



cpgb-ml
eighth party
congress





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Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

Eighth congress of the CPGB-ML, 2018

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274 Moseley Road, Birmingham, B12 0BS
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REPORTS

1. General Secretary

The four years since our last congress have been very eventful ones, with much that we can be proud of but also much that can and must improve. I enclose below some evaluations of the past and needed work for the future.

Building the party, developing our cadres

It's now eight years since four young leading comrades looked at the party's internal organisation, paying specific attention to recruitment, member retention, branch structure and education. They came to the central committee with a proposal to form a small committee to tackle that work. That did not mean then and it does not mean now that those areas of work can be ignored by everyone else and simply left to the cadre development committee (CDC); they will give a lead, but these things are the duty of us all.

The CDC has made excellent progress and it has grown beyond those four comrades, always looking to pull people in, to increase the party's financial position, but mostly to make sure that all our cadres grow into thinking, disciplined communists, studying and

thinking for themselves but also becoming actively involved with other comrades in all our work and organisations – and, critically, always respecting and adhering to the decisions of the majority once majority positions are agreed upon.

This party has a short history, just 14 years (if we don't count the many years spent preparing the ground for it by another 'gang of four'), but it is a history of hard work, carried out both cheerfully and seriously, punching way above our weight to push the social-democratic defenders of imperialism aside, along with their Trotskyist and revisionist puppets, who do and say so much to blind the working class to its real interests, which, we have to explain, will come about through following the Marxist-Leninist path to social revolution.

Every time we come to congress, there will always be some matter that seems to be of the utmost urgency and which some will always prophesise will 'break the party'. And yet the party always survives and comes out the other side stronger. We may lose one or two people, but our greatest strength is not being scared of a term of unpopularity; we must always stand by what we collectively see as correct. We do not expel or pick on those who have argued for minority views in our internal debates once the decision has been made, but the minority must learn what democratic centralism is and live by it.

The political environment

During the past four years, we have had the spectacle of a national vote on membership of the EU. Nearly the entire House of Commons and the bourgeois parties opposed leaving, while we took the opposite view, and many, if not all of us, were amazed to find we were on the winning side after the votes were counted.

Imperialism and all its puppets in the British state were horrified and confused; they had totally misread the British people. Of course, most Brexit voters didn't vote leave for the same reasons

as we did, but a weakened EU was on show to the world and anti-EU groups and parties in other countries have taken heart from the Brexit result.

On the international stage, we have continued always to take the anti-imperialist position, whether that be in regard to the DPRK, China, Russia, Cuba or Syria, Yemen, Iran, Venezuela or Ukraine. When the traitors of the Stop the War Coalition call for 'no war' on a given country and then proceed to mouth the same lies that imperialism is using as a mask for their attacks on that country and the resulting carnage, we condemn both the StW traitors and the imperialist brigands.

Again, this has made us unpopular with many, but more and more people are listening to our words, and while this hasn't resulted in a big jump in membership applications, our influence and the increased understanding of our anti-imperialist logic is growing at a rate that alarms our enemies. This is a matter of pleasure to us, and yet we must all do more.

Balancing theory and practice

The party's education programme, guided by the CDC, can take much credit for building our influence inside our class, and it has been a long time since anyone tried to argue that more practical work needs to be done at the expense of our educational work. The vast majority of our members, candidate members and supporters do now understand that we do not have to choose between the study of Marxist-Leninist ideology on the one hand and 'practical' activity on the other – we can, and do, manage to do both.

We study those classic texts to understand the world we live in, why it is the way it is, how it can be changed, who will change it and what they will need to do to bring about that transformation – in short, to arm ourselves and our class with tried and tested weapons and the knowledge of how and when to use them.

Our grasp of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism is what guides our practice. Take that away or even dilute it a 'little' and you have aimless 'practical' work that is all but useless – the type of 'practice' so beloved by social democracy, Trotskyism, revisionism et al.

Comrades, there are no shortcuts to the ideological knowledge that we need to guide our class as it moves towards a successful socialist revolution, but our time, before imperialism drags us into another global war to try to save its own skin, could be short. That being the case, we must all do more; there is no other way!

We must bring in more cadres to the party, but we must also train them. We must keep writing our leaflets and articles for the papers and the internet, but we must also give out more leaflets, sell more papers, raise our profile anywhere and everywhere.

Internet and social media

Our editors, writers, printing teams and technology workers, who keep our website and Facebook pages interesting, informed and up to date, have continued to do a fantastic job of trying to educate both our class and our party cadres, but, of course, there is much room for improvement and we cannot allow complacency. We must increase the sales of our papers before we can increase the number of papers printed; before we can shorten the time between print runs to monthly, weekly or even daily.

The internet has been a great tool for us, and from the party's birth in 2004 we have led the way in utilising it among the 'left' in this country, and can rightly now point to our website as not only having the best content but also the best look and organisation since it was relaunched this year. The majority of this work of rebuilding our website has been carried out by a long-time supporter with the aid of one of our leading members over a few years and we thank them both for the huge amount of time and effort that they have given freely to help improve our means of carrying our

message to our class, both here in Britain and abroad.

But it has to be said that the internet in general, and social media in particular, can be a double-edged sword, and we all need to think about how we use it and how we respond to one other online.

We may be sat in our own homes tapping away at our keyboards, but what we write is instantly in the public domain, meaning that our enemies are privy to many of our conversations and comments. Our self-discipline must operate in this medium even more strictly than on the streets.

Whatever debates are currently going on, we must not be seen to be attacking the party, other members, or breaking with the party's decided line on any issue.

Party finances

Another area that requires much more attention is the party's finances. Our party can only get the cash it needs to help us organise from our members and supporters. Members must first and foremost make sure that their subs are paid on time. We have standing order forms to assist with this, and if more than the basic subs can be paid regularly, or even in sporadic donations large or small, that will make all the difference.

We also need to think about asking those we know who support us, share some of our beliefs or buy our papers if they would give money to the party. This can be a difficult thing for most of us to do, but we have to build the amount of cash we have to be able to keep doing what we are doing, as well as to make standing in elections possible or facilitate any of the 101 other projects we need money for.

We cannot look at other parties and say they only charge such-and-such in subs so why are we asking for more? Those parties and groups are not seriously trying to lead a revolution!

We are not playing games; every penny that we can spare should

be given to either the main party account or the CDC account. Our work cannot be treated as a hobby, and the more successful we become the more cash we will need.

Work in the unions

Our effect on trade unions and their policies is minimal, to say the least at present, but we have a very gifted and committed industrial organiser who has worked very hard to make excellent analytical monthly reports based on quite extensive research. However, as hard as he has worked on research and reports he has found it impossible to coordinate party work in the unions as there is very little actually there to coordinate.

Our work in the unions should consist of getting to union meetings, both national and local, and intervening to explain the party's positions, to sell papers at these meetings and distribute appropriate leaflets. It is tactics like this that will help us to win the trust of workers over time. Our members and supporters who hold trade union membership need to do more to spread our message within their unions and should always let the industrial organiser know what activity they have been doing.

A word of warning though: working in the unions also runs the risk of getting caught up in the bureaucratic traps that unions excel in creating. Our advice to members is not to take on jobs that tie you up with time-consuming and meaningless activities. Confine yourself to spreading the party's literature and to arguing for and organising militant action in the workplace.

Our tasks in the coming period

Generally speaking, despite some limitations based on our size and financial situation, everything we have done so far in the 14 years since the party's birth has been correct. We need not only

to keep on doing it, but also to do more of it. That means all comrades trying to stretch themselves even further and without any guarantee of success in the short term.

This struggle is a long-term struggle and it is not a tea party. It is wearisome, hard and at times it will test the best of us. We all have other commitments, but if we genuinely believe that we are the party that will become the true leadership of our class in the socialist revolution that will one day come to Britain, then we really must increase our activity and get our message further afield. We must raise the profile of the party in all the regions, especially outside of London.

The more we immerse ourselves in this struggle, the more we will become steeled and better revolutionaries. But this struggle, which steels many of our cadres, will also prove too much for some others.

There is little we can do about that except try to give comradely support to any who are having problems and doubts, and, if they feel they have to leave, make the parting as friendly as possible; they may yet be useful one day.

In conclusion, our goals for the next four years, notwithstanding any other urgent matters that might arise, are basically the same as we set out four years ago, and really, how could they not be?

We need:

- To improve our internal organisation and communication, both regionally and nationally, with guidance from our CDC.
- To increase sales of *Proletarian* and *Lalkar* significantly.
- To increase all our activity in the regions, especially our own educational study.
- To increase attendance at party meetings and demonstrations, particularly when national mobilisations are called for.
- To work harder within all areas to recruit members and supporters, and to make sure they attend meetings, stalls and

events as much as possible.

- To study the party's positions on all matters so that we always understand our own policies and can answer critics and questions. In this regard, it really is important that comrades selling papers or handing out leaflets know what is written in/on them and are able to talk about it.
- To work individually and collectively to dramatically increase the money that the party has in its coffers to fund our work, be it by collecting donations from others or from our own pockets.
- To improve the ways in which we deal with one other, organise ourselves and do our practical work, and how we approach our study and understanding of the greatest weapon that the working class can wield: the guiding ideology of Marxism-Leninism.

Zane Carpenter

2. Publications

Although we are still very small in size, as a party we have set ourselves the only goal we can: that of bringing a Marxist understanding to the widest possible number of people and of thus renewing the popularity of scientific socialism amongst workers, in order to create the leadership and lay the groundwork for a successful socialist revolution in Britain.

To that end, we aim to build first and foremost an efficient and truly nationwide distribution network for the propagation of literature of all kinds, from theoretical analysis to agitational leaflets; from cartoons and posters to videos, tweets and blog posts.

This network, both local and national, on the streets and online, should ultimately be able to respond both to the questions taxing workers in a particular area (lay-offs at a factory or the closure of an essential service, for instance) and to those facing the whole of the British proletariat (Brexit and the economic crisis, austerity and war, privatisation and unemployment, etc).

The next goal that presents itself is the urgent need to improve our ability to respond to the big questions of the day in a timely and coordinated way for maximum impact and reach, taking to the streets when workers go on strike, or when a question on which we have something useful to say is on all the front pages and has become a popular talking-point.

Just as taking a leaflet on privatisation to workers in struggle against outsourcing profiteers gives our members a chance to bring our message to people who are more ready to hear it than usual, so taking a leaflet about Brexit or the drive to WW3 to the streets is more likely to create useful conversations if it happens at a time when some crisis has brought to issue to the front of workers' minds. Even a royal wedding offers us an opportunity to get out and remind people of the parasitic nature of capitalist society.

Our study classes should be using party materials as the basis for collective discussion and working out the best way to bring the analysis they contain to workers in their areas. We are struggling against the apathy engendered by overwork, underemployment and the endless distractions created by the bourgeois mass media and an all-encompassing consumer culture. We must take every opportunity to meet workers when they are likely to be most open to our message, and to have materials with us that can maximise that opportunity.

To that end, we must maximise our use of *all* possible materials, from print to online, from tweets and comics to posters and newspaper articles, and do our best to find advanced and class-conscious workers wherever they may be – both those who live most of their waking hours online and consume their media there and those who have avoided or been left behind by the smartphone revolution.

Armed with a scientific understanding of capitalist imperialism, we know too well that the next downward lurch in the global overproduction crisis may come at any time, and that the moves towards a third world war must undoubtedly come to fruition. That being the case, it is our duty to do everything we can to build our branch network and urgently to develop our writing, filming, designing, editing and production capabilities in all areas of propaganda work so that we may be able to rise to the challenges that the developing crisis puts before us.

It can seem today as if nothing could ever rouse the British working class from its apathetic and resigned slumber, but the signs of unrest and unease are simmering away beneath the surface and it only needs a severe economic shock or two to jerk significant numbers out of their acquiescence and in search of answers and action.

No-one is going to turn to us at that moment if we haven't been doing our work already. Even if they seem mostly to ignore us today, we need to be planting the seeds of understanding in workers' minds now, exposing as many of them as possible first to the fact of our existence, and second to the unvarnished and unashamedly fact-based class analysis that is contained in our propaganda.

On every question of significance we have something to offer to workers that no-one else is giving them: the truth. We should be proud of that fact and clear in our own minds that the work we are doing is not merely to keep ourselves busy, but to bring enlightenment to the working class and thus equip it to move history forward.

It is work of historical significance and, ultimately, it is the most useful work any human being presently alive on the planet can engage in: the task of bringing an end to the historically-outmoded, parasitic and bloodthirsty system of capitalist imperialism.

Proletarian

Our party paper remains a central part of our mission; a hub around which other work can be carried out and other aims served. It does this by:

- Giving us a printed space in which to present our analysis of important events and theoretical questions.
- Allowing us to train cadres in the skill of writing (and editing, laying out, designing, printing, collating, mailing etc) and in the art of applying Marxism to current events.

- Providing our own members with relevant and topical materials for use in their study classes, creating the basis for collective study and discussion, as well as arming comrades with talking points for stalls, leafleting sessions, etc.
- Giving us a reason to get out onto the streets and talk to people.
- Giving us something to offer to workers when we engage with them in conversation, which they can then take home and consider at their leisure.
- Allowing us to spread a more in-depth analysis than can be fitted into a leaflet among workers who express an interest in what we have to say.
- Creating new material for our website, and turning comrades' verbal presentations and speeches into print articles.
- Producing analysis that can be used as the basis for new agitational materials (eg, leaflets).

The editors have striven to cover every global topic of importance to workers over the last four years, from the war in Syria and threats of war against people's Korea to the progress of the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela, the crisis in the euro-zone, the election of Donald Trump and the development of the US's trade war policy.

At home, topics of significance have included Brexit, two general elections, privatisation and austerity and their effects on health, education, housing, benefits and other social services, racism and more. And of course we have covered such important events as the Grenfell fire, the October Revolution centenary, the passing of Comrade Fidel and the 200th anniversary of Marx's birth, to name but a few.

We also try regularly to include cultural and theoretical articles, doing what we can to enable our readers to learn to apply a Marxist analysis to a wide variety of topics.

Taking into consideration the fact that we want our paper to be accessible to any worker who might be interested in the topics we cover, and to be a good introduction to the party for those who have picked it up for the first time, we strive to include a mix of shorter and longer articles, to explain any Marxist terminology we use, and to keep our language as clear and approachable as possible, whilst never dumbing down the paper's content or treating workers like idiots. *Proletarian* now always includes half a page of information about the party and its aims, as well as a struggle fund advert asking for donations to support the party's work, which latter is also carried in every issue of the friendly journal.

Given the rising costs of production, and the fact that the paper's cover price has remained the same for 14 years, we propose that a solidarity price of £2 should from now on be advertised on the front of the paper (alongside the £1 minimum), and that this should be routinely requested by comrades when selling. This has been discussed by the CC in the past but never yet implemented.

We also request that branches, while striving to increase circulation and to create more opportunities to sell papers, should routinely report on the numbers *actually being sold*, and to adjust their orders accordingly, in consultation with Comrade Katt and the print shop. We have better things to do with our print workers' time than to spend it on printing and collating papers that are not being sold, and better things to do with our paper and ink than to turn it into doorstops or consign it to the flames.

Activity levels within the party and in the wider movement fluctuate all the time, and it is far more sensible to take a flexible approach to this, reducing our branches' regular orders if papers aren't being shifted for whatever reason, then increasing again as the situation allows. An agile and responsive attitude from all branches should help us to use our resources as wisely and efficiently as possible, and, most importantly, should enable us to ensure that any paper that comes off our print machines, whether in the form of leaflets, bulletins, papers, posters or stickers, actu-

ally ends up in the hands of workers, not propping up the mattresses of our members.

Of course, such an approach also requires us to think ahead and plan a little. For example, if we know there are extra events coming up when we could reasonably expect to sell more papers than usual, this will need to be factored in and the print shop notified. While we have no desire to waste paper on producing what will not be distributed, we equally do not wish our comrades to be so parsimonious with their orders that they end up with nothing in their hands when out on the streets! In short, orders should be on the optimistic side, but retain some connection with reality!

Leaflets

As well as producing and printing centrally huge numbers of leaflets on major issues, several local centres have been producing their own leaflets in recent years. These include the *Birmingham Worker and Trade Unionist* (both produced in Birmingham), the *London Worker* (produced in London) and various leaflets for local and national demonstrations and strikes (produced in Birmingham, Bristol and London). Disputes covered have included the First Manchester busses; McDonalds; Birmingham homecare workers; Northern Trains, DLR, and the UCU lecturers.

Other branches have also produced their own leaflets on various topics, as well as to advertise party events in their areas (Wakefield in particular regularly produces its own leaflets). Party members in Birmingham this year produced, folded and distributed over 16,000 leaflets across three local election wards, 10,000 of them in a single month.

During the Birmingham binmen's strike in 2017, the local branch was able to use printed materials very successfully. As a result of the predictable failure of Unite to provide any useful material for striking members, our leaflets were not only welcome to the strikers themselves, but were even taken by them to distribute to

the general public when they were picketing. Our printers worked overtime and produced over 8,000 leaflets, hundreds of posters and 2,000 stickers, which were taken by strikers and supporters and distributed across the city.

Looking at how we use and re-use our content, it is interesting to note that the *Trade Unionist*, *London Worker* and *Birmingham Worker* have all made use of a folded A3 format to feature a combination of texts from existing party leaflets with small articles about local issues to great effect.

Thinking along similar lines, the CC is currently considering whether there may be ways for us to combine our agitational and propaganda work more effectively. We could, for example, produce the cover of *Proletarian* as a stand-alone free handout, which would, like the local handouts described above, act as a mini paper (or big leaflet) covering several topics in agitational style, while the main contents continue as now to present a deeper analysis on a wider variety of topics.

Handing out free *Proletarian* covers and offering the internal contents for sale at the same time may be a way to increase both sales and visibility of the paper, helping to develop a better 'brand recognition' of both paper and party. It also would allow us to focus our printing and writing activity onto turning around more topical material for members to give out. It could also allow us to change the wrapper more often than we change the internal contents of the paper – moving us a step closer to our goal of bringing the entire paper out more often.

Other printed items, banners and merchandise

Since we bought the printer in Birmingham, the print comrades there have experimented with colours and formats and produced several very striking posters, postcards, placards and stickers, some with the aim of popularising the party's main slogans and others to advertise big events such as May Day and the October

Revolution, or for use on demos such as the African Lives Matter ones in Birmingham and London.

Having a resident cartoonist has made a big difference to impact of our designs of t-shirts, leaflets, placards and banners. As a result, we have begun dabbling our toes in the water of creating cartoon-strip leaflets, such as the one explaining surplus value. Our October Revolution centenary t-shirts have also been a great success, and another excellent way to differentiate our party from others and enhance our 'brand' with a wider public.

It is hoped that all these aspects of our work will expand in the coming period, along with the creation of more infographics for use online, which has also started in a small way this year.

The party has produced many new banners in the last four years, some hand painted in Birmingham, Bristol and London for specific purposes (the binmen strike, the BBC picket, NHS campaigning, etc). In particular, along with a few banners for new branches, the party organised the printing of eight new banners for the October Revolution centenary celebration (four portraits – Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin – with quotations; four collages of Soviet revolutionary art), which created a huge impact in the hall for that event, and which can now be used for other demonstrations and rallies.

The party has also invested in a collection of large flags, which have been carried at the front of our contingents on May Day in the last few years, as well as the October meeting in 2017, and, borne by disciplined marching comrades, have helped to leave a strong and positive impression of our party on those who have seen them.

Finally, a review of our merchandise would not be complete without mention of the Soviet and other badges put up for sale by comrades in Wakefield, who never miss an opportunity to put these on show, attracting a wide audience to their table, thus making money for their branch and facilitating our work.

