

weekly worker



No 80

Thursday February 2 1995

**Will Unionists
derail the 'peace'
process in
Ireland? - inside**

Workers' action to stop council cuts

Councils across the country have announced huge spending cuts as a result of reduced government grant support for the new financial year. Some areas will be worse hit than others and Labour and Tory councillors alike are jostling for their share of a smaller cake. Only workers' organisation against all cuts and all closures can halt the attack by both government and council. That is the message Communist Party candidates will be taking to the local elections in April and May

COUNCIL SPENDING cuts have become a way of life, and it makes no difference which capitalist party holds the balance of power in your council. But cuts this year on an already skeleton service will hit those most in need hardest.

Local councillors are keen to shift the blame for decaying communities onto central government and 'unfair' allocation in this year's reduced grant support.

On Wednesday thousands of council workers in Newcastle supported 24-hour strike action in protest against a threatened five million pounds budget cut. Council services were brought to a standstill.

Tony Flynn, leader of the council, complained if the grant cut goes ahead 200 teachers would be lost; 40 social workers, six homes for the elderly and two or three day centres would close; and meals on wheels would be cut by 50%. But his solution? The worst cuts could be prevented if the capping criteria for London boroughs were applied to other metropolitan districts - and what about non-metropolitan districts, Tony?

On Tuesday members of Ellesmere's youth service lobbied the Commons against threatened cuts. Shropshire as a whole is faces £14.5 million in budget cuts, £380,000 of which is targeted on youth, placing 30% of the service at risk.

Kathy Edmonds of Ellesmere Youth Service pointed out that the government is keen to blame youth for crime, but will not put money into providing youth

services. "The cost of youth crime is estimated at £2,300 per youth, whereas providing education and services costs £30," she said. "Shropshire has a Conservative MP at the moment, but they have gone too far now. People feel the government is not listening to them".

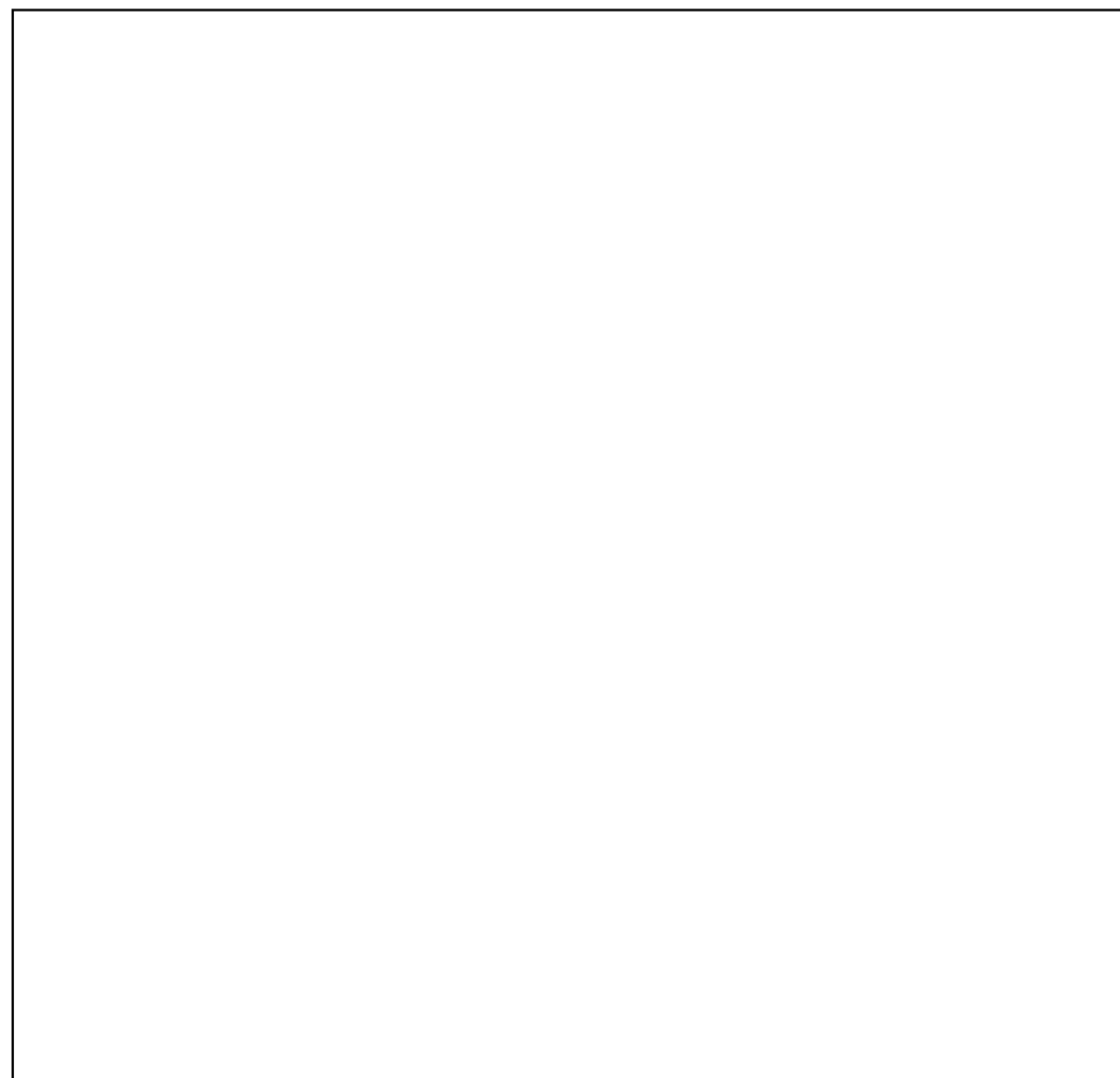
In Birmingham, Labour leader Mrs Theresa Stewart complained that they had been 'forced' to find savings of £41 million and would 'have' to cut 600 jobs.

