

# weekly worker



No 86

Thursday March 16 1995

## March against Badgerline

March in support of sacked Chelmsford busworkers.  
Assemble Saturday March 25, 10am at Central Park,  
Chelmsford to rally at Chancellor Hall, Market Road

## Demonstrate against education cuts

Join the national demonstration organised by FACE  
Assemble 1pm, Embankment, London for march to  
Hyde Park. Saturday March 25  
Call 01589 789104 for details

# No ration on health

Last week two cases highlighted how money talks in today's National Health Service. A man died after being airlifted two hundred miles to an intensive care bed because his own regional unit is being run down; and top judges have ruled that a 10-year old girl cannot have the treatment that could save her life

NOTHING more clearly illustrates the priorities of capitalism than the plight of the child who has only weeks to live, yet has been refused a last chance because the treatment would be too expensive.

According to doctors the girl, who has a rare form of leukaemia, has a 10% to 20% chance of recovery if she undergoes chemotherapy followed by a bone marrow transplant. Yes, the treatment is risky and desperately unpleasant, but she has no other hope.

So what is preventing the health service from administering it? The £75,000 that her health authority would have to find for the 'extra-contractual referral' to carry it out. Everybody, from Cambridge Health Authority to health secretary Virginia Bottomley, from the Appeal Court judge to John Major, is claiming that the decision not to treat her was taken by her doctors on medical grounds. But the doctors know that if they treat this patient then they would not have the funds for others, so it is clearly the cash which is paramount.

The NHS has been forced into the grim 'realistic' world of 'market forces' as part of the new consensus - shared by the Labour Party, despite its bleats of protest - to wind down the welfare state. So an anonymous donor has stepped in to finance the child's treatment - a wealthy Harley Street consultant can start work today.

Just as grim is the case of Malcolm Murray who quickly needed an intensive care bed with neurosurgical facilities after being hit by a van and suffering a severe head injury. His regional neuroscience unit, the Brook General Hospital in nearby Woolwich, London, was closed for new admissions because of staff shortage - and no other suitable place could be found for him *anywhere in the South-East*.

Just last month a national survey, commissioned by the

government itself, revealed that 20% of all intensive care beds in major cities have been permanently closed, resulting in one in four patients having to be turned away. Yet Bottomley still intends to press ahead with her massive hospital closure programme. In London alone six intensive care units and three specialist neurological units are currently under threat, including Brook General Hospital itself. As the Brook is run down, its one remaining neuro-anaesthetist is now on *permanent* emergency call until the unit finally closes later this year.

And they blamed the staff shortage there on an outbreak of gastric flu!

Perhaps, you may think, all will be well when, come the next election, Bottomley, Major and the whole gang are replaced by Tony Blair's new-look Labour Party?

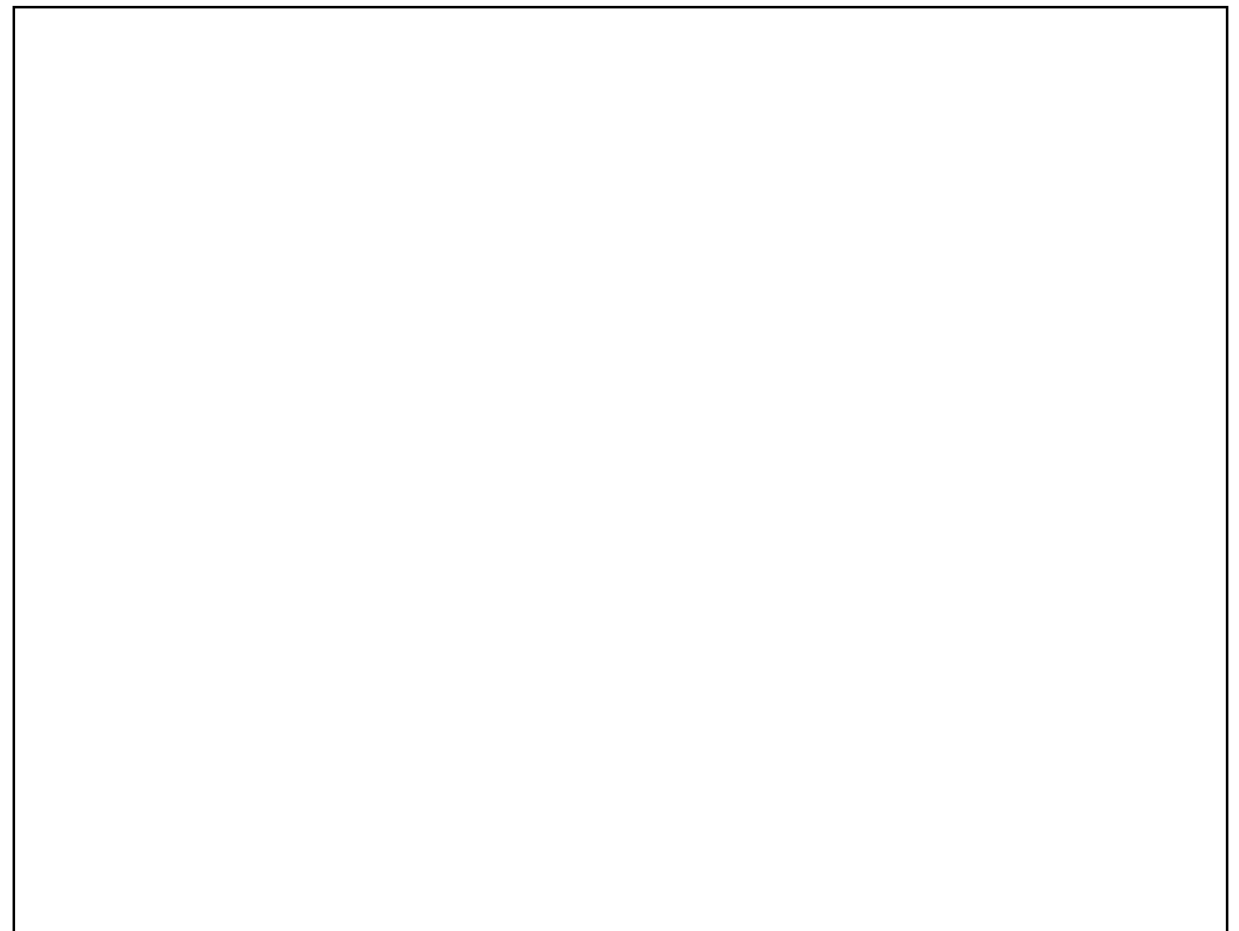
Think again. Margaret Beckett, Labour's spokesperson on health, has contented herself with calling for a halt to *further* specialist bed closures, rather than demanding the improved facilities that we need. Capitalism's government-in-waiting is in full agreement with the bourgeois consensus that "The National Health Service cannot possibly afford what is now medically possible" (*The Independent* March 11).

