

UNITE AND FIGHT FOR LGBTQ+ RIGHTS FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

www.socialistparty.org.uk

This charter is for discussion and debate about the demands and organisation we need to fight for LGBTQ+ liberation.



**SOCIALIST PARTY
LGBTQ+ CHARTER**

LGBTQ+ WORKERS' CHARTER

MAY 2023

The Tories are attempting to whip up transphobia as part of their attempts to stir division at a time when workers are uniting in a fightback against the cost of living crisis. This is not a coincidence!

LGBTQ+phobia – discrimination, oppression, harassment and bullying of LGBTQ+ people – impacts the lives of every LGBTQ+ person. A fightback is needed. The Socialist Party has produced this charter to aid the discussion and debate needed as part of building a movement to fight for LGBTQ+ liberation and socialism.

LGBTQ+ workers and young people have a proud history of fighting back against oppression. In 1969, the LGBTQ+ community in New York exploded in anger at police repression and Stonewall was the birth of Pride events. This was a time of a heightened radicalisation throughout US society. It included the civil rights movement, the mass protests against the war in Vietnam, and the most militant strike wave in the workplaces in decades. Revolutionary movements internationally were also important parts of the backdrop - such as the ten-million strong strike of May 1968 in France and the struggles for liberation from imperialist exploitation and oppression in the colonial world. Such powerful movements are what have led to the legal improvements we've won, such as health provision, the equalisation of the age of consent, equal marriage, and other laws that improve LGBTQ+ rights.

But no gain is permanent under a capitalist system in crisis. And homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, bigotry and discrimination still exist and affect our lives.

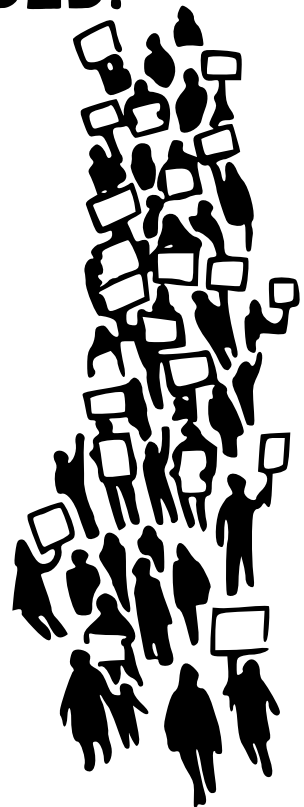
The Covid pandemic and the cost of living crisis have exacerbated the situation. Outrageously, some services even recommended people 'press pause' on coming out during the pandemic. The Tories' approach to banning so-called conversion therapy shows how they will attempt to divide us, including among LGBTQ+ workers and young people. We must resist all attempts by the Tories and the bosses to create divisions.

For the Tories, the rights of trans people are weapons for their culture war. Faced with crisis after crisis, the Tories see the politics of division as a way of deflecting from their inability to deal with issues like low pay, crisis in the NHS and other public services, and in the hope of maintaining some kind of social support. Because of the Tories' failure to address these questions, it is likely that 'cultural issues', under which they include trans rights, will be to the fore in their programme in the next election.

But the Tories are weak and divided themselves. Look at the way they have been forced to find money they claimed wasn't available for health workers' pay, even if it doesn't yet match inflation. That is an indication of how a mass workers' movement can fight back.

- Surveys show that two-thirds of LGBTQ+ people are afraid of holding their partner's hand in public, or being open about their sexuality for fear of a negative reaction
- More than a quarter of young LGBTQ+ people in education have experienced verbal harassment, insults or forced 'outings'
- Nearly all LGBTQ+ people experiencing this harassment do not report it for reasons like 'it happens all the time', or the feeling that nothing will change. Findings of, and experience of, institutional homophobia in the police will also deter people from reporting crimes they suffer
- A report from the Trades Union Congress found that 68% of LGBTQ+ people have faced sexual harassment at work. Of these, two in three did not report it to their employer. A quarter of those who didn't report chose not to for fear of being 'outed'
- Young LGBTQ+ people are more likely to be homeless – making up 24% of the young homeless population
- More than half of LGBTQ+ people have experienced depression (with one in seven afraid to seek help for fear of discrimination)
- LGBTQ+ asylum seekers face hostility while attempting to flee persecution. The Home Office demands 'proof' of sexuality, or says that deportation is not a risk to people's safety on the basis that they could hide their sexuality in countries where they would otherwise face persecution, criminalisation, discrimination or violence

A MASS UNITED STRUGGLE FOR ALL OUR RIGHTS IS NEEDED!



