a much stronger Communist Party are the basis on which the labour movement in Britain will resolve its current crisis of political representation. This is what will determine whether the labour movement can reclaim the Labour Party or, failing that, whether the trade unions have to take the lead in re-establishing their own mass party.

Whatever the outcome, the slogan coined by Lenin and the Communist International should continue to embody the spirit of May Day across the world: 'Workers and oppressed peoples of all lands, unite!'

ROBERT GRIFFITHS IS GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

NATION, CLASS & REPUBLIC

‘But this loathsome cult of the king as such, the veneration of an empty idea – or rather not an idea but the word “king” – stripped of all content, is the culmination of monarchy, just as the veneration of the mere word “God” is the culmination of religion. The word “king” is the essence of the state, just as the word “God” is the essence of religion, even though neither word has any meaning at all. ‘ Friedrich Engels 1844

DOWN WITH THE MONARCHY! FOR A REPUBLIC! FOR REAL DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM!



Britain’s young communists have taken a bold stand in defence of a British republic and call for the abolition of the monarchy and for the expropriation of the wealth of the royal family

THE DEATH of Elizabeth Windsor highlighted to our generation and working people across Britain that the abolition of the monarchy remains a pressing and important issue.

It is fundamentally clear, now more than ever, that Britain must become a modern republic. A tiny interbreeding sect of a decaying aristocracy cannot and will never reflect the interests of working people in Britain.

The imposition of an obscenely wealthy, unrepresentative, unelected head of state is offensive to all working people. But this is not just a matter of important democratic and egalitarian principles.

This monarchy continues to be an important symbol and tool of the British state and its apparatus for maintaining control.

Despite all the talk to the contrary, the monarchy continues to hold significant power under Britain’s broken constitution, including the selection of governments, and will remain a perpetual danger to democratic and social progress while that remains the case

The Royal Family’s wealth and the Crown estates, vast tracts of land and resources across Britain, are centuries of stolen wealth from the working people of this country and the oppressed and exploited peoples in Britain’s colonies.

The monarch’s position as the head of state not just of Britain, but of various former colonies and as head of the Commonwealth plays an important symbolic and ideological role in maintaining British imperialism around the world.

Britain’s state and monopoly media canonised Elizabeth Windsor as a ‘tireless public servant’. No one can genuinely define public service as never working a single day in your 96 years on earth and living in obscene wealth every day while surrounded by poverty and doing nothing to change it.

Elizabeth Windsor never criticised Britain’s racist colonial empire. She never criticised or apologised for her notoriously racist husband. She never shied away from consorting with dictators in the interests of the British state.

She used public money to fund the legal defence of her paedophile son.

Elizabeth Windsor was a symbol of the archaic, corrupt and racist institution. Hers was also the arrogance of hereditary and unchecked power and wealth.

Britain’s ruling class, through the state and the media, used this death to distract from the so-called cost of living crisis and rising industrial militancy, and undermine strike action. The coronation of her son plays the same role.

We can’t allow their calls for ‘unity’ and ‘respect’, which are in reality demands for class collaboration, to succeed.

★ Charles should never become ‘king’. Elizabeth’s death should be the death of the monarchy itself.

★ The immediate abolition of the monarchy and its replacement with a democratically elected head of state.

★ The nationalisation of the Crown Estate and the expropriation of the personal wealth of the Royal Family for the public good.

★ Redistribution of and reparation for all wealth stolen by the Royal Family from Britain’s former colonies.

<https://challenge-magazine.org>
<https://ycl.org.uk>



Kenny Coyle reviews a new pamphlet on the labour movement and the national question. This pamphlet provides an accessible contemporary Marxist perspective on the interrelationship of class and national identities among the nations of Britain.

IT COMES AT a particularly critical moment for the left in Britain. As the recent waves of industrial action by workers across Britain show, there remains a strong material basis for working-class unity, despite national differences. However, since the 1990s, these national differences within Britain have also taken institutional form, resulting in a fragmented political landscape.

Rishi Sunak’s Tories may control the UK parliament but Humza Yousaf’s Scottish National Party, factionalised as it is, still rules the roost in the Scottish Parliament, and the Labour Party’s Mark Drakeford, measurably to the left of Keir Starmer, presides over the Welsh Senedd. If we can identify progressive all-Britain unity in the class struggle, it nonetheless co-exists with splintered divisions on national levels – how should the left respond?

The pamphlet is applicable to the constituent nations of Britain alone, it explicitly does not aim to cover the national question in general, nor the quite different relation between Britain and Ireland, based as that is on colonial and imperialist domination.