Labour and Tory councillors alike have all supported their own party's tax and spending policies. Tory and Labour councillors alike have implemented years of cuts throughout the country. Tory and Labour councillors alike have closed schools, day centres and old people's homes, slashing jobs and pay. The hypocritical hand wringing and book balancing does not wash any more.

Local council cuts are a result of the same disease that cuts welfare and closes hospitals, factories and pits. It makes millions unemployed and homeless and introduces Jobseekers and slave labour wages. Capitalism - whether at council or government level - is trying to balance the books.

But we know that the rich are getting richer, while the low paid and unemployed are sinking ever deeper into poverty. It is not up to us to pay for the bosses' economic crisis. It is not up to us to fund their 75% pay increases, while our wages in real terms plummet. But we will be made to pay as long as we do not organise to fight back.

That means no cuts, no



Labour cuts and Tory cuts are all the same. Anger needs to be turned into independent workers' organisation

closures, no job losses. It means organising workers locally to fight together against all closures and cuts in services. This is the message Communist candidates

will be taking to the local elections. It is no good trying to get a bigger slice of the cake - it is not big enough.

If capitalism cannot provide

basic services and living conditions for the mass of workers today, then it is capitalism that must go, not our education, health, jobs and services.

Make the bosses pay!

Contempt

I have been reading the *Weekly Worker* for approximately 12 months and I am struck by the similarity of views in letters and articles concerning others who would probably describe themselves as 'leftwing'. The letter by Eddie Ford (*Weekly Worker* 77) seems to sum up the collective view of your writers. His letter in support of the Year of the Party seeks to draw in and inspire pro-Party elements, which will include himself "of course". But woe betide others who do not fit his criteria of communist perfection.

He has contempt for official communists, revolutionary left, Communist Action Group, Independent Communists, Trotskyists, NCP, Straight Left and all of the Labour Party, plus, I am sure, others too numerous to mention in a paper of only four pages. Who needs the Tories to divide the working class when we have Eddie Ford, who does the job for the Tories inadvertently or willingly?

Lucky for Eddie, others in the CPGB think alike, so he does not feel isolated. As for me, I am just a life-time communist - non-elitist, prepared to listen to other communist and non-communist opinions. I respect others who work in leftwing groups, as it is not easy in our very conservative society, and I am very pro-working class, because - with all their faults and prejudices - they are the class that contributes the most to our very diverse society. If any communist party is to grow significantly, it must shed sectarian and elitist views, take the working

class as it is, and agitate, educate and organise it into a class capable of taking power.

I do not think I would be good enough for your party, Eddie: I am too fallible; but, by damn, I am proud to be working class and a communist.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the defeat of fascism. I will enjoy being sentimental and in some way show respect for millions of communists and non-communists who sank their differences and defeated fascism. I will be proud to recall the communists who led the Red Armies and the resistance movements all over Europe and Asia.

If we are to defeat capitalism we need a Communist Party that respects diverse opinion and builds its strength or unity within the working class.

Best wishes in your search for perfection, Eddie. You have helped me reflect on my past mistakes. Your contribution will help us all in our search for enlightenment. Thanks for the memories.

DC Cozens
Dyfed

Left hot air

It appears that the journalist Andrew Rawnsley has been reading the *Weekly Worker* carefully, if his recent article in *The Observer* (January 29) is anything to go by:

"The defenders of clause four cling to it as an ideological security blanket in a world of frightening change. They will not let go of a text from the beginning of this century for fear that they cannot find anything relevant or radical to say to the next one."

