

Communist manifesto for the local council elections in 1995

The Communist Party of Great Britain is standing candidates in the local elections in Scotland and England. Our candidates have a very different message to the other parties. This is our election manifesto. It is a call to action for the working class throughout Britain. It is the only manifesto which begins to answer the needs of the working class. We should settle for nothing less. Vote communist and join the fight!

THE TORIES have been in power for sixteen long years. Sixteen years of attacks on the rights, living standards and democratic rights of millions of working people. Sixteen years of corruption and unmitigated disaster.

Industry continues to decay; Britain's spiral of decline goes on. Public services have been slashed to the bone. Privatisation, NHS trusts and deregulation have done nothing except line the pockets of the Tories' well placed friends. Life for the population as a whole has become more and more insecure. While the rich few have got vastly richer, mass poverty has returned and blights the lives of millions.

Workers have to work harder and longer. Recent figures show that workers in Britain work the longest hours in Europe - for one of the lowest standards of living. Unemployment, once dubbed a thing of the past, remains at an historic high. Most new jobs are badly paid or part time. Many who managed to increase their wages in the 1980s saw their dreams of home ownership turn into a nightmare in the 1990s. Caught in mortgage slavery, the threat of homelessness and slum-like temporary accommodation looms over them.

Cynically, the Tories have hyped draconian law and order campaigns. The new Criminal Justice Act is a savage attack on our democratic rights and hard won liberties. Despite the 'law and order' posturing of the Conservative government, anti-social behaviour and petty crime increases, marring the lives of ordinary people.

No wonder millions yearn to see change.

Neither Labour nor any of the other establishment parties can bring it. The problem in Britain is not just the Tories. Our real enemy is the capitalist system they and all the other establishment parties serve. It is a system of exploitation and greed - celebrated, defended and promoted as much by Tony Blair as by John Major. This is nothing new.

From Ramsay MacDonald to Jim Callaghan, from their first government to their last, Labour has been practically indistinguishable from the Tories. At home and abroad Labour was as loyal to capitalism and its interests as the Tories. Labour presided over brutal colonial oppression in India, Kenya, Malaya, Cyprus, Aden and Ireland, while at home this 'socialist' party broke strikes. As shown by its leadership's determination to ditch clause four, all that is different nowadays is that Labour does not even pretend to have anything to do with socialism. The Labour flag is no longer palest pink. It is

deepest blue. Tony Blair and his docile shadow cabinet are determined to embrace the same conservative prejudices as the Tories.

There is a crying need for a real political alternative. The Communist Party of Great Britain is that alternative.

The Communist Party is committed to the overthrow of capitalism and building socialism - the first step towards world communism. Socialism is a system of planned production based on the needs of the many, not the profits of the few. Real socialism was never about the bureaucratic monstrosity built by Stalin in the Soviet Union. Real socialism grows out of the needs and struggles of humanity the world over. Socialism means achieving global peace, global progress and global plenty. It means mass democracy and realising a society free from poverty, national hatred or racism. It means ending the crime of pollution and ecological destruction. It means using science and technology to liberate people, not to make them redundant. Socialism is the answer to the economic and social anarchy, wars and crises of capitalism.

While we are asking for your vote in this election, we say that we must have no illusions in capitalist 'democracy'. What does voting under this system amount to? Every few years we get a choice of who will carry through cuts, sack workers, impose taxes and generally misrepresent us in what passes for national, regional and local democracy.

So our Party does not pretend that elections change anything. They do not. The fact that from top to bottom the economy is dominated by the capitalist class is a thousand times more significant than any election. Nevertheless elections give us a good opportunity to test the strength of socialist ideas and present our politics to millions of people. That is why the Communist Party is standing in the local elections this year.

A vote for the Communist Party is the only vote that is not a wasted vote. A vote for any establishment party is a vote for capitalism. A Communist Party vote is a vote for social progress, a vote against exploitation, a vote that will send a message of new hope reverberating throughout Britain and the rest of the world.

Unlike the Tories, Labourites, Liberal Democrats, Greens, Nationalists and the various NF and BNP fascists, our manifesto has nothing to do with running capitalism. Nor is it a list of empty promises. It is an action programme based on what the working class needs, not what this rotting system can afford.

Minimum platform of working class defence

Where there is no Communist Party candidate, we say voters should only vote for candidates who support the following demands:

- For a £275 minimum weekly wage.
- Work or full benefit at the level of the minimum wage.
- Pensions at the level of the minimum wage.
- Free abortion and contraception on demand.
- Unconditional withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.
- Support the right of self-determination in Wales and Scotland.
- Against immigration controls.