John Foster outlines the processes by which the elites of Scotland and Wales were co-opted into a common capitalist and later imperialist project – the United Kingdom. Yet this never extinguished the popular attachments to Scottish or Welsh national

identity, lending a special complexity to what constitutes the so-called “British nation”.

He brings out the unifying elements of all-Britain working-class history, the great strikes that brought together miners from Fife, Yorkshire, Kent and the Rhondda, to the multi-national coalitions that fought fascism from Cable Street to Jarama.

Communists played a significant role in a progressive all-Britain culture, particularly during the period of the Popular Front against fascism, when cultural artists of all fields joined or worked with communists. However, no less important was the communist contribution to the renaissance of Scottish and Welsh national cultures, with Hugh MacDiarmid and TE Nicholas, respectively, pioneering these efforts.

The pamphlet also notes the efforts, especially in the 1930s, to rescue English history and culture from the still dominant narrative that focuses on tales of domestic royalty and plutocracy, English hegemony over the other nations of Britain, and a bloody record of international colonialism and imperialism. The alternative approach was epitomised by the works of Marxist historians, most famously by AL Morton’s *A People’s History of England*, which brought to the fore the popular anti-feudal and anti-capitalist struggles of English peasants, artisans and workers.

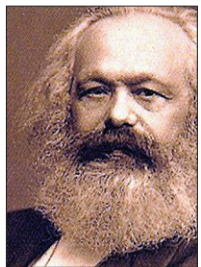
Foster’s approach, drawn from Lenin but elaborated by Georgi Dimitrov, avoids both the narrow economic approach to the national question and its polar opposite, the assumption that Scottish or Welsh nationalism is inherently progressive.

Foster reaches into the works of Marx, Lenin, Dimitrov and of James Connolly, the Edinburgh-born revolutionary socialist who gave his life in the struggle to free Ireland from British imperialism. Here he finds ample support for his perspective.

The concept that every nation has two cultures, one broadly reflecting the ruling elites and the other one forged at the grassroots, has been a recurring motif of Foster’s work since the 1970s, when sections of the left and ultra-left were often dismissive of the resurgence of the national question within Britain. Decades later, these very same nationalisms became a bandwagon for them to follow, if not climb aboard.

Nations and working-class unity in Britain is a timely contribution to an unavoidable debate about whether national-based separatisms or a unifying class-based politics – including the proposal for progressive federalism – offer the best way forward for the left in Britain.

Nations and working-class unity in Britain, by John Foster (Communist Party, 48 pp, £2).



MARX ON STRIKES

'... the alternative rise and fall of wages, and the continual conflicts between masters and men resulting therefrom, are, in the present organisation of industry, the indispensable means of holding up the spirit of the labouring classes, of combining them into one great association against the encroachments of the ruling class.' **Karl Marx** 1843



IN TODAY'S BATTLES WE BUILD THE FUTURE

▲ **RMT Paddington No.1 Branch Cleaners on strike at Atalian-Servest – a Great Western railway contract – demanding £15 and hour, contractual sick pay and free travel.**

The workers want an end to outsourcing and to be directly employed by the train operating company.

Picture from Alex Gordon

Andy Bain STRIKE WAVE

THE WAVE of strikes continues across different parts of England, Scotland and Wales as workers and their unions are determined to protect living standards, jobs, conditions and services.

But we should also see this increasingly visible class struggle in the context of the Tory government's plans for post-Brexit Britain. And we don't have to research much to confirm what it is they have in store for workers and their families: a low wage, low regulation, low tax and even more privatised economy; an economy to attract investment capital from home and abroad.

Hence the Sunak government's wide-ranging war against workers in the state and privatised monopoly sectors, notably in the transport, mail, education, health, and national and local government services. Hiding at first behind pay review bodies, the aim has been to maintain the real-terms wage losses of the last 12 years and then cut pay by a further 10 per cent or so.

Many public sector jobs are quickly and quietly heading for the private sector to the benefit of shareholders. But many more employers across the economy will profit from a successful drive to impose below inflation wage settlements in the public and privatised sectors.

As we know from experience, when public sector industries and services are handed to the private sector, the result is job cuts in order to maximise profits, while those staff who remain in the public sector face bigger workloads and more oppressive terms and conditions.

For the general public, privatisation also means lower quality, as seen recently with the water industry's pollution of rivers and

coasts and the 'unmitigated disaster' that led to the full return of probation to the public sector.