Bulletin

Since our last congress, responsibility for producing the CC bulletin has passed to the CDC, and it is now being put together, laid out and mailed from London – a significant weight off the hard-pressed shoulders of the Birmingham branch, whose members have for several years been responsible for all party and newspaper mailings.

The bulletin has had a revamp of its format and content, and it is hoped that this has made it both more readable and more useful as an organiser. Members are encouraged to go through the bulletin together when it comes out and to discuss issues raised in their branches, taking on board requests from the central committee as well as ideas for useful ways of working that are shared by comrades around the country.

Printing

Our printing capability has grown significantly since 2014, meaning that our production has increased to keep pace with a growing party's ability to distribute material.

Several important changes have taken place over the last four years to enable this improvement. The first was the installation of a printing press in the Birmingham office, following the party's successful fundraising campaign four years ago. This machine quickly became the main output for our print propaganda.

The second is the training of several new comrades in print work. We now have four capable printers in Birmingham – a big improvement on our previous position, which enables the workload to be shared and reduces the party's reliance on one or two individuals.

The third is the acquisition of new presses. In 2017, the party purchased another offset machine, similar to the one in Birmingham, and installed it in the Bristol office. This is now functional, and

comrades' training is underway. The London region also fund-raised locally for a risograph machine, and comrades there are now producing increasing numbers of leaflets, alongside the bulletin and documents for this congress, which has further helped to reduce bottlenecks. Our hope is that it won't be long before comrades in Bristol are also regularly turning out reams of topical leaflets and posting them out to branches, allowing us to further spread the workload and increase output.

Overall, we are now producing and distributing more leaflets than ever before. Our monthly newspaper print-runs are often supplemented by thousands of leaflets. In 2016 alone, we produced over 65,000 leaflets in addition to many thousands of newspapers. This is a significant output for a party of our size, and an indication of how we are growing, as these leaflets in the main are not gathering dust on shelves but have overwhelmingly been distributed to the public.

With growing branch activity, the number of leaflets required has steadily risen, to mean that a print-run of 5,000 leaflets is hardly enough to meet the party's need for a month. The new presses should enable us to meet this growing demand, and branches whose members are not at present getting out on the streets are asked to follow the example of those who are and help push our numbers up even further.

We may have the best analysis in the country, but our advanced theory will remain powerless until such time as it has been gripped by the masses.

Pamphlets

The last four years have seen six new pamphlets produced by our party: *WW1*, *Soviet Victory* (second edition), *Claudia Jones*, *Class Analysis*, *Drive to War* and *Zionism*.

We have also funded the reprinting of eight Stalin Society pamphlets: *Education in the USSR*, *Health in the USSR*, *Bourgeois*

Democracy and Fascism, A Personal Account of Stalingrad, Lies Concerning the USSR, George Orwell, The Ukraine Famine and The Katyn Massacre.

As well as printing our own books, we have imported from India (where such things are still regularly produced in English) a stock of classic Marxist texts for sale to members and supporters, and have arranged for the reprint of some important works that are increasingly hard to find. Our reprints include: *History of the CPSU(B)*, *Political Economy* (Leontiev), *Foundations of Leninism* (Stalin); *State and Revolution* (Lenin) and *Socialism and War* (Lenin). The Lenin and Stalin texts have been copied exactly from the Chinese antirevisionist editions.

With the increasing availability of large print-quality images on the internet, we have been able to update the party's pamphlet design to make the covers more striking and attractive, and are finding that the new pamphlets are selling well, all (with the exception of *Claudia Jones*) being perceived as very topical, and being relevant to the meetings that our members are presently going to (antiwar, Palestine solidarity, antisemitism etc).

In the pipeline at present are: a new edition of the immigration pamphlet as we are down to our last 50 of these (and an understanding of this important topic is vital for all our members, as well as for the wider class); a social media guide for members (member kit #4); our education programme; and an NHS pamphlet. At some point soon we should also produce materials in pamphlet form on the Syria war, identity politics and the DPRK. If members and groups have requests or suggestions for pamphlets they would like to see, please let me know.

It is highly recommended that all study groups around the country make a point of regularly working their way through our pamphlets, as they cover issues of great importance to the working class and give a much more detailed analysis than a newspaper article can do. Familiarity with the contents will help develop our members' understanding, as well as increasing their confidence

when speaking to workers.

We also recommend members to carry a set of pamphlets whenever they can and to offer them for sale at every opportunity. They are an excellent way to spread our analysis, being small and easy to carry, short enough to be actually read, and cheap enough to sell fairly easily.

Strangely, we often find that people who will not pay £10 for a big book will happily pay £15 for three small pamphlets. Most often this is because, while people feel able to commit to reading fewer than 100 pages, they worry about spending money on a 500-page book that will in all probability just sit on the shelf.

Given this time-pressured and media-saturated feeling shared by so many, we should seriously consider working on some condensed materials based on our most important longer texts, such as *Perestroika*, *Imperialism*, *Trotskyism or Leninism?* and *Women*.

Website

Early this year, our new website finally launched. It had been many years in development and still has a way to go before it is fulfilling all the functions we would like it to have, but even in its present form it represents a great step forward in presentation and accessibility, with a clean, uncluttered design and responsive functionality (adapting smoothly to different devices and screen sizes), creating an impression of our party that is both authoritative and professional.

The new site allows us to showcase our content in a far more effective way than before, and the recurring events feature saves a lot of updating time. Conversely, the amount of work required to bring the best out of each new article, and to convert old articles to the new template, is substantial. One or two comrades are helping to wade through the work of converting all the articles in the *Proletarian* archive, but this is bound to take time to complete, as will the task of picking important articles and videos from the *Lalkar* and *Proletarian TV* archives.

The extra work pays dividends in terms of how our analysis is presented and will not have to be redone for any future redesigns, but it is a big toll on the time of those involved, especially as we also need to keep up with the flow of new content available from *Proletarian*, *Lalkar*, leaflets, *Proletarian TV*, etc. Anyone who feels they would be suitable to volunteer for this work, please get in touch.

Now that we have the new site, we have changed from the old routine of uploading all articles from *Proletarian* simultaneously to spreading them out, so that, when combined with other materials from leaflets, videos and *Lalkar*, there is in something new online most days. Links to the daily updates are posted in various WhatsApp and Telegram groups, as well as on the party's official Facebook and Twitter pages. Our big challenge now is to get our own comrades into the habit of spreading this daily dose of Marxism on their own social media pages and in any relevant groups or forums to which they belong.

All branches should be encouraged to run a Facebook and Twitter account, and to use these to share party articles, as well as to organise and promote their local activities (although not to get sucked into time-wasting online debates!)

Last year also saw the launch of our online shop, which is run by comrades in London. While we hope at some point to have sale pages integrated into the main website, this ready-made solution has enabled us to get on and start selling properly online.

Jobs for the future include building a shop section on the main website and creating better online mechanisms for receiving subs, donations, recurring payments, etc, as well as adding a section for downloading PDFs of our papers and pamphlets. We also need to prepare our books in Kindle format, sort out all outstanding ISBN issues, and set up an Amazon store for both hard and digital copies of all our books and pamphlets. We also need to revamp our mailing list, set up some useful mailout templates, go through the various GDPR hoops and reinstitute a regular party email.

Local websites have been set up in recent years by both Birmingham and London. Bristol aims to follow suit soon. The format of Birmingham / London / Bristol Worker is the one we have arrived at, and which should be easy enough to extend to other cities as our branches grow and feel ready to move into this area of work. Local Twitter accounts can either use the name of the party (eg, Brighton CPGB-ML) or this format (eg, Birmingham Worker).

Proletarian TV and social media

Proletarian TV continues to grow and develop, with in-depth presentations on a wide and growing variety of topics, alongside shorter comments and clips taken from elsewhere that support our analysis.

The channel has become one of our major sources of recruitment, offering as it does a comprehensive Marxist education to anyone who comes across it and has the inclination to stick around.

We are finding that many of the young people who apply to join us have been watching our videos for some time, and that this is doing us a double service of weeding out those who simply wouldn't be comfortable in a revolutionary organisation while providing a preliminary theoretical training to those who would.

Without getting bogged down in the detail of controversies that have blown up on the party's social media accounts in recent months, what is very clear from these events is the inadequacy of such platforms for reasoned debate, and the ease with which people (wilfully or not) misunderstand one another when they try to engage there, in particular via Twitter, which does not at all lend itself to discussion.

Consequently, our advice to all those running social media accounts for the party is that *as far as possible* they should stick to posting links to party materials or to useful articles etc that

reinforce our analysis. Also, that those who run such accounts should ideally be full members, conversant with party policy and trusted by their branches, and that branches should ultimately be responsible for overseeing such work.

Finally, and most importantly, inner-party debate should be kept off social forums and confined to party channels only. Any issues should be discussed within branches or raised privately with the person who operates the account, before escalating to the CC, CDC or party organiser.

Our gallery pages on Flickr continue to be updated with fabulous photographs from our resident photographer. It is hoped that at some point we will have a decent gallery section on the new website, but for now, they are at least being uploaded where people can see and use them, and provide a valuable visual archive of our major activities.

Last year, London comrades also launched a channel on Soundcloud, Proletarian Radio. If there are comrades who are able and willing to help with the task of converting and uploading audio from our meetings to create new shows for Proletarian Radio, please let us know. A regular podcast would be an excellent addition to our output.

All in all, our comrades are working hard to make sure we are represented in as many fields as possible. There is always more that can be done, but considering our size and resources, we are punching well above our weight.

Our main challenge is to turn all this effort to the best possible account by making sure that web pages, video, tweets, Facebook posts etc are shared as widely as possible, and that every possible effort is put into distributing more and more printed materials on the streets.

These are the foundations on which our future success will be built.

Joti Brar

3. Finance Officer

Our bank balance has been declining at an average of approximately £1,225 per annum since our last congress. While we have had major expenditure on purchasing two new printing machines and the associated expenditure including the cost of transporting one of them to Bristol, much of this expense was covered by the money raised from the printer fund, to which many comrades contributed very generously.

Aware of these problems, the party has taken steps to try to remedy the shortfall which was therefore averaging over £100 a month, in particular by tightening up subscriptions to *Proletarian* and ensuring that new members and supporters take out subscriptions. This is expected to improve the situation but would still in all probability leave some overspend, but less than before.

However, the party has also undertaken the employment of an intern to act as national organiser to whose expenses the main party account has been contributing £500 a month since August, with the CDC paying the remainder. Clearly this is money that the party is not collecting from anywhere. Unless this money is raised, the party will be bankrupt well before the next congress.

It is essential, therefore, that steps are taken to increase the party income. It only takes 50 members to pay an extra £10 a month for most of the shortfall to be covered. Although compul-

sory subs should remain low as we want our party to be open to those with minimal income, members who are in regular employment, or can otherwise easily afford it, should be encouraged to pay at least £20 a month, or £5 a week, which would make a tremendous difference to our financial viability.

If we are able to raise more than the bare minimum to keep afloat, it will also be easier for the party to send to overseas conferences members who are unable to finance their own travel.

What is true is that since the last congress the party has acquired a large stock of literature, flags, t-shirts, etc, and now has a far better system for ensuring that when sold the money comes to the party. However, this cannot be regarded as a money spinner, as very large numbers of the goods have to be sold before the cost to the party of acquiring them is recovered, especially in the case of books.

We have also acquired a very good stock of banners for use at party public meetings and on demonstrations, and of gazebos for literature stalls, greatly enhancing our public visibility.

Our production and distribution of leaflets has increased exponentially, much of it financed by branches from their own resources, including the *Birmingham Worker* and the *London Worker*.

The money received for sales of *Proletarian* still remains below the cost of producing it, and comrades are urged to do their utmost to increase sales.

It is obviously easier to give away a free paper than to sell one, but the work of research that goes into producing our journal is the basis of applying Marxist-Leninist theory to the current developments in the world, without which it would be difficult to produce the leaflets that we do, let alone keep our members in all different parts of the country up to date and able to answer the various opportunists and other charlatans who devote themselves to trying to pull us into deviation from our revolutionary work.

Ella Rule

4. Cadre Development Committee

The growth and development of the CPGB-ML is noticed by all the small political groups that exist in Britain and collectively refer to themselves as 'the left'. In this small pond, overpopulated by an exotic array of politically toxic specimens, we are the 'left group' that causes the most anxiety and fear amongst the others. Having no desire to be recognised as a variety of this particular 'leftism' is one of our strengths, and the chasm that separates our politics from theirs is an indication of the utter bankruptcy of those groups who claim to represent the interests of British workers.

A contempt for the quislings of the British labour movement marks our organisation out from the rest and has the potential to bring Marxist analysis to a much wider section of British society than those who self-identify as 'socialists' and 'progressives'. Continued worship of the British 'labour movement' is nothing more than the worship of spontaneity for slow learners.

Smashing the prejudices of most workers towards that which is considered 'left-wing' can only be accomplished by an organisation that is unafraid to be labelled as 'right', 'fascist', etc by the class enemy ensconced amongst the hallowed British 'labour movement' – which is dominated by the labour aristocracy, class collaborationists, careerists, zionists, and other apologists for British imperialism.

Recognising our weaknesses and harbouring no illusions about our influence, our small size, our financial limitations, and the social and political climate in the country, is a sure sign of our maturity and seriousness. Whilst the blind remnants of the revisionist and Trotskyite movement of the 20th century continue to tie their fortunes ever more closely to social democracy, the conditions for the seeding of the roots of a Marxist-Leninist party present themselves in abundance in Britain.

On Brexit, on imperialist war, on the causes of terrorism, on the question of immigration, on the basic question of how the working class needs to wage economic struggle unshackled from the disastrous influence of social democracy, we are the only political party in the country to have answers to the most pressing issues facing British workers.

Whilst our ideas are certainly not immediately popular with vast swathes of politically ignorant workers, they do have increasing currency amongst those workers who find themselves in struggle, and are causing mounting anxiety, revulsion and annoyance amongst our political opponents. The divide between us sharpens, and we can expect greater hostility and opposition to our work in all fields, whether it be on the picket lines, at antiwar meetings, or on May Day and other labour movement events and rallies.

Our organisational challenges are acute. We must reassess the viability of our present methods of work, reflect on the political activity we carry out and its usefulness in a concrete historical context. Making a critique of our work and then assessing our capacity for new forms of work is a difficult task for a small party of volunteers with limited resources, both physical and financial. A basic principle of dialectics is that there is no such thing as abstract truth; truth is always concrete. As the motion on the rule change highlights, forms of organisation, alongside forms of political work, must be suited to concrete reality.

As the party grows, no matter how small that growth is, new opportunities for work present themselves – work which ten years

ago would have seemed an impossibility.

Since the seventh congress

An important factor contributing towards our growth since 2014 has been that we are building an active party and have not allowed a situation to develop where significant sections of the party have become inactive. It is inevitable in any party there will be churn – that some bad people will join and some good people will leave. What destroys a party is allowing the vitality of the healthy part to be polluted by the unhealthy.

The party that purges itself strengthens itself. Our party is a voluntary union – those who cannot stay the course, even if we wish that they could, must not be allowed to sow division, dependency and negativity, but must be assisted in leaving the party in an orderly and respectful manner. Those who demand that the majority must follow the desires of the minority, those who cannot learn to work in a collective manner, must understand that we welcome all support but will not be held to ransom over any single issue.

In an organised party, a split is inevitable if the minority cannot subordinate itself to the majority. Scandalmongering must be resisted and overcome; it is essential to create a political situation in which there is both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness. We do not need, nor can we accommodate, individualism or pessimism.

Our congress is a place where the active members of the party make decisions about the future direction of the organisation; it is not a place for all and sundry; it is not a mass political rally to which we invite everyone. Similarly, the desire to grow and to be big must not develop into a trend where politically and socially unstable individuals are allowed to join our ranks without the necessary training, supervision and oversight. Not everybody who

wanted to be at this congress is here today, and that is a sign of our strength and our growth.

This report will now deal with the most significant aspects of our developing work since 2014, and raise proposals for the future direction of our party's organisational and political tasks.

Interns and paid workers

The CDC set up a cadre development fund some years ago as the first step towards professionalising our party in line with the Leninist conception of a proletarian vanguard.

The intern programme was always a halfway house. After the last congress was held in November 2014, the CDC appointed an unpaid party intern based in Birmingham, who was replaced in March 2015. A fund raised from a small number of party members has supported efforts to replace a succession of unpaid interns with a full-time coordinator in 2017.

The officer, appointed by the central committee, was initially appointed with the title membership and finance coordinator in June 2017. The current postholder, Comrade Ed, has been in position since May 2018.

The party takes this moment to place on record our thanks to those comrades who gave months and years of their lives to the development of the party organisation under conditions of real financial hardship as interns and party workers, and we thank and salute those comrades who contribute significant amounts to the CDC fund. Without these donations, a full-time coordinator would be unthinkable, and the progress towards dedicated regional organisers impossible.

Press

A party financial campaign that was initiated in 2014 was brought to a close having raised more than £20,000 for the purchase and

installation of a new press. The press started operation in 2015 and since that time has been operated by a handful of comrades to produce all the party leaflets, newspapers, and printed materials. Efforts have been made to train others on the press and work is ongoing to bring about the operation of party presses in other cities. We currently have three presses, with the London press now producing the CC bulletin, *London Worker*, and some leaflets.

The development of our print work is an assurance that in the difficult times which are to come, the party, faced with illegality, shall be able to continue to operate its own presses and produce revolutionary literature.

As groups grow and develop, the CDC and the CC will continue to look for opportunities to establish new presses and share the skills, as well as the work, that accompanies operation of a press.

Membership

Before the appointment of Comrade Paul Winstanley in June 2017, the party had failed to contact many of those who had applied for more information or membership of the party. The CC recognised that the party could not grow if this situation persisted. It recognised that the workload was heavy and a person must be engaged in this work full-time. That is the reason Paul was appointed membership and fundraising coordinator.

The party made significant improvement in contacting new applicants for membership after the appointment of Paul W in 2017. After July, we contacted 84 percent of applicants. Of those, Paul W concluded that 59 percent demonstrated that they were politically suitable to be accepted as candidate members. Two-thirds of those considered appropriate for membership have now paid up.

There will always be a small minority who are uncontactable; there will always be a small minority of applications which are prank or malicious. The vast majority of applicants are genuine and should be suitable for supporter or candidate member status.

The minimum requirement is the £24 to begin to receive papers. Regular standing orders and financial contributions now cover all the costs of distribution of party materials. This is a major advance since the last congress.

Financial commitment is now the first step to becoming eligible for membership of the party, although where local groups exist this does not preclude contacts attending meetings to get to know party comrades and our work. Placing financial commitment first may deter some whose commitment to socialism does not extend to £2 a month, but this is a positive development because it has freed up valuable time.

Significant leeway has been given to comrades who were behind on subs or semi-inactive in our ranks. Indulging those who fail to maintain good financial standing with the party is a drain on the party resources, jeopardises our party press, and eats into the precious time of the party's full-time coordinator. In the preparations for congress, all historically active party members who were behind on subs have been afforded the opportunity to make good their subs. Those who do not pay the established fees cannot be considered members of the party.

Those who do not work in some organised way, directed by the party, similarly cannot be considered party members, even if they make financial donations to the party. Party members have a responsibility to be firm with friends, family and comrades amongst our wider political family who fail to pay the established fees and act as a drain on the resources collected from those who do.

Regional variations and local conditions

It is important to view our progress in the context of a party at varying levels of development. Stronger branches always do better at meeting, signing up and retaining members. The stronger they get, the more activity and members they have, the easier it is to make contact, meet, and sign applicants up without the as-

sistance of a central directing person.

In the entire country, there are really only a few branches or groups that have demonstrated they are capable of this work. The development of the party therefore rests on the development of weaker branches and the formation of new ones.