There should be no vote for candidates who cannot support such a platform. Do not vote for those who will not fight capitalism and who will only misrepresent and oppress the working class. Under such circumstances, write 'communist' across your ballot paper.

I want to help with the Communist Party election campaign

Please send me more details ☐

I want to get the *Weekly Worker* ☐

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Return to: CPGB,
BCM Box 928,
London
WC1N 3XX.
Or phone
081-459 7146

Our immediate demands

Communists are for the fullest extension of democracy both under capitalism and socialism. For us democracy means much more than voting for councillors, MPs and MEPs. It means taking control of our own lives and ending all forms of privilege and oppression.

democracy

- For proportional representation and the recallability of all representatives.
- Abolish the monarchy and the House of Lords.
- Separate the Church of England from the state.
- Freedom of religious belief and freedom of atheistic information.
- For free speech; against censorship.
- For openness in all state and business affairs.

Our starting point is what is required for a decent life in Britain today. That means communists support workers in the struggle for better pay and conditions.

wages

- A minimum wage of £275 per week.
- End all compulsory overtime with no loss of pay.
- A maximum working week of 35 hours.

Tory governments have made effective trade unionism illegal. Trade union leaders have tamely accepted this, fearing to break the law and go beyond the narrow confines of collective bargaining. Communists fight for the right to join a union and the right to strike.

trade unions

- No state control or supervision of trade unions.
- For democratic rank and file control of unions.
- Trade union officials to be electable and recallable and paid the average wage of their members.
- Smash the anti-trade union laws.

Economists and other apologists for capitalism tell us that unemployment is natural or that workers cause it with high pay demands. Unemployment actually occurs because capitalism cannot employ all workers profitably. Those who are unprofitable are thrown on the scrapheap. Unemployment is used to drive down the wages of those in work. Communists seek to organise the unemployed alongside the employed so we can challenge capitalism together.

unemployment

- Work at trade union rates or benefit at the level of the minimum wage.
- Oppose all redundancies and natural wastage schemes.
- Threats of closures should be met with occupations.
- Nationalise unprofitable industries faced with closure. Put them under workers' control.

Tories and Labour vie with each other to further strengthen police powers. We say the police serve capitalism, not the people. The vicious police attacks on our pickets, demonstrations or young people at rave concerts prove that. Shutting up ever greater numbers in overcrowded prisons does no good. We say change the conditions which cause crime - poverty, alienation, unemployment and social fragmentation. To begin to do that and defend our areas we must form workers' defence patrols.

law and order

- No support for the police.
- Drug takers should not be criminalised. Drugs should be legalised.
- Prisoners should have the right to vote and access to extensive training and education.
- Prison work should be paid at trade union rates.
- Workers' defence patrols must have the right to carry weapons.

We say not a penny should be spent on 'defence' of the bosses' state. Communists fight for disarming British capitalism and arming the working class. We are against a standing army as a matter of principle. We oppose Nato and the deployment of British troops abroad.

defence

- Stop the humiliation and bullying of army recruits.
- Officers should be elected.
- For trade union rights in the armed services.

The people of Britain have come together over the centuries to form one nation. However, narrow nationalism still exists as a divisive force. Communists say workers in Britain have an overriding common enemy - the British capitalist state. We can best fight it together. For working class unity across Britain and against those who would divide us along lines of nationality. Countering separatism is most effectively done by extending democratic rights.

scotland & wales

- For the right of Scotland and Wales to become independent.
- For the equality of Welsh and Gaelic in all relevant official documents and proceedings.

For all the present talk of peace, Britain is in fact merely reorganising its domination. Britain has oppressed Ireland for hundreds of years. Britain propped up the sectarian Northern Ireland statelet with thousands of troops. The people of Britain have paid dearly for this - the methods used to crush and terrorise Irish republicans have come home in the form of censorship, the recently extended PTA, para-military police units and now the Criminal Justice Act. Communists unconditionally support Ireland's right to self-determination.

ireland

- Withdraw British troops immediately from Ireland.
- Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act.
- Release all Irish political prisoners.