Spot on, Andrew! Similarly: "Clause four, part four is not so much

a religious icon as a relic. A relic, moreover, of dubious provenance ... the very antiquity of the language gives it that Old Testament flavour."

Exactly. Incisive insight from a bourgeois journalist which puts to shame the pathetic mystifying drivel in *Socialist Worker*, *Militant*, *Socialist Outlook* etc, which is rallying behind clause four. However, the mounting reformist hysteria is hardly surprising. *Homo Sapiens Lefiticus Reformisticus* facing extinction, as their delusions of a Parliamentary British Road To Socialism' (or, if you are an 'orthodox' Trotskyist, burrowing yourself deep into the Labourite carcass so you can 'be with the workers') melts into the Blairite thin air.

SWP/Militant members should also take note of Rawnsley's assessment of the 'new' clause four: "Draft replacements have tended to be so platitudinous that they could be supported by a one-nation Tory". At the next general election will the SWP (and their clone-like rivals) be telling us to vote for 'one-nation Toryism' with no illusions? The mind boggles!

Perhaps we should write to Rawnsley offering him a regular column in the *Weekly Worker* or, better still, write to Mr Anthony Blair congratulating him on his brilliant 'tactic', which has exposed the rotten nature of Labourism (particularly the leftist variety) far more successfully than a mountain of communist propaganda could ever have done.

Danny Hammil
South London

Note: Letters may have been shortened because of space. Some names may have been changed.

Dave Douglass

Dave is vice chair of South Yorkshire NUM panel

Private Clegg - State terrorist assassin

BEFORE THE Colonel Blimp media bandwagon gets into full flight, assisted by the upper-class Tory man and woman in the street, and the whole pattern of events leading to murder by Private Clegg gets totally distorted, we ought to remember a couple of things.

Contrary to the way the press is portraying things, the stolen Astra did not "crash through" a road block. Soldiers were not hit by the joy riders. The RUC confirmed under oath in the court that the soldiers had hit each other with their rifle butts and then lay in the road feigning injury by the car.

When Clegg fired the fatal killing shot, the car was stationary. The occupants were totally disabled and riddled with bullets. It was a cold blooded execution. The story now told by another soldier that he fired after Clegg is neither here nor there. The fatal bullet - fired not in the heat of the moment, but at defenceless victims - came from Clegg's gun, which was fired by him.

The Paras knew, after their briefing just hours before by the RUC, that this was an area in which they would "be likely to encounter joy riders, because it was endemic in the district". Afterwards these guys, who had said they thought

republicans were driving the car, painted their mess room with a graphic picture of a shot up car, blood stained bodies hanging from it, and the boast, "The Astra, driven by joy riders, stopped by A-company". Hardly a case of mistaken identity, is it?

Asked if he felt any remorse, Clegg's reply was: "No, I was doing what I had been told to do." Well, that much is true. He had been sent to a foreign country to impose the rule of the British state and keep the rebellious Irish in their place, by killing them if necessary.

We should consider Private Clegg a prisoner of war. A political prisoner of the conflict, like the IRA, the Inla and the loyalist militias. Clegg can be released when there is a general amnesty of all political prisoners and all the prisoners of war are allowed out. There is no ground for freeing him beforehand if we play by British law. British 'justice' of course is whatever suits the ruling class to chose what the law is. So expect Clegg to come back to a hero's welcome and a torrent of anti-Irish crowing by the gutter press and far right before very much longer. A nice little patriotic story to take the punters' minds off the mess the Tories put most of us in.

Unionist fury threatens Major

THE LEAKED draft of the Anglo-Irish joint framework document caused such outrage among unionist politicians that John Major was forced to make an emergency broadcast on TV and radio on Wednesday night.

The document, resulting from discussions between the British and Irish governments, is to provide the basis for 'peace' talks. But, just a week after John Major promised unionists that the framework document would contain "no proposals" for a joint all-Ireland authority, *The Times* published a 'leaked' draft in direct contradiction. A new unelected body would be created, answerable to both the Dail and a new Northern Ireland Assembly. At first it would have powers to harmonise agriculture, trade, health and education, and to deal with the European Union in those fields. Later its powers would be extended.

Major is of course concerned to keep the 'peace process' on track. British imperialism has too much at stake to allow it to fail. But he is also



A negotiated settlement will have to keep Unionists on board, and will leave British imperialism intact

concerned for the survival of his government, now very much dependent on unionist support. That is why he felt it necessary to take up prime broadcasting time in his attempt to reassure the Six County protestants.

Not that he said anything that went beyond the usual platitudes. He correctly stated that agreement on "areas for cooperation" between Britain and Ireland was "not a new idea", and added that any cross-border body "must be accountable" to the new northern assembly, which could not be overridden by Britain or Ireland.

