

# 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](http://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:

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# How can we save our steel?

[www.cpgb-ml.org](http://www.cpgb-ml.org)

Thousands of steel workers' jobs are being axed across the country. First, the liquidation of Sahaviriya Steel Industries (SSI) UK led to the closure of the company's site in Redcar, Teeside, with the devastating loss of 2,200 jobs. The Redcar plant had been operating under various ownerships for 98 years. Soon after, Caparo went into administration, announcing over 300 job losses in the West Midlands and cuts in Hartlepool and Wales. Then Tata Steel announced 1,200 job cuts in Scunthorpe and Lanarkshire and another 750 at Port Talbot.

With a further 100 jobs now on the line at Sheffield Forgemasters, more than a sixth of Britain's remaining steel industry workers have lost their jobs in recent months, with no sign of any slowing in the decay of the industry. Indeed, it shows every sign of being in terminal decline. The current prospect of the complete demise of steel production in Britain threatens the livelihood of some 30,000 families, most of whom live in areas of already high unemployment.

## The world needs steel

Yet the products of the steel industry have never been more necessary to the development of the modern world, whose infrastructure, transport and machine tool requirements are urgent.

The mainspring of capitalist production is not the needs of society, however, but the needs of the capitalist to make the maximum profit. Since the late 1970s, when the re-emergence of a crisis of overproduction began to choke the market for many commodities, including steel, sharpening competition between rival producers around the world has resulted in the widespread plant closures and lay-offs we now see unfolding. The Labour party and the trade-union mis-

leaders, along with the imperialist mass media, are seeking to pin the blame for this on China, citing the low cost of Chinese steel exports. A Daily Mirror petition, which Unite is urging its members to sign, demands that the government should "buy British" and "block China from dumping cheap steel on the UK market". But advising workers to cheer on British imperialism in its global trade-war battle for markets will do nothing to 'save our steel', and everything to mislead workers into lining up behind the union jack just as crisis-ridden imperialism slips deeper into slump and war.

We should not allow ourselves to forget that it was just such social democrats as those in the Labour party who led the working classes of Europe into the charnel houses of the trenches in WW1 under the deceptive slogan of 'defence of the fatherland'.

## A half-century of decay

The real cause of the collapse of Britain's steel industry, along with mining and other former economic mainstays, lies in the decades-long failure of successive British governments, both Conservative and Labour, to invest enough in modern production methods to be able to compete successfully with rivals abroad. As the scale of global production has outstripped the purchasing power of consumers, the less 'efficient' producers (those who have not modernised their production methods) can no longer sell anything at a profit and go out of business.

We should note, however, that even if sufficient investment *had* been made and modern production methods *had* been applied, the end result would still have been bad news for workers, who would find themselves expelled in droves from modernised

factories needing far less manpower.

It is clear that *whichever way capitalism tries to manage its own contradictions, it is the working class that suffers the consequences* – unless and until it learns to overthrow capitalist rule and build socialism.

In 1965, the number of workers in the plants of the then British Steel Corporation (BSC) stood at 817,000. In January 1980, steel workers began a bitter 13-week strike as the privatisation and wage-cutting agenda of the Thatcher government, elected the previous year, started to kick in. This strike was betrayed by the Labour and trade-union leaderships.

Mass steel production in Scotland effectively ended with the closure of the Ravenscraig plant in 1992, despite a protracted struggle by the workers and their local communities. So vital had the plant been to local life that the town of Motherwell had been popularly nicknamed Steelopolis.

## Ditch the Labour misleaders

This wilful destruction of a once-thriving steel industry by a parasitic imperialist ruling class occurred long before China, or any other developing country, was a significant steel exporter.

When the likes of Jeremy Corbyn attempt to outflank the Tories from the right, demanding that the government "stand up to China" on the steel issue, they not only fuel social-chauvinist attacks on a developing socialist country that was once the plaything of British imperialism; they also prevent the class struggle of British workers from even getting off the ground by presenting our friends (the socialist countries and workers in other countries generally) as enemies and our enemies (the British ruling class, the EU and

imperialism generally) as friends.

Workers are told by Unite that "together we can save our steel". But what does this mean? If it means that by putting pressure on our capitalist government we can reverse the half-century of decline, then it is just whistling in the dark. Worse, it is encouraging workers to identify their class interests with those of the capitalist at the very moment when the state is making its preparations to crush working-class resistance to deepening austerity.

In hard reality, there is only one way to save the steel industry in Britain, and that is to fight class against class with the strategic objective of establishing the rule of working people. Only then can we create a planned socialist economy geared to serving the interests of *all* workers – not only in this country, but throughout the world.

The history of the USSR shows us that under a planned economy, steel (and everything else) is produced for need rather than for the market, and any workers no longer needed in one area of production are retrained for other useful work, without ever facing the prospect of homelessness or the dole. Moreover, modernising production methods and achieving greater productivity lead not to unemployment but to a gradual lessening of the working day for all.

Yes, we demand the nationalisation of what remains of the steel industry, and we demand full compensation and retraining for those laid off. But we demand these things not as 'left' camouflage for the pernicious slogan of 'British jobs for British workers', but as a first step in the direction of ending capitalist class rule for good.

**It's time to face it: capitalism must go!**