BUILD A MASS MOVEMENT TO END LGBTQ+ OPPRESSION

In Britain today, austerity and capitalism in crisis threaten the gains won through struggle in the past. While austerity hits all working-class people, those groups already discriminated against under capitalism can be particularly hard hit.

Since 2010 we've seen large numbers of LGBTQ+ services close due to lack of funding. LGBTQ+ people are disproportionately more likely to experience mental health issues or experience homelessness; all areas where we are seeing huge cuts to public services.

In recent years, issues around discrimination, particularly transphobia, have been on the rise. This is not just as a result of the Tories and their policies, but the failure of the trade union and labour movement leaders, and the absence of a mass workers' party to answer Tory lies and build a mass movement to fight cuts and division with mass action and a socialist programme.

The housing crisis, cuts to homelessness services and shelters, cuts to NHS funding and many of the other austerity attacks are hitting LGBTQ+ people sharply. A Tory lie, that needs to be answered, is that the fight for rights and resources in society is between different groups who face discrimination and oppression. Their propaganda attempts to place the blame for the oppression and lack of services, rights, and support, suffered by women and lesbians on trans people.

They also seek to scapegoat migrants and asylum seekers. The truth is that capitalism, the system the Tories defend, is based on exploitation and the driving down of working-class living standards. Keeping us divided is in their interests as it weakens our ability to fight back. This tactic is what ultimately lies behind the Tories' failure to update the Gender Recognition Act (2004) to make it possible for trans people to self-identify. The Socialist Party fights for the right to self-identify - but also for the rights, resources and public services we all need.

By building the struggle against cuts to public services and the cost-of-living crisis alongside other workers and youth we can defeat the Tories, their division, and their austerity agenda! That means building fighting trade unions and a new mass workers' party, with a programme of fighting for all our rights and for socialism.

Homophobia and transphobia have their roots in class society and imperialism and the institutional inequality inherent to it, including on gender lines. Historically the ruling economic class has promoted stereotypical binary gender roles, partially within the family, and more broadly to bolster its economic and political control. While attitudes have changed as a result of struggle and economic and social processes, capitalist gender norms and discrimination still remain and are reinforced by the unequal and profit-driven capitalist system we live in.

So, while LGBTQ+ people have fought and won rights, we also continue to face oppression. The idea that we will gradually win full liberation without a struggle to change society has been disproved by the recent period. Capitalism is a system based on exploitation and it utilises division among workers in order to maximise the profits of a few by weakening our ability to fight back collectively and change society.

In Britain and worldwide, a tiny group of people own and control industry, science and technology – and harness them in order to make vast fortunes. Globally, eight people own as much wealth as the poorest half of humanity – the greatest polarisation between rich and poor in human history. In Britain, the majority of us have faced austerity, while a tiny handful are raking it in. For example, the CEOs of the 100 biggest stock-market-listed companies collect an obscene 73 times the average wage of their workers.

Big businesses and banks claim support with rainbow logos and by sponsoring Pride events. But the major banks and big businesses that rush to lead Pride marches and hang rainbow flags are part and parcel of the capitalist system. Many, for example, also invest in Saudi Arabia where the government sentences LGBTQ+ people to death. They all exploit the working class and have an interest in maintaining any forms of division among us in order to prevent the working class realising its ability to transform society along socialist lines.

Capitalism offers no hope of a decent future for the 99%. It is an unequal, oppressive and discriminatory system, based on exploitation of the working-class majority by the tiny capitalist class, and divides us on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, etc.

The working class is the force in society that can get rid of capitalism. Class exploitation unites workers of all backgrounds. Together we have the potential power to fundamentally change this rotten system. Because of our role in production – we make things and make things work – and the awareness of our collective interests that this can generate, the working class has the potential power to replace capitalism with a socialist alternative based on democratic planning to meet the needs of all.



WHAT WE STAND FOR

**THIS SOCIALIST PARTY MANIFESTO
SUMS UP OUR MAIN DEMANDS ON
THE DIFFERENT ISSUES THAT FACE
THE WORKING CLASS.**



The strike wave over the last year has given a taste of the power of the working class when it is united and taking action. Workers have forced the government to negotiate on pay and have the potential to win inflation-busting pay rises. The working class organised within trade unions could lead a fight and win rights and resources LGBTQ+ people need. Because of this it is essential to link the fight against all forms of oppression including racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia, to the fight against class exploitation and capitalism.