It is very likely that Major will succeed in keeping the unionists on board. The marginalising of hard-line protestant opinion is well illustrated by the reaction to the Belfast visit earlier this week of Bertie Ahern, leader of the Irish opposition Fianna Fail party. Although he had talks at Belfast City Hall with unionist leaders, there

was hardly a squeak of protest from Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists. Just a short time ago such an event would have seen the mobilisation of hundreds of protesters.

Meanwhile, the row continues over the likely release of private Lee Clegg, murderer of a Belfast joy rider.

Republicans are rightly incensed by the campaign to free only the second British soldier to be convicted of any of the 300 'security force' killings in the Six Counties. Many civilians, including children, are numbered among their tally, most notoriously on Bloody Sunday. Yet those who resisted British repression are labelled 'terrorists' - over 300 Irish fighters, several framed by the British state, received life sentences.

At the same time, however, many of these prisoners of war will have to be released if the 'peace process' is to make any progress. The Clegg campaign could well be used to appease anti-IRA opinion before

that occurs.

Des Wilson, campaigning priest and community leader in West Belfast, told me that many people would have no difficulty with Clegg's release if it coincided with that

of prisoners right across the board - especially in view of the fact that many of them are innocent of any 'crime'.

"The myth of the 'brave, valiant paratroopers' has been well and truly shattered and the concept of 'British justice' is in shreds," he said. "The military has lost ground and their morale is low. They have been forced to pull out of a situation they couldn't control without achieving any victory. So the campaign around Clegg is partly concerned with the military's own independent influence as one of the pillars of the establishment. It is not only in Russia where the army jostles for influence."

Despite John Major's present difficulties, the bourgeoisie will not allow the 'peace process' to fail. The settlement will contain an all-Ireland element, but British imperialism is undoubtedly firmly in control.

The question remains how best to achieve workers' unity, both within Ireland and between Ireland and Britain. That is the only force able to stop imperialism in its tracks.

Peter Manson

Memorial march

AN ESTIMATED 2,500 people marched through Manchester last Saturday in the annual Bloody Sunday commemoration, which marks the murder by British troops of 14 unarmed Irish demonstrators in January 1972. The march was enlivened by music from four republican pipe bands. However the mood was otherwise quite flat and it was noticeable that there were no new forces mobilised. Most faces were recognisable from previous years.

The chant of "Troops out now" is no longer a call for the expulsion of British imperialism, but a demand for a speedy peace settlement within the UK. As Sinn

Fein leader Martin McGuinness said at the rally afterwards, "Repression and intimidation have had their day and Britain has no reason, nor any right, to delay a peaceful settlement between the people of Ireland."

John Kelly, brother of one of those murdered, asked: "When will the British Government acknowledge the complete injustice of Bloody Sunday in Derry 23 years ago?"

The campaign to release Lee Clegg from jail indicates that the ruling class is not about to change its spots.

Phil Kent

Fighting fund

February's fighting fund marks the beginning of our drive to raise finances for the local elections in April and May.

We will be stretching our resources to the limit during those months in order to use the elections to dig roots within the class locally and to raise publicity for the Party nationally.

Even if you cannot get involved in the campaigns yourself, we urgently need your financial support.

Phil Kent

Gold to our movement

Kemal Osman is a Turkish textile worker who has recently joined the Communist Party in Hackney, an area with a high percentage of migrant workers and exiled revolutionaries from Turkey. He tells the *Weekly Worker* why he has joined the Party

SOME PEOPLE from my community may say, 'Why have you joined a *British* organisation?' But I don't think I have joined a 'British' party. Communism is not about workers in Britain or workers in Turkey - it is about the workers of the world uniting together to fight.

I am living in Britain and I am a communist. Therefore, I must be in an organisation that is fighting for the revolution in this part of the world. It does not matter where I came from originally.

I think it is wrong to suggest that, if you are living on some sort of permanent basis in this country, you should join a Turkish group that is organising for the revolution back in Turkey. We should fight the capitalist government of the country where we live, not one thousands of miles away.

It is not an easy decision on a personal level. Sometimes I feel guilty emotionally, particularly when friends of mine join Turkish organisations working in this country such as Dev Sol (Revolutionary Left), TDKP (Revolutionary Communist Party of

Turkey) or TKP (Communist Party of Turkey).

Being a revolutionary is certainly a process that engages all your personality, including your emotions. But primarily, a communist is a person ruled by the head, not by the heart. For too many fine revolutionaries in the Turkish working class community in Britain, revolution has become a matter of a passive nostalgia, a sentiment for the struggle thousands of miles away.

If I joined an organisation fighting for the revolution in Turkey, on a practical level what would I be doing? What would be the content of my political work? The danger facing revolutionaries in this country who do not join the Party here is that their day-to-day work becomes more and more like social work - dealing with workers' DSS problems, housing and translation. Whether they want to or not, they are sucked into British society - but not as revolutionaries, unfortunately.

