

Labour prepares to step into Tory shoes

This week the proverbial Tory boil burst. The Tories cannot save themselves by lancing the Europhobe boils, as they would have us believe. The party is disintegrating from top to bottom and is increasingly a blight on workers' lives. Who knows what will happen to their disastrous leader. The real question is what will happen after the Tory collapse



Major and Redwood waving goodbye

MAJOR'S desperate attempt to dig himself out of a political hole has only sunk him further down into the slime of Tory internal squabbles. The Tory Party is for the time being undoubtedly a defunct party.

Conservative MPs know they cannot win the next election and are destroying each other in their desperate individual bids to hold onto their seats. Running capitalism has been firmly and surely replaced by saving their own skins.

Fortunately for the Tories the European Summit was conveniently overshadowed by Major's 'domestic problems'. But the squabble over Europe within the Tories is indicative of not only their vicious and chauvinistic attacks on the working class, but their inability to cohere any long-term programme for British capitalism.

But before we revel in too much smug glee at the imminent demise of Major and his cronies, we

should be very wary of what is lurking in the wings.

The Labour Party's promises to be tough, - tough, that is, on the working class in the interests of the bosses - have continued relentless since Blair moved the party centre stage. Only this Wednesday Gordon Brown, the shadow chancellor, launched his 'get tough on spending' economic policy document. He promises a crackdown on waste and inefficiency - workers' wages and services no doubt being the biggest waste for this thoroughly loyal opposition.

Last week Jack Straw's pet crackdown was on 'problem tenants', who apparently pose the latest threat to civilisation. Keen to play the 'law and order' card, he suggests that "disruptive tenants" (in council accommodation) should be subjected to apartheid-style bans and threatened with jail sentences of up to seven years.

Many on the left, both inside

and outside the Labour Party, bemoan the fact that it is not waging all-out war on the capitalist system, as it 'should' be doing, and is instead declaring war on the working class.

Condemned to swing from the coat tails of Labour, they will be totally unprepared for the Labour attacks that would follow the Tories' final demise in a general election.

The Communist Party, on the other hand, does not see itself as the 'left' conscience of bourgeois society. The job of communists is not to give advice to the Labour Party or more powers to the capitalist state - whoever is in charge, it is our enemy.

We must fight ourselves for improved housing conditions and organise ourselves to defend our neighbourhoods against those who harass and attack others. Above all we will have to organise ourselves against the likelihood of a new and viciously anti-working class Labour government.



Communist Party Offensive 95

THIS WEEK we reach the halfway point in the twelfth Party Offensive. So far comrades fully involved in the Summer Offensive have raised a staggering £5,116.61. Many areas of the organisation have made an impressive start, in particular Brent branch, the Party printshop and *Weekly Worker* committees. Those that are lagging behind will have to ensure that this month fundraising is at the top of their agenda.

We have raised 29% of the total pledged, which is a good start, as the tempo always rises in the last month. However we are still some way short of our £25,000 target. If you are not yet involved, we need your help. Join us - rush cheques and pledges in now. Tickets for the Summer Offensive celebration meal are now available. The meal is on Saturday July 29 and tickets are £20. Please write or phone for more details.

Euston railworkers defend safety

We need your support

RAILWORKERS are being asked to carry out night work on track with defective lighting and inadequate numbers of staff. This is breaching health and safety laws and risking fatalities.

Despite repeated requests for a meeting to discuss the matter by staff reps, management has stubbornly refused to address this crucial issue.

Euston workers are now reluctantly forced to protect themselves by refusing to go on track unless enough staff and adequate lighting are provided. Veiled threats have already been given by managers, with one boss even referring to the Manchester four guards, who were sacked for defending safe working practices nearly two years ago.

Staff have made it clear that we will not be intimidated into unsafe working. We have also indicated that

any victimisation will be met by immediate industrial action, which will spread to all railworkers, regardless of their grade or union.

Management may well see reason in the face of our determined action to defend safety. However, if it does not, we will be calling on all our brothers and sisters in the rail industry to come to our aid.

No more unsafe working - no more Manchester fours!

Organising for railworkers' victory

Meeting to build for the rail strike and reactivate the support groups, called by the London Midland district council of the RMT.

Wednesday July 12 at 7pm in Aloysius Hall, Eversholt Street. Nearest tube - Euston

Labour is no alternative!

Our voice and organiser

IT IS timely that we reach the hundredth edition of the *Weekly Worker* as we approach the halfway point in the twelfth Party Offensive. The Offensive is central in our fight to reforge the Party, with the organisation turning outwards in two months of intense work to raise the finance needed to achieve the year's tasks.