As a result Labour is considering the option of forcing workers to take out private health insurance, so that the NHS can be run down more smoothly.

Workers should consider why medical advances should lead to a *worsening* in health provision, including even the basic emergency services.

The answer of course is capitalism. It is capitalism which fixes sky-high health prices, whether for simple drugs or for intensive treatment, such as that required for leukaemia or brain injuries.

In a planned society - where workers' need, not bosses' greed, is given top priority - we will be



The bosses say they can't afford to save lives, but we demand the very best that is available for all

able to make such provision so cheap and efficient that it will be available to everybody on the planet.

The Communist Party exists to make that possibility a reality. In the coming local elections, we will be standing for what workers need, not what the bosses say the system can afford.

- Abolish waiting lists
- No private practice in NHS institutions
- Free medical, dental and optical treatment
- Full state funding of Aids research. NHS care for Aids sufferers

## Cost cutting in Dundee hospitals

DR FOWLIE of Dundee Healthcare NHS Trust announced savings of £750,000 from his £85 million budget.

The trust claims that £270,000 can be saved through better management of staff turnover - without reducing the numbers employed. The good doctor said there were bound to be gaps

between staff leaving and others being appointed. Obviously staff will have to carry an extra workload while their employers manipulate their appointments policy to save money.

The trust is developing what it calls "a long term reward system" with employment consultants Negotiate Ltd. It sounds like the

most amount of work for the least amount of pay.

A joint negotiating committee covering the hospital unions has been set up with management. The bosses will try to use negotiations to undermine national agreements and try and exploit inter-union differences. Why else employ consultants?

**Nurses unite against 1% on March 30!**

Confidence in workers

In response to Dave Douglass (*Weekly Worker* 77), the workers' buy-out at Tower was not intended to restore our dented armour nor to give us back our glory days.

If anyone's armour is dented it is Tower's. We probably fought our corner harder than anyone over the past 20 years, but we were not content to sit back and say, 'Well, the pits are privatised: that's the end of it'. We all said if there is no help out there to stop privatisation, we'll buy our own pit and give ourselves fair pay and conditions and mine and sell our own coal. If we can't beat British Coal at selling coal I would give up (British Coal could not sell water in a desert).

As to his comment, "We must continue to fight the capitalist state", there is no rule that says you must be unemployed to fight. And "coal will come back to the valleys"; coal today is an internationally traded product. We are looking to our coal going overseas, not only to Welsh or British valleys.

Too many people today and many in our own industry believe the Tory and Coal Board lies that coal has no future. Coal has a future and it is up to us to go out and prove it. For Dave to even suggest that the workers at Tower will work longer hours for less pay and cheaper production methods only reinforces in my mind that some workers would not know what to do with control if we ever got it.