With the Party in Britain I am able to play a full role as a communist.

Of course, the reverse is true also. If a British revolutionary lives in Turkey, then they should join an organisation in that country fighting to overthrow the state there.

Meanwhile, the workers in this country live and fight. They march against the poll tax and battle with the police. The miners fight for their jobs. The Irish people have fought the British army in northern Ireland. Revolutionaries from Turkey could have contributed many things to these and all the other struggles of the class here. They have very valuable experience and histories which could be gold to the movement in this country. Instead, they have watched, waited and planned for the revolution in another country. Worse than that, they have tried to keep the whole working class community with their eyes on Turkey, instead of making them a distinct, but integral part

of the working class in this country.

For example, Kurdistan is a very important question for revolutionaries from Turkey. But what about Ireland? Here is a national liberation struggle, in *this* state, against *this* bourgeoisie. What are we saying and doing about this?

I hope I am the first of many comrades - both from Turkey and other parts of the world who now live in Britain - who will take this step.

It does not mean denying or being ashamed of the history of the movement in Turkey - far from it. It means getting our 'affiliations' right. First, I feel I am a communist. Only then do I feel I am a Turk. I must admit, however, I'm afraid I never feel 'British'!

Clause 4 Mücadele etmeye deger mi?

Diane Abbott MP ve Mark Fischer (Hackney CPGB)
Bu toplantı İngiltere Komünist Partisi Hackney subesince
Tarih: 16 Subat 1995
(persembe) Saat 19.30
081-459 7146

Clause 4 Something worth fighting for?

Diane Abbott MP debates with Mark Fischer (Hackney CPGB)
Public meeting organised by Hackney CPGB
Thursday February 16, 7.30pm.
For details contact Andy Hannah on 081-459 7146

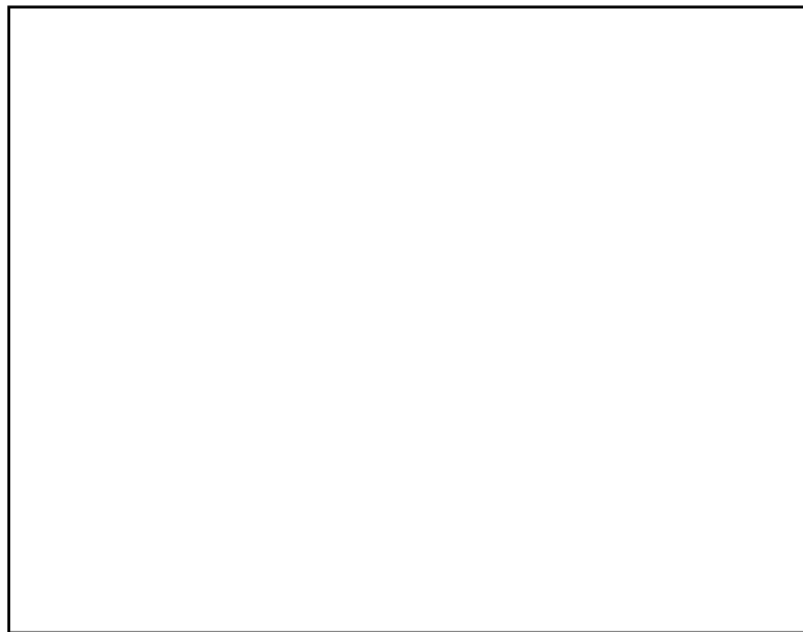
From *The Call*, paper of the British Socialist Party, February 5 1920

Houses or hovels?

THE WORKERS of Croydon are very much incensed at the kind of workmen's dwellings now being erected on the Norbury estate ... The workers protest that the rooms are too small, and that there are twice or three times more cottages per acre than there should be. Public meetings are being organised to give voice to their objections. And now comes the most gratifying feature of these protests: we hear that the building trade workers engaged on the building propose to cease work if the plans are not modified. They object to build houses which they assert are not good enough for their class to live in.

C · P · G · B
· Y · E · A · R · S
JULY 31 1920
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Chechen bloodbath goes on



Pictures of war in Chechnya expose Yeltsin's democratic credentials

SEVEN WEEKS after Moscow sent troops into Chechnya to end its bid for independence, the fighting seemed no nearer ending. In a TV interview on January 30 a Russian army lieutenant said: "If [the Chechens] go to the mountains, we will be fighting for a long time. As for Grozny, I don't know - perhaps two weeks, perhaps a month."

The Russian forces bombarded Grozny again on January 30, in spite of the presence of officials from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, who were in Chechnya on a fact-finding tour.

