

# Organise!



## OPEN LETTER TO THE NOVEMBER 2023 CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN

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Dear comrades, we congratulate you on the occasion of your 2023 congress and send greetings to all delegates, who are tasked with navigating the way forward for your organisation in these turbulent times. As Mao Zedong said: “Everything under heaven is in utter chaos – the situation is excellent.”

Nato’s failing war on Russia fought with its Banderite fascist proxies in Ukraine; the conflagration in the middle east sparked by the heroic Palestinian resistance; the wave of revolutions across the Sahel, in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in particular; the strong and ongoing resistance of popular socialist Bolivarian and progressive governments in Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Mexico and across Latin America; and the steadfast struggle of socialist China, DPRK and Cuba, Laos and Vietnam, as well as the steady rise of the Brics nations and China’s Belt and Road initiative, are shaking the foundations of US-led imperialist hegemony.

The global capitalist economic crisis and the deepening impoverishment of British workers herald a period of renewed struggle, and communists must make themselves fit to play a role in giving them robust, far-sighted and historically-rooted leadership.

After reactionary years when apparently ‘nothing happened’, we are entering months, weeks and days in which those years are embodied.

### **The future belongs to the working class – and to communism**

Today, Saturday 4 November, at 1.00pm, we will be holding a solemn meeting to commemorate the

106th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Bolivar Hall, Grafton Way. You are of course welcome to join us, and to hear the ambassadors of China, Venezuela, Cuba and DPR Korea, who will be speaking alongside comrades from the Donbass, south Korea, France and Britain.

As communists, we don’t need to tell you the importance we attach to this event, which shattered the “iron ring of imperialist ties”, as Lenin put it, and ushered in a new era, the era of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the era of working-class power and the overthrow of the despotic dictatorship of the finance capitalists whose rule is despoiling the earth.

We believe that despite the temporary reverses suffered by the revolutionary movement of the working class – consequent upon the victory of revisionism in the USSR, the Sino-Soviet split, the demise of the once glorious USSR and eastern European people’s democracies, and the 33 years of renewed imperialist wars against the workers and oppressed peoples that we have lived through – the inherent contradictions and perennial anarchy of imperialist economic and political relations are still driving the world in the direction of communism.

It is our job to hasten that journey, with Marxist-Leninist understanding, education and leadership.

### **Unity is strength**

This slogan of the trade union movement we take to be axiomatic. But it is axiomatic also – as Lenin documented throughout all the volumes of his works dealing with the first world war, the split in socialism,

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the rise of European opportunism and the bankruptcy of the Second International and social democracy (consequent upon its betrayal of the workers and sell-out to its own imperialist ruling class) – that the bourgeoisie goes to great lengths to divide, weaken and suborn the working class and its political movement.

### **The Labour party and the split in socialism**

Our characterisation of the Labour party is strikingly different from that of the CPB leadership. *It is this principal difference that separates our comrades from yours* – not any personal, historic or other petty individual or allegedly ‘sectarian’ concern. When we appraise Labour’s history (and please see our pamphlet Britain’s Perfidious Labour Party to examine our arguments and evidence in detail), it is clear that it remains what Lenin described more than a century ago as a “bourgeois labour party”.

Labour is *not* a part – let alone the core – of the working class’s struggle for social emancipation. Rather, it is the real conductor of bourgeois influence into the working class – a means of limiting, controlling, corrupting and frustrating all and every attempt to bring socialism to Britain.

### **Sir Keir Starmer’s Labour**

It is therefore particularly disappointing to see CPB leader Robert Griffiths write in his notes to this congress that his appraisal of Sir Keir Starmer’s entirely bourgeois Labour party remains that “A Labour victory at the next general election would be a better outcome than a Conservative victory, raising working-class morale and demands.” (‘Developing strategy and direction on the left’, Morning Star, 11 September 2023)

This Wednesday, at Chatham House, Keir Starmer called for *ongoing support for Israeli genocide in Gaza* – “with humanitarian [!] pauses”, if you please. He has supported the mass punishment and siege of 2.3 million Gazans, including cutting off their food, water, fuel and medicine. He has justified the bombing of hospitals, while saying it is not his job to “judge who is or isn’t committing war crimes” – unless, of course, they are Russians!

It would seem that neither 70 years of the decline of British communism (owing to the post-WW2 CPGB’s having trailed in the wake of an unheeding Labour party, following the edicts of its – and now your – British Road to Socialism programme) nor the rise and fall of the Corbyn project have taught your leaders anything about Labour’s true nature.

Comrades, you have a historic opportunity this weekend to discard your support for the Labour party and take the revolutionary road. We urge you to seize it with both hands, to vote against this resolution and discard this bankrupt policy.

### **Labour aristocracy**

Britain as the oldest imperialist country, having developed a monopoly on manufacture and conquered colonies all over the world, was able to bribe its own working-class leadership. This was noted by Marx and Engels, who referred to the tame labour leaders and the upper stratum of privileged workers as the “labour aristocracy”. As a result, Lenin urged communists to go “lower and deeper” to the mass of poorest, most disenfranchised, most revolutionary workers, in order to find the real supporters of socialism.

