



Communist Party
July 2023

Inflation is a class issue
Time to end the monarchy
Harry Pollitt's speech

**international
bulletin**

Unity!

BOSSSES' PROFITS DRIVE CAUSES INFLATION

Nick Wright
INFLATION

PROFIT-HUNGRY big business bosses are driving inflation but premier Rishi Sunak, his chancellor Jeremy Hunt and the governor of the Bank of England, Andrew Bailey, say the solution is for workers to take pay cuts

Workers' wages have not kept pace with price rises for more than a decade but Tory ministers, echoed by the Labour Party leadership, place curbing demand – forcing families to spend less – at the centre of their bi-partisan inflation policies.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development there is overwhelming evidence that almost all the main capitalist economies have seen soaring profits in the midst of the 'cost of living crisis'.

But the crisis in consumption is experienced exclusively by working people while the rich live much as before.

The official conclusion by even the OECD, a big business-friendly organisation, is that it was not workers' pay increases that have driven inflation but business bosses jacking up prices to boost profits.

Bosses have capitalised on the energy price shock caused by NATO's 'proxy war in Ukraine, the Russian invasion and the sanctions-driven rise in commodity prices to add in an extra boost to profit margins.

The tendency for the capitalist system to stagnate and fall into crisis is obvious to everyone. Even big business bosses and bankers with most invested in the capitalist system are forced to acknowledge this truth.



ANDREW BAILEY
Salary £575,538
Personal wealth unknown



RISHI SUNAK
Salary £156,163
Joint wealth £730 million



JEREMY HUNT
Salary £155,817
Personal wealth £14 million

They simply blame the crisis of **their** system on the workers demanding higher wages.

This lie won't wash. More than a century ago Karl Marx explained that the enduring capitalist crisis was due to the falling rate of profit that is built into the system.

Marx did not predict that the rate of profit would decline in a simple downward spiral but all kinds of factors would interrupt the process.

One of the ways capitalists jack up falling profits is by privatisation. We have seen that happen to disastrous effect in Britain's water utilities and to the expense of commuters with the privatisation of rail.

Another way to force profits up is by war. We can see that in action as taxpayers on both sides of the Atlantic are forced to subsidise colossal arms industry production while energy consumers throughout Europe pay inflated prices for fracked US gas.

Not only are workers not responsible for inflation but those on the lowest pay fare worst. Price inflation in the day-to-day living costs for working people on basic incomes is far greater because a much bigger portion of the household budget is spent on basic goods.

According to the Institute for Fiscal Studies,

there is a differential cost-of-living increase of 11% for the poorest households compared to 4% for the wealthiest.

Rishi Sunak knows that corporate profits in Britain were up to £159494 million in the first quarter of 2023. This is up from £154087 million in the last quarter of 2022. He knows this because the Office for National Statistics says so.

All profits gathered from our work are simply unpaid wages. That is the basis of the capitalist system and it can be ended.

Workers and our unions understand that if the Tories get away with their pay cutting strategy then the economic crisis will deepen and working people will be even worse off.

We are in an eternal battle with bosses and their governments until the wages system is ended and working people get the full benefit of their labour.

The Communist Party argues that every successful wages struggle strengthens the working class as a whole and that a united front can hasten the day when the system is brought to an end with the working class in power and a socialist economy constructed.

NICK WRIGHT IS EDITOR OF UNITY!



Welcome to everyone at the Durham Miners' Gala from the Communist Party

Since 1871, the Big Meet is famous as a celebration of working class solidarity and culture.

The Durham coalfield has long been a stronghold of militancy and has produced generations of outstanding working class leaders.

If today's most important task is to return the working class to the heart of politics, for the working class movement to become decisive in the nation's affairs then the Durham Miners Gala is the place where the arguments for working class political power and our socialist future will be heard.

Rob Griffiths
general secretary
Communist Party



▲ An updated edition of the fight of our lives is now available in digital and print.

In the face of a fast-moving strike wave and following a first edition that sold out in weeks a new updated version is now available.

Author of the best-selling Manifesto Press book *Our Trade Unions* Nigel Flanagan says of the pamphlet: "The gift of clarity is an essential one for revolutionaries. To be able to offer clear analysis and firm explanations is an essential part of the work inside the working-class movement. This pamphlet is clarity – in itself a massive achievement. It is thoroughly recommended to all working class and trade union activists who are trying to make sense of what is going on and most of all it gives answers."

All workers, readers of Unity! and Communist Party members and supporters can buy individual print copies at www.manifestopress.coop/products.

You can download digital copies and you are urged to distribute them to workmates and where possible hold small union or workplace meetings to discuss the issues raised.

Communist Party organisations are holding open branch meetings based on the pamphlet and holding public meetings with the emphasis on gathering broad platforms of speakers



NEWS & VIEWS

‘Socialism should cease to be only the scientific prevision of the future. It should become the torch that kindles indomitable faith and energy in the hearts of people....’ **Felix Dzerzhinsky** future head of All-Russia Extraordinary Commission to Combat Counter-revolution and Sabotage writing from his Tsarist prison in 1908

Fascists flee local anger



▲ **ELGIN, MORAYSHIRE** A self styled ‘Highland Division’ far right faction faced humiliation when hundreds of local people drove them from the Elgin town square. The local reaction – organised by Moray Trades Council and Stand up to Racism – drove the half a dozen nazis and Hitler look-a-like Alan Yerbury out of town. The crowd heard from a full range of trade unions, community and faith groups and calls for solidarity and support for asylum seekers. ‘A fantastic day for anti-fascists in Scotland’ said Communist Party Scottish secretary Tam Morrison.

Crisis of state calls for class politics – strike leader

Unity reporters
Communist Party

B RITAIN’S POLITICAL crisis reflects a deeper crisis of the British state and its institutions, rail union president Alex Gordon told the Communist Party’s political committee in June.

He was speaking as past and present Conservative Party prime ministers were at each other’s throats, one having been denounced by a House of Lords committee, and after the arrest of the former Scottish first minister as part of a police investigation into the finances of the Scottish National Party.

‘Meanwhile, the increasingly autocratic Labour leader and his faction are purging their party and Britain’s only Green MP and former party leader is quitting the House of Commons because nothing useful can be achieved there’, Alex Gordon said.