A new opinion poll has found that 72% of Russians do not trust president Boris Yeltsin now, up from 66% earlier in January. Harrowing television images of bodies mangled by Russian shelling and aerial bombing have fuelled public opposition to the war. There has also been increasing opposition in some of the republics inside the Russian Federation, such as Tatarstan.

A symptom of the Russian problem is the difficulty of recruiting police locally for Chechnya. Detachments from the armed groups of Chechens who opposed president Jokhar Dudayev before the Russian invasion are being formed into police units. However the Russian interior ministry general Aleksandr Kulikov said that muslims were not being recruited into "special forces" units for "ethical reasons". Since most Chechens come from a muslim background, it is clear that the Russian authorities cannot rely on Chechens to patrol Grozny.

The Russian pro-market politician and ex-prime minister Yegor Gaidar has commented that "democratic" forces in Russia have been weakened with the military and the secret service strengthening their hold - including over Yeltsin himself.

General Aleksandr Lebed, one of the country's most respected military figures, commented that "in the past only the communists hated Yeltsin, but now the democrats do as well. Not even the army is still on his side." Yeltsin's hold on power now appears very loose, but the problem for Russia and the West - who once hailed him the hero of democracy - is who will replace him.

Steve Kay

Rewriting the history books

WORLD LEADERS, heads of state, death camp survivors and religious officials congregated last week at Auschwitz-Birkenau, to pray for the 1.5 million victims of Nazi terror and to sign a joint declaration to the 'peoples' of the world calling for peace: "We ask all nations and peoples to stop all fanaticism and violence. No more war and killing".

In the absence of any independent working class challenge, bourgeois propaganda has been extremely successful in blaming the Auschwitz atrocity and the whole of World War II on a mad psyche that must somehow be exorcised from society for good.

Fascism throughout Europe, including the German form known as Nazism, was a product of capitalism when experiencing extreme crisis - in other words, capitalism turned to fascism hoping to rescue itself. When the Allied Powers went to war with the Axis Powers they were fighting a rival dynamic imperialism which

needed to expand, just as they had in World War I.

For the capitalists the camps were only a detail of the war. That is why train lines to the camps were not bombed. That is why 191 Jewish refugees were refused access to Britain and sent back to Germany in the first six months of 1939.

Racism and eugenics were popular the world over until the war made them of necessity unfashionable. Neville Henderson, ambassador to Germany, wrote in *The Times* in May 1937 that "far too many people have an erroneous conception of what the National Socialist regime really stands for. Otherwise they would lay less stress on Nazi dictatorship and much more emphasis on the great social experiment which is being tried out."

The virtuoso halo surrounding the coverage of Auschwitz obscures the grubby and sordid reality we all know exists. The prayers of the catholic church rang hollow, given its past anti-semitism and often connivance with fascism and

Nazism, and the continued reluctance of its hierarchy to confront and recognise this ugly history.

A vicious brand of capitalism is spreading throughout the US today. In New Orleans they are building state orphanages which they hope will be funded from the money 'saved' by abolishing welfare payments to unmarried mothers; and some elements on the 'lunatic' right of the Republican Party have, albeit tentatively so far, raised the possibility of sterilisation.

Throughout the world rightwing ideas are gaining hegemony. We should not be fooled by the 'never again' hand wringing. If the working class is unable to get rid of the barbaric capitalist system itself, the capitalists will turn again to war and, if necessary, fascism to stave off crisis at home. If we allow a 'next time', the economic crisis will be much deeper and more widespread and the capitalist reaction more vicious.

Eddie Ford

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.

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Clause four
roadshow
gets
underway

Left out in the cold

DUE TO snow drifts that annually cause turmoil - and the even bigger upstaging by Eric Cantona - the launch of Tony Blair's tour of the constituencies may not have opened with the blaze of publicity he had hoped for.

The first constituency meetings will of course have been carefully chosen, but they do give a taste of things to come in a debate which the whole of the left has catapulted itself into with notable passion and a more notable lack of ammunition.

The whippers of opposition to Blair are shrivelling already in a fortnight which has seen moderniser and traditionalist alike jump on board to defend their leader and his campaign to change clause four.

Brian Wilson is the latest to add his meaningless jargon to that of the other contenders. He wants to "cast out poverty, nurture enterprise and promote common ownership", and has won the support of several MPs in Scotland.

Blair has welcomed Wilson's contribution and during his tour has dropped several hints at the wording of his new clause.

It is clear that it will have plenty of

reference to 'fairness', vague enough to satisfy both left and right who both have their pet schemes and definitions of what that means. Significantly for the left, Blair says: "The issue of ownership will not be a matter of ideology, but of the best practical means to serve the public interest." - Sorry, is that the elusive 'common' interest, workers' interest or bosses' interest?