Our paper has always been the voice and organiser of that fight. Its development has been guided by the needs of the struggle to reforge the Communist Party of Great Britain, not imposed by financial limitations.

We made the first step in transforming our fortnightly journal into the *Daily Worker* in 1992. Our previous journal was primarily concerned with laying the theoretical basis necessary to reforge the Party through polemic with the left and in particular 'official communism'. In 1992 the paper developed from this base to take our ideas out to the mass in a much more concerted way.

The general election of 1992 was an important one in putting the CPGB back on the political map after the hatchet job inflicted on our Party by the liquidationists who had dissolved themselves into the Democratic Left in 1991.

We stood candidates in that election and produced the *Daily Worker* for the campaign. We were clear that the CPGB and its paper could not be voted or

legislated out of existence.

The *Daily Worker* during the election provided a foretaste of the paper that will be necessary to take communist politics - so distorted and discredited by 'official communism' - out to the mass again.

Later that same year the miners moved into action and a real concrete necessity for a workers' organiser and propagandiser emerged. Previously our organisation had been involved in lengthy discussions on how to transform our journal. The situation demanded a paper that did not drop the need for developing theoretical clarity, but also could intervene in the day to day struggles of trade unionists and workers, wherever they moved into action.

The miners did, and our organisation transformed itself without hesitation. The discussions around the paper were transcended as we immediately changed the paper's masthead from *The Leninist* to the *Daily Worker*. Its contents were posed and provided by the movement itself. We used the paper throughout to provide a voice for workers' own views and to agitate for what was necessary, taking the slogan 'Prepare for a general strike' up and down the country.

With our tiny quantitative resources most comrades were surprised by the impact the *Daily Worker* was able to

make through the hard and disciplined work of comrades prepared to pull themselves out of their normal routine and put the organisation onto a war footing. Our organisation won not only a hearing for the tasks of the immediate battle, but also many new readers and communist sympathisers.

The paper at this time came out sometimes four times a week - we urgently needed to print it ourselves.

The work to build the Party printshop had already begun, but at this time our press was limited to producing A3 broadsheets. It was clear that the pace of events in the middle of mass struggle demanded the ability to respond to events at the time - one month, one week later would be useless to the working class.

As the miners' struggle subsided, the organisation debated how to take the paper forward. The broadsheet format was now derided by many comrades.

Some had argued that we should stop production and only print a bigger paper when we could afford it. Others that the paper should go back to being a purely theoretical journal, or else should not have theoretical articles in it at all, but only short agitational workplace reports.

As local and European elections loomed, other political tasks were posed. Some argued that we should not contest these elections or that all other

work should be subordinated to getting an A2 printing press and a bigger paper.

These discussions continued throughout our work in many different forms, as each new task was posed. The majority view won through by a combination of debate and practice. We were clear that there should be no retreat. The paper should continue regular production and build on the gains made. It must be a tool for our communist work - the two could not be separated. We would never develop the paper as an isolated group trying to save up enough money for a printing press. The paper could only develop by using it to win new friends and support for our communist work. This is the only way both the content of the paper and the finances for it could be raised.

Transforming what was now the *Weekly Worker* into a regular four-page paper with issue 42 was a huge leap for us. With the A2 press the paper had the possibility of expanding to include debates and theoretical supplements.

The need for a bigger paper has now become urgent, as the process of rapprochement has begun to become a reality.

If the Party is to win new forces, it must intervene in workers' struggle with its paper. And if communist forces are to come together in the task of reforging the Party, its paper must be able to carry the debates and disagreements between the different revolutionary traditions which we hope to unite in one Party. Clearly serious debate cannot be carried out within the present four pages.

The struggle to expand the *Weekly Worker* must go hand in hand with the process of rapprochement, of reforging the CPGB. This must be one of the tasks of this year's Summer Offensive as we take the paper forward to fight the next general election and, more importantly, the process of extreme disillusionment which a Labour government would trigger off.

Join us in the fight for our paper, in the fight to reforge the Communist Party - our weapons of class war.

Lee-Anne Bates

From *The Call*, paper of the British Socialist Party, June 24 1920

Communism through communist unity

THE RAPID and encouraging progress towards the formation of a united Communist Party is carrying the practical work of consolidating the revolutionary forces in this country from the sphere of discussion into the realm of reality and class action ...

Our aim must be not only the uniting of existing Marxist organisations, but the mobilisation of the masses as a class to do battle for communism. Nothing less should satisfy us.

The unity we move towards is no mechanical one. On the question of basic principles no compromise will be tolerated. And rightly so. But on questions of tactics, when differences exist - ie, on participation in parliamentary elections and the relation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party - the issues must be settled by discussion and the decision of the rank and file themselves.