It is also necessary to build a new workers' party with a programme of fighting for jobs, homes, services and rights for all in which different struggles can come together in solidarity and to develop that programme.

The rights the LGBTQ+ community have gained have come from decades of struggle. However those gains and developments can be lost. We don't want to just struggle to keep what we've already won, we need to build a mass movement, not just of LGBTQ+ people but the wider working class, which moves into action. It is only through this that we can fundamentally change society – fighting for a socialist change and the end to exploitation, oppression and discrimination.

The Socialist Party LGBTQ+ group has updated this charter, first published in 2021, to start a discussion about the demands needed to fight for the rights of LGBTQ+ people, and what programme is needed to end LGBTphobic discrimination.

**HELP US TO BUILD A MASS
MOVEMENT TO SMASH
LGBTQ+PHOBIA.
APPEAL FOR SUPPORT FOR
THE CHARTER IN YOUR
WORKPLACES, YOUTH
ORGANISATIONS AND
AMONG THE WIDER
WORKING CLASS.**

PRIDE

Born out of the struggles and campaigning of LGBTQ+ people, more recently we have seen Pride events become increasing corporatised and step away from their radical roots. A political Pride is more important than ever. But an annual protest is only the start of what we need.

We call for:

- Democratic committees of Pride organisers to kick out the corporations and organise by drawing together community campaigners, trade unions and all others interested in reclaiming Pride
- Build a fighting movement with a democratic and accountable leadership to fight for LGBTQ+ rights, participate in movements against austerity, oppression, and discrimination and organise international solidarity

IN OUR WORKPLACES

Many LGBTQ+ workers face discrimination, bullying and harassment at work. The main bodies of organised workers – the trade unions – need to launch fighting campaigns to stand up against all the bosses’ attacks and for LGBTQ+ workers at work and in wider society. These are organisations which can put the rights and needs of workers first, before the profit or interests of the bosses.



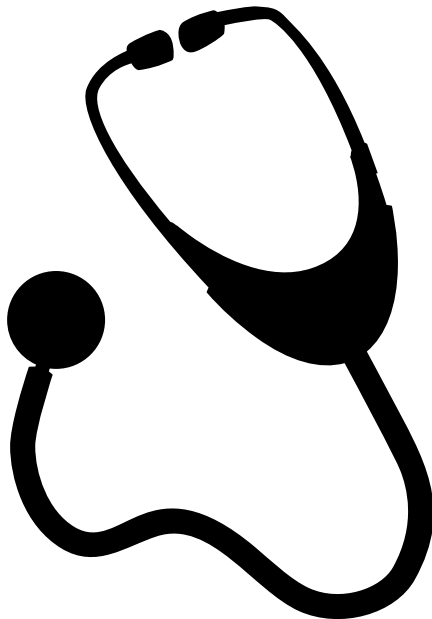
We fight for:

- Fighting trade unionism, under the democratic control of the members with a socialist programme to defeat the bosses.
- A trade union movement that fights against bullying, discrimination and harassment in workplaces, including schools, colleges, and universities. Democratic oversight by trade union and workplace committees to ensure procedures are fair, adequate and implemented in practice. No tickboxes.
- Trade unions to organise training available for all trade union reps and staff. Defend trade union facility time to carry out duties.
- Job security. No forced redundancies. End zero-hour contracts which can be used against workers raising issues of discrimination. Trade union action to fight any job losses and cuts in the workforce. To defend workers’ jobs and incomes, industries should be nationalised under democratic workers’ control and management with compensation only on the basis of proven need
- End low pay. Increase the minimum wage to £15.
- Ensure election of equality officers in trade union branches
- Trade union oversight over the recruitment and promotion process
- Defend the right to protest. Scrap the anti-trade union laws and other anti-democratic legislation such as the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill



IN HEALTHCARE

As socialists we fight for democratic control of society, and that includes in the health service. This requires democratic discussions, bringing together workers and service users, to develop a plan of what treatment, support and resources we actually need, not what capitalists can make a profit from or what the capitalist system can 'afford'. We wouldn't have to fight tooth and nail for safety measures like pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) to be available, for access to IVF, or against the years-long waiting lists for trans healthcare, because resources could be allocated on the basis of need not greed.

