



## Fighting for communism

*- the future that works!*

**Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)**

### Who are the communists?

Not only do we need to campaign against the bad conditions and lack of prospects for working-class people in Britain today, but we need to work for a completely different type of society – one where people's needs decide everything.

So many problems face this world: environmental catastrophe, poverty, disease, racism and war. They'll never be solved while capitalism remains, but they could all be sorted if society was set up for the benefit of the majority rather than the private gain of a few billionaires.

The Communists refuse to be intimidated by the barrage of lying propaganda that fills Britain's corporate media. It is the capitalists' job to try to stop us from building a socialist society; it is our job to do it anyway!

Our aim is to revive revolutionary Marxism and popularise it amongst the broadest possible sections of our class. Combining knowledge with disciplined organisation is the key to success in the fight against capitalism.

Our membership is youthful, while our leadership is experienced. We may be small, but we are growing. We welcome anyone who is serious and committed to working for a socialist future.

watch: [youtube.com/proletariancpgbml](https://www.youtube.com/proletariancpgbml) :: read: [thecommunists.org](https://www.thecommunists.org)

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**ULEZ:**  
**a green**  
**greed**  
**initiative**



**thecommunists.org**

The Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) was introduced in central London in April 2019 by London Mayor Sadiq Khan, and expanded in October 2021 to cover Central London between the North and South Circular roads. Khan intends to further expand the ULEZ to cover all of London by August 2023.

The stated aim was to reduce air pollution in London by penalising vehicles that don't meet emissions standards. Khan claimed that the ULEZ is "also about social justice", saying it would help "the most deprived parts of London".

Under the ULEZ scheme vehicles that don't meet emissions standards must pay a daily £12.50 fee to be driven through the zone, or £100 for buses and lorries. Surely if, as according to Khan, "toxic air is an invisible killer responsible for one of the biggest national health emergencies of our generation," these dangerously polluting vehicles should be banned entirely, rather than allowing whoever can afford it to drive through the zone in one?

And, if Khan really wanted to "not stand by and watch children grow up with under-developed lungs in our city", why allow vehicles that still pollute, only somewhat less? Is his aim to watch children grow up with slightly-less under-developed lungs? Hardly a heroic stand!

### Does the ULEZ work?

The reality is that air quality in London had been improving before the ULEZ was even dreamt of, and vehicle emissions standards keep increasing. The ULEZ is just one of the policies introduced to reduce pollution, but is it a necessary, or

even effective one?

Researchers from Imperial College London disagreed with its effectiveness in one paper, finding that only a minimal decrease in pollution occurred during the introduction of the ULEZ, countering claims from the Mayor that "there has been no single policy that's improved the air as much as the ULEZ" and that "we've managed to reduce toxic air by almost a half." In reality, other measures have had much greater effect, especially replacing the London bus fleet with less polluting vehicles.

It seems that Khan and the London Assembly are hell-bent on expanding ULEZ to cover the entirety of London, with the associated costs for cameras, signage, and systems to manage it all. But those costs will surely be quickly recouped, as the ULEZ brought in £226 million in fines in 2022!

### Who does the ULEZ hurt?

The Mayor is offering a car scrappage scheme to Londoners on benefits, sole traders, companies with less than 10 people, and registered charities. This means anyone earning just enough to get by, but not enough to go out and buy a ULEZ-compliant car, and any sole traders or small companies that are based outside of London but commute to the capital for work, are looking at an unaffordable expense.

The idea that the Mayor would try to push through the expansion of the ULEZ during a cost of living crisis seems more like madness than environmental concern. It's a move that will potentially take away

the ability of many people to commute around London and put people out of business.

For anyone ineligible for the scrappage scheme, TfL suggests a range of paltry discounts for private vehicle hire or purchase.

### What is the ULEZ really for?

It could be argued that the ULEZ is just one part of a wider environmental strategy to reduce pollution in the capital. But why does it shift the burden onto ordinary workers, forcing people to sell or scrap working vehicles and shell out for, or get into debt for, newer cars?

London is one of the most expensive cities in the whole of Europe for public transport, and one of the only cities in the world without public funding for the transport system. Combined with the drop in fares over the lockdowns, this means that TfL have been unable to plan any upgrades, and instead have been faced with cutting services, had it not been for a drip feed of emergency funding to keep it on life support.

This makes the entire ULEZ scheme seem like a punishment rather than a cure.

However it does do one thing very well - create more demand for vehicles. In 2019 the global car market was shrinking faster than it was in the last financial crisis in 2008, and April 2020 saw only 1000 new cars sold in the country. For the past decade, growth in car sales hovered around 0%. Naturally during a financial crisis, the people who are affected by it tend to spend less, keeping their cars for longer and buying older cars when they need to.

The ULEZ scheme creates artificial scarcity for cars, which car manufacturers are desperate for to keep sales, and therefore profits up. This 'environmental' scheme, then, means encouraging the growth in production of new cars, instead of maintaining the ones we have and only replacing them when necessary. Unfortunately producing a new car also produces around 720kg of pollution - per £1,000 spent. This means a new car that costs £25k produces 18 tons of carbon dioxide emissions - hardly a 'green' move.

### What should be done instead?

Rather than penalising a minority of drivers with older cars, people should be encouraged to use public transport by making it affordable, accessible, and more convenient to use. Any environmental schemes should focus on big companies (who have been posting record profits during the cost of living crisis!) to update their fleets of vehicles.

Unfortunately, much like the NHS and every other aspect of life in Britain, successive governments have shown that they are only interested in stealing from ordinary workers to give more and more to giant corporations.

The only way we can have a rational transportation system, one that works for people instead of against them, is if we own and manage it ourselves, rather than leaving it to politicians in the pockets of big businesses!