‘As the Conservatives face three by-elections losses, the ruling class is preparing the Labour Party for government as Sir Keir Starmer dumps left-wing policies in return for shed loads of big business cash’.

Alex Gordon noted that the Greens had betrayed their long-standing opposition to NATO as Britain’s mainstream mass media rigorously peddle a single pro-war, pro-nuclear weapons and anti-China agenda,

excluding all critical voices from broadcasting coverage.

He traced the latest stage in Britain’s political and state crisis to its roots in the 2016 EU referendum result.

‘Britain’s ruling capitalist class has lost its role inside the EU as a champion of economic neoliberalism and US-NATO foreign and military policy, yet the attempts from outside to create an exclusive economic, technological and media relationship with the US are being rebuffed as President Biden pursues allies and markets elsewhere’.

At the same time, the trade union leader declared, British capitalism’s parasitic reliance on financial services, investment abroad and short-term profiteering at home is driving the current offensive against living standards, stable employment and democratic rights.

‘Workers are fighting back on the basis of class politics, as disaffection with the main political parties, elections and the integrity of government and the state continues to grow’ he said.

Warning against a turn to the far right, racism and fascism, Britain’s Communists urged the political left to build a ‘united front’ against the ruling class offensive, reinvigorating the anti-war movement and rebuilding working-class organisation in the trade union movement and local communities.



▲ **The execution of Charles the First. Oliver Cromwell’s Commonwealth lasted less than twenty years and with the restoration of the monarchy most of the parliament figures who ordered the execution of the king were executed themselves in a bloody reign of terror.**

Ruth Styles
ROYALTY

TO REPLACE servile oaths to serve the head of an aristocratic family for evermore and pious phrases about ‘serving the nation’ and ‘helping the poor’, communists demand a massive transfer of wealth from the capitalist class to the working class.

The coronation of Charles the Third was designed to maintain public support for an institution that embodies the gross inequalities, privilege and anti-democratic nature of our society.

Recognising that many people enjoy opportunities to gather together in response to appeals based on patriotism, tradition and ceremony, Britain’s ruling class and its mass media did all in their power to promote this spectacle.

Dissenting voices were all but silenced. As usual, the one daily paper – the *Morning Star* – that did not join in the royalist hysteria was excluded from all media reviews of the daily press. Unsurprisingly, as an institution itself not known for a commitment to equality and democracy, the Metropolitan Police arrested and detained peaceful protestors against the monarchy.

The coronation ceremony itself confirmed the close ties between the monarchy, the Anglican Church, the political establishment and Britain’s long and bloody history of militarism, conquest and plunder.

The Communist Party refuses to celebrate a monarchy inseparable from its role in Britain’s record as a reactionary colonial power. In place of a mythical royal sovereignty based on bloodline, the Communist Party proposes a popular sovereignty based on the people and their

elected representatives in parliaments, governments and mass movements.

In place of a bogus national unity that conceals deep social, national and religious inequalities, the Communist Party fights for socialism and a federal, secular Britain in which England, Scotland and Wales enjoy equal status and people are free to practice their religion or no religion at all, with no privileged status for any one nation or faith.

An important step towards these aims would be the abolition of all powers and institutions relating to the monarchy, including such posts as head of the Anglican Church and commander-in-chief of the armed forces, together with the royal prerogative, the Privy Council and other unaccountable offices of state.

The abolition of the monarchy itself, to be replaced by a head of state for ceremonial purposes, would complete a process that needs mass public support in order to succeed. Important to winning such support would be a drive to reform, democratise and restructure the state apparatus, resulting in its transformation into one which serves the interests of the working class and people generally, rather than those of the big monopoly capitalists centred on the City of London. This is the revolutionary essence of socialism.

In the meantime, the Communist Party will continue to commemorate and celebrate with others the struggles of those who have fought exploitation and oppression in England, Scotland, Wales and beyond. That is why we urge people over the coming weeks to turn out in great numbers to the Chainmakers Festival, the Durham Miners Gala and the Tolpuddle Martyrs Festival.

RUTH STYLES IS CHAIR OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY



INFLATION & CAPITALISM

“It establishes an accumulation of misery, corresponding with accumulation of capital. Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole...” **Karl Marx** *Das Kapital* Volume 1 Chapter 25



Straight Left The Bank of England's response to an inflation provoked by corporate price gouging is to increase interest rates says *Stewart McGill*

We need to understand how this market works so we can argue against people that blame inflation on ‘natural causes’ beyond human agency, and the idiots who blame it on workers trying to secure pay increases that prevent them from sinking further into debt-ridden poverty. We also need to understand that, if we want real change and to take control of the commanding heights of the economy, the power of these global giants must be broken and the entirety of the food production and distribution network needs to be transformed; this is also fundamental to saving the environment.

ONE OF THE profound insights of Marx was that capitalism is driven by the imperative to accumulate more capital. It's all about the drive for profits: if you want to understand how the capitalism works, this is our starting point.

This may seem obvious, but it is less so to those that manage our economy. The Bank of England's response to an inflation provoked by corporate price gouging is to increase interest rates, thereby exerting more pressure on poorer people that go into debt to keep their heads above water.

UK personal debt rose by one-third in 2022, with over two thirds of UK adults (68 per cent) saying that have felt stressed due to the cost-of-living's impact on their finances this year, with almost half (46 per cent) in debt as a result of the crisis.

In April this year Citizens Advice said Britain was facing a debt time bomb: they were having to help increasing numbers of people with a negative budget, i.e. their income is not enough to cover the essential expenses, making debt “unavoidable” for millions of people during the cost of living crisis. According to its statistics, 51% of those it helps with debt are in a negative budget, compared with 36% in 2019. The average debt client now has £0 left over each month, compared with more than £15 in 2019.

“The maths speaks for itself – a household debt crisis is coming and we have a choice about whether to prepare,” said Matthew Upton, the director of policy at Citizens Advice.

Interest rates increases are blunt, misdirected, and more about disciplining labour through fear and impoverishment than fixing inflation.

Food's Robber Barons

The French government are showing signs of understanding the issue, even the European Central Bank is beginning to realise the true nature of the problem.