Nationalisation was never the answer for coal. We worked as slaves most of our lives with others benefiting off our backs. We provided cheap energy after the war and made millionaires out of many owners of companies feeding into us: Dosco, Baldwin and Francis, Meco, Dewty, Wecol - the list is endless.

Tower is 100% worker-owned, each with equal shares. We have a safety manager and large team, with safety and good conditions No 1 on our agenda. We have thrown the bonus scheme out and given a substantial increase on basic wages, full holidays and rest days.

This has never happened before. It is different to the pit in Scotland. We are the only pit in Europe to be owned 100% by the workers. There is not enough confidence in workers; we can take our principles into the working world, into the competitive world of the capitalist. But we go in on our terms, not theirs.

Dave goes on about changing the system. Well, we are trying to change it, not sitting back and moaning about it. If workers are going to control their own destiny, then we are going to do it at Tower. I hope Towerism will be more famous than Thatcherism.

Tyrone O'Sullivan

Personnel Director  
Tower Colliery, South Wales

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

Marriage vows

In response to the ever increasing fractures in the United Kingdom the Tories have promised to play the British nationalist card at the next general election. The Labour Party's devolutionary proposals aim to save the Union. As Enoch Powell noted, "Power devolved is power retained". The constitutional nationalist parties will similarly pose no threat to British imperialism. Against these factions of the ruling and middle classes the Communist manifesto for the council elections does indeed provide a very different message. Nevertheless it fails to break new ground in terms of a communist platform on the national question in the UK.

The old CPGB never developed beyond traditional politics. In Scotland it started with a knee jerk denunciation of "Claymore communists". Then, when tamed by Labourism, it joined the church in support of Home Rule. The attitude of communists to the national question was retarded by the decay of the 'official communist' movement.

For years official history was distorted and incorporated schools which were the antitheses of revolutionary progress. In the CPSU Great Russian centralisation was portrayed as the centre of historical development. Similarly the CPGB took on board a view no different from establishment unionism, placing the development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain at the centre of progressive thinking. Historians like John Foster in *The Scottish Marxist* created a history where "there was never any room for petty bourgeois separatism", imagining the "equal development of Scottish and Welsh peoples" compatible with the "elimination of the regional (sic) problem".

The current manifesto falls back on this framework, noting: "The people of Britain have come together over the centuries to form one nation". I thought the class struggle was the motor force of history? In fact each Act of Union was the culmination of counterrevolution against radical alternatives posed by the lower orders. The 'British nation' was created for the ruling class cemented with the highpoints of the Empire. Then mostly reactionary, British 'nation' theorists abounded in the halls of learning. British national consciousness was able to sink deeper roots with the aid of Empire super profits, granting privileges to the vast middle class and integrating the labour aristocracy.

It is worth noting that today the only place that has seen a growth in British national consciousness is among protestant workers in 'Northern Ireland'. The manifesto moans that after centuries "narrow nationalism still exists as a divisive force". Once again by identifying the unity of the working class with that of the state, you end up hinting that the British ruling class has failed in its historical mission to merge national remnants. It was never in the marriage vows: the UK state unites the ruling class, but divides

the people; it recognises nations, but denies self-determination.

In fact none of the traditional programmes in the elections can realise self-determination. This would require a programme far more revolutionary-democratic, that challenges the British state. The old *British road to socialism* set its aim at merely the refinement of the British state. If however our own communists cannot draw on their vernacular traditions then they could at least consider Lenin's advice. He saw the revolutionary potentialities in the national question and advocated communists take a lead against other class parties. In *State and Revolution* with regard to Britain he saw that "the establishment of a federal republic would be a step forward". Yet over 75 years later no Communist Party has stood on Lenin's programme. It would be an indispensable start to a reformed Communist Party in the face of resurgent British nationalists.

Chris Ford  
London

Crude distortions

I want to take up a point which was raised by Danny Hammill in the *Weekly Worker* (February 9). Comrade Bill of the Communist Action Group does not know what he is talking about when he speaks of the Revolutionary Communist Group's views of the white working class. We are entitled to see the hard evidence, in words and deeds, for this outrageous distortion of the RCG's politics.

That British imperialism has given rise to a labour aristocracy which has varied in its form and composition within a working class which has itself changed greatly is surely the basis for politics in this country. Yet it is very difficult to get the political consequences of this situation - that is, the fundamentally opportunist role of the Labour Party and trade union movement - discussed, accepted and acted upon seriously.

We in the RCG are used to the crude distortions of the SWP in their attempts to deny the existence of a privileged layer of the working class, yet a casual wander round any housing estate reveals this clearly. You will find - next to families struggling on Income Support - bought council houses, with drives stuffed full of motors. Come on! Who is more likely to want change and fight for it?

As Lenin pointed out, it is impossible to nail with certainty who is following the opportunists. "This will be revealed by struggle. It will be definitely decided only by the socialist revolution. But we know for certain that the opportunists represent only a minority."