The phrasing of the new clause, as with Blair and Prescott's speaking tour, will give the left apologists for the Labour Party very little room for manoeuvre. The wording will undoubtedly keep in a reference to common or public ownership in some form or another. All the left can do then is cling desperately on to arguing for the retention of a clause which was introduced as an anti-revolutionary, anti-socialist move, was never (and never intended to be) implemented and now is woefully out of date by anybody's standards.

The argument for and against replacing one meaningless clause with another one is obviously a tenuous one, and one therefore that the left is having difficulty rallying anything other than itself around.

Although many left constituency members may have a utopian and nostalgic attachment to clause four, they are unlikely to rock the boat if the rewrite can express equally well all their utopian and reformist dreams.

For the left inside the Labour Party, the various Trotskyite permanent entryists and those outside who still devote pages of their papers on how the Labour Party *should* change and 'why we are going to vote for it anyway', the stakes are much higher. The debate over clause four highlights starkly the very nature of the Labour Party itself.

If we all know why clause four was introduced, why it was never implemented and why now Blair is so keen and so *able* to ditch it, surely the most important question raised is the need to ditch Labour.

Unfortunately it seems these left groups are doomed to hang on to Labour's coat tails until they can see an alternative. Revolutionaries must take up the task of building that alternative. Building a working class party based on scientific socialism, not defending a clause which tried to steal the language of socialism in order to disarm workers.

Helen Ellis

Labour waves the union jack

ROBIN COOK has spent the week reassuring the bosses that the Labour Party can wave the flag just as vigorously as the Tories. We never doubted you, Robin. Putting on his very best Eurosceptic clothes, Cook condemned as "totally irresponsible" calls for a European single currency within the next three years.

Naturally, Cook's new found reservations about European union stem from his great love for democracy: "We will not answer the desire of the people for national democracy if we do not respect their right and their wish to retain control over the public policy of their nation."

It will probably come as a great surprise to the unemployed, low-paid, strikers, republican community in the Six Counties and protesters against the Criminal Justice Act that the Labour Party wants to see them "retain control over the public policy of their nation".

Since when has Britain belonged to the workers? The British state, which Robin Cook loves so much, is the property of the ruling class, which alone has 'sovereignty' over it. We will not be campaigning to defend Cook's precious "national democracy", but fighting to build workers' unity across Europe.

This is a good time to strike home our message. The Tories are self-destructing over Europe, with the Eurosceptics baying for Douglas Hurd's blood and scenting that their time has come. Michael Portillo is shifting into Winston Churchill mode, promising that the government would act to prevent any changes to the UK's use of its veto, or to any alteration in the 'majority' voting system.

While Portillo gets prepared to fight them on the beaches and Robin Cook struggles to preserve 'national identity', we utilise every opportunity to fight for a workers' Europe. Workers' interests do not lie in lining up with their own national exploiters, but through overthrowing the state we live under and taking that victory forward to world revolution.

The bosses in Europe are being forced together against their own reactionary nationalist impulses. To the extent that they succeed, we will need greater workers' unity - across unions and through a Communist Party of the European Union.

Eddie Ford

Road to riches

JOHN EDMONDS of the GMB was quoted in the Observer on Sunday, saying that there are "fewer workers working longer hours producing more, but badly managed and over managed." Managers now account for 15.8% of the workforce and total 3,921,000 individuals - exceeding skilled manual workers in number. The government that created high levels of unemployment elsewhere has played a leading role in this process.

Privatisation has produced a management boom, and the higher up you go the better it has been. Gas boss Cedric Brown's 75% pay hike for pumping up profits and sacking manual grades is not the worst. The chief executives of PowerGen and National Power find themselves about 1000% better off thanks to share options. Sir Iain Vallance, chairman of BT, earns £663,000 a year.

The road to riches does not stop there. No fewer than 373 senior civil servants and top army brass have retired into well paid civilian jobs, mostly in the defence industry. A former senior aide to Virginia Bottomley, the health secretary, has just been appointed chief executive of Great Ormond Street hospital - no connection there, obviously!

John Wakeham is only the latest ex-Cabinet minister to benefit from his privatisation exploits. He joins Norman Lamont at Rothschild's. The same bank that advised how to privatise the electricity industry and retains close links with it.

Big business and the state are closely interdependent. The Labour Party and TUC can dream up whatever rules they like to keep the two apart, but it is this relationship, not the parliamentary talking shop, that really runs the country.

Arthur Lawrence

No victory for workers

LABOUR held onto their council seat comfortably in Newham South and the fascist BNP came third, disappointing for them in an area which they had specifically targeted and hoped to do well in, but a warning for the left all the same.