Regions that are stronger are more able to progress applicants and payments themselves. Those regions that are fewer in number and weaker are more reliant upon direct intervention by the party centrally to ensure growth, particularly in those cities and towns outside of the ones in which we are currently organised.

For this reason, the party must have a full-time coordinator to devote his energies to this work, and our branches need to work closely with this coordinator to ensure his work is effective.

Political education

A large number of educational talks, presentations and speeches have been organised by the CDC in cities across the country. Party speakers have been sent to Glasgow, Newcastle, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Brighton, whilst larger branches have hosted and organised successful meetings jointly with non-party speakers including Vanessa Beeley, Eva Bartlett, and speakers from the Venezuelan embassy in London, Bristol and Birmingham.

A cadre development programme ran three courses in 2016-17, each lasting a minimum of three days. These courses covered Lenin's teachings on party building, the state and political economy. This work, although it was discontinued, made a significant contribution to the development of party cadres, Comrades Dan O'Brien and Ed Renyard were co-opted to the central committee, followed some months later by Comrades Rob Amos and Paul Winstanley. In June 2018, Comrade Dean Simon also joined the central committee.

The courses that were prepared for attendees also led to the

development of the national programme of inductions. Comrades Ed Renyard, Daniel O'Brien, Rob Amos, Paul Cannon, Joti Brar and Ranjeet Brar have all assisted in running induction schools for new applicants and candidate members in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Newcastle and Glasgow.

As the party continues to grow, we should expect these basic induction classes to be held with increasing regularity across the country for new applicants and long-serving candidates, and we should see the development of a more thorough course and political verification process for those seeking to become full members of the party.

Collective and individual study is paramount to ensure members are able to understand and communicate the party's positions on various issues, especially in these politically confusing times, and furthermore develop into worker-theoreticians capable of producing analysis and propaganda for the party.

Study classes and individual members should ensure that they are following the party's educational programme and that they are in this way acquiring a sound and broad fundamental knowledge of Marxism-Leninism. The programme is available on *londonworker.org* and will be produced in pamphlet form for distribution to members and new applicants.

Work to build the party

Lenin observed:

The character of any organisation is naturally and inevitably determined by the content of its activity.*

Our party, despite its relatively small size, carries out important political work. What form does this take? Are we able to lead

* VI Lenin, *What is To Be Done?*, 1901.

strikes or to organise demonstrations that challenge state power? At the present moment, clearly not. But it is our duty to develop a strategy capable of moving our organisation from its current level of development to that point.

Our scope of work has until now been largely restricted to theoretical and propaganda work. This represents one of our greatest strengths. An all-round understanding of Marxism-Leninism and its application to the contemporary political problems faced by British workers and the wider toiling masses worldwide, languishing as humanity is under the wage-slavery imposed by monopoly capitalism, is what marks us out from so many groups, larger in size but impotent in the face of their pressing tasks.

But we cannot allow this great strength – which has made our small organisation a bastion of the revolutionary movement today – to blind us to our own significant shortcomings. We must not be content with resting on our 'laurels'. We must relentlessly pursue the path that will lead to higher and broader development of working-class consciousness and set British workers on the path to an understanding of their true task: to take power.

Our propaganda seeks to explain a multitude of ideas to our audience, and the best method for this has been our newspapers, our excellent new website (rightly regarded as the 'best on the left') and, increasingly, our YouTube channel and other social media.

Agitational work differs from propaganda work in that it attempts to communicate our ideas creatively and powerfully, but centred around a single issue that is of great significance to the masses at that particular moment, so winning support and sympathy for the party from a broad group of workers. Any comrade who has attempted to give a message of greeting to striking workers at the gates or expose the crimes of imperialism in an antiwar meeting will understand the pitfalls of trying to say too much. Agitational work, like agitational slogans, must be pithy, accessible, and clear.

Our output of agitational material has greatly increased in recent

years, and this can be observed in our huge increase in production and distribution of leaflets, the accompanying frustrations of branches that have too few, and the growing burden on our print workers, who have been run ragged by an increasingly hungry party machine. We now require in the region of 65,000 leaflets a year to satisfy the demands of branches, an incredible amount for such a small organisation.

The topic, the subject, the matter at hand in these materials varies greatly, but increasingly the practical work of most of our groups boils down to distribution of socialist literature amongst as broad a section of British society as we are able to reach.

The trend is that our branches demand leaflets. It is influenced by many factors, but it in no way diminishes the role of the newspapers; they each play vastly different roles. How could any party member or advanced worker hope to be politically educated on the basis of party leaflets alone? How could the party hope to provide ample literature, giving the widest possible political exposures for the broadest sections of British society, through the production of *Proletarian* and *Larkar* alone?

Because of our commitment to Marxist-Leninist analysis, we have inherited, and continue to develop, our press and publications work. This work is now capable of unfolding on a greater scale on its present basis, and should comrades step forward who are determined to learn and master the print technique, there is no reason that we cannot double our output.

At the time of the 2014 congress, a leaflet print-run of 5,000 would have been considered extraordinary, and would perhaps have been considered for only the largest trade union mobilisation. Now we routinely distribute 5,000 copies of any leaflet amongst our groups, popular agitational leaflets for strikes or for single-issue campaigns like NHS privatisation have been printed and distributed in tens of thousands of copies. Not only can we physically afford and produce these quantities, we now possess the members to distribute such numbers of leaflets.

No matter how weak and small, all of our groups are capable, with the correct attitude and leadership, of leafleting. The more advanced comrades are already targeting their leaflets at strikes, workplaces, and electioneering, whilst even the weakest groups are able to hold street stalls or leaflet outside shops and railways with the right encouragement. Every small group, if undertaking this work properly, is capable of contributing towards a mighty distribution of socialist literature.

Of course, we understand the limitations of leafleting and aspire to much greater work, but taken in the context of the current political climate and soberly assessing the forces at our disposal, we should aim to carry out such work on the largest possible scale. It is inconceivable that without this mass agitational activity British workers, currently dominated by bourgeois ideology and lacking even the rudiments of class consciousness in many instances, would be capable of raising themselves to participating in a revolutionary movement against the bourgeois state.

Our agitational work has been most successful when it has focused on issues that affect the broad masses. Highlighting the ongoing NHS privatisation, campaigning around the EU referendum, and support leaflets for striking workers that also expose social-democratic treachery during industrial disputes have all been political exposures carried out on a broad basis. The continuing improvement of targeted leaflets and political exposures gives our party the opportunity to communicate to huge numbers of people.

Our party presses are capable of producing the numbers, and only the better organisation of leafleting at factories, strikes, outside railway stations and in public spaces stands in the way of our party aiming to distribute a quarter of a million leaflets a year by the time of the next congress. Such a scale of work not only takes a socialist message to an unprecedented number of workers, it also trains our willing comrades in every aspect of the work, from its production through to its dissemination.

The coming period, with the possibility of a Corbyn government, the ever-present threat of war and mutual annihilation, the continuing deterioration (no matter how slowly) of the living standards in the imperialist countries, presents avenues of huge opportunity for a Marxist-Leninist political party.

The global financial crisis rolls on, and if it is the contention of the Thatcherite libertarians that 'the rising tide (of capitalist economy) raises all boats', benefiting rich and poor alike, then it is our duty to point out to the masses that the tsunami of monopoly capitalist crisis of overproduction will in fact *sink* rich and poor alike – bringing *billions* of our fellow workers poverty, insecurity, starvation, disease, misery, environmental catastrophe and death. Wealthy nations like Britain cannot escape this crisis, any more than can wealthy individuals (much as they delude themselves) or any other nation, except through collective solutions – and that means putting power in the hands of working people, whose interest it is to solve them.

Britain's youth face a future in which jobs are scarce, insecure and underpaid. The Blairite mantra 'Education, education, education' and universal university education has been shown up as a hollow phrase under capitalist economic conditions, as £27,000-£54,000 will be the cost of fees for three to six-year university courses. Add on living expenses, and university students will walk away with £100,000 of debt – money that, given the depressed state of wages – they will have great difficulty recouping in the workplace.

Unemployment, rising house prices and rental charges mean that even the children of formerly reasonably well-off so-called 'middle-class' workers are unable to produce the lifestyle of their parents' generation. There is an increasingly large pool of disenfranchised and angry working-class youth who have no stake in the system.

Our capitalist masters wish to promote the idea that the system's failings are in fact the *individual* failings of each worker who

is struggling. It is our duty to enlighten and recruit these working-class youth, rather than letting them fall prey to depression, despondency and despair, or be led down the right-wing blind alley of sectarian or supremacist ideology.

Our young comrades must organise effectively and contribute to the production of material (in blogs such as Red Youth, or leaflets for distribution at freshers' fairs and schools, or via their local branches) that brings this message home to their fellow working-class youth.

Our unmatched Marxist analysis *must* continue, and cannot be dependent upon comrades such as Harpal and Ella for its production. Marxist dialectics subjects all phenomena to the power of human reason, including the realms of human history and contemporary society. No problem is insoluble to the rising class armed with Marxist understanding and organised by a Leninist party.

All comrades must take responsibility for advancing their education and bringing on their family, friends, comrades and contacts. Young comrades should aim to organise, to lead, to speak, to recruit, to write and to teach. There is no better way of learning than through applying your knowledge.

Our redeveloped website is the envy of other organisations. It is essential to ensure a wider availability of all our literature on the website, ideally all papers pamphlets and books should be available as PDFs or via Kindle reader, etc.

YouTube videos of our meetings and analysis have proved an essential part of our growth. Recently we have seen increasing censorship on the grounds of 'antisemitism' and small social media campaigns (alleging that we communists, unlike our ruling Conservative party, harbour racism and other forms of bigotry!) aimed at decreasing the following of the party, and all members must help to counter this. We will need to think of placing our material on alternative platforms to ensure it cannot be easily censored. Comrades should seek to get involved with this work.

Paper circulation of *Proletarian* and *Lalkar* is vital to the sustained

growth of the party. It will increase with active membership and those who are able and prepared to sell it. Regularly committing to taking a number of papers and selling them on will help this work and must become a part of our party culture. We must wherever possible ensure that the topic that is most animating the working class and/or news-media is addressed prominently on the front page of our journals, to ensure our excellent material gains a wider audience that is not restricted to our immediate members and supporters alone.

It is necessary, *but it is not sufficient*, to ensure that our excellent topical leaflets are available to download and print in small numbers for distribution at local events. That will suffice for some individuals and the most primitive fledgling branches, but as we have a growing number of active units, cells, study classes, groups and regions, we must ensure that they are well supplied with the powerful national voice of the party in print. Where topics touch us all (NHS, war, Brexit, housing), or local affairs gain national significance (certain strikes and events such as the Manchester bombings, etc), our comrades on the spot must be helped to produce timely and high-quality agitational literature, and this in turn can be distributed nationally via *Proletarian* and the website, or in leaflet form.

An increased dissemination of our excellent agitational material is key to our immediate growth and development. Every leaflet should have a clear means of contacting the party (ideally locally, but otherwise nationally). Every leaflet signposts the way to a broader understanding via our impressive online body of literature, now beautifully packaged and presented.

We have increasingly seen that workers who take our literature and study our message return to the party as supporters and can progress to become members and cadres. A great mass of agitational material will therefore supplement this process, ensuring that which we all desire – a professional, organised, disciplined party, trusted by the broadest possible section of the working

class, and ready to use the inevitable unfolding crisis of capitalism to fuel the development of a militant working-class movement.

We must position ourselves to be the trusted voice of workers in struggle, wherever that struggle is taking place. Capitalism creates its own gravediggers.

We must organise them into a mighty liberating army.

Cadre Development Committee

5. International Secretary

The years since our last congress have been extraordinarily eventful, as US and EU imperialism continue to sink painfully into decline while China and Russia gradually gain ascendancy.

The war against Syria

This is most clearly seen in Syria, whose government, at war since 2011 with jihadis of mostly foreign origin, who have been trained and backed by US imperialism, and which is now, thanks to Russian military backing and that of the Iranians and Hezbollah, on the verge of taking back the whole of the country.

The aim of the jihadis was to overthrow the Syrian government headed by President Bashar al-Assad, but their fortunes began to decline when they started to take more interest in fighting each other than in fighting the Syrian government. At this point, US imperialism began to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' terrorists in Syria: the former acting according to its master's wishes; the latter bent upon removing as much of the middle east as possible back to the seventh century.

Neither fundamentalist grouping was to the liking of the vast majority of the Syrian people, with the result that even opponents of the government who were in the least patriotic stood with the

government against all the terrorists, whether they continued to be US-backed or not. Therefore, the Syrian people greeted with joy Russian military intervention on their behalf at the invitation of their government.

Nevertheless, the fighting has been very vicious, with the fundamentalists being equipped by their various reactionary sponsors – the US, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states and Turkey, all with their own agendas – with all the latest and most lethal weaponry, and receiving from them tremendous logistical and financial support, as a result of which they have not given up their positions without fights that destroyed practically all the housing in the cities they had occupied, as well as the civilian infrastructure there.

With Russian support, however, the jihadis have now been cleared out of city after city, with only Idlib province (adjoining Turkey) remaining in enemy hands – and that too is now surrounded by government forces. It only remains to be seen whether yet another false-flag chemical attack will be staged to provide an excuse for US imperialism and its satellites in Europe to try to intervene militarily to stave off final defeat – at the cost of thousands more civilian lives and livelihoods.

Because US imperialism, desperate that the war against the Assad government was being lost, turned to supporting the Kurdish separatist YPG, Turkey, which faces problems with its own Kurdish separatists, indignantly refused to continue to cooperate with the US and is instead moving closer to Russia, thereby considerably weakening the front of the Syrian government's opponents.

Ever-rising levels of debt

The combination of the shock of the economic crisis of over-production that was unleashed in 2007-08, along with the cost of the various wars being pursued by or on behalf of imperialism, is causing indebtedness worldwide to escalate.

Since 2006, per capita public debt in the United States, for instance, has more than tripled and now stands at 94 percent of GDP. In the UK, public debt is 104 percent of GDP, up from 42.5 percent in 2006, and it's the same story in all the imperialist countries. Repaying and servicing that debt falls on the working-class masses, including sections that have previously enjoyed quite a bit of privilege compared to the ordinary masses – ie, the skilled and highly-educated workers.

The result is rising anger among the masses throughout the imperialist world, leading them to exercise their voting rights in ways that cause problems for the ruling class – hence the election of Trump as president in the USA, the Brexit vote in Britain, and the support for 'populist' parties in many European countries. For the most part, imperialism is able to misdirect the anger of the masses against immigrants, or to cause one section of the proletarian community to resent some other section for an infinite variety of reasons, but more and more people are coming to the realisation, albeit instinctively, that the problem is capitalism, even if they still hold to the illusion that capitalism can be reformed.

In spite of its heavy expenditure on war, imperialism has proved incapable of imposing its will on any of the countries it has attacked – whether Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya or Syria, notwithstanding all the death and destruction visited upon their peoples. Undeterred, the US is certainly contemplating military intervention in Syria and in Venezuela, quite unable to accept that such intervention will only harden the determination of the people to fight the aggressor so that they simply refuse to be defeated. However, war after war is bound to follow, as imperialism vainly seeks to maintain and extend its domination, and the US and European armaments industries continue to make fabulous profits.

The continuing significance of Palestine

An important instrument for imperialism maintaining some kind of a bridgehead in the oil-rich middle east is Israel, created through the dispossession of millions of Palestinian people, who were driven out of their homes and the land from which they made their livings.

Out of sympathy for jews arising out of the horror of the jewish holocaust, many wellmeaning people turned a blind eye to the monstrous injustice that the creation of Israel resulted in for millions of innocent Arabs – but as that injustice continues year after year, with ever more Palestinian land being forcibly replaced by jews-only settlements, and more and more takeover of territory that was supposed to be reserved for a Palestinian state by virtue of the Oslo Accords, public sympathy for Israel is fast evaporating.

The result is a Goebbelsian assault by imperialism and its zionist puppets, intended to equate any opposition to the existence of a jewish state, and any criticism of Israel's treatment of Arabs, as racist and antisemitic. In Britain, we see the Labour party being browbeaten into accepting a 'definition' of antisemitism as including anti-zionism, which is being hysterically played up in the bourgeois media, although it is likely the majority of people are simply not convinced.

According to a poll taken last year by the Institute of Jewish Policy Research, about 70 percent of the population of Britain had a favourable opinion of jews and did not hold any antisemitic ideas or views. On the other hand, the poll found that

The position of the British population towards Israel can be characterised as one of uncertainty or indifference, but among those who hold a view, people with sympathies towards the Palestinians are numerically dominant.

And this in a country which the report on the poll admits has one of the lowest rates of antisemitism in the world!

In Israel itself, both the newspaper *Haaretz* and the *Times of Israel* have published articles condemning the conflation of anti-zionism with antisemitism – although this is a minority view in Israel, as might be expected.

Protectionism and trade wars

Because of the relatively high and growing level of dissatisfaction among the electorates of the imperialist countries, pressure is building up in those countries to try to recover their economic strength at the expense of others. Hence the outbreak, led by US President Trump, of trade wars, and the erection of tariff barriers with a view, theoretically, to repatriating jobs. Snatch millions of jobs from poor people round the world and create a handful of jobs for relatively well-off people in America – that's the way to make America great, according to this twisted thinking.

The trade barriers the US is erecting are aimed not only at the burgeoning economies of the Brics countries but also at the faltering economies of the US's allies in Europe.

Part of the problems faced by the imperialist countries today arises from the fact that their traditional superexploitation of Asia, Africa and Latin America is to some extent being curtailed because China has been active in all these regions offering fair trade terms, thus enabling the countries concerned to turn down foreign investment that is conditional on the acceptance of super-exploitative terms. This also weakens imperialism and makes all the more desperate its drive by both financial and military means to extend its world domination – to keep China out!

Supporting the forces of socialism and anti-imperialism

China, however, is going from strength to strength, asserting its control over the South China Sea at the expense of US domination of the area, building up its military strength and extending its commercial reach to every corner of the globe. Through its Belt and Road initiative, it hopes to break the imperialist stranglehold that has held back the development of so many Asian countries so that all are able to flourish economically as never before.

Throughout this period, our party has remained loyal to the socialist Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), defending its right to develop and have a nuclear deterrent thanks to the socialist economy that enables it to maintain such an advanced industry despite the draconian imperialist sanctions enforced against it. We have continued every year to celebrate our anti-imperialist barbecue around the date of the DPRK's victory, with fraternal assistance from communist China, against the combined forces of US imperialism, its fellow imperialists and various other satellites in 1953.

We are most happy to note that one consequence of US imperialism raising tariffs against the import of Chinese manufactured goods is that any temporary concessions that China may have made to the US-inspired sanctions regime against the DPRK appear to be falling away. The DPRK is a country that is very brave and stalwart in defending its right to maintain a socialist system of economy. It deserves the wholehearted and unreserved support at all times of any progressive person or country.

Since the last congress, our party has extended its international contacts. We have maintained friendly and cordial relations with the Korean, Cuban, Venezuelan and Laotian embassies; our representatives have participated in Seminars in China, the Czech Republic, France (on Korea), and Brazil; and in May Day celebrations in France, Sri Lanka and South Korea at the invitation of the

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JVP and the People's Democratic Party respectively. Our delegates also attended a Stalin Society meeting in New Delhi this year; summer camps organised by the Communist Party of Sweden, and a lecture tour in Spain organised by the Union Proletaria.

Ella Rule

MOTIONS

1. Rule changes

*A new set of party rules was adopted by the congress.
The updated programme and rules document is published separately.*

Proposed by the Cadre Development Committee

Passed unanimously.