Today they still represent a minority but politically dominate what exists as the working class movement. The central task is to challenge and defeat this domination while organising the new forces willing to challenge the whole rotten system.

A Michael  
Dundee

Mexico's critical days

Ruiz Massieu, Mexico's former deputy attorney general, being led into a US court. Just one of the government's casualties

MEXICO'S SLIDE into a revolutionary situation has been dramatically highlighted by recent events.

In a surprise move on Tuesday night, President Zedillo ordered the army to withdraw from the Zapatista-controlled area of Chiapas and renewed his offer of 'peace' talks. This seems to indicate that Zedillo is desperate to restore some sort of stability and improve his tarnished image, which is reaching pariah status.

Also somewhat unexpectedly, President Carlos Salinas appears to have fled to the United States, as the allegations against him mount. It is common knowledge that his elder brother, Raul, who has been charged with the murder of the secretary general of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, had close links with the cocaine cartels. Carlos was almost certainly involved somewhere along the line, but as he was the United States' prodigy at the time he obviously felt secure in his position and made little effort to 'reform' the

PRI.

Last Friday saw the unveiling of President Zedillo's "90 critical days" plan, which is an unprecedented wholesale assault on the living standards of the masses. This desperate gamble includes a sweeping 35% increase in the price of fuel, VAT raised on most consumer items from 10% to 15%, a 'promise' to cut public spending by 10% during the year and an effective 10% cap on public sector pay rises.

However, Zedillo may well have played his last card. The ruling class is irreparably divided over the austerity plan, the 'official' labour organisations are in near revolt and Zedillo's only supporters appear to be the IMF and the World Bank.

All the ingredients for a Mexican revolution are present. This would send shock waves straight into the heart of the United States and bring a much needed *fluidity* back into American politics, which is currently frozen in ultra-reactionary aspic.

Frank Vincent

Dave Douglass

Dave is vice chair of South Yorkshire NUM panel

War in the peace movement

THIS WEEKEND'S Trade Union Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament AGM promises to be a stormy affair with the leadership, centred around Jimmy Barnes, calling for an agnostic civil nuclear policy and a rival peace movement outside of CND. Anti-nuclear supporters of the campaign are of course outraged.

Behind the storm is the fact that the GMB pulled out of CND last year, largely because of the generally anti-nuclear position, but particularly over efforts to block the development of Thorp. GMB's affiliation fees were of course very handy, as is the prospect of winning even more pro-nuclear unions to some rival non-anti-nuclear peace campaign.

With CND policy firmly in the anti-nuclear camp (a resolution to that effect was unanimously passed at this year's conference) and the TUC unable to get enough support to weaken the anti-nuclear policy, a pro-nuclear Trojan horse is just what the GMB and Mr Barnes are looking for.

If it proves impossible to take TU-CND off on the irradiation tangent, there are those who would like to set up a moderate pro-nuclear Labour movement 'peace' body. The picture would then be complete. A trade union movement which doesn't believe in striking, a 'socialist party' which doesn't believe in socialism and an anti-nuclear movement which is sweet on British Nuclear Fuels.

Whatever one thinks of CND, efforts to appease rightwing pro-nuclear bodies by effectively destroying the trade union presence within it ought to be fought tooth and nail.

With comrade Scargill and my good self representing the NUM's position the air could get rather hot.

Arafat today, Adams tomorrow

THERE IS surely nothing so hypocritical as imperialism's apologists condemning the violence of 'terrorism'. Imperialism itself, not least the British variety, has been responsible for more death, destruction and vicious terror than any other force in the history of the planet. It has accumulated enough weaponry to destroy the entire world hundreds of times over and is itself almost entirely responsible for manufacturing the weapons now in the hands of those forces of whom it disapproves.

A prime example of such hypocrisy has been paraded before us this week. While John Major criticises President Clinton for agreeing to meet Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams at the White House on Friday, he himself has been warmly

shaking the hand of yesterday's 'terrorist', Yasser Arafat. His justification? While Mr Arafat had renounced 'terrorism', Sinn Fein was still associated with the IRA, "a fully formed terrorist organisation".

In fact Arafat, in his position as head of the Palestinian statelet, has access to refined and efficient weaponry to be used for terrorist purposes against his own dissidents on Israel's behalf. John Major is providing him with sophisticated supplies for his 'police force'. In contrast, Gerry Adams' contention that "the IRA does not need arms since they have ceased those activities" is a pretty accurate reflection of today's reality.

Adams was of course referring to supposed new arms that his now 'legitimate' fund-raising in the USA

would allegedly be used to buy, not the IRA's existing stockpile which the British government is insisting must be "decommissioned" before fully-fledged talks with Sinn Fein can begin.

But all this is part of Major's balancing act in continuing moves to carry all parties with him in the progress towards imperialism's 'peace' settlement.