... In our judgement the relation of the Communist Party to the Labour Party is fundamentally a question of the relation of class conscious workers to un-class conscious workers.

... Not by isolation, but by continuous contact with the workers within all existing Labour organisations, constantly stressing the connection between their immediate struggles and the ultimate struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, shall we win the confidence and support of the masses.

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Obituary

Loss of a revolutionary

Harry Gwala: born July 30 1920; died June 19 1995

HARRY GWALA, veteran leader of South Africa's communists, died last week after a long battle against motor-neuron disease.

Uncompromising in his commitment to communism, he continued to put forward the workers' viewpoint. While most leaders of the South African Communist Party were content to integrate themselves into the bourgeois establishment, fully supporting Mandela's capitalist government, he was not afraid to speak out against them.

Born in KwaZulu-Natal, he qualified as a teacher and joined the Party at the age of 22. As a result of his trade union activities he was banned for much of the fifties and was eventually jailed for 'terrorism' for his role in the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. In 1976 he was sent to Robben Island for life, but was released in 1988 after his illness began to rob him of the use of his arms.

He rapidly reached the top leadership of both the ANC and the SACP, and was particularly venerated in his native Natal. Yet he never lost touch with the masses, paying great attention to local work. The chairperson of his local Dambuza branch of the ANC, Shakes Cele, told me: "There were not many leaders like him, able to go down to the masses on the ground and translate their feelings."

He was a great teacher. As Tony Yengeni, SACP executive committee member, pointed out, "Working class theory and Party organisation are most advanced in Natal-Midlands, thanks largely to the influence of comrade Gwala. The youth are well read and well trained."

He was among the leaders of resistance to the Party's attempt to ditch even the term, Marxism-Leninism, and was uncompromising in his insistence that the Inkatha terrorists must be met with counter-violence: "Make no mistake - we kill Inkatha warlords," he told a journalist.

Not surprisingly he became increasingly unpopular with both the ANC and Party bureaucracies. Nelson Mandela intervened personally in an unsuccessful attempt to remove him from the Natal ANC chairmanship, and last year his SACP membership was suspended after allegations were made that he was organising hit squads - not against Inkatha, but, ludicrously, against ANC and Party leaders.

Comrade Gwala gave an eloquent reply to this in an interview with the *Weekly Worker*: "I've been a member of the Communist Party since 1942. It would be very strange if, in my old age, when I'm just about to leave this world, I start organising hit squads. There have been sharp differences all along and they have been part of our culture" (August 11 1994).

But Harry Gwala never broke from the left centrism that characterised the SACP, even in its most revolutionary days, when it was calling for armed insurrection. During the present period of transition, he believed that the time was not yet right to organise *against* the ANC-led government. He himself was ANC chief whip in the KwaZulu-Natal provincial parliament, where Inkatha is the majority party.

At a time when Nelson Mandela was adopting openly anti-working class policies, he told us: "I don't think we have reached the point of breaking with the government yet. We have built this bourgeois democracy around characters, around certain individuals.

Until we destroy that myth, any criticism will appear to be against an individual and not against the system" (*Weekly Worker* February 23 1995).

Tony Yengeni told me that Harry was not afraid of speaking his mind: "He didn't follow individuals, but policies. For him no individual was above criticism." Unfortunately he made an exception in the case of Nelson Mandela.

In the last months of his life comrade Gwala became more and more outspoken in condemning the SACP leadership. In one of his last interviews he told the *Weekly Worker*: "The Party leadership has collapsed and is trailing behind the bourgeoisie and the national movement. It does not even seriously discuss socialism. It attacks the populace and praises the 'transformation'. The SACP of the bureaucracy is dying - it is tied to the apron strings of the ANC. We must start a new road: we must go to the factories, to the youth - then the Party will not die" (April 27 1995).

As Shakes Cele points out, "When Harry made his criticisms, most would not agree completely. But within a short time events would often prove him right. In terms of his understanding of the present period, combined with his knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, we have suffered a great loss."

That loss is felt far beyond the boundaries of South Africa.

Peter Manson

Lesser evil wins

BILL MORRIS was last week re-elected leader of the Transport and General Workers Union. In the ballot for general secretary, he received 158,909 votes, as against 100,056 for Jack Dromey and 16,833 for Norman Davidson.

The contest received much more attention than is normally given to union elections because Dromey was standing openly on a 'new Labour', pro-Blair platform, causing the lesser-of-two-evils left to throw its weight behind Morris. In fact the differences between the two major candidates are those of nuance, rather than principle.