2. Decent education for all

This congress recognises that the purpose of education is twofold. To equip adults with the skills and knowledge for them to contribute usefully to society and to enable them as individuals to realise their full scientific and creative potential. Utility and self-fulfilment being two arms of the one body.

The sharing of knowledge and cooperation in production is the basis of human civilisation, which has enabled mankind to rise

above mere survival and achieve incredible feats of engineering and artistry. Where education and scientific research has been deployed in the service of humanity it has brought about tremendous advances. The productive capacity of humanity on a global scale now means that we produce more than enough food for the entire current population of the world, some 7.5 billion people.

We have already have eliminated many diseases and we have the potential to eradicate all. We can instantly communicate across the globe and travel to most places on earth in under a day or two. We continue to explore the earth and we have begun to explore space. Yet in large parts of the world, there is not only no education or training provided, but not even clean running water or electricity, as these resources are reserved only for the parasitic landowning and bourgeois elites.

This congress notes that today in Britain, rather than education and vocational training being viewed as a social necessity and individual necessity required for the full flourishing of society as a whole as well as the individuals within it, education and training are treated as a commodity, which is sold to the working class as a product that will provide a higher income to them as individuals, irrespective of its social utility or its ability to enhance the individual life.

Congress believes that all education and training from creche and kindergarten through school, university, vocational college and on to adult lifelong learning and retraining should be provided free, along with full maintenance grants to full-time pupils and students, that sufficient teachers should be educated, trained and provided, and that vocational training should be awarded equal respect to academic education, since the plumber is as useful and as necessary as the sanitation engineer.

Recognising the above, congress resolves that the party's demands regarding education are:

1. The expulsion of all private interests in education, including the abolition of academies and their return to the state school

system and the end of private provision of goods and services to educational institutions, with all staff brought in-house with realistic wages and full employment rights.

2. The abolition of private, religious and ethnically-divided schools.

3. The abolition of tuition fees in all institutions at all levels of education.

4. The provision of maintenance grants to cover living expenses of working-class students and their families, from creche and kindergarten through nursery, to school, undergraduate and higher-degree level.

5. Changes in the syllabuses and teaching methods should reflect the scientific, historical and artistic needs and interests of working-class people, including the teaching of materialist philosophy, science and working-class history and politics.

Proposed by Daniel O'Brien

Passed unanimously with amendment.

Amendment to motion 2

In the last point amend as follows:

. . . materialist philosophy of science . . .

Replace with:

. . . materialist philosophy, science . . .

Proposed by Paul Cannon

Passed unanimously.

Speech on amendment: The significance of dialectical materialism for science

Comrades, I wholeheartedly support this motion and commend the author for a well-written, concise motion and set of demands. My amendment is concerned with only a small but not insignificant line concerning the 'materialist philosophy of science'.

I raise this because it is incorrect to talk about a 'materialist philosophy of science', and obscures to the general reader the revolutionary significance of Marxist philosophy. Since many new students of Marxism are in our ranks today and still more will read our resolutions, it is incumbent upon us to be especially clear in questions of science and philosophy.

The sentence as it currently stands confuses Marxist philosophical materialism with the development of the natural sciences. Science has furnished no philosophy of its own, and no philosophy is independent from social life; there is no 'materialist philosophy of science'.

The history of the development of the natural sciences demonstrates that they broke from the ancient philosophical stranglehold and developed independently, specialising in their respective fields. This process took centuries.

The natural sciences were forced to do this as the philosophical world outlook of ancient society was a fetter on their development, and thus a fetter upon the productive forces.

It is not hard to imagine what the fate of biological science would have been if it had not broken with the notion that illnesses were 'divine punishment' and that healing was a 'gift from the gods'.

The breach between philosophy and science had ramifications for the historical development of philosophy, not least its centuries-long flirtation with idealism, and an ivory tower existence

enforced by feudalism.

With the development of the various branches of natural science as independent special subjects – physics, chemistry, biology etc – discoveries were based on empirical evidence gathered from observation and experimentation.

We all know the general development of these sciences – the progressive, ascending development of man's knowledge of the surrounding world and the impact this has had upon the productive forces and man himself. These discoveries were not the result of a 'materialist philosophy of science' – in many cases, and as can still be seen today, the natural sciences remained enmeshed in the tangled weeds of idealism.

Despite this, man's knowledge of the surrounding world continues to advance from the lower to the higher plane. For philosophy, as a distinct science of its own, the significance of the development of the natural sciences lies in the fact that they furnished proof that nature's processes are dialectical.

Engels wrote:

Nature is the test of dialectics and it must be said for modern natural science that it has furnished extremely rich and daily increasing materials for this test, and has thus proved that in the last analysis nature's process is dialectical and not metaphysical.*

The materialistic outlook on nature (wrote Engels) means no more than simply conceiving nature just as it exists, without any foreign admixture.†

The foreign admixture to which Engels refers is contained in the various philosophical fancies of man, and these have been

* F Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, 1880, Chapter 2.

† F Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, 1883.

many and varied until the natural sciences furnished proof of the validity of the dialectical materialist world outlook, causing Lenin to remark:

Dialectical materialism no longer needs any philosophy standing above the other sciences. Of former philosophy there remains the science of thought and its laws – formal logic and dialectics. And dialectics, as understood by Marx, and in conformity with Hegel, includes what is now called epistemology, which, too, must regard its subject matter historically, studying and generalising the origin and development of knowledge, the transition from non-knowledge to knowledge.*

In the words of Stalin:

Dialectical materialism is the world outlook of the Marxist-Leninist party. It is called dialectical materialism because its approach to the phenomena of nature, its method of studying and apprehending them, is dialectical, while its interpretation of the phenomena of nature, its conception of these phenomena, its theory, is materialistic.†

In propaganda dealing with philosophy and science, it is important that we make clear that Marxist philosophy is not a science above other sciences; it is an instrument of scientific investigation. Furthermore, science can furnish no philosophy of its own, since philosophy cannot be independent of social life.

Therefore there is no 'materialist philosophy of science'; there is only Marxist philosophical materialism.

Our world outlook, dialectical materialism, must be studied so as to ensure that it is not used as an incantation to be invoked

* 'Karl Marx' by VI Lenin, 1914.

† 'Dialectical and historical materialism' by JV Stalin, 1938.

by philistines to justify their fancies, habits or tastes, especially those that run counter to nature, and for that reason I propose the amended form of words to this motion, and wholeheartedly endorse the proposals outlined today.

Paul Cannon

3. Employment

This congress recognises that all adults have a duty to work in a useful fashion, according to their talents and abilities, and that society has an equal duty to ensure useful employment is available to all, part-time or full-time according to the domestic, health and lifecycle constraints of the worker.

Congress also recognises that useful work well done for collective benefit gives personal fulfilment.

In the circumstances prevailing in Britain today, this congress resolves to advance the following demands in the immediate interests of the working class:

1. All employers should provide a safe and dignified environment, with wages and benefits that allow all workers not only to have the necessities, but to live a culturally fulfilling life.
2. All jobs should ensure access to suitable vocational or academic education, either within or without the workplace, and all apprenticeships should provide a wage to apprentices, which not only provides the necessities, but allows a culturally fulfilling life.
3. All jobs should be made accessible to the working class based on ability, rather than class or other characteristics.
4. All jobs should ensure that time is given to workers not only for education and training, but also for family and cultural pur-

suits, as well as for leisure and holidays.

5. An end to zero-hour contracts and an end to fake self-employment, which are used to deny workers job security and many other employment rights, including sick and holiday pay.

6. Councils to return to in-house or direct labour employment to end the anti-worker and safety-cutting practices inherent in contracting work out to profit-motivated companies.

7. The abolition of anti-trade union laws, including the postal ballot and the laws against secondary 'flying' pickets and sympathy strikes.

8. The reduction of the age of retirement to 60 for all workers.

This congress instructs all branches to forward these demands, to build strong ties with local workers and provide support during local as well as national disputes.

To this end, branches must be informed and understand the particular forces and characters at play not just in national, but in local business and industry, and to produce propaganda and agitate amongst the broadest sections of the working class as well as the advanced workers.

Proposed by Daniel O'Brien

Passed unanimously.

4. Housing

This congress notes that every day we face the insanity whereby there are more than a million surplus houses while over 250,000 people are homeless, of whom official statistics conservatively estimate that at least 4,500 are living on the streets, while the rest are moved between bed and breakfasts and other temporary

accommodation with no stability and generally in poor housing.

In addition, hundreds of thousands live in desperate housing conditions, many failing to keep pace with spiraling rents as private landlords capitalise on the acute housing shortage. The luckier workers waste their lives paying mortgages that in many instances account for half the family income, hoping to be 'home-owners' by the time the state comes to sell their property to pay for their carehome costs.

This congress remembers the horrific fire at Grenfell Tower in London, which killed so many working-class people. The fire was a tragedy that demonstrated the terrible reality of housing in Britain today. A tragedy that should never be repeated but one that under capitalism has every chance of recurring as a result of the financial corners cut and the cost savings made by housing developers at the expense of the health, safety and fundamentally the lives of those occupying the houses/flats.

This congress believes that houses should be homes for people, that shelter and a secure family life is a right for every worker. Houses should not, as they are under capitalism, be commodities, sold only to those who can afford to buy or rent them, rather than provided for those who need them. By its utter inability to solve the housing question and meet this basic need of working people, the capitalist system is providing yet more proof that it is well past its use-by date and due for demolition.

This congress believes that the welfare of workers can only be safeguarded by a socialist system of economy, controlled and administered by the working people themselves. As Engels so aptly put it:

As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist, it is folly to hope for an isolated solution to the housing question or of any other social question affecting the fate of the workers. The solution lies in the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the appropriation of all the means of life and labour by the

working class itself.*

This congress recognises that we benefit from the experiences and examples of socialist and progressive countries such as the Soviet Union, Cuba, the DPRK and Venezuela. In seeking to put the case for socialism to British workers we should continue to highlight these examples, which show first hand the achievements made by working people. These achievements have the potential to resonate with British workers when, for example, it can be pointed out that in the Soviet Union rents were as little as 2 percent of income, or that surplus and large houses were nationalised to provide housing for those in need.

This congress resolves to better research examples from socialist and progressive countries for use in highlighting what is possible when people are put first in society and the economy is driven by human need and planned accordingly, rather than being driven by the expansion of capital with housing a profit-making commodity.

This congress resolves to use our demands, set out below, within local housing campaigns and local communities to highlight how capitalism, by contrast, is unable to organise society to meet even these simple demands.

Our demands:

1. Scrap the 2016-17 housing bill: the immediate scrapping of the 2016-17 housing bill, which threatens hundreds of thousands with poverty and homelessness.

2. Build council houses not 'affordable homes': the provision of at least 300,000 new council houses per year to end the crisis.

3. Guarantee secure social housing: guaranteed, secure and well-maintained social housing for all who want it, close to

* F Engels, *The Housing Question*, 1872.

people's work and families, and the abolition of divisive allocation criteria.

4. Council ownership not ALMOs: the return of housing association and 'non-profit' properties to council ownership.

5. Abolish housing charities: the abolition of housing charities and the reintroduction of the legal right to decent, secure housing for all; slums, overcrowding and homelessness are an indictment on capitalism and a crime against humanity.

6. Set a rent cap: the introduction of a rent cap at 20 percent of minimum wage for all privately rented accommodation, and the scrapping of housing benefit (a subsidy to landlords that has helped to fuel rent rises).

7. Protect existing council housing: the scrapping of all schemes that fuel prices, create shortages and offer subsidies to landlords and developers.

8. Use existing surplus housing stock: the confiscation of all surplus homes and unfinished developments and their transformation into council housing.

9. Provide decent homes for all: the establishment of residents' management committees to oversee planning and maintenance and ensure that all workers have access to adequate space, necessary amenities and decent facilities, including having usable and pleasant outdoor spaces and community halls.

Proposed by Katt Cremer

Passed unanimously.

The major controversy at the congress arose on the question of the party's attitude to LGBT+ ideology.

Motions 5, 6, 7 and 8 on the topic of identity politics generally and LGBT+ ideology in particular were discussed together.

Selected speeches from the debate are reproduced here after the motions.

Two party pamphlets: Identity Politics and the Transgender Trend and Identity Politics or Class Politics? have been published separately.

5. The party's stance on LGBT+ rights

This congress notes that many comrades in the party are ignorant of LGBT+ rights in this country and worldwide. The stance many comrades take on the LGBT+ rights movement is that it is not linked with the working-class struggle and serves only to distract the masses. This attitude has led to alienating many potential members who are part of the LGBT+ community or those who feel strongly about fighting for LGBT+ rights.

This congress believes that the struggle of LGBT+ workers should be recognised by the party in the same way the struggle of working women and workers of oppressed ethnicities are recognised, and that the party should provide a dialectical-materialist analysis for the oppression of LGBT+ people in the same way it has for the oppression of women and racism. With most LGBT+ movements being overtaken by liberalism, a Marxist analysis is sorely needed to show the LGBT+ community that their emancipation lies in a socialist society (as has been shown in Cuba).

This congress wishes to resolve this issue by making the party more inclusive of LGBT+ workers in the following ways:

- Having LGBT+ comrades in the party collaborate and create a pamphlet on the history of LGBT+ rights to be shared internally within the party.
- Having LGBT+ comrades write an article on the history of LGBT+ rights in the UK and how Marxist movements were involved for Lalkar.

- Having the party attend and leaflet at Pride events across the country.

Proposed by Khalid Talati

Defeated.

6. LGBT and transgender rights

This congress notes that a right-opportunist trend has appeared in the party in regard to LGBT rights, particularly transgender rights. This has resulted in the ridiculing and mocking of transgendered people as though they were an abomination, as though they were alien to the broad masses of the people of this island.

This congress believes that all working-class people of the LGBT community are allies of the general proletarian movement and the fight for socialism. All party members must uphold the principle of fighting for and defending all the working class, whether they are heterosexual or gay, lesbian or bisexual, or whether they are transgendered or not. The working class contains a very small amount of people that are regarded as transgendered. Most transgendered people are working class, just as most LGBT people are. Their natural place is with the working class in the fight for socialism.

This congress resolves to uphold the line of defence of all the working class, irrespective of sex, sexuality, gender, gender identity, creed, race, etc.

Proposed by Mitchell Wells

Defeated.

Amendment to motion 6

In the first paragraph replace the line

'This congress notes that a right-opportunist trend has appeared in the party' with

'This congress notes that socially conservative and right-opportunist views are being promoted by some members in the party'.

In the second paragraph, insert between the words 'are' and 'allies' the word 'potential', to read:

... LGBT community are potential allies ...

Proposed by Mitchell Wells

Defeated.

7. Identity politics

This congress recognises the current confusion among members of the party regarding identity politics.

The principle is that to take the correct line we must recognise the kernel of truth in identity politics as a step to class consciousness, and necessarily critique both its internal contradictions as well as how this has been reified and co-opted in capitalism. This will allow us to both take the correct line while respectfully showing other workers and young people the poverty and contradictions of their own thinking.

Firstly, we must recognise what identity politics is: simply that the immediacy of identity is elevated into a principle. This holds that women are more oppressed than men, that black men are more oppressed than white men, and that black women are more oppressed than black men. We can see that this is without concrete content and remains abstract, along with all of the contradictions that manifest itself from taking either race or gender as a self-evident apparition and the defining factor of oppression.

To negate this is paramount, but – as dialectical materialists – it must not be negated abstractly, by refusing its terms outright and throwing LGBT struggles under the bus. It must be negated by the content of material reality and how the manifestation of capitalism exists in class and identity after identifying its naive kernel of truth.

In this context, then, the class element must be added concretely – to follow the lines of the naivety of identity politics and to expose its contradiction to material reality. This is very achievable, merely by exposing the fact that Barack Obama was far more privileged than homeless white men or that Margaret Thatcher held far more power than white men who were miners. Here, both its class content and contradictions are revealed and it is in that way that we can expose the poverty of identity politics without falling into reaction – and it is through this simple contradiction that we can raise people's class consciousness.

The proposal for action is for the party to take an appropriately Marxist-Leninist and correct line on the question of identity politics, and to critique it without succumbing to chauvinism or reactionary arguments common among the right wing and fascists.

Proposed by George Buchanan

Defeated.

8. Identity politics (emergency motion)

While being totally opposed to discrimination on grounds of race, sex or sexual proclivity, this congress declares that obsession with identity politics, including sexual politics, is anti-Marxian.

Congress therefore resolves that the propagation of identity politics, including LGBT ideology, being reactionary and anti-working class and a harmful distraction and diversion from the class struggle of the proletariat for its social emancipation, is incompatible with membership of the party, rendering those involved in its promotion liable to expulsion.

Proposed by the central committee

Passed overwhelmingly.

Speech: Gay rights is not a class issue

First of all, I want to address the issue of why we give priority to the question of the oppression of women and to fighting racism but do not give the issue of LGBT rights the same priority.

The answer to this is straightforward. Our party exists to promote the interests of the working class as a *class*, and to assist it in overthrowing the rule of the bourgeois class and establishing its own class rule. *In that context*, the question of LGBT is not a class question.

The question of women's oppression, that is a class question, because when society was divided into classes, then as a result of that, women became the domestic slaves of men, and the only way of finally getting rid of that status is to abolish classes. Therefore the interests of working-class women are intimately

bound up with the struggle of the working class as a whole for its emancipation.

Women's liberation is absolutely 100 percent a class question.

The question of racism is also a class question, related to imperialism. As imperialism has gone all over the world, in order to mobilise the white workers at home to help them in their rape of the whole world, the colour question has become: 'Well you know, these people are black, they're inferior.' If white workers continue to harbour such prejudices, however, it will be impossible to bring about sufficient unity in the working class for it to be able to overcome the power of bourgeois rule.

That is why the question of racism is very much a class question.

Now the question of people being unpleasant to others who are a bit different, that is *not* a class question. We don't approve of being mean to people who are different. We don't approve of mocking people because they have wooden legs or are different in any other way. It tends to be a feature of human nature, but of course we are opposed to people being persecuted for being a bit different to the norm.

Only a minority of people are gay, and only a very tiny minority of people have gender dysphoria. However, these people are harmless to society and there is absolutely no need to persecute them.

The western imperialist bourgeoisie has suddenly discovered and embraced gay and transgender rights, which only yesterday it was vigorously opposing, to the point that today it is those who raise even the slightest question over even the most absurd demands of self-appointed LGBT activists who find themselves persecuted.

The advantage to the bourgeoisie of its newly-discovered enthusiasm for gay rights is that *it can use them to castigate oppressed countries* who stick to traditional religious prejudices on this issue whenever they fail to fall in line with imperialist demands.

Needless to say, the full force of this 'human rights' assault never falls on such client states of imperialism as Saudi Arabia, but only on those countries that resist imperialist hegemony. *An excessive obsession with LGBT rights can therefore lead the unwary into backing imperialism against anti-imperialist governments.*

But, to return to the question of the demands of the self-appointed LGBT activists. Unlike ordinary people who happen to be gay or transgender, they are not happy with simply being allowed to live their lives in peace and without discrimination; it is not just a question of men and women wanting to be accepted even though they're different.

For the so-called activists, it is a question of going far further than that, to the point of absurdity. Transgender activists want us, for instance, to encourage little boys and little girls who prefer the lifestyle that society offers to people of the opposite sex to the one that accords to their own sex to actually physically mutilate themselves in order to achieve the appearance of a person of the other sex.

Now I was saying earlier to another comrade that both she and I, when we were eight, nine and ten, we cut our hair short and we wanted to be boys; we desperately wanted to be boys. Well, you know, in those days it was just accepted that some girls wanted to be boys, and nobody thought that strange in the least.

An example was the character Georgina (George) in Enid Blyton's Famous Five books. They were called tomboys and expected to grow out of it, which for the most part they did. Generally speaking, these girls on reaching puberty were more than happy to be girls and not boys, and to have boyfriends and not girlfriends. Only a tiny minority would have genuine gender dysphoria.