French food prices rose 14.1 per cent in the year to May, close to the eurozone average, and have overtaken energy as the region's biggest driver of inflation. The French finance minister announced on Friday 9 June that 75 food producers had pledged to lower prices by July following weeks of pressure from the government for companies to stabilise food prices.

The European Central Bank in April, observed that although commodity prices were “falling steeply”, the prices paid by consumers for food “remained very sticky, suggesting that expanding profit margins were preventing inflation from falling.”

The problems in the food industry run deep, we can't blame it all on the supermarkets ripping people off - though there is still plenty of that, see below.

The big food companies cashed in from the cost of living crisis that followed COVID, just like the energy companies. The latter tend to be well known, Shell, BP, British Gas and other predators; the names of the businesses pulling the strings of the food industry - Cargill, Louis Dreyfus etc, are less well-known, and much less scrutinised.

“It's surprising in a way, because I think that they're doing exactly the same thing as the fossil fuel corporations,” said Nick Dearden, director of NGO Global Justice Now, “You've got a bunch of corporations that are growing more and more and more powerful all the time, gaining more control over different aspects of the food system and massively profiteering.”

According to the Oxfam report *Profiting from Pain*, food billionaires have seen their collective wealth grow by an estimated 45 per cent over the past two years - a total of £328 billion added to their profits. In the same years, 62 new billionaires were created as companies inflated their profits by capitalising on the COVID pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis.

In *Mapping Corporate Power in Big Food*,

the ETC Group identified “just four to six” dominant firms that control every aspect of the food industry, from agriculture machinery to animal pharmaceuticals.

Cargill is owned by the 11th richest family in the world and one of the world's largest private companies. In 2017, according to Oxfam, the company was reported among the four oligarchs controlling over 70% of the global market for agricultural commodities. Since 2020, the Cargill family's collective wealth has grown by 65%, with four members joining the Forbes list of the richest 500 people in the world.

Cargill's competitor Louis Dreyfus PARIS reported a 44% jump in net profit in 2022.

Nick Dearden sums it up nicely: the food industry is “in a tiny number of hands and effectively controlled on the basis of how much profit those companies can make rather than preventing people from being hungry.”

We need to understand how this market works so we can argue against people that blame inflation on ‘natural causes’ beyond human agency, and the idiots who blame it on workers trying to secure pay increases that prevent them from sinking further into debt-ridden poverty. We also need to understand that, if we want real change and to take control of the commanding heights of the economy, the power of these global giants must be broken and the entirety of the food production and distribution network needs to be transformed; this is also fundamental to saving the environment.

Diesel's fast and furious profits

Even though we've focused on foodstuffs, no analysis of inflation would be complete without a note on fuel profiteering. RAC analysis shows that retailers, including supermarkets, have quickened the pace of cutting the price of diesel since the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) expressed concern about weakening competition in the market.

Since 15 May, when the CMA issued its road fuel market study update saying average supermarket margins in 2022 had increased compared to 2019, the average price of a litre of diesel at supermarkets fell by 7.44p, from 151.02p to 143.58p. They did this to look better and appear more reasonable in the face of further CMA investigation, and hopefully exposure of their naked profiteering.

The RAC points out that the prices can still fall, and that average retailer margin on diesel had reached 22p a litre – more than three times the long-term average of 7p.

This hiking up of the price of diesel has a knock-on effect and exacerbates price pressures in the rest of the economy; combined with the increased price of food provoked by the rapine of monopoly capitalism, this cause wholesale misery. 30 million people in the UK will be unable to afford what the public considers to be a decent standard of living by the time the current parliament ends in 2024, according to a study by the New Economics Foundation: this will be due to rising prices, below-inflation increases in earnings and projected increases in unemployment. 43% of households will lack the resources to put food on the table, buy new clothes or treat themselves and their families – a 12 percentage point rise compared with 2019.

The idea that companies pursuit of profit maximisation will work to the greater benefit of all by means of an invisible hand is one of the stupidest and most dishonest in history. As the heading on this page shows Marx had it right about the way capitalism really works.

Sources:

tinyurl.com/muc93xre; tinyurl.com/2sw7k4jt; tinyurl.com/3erecetj; tinyurl.com/y4c8rbc4; tinyurl.com/y7kxvdsd; tinyurl.com/487zhnvv; tinyurl.com/mr242uca; tinyurl.com/473jvcsd; tinyurl.com/2zfb666f; tinyurl.com/yc5n5ddr

England's local elections analysed



Andy Chaffer

LOCAL ELECTIONS

VOTERS IN THE May English local elections rejected the Conservative central government's policies to let profits rip while cutting people's living standards and public services.

The Tory vote collapsed in many areas, while the Liberal Democrats and the Greens together made more gains in terms of votes and councils than did the Labour Party.

Labour's share of the poll stayed stagnant at around 35 per cent compared with the last set of local elections in 2019 even though the Conservative vote has slumped from that figure to just 26 per cent.

The biggest winner at the polls in May was the stay-away party. Two-thirds of electors again abstained from voting.

There are three major reasons: the removal of powers and resources from local government since 1979; the lack of convincing alternative policies from the non-Tory parties; and the impact of new voter ID rules which discriminate against younger people.

Keir Starmer's Labour Party has no real solutions to the cost-of-capitalism crisis gripping millions of people across Britain, while the LibDems in particular and even Green Party leaderships have been shallow and unprincipled in their scramble for votes.

Only the Single Transferable Vote system in multi-seat constituencies – and not ‘first past

the post’ or tactical voting – could ensure a fair representation of people's real views.

The Communist Party executive committee congratulated its own candidates, agents and campaigners for taking a socialist message to scores of thousands of homes. They won between one and seven per cent of the votes on a programme of more investment in council housing, education and public transport; reversal of privatisation in health and other local services; public ownership of the energy sector; a fundamental redistribution of wealth; and solidarity with striking workers.

ANDY CHAFFER IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S NATIONAL ELECTION AGENT.



GENERAL STRIKE BETRAYED

The British general strike is not only the greatest revolutionary advance in Britain since the days of Chartism, and the sure prelude of the new revolutionary era, but its very defeat is a profound revolutionary lesson and stimulus.