Jubilant ANL members chanted hysterically about how they had won and that the composition of Newham council - ie, 100% Labour - remained unchanged. But hold on a minute: weren't these ANLers the same people who appeared just weeks before as members of the SWP, lobbying the council against a vicious £6 million cut in services?

What had changed? Had the Labour group apologised for betraying the working class and promised to shelve the cuts? The answer of course is no. On the contrary, the ensuing decimation of jobs and services would continue as planned.

The SWP's support for Labour sends

a clear message to Tony Blair and his loyal councillors: 'Don't worry about abusing the working class because we will still campaign for you.'

The local anti-racist organisation, the Newham Monitoring Project, ran a campaign with the simple message - 'Don't vote BNP'. The 18% turnout on polling day probably indicates that this negative campaign was effective.

The left is now faced with a real dilemma. Does it give unconditional support to Labour because a fascist is standing or does it take a giant leap forward and stand its own candidates? Perhaps it should look to the Bolsheviks, upon whom it claims to base itself, for an answer. In the elections to the second Duma in 1912 the Bolsheviks decided against an electoral pact with the Cadets (Liberals) to prevent the Black Hundreds gaining seats, but instead stood independently. Conversely the Mensheviks made a pact with the devil, which eventually led to their oblivion.

Standing alternative candidates to Labour is the first step in breaking workers from a disastrous Labourite path. Surely it is not too utopian an idea that the left could come together to stand candidates on a minimum workers' platform. This would achieve two things. One, it would give workers, who have lost faith in the mainstream parties, a *real* alternative rather than leaving the way open to the fascist BNP. Two, it would send a message to Blair and his cronies that we are no longer prepared to surrender our vote to the bosses' second eleven, but are going to build an independent working class organisation.

Eighty two per cent of people in Newham South ward did not bother voting. Many of them are clearly looking for an alternative; we must provide it. In doing this we must oppose Labour at the ballot box and the fascists both in the ballot box and on the streets.

Steve David

Damning social trends

FOUR YEARS after Margaret Thatcher stood proudly on the steps of the UN headquarters in New York, clutching the hand of some unfortunate eight year old boy and promising to give a "high priority to the rights of children", a United Nations report has damned Britain's treatment of children.

In particular, the report smacks the government's hand sharply over its barbaric plans to build detention centres for offenders as young as 12, and warns that this would actually contravene international law (never stopped the Tory government before, of course). Unsurprisingly, the UN bemoaned the increasing number of children living in poverty (what about the adults?), the high rate of teenage pregnancies, the savage cuts in benefits, appearance of child beggars and 'dossers', and corporal punishment in private schools.

Interestingly, they pick out the treatment of children in Northern Ireland under emergency 'anti-terrorist' legislation as especially reprehensible - children as young as 10 can be detained for *seven days* without charge.

All in all, not very good PR for the British government. However, it gets worse. The 1995 edition of *Social Trends* has graphically highlighted the widening gulf between rich and poor, which assumed unheard of proportions during the 1980s.

The gap between the richest and poorest tenths of male workers, which is given in constant 1994 prices, grew from £203 a week in 1971 to almost £402 last year. For women workers, the equivalent gap grew from £118 to £279.

The cost of living has shot up in real terms as well. Bus and coach fares have

risen 142% since 1981 and rail fares 141%.

You can draw your own conclusions. The government certainly did, as it hastily dropped the introductory statement in *Social Trends*, commissioned to mark the 25th anniversary of its publication.

The claim was that it was "too political". By this it meant that the taboo word, 'poverty', was used too frequently, when normally it is blue-pencilled out of official reports.

Coincidentally the publication of a similar report by Barnardos has been "delayed". It too is critical of government policy on social services, education and housing, etc.

Lies, damn lies and statistics ... but a little too close to the truth for the government to stomach.

Frank Vincent

High kicks and high finance

THE STORM which erupted around Eric Cantona's attack on a Crystal Palace fan after being sent off seems set to run and run.

Terry Lewis, Labour MP for Worsley, Manchester, has tabled a parliamentary motion calling for the player to be allowed to play first team football this season. He has the backing of two other Labour MPs.

Lewis' call has more to do with business being allowed to run smoothly. Cantona is seen as a piece of machinery which must be kept working (however unsafe it may be) in order that it can carry on making money. His merit as a footballer is of only incidental importance.

There has been little mention also of the chauvinist haranguing that provoked the attack. Combatting racism in the football ground may be all very fashionable now, but national chauvinism in sport is big business.

Sport today is a slave to cash: matches are arranged to suit TV companies and sponsorship deals are made stretching to millions of pounds. Little thought is given to the real reasons for sporting activity.

We look forward instead to a world fit to live and develop ourselves in, free from the corruption, backhanders and bribes which characterise not just sport but the society it mirrors.

Roger Harper