The above makes it all the more important that the strike wave grows in strength and solidarity. Certainly, its continuation nine months after the rail and mail unions led the charge reflects and raises the class consciousness of workers.

Trade unions that - even one year ago - would not have been expected to beat the strike ballot thresholds have smashed through them. Health and education unions are going for a second round against a government that thought it would easily buy off all the nurses with a slightly improved but still utterly inadequate offer.

Health Secretary Steve Barclay's 'domino' strategy to pick off the health unions one by one has been stopped in its tracks. From pretending to be the nurses' friend, he went to threatening the RCN with legal action to prevent its planned 48-hour strike in England this May Day weekend. Clearly, the RCN winning a second six month mandate for industrial action can also play a major role in the wider struggle, helping to keep public support and strengthening mutual solidarity.

Furthermore, the determination of junior doctors and the BMA - like the RCN not known for its militancy - has surprised Barclay and his discredited government. The votes for action by undervalued and underpaid PCS staff across a wide range of government departments adds to the pressure.

It remains to be seen how successful another government ploy - one-off non-consolidated pay offers - to buy off workers in the short-term will be. Unless these are consolidated in a pay round next year, it means the biggest cut in their living standards has been postponed not avoided.

Where private sector workers are well

organised in trade unions, many above-inflation deals have been won. Naturally, except in the Morning Star, most of the press and broadcasting media are giving no publicity to these victories for fear they will encourage wider action.

Of course, many workers in non-unionised workplaces are faring worse than their sisters and brothers in the public sector.

After nine months of open class struggle, there are lessons to be learned.

The best organised unions, nationally and in the workplaces, will get the best strike ballot results. The NEU is a good example of what can be achieved. Improved organising across the union in its fight to protect members during the Covid pandemic won more teachers and support staff to vote for action to win an inflation-plus pay rise.

Unions working together gets the best results. This is true in a workplace but also in the coordination of strikes within and across industrial sectors. Disunity between unions in the same sector makes for weaknesses that governments and employers will always seek to exploit.

Local unity, in which trades councils and regional and national TUCs can play an important part, builds local awareness and solidarity. The basis is being created for forming broad pro-strike alliances in our towns and cities.

Tooting cars, local press articles and social media images of picket lines can give a great boost to those doing the picketing. Social events and fundraisers help too.

Drawing Labour Party members, councillors and MPs into supporting picket lines is another necessary part of building a movement to win - not only now but also next time. We will need a mass, vibrant and militant trade union movement just as much under any future Labour government.

Before the next General Election, the current Tory government intends to tighten legal restrictions on taking industrial action. The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Bill will force named employees in health, education, fire and rescue, transport, nuclear fuel and border security services to break strikes or face dismissal.

A Labour pledge to repeal the measure (although not all the other Tory anti-union laws) is not enough. Unions need to be developing a united strategy now to make the Strikes (Maximum Scabbing Levels) Bill unworkable.

In the meantime, the reality that this is a 'Cost of Profits' and a 'Cost of Capitalism' crisis must be driven home. The profits made by Shell, BP and the gas and electricity supply monopolies, aided and abetted by Ofgem, have doubled and trebled in 2022-23.

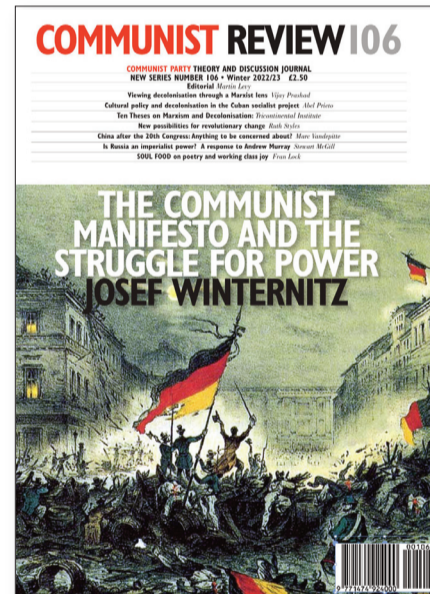
In the battles of today, we begin to build and shape the future.

ANDY BAIN IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S INDUSTRIAL ORGANISER



▲ Revised and updated in the midst of the great strike wave this short pamphlet offers the Communist Party's perspectives on the urgent priorities for the left in the trade union movement and on the need for greater left organisation. What is the left doing now to offer leadership? What should our key demands be and how can we best organise to achieve them?