The left made much of the fact that Morris spoke up for Labour's original worthless clause four, whereas Dromey was in favour of its meaningless replacement. But Morris was bound by his executive's decision though he was known to privately prefer Blair's version.

Morris campaigns for his union policy of a minimum wage set at the pathetically low level of £4 an hour, but Dromey has said that he too will stand by that policy.

The fact that Morris was the sitting candidate and enjoyed the support of most of the union's bureaucratic machine played a more significant part in his re-election than any of the 'revolutionary' left's propaganda.

After the result was declared, Morris described Tony Blair as "highly respected, valued and much loved". This was no doubt an example of fighting talk to defend his members against Labour's coming attacks.

Workers should not be encouraged to give their votes to any candidate who will not fight wholeheartedly for what we need.

Alan Fox

Can a general strike ever be kept within the realms of a simple trade dispute?

This week's London seminar in the *Revolutionary moments* series is on 'Britain 1926'.

Next week's seminar (July 9) is on 'Britain: nation and nationality'. All seminars are in central London on Sunday at 5pm. For more details, call 0181-459 7146

No cuts, no closures

Pat MacManus from Unison at Central Middlesex Hospital discusses the campaign against health cuts in Brent; and a speaker from the Unemployed Workers Charter rallies support for the fight to gain 100,000 signatures for its health petition by August.

Join the campaign - 7.30pm on Wednesday July 5 in Willesden Green. For more details, call Brent Communist Party branch on 0181-459 7146

End of the Tory road

Whatever the outcome of the Tory election contest, Blair's New Labour looks set for government. How should the revolutionary left prepare?

JOHN MAJOR'S decision to pre-empt a possible leadership challenge in November is not an act of courage. It is a pathetic gamble by a desperate man which cannot pay off. Clearly the idea is to reassert his long lost authority. "Put up or shut up" sounds bold and firm. But with the Tory Party deeply divided it may just be an elaborate way of leaving the political stage with honour intact.

July 4 will be no presidential referendum ending with some predetermined result. There will be no walkover. Those opposing Major are not merely the tiny clique of former whipless Europhobes like Tony Marlow and Teresa Gorman. The right wing has a heavyweight champion in the form of John Redwood - 'ward nine' has already been marginalised. There is, of course, an overarching body of malcontents. Among all sections of the Tory Party dissatisfaction with Major is palpable. Endless by-election defeats and a 20% poll rating shatter nerves and breed intrigue. Moreover from within the cabinet other ambitions crave fulfilment. As a result Major is unlikely to receive a 'thumping' mandate. He might score an arithmetical victory. But that will leave him humiliated and vulnerable to resignation calls. Surely a second round will finish him.

How things unfold is therefore uncertain and made all the more so, given the interweaving of party interest and personal calculation. One uncertainty compounds another. Take the Michaels - Heseltine and Portillo. Despite protestations of loyalty they are feverishly manoeuvring behind the scenes. In the secrecy of the ballot booth their supporters could well abstain or vote for Redwood in sufficient numbers to trigger a second round, which would allow cabinet ministers into the running. Major's backers may insist he will hang on to the bitter end. However the real content of a second round would be a battle between the Tory left and right represented by Heseltine and Portillo (who at 42 appears at the moment content to bide his time).

The votes of the 329 Tory MPs might be impossible to predict. Those of the 40 million electorate at the next general election is another matter entirely. Even if a compromise candidate emerged - Gillian Sheppard has been widely touted - the Tory Party would be seen as hopelessly divided and guilty for the failures of the system. Whoever leads it, the Tory government might drag on for another year or two, but



As the Tories tear themselves to pieces Blair is waits in the wings

the end is in sight. The question is not so much whether the Tories will lose the next general election. Rather it is by how much. A Canadian-type wipeout, which reduces them to a mere rump, is far from inconceivable.

It is essential for the revolutionary left to correctly assess this moment. Looked at one way, nothing important is happening. For all the media attention, the Tory leadership contest will be conducted over lunches at Claridge's and Pimm's on the terraces of Westminster. The masses are playing the purely passive role of TV audiences and atomised potential voters.

As the party in office, it is natural for the Tories to be unpopular. Equally it is natural for Labour to be popular. That is how the two party capitalist system of politics is supposed to work. The 1980s were unusual in that Labour's splits and consequent return to its 1920s and 30s role of a party of crisis allowed one Tory victory after another and the phenomenon of Thatcherism. Blair will reap, and has added to, the success Kinnock and Smith had in restoring Labour as the alternative party of government.

Having for years dully limited itself to the politics of "Tories, out, out, out", the pro-Labour left looks as if it will get what it always wanted, a Labour government. However - and this is what is important - a Labour government will be saddled with the problem of managing a British capitalism whose relative decline has gone on unabated. There has been no turnaround. No Thatcherite economic miracle.

