

Communist Party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

Fighting for communism – the future that works!



About the CPGB-ML

An understanding of society (theory) and a way of uniting to change it (organisation) are the two things that we need to make a socialist revolution. Ordinary people in Britain have everything to gain by getting involved in this process sooner rather than later. This world isn't working for us and we deserve better!

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

So many problems face this world: environmental catastrophe, poverty, disease, racism and war. They'll never be

solved while capitalism remains, but they could all be sorted if society was set up for the benefit of the majority rather than the private gain of a few billionaires.

Our party is different because we consistently apply Marxist science to all areas of our work, and we're not scared to tell it how it is. We refuse to be intimidated by the barrage of lying propaganda that fills Britain's mainstream media. It is the capitalists' job to try to stop us from building a socialist society; it is our job to do it anyway!

Challenge your ideas – challenge their propaganda – seek the truth – serve the people – change the world!

Contact the CPGB-ML to find out more.

watch: [youtube.com/proletariancpgbml](https://www.youtube.com/proletariancpgbml) :: read: cpgb-ml.org

Get in touch with local activists, find out more about the party and join the struggle!
Send us this form or an email and we'll contact you:

Name _____

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Decent homes for all!

www.cpgb-ml.org

Half of Britons under 40 have given up on trying to buy a house, with only a quarter expected to own their home by 2025. Whatever happened to a 'nation of homeowners'?

A ladder with no bottom rungs

The average wage in London is £28k a year, but first-time buyers need to earn £77k to qualify for a mortgage there. Nationally, the average wage required by lenders is lower, but still a prohibitive £41k. With house prices rising three times faster than wages, this gap is getting wider, so that each year 70,000 more people are priced out of the market – one third of them in London alone.

Young people needing a home today find there is no council housing available and are thus forced onto the mercy of a private rentals market in which rents are extortionate, conditions often poor and security nil. To even *consider* buying, not only do we need to earn above-average wages, but we often also have to look far away from work, friends and family. Commutes of well over an hour are now common.

Rise and fall of social housing

At the turn of the 20th century, the vast majority of workers rented from private landlords, with the poorest living in filthy slums or brutal workhouses. Council house provision was one of the working class's main demands and construction began in earnest after WW2 – one of many concessions wrung from Britain's rulers by militant workers, backed up by the example of the USSR, where socialist planning provided high quality homes, healthcare, education and more for free to all Soviet workers.

During the peak years of social provision, average waits for a council house were be-

tween six months and three years, while council rents were just *20 percent of one person's income*. As the post-war boom came to an end, a new crisis of overproduction made the capitalists desperate for new sources of profit. With little resistance from a pacified, Labour-aligned working class leadership, secure housing was one of many rights to be steadily undermined, and 1980's 'right to buy' led to the mass transfer of council houses to private landlords.

While existing stocks slowly declined, construction of new council homes plunged from 185,000 in 1970 to just 19,380 in 1990 and dropped below 1,000 a year between 1999-2010. As a result, private rents have reached astronomical levels and council housing is like gold dust. The new housing bill paves the way for the sell-off of remaining stocks and leaves formerly secure tenants facing an uncertain future.

Subsidising the developers

The vast majority of new houses today are being built by private developers, in numbers that are far too low to meet the needs of all those in search of a home. Development for profit also leads to shoddy building practices, small room sizes, and inadequate provision of green spaces, community facilities, transport links and other amenities.

Instead of building and maintaining social housing, the government is using the housing budget to subsidise private developers and keep their profits high. One scheme offers 20% discount on small 'starter homes', but with an average sale price of £215k, these are way out of reach for most. Similarly, 'help to buy' offers a deposit loan of up to 20 percent of purchase price. While such measures may help better-off first-timers into a home (and a crippling debt burden),

the schemes are at the same time *pricing out* millions more by stimulating an overheated market and further inflating prices.

Meanwhile, the pulling down of housing estates in desirable city-centre locations (so that the sites can be redeveloped commercially) is adding fuel to the fire. These demolitions are driving thousands of workers out of their previously secure homes and into the waiting arms of private landlords – driving up rents and pushing down standards for most, while making room for yet more luxury developments in which the super-rich can rest their surplus capital.

Decent homes for all

There are over 700,000 empty houses in Britain, 80,000 of them in London. In recent years, hundreds of thousands of half-built homes have been demolished in order to preserve high prices, but there are signs that the housing bubble is starting to collapse. Investors are pulling out of London's Battersea development, which has recently cut £2m(!) off the price of its top-end suites. As wealthy capitalists using London property for investment purposes start to flee, we might hope that housing prices will begin to drop. Given the fortunes at stake, however, we can expect to see our rulers try every trick in the book to keep prices high.

The CPGB-ML holds that houses should be provided as *homes for people*, not as investment opportunities for billionaires. The right to shelter, and to a family life, is a fundamental human right. 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 sell-by date. We demand:

1. The immediate scrapping of the housing bill, which threatens hundreds of thousands

with poverty and homelessness.

2. The end of the right to buy and the scrapping of all other schemes that fuel prices, create shortages and offer subsidies to landlords and developers.

3. The return of housing association and 'non-profit' properties to council ownership, 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.

4. The confiscation of all empty homes and unfinished developments and their transformation into council housing.

5. The provision of at least 300,000 new council houses per year to end the crisis.

6. Guaranteed, secure and well-maintained social housing *for all who want it*, close to our places of work, and the abolition of divisive allocation criteria.

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

8. 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 access to usable and pleasant outdoor spaces and community halls.

The CPGB-ML believes that the welfare of workers can only be safeguarded by a socialist system of economy, controlled and administered by the working people themselves. Let the capitalists' ministers try and show us otherwise; let them start by meeting this list of simple demands.

11 March 2016