Two carefully programmed announcements made this week illustrate this point. On the one hand the Five Regiment Royal Artillery is to be withdrawn early (reducing the number of British Army troops by 400 to 18,100). On the other army murderer Lee Clegg will be considered for release in June.

Jim Blackstock

# Turkey: class struggle erupts

ON SUNDAY March 12, the 14th anniversary of the infamous military coup of 1971, a *gecekond* (built overnight) shanty town area of Istanbul, which has been mainly occupied by Alevis immigrants from various regions of Anatolia, was the target of a concerted state-terrorist attack.

According to eye-witness reports, three men and a woman opened fire into an Alevi community centre, four coffee shops and a patisserie with automatic assault weapons. The hit-team struck with military precision, leaving behind three dead and scores of wounded. Later the taxi was found with the owner-driver's body locked in the boot with his throat slit.

Two so-called islamic fundamentalist illegal organisations, which have emerged recently, have claimed responsibility for the attack. Their semi-legal press has written, "We will make these districts resemble Sivas." This refers to a previous attack on the Alevi community during their annual ceremonies in Sivas, where over thirty people burnt to death in a hotel.

Immediately after the Istanbul attack thousands of Alevi workers gathered around the community centre and began to protest against the inaction and silent collaboration of the police, who did nothing during and after the attack. Many more thousands from various districts of Istanbul began to gather in the area. Police reinforcements were brought in, but this did not diminish the resolve of the people and small skirmishes developed.

Towards Monday morning more commando units were sent in. The uneasy tension between the massed protesters and police and army units was broken when the police attacked using firearms. Altogether now at least twenty-six people have been killed in street battles and over three hundred injured. Partial curfew was declared in the area and all inward bound traffic stopped.

During Monday various bourgeois politicians - including social-democrat leader Bülent Ecevit, the conqueror of Northern Cyprus - tried to visit the area to invite massed Alevis, youth activists and striking workers to come to their senses (!) and to leave the area calmly. These attempts met with contempt and the politicians were sent back with Molotov cocktails.

There were smaller demonstrations in many shanty towns of Istanbul during Monday. A large protest was held in Ankara on Tuesday which the police attacked when it moved towards the National Assembly, leaving many wounded.

Many agree that Sunday's attack aimed at intensifying conflict between Alevis and Sunnis. However there is no consensus on the purpose of such a provocation. The right wing of the liberal bourgeoisie located it as a new attempt to undermine the foundations of the present coalition government. Many left liberals were preaching unity of Sunnis and Alevis in the face of a danger which may split society into two.

The working class gave its verdict by its actions: it mobilised and fought against the state's armed forces. Its militant action showed that so-called islamic fundamentalism would be nothing but a pipe-dream in Turkey if the state machinery did not actively support, organise and defend it. What has erupted in Istanbul was not "street violence", as claimed by *The Guardian*, but highly political, albeit spontaneous, class struggle against the bourgeois state. This incident was yet another living proof of the age old slogan, "The only way to democracy is through revolution".

*Kemal Osman*

# New clause four is pre-clause four

Labour, ironically under the rubric of 'modernisation', is about to transform itself back into a trade union backed liberal party

ON MARCH 13 Labour's National Executive Committee overwhelmingly agreed to support the Blair "update" of clause four. Labour's leadership now officially and openly champions what is called a "thriving private sector" and the "enterprise of the market": ie, capitalism. This is indeed a defining moment in the history of Labourism.

New clause four in fact is pre-clause four. Islington man speaks in the archaic tongues of community, nation and partnership. Ironically under the rubric of 'modernisation' the Labour Party is being returned to its ideological origins, which lie not in 20th century Fabian socialism, as so many pundits maintain, but in the 19th century. Transparently Blair's much vaunted "social-ism" has nothing to do with the apocalyptic visions of firebrands like Edward Carpenter, John Bruce Glasier and Robert Blatchford. These god-fearing gentlemen thundered against the devil capitalism and prophesied the coming of a New Jerusalem. Blair's Victorian values are those of a conventional liberal politician.

That is why he and his chums on the Commission for Social Justice make no pledges to spend beyond what capitalism considers it can afford. And that in turn explains why he supports anti-union laws, a below subsistence minimum wage and workfare for the unemployed. New Labour will be an SDP Mark II.

There is, of course, a thin leftwing line determined, even at this eleventh hour, to fight for that antidote to Bolshevism drafted by Sidney Webb and Arthur Henderson 77 years ago. From the right-moving Ken Livingstone to the left-moving Tony Benn, from the entryist *Socialist Organiser* to the ex-entryist Socialist Workers Party, from the Kimilsungite New Communist Party to the Gorbachevite *Morning Star*, from the 'hard' Trotskyite Spartacist League to the 'soft' Trotskyite Militant Labour, they are committed as a body to save Labour's reformist soul.

As we said last year in the *Weekly Worker*, these opportunists are on "a loser". Blair is sure of victory at the April 29 special conference. Where Gaitskell failed, Blair will succeed. In the reactionary climate of the 1990s all he has had to do is hold out the threat of a fifth general election humiliation. Before even hearing or seeing Blair's 349-page revision, trade union and constituency delegates alike were voting at regional conferences to sacrifice Fabianism so that he might live as prime minister.

The imminent demise of the old clause four is a crisis for the whole pro-Labour left. Those who joined to further the Bennite project in the 1980s find themselves in the 1990s members of a party Shirley Williams again admires. Those who argue that Labour is the only realistic vehicle for socialist change will soon be flatly contradicted by its constitutional aims and values. Those who say 'Vote Labour, but ...' will have to admit that they are after all calling for a pro-capitalist vote.

To understand why Blair and his spin doctors decided to junk the Fabian code for a more humane, more state regulated form of capitalism, one needs to know its genesis. The Labour Party began in 1906 explicitly rejecting the class war and socialism. In essence it was a trade union version of the Liberal Party. Only after the October 1917 revolution in Russia did Labour's grandees decide to wrap their party in the red flag. Workers had been radicalised by the horrors of

World War I and inspired by the young Soviet Republic. "Society," said David Lloyd George, the Liberal prime minister, "is more or less molten." Marx's well grubbed old mole was at work.

To *delay* communism Labour transformed itself in 1918. From a loose federation it became a cohesive, national party with individual members who were subject to central discipline. Liberalism was discarded. What replaced it though was not socialism, but a Labourism enshrined in the Webb-Henderson clause four. Though a far cry from genuine socialism - ie, the first stage of communism brought about by the revolutionary self-activity of the working class - for many British socialists it was considered a positive step. If by some fluke clause four had been implemented it would not have ushered in a new social order. The existing state would have remained intact. It would however have had a far reaching impact on capitalism. That dim prospect reconciled most class conscious workers to the limitations of Labourism and kept them attached to a party permanently dominated by reactionaries.

Given this it is absurd to claim, as does Arthur Scargill, that the old clause four is the "cornerstone" of the Labour Party's "socialist faith". To be a Labourite is to *misunderstand* the history of the Labour Party. Clause four was a sop. Every Labour government has dutifully managed capitalism and ensured that the working class continues to be exploited through wage slavery.

Defending the old clause four has nothing to do with defending working class socialism. Clause four was introduced by Labour and trade union tops to keep militant leftwingers tamely within their orbit. Now paradoxically this very same Fabianism is being *defended* by militant leftwingers because they require an *excuse* for staying in, or continuing to support, Blair's party.

In 1918 the masses were beginning to reject parliamentarianism and turn towards direct action. The Labour leadership bolstered the left so that it could appear socialistic and maintain its working class following. In 1995 we are in the shadow of reaction. With the working class politically mute the Labour left is no longer needed, neither by Blair nor the boss class. But the latter does want a responsible and cringing second eleven, a party that can be trusted to screw workers in the national - ie, capitalism's - interest. Thus the media praise for every Blair utterance, and the financial donations from the rich and famous.

Reaction has however by its own dynamic created a contradiction. Capitalism is a system that uniquely hides the secret of its exploitation. In the age of bourgeois democracy this has become a political necessity as well as an economic characteristic. For much of this century capitalism has therefore denied its own existence. According to the permanent persuaders, following World War II we lived in a post-capitalist, post-industrial society. And most fell for it. Edward Heath momentarily let the mask slip in the early 1970s. Then in the 1980s the social democratic disguise was discarded altogether. After the disastrous Wilson-Callaghan government Margaret Thatcher rode into office over a split and discredited Labourism proclaiming the joyful news that in capitalism lay salvation.

The Tories shattered the post-World War II settlement and launched a sustained drive to make Britain safe for

profit. Unemployment was cynically allowed to spiral. Industry was decimated. Effective trade unionism became illegal. In turn miners, dockers and printers were crushed. Youth found themselves denied housing benefit and the dole. Student grants were frozen and replaced by loans. House buyers saw dreams turn into nightmares. The NHS was handed to money grabbing trusts and executives. Privatisation gave huge salaries and share options to the few, but job cuts, insecurity and worsening services to the many. Single parents, travellers, beggars and other victims were blamed for social decay. Ravers, squatters, environmentalists, protesters of every hue and kind were criminalised. But precisely because all this has ostentatiously and bombastically been done under the name of capitalism, millions today know the beast - and revile it.

There is a political vacuum. The death of social democracy and 'official communism' means capitalism feels stronger than ever. Even in the midst of its slide towards a new general crisis it arrogantly insists that there is no alternative. Yet at the same time capitalism is rejected as never before. When Blair refers to the 'market' and 'enterprise' people know he means capitalism and they hate what that means. Labour's new clause four demands that if the left is to remain left there must be a break with illusions and excuses. These times require honesty and courage. Let us unite, not in the defence of a Fabian sop. Together let us provide a real alternative to capitalism. A mass revolutionary party committed to the liberation of humanity.

*Jack Conrad*

From *The Call*, paper of the British Socialist Party, March 18 1920

## The great fiasco

THE TRADE Union Congress called to decide "the form of action to be taken to compel the government to accept the majority report of the commission" [to nationalise the mines] had before it a clear alternative: to fool or to fight. There was no middle course ... Demands have been formulated; the limits of the workers' patience fixed. The time expires, and then - what? The government is compelled? Oh dear, no! Nothing so realistic, so catastrophic. When the time for action comes another conference is held. The opposition of the government to the miners and their demand was foreseen ... Theirs [the TUC's] certainly is the responsibility for the unpreparedness of the exploited masses to do immediate battle with the profiteers and their parliament ... Of what use is a general staff, which, faced with the possibility of intense industrial war, postpones its organisation for the struggle until after war has been declared?

C · P · G · B

YEARS  
JULY 31 1920  
JULY 31 1995

## 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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Printed by and published by: November Publications Ltd (0181-459 7146). Registered as a newspaper by Royal Mail. ISSN 1351-0150. © March 1995



# Communist candidates say 'no cuts, no closures'

## Militant dilemma

MILITANT Labour polled 112 votes (3.7%) in last month's Weavers council by-election in Tower Hamlets, London. Militant's decision to stand had provoked disagreement within its ranks.

This was not over whether ML's intervention would split the vote and allow in the British National Party: as *Militant* itself reports (March 3), all agreed that Labour would eclipse the BNP on this occasion (in the event winning the seat with a 45.5% vote). Rather it was about whether ML's own vote would be viewed as derisory. The article correctly argues that a failure to put forward an "authoritative socialist alternative" leaves the way open for racist ideas. ML's vote was seen as a "good foundation" from which to oppose the Labour council's cuts and rent rises.

But what happens if Militant *does* build up support so that it really would 'split the Labour vote' and risk letting in the BNP next time? Would the organisation then retreat to a shamefaced 'Vote Labour, but ...'?

Meanwhile both the *Morning Star* and *Socialist Worker* suppressed news of ML's stand in their reporting of the election.

**Alan Fox**

## Managing poverty

THE UNITED NATIONS Social Development Summit in Copenhagen - a week long jamboree whose cost has been estimated at something between £20m and £40m - ended on Sunday.

The great and the good signed a 90-page, non-binding (what else?) declaration which loftily proclaimed, "For the first time in history ... we gather ... to recognise the significance of social development and human well-being for all".

The entire summit was dominated by the very same forces that are responsible for world poverty - imperialism and international capital. The charities and non-governmental organisations spent their time pleading with the World Bank and IMF to be 'nicer' to the 'wretched of the earth', who are the object of liberal sentimentalist pity.

Therefore, when the IMF and World Bank agreed to take "social factors" into account for drawing up future programmes, Oxfam announced that the summit had been "worthwhile" after all!

The only way to eradicate poverty is to eradicate the economic system that feeds off the misery of the masses on a daily basis.

**Eddie Ford**

### Where does the liberation of the working class lie - with the nation or with internationalism?

The Communist Party seminar series on *Trade Unions* looks this week at how trade unions should respond as production becomes ever more international.

Seminars are in central London at 5pm every Sunday. For more details, call 0181-459 7146.

Next week (Sunday March 26) our series on *Why the Collapse?* asks, "Has socialism failed?"

# Workers' campaign in Scotland

THE LAUNCH of the Communist Party's election campaign in Scotland last weekend was impressive.

On Saturday morning comrades were out on the streets introducing the candidates and selling the *Weekly Worker*.

Our rallying cry of 'No cuts, no closures' had a powerful resonance in Tayside, where budget cuts were announced on Thursday.

The district council in Dundee is held by Labour, while the Regional is hung but SNP - dominated. Neither council challenged central government's spending cap - Labour even took pride in it. Council tax will rise on average by 6.7%, well above the rate of inflation. Water charges have also been increased. But, despite the increase, services are being slashed.

Working class voters, fed up with the lies and attacks of SNP and Labour, were interested to hear why the Communist Party was different and that we were about liberation, not about bringing back the Soviet Union.

Mary Ward, selling papers outside the Dundee election shop in the Hilltown (where she is a candidate), was told by one passer-by that "what we need is a revolution"!

Down the road in Lochee, communist candidate Dominic Handley was campaigning against hospital closures. Most shoppers stopped to sign our petition and hear why Dominic was saying, "No to any rationing in the health service".

In Dundee centre the same slogan had people queuing up to sign the petition and take our election manifesto which demands that the "NHS should meet the growing needs of the population, not operate according to what capitalism can afford".

On Sunday people on the doorstep in Lochee were surprised to see the Communist Party, but most were very interested in what we had to say.

## By-election by and by

THE TORIES have delayed the Perth and Kinross by-election until June, fearing that another defeat so close to the local elections would be just too disastrous. This has not dampened the enthusiasm of the SNP, which has already reaped enormous publicity from the sex affair stirred up by Winnie Ewing. As a result its candidate, Roseanna Cunningham, is a household name throughout Scotland.

Not so the English Tory banker, John Godfrey. Sir Nicholas Fairbairn described his nominated successor for the seat as "an unelectable clone" before his death last month. Mr Godfrey is alone in thinking he can win. Labour and Liberal Democrats are so far back in this constituency they do not count. Roseanna Cunningham, who came within 2,000 votes of winning the seat at the last election, must be smugly confident this time.

Her reputation for radicalism is based on her feminism. She is politically indistinguishable from the



Dominic Handley while campaigning in Lochee

Everyone took a paper and manifesto and some wanted us to come back regularly with the *Weekly Worker*.

We still have a long way to go to turn the sympathy we received on the streets of Scotland into action. We need to convince workers not only to vote communist but to join us in the fight against this system. People are quite obviously completely fed up with the bosses, their system and their parties. The Communist Party in the local election on April 6 is raising the alternative that workers in Scotland so desperately need.

**Lee-Anne Bates**

The Communist Party in Dundee has regular Monday meetings at 8.00pm. For details, call 01382 667517

### Sweatshop conditions

THE LAUNCH of the campaign was celebrated on Saturday evening at a production of Banner Theatre's *Sweat Shop*. The production is a harrowing indictment of the treachery of union bureaucrats and the lack of any independent working class organisation across the world.

Song, slide projection and taped interviews with strikers and sweat shop workers - whose "hidden hands" create the bosses wealth with their sweat - tell the story of appalling working conditions and pay. This has been allowed to continue and escalate in sweat shops around the world: from Burnsalls in Birmingham, to Nike shoe workers in Indonesia, to Levi Strauss machinists in San Antonio, Texas.

The stories and music left you with haunting images of the horrific conditions forced upon workers as a result of our failures. The production looked forward to a future of working class unity and strength, but the lack of, and urgent need for, working class organisation was starkly exposed.

For details of the Banner Theatre tour, contact Friends Institute, 220 Moseley Road, Highgate, Birmingham B12 0DG. Tel 0121-440 0460

## Fighting fund

DUNDEE Communist Party branch raised £130 at the launch of its election campaign on Saturday.

Dominic Handley, candidate for Lochee, commented: "I was really surprised to find such a high level of dissatisfaction. People really feel it is time something was done. Talking to people is very heartening because people feel angry about the same things as I do. It's a challenge to convince them that communist politics provide the answers."

We still need your support to reach our £6,000 March target to fund our election campaigns around the country.

**Phil Kent**

## Labour - daftness devolved

THE MAIN political question for many in Scotland is how to regain control over their affairs. Everything is decided in London and decided badly.

The Labour Party conference in Inverness is peddling devolution as the answer. It is a popular policy. But, as Linsey Keenan of the M77 protest said, "It could turn out to be like Strathclyde Regional Council writ large". "Useless, morally corrupt and walks all over people," Mary Ward added.

Tony Blair is all for it: "Devolution isn't daft. It isn't impossible within a unitary state. It's sensible, it's practical, it's realistic." He might have added that it is subordinate to his becoming prime minister. "Scotland's problem is not the English. It's the Tories." In other words he believes he is the answer, not the ability of workers in Scotland to make independent decisions.

The Labour Party, along with other bourgeois institutions, has absorbed feminism. This has created an odd beast: half anti-democratic, half plain daft. The party has concluded that there should be an equal number of male and female candidates to the Edinburgh parliament, fairly distributed and with equal opportunity of election. Plus an 'additional member' voting system that guarantees a 50-50 gender split in parliament by allowing the party leadership to appoint a number of members according to their sex - an unelected quango of 'placepersons' whose loyalty can be counted on. Liberal Democrats and the SNP have similar policies, and Labour hopes the Tories will back it too.

Pamela Urquart, a delegate from Inverness, argued, "We must look at all the ways power can be devolved down from a Scottish Parliament." Even to the point of holding committee meetings in Mallaig on fisheries.

You cannot build democracy by devolving meetings. Fisheries are an international problem. For example, Spain has 25% unemployment. Is it (or any other bourgeois state) going to bow to polite requests to fish responsibly? A working class response might begin by trying to unite fishers internationally to fight for full employment and to demand unemployment benefits without loss of earnings. So long as fishing is dependent on profit, rather than human need and the sea's fertility, then the fisheries problem will be resolved by the bankruptcy courts, no matter how many meetings are held in Mallaig.

**Phil Kent**

**Arthur Lawrence**