Go to Communist Party online shop at <https://tinyurl.com/7m8rd2jp>



COMMUNIST PARTY THEORY & DISCUSSION JOURNAL New Series Number 106 Winter 2022/23 £2.50

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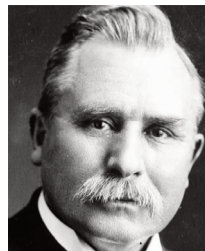
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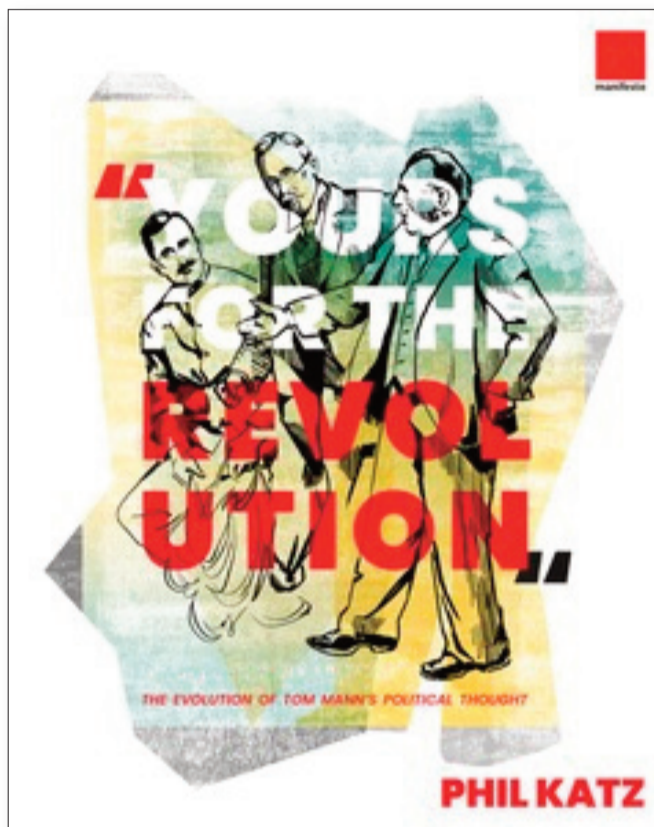
SOUL FOOD On poetry and working class joy *Fran Lock*



REVOLUTIONARY PIONEER

'The future of the world belongs to the youth of the world, and it is from the youth and not from the old that the fire of life will warm and enlighten the world. It is your privilege to breathe the breath of life into the dry bones of many around you.'

Tom Mann chair of the British Bureau of the Red International of Labor Unions and the National Minority Movement



Veteran trade union organiser and communicator **Phil Katz** has been working on a biography of the legendary trade union pioneer **Tom Mann** for years.

Relying on the words and writings of the communist and revolutionary trade unionist his research took him to Australia.

Paul Simon talked to him about the book and the origins and evolution of Tom Mann's political thought.



Yours for the revolution

Paul Simon
TOM MANN

In Australia, Tom Mann is still, eighty years after his death, a well-known figure. Yet in Britain he is mainly associated with the Dock Strike of 1889 and the strike struggles on Merseyside before world war one.

This book covers the full span of Mann's life between 1856 and 1941 and focuses on the evolution of his politics from radical Christian socialism through social democracy, to syndicalism and communism.

EP Thompson expressed exhaustion at even thinking about writing about Mann's achievements and Dona Torr managed just one of four planned volumes.

The book certainly took the author a while to write! It tells of the 1889 Dock Strike, Mann's campaign for an Eight Hour Day that turned the TUC inside out, building the Socialist International and organising the first and biggest ever May Day in Britain that had Engels exclaiming "if only Marx were still alive to see this".

Mann became the general secretary of the Independent Labour Party, formed the Workers' Union with his own money, and was first president of the International Transport Workers' Federation, founding the Industrial Syndicalist Education League, and was the main union representative at the pathbreaking Royal Commission on Labour (1891). He even turned down a post in Gladstone's last cabinet.

With his faith and great knowledge of religion he was a lay preacher and powerful critic of the church hierarchy. He helped form giant unions such as the National Union of Railwaymen.

In Australia he led the seminal strike of

miners at Broken Hill NSW and formed the Victoria Labour Party. His organising visits to Canada and South Africa were key to the birth of the union movement there.