Communists are for the right of all ethnic minorities to use and be educated in their mother tongue. We also support their right to assimilate and be educated in and speak English. We oppose all separate schools whether based on language, religion or ethnicity. Mainstream parties in Britain are officially anti-racist. However all of them are openly national chauvinist: all defend the British capitalist state. Ethnic minorities and migrant workers are often used as cheap labour by capitalism. Discrimination and the threat of deportation keeps wages low and divides the working class through undermining the possibility of trade union organisation. Immigration controls have nothing to do with the myth of overcrowding. They are designed to criminalise migrant workers.

minorities & immigration

- Stop police raids.
- For the right to migrate from Britain, for the right to migrate to Britain.
- End immigration controls. If a product is legal, so must be the worker who produced it.
- Full citizenship rights for all workers.

Fascism is a product of capitalism. As capitalism moves deeper and deeper into crisis, it will not only throw workers onto the scrapheap, but will use fascism to attack and murder those who can be scapegoated or resist. Social decay, Tory cuts in welfare and social security, Labour's inability to fight, drive the alienated, ignorant and disorientated into the arms of fascism. Fascist dupes terrorise and launch attacks on the working class. We need to be organised against them.

fascism

- No platform for fascists.
- For united workers' defence patrols to combat racist attacks and fascist provocation.
- For a united, militant anti-racist, anti-fascist movement directed against the capitalist state itself.

Women in Britain are still oppressed. Women get less pay, do most housework, child rearing and caring for elderly relatives. There must not only be equal pay for equal work, but moves towards the full socialisation of housework, comprehensive nursery provision and state sponsored care for the infirm.

women

- Free abortion and contraception on demand.
- Free, high quality 24-hour nurseries.
- NHS day and night care for the housebound.
- Trade union meetings to be organised within the working day to facilitate women's participation.
- Women to be fully integrated into workers' defence patrols.

Communists say youth is the future. Young people in education should receive grants at the minimum wage level from the age of 16. If young people are allowed to work at 16, every other social right should be extended to them. Young people themselves should be able to decide when they are ready for sexual activity.

youth

- For the right to vote in elections and be elected from the age of 16.
- Abolish the age of consent.

Schools and colleges are run down, understaffed and underfunded. Communists say there must be comprehensive and free education for everyone who wants it, from nursery to degree level. Communists say elitism must be fought and the battle for democracy won in education.

education

- Governing bodies in schools and colleges to be made up of elected representatives of teachers, pupils, local working class organisations and parents (where appropriate).
- Abolish private schools.

Homelessness and overcrowding exist side by side with empty houses and unemployed building workers. Decent housing is a basic right. Communists say there should be good quality housing for all.

housing

- An emergency programme of house building and repair.
- Occupy empty houses. Abolish all anti-squatting laws.
- Confiscate the second homes of the rich. Distribute housing according to need.

The British state treats elderly people as excess baggage. It is promoting private pensions for those who can afford them. At the same time the relative worth of state pensions has steadily been allowed to fall. Communists say pensioners have the right to live a full life.

pensions

- Pensions to be set at the level of the minimum wage of £275 a week.
- For the right to stop work at 60.
- No compulsory retirement age.

Both Tories and Labour have starved the NHS of funds. The NHS should meet the growing needs of the population, not operate according to what capitalism can afford. NHS hospitals must be run not by appointed trusts, but democratic committees made up of trade unionists and elected local working class representatives.

health

- Abolish waiting lists.
- No private practice in NHS institutions.
- Free medical, dental and optical treatment.
- Full state funding of Aids research. NHS care for Aids sufferers.

The Tories have given huge tax handouts to the top 10% while sharply increasing the level paid by the rest of us. Communists say the tax burden must be shifted from indirect taxation to direct taxation. There should be no income tax or council tax for those on low or middle incomes.

taxes

- Abolish VAT.
- Make big companies and the rich finance state spending.
- End the right of the rich to pass on their wealth.

Communists are for the full equality of people whatever their sexual preferences. No more jailing for consented sexual acts. Consented sexual acts should not be illegal. There must be no discrimination against homosexuality in schools or in any other area of life. Homosexuality should not be portrayed as unnatural.

lesbians & gays

- End police harassment of homosexuals.
- Workers' defence against 'queerbashers'.

Capitalism will not simply hand over these rights. They will have to be fought for. None of the establishment parties will do that. They all tell us the system cannot afford such things. But all these rights are necessary for a full life in a society such as Britain today. Only the Communist Party puts people before profits. We say, if the capitalist system cannot afford to give people in Britain a decent life, then it should go.

The Communist Party is organised to empower the working class, to remember past battles and lessons, to provide a vision of a better future. Those who are committed to the cause of socialism and want a world fit for human beings should join our ranks. We need your vote and we need *you*.