It was of course much harder for little boys who preferred the lifestyle offered to little girls, and they would no doubt have been pressurised into concealing that preference, but there's no saying that in their case, too, puberty would change everything for most of them.

Nowadays, any 'tomboy' would be encouraged to think: 'Well, have an operation, have hormones, have an artificial extension' – as a young child. That would honestly ruin their lives. If that had happened to me and I had been allowed to have hormone treatment to make myself more into a boy when I was clearly a girl, then it would have ruined my life.

We do want to represent the *whole* of the working class, *including* those people who happen to be LGBT. Not accepting the absurdities being promoted by self-appointed 'activists' means acting in the real interests of the working class, including those who happen to be LGBT, not against them, however genuinely such 'activists' may believe in the absurdities they are promoting.

Actually, the working class as a whole has a lot of common sense, and their attitude will be: 'I'm sorry but a man's a man and a woman's a woman and you're not going to be able to mess me around.' Any party that is claiming to be serious, but actually expects workers to believe that a fully equipped male who hasn't even had an operation is actually female and ought to be allowed to come into women's changing rooms, is going to be laughed out of court and told: 'Look, get lost. This is not a serious party. This is not a party that I can trust to represent my interests, to overthrow capitalism and get a better life for everybody – including the LGBTs.'

In fighting for the interests of the working class *as a whole*, LGBTs will obviously also benefit. LGBTs would be much better off if everyone had a job. LGBT people won't be able to say: 'Well I'm not able to get a job because of my sexuality.' If everybody has decent healthcare, there is nothing special for LGBTs. We can honestly say that under socialism there will be no 'LGBT rights' because *everybody* will have full rights; end of story.

The other point that is very upsetting about the way LGBT 'activists' behave, the ones who are pushing this ideology, is that you are not allowed to have any dissent. The minute you disagree, you're a 'fascist'. All sorts of terrible words are used to describe

the fact that you disagree with them. Is that how we want to proceed? Is that how you win hearts and minds? That we can't debate; we can't even raise it?

Recently there has been an argument in the Girl Guides. The Girl Guides have been told that a man, a fully equipped hairy male with all the necessary appendages, who self-identifies as a 'woman', is perfectly entitled to take young girls out on camping trips without supervision.

Now, can you really accept that nobody is even allowed to protest about that? Nobody is allowed to say: 'Well I'm sorry but I'm unhappy about that. I think men are men actually, and I don't want young girls exposed to the danger that that conceivably could produce. I'm sure this particular person is a lovely person, my daughter would probably be perfectly all right with him/her/them, but I can't take the risk, I'm sorry.'

Frankly, by attempting to force absurd views onto people, 'activists' can only succeed in rousing hostility against LGBT people – even those who themselves oppose the absurd demands being made in their name.

And finally, if I'm a man *because I say I'm a man* – if that is the criterion, then that is surely the purist idealism . . . and I don't think I need to say more.

Ella Rule

Speech: The only thing that unites us is class

The reason for our debate today is a phenomenon I first encountered as an academic doing a masters then a PhD in the humanities. For the last eight years, I have been employed to lecture on LGBTQ identities, queer theory and identity politics in performance.

In 1995, there was a huge shift in the humanities – a moment I can clearly locate in the trajectory of my own studies, which coincided with the beginning of my training for a degree in languages and linguistics in Europe. This shift was consolidated when I started my postgraduate programme in Britain, in the belly of western capitalist education.

The first thing that I was taught, as a student and later as part of the academic staff in the early 2000s – based on books that had been published years earlier, as a result of the 1960s and of what Euroleftism considered to be ‘the end of class struggle’ – was that *we do not need to talk about class* in the humanities; that it is no longer ‘trendy’ to consider ‘the grand narrative of class’, and that such ideas had expired after May ‘68.

Instead, I was told, we needed to talk about ‘identity’ based on a notion of ‘difference’. I needed to acquaint myself with the full philosophical movement that focuses on difference; which no longer talks about things that can rally people around a shared reality, or material conditions that people can have in common, but declares this a ‘failure’ from the start, arguing that it is useless to try to find things in common with others.

I was taught that this understanding of ‘failure’ should be the basis of contemporary humanities and culture, and that there is no need to study ‘positivist’ sciences like sociology with its rigid categories any more; that there is no need to research sociological explanations for cultural phenomena, because this leads to ‘deterministic’ conclusions. Instead, you need to go straight to poststructuralist theories, ideas about ‘deconstruction’, and post-modern philosophers like Jacques Derrida to address ‘difference’, as the only idea that unites people.

This was the conclusion of my postgraduate studies: we are united only in our individualism. I can still get paid today, or have flight tickets offered by universities to give lectures on ‘queer studies’ – which I can try my best to transform into opportunities for class analysis, but believe me, that is not easy.

Of course, I am hourly-paid with no permanent contract, as a woman lecturer, because university businesses where I worked have in place a positive discrimination policy, which ticks boxes when hiring a man who self-identifies as a 'woman' and who can get a lecturer's position that makes much more financial sense to the university's management than paying for my maternity leave. One needs to compare the material basis of my existence and the identity of a man who calls himself a woman, and who has studied Derrida of course, as I have. This man has all the philosophical backing, plus the university funding to bolster his position and call my class concerns a 'failing project' like the project of the Enlightenment (this is what they teach in postmodernism – the end of logic; the end of history; the futility of social struggle and resistance).

Are we in this party because we agree with what Karl Marx said? Do we understand the need to escape from this capitalist education that disables us; that disables our ability to unite and to understand what we have in common and act upon it; that teaches us to fetishise our loss? I have been offered various jobs to talk about my 'loss', about what makes me different, as a woman; to talk about rape and the traumas of the 'patriarchy'. One can land academic careers by being 'anti-patriarchal' and by considering oneself to be 'a class on our own'. But we are not in this party because we believe we are a class on our own, and nobody who is Marxist-Leninist should believe that.

One can definitely make more money teaching others to believe that they are a class in themselves, but we are here because we defend the truth, not careers. We defend Stalin because we defend the historical truth, not because Stalin sets us apart as being 'different'. I am sure that nowadays some can come to this party to be 'themselves'; as another 'radical' way of fetishising their 'identity' and declaring themselves 'different' to other gays or other lesbians or other 'gender fluid' people they know. Defending Stalin can become another way to self-identify.

But we are not here to defend our individual identities; we are here to really find what made communist society happen. If we want to help people who are in a state of loss, in a state of dependency, then we have to be 'a communist' and dare to talk about the things that are the alternative to what they teach us.

First, we have to become aware of exactly what lies and fallacies the ruling class are teaching us, and how these ideologies disable us whilst cloaking themselves in a narrative about individual 'empowerment', 'agency' and 'self-liberation'. They teach us that we have more 'agency' as a 'hybrid', 'fluid', individual, unattached to biology or material groundings, precariat.

They teach us that it is actually unfashionable to expect to enjoy retirement, a pension or permanent housing; it is trendy to be 'nomadic'; it is *creative* to live in precarity, and not to have a permanent job. They teach us to love 'change' and to dislike 'stability'; to unite with others in loving our 'lack' – what capitalism has stolen from us.

They teach us to love the inflictions of capitalism, the traumas of exploitation; they teach people to think that this attitude is revolutionary. But it is false consciousness and nothing else. They make a parody of the working class. This ideology segregates us, isolates us in lonely, passive crowds of 'I'. They teach us to hate what is healthy and instead love our illnesses.

The moment of truth came for me when I was denied my PhD award. My thesis was a critique of New Labour's 'inclusive' education. In it, I talked about students' disability and, apparently, I made the 'mistake' of failing to link disability with identity politics, instead talking about it in terms of class. I argued that bourgeois education oppresses children not because they are physically or mentally disabled but because they are working-class children. I argued that capitalism defines bourgeois identity as ability; people are seen as able when they belong to the bourgeoisie and submit to its ideology. Capitalism considers working-class identity to be a disability, and tries to 'manage' it and integrate it into its

system of exploitation, not to alleviate it or cure it.

The moment I started to draw such conclusions, the examiners challenged my methodology on 'ethical grounds' and denied me my doctorate. I had to resubmit my thesis, because, according to the examiners, I was 'labelling' people by calling them 'working class'. The only truthful identity – a sociological reality that I was able to prove with lots of statistical evidence – was censored as 'labelling'. I was forbidden to talk about the class of my students, but I could conduct a survey on the 'sexual desires' of primary school kids without any problems.

I am in this party because communism is the only discourse, the only philosophy, the only way to talk about things as they are and rally people not around their 'lack' but around their only collective identity, the only one that we have, that which is based on our class. We are not here to fetishise our traumas, as we live them under capitalism.

In a communist society, people experience themselves and others differently, as in a society like Cuba's. We cannot compare ourselves with Cuba. Cuba has been developing along a socialist path; the people are in power; they pass legislation relevant to their society and its place in the international sphere. Cuban kids at schools are not taught what our kids are taught. The state and the socialist government filter things very differently because the economy is not the same we have here. Cuban laws on LGBTQ cannot be compared to dominant British policy. As British workers we have to focus on what is happening in our own country and look for an alternative education to the one we are getting.

We have to reinstate the things that unite us and not the things that divide us. The only thing that unites us is class, and if you care about the welfare of gay people, raped women, disabled children, etc, you have got to declare the only agency they have is if they act collectively in an organised political manner based on their class interests, and not some vague idealism.

If you care about oppressed people's dignity then you have to

convince them to unite with others and demand power; to demand all the things we discuss in our party congress resolutions.

Marxism-Leninism is the only way to guarantee that the working people's struggle will be successful. As Marxist-Leninists, we don't patronise people; we don't tell them that what they are going through is something that they should wear as an identity, because such isolating identities disable them. We have a responsibility towards people who suffer, and we have to defend them by telling the truth.

'Transgender rights' are bourgeois ideology. The whole issue confounds reality. It is pure idealism because the reality is that we cannot choose our identity at will. It is an illusion, a mistake and a crime to teach people to think that they can choose like this, under capitalism.

We are here to help them dispel their bourgeois illusions, and our own first, however taxing and painful that can be.

Nina Kosta

Speech: Teach children to kick against gender stereotypes, not gender itself

The fundamental point about how idealism is being pushed onto us in a very systematic and pernicious way has been beautifully made by previous speakers. They also outlined how it is that whilst racism and sexism as things which divide workers are absolutely bound up with *class society* and the imperialist world order, *other forms of discrimination come and go*, according to the culture and the times, and therefore they have a different status in that sense.

There is some confusion about this. Comrades think: 'Oh, we don't make support for LGBT+ rights a main plank of our platform,

therefore we're against LGBT+ people.' No, that's not the same thing, and I think and I hope that has already been clarified, but let me clarify it again: it's not about *people*, it's about *ideology*.

We who are arguing against the idea that we must have an LGBT+ *platform*, that's what we are arguing against: we're arguing against *idealism*; we're arguing against *identity politics*; we're arguing against *the replacement of class consciousness with individualism*.

Our job, as has been said, is to recreate, to revitalise class consciousness in Britain, because without a class mentality, without a *collective* mentality, we will not stand a cat in hell's chance of forming a party that can lead a revolution. And *that is what we are here for*; let us not forget it.

The first speaker opened this debate with a very emotional appeal that we should not support the central committee's motion because, based on it, he would be summarily expelled from the party. Now, I understand this is an emotive issue for many people, and that has been shown in the debate so far, but that was not a statement of fact.

There's nothing in the resolution that says it's wrong for us to have had this discussion. We are in the process of having a discussion, and I hope very much that at the end of it, the party will agree to *carry* motion 8; to *remit* motion 7, which is vague – the proposition that we should come up with a good analysis and propagate it amongst the working class is good, but the motion itself I think is not well expressed; and to *reject* motions 5 and 6 – because they ask us to have a platform and to make a central plank of campaigning for LGBT+ rights, and this is not a necessary thing for us to do.

That's my hope – that, following this discussion, that's what's going to happen. But nothing in motion 8 says that people who have taken part in this discussion, or who have expressed different points of view during this debate, should be expelled. What it says is that, going forward, it must be understood by our mem-

bers that if this motion is adopted, we will not obsess over LGBT+ rights. We understand that it's a diversion that has been pushed on us and therefore we simply say: 'We are inclusive, we will take anyone who wants to fight for the revolution, regardless.'

There are a few points I wanted to make in relation to this question. When it comes to this word 'community', I fundamentally object to the idea that the person you have sex with is so important that it dictates what *community* you're a part of.

If we're going to be Marxists, 'community' as a word has to have a *meaning*. Isn't it interesting that in a society – a late capitalist society in a state of total disintegration, as ours is – in which we hardly have any such thing as community any more, we are constantly being bombarded with the *idea* of community in order to have people pushed on us as spokespeople who don't speak for us.

We hear it all the time. We are told that so-and-so represents the 'black community', or the 'muslim community', or the 'Asian community', or the 'women's community' or the 'LGBT+ community', the 'queer community', the 'trans community' . . . but there's no such thing as any of those 'communities'!

Every muslim is not in one community with every other muslim; of course they're not, it's nonsense. What community am I in? If I'm in any, I'm in a community with people who live very close to me; ones that I know. Lots of us don't have a community like this because communities have become so fragmented and broken down that we don't know our neighbours.

These communities that we used to refer to hardly exist. I'm in a kind of community around the schools where my kids go because I meet lots of those people every day; certainly at primary school you do. These are the communities that actually exist. I'm in a community with all of you, because I work with you all the time in the party. We are a community.

One thing I'm not a member of is the married women's community, I'm not a member of the heterosexual community; I'm

not a member of the half-Asian community . . . I do not identify with, my life is not the same as, I do not have the same interests as, all the people who are also classified under those labels. It's a nonsense!

Identity politics, if you want a definition, is that which encourages us to identify our differences, our uniqueness and argue from a platform of 'Nobody understands my pain but me!' It is, frankly, nonsense, encouraging us to gaze at our navels and tell ourselves what a terrible, awful time we're having, which no-one else can possibly understand. It's a recipe for inactivity, isolation and mental illness.

This issue of gender versus gender roles: again, we see the way that language is messed with and confused; but they are not the same thing.

I don't have to keep going over it; it's been expressed very eloquently by other speakers, but it's really important that we as Marxists use clear language and terminology.

Do not use the word 'gender' when you mean 'gender role'; it's not the same thing. 'Gender' is a material thing, 'gender role' is a social construct – let's agree that they are two separate things.

I want to finish, comrades, by reading you something very short that I wrote about the trans movement which sums up how I feel about it.

I hate to say this, but 'as a woman' and 'as a mother', these things have touched me and touch me now quite deeply as I watch my daughter coming to terms with the fact that the 'gender role' that's pushed on her *doesn't* conform with how she feels. But that doesn't mean that she is in the wrong body!

I wrote this in reply to a comrade who was accusing us of being reactionary when we should be progressive:

Try to remember that 'progressive', in the context of the class struggle, means that which moves history forward. It doesn't mean everything that a liberal says it means. It has a real meaning.

If you're a Marxist, you understand the word 'progressive' not the way the bourgeoisie tells you to understand it, but as Marxism explains it – and that means *anything that strengthens the socialist revolution*.

There is nothing progressive about trying to convince the working class that biology is irrelevant to sex. It's obviously absurd. Our job is to tell the truth and not to follow fashion.

The petty-bourgeois academic obsession with identity politics has been nurtured and fostered by the ruling class to take the place of class politics. That is a *reactionary* development, not a progressive one.

It can be seen in a very effective way that this has caused division between better-off workers and poorer workers. The better-off workers are thoroughly brainwashed in the petty-bourgeois identity politics ways of thinking by their education. The masses revile the smug insanity of the people who come and lecture them about their 'white privilege' and their 'transphobia'. They think it's stupid and they're right.

The trans movement, in my view, is the absurd apotheosis of identity politics.

Now please understand I'm talking about the movement. We do not deny that there are a tiny number of people born with some malformation of chromosomes or genitalia, and, like any disability or birth defect, such people deserve humane treatment. But *they are not the basis of the modern trans movement* – we have to understand that. *They are being used by that movement to justify its existence, but they are not its basis.*

This is based on *self-identification* (that is, as another comrade pointed out, on *denying reality*). In my view, and I'm sorry if people here feel this as a personal attack – it's not; in my view, this [mass gender dysphoria] should be treated as a mental disorder

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that requires help and support to recover from, not trumpeted as proof that girls are born in boys' bodies and vice versa.

It is a twisted society that makes people feel so alienated that they even wish to escape their own bodies, and an even more twisted one that pushes them into a lifetime of expensive drugs and surgeries that will leave them infertile, while solving none of the problems that led them down that path in the first place.

To my mind, it is plain child abuse to tell little children who don't like the gender stereotypes being forced on them that they are in the wrong body, rather than teaching them the resilience to ignore those stereotypes and find a way to be comfortable in their own skins.

Other women comrades spoke earlier and I know we all feel the same about this. I, my mother and my daughter could all have been candidates for the vultures who push this sick idea onto kids who don't fit the social expectations of what a girl or a boy or a man or a woman should be like.

It's a sign of a society in total collapse – utterly bankrupt and unable to offer workers anything useful or fulfilling to do with their lives, or any hope of a better future. It has obvious parallels with the last days of Rome in its decadence and absurdity.

As an ideology, this is being pushed by some big financial backers, from the United States in particular, who have identified it as a massive medical money spinner. Believe me, when you read the articles, when you look into where the backing has come from, there are some particular families in the States who have realised they're onto something very profitable.

I welcome the chance to debate these ideas at congress. Clearly, many people have been suckered by the liberal idea that one must never question the feelings of others, even when those feelings demand that everyone around them should share their delusions.

As far as 'putting people off' goes, we welcome into the party

anyone who wants to work for revolution. We don't discriminate on any basis apart from *ability and willingness to serve the working class and build the party.*

We also consider religion to be a delusion that denies reality, yet we are quite happy to allow religious workers, whose number is far, far greater than self-identified trans workers, to join the party. But they do so on the basis that *they have to square that contradiction for themselves*, not on the basis that we will start telling everyone there *is* a god after all, so as to make them feel happy.

We are not against trans people, we are against a society that has produced this delusion and the leeches who nurture and feed off it. *We are against lying to the people* in order to gain the approval of the political correctness police.

We are the purveyors of truth. Let us not forget it, comrades.

Joti Brar

Speech: The reactionary nightmare of 'gender fluidity'

This is a very interesting debate, comrades. I find it both encouraging and discouraging at the same time.

I would like to say that I agree with motion 8. It's quite clear that this is an issue which is causing genuine confusion – and not only in our party. Our party is the reflection of society, and so if it is confusing us, you can be sure there is a far greater confusion outside our ranks – and that, if you like, is why we're having this debate.

While I am sympathetic with the arguments put forward by those opposed to motion 8, we clearly do need to have a debate. Clearly some people have taken on identity politics as a very central part of their political discourse: people in our schools, people

in society, in every mainstream paper that you turn to.

A mere reference to gender identity and idpol, without expressing an opinion, is enough to make many people incandescent with rage.

We have to ask ourselves why that is, because when I grew up some years ago, this wasn't an issue affecting peoples' minds. People didn't talk about it; they didn't debate it: it wasn't an issue.

Marx and Engels and Lenin and Stalin didn't devote much attention to the politics of gender fluidity because it did not exist as an issue. This concept – contrary to the opinion of those opposed to this motion – is *not* 'as old as humanity'.

I do think that it is very important that all our discussions are rooted in material reality. And we have to ask ourselves: do we think that a material reality exists? Because there is the question, a fundamental question of philosophy, which underlies everything.

It's why dialectics is so very powerful. I don't want to go on about it. It wasn't me who invented dialectics, but I am a firm adherent of it; of the revolutionary teachings of Karl Marx.

Dialectical materialism didn't come naturally to me because my father happened to be a Marxist, or my mother happened to be a Marxist. You have to win that ideological bedrock through *study*; through really struggling with ideas and understanding.

I grew up in bourgeois society – just like everyone else. So when I was taught chemistry, when I learned and went to school, I quite liked some subjects and I didn't like others. I realised after a while it was mainly my relationship with certain teachers that determined my enjoyment of certain subjects. But I had a flair for science.

I found out, actually, that I enjoyed studying history and politics more, but I argued with my schoolteachers; they would send me out of the class for disagreeing in a way they felt was antisocial. They couldn't control the class. So I gave up those subjects and I concentrated on the sciences, thinking that science at least is *objective*; no-one will argue over the question: is two plus two

equal to four?

Lenin quite rightly told us:

If geometrical axioms affected human interests, attempts would certainly be made to refute them.*

What did he mean? There are simple formulas that tell one the volume of a sphere, or how to work out the area of a triangle: half the base times the height. Does anyone fundamentally disagree with that? If a circle thinks it's a square, is it a square? What a stupid thing to say; no-one's saying that!

Why can't a circle self-identify as a square? Is there not some kind of shape fluidity between circles and squares? Are they not fundamentally the same? They all fundamentally consist of area. Why do we differentiate between them at all? Why has humanity worried to define objects as green or blue?

Is there a material reality? There are those who will argue there is no material reality; we are not among them. That is not a Marxist concept.

Is sex important? Attempts are being made to confuse us as to what 'sex' is. Are 'sex' and 'gender' synonyms? Well they *are* synonyms, but a certain group of academics in the seventies in the United States decided that they *weren't* synonyms. They were going to use 'gender' in their own way; they were going to use 'gender' to mean the *social construct of behaviour* surrounding what was expected of the biological differentiation among human beings (men and women).

But *biological differentiation between male and female is a real thing*. It doesn't just exist in humanity, it exists in many species throughout the natural world. Sexual reproduction is a natural biological process that has persisted in nature due to the diversity it engenders; it is a phenomenon encountered in the natural world.

* 'Marxism and revisionism' by VI Lenin, April 1908.

And let's not forget how this debate impinged upon us. We've been following this ideological trend, and encountering identity politics among supporters and candidates for membership of our party, and amongst people we've been working with for at least four or five years. Because idpol has become a fashion in that period.

And it is a fashion; it is a trend. And it suddenly – from being very marginal to certain academic institutions in the 1970s – became mainstream globally worldwide; it was actively promoted. *Not promoted by communists, not by socialists, but picked up on and accepted by many of them, because they are led by, and they blindly followed, bourgeois society down this dead end.*

But we are a party of a different kind. What is the purpose of internal party discourse? What is the purpose of debate? What is the purpose of democratic centralism? *It's so that we can amongst ourselves work out the truth; what is in the interests of the working class as a whole.*

We claim to be the party of the working class. It is a big claim, and really, we're in embryonic form – let's be frank about it. We're not going to be the people and the organisation that finally make the revolution. We're the beginning of that; we're in the process of building it.

We have to *earn* the right to be trusted by the working class; to bring the best elements of the working class into our ranks and organisation. We must develop broad roots among the masses, to be in a position where they even trust and accept anything we're saying.

And so, we are really only trying to find the truth. *The truth is our biggest ally* in that process.

Why did it become a fashion to say there's no such thing a male and female? I think the use of our internal bulletin has evolved to the point where we actually used it successfully to conduct that inner-party debate. The debate came up because of some posts on the party's main Twitter account; the controller of the account

was denounced on Twitter as 'fascist' and 'racist'.

Is it true? Are we going to get up here at congress and denounce comrades in debate? Will we tell them that *'If you say X,Y and Z – then that's it! I'm off! Screw the lot of you!'*?

Is that a comradely way to have a debate? Does that forward our arguments? Does it help us reach a sound understanding? It does not! *We've got to reckon with science, we've got to reckon with social phenomena. We have to come to a correct position which serves our class, and if we fail to do so, our organisation will fail to exist.*

Not that the working class won't achieve their salvation without us; it's our firm belief that they will be able to. But will they be put back in the process if we do not evolve the leadership that is capable and worthy of the name of actually interpreting the world and Britain, and leading them forward?

Yes, they will be set back enormously. We know how difficult it is to get a foothold and a correct orientation; to develop and hold a class position that's capable of leading working people. It's been a problem – and it's been a problem not just because it's hard in itself; it's been a problem because there's been an *active class whose interest it is to prevent us.*

The British capitalist class is not passive; they're not idle, and they're perfectly happy to troubleshoot problems. They don't have all the answers ready-made, but they have all the levers of power and they have capital.

So they can take an intellectual worker, they can set him a problem and when he comes up with a solution they find workable, they can employ him, and when they put their divisive ideas into practice in a little case study somewhere, and that seems to be working quite well, they can roll them out.

Class analysis seems alien to many workers in Britain because it's gone 'out of fashion'. It's gone out of fashion because it's been deliberately denounced and ridiculed from every pulpit, every university, every fount of learning. From the kindergarten right

through to getting your PhD and becoming a lecturer, you're rewarded if you do certain things.

In industry and in science, you're rewarded if you provide any kind of technology or medicine that's going to make money.

When I went to medical school, I had a very erudite, intellectual, quite self-satisfied, pompous, English upper-middle-class, Oxbridge graduated professor. He had a degree of respect and notoriety as he had become a multimillionaire through the intellectual property right he exercised over his research. He had discovered and developed the proton-pump inhibitor (PPI) that went on to become the drug Omeprazole.

It's just one of those things. In the lab he had played a key part in inventing this drug, which reduces stomach acidity. During an undergraduate lecture at the Royal Free hospital many years ago, he told us that before his results had been widely published, someone phoned him from Wall Street.

He said: 'I was amazed that someone from Wall Street even knew about my research!' And this Wall Street capitalist asked him one question. He said: 'This medicine, would you have to take it for a certain period of time, or would you have to keep on taking it to get its effect?'

The professor: 'Ah, well, you'd have to keep on taking it.'

The Wall-street caller: 'Oh, well thank you very much, that's fascinating.'

His discovery went on to become one of the pharmaceutical industry's huge money-making drugs, rolled out worldwide – *because you have to keep on paying*. It doesn't *solve* the problem. To keep gastric symptoms at bay, you have to take it lifelong. So the drug was viewed by the industry as an almost limitless source of revenue.

In the field of science, why is it that huge amounts of money are put into the latest research to develop endovascular stents for an aneurism, which is going to cost £50,000 to treat a single patient, when in fact you could get rid of much of the problem by stopping

the community from smoking? You could usefully spend those billions of dollars to develop a programme of preventative health-care, rather than develop treatments for the wealthy inhabitants of a very small number of overwhelmingly industrial countries in certain healthcare systems, making a huge amount of money.

How much do we spend on malaria research, or tuberculosis research? Or even realising how aspirin can be used to treat certain conditions? Use and application of cheap drugs, that you can't patent, are not pursued or promoted.

There is a vested interest of the capitalist class to accumulate capital, through the exploitation of their wage slaves.

But then there is also an ideological outlook. Science and the arts are *not* alien to bourgeois influence. Lenin wrote a very beautiful article in 1905, *in which he called for the intellectual class to be partisan.*

He said: Don't be neutral. Don't say 'art for art's sake'. Don't pretend that your output – funded and commissioned by the possessors of money, the capitalist ruling class – is *intellectually neutral* output. Call a spade a spade. *Become and state fearlessly that you are fierce advocates of the working people, and that their only way to a better society is to develop a liberating culture, a culture of proletarian revolutionary ideology.*

You have to be openly partisan! That was his call – in art, in culture and in science.

So the question is sexuality: how does this tie up with the question of sexuality? And we come back to that innocuous post on Twitter, which I thought was obviously hilarious because I thought it was non-controversial.

We wrote:

There is a group of self-proclaimed 'socialists' who are not actually any longer fighting against our oppression, they're fighting against reality!

and posted a link to an article.

Why did we say that? They're a circle of people who broke away from a very small group which you may know, called the RCG. This circle wrote a blog called 'Red Fightback', and the bottom line is, their position is that there's no such thing as gender.

Rather, gender, they claim, is some kind of *medical conspiracy* where, at birth, the doctors go away and huddle together and they 'assign a gender role' to you. So, pregnant mothers: when you have your 20-week ultrasound scan, you're *not* having a scan to see whether your baby is a boy or a girl (say 'Red Fightback'). No; that's all medical conspiracy! And when the baby is born, *they* inspect the baby to say it's a boy or a girl – well that's all medical conspiracy, too! These things (boys and girls, men and women) aren't real – don't you see??

Now, that seemed to us to be so absurd and preposterous that we posted it. And the post seemed popular! It had, like, a hundred thousand views, with hundreds of comments saying: 'You're a Terf!'

I didn't know what a *Terf* was at that point, but I have since found out. It is an acronym for 'trans-exclusionary radical feminist' – which I'm not, because I'm not a feminist! But essentially, their line is that *anyone who would purport to say there really is such a thing as gender (men and women), is some kind of fascist.*

Who is pushing this ideology that there is no such thing as gender? That there is no such thing as sex? That it's not real?

There is even a movement termed 'ableism' or 'trans-ableism'. There exist people who say: 'I look as if I've got two arms and two legs, but actually in reality, I feel like I was born disabled.'

There are people who are petitioning *for the right* to have an arm or a leg cut off; to have an operation which will make their physical form conform *to how they feel*; 'my inner essence'.

It's the ultimate idealism isn't it? Idealism in the philosophical sense that that 'the material world doesn't exist'; 'it's whatever I think that is most important'. So actually, by that rationale, ideas

are prime and matter will have to conform with my ideas, and the ultimate result is this kind of solipsism where you are alone in the world – the lone conscious force and the ultimate determiner of your own reality without reference to other people or the material reality of the world's environment around you.

Morally, it means whatever you *want* subjectively is right and correct. So it can be used to justify doing anything, committing any crime against anyone.

As a philosophy it is totally isolating, and totally gets rid of the idea, as the previous speaker was saying, of having things in common, uniting on a class basis around the real things that oppress us; real material and economic phenomena.

Capital is the labour of past generations, accumulating in the hands of a tiny number of people who use their vast wealth to oppress and enslave us. We are wage slaves. We are slaves!

You go and tell working people outside this congress that they're wage slaves! They won't agree with you – they'll think you're mad. 'I'm not a slave. Slavery, that's all gone. That was the black people in the United States.' They literally have no concept of real history and culture. That is the deliberate product of capitalist education.

We in the CPGB-ML are here to create a scientific analysis. But let's move away from the fact that this is pure idealism.

Why would the capitalist class suddenly take this idea from a group of academics and propagate it worldwide to the point where it's on the lips of every prime minister; it's on the lips of every banker; it's on the lips of every capitalist?

You know, sometimes, the billionaires let slip things that the mainstream politicians feel unable to say. Now there was quite a nice article, probably about the time when the 2008 banking and world-economic crisis hit, when Obama had said to Wall Street: 'I'm the thing that stands between you and the pitchforks.' But the billionaires were not to worry, Obama told them: 'We're going to bail you out. We're going to protect you.'

Some of those billionaires have said that they don't understand

why the working-class movement hasn't got more traction than it has. They literally don't understand why they're getting away with it. There are, incredibly, just *eight* multibillionaires who have as much wealth in their hands as fully *one half* of humanity's population (3,500,000,000 people). Billions of people don't have enough food, clothing, housing, shelter – the other, apparently 'uncontroversial', motions that we've discussed today very convincingly paint that picture.

So there's a real question on how they can take art and culture and ideology and politics and divide working people, make them feel disunited. If you make people concentrate on their differences, if everyone is totally isolated and different, if everyone is suspicious of their neighbour . . . well, racism certainly has a part to play.

It's very useful not to trust muslims or not to trust Pakistanis or not to trust African-Americans, or 'I don't really like that Nigerian who lives next door to me, they're a bit different aren't they?' Well, if people rub along with each other, they get over that don't they?

In my opinion, despite the active promotion of anti-immigrant hostility, this country is far less racist than it was whilst I was growing up. Yet the capitalists are constantly, constantly searching for new ways of dividing people.

Not enough working women are involved in our movement. Why is it that all of our YouTube videos have 80 to 90 percent hits from men? Young women don't think politics has got anything to say to them. They've been pushed into this blind dead-end of bourgeois feminism.

As a previous speaker very informatively related, what began as a liberating movement for women became a simple demand for a meaningless piece of legislation – complaints about pay for professional and wealthy women. Working-class women were left to go back to the kitchen and raise their families.

Actually, say the bourgeois feminists, *equality* with men is main-

ly about women being sexually promiscuous. To the absurd point where Hugh Hefner-type Playboy promiscuity, not conforming to this marriage thing, just 'go for it, girl', make yourself naked and get into a pornographic magazine – this is touted as 'liberation'! Women were already liberated in the sixties and seventies, runs the narrative: well done, women, all your problems are over, be in pornographic magazines; all your problems are over!

Working women, while not fully buying into all of this, however, have successfully been encouraged not to identify with mainstream working-class movements. It's very hard. We're lucky to have a few strong women comrades; but look at the composition of the room: where are our able, active, working-class young women? Why aren't they here?

We've been divided from them through a narrative that says: 'Sex is the most important thing. Men are oppressing me. Why would I unite with a man to try and solve my problem? My problem is men! I don't want anything to do with you.'

We must get away from this idea of wearing a 'badge of oppression'. We are a small group because we've been actively marginalised. The huge, multimillion-strong communist movement across Europe and the middle east, across much of Asia and Africa, has been broken by Khrushchevite revisionism from within. It's been broken by imperialism, which used every division in the communist movement as an opportunity to drive home the wedge and destroy our ideology.

The grip that communist politics naturally had over working people was based upon its *truth and utility* as a guide to the liberation struggle of the masses.

We want to rebuild that. We're not going to rebuild it through division and discord; through a struggle against reality. I think the resolution is very good for this reason.

We in the CPGB-ML are and have always been *actively opposed to discrimination* on the grounds of race, sex or sexual proclivity. We want broad unity of the working class, as working people who

face the same economic oppression and have the same interest in changing it.

During our inner-party debate running up to this congress, conducted largely in local groups and the party bulletin, some comrades produced articles saying that particular and unusually harsh oppression had come to a group of people, 'LGBTQ+' people. They attempted to demonstrate this particular oppression of transgender people by producing a variety of references and percentages.

First of all, I would urge then to look very carefully at their figures and their sources. What is the actual percentage of the working class that are transgender?

It's very difficult to find out. [A member of audience: 'Ten percent of the population!']

No. It's very far from that figure. It is statistically so small as to be insignificant. It's absolutely tiny. But, if you take everyone who is 'gay' and tell them 'actually really, you're transgender'; if you take everyone who is 'confused during puberty' – well, everyone's confused during puberty! – 'but actually, probably you're transgender'. *If transgender becomes your fashionable label that you impose on everyone who feels alienated in society*, then you start to arrive at these incredible figures.

Because actually, the percentage of people who are *alienated* in society is massive; absolutely bloody massive. Because *alienation is a product of capitalist exploitation*, of its individualism and its dissatisfying, isolationist, selfish culture.

Equally, if you take any group in a society, figures can be quoted to show an *association* but not *causality*. Let me give an example. I'm not comparing the two groups, but if I said that 'fascists are overwhelmingly working class' or 'fascists are overwhelmingly less likely to get a job', therefore we need to be championing the rights of fascists – it's totally the wrong way of constructing an argument; it's meaningless.

When we discuss the question of 'trans rights', we are told that this is exiting and new and meaningful and trumps all other is-

sues! But never forget that to the extent that this is a real group of people and not a manufactured ideological product purveyed by the bourgeoisie to sow confusion and disunity in the ranks of the working class – then we're talking about an insignificant percentage of the working class.

When we state clearly that we are against unjust discrimination, that relates to *everyone*, to all groups of workers; it's covered! That statement and belief covers everyone. We're *inclusive*.

It's the same in our attitude towards racism. I've been in Brixton and I've had someone walk up to me and say: 'Yeah, man. You think it about race, or about class?' And when I told my fellow Lambeth resident and worker that fundamentally oppression is based on class, he simply opined: 'Nah!' and walked away, because the black community also . . . Why aren't the black community here? They should be! Overwhelmingly, black workers find themselves confined to the lowest sections of the working class, because of racism, because of the legacy of colonialism.

Black workers should be identifying with the broad highway of working-class politics. But no, because we've been kept artificially divided. Blacks are told whites are racist; whites are encouraged to be racist, and, despite the fact that we've broken that down in many day-to-day dealings, in our political organisations, in our social organisations, we ghettoise.

We ghettoise. Should a Turkish comrade living in Britain identify as a British worker or as a Turk? Is he a Turk first and foremost? That's been a huge problem for the revolutionary movement in this country.

I can tell you there are hundreds, thousands of militant communists in London who will agree with me on pretty much everything – but they will not join our organisation, 'because I'm a Turk. Actually, the struggle I identify with, that I feel most strongly about, is going on in Turkey. And although I live here, and my kids are here, and they go to school here and I'm working here, and I face the problems that are here and in fact basically, I'm a British

worker and my kids don't speak Turkish . . . Well, I'm Turkish, and I don't want them to get involved with you because I want them to look to Turkey.'

The children of such a 'revolutionary' are almost impossible to draw into revolutionary politics on this basis. They don't really engage with Turkey in that way because they're British; they were born here. You adopt the culture of your friends and the culture that surrounds you when you grow up. For kids that grow up in Britain, they are culturally British. And to deny their Britishness, and their right to change British culture, to join the British working-class movement and change what is wrong in their lives, means they become alienated from all that is living in *both* cultures.

Are we going to carry on in that way, where we are all separate and all divided? Do we have to follow the fashion of the bourgeoisie?

The bourgeoisie that have pushed this identity movement aggressively have done so to confuse and isolate working-class youth.

So I will conclude by saying: *We are not transphobic!* There's nothing to be afraid of in this statement. We do not advocate discrimination against any group of the working class. We advocate unity; we advocate common struggle; we advocate understanding; we advocate a broad and tolerant society.

But, we do not advocate and we cannot allow the bourgeoisie to impose this divisive ideology upon us!

Thank you, comrades.

Ranjeet Brar

9. Antiwar work in Britain

This congress notes the increasing drive towards more and bigger wars that is accompanying the deepening capitalist crisis of overproduction.

Congress further notes the hysterical propaganda emanating from the bourgeois media in support of this drive, and the pernicious role such propaganda plays in neutralising the antiwar sentiments of the British proletariat.

Congress notes also the insidious role played by the so-called 'leaders' of the working-class movement, from trade union to 'antiwar' leaders, who consistently repeat every unfounded bourgeois slander against the targets of British imperialism's aggression, often dressing them up with a 'left' veneer and a pretended 'concern' for the 'rights' of the peoples being targeted. Given the rising levels of cynicism amongst workers regarding bourgeois propaganda, the lies of such leaders often carry more weight with the workers than the lies of the ruling class, since they emanate from allegedly 'progressive' sources.

Congress notes with pleasure, however, the signs of a new wave of antiwar sentiment and activity among the British people, despite the best efforts of the bourgeoisie to confuse them with lies and distract them with inanities. For example:

1. The growing appetite for independent media sources amongst British workers.
2. The increasing number of independent sources available, which include anti-imperialist news channels such as RT, Telesur, Press TV and China Daily, and also small homegrown groups like

MediaLens, OffGuardian and 21C Wire.

3. The growing number of honest activist reporters like Vanessa Beeley and Eva Bartlett, who are risking their lives and sacrificing their career prospects in order to travel to Syria and bring back eye-witness accounts from the mass of ordinary Syrians, who are ignored by the imperialist media. The rabid hysteria with which this handful of small independent voices is being met shows how effective they are, and how terrified the ruling class is of the spread of their message amongst the working class.

This congress believes that the British working class has both an internationalist duty and a definite class interest in working for the defeat of its own ruling class in all aggressive imperialist wars, and that therefore our demand that workers should support the resistance remains correct, and must be explained and popularised at every possible opportunity.

This congress further believes that those independent activists and academics who are helping to expose the lies of the British media and politicians are doing vital antiwar work that will help to lay the foundations for a mass movement of non-cooperation with imperialist war. It is notable that Stop the War has so far failed to give a platform to a single one of these brave activists and eye-witness reporters.

Congress believes that the CPGB-ML has a vital role to play in helping to create a really effective, anti-imperialist antiwar movement, since it is only our party that has a clear programme of action to put forward in answer to the question of what concerned workers should actually do to stop the British ruling class's wars.

Congress therefore resolves:

1. That all branches and members shall give every possible support to independent reporters, academics, organisers and activists who are helping to expose the imperialist lie machine's war-mongering activities, from hosting and organising meetings for them ourselves to supporting and publicising those being put on by others, writing or reprinting articles in our press and creating

or reproducing videos for Proletarian TV.

2. That all branches and members shall be ready to speak and distribute literature at such meetings, in order to put forward our party's platform of non-cooperation with imperialist war and support for the resistance.

3. That, notwithstanding the bankrupt nature of the organisation's leadership, all members and activists shall make every effort to attend and speak at local StW meetings, especially large public meetings, in order to bring the party's analysis and programme to the attention of the new generation of activists who are presently being drawn towards the antiwar movement. Members should also take every possible opportunity to expose StW's unwillingness to invite honest antiwar activists and reporters such as Vanessa Beeley and Eva Bartlett onto their platform.

It is our firm belief that these actions will bring us closer to the day when we are able to found a real, anti-imperialist antiwar movement in Britain.

Victory to the resistance; no cooperation with imperialist war!

Proposed by Joti Brar

Passed unanimously.

10. Promotion of proletarian culture

This congress recognises that our society is in a state of moral decay and that bourgeois art offers up for working people a diet of the most corrupting and banal material. Bourgeois painting, television, cinema, drama, dance and music spread the same toxic influence of bourgeois individualism.

Sadly, nowhere is there to be observed a real movement of proletarian art. Bourgeois art continues to glorify the disgusting excesses, unbridled consumerism and moral depravity of modern bourgeois society, offering as role models and central characters corrupting anti-heroes – gangsters, drug dealers, murderers, mercenaries, the police and imperialist soldiers – or endless streams of instantly forgettable cabaret acts, and for children (and adults that have regressed to the level of children) increasingly vacuous big-screen ‘superheroes’.

The ongoing decay of bourgeois society has advanced to the point where demented mystical drivel, pornography and extreme violence and cruelty are routine, monthly offerings from Hollywood, the BBC, the production companies and publishing houses of the imperialist countries. Fantastic and mystical ideas dull the imaginations of workers and detach them from the great struggle of mankind against capital. Violence and cruelty normalise abominable behaviour and prepare us to accept the unleashing of fire and fury upon the oppressed people.

It is no surprise that such a cruel and unjust society as ours in the imperialist countries should produce art that is just as wicked and sick as the society that has nourished it.

There is now an endless production of films that elevate the characters of the sick and psychologically demented. Grown adults are encouraged to associate themselves with sadists and killers, vampires, zombies and ghouls, and to cover the walls of their houses and even their bodies in scenes depicting hellish trauma, such are the ideas which these ‘artistic’ offerings arouse. Directors of film franchises like *Hostel* are living out on-screen their most depraved fantasies involving sexual violence, torture and murder whilst Hollywood and the press hypocritically moralise over Harvey Weinstein.

Worse still, the incessant praise of capitalism from every corner of the arts, love of its methods and cruelties are lauded by ignorant workers. What dignity is left to British workers who roundly

applaud another firing by Alan Sugar, a ten-minute begging session in front of the 'Dragons' or another indecent, humiliating performance for Simon Cowell? Workers taken in by this 'entertainment' are utterly castrated before their exploiters and turned into wretched voyeurs of their own humiliation.

Congress recognises that only our party, a Marxist-Leninist party, can offer any salvation to the tortures of our era, and that proletarian art is a powerful tool for our social emancipation. The limitations through size and finance that are placed on our output in video and literature are well-known. However, we recognise the enormous impact our political educational videos have had and are having upon workers through YouTube, we applaud the distribution of a number of copies of Ostrovsky's book *How the Steel Was Tempered* in 2015, and praise the articles in *Proletarian* that have critiqued anti-Soviet propaganda films or brought to readers a Marxist appraisal of Shakespeare.

Furthermore, we applaud our socialist cartoonists who illustrate our journals and leaflets with such vibrancy and humour. In our own small way, our party has continued in the great tradition of socialist realism in artistic criticism and artistic production. Our party is the only light in the darkness that surrounds us: our artistic output, our propaganda, our penetrating analysis, will lead British workers to a dignified life if we are able to link our party with the masses.

To this end, and recognising the above, congress instructs the central committee to:

1. Delve into the wealth of Soviet literature and bring to life through re-publication some Soviet titles at intervals that can be sold to party members and the public. The titles chosen should have the broadest popular appeal that will give the unacquainted reader a glimpse of the heroism of Soviet citizens in their struggle against the bourgeoisie and in the struggle for socialism.

The books chosen should be suitable to hand to new party supporters and candidates unfamiliar with Soviet history and litera-

ture. They should be the most inspirational stories that convey the proletarian ethics and morality of the world's first socialist state.

These stories, some of which might be Stalin Prize winners, are lost to time. Their distribution in the 21st century can be a powerful antidote to the sickness and depravity of the bourgeois arts, and can counter the nihilism that penetrates the ranks of even the most sincere and well-meaning comrades.

2. Give more attention to the artistic output of modern Russia and China, particularly their historical dramas and documentaries. Not only have these countries advanced technically in the production of good historical dramas and documentaries that deal with their revolutionary history, but a renaissance is to be observed in the way in which historical personalities are now being reappraised by the young generation of these countries.

These films, while not perfect, can play an important role in the development of our own party members and supporters, but need promotion in our party press to bring them to the attention of a British audience.

Proposed by Paul Cannon

Passed unanimously.

Speech: Proletarian culture is not something dreamed up out of nowhere

I move this motion and ask congress to take this opportunity to consider the harmful effects modern bourgeois culture is having on the class struggle and the threat it poses to continued human progress.

All of us here are realists and we know that our ability to influence the main trend in the arts is extremely limited for the moment. Having said that, our cultural pieces in *Proletarian* play an

important role in expressing our opinion on this question – not only for the widest possible external audience, but also, crucially, for our own comrades.

None of us can be immune from the polluting effect of bourgeois literature and art, which subverts the natural instincts of people towards mutual aid and brotherly love, and in their place introduces the virulent germs of individualism, envy and greed.

The obsession with the history of kings and queens, which was overcome in art and culture for a large part in the 20th century (thanks to the Soviet Union and widespread influence of socialist ideas) has returned with a vengeance. These subjects now dominate drama, documentaries and books, and lurch from the semi-historical to the outright ludicrous.

Television series depicting the sexed-up struggles of kings and queens, their murderous intrigues and 'human' back stories, pass for historical dramas; and for those who find such shows a little dull, the same stories are retold replete with wizards, dragons and midgets, all of whom at some point either have to have gratuitous sex with one another or commit murderous outrages in a glorified phantasmagorical medieval world.

This buffoonery now runs for hundreds of episodes, each one as dull as the last, whilst millions are spent on the accompanying billboards of semi-nude, blood-soaked 'actors' surrounded by pseudo-gothic imagery and replete with inane slogans such as 'All men must die', 'Iron from ice', 'Fight for the crown' and, the one which offers viewers most hope, 'The end begins'.

The harmful messages conveyed through antisocial and anti-working-class literature, music, television and advertising of all types is reinforced by the social acceptance of various channels of self-delusion; not least addiction to social media, computer gaming and escapism of all sorts. These saturate our environment to the extent that we are in danger of suffocation. And suffocation is the fate that catches up with many young people today who see no class struggle.

Communists must remind ourselves of the clean fresh air of proletarian culture – especially that which blew through the former USSR and which, to a modest extent, can be felt in our party study classes and branch work today.

Party work, proletarian culture – these are defences against the awful assault on so many minds and wills that are broken by capitalism; so many young lives ruined by depression, anxiety and a host of mental health problems that are symptoms of a sick society and a depraved bourgeois culture that has nothing left to offer than escapism and delusion.

Speaking to the third all-Russian congress of the Komsomol in 1920, Lenin said:

Proletarian culture is not something dreamed up out of nowhere; nor is it the invention of people who call themselves specialists in proletarian culture. That is all complete nonsense. Proletarian culture must emerge from the steady development of those reserves of experience which humanity has built up under the yoke of capitalism.

To this day, Trotskyites and misleaders of the working class seek to hide the significance of Soviet cultural achievements from new generations of socialists. Writing in the *Guardian* in March 2017, Tariq Ali sneered:

The classicism that was so deeply rooted in Lenin acted as a bulwark to seal him from the exciting new developments in art and literature that had both preceded and accompanied the revolution. Lenin found it difficult to make any accommodations to modernism in Russia or elsewhere. The work of the artistic avant garde – Mayakovsky and the constructivists – was not to his taste.

In vain did the poets and artists tell him that they, too, loved Pushkin and Lermontov, but that they were also revolutionaries,

challenging old artforms and producing something very different and new that was more in keeping with Bolshevism and the age of revolution. He simply would not budge. They could write and paint whatever they wanted, but why should he be forced to appreciate it?

These words of Tariq Ali seek to conceal from the reader the real state of affairs in Soviet literature, and Lenin's attitude towards them. Tariq Ali does this because Trotskyism worships revolutionary slogans; it champions that which *appears* to be revolutionary but in essence is reactionary and backward.

Ali, as an opportunist and a scoundrel, has spent his career misdirecting the youthful excesses of new blood that comes into the movement. It is an old trick to pit 'the new' against 'the old'; to champion naivety rather than harnessing youth's energy and adding it to humanity's general reserve of experience. Throwing out the baby with the bathwater is an old tactic of Trotskyite politics.

How can one criticise Lenin's attitude to the early excesses of Mayakovsky and similar revolutionary poets when they wrote as Mayakovsky did:

Throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, etc, etc overboard from the
Ship of Modernity . . .

All those Maxim Gorkys, Krupins, Bloks . . . need only a dacha on
the river. Such is the reward fate gives tailors.

From the heights of skyscrapers we gaze at their insignificance!*

Such excesses should not be held up as something to emulate but as something to be overcome. Tariq Ali, with an ego as big as a youthful Mayakovsky, chooses to use this as an opportunity to attack Lenin and Leninism. He writes:

* 'A slap in the face of public taste' by D Burluk, A Kruchenykh, V Mayakovsky and V Khlebnikov, 1917.

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Many of Lenin's colleagues were more sympathetic to the new movements. Bukharin, Lunacharsky, Krupskaya, Kollontai and, to a certain degree, Trotsky understood how the revolutionary spark had opened up new vistas.

These are heroes of Ali's because they are either counter-revolutionaries and fascist conspirators or found themselves for some time in the camp of the so-called 'opposition'.

Ali states:

Lenin was also hostile to any notion of a 'proletarian literature and art', insisting that the peaks of bourgeois culture (and its more ancient predecessors) could not be transcended by mechanical and dead formulae advanced in a country where the level of culture, in the broadest sense, was far too low.

Shortcuts in this field would never work, something that was proved conclusively by the excremental 'socialist realism' introduced in the bad years that followed Lenin's death. Creativity was numbed.

How the creative output of Sholokov, Gerasimov, Brodsky and Eisenstein can be labelled excremental by this third-rate courtesan of imperialism is anybody's guess. No doubt he is comparing them to his own monumental works *Iranian Nights* and *Partition* in film, or maybe his 1988 magnum opus *Time to Bury Lenin*.

For our part, the critical assimilation of the heritage of previous epochs helps us to find our feet, helps us to know that the present deplorable state of affairs is but transitory, and opens up a vision of a much brighter, happier future.

The great benefit of socialist realism is that it is thoroughly consistent with Marxist philosophical materialism. Its works are realistic but also romantic.

When a child is born, it inherits the world as it is; the good and the bad. Marxism protects that which is good, nurturing that

which is healthy in the garden of human creative thought, whilst weeding out that which is poisonous, harmful and ugly. That is why socialist realism is both realist and romantic.

We must not abandon that which is old merely because it is old. In the field of the arts, this resolution calls upon the party to resurrect, to the best of its ability, that which could be dismissed as old; that which was squandered and lies forsaken, and through doing so, hopes to demonstrate to young workers today that the solutions to today's problems, feelings and quandaries do not lie in the promises made by capitalism and its sick, paranoid, murderous projections on screen and in print media.

In the general hubbub of day-to-day life, it is important not to succumb to the weeds of bourgeois culture. It is worth reminding ourselves that, though chronologically we belong to the age in which we are living, spiritually we belong to the future.

Paul Cannon

11. The party press

This eighth congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) notes that our party's fourth congress, held in July 2008,

called on all members and supporters of the CPGB-ML to continue prioritising the distribution of our party press by . . . carrying copies of both *Proletarian* and *Lalkar* at all times, so as to be able to make spontaneous sales and to enter more effectively into impromptu discussions about the aims and work of our party.

Congress further notes that this decade-old guidance has not

been followed by all of our cadres with anything like the necessary rigour, resulting in missed opportunities for making new contacts and moving existing supporters forward,

We therefore instruct all members of the party to ensure that, henceforth, they always carry at least one copy each of *Proletarian* and *Lalkar* about their person.

We further instruct the cadre development committee and the incoming central committee to draw regular attention to this policy in their internal party publications.

Proposed by Steve Cook

Passed unanimously.

12. Antifascist work

This congress recognises that a section of our members and supporters are increasingly alarmed at the noisy display of nationalism made by a section of the working class under the leadership of various nationalist outfits: the Football Lads Alliance, English Defence League, etc.

Congress notes that the work of such organisations receives constant coverage from the section of social democracy that paints itself 'the left wing', the 'labour movement', the 'antifascist movement', etc.

Congress recognises that the term 'fascism' was precisely defined by the Communist International, which warned of the dangers of fascism at the sixth congress of the Comintern (1928), elaborated upon its description at the thirteenth plenum of the executive committee of the Comintern (1933) and subsequently in the main report delivered by Georgi Dimitrov at the seventh world

Congress in 1935.

In the latter report, Comrade Dimitrov characterised fascism in power as:

The open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital.

Congress recognises that the germs of a fascist movement are to be found in every imperialist country, and yet fascism is not being implemented. There are many reasons for this, though the most important reason is that it is not necessary to implement a naked, terroristic rule over the workers owing to the hopelessly reactionary and backward state of the workers' movement.

The workers' movement is poisoned and crippled by social democracy and poses no threat to bourgeois rule. Hence, fascism is not yet a necessity for the bourgeoisie. Until a real, revolutionary proletarian movement is to be observed in our country, bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism will be the prevailing political forms of bourgeois dictatorship.

The FLA and EDL, and any other extreme chauvinist-nationalist group, will not be the political organisations to implement fascism in Britain. Such groups are merely one form of the outward expression of reactionary ideas that hold sway in British society and culture more generally.

As the crisis of capitalism deepens, we have seen a revival of hopes in social democracy rather than a collapse. This is on account of the hope placed in Jeremy Corbyn and 'left' social democracy.

There has also been a corresponding increase in the activity of the more militant and vocal nationalist forces, firstly on account of the deepening crisis, and secondly because no revolutionary proletarian perspective is being offered to the reactionary politics of Labour and Tory.

Such a situation enrages a section of the working class. The

prolonged attempt to undermine the referendum result to leave Europe contributes to this, as do the continued imperialist wars of aggression and the work by the British state to arm, fund and assist the most backward forces of feudal reaction in the middle east and elsewhere: Syria and Libya in particular.

A direct result of imperialist meddling since 2011 has been the terrorist acts carried out in Britain and Europe by those who have been encouraged by imperialism to carry out similar atrocities abroad. Such atrocities contribute to the spread of reactionary ideas and the movement of the FLA, EDL, etc.

Congress notes that the activities of the FLA, EDL, etc are restricted to propaganda espousing national chauvinism. Street demonstrations are the most visible form, although well-organised online work often centres upon expressing similar ideas through social media. Attempts to 'out' paedophiles along with online exposures of 'grooming gangs' interest them only in so far as they are able to depict all such lowlifes as immigrants, with a focus upon Pakistanis (after the Rotherham events).

Low-level violence exchanged with left social-democratic groups, who style themselves as 'left' or 'antifascist', is epitomised by the thuggish hooliganism of a group of 'leftists' who ambushed former EDL leader Tommy Robinson as he left McDonalds (filming the fracas for their social media accounts).

Our own experience teaches us that no matter how well-meaning individual members of Trotskyite and anarchist groups are, such groups as Unite Against Fascism (UAF), the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Antifa, etc are loyal servants of British imperialism, defenders of the imperialist Labour party and cheerleaders for Corbyn's 'left' social democracy, and as such are incapable of persuading, influencing or turning any worker who has been poisoned by the prevailing reactionary propaganda away from racist, chauvinistic ideas and aggressive nationalism, let alone winning them to proletarian politics which they themselves do not hold.

Only the Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist) is

able to carry out such a task.

Recognising the above, this congress instructs its branches as follows as regards to the attitude they should adopt towards groups such as the FLA, EDL, etc, and instructs them to make a concrete assessment of their forces and abilities before engaging in any such work.

1. FLA and EDL members, and certainly their sympathisers who attend demonstrations during the summer months when they are deprived of their only cultural activity, namely attendance at a Saturday football match, must not be treated as 'the enemy', as the main 'fascist threat' or as a target for condescending derision.

Rather, these men and women constitute a politically backward strata of the working class that has fallen prey to the most extreme reactionary nationalistic ideas, which are themselves only an extreme version of the habits and prejudices to be observed in society at large, including amongst the ranks of the self-identifying 'left'.

2. Acts of violent hooliganism of the type irresponsibly indulged in by anarchists, lifestylists and others towards what is quite a broad group are counterproductive and play into the hands of the most militant racialists and others.

3. Alliance with the UAF, Trotskyites, the Labour party, Searchlight and all manner of 'left' social-democratic organisations, all of whom are backers of British imperialism and collaborators with the class enemy, is harmful to the cause of winning the workers away from such reaction.

4. Face-to-face engagement with members and supporters of these organisations is the only way of delivering a proletarian understanding to this section of the workers. Conversations, meetings, cautious leafleting and the spreading of Marxist ideas is the way to undermine the hold of reactionary ideas and substitute in their place ideas that represent their true class interests.

5. To this end, the central committee shall appoint a committee to work upon written material which shall be so designed and

tailored as to have some hope of the arrow finding its target.

Proposed by Paul Cannon

Passed unanimously.

Speech: Fighting the forces of fascism with persuasion, not force

Comrades, this resolution aims to give some perspective and direction to our branches and comrades who find themselves presented with regular opportunities to join with Trotskyists, revisionists and Labour party social democrats in common cause against 'fascism' and 'racism'.

It goes without saying that our party is, by its very nature, irreconcilably opposed to fascism and racism. It is to be expected that we shall have comrades who wish to oppose this racism and fascism, and even some who wish to challenge it physically. We have no opposition in principal to this; however, it is incumbent upon the party to point out to our members a number of pertinent considerations.