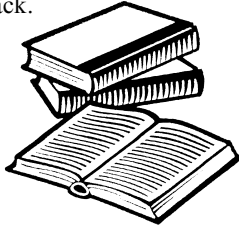


We say:

- Reverse all privatisation and cuts. Kick big business out of the NHS. End the postcode lottery. Scrap the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and cancel all PFI debts
- Support health workers fighting back against cuts, privatisation, low pay and the destruction of the NHS.
- Build a mass campaign for massive investment into our NHS – for a fully funded National Health Service and care system, free at the point of use. Increase the pay and numbers of NHS staff
- Increase funding in specialist LGBTQ+ healthcare and sexual health and make sure this is accessible for all who need it
- Scrap prescription charges in England, and all dental and health charges
- Invest and expand provision of gender care to meet the needs of trans people. No cuts to or closures of gender clinics while increasingly accessibility of services from the point of GPs
- Massively expand mental health support
- Nationalise the private healthcare sector, care homes, the medical supply industry and the pharmaceutical companies – integrate them into the NHS
- Health services run for health not profit. Build and fight for services that meet all our needs

IN EDUCATION

Many LGBTQ+ young people deal with the effects of capitalism's divide and rule at school, with bullying and an unrepresentative curriculum. We support students forming students' unions to be able to organise and fight back.



We need:

- Elected representatives of parents, student unions and the trade unions to have democratic oversight of the curriculum
- History and gains from the struggle to be taught. Include in the curriculum working-class struggle, LGBTQ+ history and trade unions' record and achievements in fighting oppression
- A positive curriculum regarding sexuality, relationships and gender identity to replace the legacy of Section 28
- Students unions and education trade unions must organise and campaign against LGBTphobic bullying. Joint committees of trade unions and student unions to oversee and monitor anti-bullying and harassment procedures
- All schools to be brought back under local authority control. End academisation and free schools
- Free school meals and travel for all
- Free education for all – scrap tuition fees, and write off all student debt



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HOUSING, WELFARE, SERVICES AND RESOURCES

How many LGBTQ+ people have put up with discrimination in the workplace or bullying bosses because the alternative was being thrown on the scrapheap of Universal Credit, facing poverty and eviction? How many LGBTQ+ people have not been able to be out, or have been forced to live in unsafe conditions, due to the lack of decent housing, or been forced onto the streets? How many already stretched LGBTQ+ services, have been stripped to the bone by a decade of austerity?

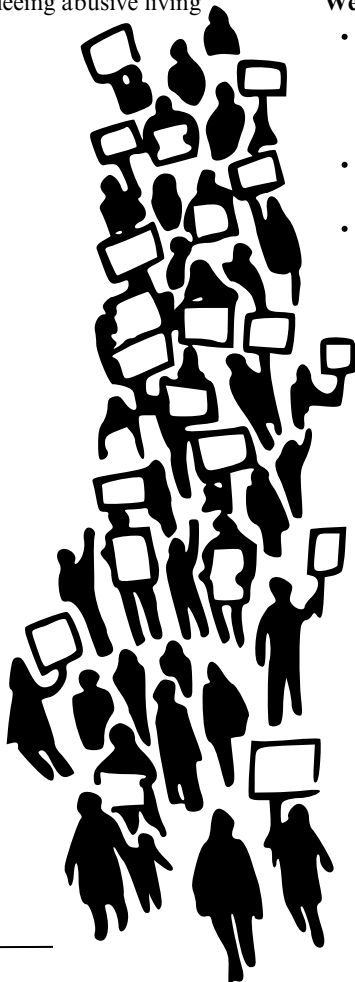
We fight to:

- Oppose cuts and privatisation of public services
- End enforced poverty – for the right to decent benefits, no to sanctions, pensions for all
- Stop imprisonment for crimes of poverty. Safe communities for all. Mass investment in jobs and training
- Fully fund and expand services for all, from the NHS, to social care, domestic violence refuges, support, education, to public toilets, including provision of gender-neutral facilities
- Build shelters for LGBTQ+ people fleeing homophobic, biphobic and transphobic families or partners
- Protect existing LGBTQ+ venues and provide funding to develop additional venues to meet the needs of the community
- Cap private rents, for a mass programme of building council houses, no to evictions



YOUNG PEOPLE

- Get organised! Build student unions in school, college and universities to fight to end homophobic bullying in education and for young people to have a say. Build Youth Fight for Jobs to fight youth unemployment and low pay
- Safe, council-run, well-funded youth centres, youth services and youth clubs and facilities. Young people need support and somewhere to go
- Fully fund housing and social support, and supply council homes for LGBTQ+ young people fleeing abusive living situations



TRANS RIGHTS

It is largely as a result of the courageous struggle by trans people that trans oppression is becoming more widely understood. But that doesn't mean there isn't still a lot of work to do to end it. Many trans people experience mental health issues alongside discrimination and harassment in the community and in workplaces, and when accessing services including healthcare. The Socialist Party stands for the right to self-identify, including for non-binary identities.