The Labour party, from its origin, was the vehicle of the most privileged section of the British working class and has bound itself hand and foot to British Imperialism. Through all the key struggles of the working class,

### **Labour stood with the monopoly capitalists**

At its very formation, Labour rejected class struggle, opting for ‘parliamentary representation’ – begging the ruling class for crumbs. During WW1, it tried to suspend all class struggle – against opposition from John Maclean and the Clydeside shop stewards, amongst others. Arthur Henderson’s Labour party stood with the warmongering colonial imperialist class, dripping in blood from head to foot, and recruited workers to the slaughter to defend the profits and colonies of British capital.

### **Labour’s colonialism**

Labour supported the continued colonisation of Ireland. When Easter Rising leader James Connolly,

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wounded and bleeding and propped on a chair, was executed in 1916, news of his death was greeted by Labour MPs with a standing ovation in Parliament.

Ramsay MacDonald's first Labour government supported the continued enslavement of India, the suppression of the revolutionary Ghadar party and the strangling of the Indian Communist party, as well as the hanging of Bhagat Singh, India's foremost revolutionary youth leader. MacDonald's government defended colonial possession of the Suez Canal, helped to establish Zionist settlement in Palestine, ordered the wholesale bombing and suppression of the Iraqi people in 1924 and conducted a naval bombardment against China.

Labour and the Fabians promoted the concept of the *inferiority of the working poor*, and of *European racial superiority* in general. They wanted it understood that they were the guardians of empire – with all its attendant horrors, racism and superexploitation of the colonial slaves.

### **Labour's anticommunism and suppression of British workers**

In 1917, Labour stood against the Bolsheviks and ever since has been the greatest bastion of anti-communism in Britain. In 1926, the TUC and Labour leadership collaborated to break the general strike – just as they would again in 1984 to break the heroic miners' strike. Throughout the great depression, Labour leaders joined governments of 'national unity', sending troops against strikes using the emergency powers legislation to force the most brutal austerity measures onto British workers.

It was no accident that the Labour party rejected all the advances of the young CPGB to affiliate – this refusal was vital to the ruling-class policy of wiping out independent action and leadership for the British working class. This policy has never changed. Labour launched a war upon every communist-led mass movement – the tenants' and unemployed workers' movements, the Anti-Imperialist League, Friends of Soviet Russia, the Minority Movement in the trade unions, and even the CPGB-led antifascist recruitment drive for the International Brigades, formed to defend republican Spain and fight Franco's fascist

forces.

### **Attlee's Labour party**

After WW2, the Attlee government formed the imperialist warmongering and anti-Soviet NATO 'alliance' (of which Keir Starmer is so proud), initiated a decade-long brutal colonial war in Malaya, and was active in its attempts to reinstall Dutch colonialism to Indonesia and the anticommunist pogroms that later resulted. Labour suppressed the 'Mau Mau' national-liberation struggle in Kenya, defending apartheid and placing Kenyan revolutionaries in concentration camps. Attlee's government helped to preserve Japanese fascist forces for use in controlling southeast Asia, facilitating with the US the reinstallation of its colonial police in south Korea, and actively participating in the genocidal Korean war, in which four million Koreans died, as well as reinstalling French colonialism in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

### **Blair's 'new' Labour party**

Tony Blair and Gordon Brown simply continued this long tradition when their governments crushed workers' rights, facilitated the transfer of wealth to the capitalists in the City of London, clamped down on the 'anti-social' working class, and accelerated the demolition of the NHS through privatisation measures. In the same proud tradition, they prosecuted their genocidal wars in Yugoslavia, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Iraq.

In 1997, Brown famously gave over control of macro-economic policy to the capitalists (Bank of England if you prefer), and in 2008, as prime minister, he bailed out the banks to the tune of £850bn, ushering in another era of brutal austerity in Britain and laying the foundations for the current cost of living crisis facing Britain's workers. He was and remains a consummate champion of Britain's colonial record, as he insultingly told the people of Africa on his continental tour.

Tony Blair is now 'back' and helping to install a very Blairite Keir Starmer, who has, like Blair, signed his pact with the Devil – in the form of Rupert Murdoch and the other representatives of Anglo-American imperialism. He will be our next prime minister, be-



cause the *political crisis* instituted by the corrupt and self-seeking Tories needs new window-dressing if the capitalist class is to remain in power. Not because Starmer's Labour offers any substantial change, and certainly no challenge to British monopoly capital.

If the best a 'communist strategy for the left' can offer is to support Labour as being "better than the Tories", then you may as well issue a certificate of the CPB's bankruptcy here and now. There is simply no point carrying on as a 'communist party' with such a policy. Shut up shop, disband and join Labour if this is really what you believe.

### **But there is another choice!**

Reject subservience to the trade union aristocracy

This is the essence of our significant *political* difference with the leading comrades of your party. We state our differences frankly, as communists must.

*We call upon you, CPB delegates, to reject Labour and change course.*

Vote against your central committee's 'political resolution', which is a shame-faced vote of support for Labour, and overturn the historically-discredited BRS programme! If you carry on down this road, you will consign yourselves and your comrades to years of futile activity and hold back your ability to contribute to the rapidly escalating struggles of the revolutionary movement in Britain and the wider world.

Lenin long ago wrote that "Social democracy has become a stinking corpse!" He was not playing with words, but giving a real political characterisation of the rottenness of this ideology, which has at every turn betrayed the workers and kept them languishing in wage-slavery and servitude to the capitalist class.

If the CPB proves unable to rise to this challenge, then others will most assuredly rise to the task as the CPB sinks into irrelevance. For those comrades who do not want to follow this futile trajectory, we welcome your cooperation, comradeship and help in building a true communist party in Britain.

***Join us!***