Mann knew and worked with William Morris, Eleanor Marx, Frederick Engels, Will Thorne, Annie Besant, Sen Katayama, George Hardy, Keir Hardie, 'Mother' Reeve Bloor, Big Bill Haywood, Solomon Lozovsky, James Connolly, Jim Larkin Senior and Junior, William Z Foster, Sylvia Pankhurst, Lenin and many others. In prison in Melbourne he received solidarity visits from Keir Hardie and future premier Ramsay MacDonald.

In 1917 he spoke out for the Russian Revolution which took him into the Communist Party as the then best-known and connected trade unionist in the world. He became general secretary of his own union, the newly-minted Amalgamated Engineering Union on a platform of support for 'Revolutionaries, Syndicalists, Spartacists, Bolsheviks and Communists'. He led major strikes in Britain, Africa, across Europe, Australia and even made a mark with a seventy-city tour of the USA.

Mann went on to become a leader of the Red International of Labour Unions, chair of the National Minority Movement, president of the National Unemployed Workers Movement and played a key role in the World Campaign Against War and Fascism that took him to Paris, Berlin, Moscow, New York and Seattle.

The book includes accounts of his private meetings with Lenin and Trotsky, and his later work with Sen Katayama from Japan, tours of famine areas with president Kalinin of Soviet Russia and strike solidarity meetings with the Americans Earl Browder and William Z Foster. Mann worked with Dimitrov in the late

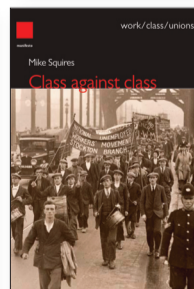
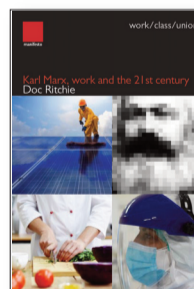
twenties to formulate a union strategy for combatting fascism and volunteered at 80 to fight in Spain.

His life-changing (aged 70!) six month semi-clandestine tour of China had him dodging pirates on the China Sea and Japanese occupiers of Manchuria. He even found time to become first president of Marx Memorial Library and Workers School giving its first lecture on the life of Karl Marx.

Mann was the first trade union leader of note in Britain to develop an understanding of imperialism. He played a vital role in the 'Hands off Russia' and 'Hands off China' campaigns, supported Indian independence and worked with James Larkin Senior and Junior and James Connolly during the Dublin Lock out and the unemployed struggles in 1932.

During this period he came to understand the progressive role of national liberation in the anti colonial struggle and opposed racism. He was shocked by what he had experienced in Australia and South Africa. His lasting legacy lies in his shaping of the British union movement and although only partly successful, his achievements lasted another half century after his death.

This highly informative book, with photos never before published and richly illustrated, is built around Mann's own words. It will inspire new activists and surprise the veterans who thought they knew Mann. Katz concludes that Mann is up there with that rare group of pioneers of socialism in Britain such as Robert Owen, William Morris and Eleanor Marx. He argues that if we are to be successful in the struggle for socialism, we will have to revisit the ideas and strategies of Tom Mann.



new manifesto press series work/class/life

This new manifestopress series is essential reading for working class activists. Nigel Flanagan's *Our Trade Unions* – currently on its sixth printing – challenges conventional thinking about unions.

Doc Ritchie's *Karl Marx, work and the 21st century* measures the reality of our working lives against Marx's thought while Mike Squires' *Class against Class* analyses the years when the Communist Party built its workplace organisation and launched the *Daily Worker*.

The Great Money Trick – drawn by labour movement cartoonist Andy Vine with an essay by left wing literary critic Jenny Farrell – presents the key episode from Robert Tressell's *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. Ideal for trade union education courses, entertaining and educative. Bulk orders welcome

Double book launch
Just a few remaining tickets are available for a double book launch at Marx Memorial Library & Workers' School on 4 May.

Nigel Flanagan, UNI Global Lead Organiser and author of *Our trade unions, what comes next after the summer of 2022?* will share a platform with Phil Katz to launch his new book, *Yours for the revolution - the evolution of Tom Mann's political thought*. Tickets available here <https://tinyurl.com/X2BOOK LAUNCH>.

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for books in print and as e pubs, magazines, apparel with a message and a left wing second hand online bookshop.