Germany, the USA and Japan continue to leave Britain behind. Italy, Spain, Korea and Taiwan continue to catch up. More to the point, British capitalism can only compete by continuously upping the rate at which the workers are exploited. In other words there will be no restoration of the post-World War II social democratic consensus.

Whether they like it or not, Blair and his ministers will be forced to attack our rights and conditions. That is why he and his cronies in the shadow cabinet make no pledges to spend beyond what capitalism considers it can afford. And that in turn explains why Blair spoke of Margaret Thatcher's "admirable qualities" in Murdoch's *Sunday Times*, courts big business, promises to retain the anti-union laws and champions a market system which for millions means unemployment, pauperisation, speed-ups and mortgage debt.

That world capitalism stands on the threshold of a new, unparalleled general crisis tells us that any honeymoon period for a Blair government will be short-lived. Discontent will be profound and will seek out expression - in all probability creating the conditions for political polarisation. A British version of Le Pen - or something worse - is far from impossible, and would no doubt produce a panic on the pro-Labour left. However the task of the genuine revolutionary left is to fight for what is needed. That is, the positive negation of capitalism with socialism, not imagining, Menshevik-like, that choosing the lesser evil represents the key to social progress. The rise of a neo-

fascism cannot be fought by trying to rescue Labourism from the inevitable consequences of its own pro-capitalist nature. Our task is to organise the workers as a *revolutionary* class.

Labour attacks on the workers have to be met, not with the pious, useless and dishonest slogan that they are Tory attacks. The prospect of a Labour government demands at the very least that the revolutionary left immediately unites to present a viable alternative to Labourism. That means standing independent candidates, committed to a minimum platform of what the working class needs - £275 for 35 hours, £275 pension, unemployment and other benefits, troops out of Ireland, self-determination for Scotland and Wales, free abortion and contraception on demand, etc. Crucially though, conditions cry out for the re forging of the Communist Party of Great Britain. By that, of course, I do not mean the CPGB circa 1920, 1930, let alone 1990. I mean the organisation of the advanced, vanguard, section of the working class into one democratic centralist party.

Readers of the *Weekly Worker* will know that the Provisional Central Committee of the CPGB considers this the central, overriding question of the present period and has advanced concrete proposals for communist rapprochement for exactly this purpose. A number of different groups have entered into discussion with us and we are seeking a further broadening of this process - next week we will be publishing an historic joint statement by ourselves and the Revolutionary Democratic Group (external faction of the SWP) on communist unity.

Sectarianism - the division of revolutionaries into tiny, ineffective groups, marked out by this or that theoretical tradition or nuance - must be overcome. Different opinions are natural and, as long as they are within the theory of Marxism, perfectly healthy. The unity of different opinions in one organisation is what we should fight to achieve.

Democratic centralism, as opposed to the deadly practice of bureaucratic centralism, allows for full factional rights, the open expression and development of differences. And that provides the best conditions for the unity of communists both in theory and action. This is no time for holding back or staying apart. We partisans of the working class have a duty to come together in one party.

Jack Conrad

What we fight for

● Our central aim is to reforge the Communist Party of Great Britain. Without this Party the working class is nothing; with it, it is everything.

● The Communist Party serves the interests of the working class. We fight all forms of opportunism and revisionism in the workers' movement because they endanger those interests. We insist on open ideological struggle in order to fight out the correct way forward for our class.

● Marxism-Leninism is powerful because it is true. Communists relate theory to practice. We are materialists; we hold that ideas are determined by social reality and not the other way round.

● We believe in the highest level of unity among workers. We fight for the unity of the working class of all countries and subordinate the struggle in Britain to the world revolution itself. The liberation of humanity can only be achieved through world communism.

● The working class in Britain needs to strike as a fist. This means all communists should be organised into a single party. We oppose all forms of separatism, which weakens our class.

● Socialism can never come through parliament. The capitalist class will never peacefully allow their system to be abolished. Socialism will only succeed through working class revolution and the replacement of the dictatorship of the capitalists with the dictatorship of the working class. Socialism lays the basis for the conscious planning of human affairs, ie communism.

● We support the right of nations to self-determination. In Britain today this means the struggle for Irish freedom should be given full support by the British working class.

● Communists are champions of the oppressed. We fight for the liberation of women, the ending of racism, bigotry and all other forms of chauvinism. Oppression is a direct result of class society and will only finally be eradicated by the ending of class society.