Firstly, Unite Against Fascism, Love Music Hate Racism and all the other such fronts are run by Trotskyites. As is well known, Trotskyites were in the past and remain today collaborators with fascism and imperialism. Trotskyites support the fascistic aggression unleashed upon Syria and give blind support to reactionary Kurdish nationalism and Islamic extremism.

Meanwhile, the Labour party is responsible in recent history for unleashing diabolical fascistic terror upon Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan, while the revisionists, hand in hand with the Trots, work ceaselessly for class collaboration, while condemning the uprisings of British youth and condoning all sorts of police and state terror in their desire to appeal to respectable public (bour-

geois) opinion.

These are not social forces with which we can unite in a real struggle against racism or fascism.

Secondly, we are numerically weak, and we have no organised fighting detachment. Those who intend to take part in serious physical confrontation need to realise that such activity must be prepared for and planned. Currently, the party is not in a position to put the entire organisation onto such a footing.

Those who do not intend to join a physical confrontation need to think about what they expect to achieve by attendance at such demonstrations and how they can protect young comrades in periods before and after so-called 'police protection' begins and ends.

Thirdly, our position on the questions of racism and fascism bears no similarity with the bourgeois-liberal positions of the Trotskyite, social-democratic and revisionist fronts. These organisations place their faith in the bourgeois state machinery and welcome its attacks on civil liberties under the illusion that the bourgeois state can deal with racism and fascism.

Fourthly, the imprisonment of Tommy Robinson was politically motivated and those on the so-called 'left' who welcomed his imprisonment are bringing the day closer when communists and anti-imperialists are locked away on similar politically motivated grounds.

Rather than celebrate this attack on civil liberties, we should point out how it forms a part of the reactionary moves of the state to suppress dissent. Pointing this out gives us much more chance of winning ill-informed, ignorant workers away from such groups as Robinson's and into the socialist camp.

It is my belief that the most effective work we are realistically capable of undertaking to counter ultra-nationalist, fascistic and racist ideas is the spreading of communist propaganda amongst both the fascists' supporters and those who ignorantly follow the lead of the social democrats, Trots and revisionists.

The latter we are doing very ably at the moment. As to the former, special attention should be given to presenting ideas of class politics in such a form that they may be read by those currently susceptible to reactionary propaganda.

This material should be in a form that is original, daring and unlike anything else we currently produce. To paraphrase Lenin, it should be particularly broad material for the most backward readers, but never vulgar.

Paul Cannon

Speech: Advice from a former fascist

Some of you who have had the chance to speak to me in the past will know that I actually come from what a lot of us would describe as a fascist background. In my late teens, I was a member of a fascist organisation – and my heart is going as I’m saying this – so I can say that if my first introduction to the left had been one of our younger members punching me in the mouth as I was coming out of McDonalds, there’s a very good chance I wouldn’t be here today.

I like to think of myself as an example that somebody can be won over, no matter how extreme their views are, with reason, with debate.

As you can tell, I’m working class; I come from a working-class background. My family is working class – in fact, most of them are unemployed. At that point, I was struggling with a lot of drug addiction, as were a lot of my close friends. Things like alcoholism, homelessness – we were suffering a lot of the same ills that a lot of our class are.

What we didn’t have was any scientific analysis. In place of that analysis, we had a member of the National Front, who pointed

my anger at immigration lies. That is a much easier thing to point your anger at than reason.

Now, I'm going to stab at a guess, that nobody in this room has actually read *Mein Kampf* before; it's ridiculous to even suggest that many people would have done. But there's a part in it where Hitler mentions the fact that his party don't ask people to read, and that was almost a point of glory for them; that Marxists were always doing study groups, and who has got time for that?

Whereas we can direct them at a point of anger – at the jews, at the blacks, at the gays. That worked very well for them, and it has been successful over the years because it deepens the blind, raw anger that the working class do feel.

What we need to recognise is that a lot of the times these are legitimate concerns that people have, with no scientific analysis. So a lot of fascists, what we might call fascist footsoldiers, they are workers, and they share the same needs as we do.

Now there is a mantra on the left that 'Fascism is not to be debated, it is to be smashed'. Now at one point soon, that time will come, but at the moment we are not in an open conflict. Now is the time for us to convince and recruit while we have the time; the fighting will come later.

Chris McGrane

13. Mass work in the NHS

Congress calls on all party members placed to do so to play as active a role as possible in their local campaigns in defence of the National Health Service – and to undertake this work as open communists.

The struggle around the NHS is currently at the forefront of the battle against capitalist cuts, and there is no contradiction between our party-building aims and the influence we can gain by playing a leading role in defending health care. Quite the contrary.

If a struggle supported by hundreds of thousands is seen to be led, at least in part, by communists, this can only add to the credibility of our cause among the advanced workers and beyond.

Proposed by Rosemary McCartan

Passed unanimously.

14. Peace and reunification in Korea

Recognising:

- That the historic meeting between Comrade Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump, the US president, is a great victory for the DPRK's consistent policy of strengthening its defence capability while simultaneously improving its economy.
- That the US has been obliged to deal with the DPRK as an equal in the bilateral discussions.
- That the US has conceded the persistent call of the DPRK for the suspension of the US-south Korean annual military exercises along the line dividing the north from the south as provocative.
- And that the US has conducted a serious dialogue with the DPRK concerning peace and security on the Korean peninsula.

This congress resolves to send heartfelt greetings to the Korean people, to the government of the DPRK, to the Workers Party of Korea and to Comrade Kim Jong Un on this historic occasion.

This congress further resolves to continue its full support for

the just stance of the DPRK, and calls upon the US to vacate the Korean peninsula and to leave the Korean people to resolve the question of the reunification of their country by themselves alone, through peaceful north-south dialogue and negotiation.

Proposed by Ella Rule

Passed unanimously.

15. Solidarity with Cuba

This congress reaffirms the CPGB-ML's unconditional support for Cuba.

This congress laments the death of Comrade Fidel Castro, who died aged 90 on 25 November 2016. Comrade Fidel gave his life to the service of his people.

This congress is inspired by the tremendous contribution that Comrade Fidel made not only to the revolutionary cause in Cuba but to all progressive humanity. Nobody expected tiny Cuba to survive after the collapse of the USSR, and it is to the undying credit of Comrade Fidel, the Communist Party of Cuba and the Cuban masses that they held firm through all the difficulties of those days. In the forward march of the revolution, Comrade Fidel will live forever.

This congress recognises the leadership provided by Comrade Raúl Castro as president of Cuba from 24 February 2008 to 9 June 2018. When Comrade Raúl took the mantel from Fidel, the imperialist vultures loomed over in the hope of using the change of leadership to destabilise the country. Such hopes were in vain, as Comrade Raúl, one of the founding revolutionaries who fought in the Sierra Maestra in 1959, continued the struggle, reaffirming

that "Cuba will not cease defending its revolutionary and anti-imperialist ideals or supporting the self-determination of all peoples." (Speech to the 17th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Venezuela, 17 September 2016)

This congress extends its warmest fraternal greetings to the newly elected president of Cuba, Miguel Díaz-Canel, who succeeded Comrade Raúl on 9 June 2018. Comrade Díaz-Canel, the first Cuban president not to have fought in the revolution, has however had a long history in the revolutionary struggle. He has been on the central committee of the Communist Party of Cuba since 1991, has sat on the political bureau for the last 15 years, has been involved in international missions, and was until his election as president the first vice-president of the Councils of State and Ministers.

As Comrade Raúl pointed out: "Compañero Díaz-Canel is not an improvisation; over the years he has demonstrated maturity, work capacity, ideological soundness, political awareness, commitment, and loyalty to the revolution." (Speech at the close of the constituent session of the National Assembly of People's Power, 19 April 2018)

This congress welcomes the growing economic and political relations between Cuba and both Russia and China. These relations strengthen Cuba's ability to defend its revolution and to stand in direct opposition to the blockade imposed by US imperialism.

This congress further calls upon US imperialism to lift the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba, and to abandon its efforts at bringing about regime change in the country. While relations under Trump have not improved, it cannot be said that prior to his presidency the US and Cuba were close to 'normalisation of relations'. Indeed, the recent pledge by the US of an extra \$20m for 'democracy promotion' (read regime change) in Cuba is only a fraction of that spent under Obama.

This congress resolves to continue campaigning in solidarity with Cuba, spreading awareness of its situation, tasks and achieve-

ments to British working people as widely as possible, through meetings, in our publications, and in other ways.

Proposed by Katt Cremer

Passed unanimously.

16. Venezuela

This congress recognises the heroic achievements of the Venezuelan people under the leadership of the PSUV in their struggle to wrest control of the nation from US imperialism and the comprador bourgeoisie.

In their mission to use the natural resources and labour-power of Venezuela for the benefit of the Venezuelan people, they have attracted the most vicious aggression from the imperialist camp. Warmongering propaganda, US-backed contras, reactionary national opposition and crippling sanctions threaten Venezuela on a daily basis.

This congress notes that, despite these challenges, the Venezuelan people and the PSUV have managed to make historic gains for the working class and peasants of Venezuela.

The housing and education missions have provided millions of homes and opportunities for education; and land reform, in cooperation with the indigenous peoples, has secured arable land for tens of thousands of previously landless peasants.

International corporations that have shuttered their operations in Venezuela have had their factories seized and placed in the hands of the workers.

This congress salutes the resolve of the Venezuelan people, the PSUV and the PCV in this struggle, which has brought them into

direct confrontation with US imperialism and its allies and has exposed many of the contradictions of capitalism.

They are demonstrating to all that the only way to secure these gains is the defeat of imperialism and the complete overthrow of the capitalist system in Venezuela.

Proposed by Daniel O'Brien

Passed unanimously.

17. Syria

This congress pays tribute to the enormous courage and endurance shown by the Syrian president, government, army and people in their tenacious struggle to rid their country of both the jihadi terrorists and their imperialist backers.

By their steadfastness on the anti-imperialist front line in the middle east they are not only on the road to restoring the unity and independence of their own homeland, but are also usefully increasing the difficulties encountered by crisis-driven imperialism as it strives to maintain its dominance in the region.

Noting that our party, in direct opposition to the misnamed Stop the War Coalition and the vast majority of 'left' parties, has from the outset rebutted the demonisation of President Assad, supported the Syrian army, welcomed the fraternal assistance of Iran and other allies and applauded the key role played by Russian air power in turning the tide of war, congress pledges its continued support for the Syrian resistance and calls for no cooperation with imperialist war crimes in Syria.

Proposed by Giles Shorter

Passed unanimously.

18. The drive to war against Russia and China

This congress notes the increasing drive by the imperialist powers, championed enthusiastically by British imperialism, towards a cataclysmic war with Russia or China or both. If such a war were to be embarked upon, it is clear that the imperialist countries themselves would become theatres of war – something workers in Britain have not experienced since the end of WW2.

Congress further notes that the role played by both Russia and China in the world today is a progressive, anti-imperialist one – as shown by China's technological transfer and infrastructure building in developing countries, for example, by Russia's military assistance to the Syrian people in their fight against an imperialist-backed jihadi invasion, or by both countries' roles in forming trade blocs (such as Brics or the SCC) that bypass imperialist mechanisms of control.

This congress believes that, even without such overtly anti-imperialist actions as those noted above, Russia and China have earned the enmity of imperialism simply by maintaining their own national independence and refusing to submit their peoples, markets and natural resources to imperialist control.

Congress further believes that neither Russia nor China have aggressive or expansionist intentions, and that all their military development is aimed at helping them to prevent an imperialist onslaught or preparing them to defend themselves in the event of one being launched.

Congress confirms that in the event of such a war breaking out, the British proletariat would have no interest in the victory of its 'own' imperialist bourgeoisie, and every interest in a victory for

the forces of anti-imperialism.

Congress therefore resolves that our members shall continue to educate workers about the real reasons for imperialist hostility towards Russia and China, doing everything in our power to expose the lies propagated to justify such a war and to popularise the programme of non-cooperation with the imperialist war machine.

Congress further resolves that in the event of the war breaking out, our party shall call for the victory of Russia and China and shall work to mobilise the masses against the imperialist system itself, which is the cause of all war in the modern world.

Congress resolves that in the case of war against Russia and/or China, the party shall continue to take as its slogans:

No cooperation with imperialist war; victory to the resistance!

Proposed by Joti Brar

Passed unanimously.

19. Zionism

Recognising:

- That zionism and the creation of a jewish state is not a jewish but an imperialist project;
- That this project, far from being in the interests of the jewish masses is, on the contrary, against their long-term interests;
- That zionist ideology, resting on the false premise that the jews of Europe do not belong to Europe, and that the non-jewish Europeans have the right, indeed the duty, to get rid of their jewish populations, is racist and antisemitic;

- That a jewish state imposed on Palestine can only be at the cost of the expropriation, expulsion and continued oppression of the lawful owners of that land, the Palestinian people, who have lived there for centuries;

- That the two-state solution (Israel and Palestine) envisaged by the Oslo agreement, under which the Palestinians made the truly painful concession of ceding 78 percent of the territory of historic Palestine to the Zionist state, has been rendered impossible through the continued Zionist settlement activity, land grabs and forced evacuation of Palestinian people from the tiny portion of the Palestinian territory which was to be the basis of an independent Palestinian state, including East Jerusalem;

- That the Zionist state has continued to act in flagrant violation of international law and UN resolutions with the full connivance and support of the leading imperialist powers, especially the United States;

- That the Israeli Zionists and their supporters persist in their fascistic behaviour, through abuse of the charge of antisemitism against all those who expose and oppose their activities, labelling every anti-Zionist statement and activity as antisemitic;

- That, this being the case, the Palestinian people have only one effective course open to them, namely armed resistance against Israeli armed suppression, for material force can only be defeated by material force.

Recognising the foregoing, this congress resolves:

- To continue to expose and oppose the poisonous ideology of Zionism as being a reactionary tool in the hands of imperialism – a tool which is as harmful to the cause of Jewish emancipation as it is to that of the liberation of the Palestinian people;

- Fully to support, morally, politically and financially, the liberation struggle of the Palestinian people, without the fear of being dubbed 'antisemitic';

- To support the cause of the Palestinian people for return to their land and homes, from which they were forced out a gunpoint, and for the recognition of Jerusalem as their capital.

Furthermore, this congress resolves to create public opinion in favour of the destruction of the racist, oppressive apartheid state of Israel and the creation in its place of a binational state of Palestine, in which Palestinians and jews can live peacefully as equal citizens and in which no group oppresses another.

Death to imperialism!

Death to zionism!

Forward to the victory of the

Palestinian national-liberation struggle!

Proposed by Harpal Brar

Passed unanimously.

20. Brexit (emergency motion)

This congress recognises the vote for Britain to leave the European Union, a union which was specifically created to suppress the working-class struggle for socialism and protect the interests of imperialist European nations, as a historic blow against a significant section of the British and European bourgeoisie.

Congress notes that both the leave and remain referendum campaigns were dominated by the bourgeoisie, with most of the bourgeoisie supporting the remain side. The mainstream narrative was focused by leavers around immigration and by remainers with the fear of financial collapse, making a superficially 'progressive' pro-EU versus 'reactionary' anti-EU, with the bourgeois media portraying the corrupt and vicious EU, which among other

crimes has martyred Greece in the name of solvency, as the bastion of all that is good and moral.

But, though it is manifestly clear that the working class mostly voted for Brexit from a reactionary position (blaming immigrants for worsening conditions of employment, housing and health care), leaving and weakening the reactionary imperialist European Union is objectively a progressive and anti-imperialist result.

In the two years since the referendum, the pro-EU bourgeoisie has done all it can to spread fear and confusion amongst the working class in order to garner support for either a 'soft' Brexit, which will see Britain remain in the customs union, single market, etc (essentially staying in the European Union), or arguing for a second referendum in order to reverse the decision.

The leave vote has also brought the question of Irish reunification to the fore. The prospect of a hard border in Ireland threatens the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement, but at the same time it has made the prospect of Irish reunification more appealing and urgent.

Congress instructs the central committee and all branches to continue exposing the reactionary, imperialist nature of the European Union and the bourgeois campaign to undermine Brexit, and to explain the communist, anti-imperialist reasons for being against the European Union.

Proposed by Daniel O'Brien

Passed unanimously.

21. One hundred years since the October Revolution: the future belongs to communism

This congress notes that it was the unstoppable combination of Bolshevik organisation and Marxist-Leninist theory that enabled the workers and peasants of Russia to unite in effective action that defeated first tsarism and feudalism, then Russian capitalist imperialism, and finally the combined forces of European imperialist intervention.

Congress further notes that the workers' heroic feats did not stop there. Under the scientific leadership of the Bolsheviks, the masses in the new Soviet republic were mobilised not only to destroy the old, capitalist forces of production and state control, but also to build the world's first socialist state.

Congress notes that this application of Marxism-Leninism in practice is what led to the colossal achievements of the Soviet Union during the period of socialist construction, and that workers not only in the Soviet Union but all over the world have felt the ramifications of those achievements every day since October 1917.

Congress notes that, with this achievement, the socialist genie is well and truly out of the bottle. Capitalism might linger on, but it is living on borrowed time.

Congress further notes that, after October 1917, the imperialists lost the moral high ground. When Soviet policy proved in practice the fallacy of bourgeois justifications for racism and national oppression (that colonised peoples were unfit to rule themselves) and for sexism (that women were physically and mentally incapable of doing 'men's work'), the popular sentiment turned against

imperialism for good.

This congress believes that the fact that modern-day imperialists are forced to pay lip-service to 'equality' and 'human rights'; that their colonial wars have to be fought under such slogans as 'anti-terrorism' or 'pro-democracy', are a telling legacy of October.

Congress further believes that, as a result of October, workers will no longer accept the openly-expressed imperial ambitions of the nineteenth century. No longer will oppressed peoples suffer their fate in silence, accepting the propaganda that their European overlords are somehow ordained by God to rule over them.

Congress believes that, while the imperialists may continue to fight wars for domination and plunder, they have to hide their real motivations for doing so, and their wars are almost never successful in the long run. Since October, there is no people to be found who will accept colonial rule. From Korea to Palestine, from Vietnam to Angola and Syria, the history of the last century is littered with evidence of the determined resistance of oppressed peoples to imperialism's best-laid plans.

Congress notes that, as fighters for socialism, the most important legacy that the October Revolution has left for us is Leninism, which was profoundly defined by Josef Stalin as:

Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular.*

This congress therefore resolves to dedicate its proceedings to the brave men and women workers, soldiers and peasants who fought in the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, to the members of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) who organised the masses to make their struggle effective and,

* JV Stalin, *The Foundations of Leninism*, 1924

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most of all, to the leadership of that party, headed by the great Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, whose profound theoretical insights enabled the oppressed masses of the Russian empire to clearly understand their enemies.

Congress resolves to continue on the path we have charted thus far: to pick up and cherish the powerful weapon of Marxism-Leninism and become ever more effective in using it.

Congress further resolves to continue to do everything in our power to defend the gains of Soviet socialist construction, the correctness of Marxist-Leninist theory and tactics, and the leadership of the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Stalin.

Congress resolves to popularise an understanding of the achievements of socialism amongst the working class. Only by understanding what the working class is capable of – that workers can rule without exploiters; that socialism can offer the civilised and secure life to which they aspire – will its members gain the confidence to join wholeheartedly with the struggle for socialism.

This congress, inspired by the earthshaking achievements of the Soviet Union, by the leadership of the Bolshevik party, and by the unparalleled contributions of Vladimir Lenin and Josef Stalin, the architects of socialism, resolves to continue to work unceasingly to bring proletarian dictatorship – rule by the working people – to Britain.

*Long live the October Revolution;
the future belongs to communism!*

Proposed by Joti Brar

Passed unanimously.