R Palme Dutt writing in *The Communist International* June 1926



Harry Pollitt's speech from the dock

In November 1925 the rising young boilermaker's leader Harry Pollitt – along with other members of the newly-formed Communist Party – were charged with conspiring to publish seditious libels and incite mutiny.

Les Docherty shows how the ruling class prepared for the 1926 General Strike by imprisoning the communist leaders

'Believe me, members of the jury, this cause to which we belong, this party, this Communist International of which I am an accepted member, and proud to acknowledge the fact, is now a permanent factor of political life; that the ideas for which we are to be convicted here are the ideals which have inspired and will inspire more and more in the future, millions of the very best working class.'

WHAT WAS IT that prompted the government to take on the communists and jail their leadership at this particular time?

The working class movement was between a series of massive post-war strikes and the looming coal crisis which would lead to the 1926 General Strike.

Essentially there were two trigger points that led to the trial.

Firstly, at its 1924 Liverpool conference the Labour Party decided to exclude communists from membership whilst imposing a whole series of rules and regulations that disrupted working class unity by forbidding Labour organisations – under any circumstance – to have anything to do with the communists.

In the run up to that decision the Communist Party made systematic efforts to secure an understanding with the Labour Party not just on repeated efforts to secure re-affiliation but in suggestions and proposals for united action and cooperation across all the major political issues and crises at that time.

The Communist Party had been formed in 1920 by uniting several socialist and working class organisations with its main



component the British Socialist Party which was one of the founding organisations of the Labour Party. Many people were joint members of both the Labour and Communist Parties.

The objections of the labour leadership were 'That communism meant civil war, bloodshed and violence', 'Communism was a product of Asiatic minds, and was foreign to Western European socialist ideas of peaceful progress towards socialism'. That, 'Britain was different, and here the peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism is so sure, that its achievements should not be 'retarded' by frightening the electorate through any association with the Communist Party.

On seeing the attack on the communists the Conservative government thought the party was isolated and unpopular, and had been disowned. It calculated that this was the time to attack the party, anticipating that the rest of the labour movement would not come to its defence.

This was an error of judgement and didn't take account of high regard in which Pollitt and his comrades were held as demonstrated by the way in which all sections of the movement rallied to the



defence of the imprisoned and responded to requests to act as bail.

The second trigger point was that the Tory government were in difficulties as a result of the mining crisis of 1924 when they were compelled to make a settlement following the threat of direct action by the trade unions. The Communist Party was the only party to put forward the doctrine of united action, and because the government did not feel strong enough to attack the trade unions head on, they came for communist leaders.

At the Conservative party conference (after Labour's Liverpool conference) the hardliners taxed their leaders – the resolution is on record – that an attack needed to be made on the communists.

Does this remind you of anything today? Can you see the parallels? Weak Labour leadership, a purge of militant forces coupled with a free hit on the working class by the Tories.

When Pollitt led the defence against charges of sedition and mutiny he went to great length to explain to the jury how no crime had been committed but that what was on trial was a political idea.

He said the law under which they were in the dock was over 100 years old, enacted to respond to a naval mutiny.

To Pollitt, the great hypocrisy of the prosecution was that the State was compelled to call on an outdated law as a justification for protecting modern democracy!

Much of the prosecution's case was built on the 'Statutes of the Communist International' which were presented as key evidence in the trial. Pollitt, with an eye to a broad working class audience, went into fine detail to dismantle the prosecution case and show the clear contradictions in their arguments. His

opening remarks concluded by pointing out: 'That it was in London in 1864 where the first International Association of Workers was established, not Moscow, but the capital of Great Britain'.

Stating that the ideas were not the direct work of one or two secret conspirators in Moscow or in the hands of one or two people in Britain but rather expressed 'historical principles born out of social and economic development over 200 years.'

Pollitt also had to deal with accusations of how communists are organised for class struggle. He told the jury directly: 'Those members of our party who are organised in trade unions, trades councils, Labour parties, are organised for activity. We believe we cannot be a political party unless it is organised to carry out its point of view. Therefore, instead of our members in Manchester saying one thing, and the members in Glasgow saying another, we organise them so that their activity takes the same direction.'

A key tactic of the prosecution aimed at generating fear in public opinion by claiming that communists did not believe in peaceful persuasion and were a threat to democracy.

Pollitt, again countered this by explaining the nature of capitalism, the Marxist concept of historical materialism and he outlined the party's duty to the working class in showing the lessons of history.

He argued that inequality, unemployment, the imperial competition for power and territories, the predatory nature of the banking institutes, the role of the press and the privileges of the ruling class were the real scourge on humanity's development.

His defence speech lasted four hours,



A NEW WORLD ORDER

It is important that BRICS countries support each other on issues concerning core interests, practice true multilateralism, safeguard justice, fairness and solidarity and reject hegemony, bullying and division
Chinese President Xi Jinping at the BRICS summit 2022

and Pollitt's own words in his closing summary for the defence are clear.

"It has been suggested by innuendo this is only for a 'material motive'. Members of the jury, nothing that Lenin wrote, or Trotsky said, or Marx ever found in the British Museum made a communist: it was the conditions under which we lived. When I see it suggested that we stand here accused of uttering seditious libel calculated to bring, I think it is, 'Ill will, hostility and hatred and dissatisfaction' amongst the various classes, members of the jury, you will pardon me if I say that is not seditious libel at all. I saw the best woman in the world carry two children out, morning after morning, while I went out looking for work, that, made me a communist.

"It was the experience that all of us in this dock have gone through and had, which made us devote our lives to working in the cause which we believe in.

"Our ideas may be distasteful to you, they may be repulsive to you, but they are our ideals, and it is these ideas which are on trial.

"Remember while you are endeavouring to arrive at your verdict what was the nature and circumstances of the Act of 1797 under which you are trying us? Believe me, members of the jury, this cause to which we belong, this party, this Communist International of which I am an accepted member, and proud to acknowledge the fact, is now a permanent factor of political life; that the ideas for which we are to be convicted here are the ideals which have inspired and will inspire more and more in the future, millions of the very best working class. Moreover, all over the world human bliss is only possible as the result of the work of a new master.

"We are looked upon as the vanguard of the working class movement. Progress can be hindered and can be retarded, but it can never be stopped. Communism today is a general political issue which cannot be wiped out by political theory, by persecution or repression.