● War and peace, pollution and the environment are class questions. No solution to the world's problems can be found within capitalism. Its ceaseless drive for profit puts the world at risk. The future of humanity depends on the triumph of communism.

We urge all who accept these principles to join us. A Communist Party Supporter reads and fights to build the circulation of the Party's publications; contributes regularly to the Party's funds and encourages others to do the same; where possible, builds and participates in the work of a Communist Party Supporters Group.

Tailing the Tory school agenda

THE LABOUR Party's rush to imitate the Tory Party on every issue took a new turn last week, when it ditched without fuss its 'commitment' to abolish grant maintained schools, which are the jewels in the crown of Tory Party education policy.

Last week Tony Blair unveiled the party's new policy document - *Diversity and Excellence* - which reads like a second hand version of John Patten's *Choice and Diversity*. All that has changed is some of the language, but the underpinning message is the same: the system of educational apartheid is here to stay.

Grant maintained schools are to be renamed, in a typically Labourite way, 'community', 'aided' or 'foundation' schools, and will incorporate voluntary aided schools.

Tony Blair and David Blunkett reserve their greatest enthusiasm for

"parent power", another Tory project. As we know, this is shorthand for middle class power and privilege, with working class parents typically left with no choice or power.

Diversity and Excellence avoids the issue of grammar schools or selection, which can only mean that a future Labour government would be happy to 'manage' an educational system that virtually condemns working class kids to an inferior education at birth, and which teaches them young that they are 'inferior' and can never fulfil their potential.

The bourgeois educational system is elitist and segregationist to the core. We need a truly comprehensive and universalist educational system, which aims to unlock the potential of every human being, not stifle it in the name of 'excellence' and 'choice'.

Frank Vincent

Flexible Labour

HARRIET HARMAN, Labour's employment secretary informed a Fabian Society business forum in London last week that a Labour government would not agree to new European Union employment regulations if they were "incompatible with Britain's flexible labour market."

She announced that Labour was about to "refine" its policy for a national minimum wage, which amounted to the introduction of a "lower pay figure" for young workers to encourage recruitment.

This will undoubtedly please the business community, which can now sleep at night safe in the knowledge that it can continue to super-exploit young workers under a Labour government.

It is impossible to disagree with the verdict of the *Financial Times*: "Labour's new position over EU social legislation indicates a movement towards the view of Mr Michael Portillo" (June 22).

Sir Richard Greenbury, chairman of Marks and Spencer and also of the committee which is investigating 'excessive' top pay increases, would also testify to the extreme 'flexibility' of the labour market. He received a 17% pay rise last year - apparently to compensate for a fall in pay during 1994 - which was on top of his 'basic' salary of £637,000. Naturally, he is also sitting on share options which have a potential profit of £1.2 million, handy if he falls upon hard times. His Greenbury committee report, due in two weeks' time, will no doubt contain scathing self-criticism.

Such gross inequality in wages is inherent in the capitalism and cannot be reformed - inequality will actually increase as it careers from crisis to crisis. The system itself must be destroyed. Socialism will not see the *immediate* equalisation of wages, but wages will progressively be 'equalised', until the wage system itself is finally abolished.

Danny Hammill

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Islington walkout

SOCIAL WORKERS throughout the London borough of Islington staged a successful walkout in protest against the victimisation and suspension of two social workers. Paranoid about bad publicity following the White report - which criticised the mishandling of many children and family cases - top management in Islington is cracking down on the workforce.

Determined to prove that big changes have taken place following the scandals exposed in the White report, management has imposed massive reorganisation, causing a lot of confusion and stress for workers. Missing files and the anger of service users have added to their problems. To cap it all, management is now attacking and witchhunting staff throughout the

borough.

Despite chronic working conditions and low staffing levels, the message from management when it suspended two social workers is clear - if anything goes wrong now, individual workers will be scapegoated.

For many this was the last straw. Following the walkout, workers are now demanding the immediate reinstatement of those suspended and big improvements in working conditions. A branch meeting next week will decide on further action. Management has been surprised by the strength of last week's action - where even agency workers walked out - and is feeling under pressure from the workforce. Now is the time to act.

Anne Murphy

Building solidarity

ON MAY 10, 27 pipefitters, electricians and mates walked off site in protest at the Manchester sub-contractors Rosser and Russell's sacking of two workers for "not bucking their ideas up".

The picket line, which begins at 7.30am each day, has been successful in stopping scab labour. The workers are fighting for reinstatement and against poor working conditions and are appealing for solidarity and financial support to maintain their ability to continue this dispute against an intransigent employer.