We say:

- Fight to end trans discrimination in law and in society as a whole. Build a movement to fight for legal changes to make it possible to self-identify
- Invest in expanding all public health support and other services for all
- Build a united struggle to end the discrimination and oppression faced by trans people

CULTURE AND CULTURE WAR

The Tories have turned to ‘culture war’ to divert from their inability to offer a decent future to anyone bar the super-rich. The LGBTQ+ community and particularly trans people have found themselves alongside immigrants and asylum seekers at the brunt. The big business-owned press supports them. Trans bans in sport, protests against drag queen story time events and attacks on healthcare services have ensued which also contribute to the whipping up of discrimination and abuse. This is coupled with years of attacks on education and local government funding, which Labour councils have failed to fight. This impacts on leisure services as well as public services, including for the LGBTQ+ community leading to closures of LGBTQ+ venues and services.

We say:

- Improve access to sport for all! Invest in and improve access to council-run affordable facilities like leisure centres, playing fields and gyms. Kick big business profiteers out of sport
- Oppose the dictatorship of the billionaire owners of the media. For the nationalisation of newspaper printing facilities, radio, TV and social media platforms. Access to these facilities should be under democratic control
- Challenge culture wars with campaigns that bring together all those fighting the attacks on our communities and living standards

BUILD A NEW MASS WORKERS’ PARTY

Keir Starmer’s Labour Party has shown it does not have an alternative to Tory division or to capitalism. Starmer flip flops, at best, on the questions of trans rights and healthcare and is proving to be no ally to the LGBTQ+ community or to the working class at large. We need a fighting alternative.

We say:

- Build a new workers’ party. Push for unions to be able to back candidates in elections that will fight for their members and to prepare a list of trade union-backed candidates for the general election
- Encourage LGBTQ+ campaigners to stand alongside workers in local and general elections on a common platform against cuts and for the resources we need



TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION

TUSC enables trade unionists, campaigners and socialists to stand candidates against pro-cuts establishment politicians.

WWW.TUSC.ORG.UK



**TUSC
AGAINST
CUTS**

POLICE, LAW AND JUSTICE SYSTEM

The Casey Review into the London Metropolitan Police has confirmed the institutional LGBTQ+phobic, sexist, and racist culture embedded in the police that many who have experienced this have spoken out about. The justice system has been a tool for the capitalist class to maintain its position and its exploitative system from the way we are policed to the legal decisions made about our rights.



We say:

- Place local police forces under the democratic control of elected communities, made up of trade unionist and members of the local community and accountable to that community
- No imprisonment for crimes of poverty. For trans prisoners to be housed according to their gender identity when it is safe to do so, with considerations made to the safety of all prisoners. No assumption of risk on the basis of a trans prisoner's gender identity. For prisons and public services to have safe staffing levels, no over-crowding, and to be run under democratic control by elected and accountable committees including service users, service workers and the trade unions



LEFTBOOKS.CO.UK

LEFT BOOKS HAS MANY POLITICAL AND SOCIALIST BOOKS TO CHOOSE FROM, INCLUDING SOCIALIST PARTY PUBLICATIONS. WE ALSO STOCK E-BOOKS, MAGAZINES AND JOURNALS.

BUILD INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

LGBTQ+ people across the globe face murderous anti-LGBTQ+ regimes and horrific discrimination. Across the world we have seen attacks on LGBTQ+ people increase. The criminalisation of homosexuality, including imposing the death penalty for some acts, in Uganda has rightly drawn condemnation but is not an isolated incident. In the US, we have seen attacks on the LGBTQ+ community including restrictions and bans on gender affirming treatment, and banning of books in libraries and schools.