"I confidently ask you, members of the jury to return a verdict of Not Guilty."

Harry Pollitt served twelve months in Wandsworth jail and went on to provide outstanding leadership to the working class through a crucial stage of our history.

Picture top left shows communists in the North West preparing their annual commemoration to mark the contribution of the Communist Party's first general secretary, Harry Pollitt pictured. The event took place at the memorial plaque at Pollitt's birth place in Droylsden, Manchester. Above right. General Strike rally in Hyde Park

LES DOHERTY IS SECRETARY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S NORTH WEST DISTRICT



Turning point

In this piece reproduced from our sister paper *Socialist Voice*, published by the Communist Party of Ireland. Tommy Kearney takes a long look at the role of China in a world in economic crisis and a changing balance of forces.

Tommy McKearney
GLOBAL SHIFT

OVER THE past few months the public, or at least a section of it, has been watching with interest the trials and tribulations of two high-profile political demagogues. We refer, of course, to the arraignment of Donald Trump and the British House of Commons voting to censure Boris Johnson.

Yet in spite of what appeared to be damning indictments against both men, they have not been completely ostracised. Mainstream conservatives in both the United States and Britain have deliberately avoided outright condemnation of their actions. It is important to analyse the reason for this reluctance, as it casts a light on significant developments internationally.

The capitalist ruling class, led from the United States and embedded in Western Europe, has had more than two centuries to perfect techniques for retaining power. For the most part, they prefer to create the appearance of governing by consensus. They do, after all, control the means of production, giving them enormous influence over employment, thereby facilitating the divide-and-rule strategy used to split working-class communities.

Moreover, ownership of the mass media allows for the creation of a self-justifying narrative. Granting the people a vote every few years lends the appearance of legitimacy to all of this.

Yet since capitalism is crisis-prone, its masters always want to have options if and when the desired equilibrium is upended. At the extreme this means a resort to fascism. Before crossing that particular Rubicon, however, they prefer the option of employing demagoguery, now known as populism. The objective is to bamboozle a critical number

among the disenchanted and disadvantaged into supporting right-wing governments, even more so to endorse reactionary policies at home and abroad.

Global capitalism is at present experiencing just such a crisis. Unwilling to prevent price-gouging profit-making by private enterprise, the United States, the European Union and Britain are all, to a greater or lesser extent, experiencing persistent inflation. As a consequence, working-class people everywhere experience hardship. On the one hand they suffer as a result of the ever-rising cost of living; workers further suffer, as economic recession is deliberately induced by central bankers employing the blunt expedient of raising interest rates.

In the process it becomes clear that the free-market system is again faced with major problems. Worse still from capitalism's point of view is the presence of a viable alternative in the east, that is, the People's Republic of China.

The influence of China on the global stage is growing almost daily, both in its diplomatic clout and its economic prowess. Reflect for a moment on some of its recent achievements. Most notable was sponsoring an accord between Iran and Saudi Arabia—two major Middle Eastern countries that the United States had managed to keep at odds for years, and now the Chinese-inspired détente has potentially altered the balance of power in the region.

There was also the visit in April of the president of Brazil, Lula da Silva, on a state visit for talks with Xi Jinping, after which Lula criticised the United States for prolonging the war in Ukraine.

Then last year, at a meeting between Chinese diplomats and senior government ministers from several African states, including South Africa, a motion was endorsed reaffirming the One China position in relation to Taiwan.

By any reading of world politics, it is easy to recognise the significance of all this. China has now become a leading influence in three of the world's most important regions, and has done so without the use of military expansionism—a strategy that has avoided bloodshed, and therefore done without antagonising whole populations.

While undoubtedly of grave concern to imperialism's strategists, it is perhaps the Chinese economic model that is causing them the greatest worry. In a little over two decades China has become an industrial powerhouse, producing 18 per cent of global GDP, compared with 12 per cent for the United States.¹ It's not surprising, therefore, that this performance is sustained by one of the developed world's best rates of return on investment.² Moreover, China is also one of the world's chief creditors, providing capital for infrastructure and industrial projects to 148 countries. Equally significant is the fact, as recorded by the World Bank, that over the past four decades poverty has been eradicated in People's China.³

Therefore, it is not just the growing diplomatic influence enjoyed by China that is alarming capitalist super-powers: a deeper concern is that the Communist Party of China has overseen the development of an economic template that is much more successful than that promoted by free-marketeters. For Western capitalism, this raises a disturbing scenario. They fear that, faced with periodic economic recessions, distressed working-class communities will demand the adoption of the Chinese economic model.

Confronted by the spectre of successful "socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era," the response of Western capitalism has been predictable. Widespread and unrelenting hostility towards China is now the order of the day as the groundwork is being prepared for a new Cold War. An era of McCarthy-like paranoia is being generated by insinuating the existence of an all-pervasive Chinese espionage capacity. Huawei, Tiktok and Wechat, for example, are deemed capable of monitoring the every movement and the correspondence of those using their technology.

Consequently, Washington, London and Brussels are co-ordinating efforts to contain China's so-called ambition to expand its orbit. Whatever other differences exist between them, they are in agreement on this issue. Moreover, such is the degree of consensus over the entire gamut of capitalism's apologists that erstwhile political opponents find common ground on this issue. Donald Trump's hostility towards China is matched, if not outdone, by that of Joe Biden. By the same token, there is no criticism of China emanating from Boris Johnson that Rishi Sunak does not share.

Hence the constructive ambiguity employed by much of the establishment on both sides of the Atlantic in relation to the two loud-mouthed demagogues. They are viewed as an "ace in the hole" to be introduced if required to once again mislead sections of the working class.

There is a lesson in this for the left. The capitalist ruling class and its political front-people are deeply conscious of the possibility, indeed probability, that we are experiencing a transformative period in world history. Whatever view we took in the past about the Chinese path to socialism, it is incumbent upon us now to give adequate consideration to developments in that amazing country where the East is still glowing red.

- 1 World Economics, "China's share of global GDP" (tinyurl.com/375xrkj2).
- 2 John Ross, "Why China's socialist economy is more efficient than capitalism," *MR Online* tinyurl.com/yuuu2syp
- 3 World Bank, "Lifting 800 million people out of poverty: New report looks at lessons from China's experience" (tinyurl.com/mr2wuduf).

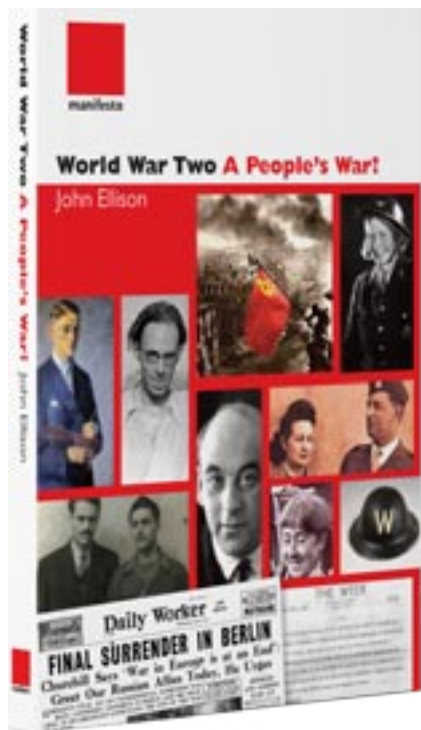


EVENTS & IDEAS & ACTION

“I believe solely and absolutely in Communism. If there is no place for the Communists in the Labour Party, there is no place for the Right Wingers. I believe in strikes. They are the only weapon”.

AJ Cook Secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain speaking in 1924

New from Manifesto Press



John Ellison interrogates diverse accounts of World War Two to bring out the inadequacies in various mainstream historical narratives, in which imperial and anti-communist motives underlying war policies of French and British governments lie mainly hidden.

He asks the question: ‘How much was the war fought for the interests of the ruling elites of the Western Allied Powers against the expansionist ambitions of Nazi Germany, Mussolini’s Italy, and militarist Japan; and how much of it was fought for the benefit of the mass of the peoples threatened by that aggression and by the military occupations that went with it?’

The front cover images of various anti-fascists represent the millions of those committed in the struggle to radical post-war change. This study highlights the significance too of the struggle for independence on the part of the people of colonial India, while the war’s consequences and follow-ups offer connections to today’s dangerous return of war in Europe.



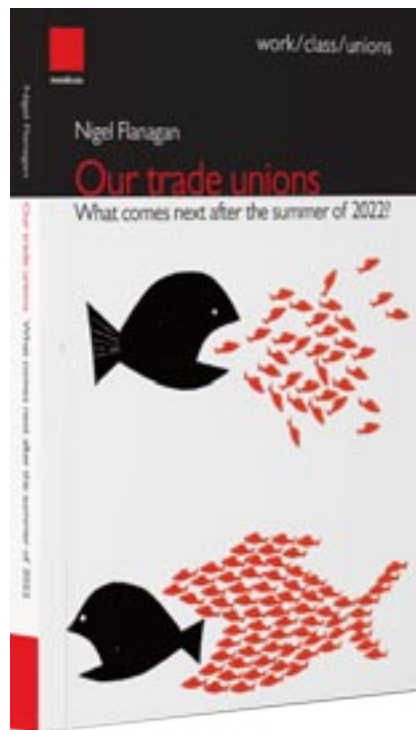
Tom Mann, Britain’s pioneering trade union leader, exemplary internationalist and the leading socialist working class leader for several generations is the subject of Phil Katz’s study, *All for the Revolution*.

The breadth of his contribution to the development of the working class movement as a whole is summed up in his memorable phrase: “I am not afraid of the terms, Socialist, Spartacist, Bolshevist or Syndicalist. I know that in essence these all mean the thorough application of the principle of true cooperation, and I unmistakably stand for cooperation and the wiping out of the capitalist system.”

Mann’s theory of socialism and class organisation was forged in the fiercest and most decisive union battles, extending over a fifty year period.

All for the Revolution helps us understand today’s tumultuous union battles.

Lavishly illustrated with many historical images and with new drawings the book is designed and produced by the Corata design group working with Manifesto Press.



The hot summer of 2022 anticipated an even hotter 2023. Railworkers, post and telecom staff, train drivers, teachers, health workers, higher education staff all took their place in a wave of strike ballots and – unprecedented in years – a real strike wave.

What is distinctive about this phase of union action are the massive ballot majorities which speak to anger at runaway inflation, fantastical energy prices and rising rents but also to waves of human solidarity.

When picket lines are universally respected, when the police sense that imposing the legal limit of six ‘official’ pickets is a nonsense, when each picket line is greeted by a cacophony of car horns and cheers and the public sees in the militant action of strikers the embryo of their own urge to action. Employers and government have cause to think again. Union leaders become media stars and their utterances dominate social media.

Our trade unions, what comes next after the summer of 2022 is a Manifesto Press best seller now on its 6th printing.

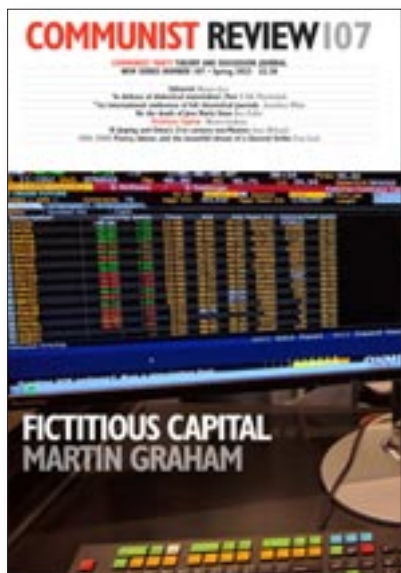


EDUCATION FOR TOMORROW now available in print and e pub at <https://www.manifestopress.coop>

TROUBLEMAKERS CONFERENCE
Saturday 29 July Friends Meeting House, Manchester
The conference includes a session on ‘Organising Solidarity with strikes.’ CWU activist and East of England CP industrial organiser Darren Turner. <https://troublemakersat.work/tickets>. Follow @Troublem8kers on Twitter.

SOLIDARITY WITH SUDAN ONLINE Q&A
Wednesday 12 July 6.30pm
Amira Osman, progressive Sudanese activist; Rashid Elsheikh, Sudanese Communist Party; Marc Botenga MEP, Workers’ Party of Belgium; Jeremy Corbyn MP, Liberation joint president, Founder of Peace & Justice Project. Chaired by Gawain Little, general secretary General Federation of Trade Unions. <https://tinyurl.com/2jr5mtaf>

BRISTOL, GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND BATH ONLINE MEETING ON THE ENVIRONMENT
Wednesday 12 July 7pm with Simon Meddick Communist Party alongside Sarah Lunnon of Just Stop Oil. This wide ranging discussion will look at measures to combat climate change and the loss of biodiversity. Register: <https://tinyurl.com/4z9hu7ta>



COMMUNIST REVIEW 107 THEORY AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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international bulletin

ISRAELI GOVERNMENT IS HOSTAGE TO ULTRA-RIGHT SETTLERS.



▲ Palestinians against occupation soldiers in Jenin, Monday, June 19, 2023 Wafa picture

The heavily-armed soldier fired live ammunition, stun grenades and tear gas canisters, as an army armored bulldozer destroyed a water carrier pipeline supplying water to al-Jabiriyat neighborhood and caused a large power blackout. The Israeli troops, according to Wafa correspondent, broke into the family house of Mus'ab al-Barmaki and used the family members as human shields, before detaining two Palestinians.

Robert Wilkinson
ISRAEL

SINCE THE reinstatement of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister last November, his desperation to avoid prosecution for bribery, fraud and breach of trust in the courts has resulted in his government becoming hostage to the demands of the extreme right-wing settler party of Religious Zionists.

The latest controversy centres around the passage of a pro-settler budget that obtained a majority in the Knesset (Israeli Parliament). In last minute negotiations the extreme pro-settler parties were granted tens of millions of dollars. \$68 million was allocated to the

racist Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Strength) party for settler development in the Negev and Galilee. The minister of finance, Bezale Smotrich, leader of the Religious Zionist Party, a settler himself, said that he hoped to double the number of Occupied Territory settlers in the near future. Already over 450,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank excluding East Jerusalem, with an additional 220,000 Jewish settlers residing in East Jerusalem. Additionally, over 25,000 Israeli settlers live in the Golan Heights seized from Syria in 1967.

The budget also included additional funding for Ultra-Orthodox schools. Leaders of the demonstrations against the budget that took place near the Knesset

building accused the government of looting state funds. They said that 'After looting citizens' tax money and bribing his coalition partners, Netanyahu is admitting his plot to continue dragging Israel toward a dangerous messianic dictatorship'.

The successful passing of the state budget will restart Netanyahu's push to overhaul the judicial system despite unprecedented opposition within Israel and increasing disquiet amongst Jewish communities abroad. Joel Rosen, president of Jewish Students in the British Isles, reported that he was surprised how little negative comment resulted from his 'particularly strong condemnation' of the Israeli government. The Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* commented that an 'irrevocable, too often overlooked shift has accelerated as fanatics in Israel speak in the name of world Jewry'.

A series of bills is being prepared for Knesset approval that would advance the annexation of areas of the West Bank and restrict academic freedom in Israeli universities.

Large demonstrations against the judicial 'reforms' have now been supported by those opposed to the occupation of Palestinian territories. The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (Hadash) and the Communist Party of Israel (CPI) have been joined by a range of human rights organisations. Anjad Shbita, secretary general of Hadash, said that 'the final goal of the regime coup is annexing the occupied territories...It is impossible to separate the struggles and fight for democracy in Israel without fighting for ending the military rule over the millions of Palestinians who live in the

territories, which has been ongoing for 56 years.'

Despite a string of arrests and police violence the protests in Israel continue in an increasing number of locations. Demonstrations against the far-Right Netanyahu regime also took place in New York when government ministers attended the annual 'Celebrate Israel Parade'.

The deteriorating situation regarding crime in Arab communities in Israeli towns was the subject of a rally led by current and former MKs (Members of the Knesset) and municipal and trade union representatives. Over 90 Arabs have been killed since the beginning of the year and the protest accused the police of being 'complicit' in the murders. Mohammad Barakeh, leading CPI activist said that 'crime in Arab society is the result of a deliberate policy, designed to divert attention from political and national issues and focus it on personal security.' Racist police commissioner Kobi Shabtai was recorded in conversation with national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir as saying 'nothing can be done. They murder each other. It's their nature. It's the mentality of the Arabs.'

Following a meeting of a deputation from Hadash and Arab Party Ta'al with the prime minister, Ahmad Tibi (Ta'al) said that 'Crime is running rampant like a cancer that threatens to destroy our society.' Ofer Cassif (Hadash) added that 'the burden of proof is on the government, and especially on the pPrime minister.'

ROBERT WILKINSON IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S MIDDLE EAST GROUP

AUGUST ELECTIONS THREATEN US REGIONAL ALLY

Jon Hailley
ECUADOR

LASSO CAME to the presidency of Ecuador in February 2021 in a surprise win over the candidate for the *correista* Citizens' Revolution Movement (RC). Throughout Rafael Correa's three terms as president, from 2007-2017, Ecuadorians endorsed his anti-imperialist stance and his social reforms, and when the time came, they voted for his successor, Lenín Moreno.

Almost immediately, Moreno showed he was in the thrall of Washington and was willing to betray his mandate. Julian Assange was handed over to British police, and a military agreement was made with the US to allow the use of runways in the Galápagos Islands. IMF loans were agreed, austerity imposed, and the strikes and protests which followed were met with brutality.

Lasso has continued this trend and in the two years of his presidency, Ecuador has

experienced a significant spike in emigration, well-reported prison massacres - exposed by human rights organisations as due to under-funding, over-crowding, and inadequate crime prevention policies - and a surge in violent crime, with murder rates leaping a whopping 82.5% in the period 2021-2. In those same two years, Ecuador has registered the highest inflation of the decade, and seen a lurch towards employment insecurity.

These policies inevitably led to confrontation, and on 13 June 2022 a national strike was called by the CONAIE, the largest indigenous organisation in Ecuador, calling for significant changes to the Executive's policies including improved employment opportunities, an end to privatisation of sovereign assets, investment in health and education, and action to curb the violent crime and drug trafficking. In the turmoil which followed, police repression included the use of incendiaries against

students and strikers' vehicles. Six protesters were killed, dozens injured, and many more detained. In June, after two weeks of the strike and protests, Lasso narrowly survived an impeachment vote and managed to hang on until the end of October when a deal with the CONAIE to end the strike was made.

After information broke in January 2023 with allegations of corruption in Lasso's presidential campaign and of his links with narco-trafficking, the National Assembly again instigated impeachment proceedings and when they voted to continue this process on the 9 May, Lasso issued the Cross Death decree, the Muerte Cruzada clause in the constitution which allows a president to rule 'by decree' until elections are held for both a new Assembly and new Presidency.

During this time, in February, Ecuador held local elections alongside a plebiscite on eight constitutional reforms proposed by the neo-liberal Lasso. In the constitutional

referendum, all eight proposed reforms were rejected and in the local elections Lasso's party was heavily defeated, with Rafael Correa's Citizens' Revolution Movement making gains in almost every key ballot, including the mayorships of both Quito and Guayaquil. Guayaquil, the nation's economic centre, had been a stronghold of the right for many years.

The snap elections have tentatively been announced for 20 August and Lasso, whose approval rating had dropped to around 12% before he dissolved the Assembly, has announced that he will not be running for President.

It remains to be seen who will be the final contestants for the Presidency, but we can certainly expect a strong showing for the Citizens' Revolution Movement in the votes for both branches of government.

JON HAILLEY IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S AMERICAS GROUP



SOLIDARITY & STRUGGLE

The (right wing) PP opposed the labour reform, which it now recognizes as “substantially good.” So why did they vote against it? Because the right despises the workers and the workers. Hopefully those who have come out of job insecurity will not forget it when voting **Enrique Santiago** Secretary General Communist Party of Spain



SPANISH LEFT FINDS A FRAGILE UNITY

Alan McGuire
SPAIN

SPAIN WAS SHOCKED and the left caught off guard when, on 28 May, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez (PSOE, Spanish Socialist Workers Party) called a general election for the end of July, moving it forward from the expected December date.

Inter-party pressures, a demotivated left electorate and a divided radical left were his reasons following a series of disappointing local and regional elections.

Parties to the left of the PSOE have multiplied in the last 12 years (and they are not Trotskyists!). Following 15-M you had the arrival of Podemos, a split from the world around Izquierda Unida (the electoral group of which the Spanish Communist Party PCE is a part). Later we had Mas Madrid, a split from Podemos, and then all the regional and local parties that have been around for various times.

This was all held together by the charismatic leadership of Pablo Iglesias, leader of Podemos and bogeyman of the right. Unidas Podemos was the name of the coalition between Izquierda Unida and Podemos, they entered the coalition government with PSOE in 2019 taking various ministries like equality, labour, social rights, and consumption. Pablo Iglesias stood down in 2021 to fight a snap regional election in Madrid. Having done this, he handed over the leadership to Spanish communist and labour minister Yolanda Diaz above with Iglesias, making her deputy prime minister and default leader of the group. Both his and her idea on how to manage the future of the space were different with her launching her own platform called Sumar (Unity). Over the past 18 months, there have been many very public arguments between those

supportive of the Sumar platform and of Podemos. This has resulted in disputes and splits at the national and local levels. With Podemos refusing to give up their hegemonic left position, despite a series of bad results in isolated regional elections, they had dug into their trenches whilst Sumar barely responded. This is on top of a very antagonistic Equality ministry that has passed several misunderstood and poorly communicated laws, Podemos has not been in a good position and the leadership has refused to listen to large sections of their support that wanted to be part of Sumar. That said, of the 15 parties that are part of Sumar, Podemos have the largest number of possible seats (11 of an estimated 35) and 26% of the funding.

Sumar’s aim is to be a platform to bring together the parties to the left of the PSOE, because going separately hurts them under Spain’s proportional representation system when it comes to the distribution of seats. As there are only a few seats difference between a left-wing coalition or a far-right coalition, uniting the left parties in a coalition is an electoral necessity. But it’s not just about the seats, the result of the most recent local elections have shown that the left-wing in-fighting over the last 18 months has harmed Podemos more than anyone else. The PSOE’s vote share held, and in places where Izquierda Unida went alone, it fared well. The need to present a united front along with a less divisive and populist style of politics has been recognised by some sooner than others.

Sumar’s style of politics is very different to the style of the last 12 years, and entering a new electoral cycle, it is clear that the left-populist style of the *indignados* era is dead. Now Sumar presents itself as less identitarian without falling into traps and is framing itself as more of a working class orientated

labourist-styled platform with European green characteristics. With Yolanda’s background as a labour lawyer/minister and deputy prime minister, good connections with the largest two unions CCOO and UGT, the support of a number of old Podemos deputies that never fell victim to the in-fighting and an emphasis on more professional materialist politics, Sumar is hoping to make Yolanda Diaz the first female prime minister of Spain.

Being sworn in weeks before the Covid-19 quarantine, the right has been using every technique possible to discredit the left-wing coalition government, taking a lot of methods from the Latin American right such as lawfare. If the right-wing Popular Party and far-right Vox win enough seats to form a government, then we will see the first return of the far right since the death of Franco in 1975.

By forming coalitions at both regional and local levels they have abolished posts in local administrations relating to anything that appears ‘progressive’, even going as far as banning the Pride flag and removing bike lanes!

There is no doubt that a PP/Vox coalition would threaten to repeal laws relating to women’s rights, LGBTQ, climate change, labour gains and migration; and it will bolster support for the various reactionary parts of the security forces and the army, whilst straining ties between the Basque country, Catalonia and the national government. Just as the US reactionary right was empowered to commit hate crimes after the win of Donald Trump, the same could be happening in Spain later this year.

ALAN MCGUIRE IS A MEMBER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY EUROPE GROUP AND A PCE MEMBER IN LEGANES

‘Wars between capitalist states are, as a rule, the outcome of their competition on the world market, for each state seeks not only to secure its existing markets, but also to conquer new ones. In this, the subjugation of foreign peoples and countries plays a prominent role. These wars result furthermore from the incessant race for armaments by militarism, one of the chief instruments of bourgeois class rule and of the economic and political subjugation of the working class.’

Resolution by **Lenin & Rosa Luxemburg** at the Socialist International Stuttgart 1907



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