Brian Higgins of the Building Worker Group commented, "In an industry where the lack of union organisation and representation - and thus lack of safety - costs the lives of two building workers every week on

average, with many more seriously injured; where conditions of work and pay on most jobs are some of the worst in living memory; it is especially and vitally important we all support these workers who have the courage and are prepared to fight against this. They are not in a union - such is the state of the building industry. We must prove to them that it is worth joining one!"

The Building Worker Group is calling on the newly elected executive of the building workers' union Ucat to support these striking workers.

Linda Addison

To send your support or for speakers, contact Terry McBride on 01706 881854

Jack Dash commemoration

Jack Dash - the famous dockers' leader and member of the National Unemployed Workers Movement of the 1920s and 1930s - was the first honorary president of the Unemployed Workers Charter. Every year the UWC pays tribute to this great fighter for the working class and re-dedicates itself to the fight for social justice and human dignity that was the content of Jack's life. Join us this year.

Saturday July 15 at 3.30pm. To more details, contact the UWC on sponsor the commemoration or for 0181-459 7146

1992 Jack Dash commemoration

Free Irish political prisoners

Hackney branch of the CPGB is holding a public meeting with Saoirse, the Irish prisoners' campaign, on July 4 at 7.30pm. Call 0181-459 7146 for more details

Saoirse campaign for the release of Irish political prisoners

Public meeting on Thursday June 22 at 7.30pm in Islington central library, Holloway Road (nearest tubes - Holloway Road, Highbury and Islington). Speakers include Bridget Norney, mother of Paul Norney (Paul, imprisoned for 20 years since he was 17, still has no date for transfer back to Ireland, let alone a release date), and Dorothy McNulty, mother of Sean McNulty, one of the last republican prisoners to be imprisoned in England.

Fundraising social on Thursday June 29 at 8.30pm in the Victoria pub, Holloway Road. £3 waged, £2 unwaged.

Saoirse holds regular pickets outside Downing Street. The next one is between 12pm and 1pm on Sunday July 2.

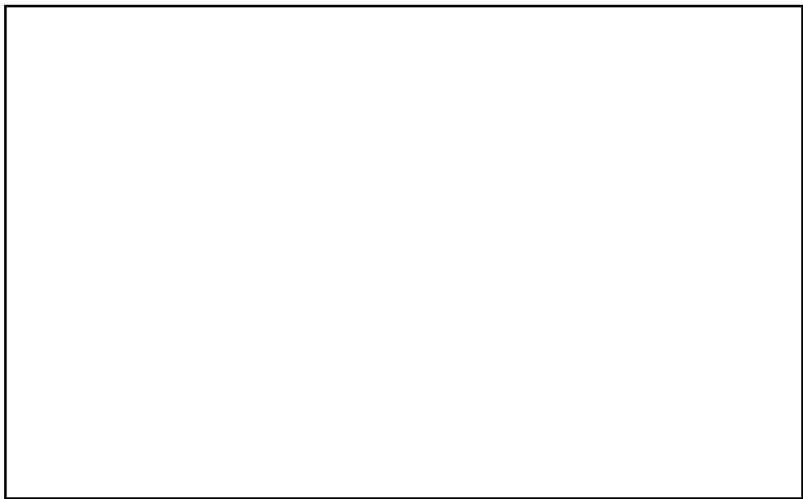
Shell survives

THE DECISION by Shell to sink the massive but obsolete Brent Platform in the North Sea was motivated solely by profit considerations, however Shell may protest otherwise. To dismantle on land could cost £50 million, burial at sea £11.8 million. But when a continental consumer boycott reduced Shell's petrol sales by 30% the company reversed its policy.

Shell UK issued a statement saying it still believes that "the deep water disposal of Brent Spar is the best practicable environmental option." Chris Fey, chairman of Shell UK, commented, "I am not sitting here tonight knowing where the Brent Spar is going next."

It was a triumph for 'consumer power', but only because it was backed up by massive support from several continental governments. Particularly Germany, where even the police were boycotting Shell products. These governments are worried about the growth of green politics and want to head it off by stirring up nationalistic prejudices against Britain as the dirty little party pooper.

While it is heartening to see what public pressure and direct action can achieve, Greenpeace's project is ultimately not a progressive one. Environmental pressure groups cannot police capitalism effectively, only profit can do that.



Brent Spar is moved but Shell lives to fight another day

Greenpeace has developed an impressive network of direct action and pressure groups, but environmentalists are like Lilliputians, binding Gulliver with flimsy threads.

Most piecemeal attempts at reform are condemned to futility because they attempt to change society without changing its basic structures. They attack capitalism's weak points; they do not challenge its strengths. They try to curb profit, not abolish it. The same with competition, ownership of property,

etc. So they end up recreating what they want to abolish. Often they are happy to leave cultural, legal and political matters alone, without realising that these are a reflection of the attitudes they are trying to combat.