We say:

- End the hostile environment – end all racist immigration laws. For democratic community and trade union oversight of the asylum system
- Grant all refugees and asylum seekers the right to work. No to low pay.
- No deportations. End inhumane ‘proof of sexuality’ by the Home Office
- Close down all detention centres – these are run by profit-driven companies that do not provide safe places for those fleeing horrendous situations
- Fight for the right to asylum – including the right of families to be reunited and for homes and support for those who cannot or don’t want to live with their families

JOIN THE CWI

The fight for socialism is an international fight. We support workers moving into action across the world and show our solidarity to those fighting for LGBTQ+ rights and against capitalism globally. Capitalism is an international system. That is why the Socialist Party is part of a worldwide struggle for socialism. We are affiliated to the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), linking up with socialist fighters across the world, learning from each other, and fighting for Marxist ideas. Wherever we organise, our members help build the maximum unity of working class and young people in the struggle to defend living conditions and fight for a socialist alternative to capitalism.



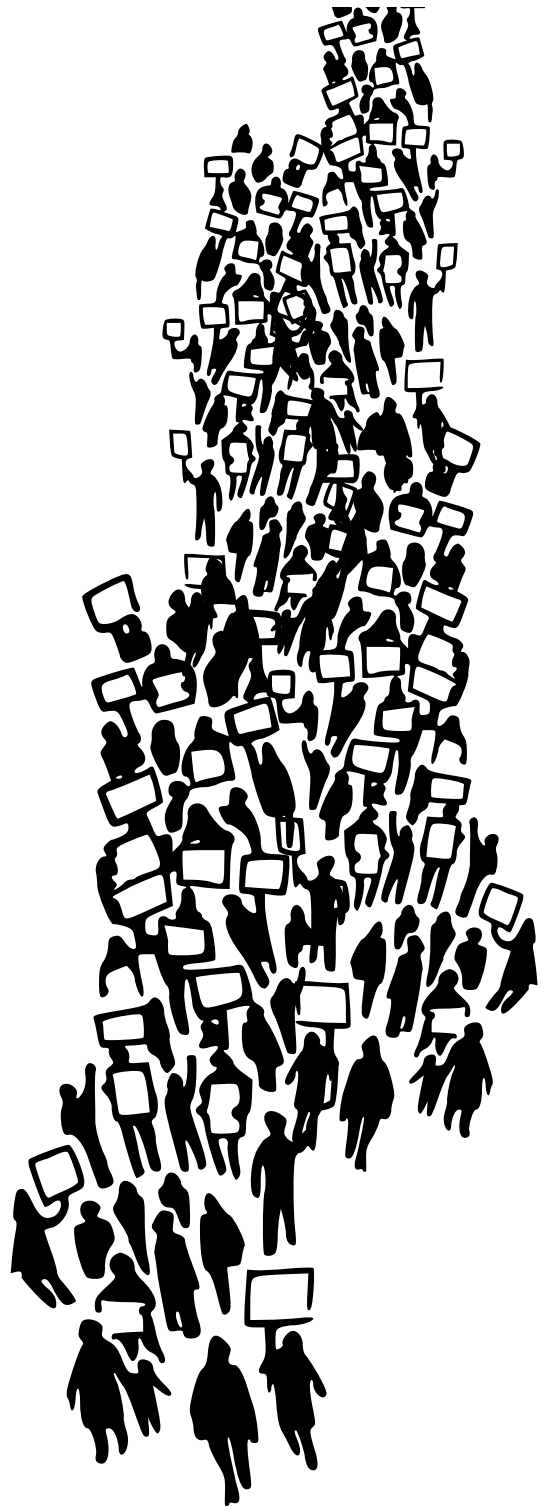
THE COMMITTEE FOR A WORKERS’ INTERNATIONAL

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FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM

Ultimately, until we end the rotten capitalist system, oppression and discrimination will be a part of everyday life for millions across the world. We need to fight for an alternative, socialism – a system which replaces the bosses, their divide-and-rule tactics, and quest for profit above all else. So that the working-class majority is able to put the vast wealth and resources of society to use, planning society democratically to provide what we need. This would open the way to building a society free from the bigotry, gender norms and discrimination of capitalism. In order to live in a world where human beings can be truly free, we have to fundamentally transform the way society is organised.

- Take the wealth off the 1% – we can't control what we don't own. Take into democratic public ownership the top 125 companies and the banks that dominate the British economy. A democratic socialist plan of production based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people would enable us to use the vast wealth that is there in society to produce what we need, not what makes a profit for the billionaire bosses
- No trust in capitalist politicians. Join the fight to build a mass democratic workers' party to represent our interests and fight for these demands



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