EVENTS & IDEAS & ACTION

‘... we must never be weary of insisting on the non-understanding that for women, as for the labouring classes, no solution of the difficulties and problems that present themselves is really possible in the present condition of society.’
Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx Aveling 1886 The Woman Question

★Morning Star
 Organise Now!
 CoDIR

GUEST SPEAKERS ON:
 TRADE UNIONS
 SOCIALISM
 WOMENS LIBERATION
 HOUSING & TRANSPORT

EVENING:
 MUSIC & BAR

SAT 27TH MAY 1PM TO LATE
 NCI CENTER
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ADMISSION:
 SOLIDARITY £6 | GENERAL £4 | STUDENT/UNWAGED £2

Sponsored by Morning Star, Strikemap, Organise Now and CoDIR. Supported by the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom and Manifesto Press, and Manifesto Apparel.

The Cambridge Red Festival is back at the NCI Centre for 2023!

Hear from local activists and trade unionists on the issues that matter most including internationalism, trade unionism, housing, transport and women's rights.

Join in with the discussions and Q&A sessions and then enjoy the late evening music and bar.

This year's Red Festival will include the first showing of the feature film 'The London Recruits' in the East of England, with a 'London Recruit' guest speaker.

Speakers are being added all the time, so please check back regularly.
<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/red-festival-2023-tickets-595091132597>

Get organised

Lorraine Douglas
COMMUNIST WOMEN

COMMUNIST WOMEN are training the next generation of trade union organisers starting with a day-long course in Manchester on 17 June

The YCL and Communist Party have The 'train the trainers' course – to increase the number of women involved in the industrial work of the Young Communist League and Communist Party – will provide the tools to organise a union in workplaces where none exists. This includes taking on shop steward and health & safety rep positions, developing public speaking, communication and social media skills and organising in the gig economy.

Experienced women comrades will lead the workshop which is aimed at trade union, community and student activists who want to develop their industrial work.

The comrades who undertake the training will then be tasked to roll this out in their districts and nations increasing the involvement of working age women in the Party's industrial work at district, nation and all-Britain levels.

**MAY 1ST 2023
 INTERNATIONAL
 WORKERS DAY**

**CELEBRATE THE STRUGGLE
 FOR PEACE AND SOCIALISM
 WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY!**

FOR PEACE AND SOCIALISM www.comunistparty.org.uk @CPBritain

**East End
 May Day Rally**

Saturday 6 May 2023 4.30pm
 Trinity Centre East Avenue
 London E2 6SG
 East Ham tube

Cultural Programme
 Udichi Shilpi -
 UK Sangshod and others

Further information
 Shahriar Bin Ali
 Chair person BWC-UK
 07872598480

Speakers include
 Labour
 movement and
 community activists

Sushanta Das
 General Secretary BWC-UK
 07581 843507

**Bangladeshi
 Workers' Council**

Thirty years ago Unity! emerged as the united voice of communist trade unionists – originally issued at the TUC, in strikes and at union conferences.

Over the last three decades it has expanded to become more widely read as the newspaper of the Communist Party available monthly, online and in print and as a paid insert in the Morning Star with special editions for demonstrations and strikes, May Day, Tolpuddle, daily at the TUC and working class events.

Joint Statement

Bangladeshi Workers Council,
 Caribbean Labour Solidarity,
 Communist Party
 Indian Workers Association

Britain has relied on and benefited from immigration for centuries and yet Governments and their apparatus has chosen to discriminate against immigrant communities and black people. The Labour Movement is central to the campaign against racism and discrimination.

- The Labour Movement must unite our communities and our working class in the months and years ahead.
- We stand for equality and not discrimination.
- We oppose the hostile environment and are for the repeal of racist legislation.
- We stand for safe and legal routes and are against the outsourcing of Britain's asylum system to Rwanda or elsewhere.
- We call for a reduction in immigration fees.
- We oppose people being housed in detention centres and are for people residing in communities with proper support.
- We stand for the treatment of people as Human Beings.
- We oppose income thresholds as a means to determine immigration and are for fair and equal treatment.
- We support the right to work and say asylum seekers and refugees should have indefinite leave to remain, access to public funds with faster tracking to nationality.
- We oppose the revoking of UK Citizenship and the deportation or removal of those who have UK Citizenship, or are at risk and for a proper appeal system. Children without Citizenship should automatically be given it on reaching adulthood.
- We call for parliamentary scrutiny of any changes to immigration and nationality laws and for the Police and Home Office to be stripped of discretionary powers. The Windrush Scheme is not fit for purpose and must be revamped and made accessible.
- We call upon Labour Movement Organisations to back these demands.
- We recognise more needs adding.
- We do not seek to replace organisations and campaigns that already exist. Indeed, we call upon Trade Unions to support these campaigns.



Join the Communist Party,
 the party of working class
 power and liberation

<https://members.comunistparty.org.uk/join-now>