Only communism aims at transcending the crisis-ridden reality of today's capitalism by developing its theoretical, technical and cultural triumphs while negating its destructive power.

Arthur Lawrence

Disabling system

DISABILITY RIGHTS activists were insulted and roughly manhandled by Brent Tory councillors when wheelchairs barred the exit from the council chamber on June 19. Denying speaking rights to the campaigners, they had voted to close the council's disability unit to save money.

Two days later, Brent Communist Party's Red Brent video discussion was opened by Party supporter and disability rights activist Simone Aspis of People First, using its video, *Altogether better*. Discussion of this question will contribute to the formulation of disability rights demands in the Party's election manifesto and forthcoming draft programme.

As Simone explained, the authority of mental health charity Mencap - established in 1948 and now running services to the tune of £42m a year - to speak for the needs of so-called 'mentally handicapped' people is being challenged by new self-advocacy groups run by people with learning difficulties themselves.

Simone contrasted two parliamentary bills in the pipeline. People First's Civil Rights (Disabled Persons) Bill puts the

onus on society to provide a non-discriminatory environment in which disabled people can participate equally. The Tory government's hurried response is the Disability Discrimination Bill, which leaves the onus on individuals to invoke the law against each infringement.

Capitalism sees disabled people as an unprofitable burden. Approximately 70% survive on 'benefits'. The government bill proposes to slash and tax invalidity benefits for those unable to work in their current profession due to impairment.

The concept of disability, Simone said, started with the advent of industrial society. People considered incapable of productive activity were institutionalised, segregated from 'normal' people and divided according to impairment - a division which prevented the development of a generalised mass rights movement. Instead of the oppressive fetishism for so-called normality, it is society rather than individuals which must be changed, to meet the needs of all the individuals in it.

Stan Kelsey

Rival buses hit home

Bus drivers in Chelmsford, sacked in November 1994, forced Badgerline into a settlement after running their own rival buses. Steve Argent, one of the sacked drivers, talked to us about the lessons of the dispute

BADGERLINE workers have agreed to a settlement with the Eastern National bus company which gives them £400 for every year of service. Anyone who wants their job back will be re-employed in return for the ending of the action by the Transport and General Workers Union, including the withdrawal of the bus service run by the union. The vote to accept the settlement was 80% in favour.

The settlement also came in response to the merger with First Bus. The chief executive of First Bus told the press that because he needed his drivers to vote for the merger he would sort out our dispute in Chelmsford.

The running of our own buses definitely had an effect on the company which originally only offered us £150 in settlement. This is a new weapon

which can be used by others, especially busworkers, since deregulation has opened up companies to such pressure. Companies will certainly be more wary of taking on the union now they have seen what we can do.

It is a veiled victory for the strikers themselves - it is a compromise package, but it is a major victory for the union movement in today's climate. Continuing attacks will carry on as long as we don't take a stand and challenge the anti-trade union laws.

For four months the company refused to talk to us - they thought the sacking was the end of the story. But our buses started to hit their pockets, so they had to talk to us. I think it gives not only busworkers but all workers food for thought and confidence in our ability to beat intransigent employers.

Save Mumia Abu-Jamal

Abolish the death penalty

ON DECEMBER 9 1981 Mumia Abu Jamal saw his brother Billy being beaten by police officer David Faulkner. When he intervened he was shot in the stomach. Although he was in a critical condition, he was charged with killing Faulkner, who was found dead.

While critically wounded Jamal was beaten, kicked and dumped on a hospital floor by police. The trial in Pennsylvania was a similar frame-up, with Jamal prevented from presenting a defence. He has been on death row ever since.

Jamal, an award-winning journalist known as the "voice of the voiceless", was a member of the Black Panther Party and supporter of the Move commune annihilated by Philadelphia police in 1985. He is a prime political target for the ultra-reactionary rightwing state authorities.

On June 2, 1995 Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge signed the death warrant for Jamal, setting August 17 as the execution date. Only days after the execution order Ridge's office had received 20,000 faxes and letters of protest. Demonstrations and meetings were held throughout the world. Meetings of support were held in London and Birmingham, attended by trade unions, socialist, immigrant and black organisations.

Helen Ellis

Send protests to Governor Tom Ridge, Main Capitol Building, room 225, Harrisburg, PA 17120, USA
Send solidarity messages to Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E, Roy Furman Highway, Waynesburg, PA 15370-8090, USA

Contributions for Jamal's defence should be made payable to the Bill of Rights Foundation and sent to the Save Mumia Abu-Jamal campaign, Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX.