

weekly worker



No 89

Thursday April 6 1995

Fighting fund

FUNDRAISING has slowed this week since many comrades from around the country have rallied to the election campaign in Scotland.

But thanks must go to Hackney Branch which raised £108. We still need money rushed in to ensure the success of the election campaign in England which was launched this week. We need another special push this month to reach the full £6,000.

Make fundraising an integral part of our election work to build the Party.

Phil Kent

Vote Communist on May 4!

Workers have no faith in either Labour or the Tories. But you can use your vote positively

THIS MONTH the Labour Party and Tories will be reeling off long lists of vacuous promises for the local elections.

Major's pathetic bid for some credibility in his relaunch speech last weekend was forced on the Tories, not by their own incompetence, but by Labour's move to the right.

It has stolen anything that was left of the Tories' clothes. The only competition is over who can cut taxes for the rich and attack working class rights the most.

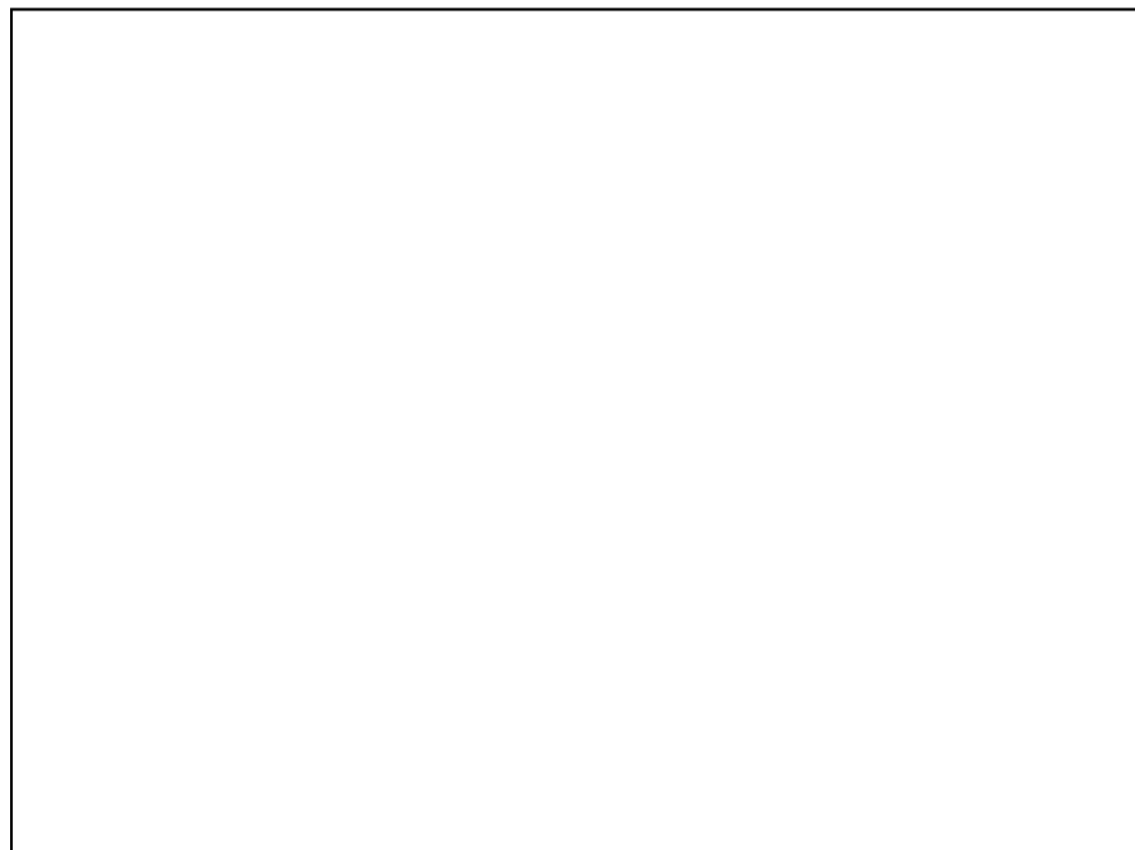
Blair's 'new look Labour', like Major's relaunched Tories, offers nothing to workers, let alone anything 'new'. Like them, the Labour Party is committed body and soul to the bosses and their system.

Yet, despite the much hyped economic revival, we know that in the long term things are not going to get any better for capitalism.

So Labour in power will fare no better than the Tories. What both parties are making blatantly clear is that the working class will have to pay for the bosses' economic crisis.

Labour promises *not* to repeal the anti-trade union laws or the Criminal Justice Act. It promises, in fact, more state power against us in its own 'get tough on crime' campaign. It promises to continue the cuts in the health service and attacks on unemployment benefit with its very own 'new look' slave labour 'training' scheme.

We should not let them get away with it. We should not vote for a party which has time



Communists move into action in the run-up to the local elections. Build the party of the working class!

and time again been voted into power by the working class only to attack us when safely in Westminster.

Over the last two months the press in Scotland has been full of stories of the "apathy factor" in the elections and only a 40% turnout was expected. This is hardly surprising since none of the main parties have anything to offer workers. The campaigns of these parties have consisted of telephone canvassing and carefully worded press releases.

The Communist Party's campaign was very different. Every voter received *Weekly Workers*, manifestos and election addresses. Where we were standing virtually every door was knocked on. The Party has been campaigning every day on the streets against cuts and closures.

People we spoke to recognised the need for real change and many now see the capitalist system itself as the problem. But without their own party which fights for the interests

of the working class, most people do not have the confidence to actually make a stand themselves to change the system.

That is why our manifesto is not a list of promises but a programme for action. Only by reorganising our own party can the working class start to build a society fit for all to live in.

Don't waste your vote on May 4. Don't vote for parties which offer nothing to the working class. Vote communist and join us in the fightback.

Education battle goes on

TEACHERS at Poundswick Junior School in Wythenshawe, Manchester, celebrated victory over the council last week.

Threatened action over class sizes and lack of funding was called off by the National Union of Teachers after education chiefs promised £15,000 of extra money for the school.

However the victory was only a partial one since Phil Hoyland, the schools NUT steward, only a few days earlier said that the £15,000 offered was not enough to solve the school's cash problems. It has a £60,000 budget deficit.

There are at least 30 children in every class at the school. This is the legacy of the Tories' education cuts. Readers will remember education secretary Gillian Shephard's comment that class sizes would not have to increase under their cuts, and that governors should not shy away from sacking teachers.

Parents, teachers and all workers are only too well aware from bitter experience that when money is allocated to one field it is taken away from another. The picture is the same up and down the country. On Tuesday Nottingham teachers staged an official one day strike against compulsory redundancies arising from the cuts.

In Manchester the NUT leadership has clearly settled for a far from adequate compromise. The fight against education cuts must continue. But most importantly it must be a united national campaign and linked to the fight against all cuts.

Linda Addison

What are nations? Will they always exist?

This Sunday (April 9) the Communist Party opens its new London seminar programme with three parallel series running concurrently. Beginning with the series on *Nationalism*, the first seminar considers "Nations, their origin and definition", and is followed by *Marx's theory of alienation* and *Modern revolutionary moments*.

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

Scottish poll campaign - see back page

Killer deserves praise

The immigration laws hang like the sword of Damocles over ethnic minorities in the UK. Unable to muster evidence to charge Indian citizen Raghbir Singh with murder, home secretary Michael Howard has ordered his deportation, despite his having attained permanent residency rights.

Whoever killed *Des Pardes* editor Tarsem Singh Purewal in January deserves praise, not deportation. When Purewal launched the longest established Punjabi language weekly in Britain, he claimed spiritual authority on the grounds that he came from the same village as the mother of Indian communist and national martyr Bhagat Singh, to gain undeserved respect.

Over the following decades Purewal's corruption, scandal mongering and tittivation took gutter press techniques to a new low in *Des Pardes*, making many personal enemies who must surely now feel avenged.

Seema Kumari
Brent

Same old rag

"Three communists are standing" in the Scottish local elections, according to the dishonest 'official communist'/Labourite *Morning Star*. Apparently the Communist Party of Britain is fielding John Foster in Glasgow and Robert Ross in South Lanarkshire, while Willie Clarke is "defending his seat" in Fife for the Communist Party of Scotland.

No mention of CPGB candidates Mary Ward and Dominic Handley in Dundee. In the 1992 general election, the *Star* even dropped its previous custom of printing full results for every constituency in order to avoid mention of our name.

A new broom sweeps clean, they say. But bureaucratic censorship is safe with its new editor John Haylett, who took over with no noticeable impact on April Fools' Day. A little bird told me the four months' delay in Chater's retirement allowed his chosen successor to fight off a challenge by Mary Rosser's candidate, who lost the battle amid charges of nepotism. For readers, however, Haylett's appointment was "unanimous".

This daily champion of 'glasnost' is, unfortunately, the same old rag.
Stan Kelsey
Brent

Lone canoeist

I am sorry Peter Manson (Letters, No86) misunderstood my point about P Conlon and Harry Gwala: perhaps in trying to keep my letter short I sacrificed clarity. They have only one thing in common: their actions are not in the interests of the working class.

Comrade Conlon likes to paddle his own canoe. In practice this ends up with him working with other lone canoeists with whom he has less in common theoretically than he has with the CPGB. However he respects these people because

they have a record of activity on class issues and do not cramp his style. You cannot build a communist party in this way.

Comrade Gwala is no loose cannon. He has worked loyally within the SACP, and his position in SACP politics reflects the importance of working within a party that is also part of the class. However, despite his suspension from its leadership for allegedly attempting to set up hit squads, he is not prepared to challenge Mandela's political line publicly for fear of unpopularity.

In a rapidly moving political scene like South Africa mistakes are inevitable. SACP revolutionary aims are restricted to achieving black participation in capitalism, and it does not practise democratic centralism. To reforge a genuine revolutionary party of the working class the comrade will need the utmost theoretical clarity.

I do not doubt comrade Gwala's courage and commitment, but he is not telling the truth to the class. That is the crucial point. The fact that he is in a position to lead millions makes it disastrous.

Phil Kent
Rochester

Sylvia Pye Appeal

The Sylvia Pye Appeal / Fighting Fund was set up at the end of April 1994, when Sylvia was singled out to pay the £15,877.16 costs British Coal ran up in forcibly evicting Parkside Pit Camp, after it kept the pit open for 20 months despite riot police threats and state surveillance. Yet if she does not pay she faces prison.

Phone or write, offering your solidarity and/or donations: 01925 226698 / 01602 608363 / 01524 834512 / 0181 8012995

The SPAFF
c/o Common Road Nurseries,
Newton-le-Willows WA12 9JJ

Communist history

Hundreds of thousands of dynamic and principled people interested in justice and change have been involved in the British communist movement. But how will people remember them? What did they sound like? What did they care about? What were their views on events that were later scandalised over the media?

The Communist Oral History Project has just been set up to address the need to get history straight from the horse's mouth. And it is appealing to those who want communist memory preserved. Many communists have been audio- and video-taped, but these tapes now need to be gathered and held in one safe public institution. This new project will ensure that the taped life stories of individual communists are not lost, and those who have not yet been taped will not be overlooked.

We are looking for people to be interviewed, to do the interviewing and to help transcribe a tape, or to send a donation. Contact Mike Squires on 0181-673 8283, or Jo Stanley on 0171-226 0032.

COHP
East London

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

Healthworkers' pay unity under threat

Nurses demand a national three percent pay rise - but this is a pay cut in real terms

LAST WEEK'S 'fair pay day' hospital lunchtime demonstrations in support of the healthworkers' pay claims saw 415 actions around the country, according to Unison, the main health union, and it is very likely that some kind of industrial action will eventually be called.

The original claims were for between eight and fifteen percent for workers - nurses, for example - covered by the pay review bodies, and a "substantial rise" for others such as ancillary workers. The government response was to offer a derisory one percent to all Unison grades, with the possibility (strong probability, the government hints) of a top-up to three percent through local negotiations.

The call to demonstrate met with a varied response. Outside the Central Middlesex Hospital in Brent, London, around 100 healthworkers attended the rolling meetings, where the chants were, "What do we want? Eight percent!"

At Christie Hospital in Manchester, a number of doctors boosted the 150 workers present, despite the fact that their own claim has already been settled at national level. Workers are under particular pressure at Christie, which was named in a Labour Research Department

survey published earlier this week as the hospital with the highest national percentage increase in waiting lists.

There, however, as in many other places, the demand was for "the full three percent" for all, with no local negotiations. In Dundee City Square around 100 attended the protest meeting, including many workers from the city's three hospitals, but again the accent was on achieving three percent nationally.

The nature of the official campaign is already undermining unity. Unison

bureaucrats - seeing their own positions under threat if local deals are implemented - have dropped the original claim in favour of the supposedly unifying national three percent figure.

But if that is already on offer through a local top-up, many workers will question why industrial action is necessary.

Workers should not settle for a pay cut. With inflation edging towards four percent, they should insist on an increase far in excess of that.

Peter Manson

The *Weekly Worker* has received the document below from an anonymous contributor. We believe it may be connected with the 2½% pay offer made to the three rail unions in response to their claim for a "substantial rise" - just a week after British Rail announced profits in excess of £400m

Mystery of the missing millions

HOLMES stood looking out of the window puffing on his pipe as Watson answered the knock on the door. "It's Mr Adams of Aslef, Holmes."

"Come in, come in," replied Holmes as he pirouetted, extending his hand. "What can I do for you?"

"It's about the missing millions," replied Adams. "Four hundred million quid to be exact."

"Ah yes. Sit down, my good man, and tell me everything," exhorted Holmes. "Do not leave anything out, however trivial it might seem."

"Holmes is very keen on trivia," chuckled Watson. "Solves most of his cases with it."

Lew Adams sat down and with a worried excitement proceeded to tell Holmes how the railways had been sabotaged as a result of a diabolical plan. He continued: "Only last week the chairman was boasting of the large surplus the railway company had successfully earned as a result of the hard work put in by railworkers the length and breadth of the land. The surplus stood at four hundred million, but when myself and Jimmy Knapp saw the chairman on Thursday he told us it had gone - vanished from the vaults. There was nothing left with which to reward the railworkers. Holmes, you must help us to recover this lost wedge."

"Hmm," replied Holmes, puffing intensely on his pipe. "Seems like the work of the Tory Gang, a notorious bunch of crooks whose time is long overdue."

"The Tories!" interjected Watson.

"Yes, I have no doubt. The missing millions is obviously the work of Clarke, the major evil of financial swindlers, Major Moriarty's right hand lieutenant."

"But what can we do to get it back?" enquired Adams. "The Tory Gang are most difficult to pin down."

"Get your members to stop work and tell them to vote communist in the local elections," instructed Holmes. "The former will not only get your members their just reward, but it also has the potential to scupper the Tory Gang's diabolical plot to wreck the railways."

"The second is most important because it will help rid us of the capitalist menace which the Tory Gang nurtures so diligently. But beware, Mr Adams, of the Blairites. They will tell you to desist from action and wait for them to take over from the Tory Gang. But this is a ruse: they are really the left hand of the Tory Gang. If you carry out my instructions to the letter, you will overcome. But falter and you are done for."

As Mr Adams left, Holmes returned to the window. Watson sank into an armchair, picking up the *Weekly Worker*. "Do you consider Adams will follow your instructions?"

"I hope so, Watson, but whatever happens the game is afoot."

Holmes managed a smile as he contemplated the demise of the Tory Gang.

The game is afoot.

Aslef train driver

Manchester Communist Party local election launch

Tuesday April 11, 8pm
ALL WELCOME
Central Manchester venue
Call Roger Harper on 0161-226 6133 for details

'Middle England' moves centre stage

"IN THE first few days after Tony Blair was elected I said to my wife, 'You know, I agreed with everything he said.'" These were the words of a delegate to last week's Conservative Party conference of constituency delegates. The Labour Party's steady rightwing drift has been so far-reaching that the Tories are torn between two instincts: they want to claim the credit for Labour's conversion to the Thatcherite free-market consensus, but in order to cling onto their supporters they need to pretend that Blair's party has not really changed.

Occasionally they have been letting slip their own belief that the next general election is as good as lost. Party chairman Jeremy Hanley told the same conference, "There will still be lots of places that are coloured blue on election night."

If the Tories are to avoid a Canada-style wipe-out at the polls they must show that they alone, in the words of home secretary Michael Howard, understand "the concerns of middle England" (the phrase itself demonstrates the Conservatives' lack of imagination: are Wales and Scotland to be written off?).

What John Major desperately needs is another Big Idea. Remember the pathetic Citizens' Charter and 'back to basics' campaigns?

This time he hopes to obscure the

bankruptcy of his government by stressing its continuity with the Thatcher administrations of the eighties: "A good part of the agenda is in many ways complete."

He points to privatisations, the

ending of "hyper-inflation" and the curbing of union power. It is true the whole of British politics was carried to the right in the wake of these policies. But in themselves they did not constitute the central aim of

Thatcherism - to halt the long-term decline of British capitalism. Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's notion that France and Germany "can now feel us breathing down their necks as we catch them up" is absurd.

He has to make such claims in order to justify the tax-cutting bribes that his two pre-election budgets will inevitably contain.

But the Tories know that this is not enough. They know that their attacks on the working class have not only hit the low paid and unemployed. Millions of better off workers have also suffered from the effects of the market: insecurity and ever increasing stress in the workplace, while the dismantling of the welfare state continues and health and education are vandalised.

Yet what has John Major come up with to persuade them it has all been worthwhile? Nothing but the same tired old promises to get tough on crime and 'young offenders' - this time backed up with a new assault on civil liberties through identity cards and national fingerprint and DNA registers.

After 16 years in office, the Tories are adrift. The ruling class will throw its weight behind Labour in its attempt to shore up its system.

Workers must be persuaded not to follow suit.

Jim Blackstock

Winning smile? Major makes his appeal to middle England

BBC faces both ways

THE RATHER complicated relationship between the BBC and the government has been highlighted in recent weeks. The latest example of this was in the form of a *Panorama* interview on April 3 with John Major, banned by judges from being shown in Scotland because it might have given an unfair advantage to the Conservative Party in the Scottish local elections.

The BBC had previously come under fire from the governing party, notably from the unfortunate chief secretary of the treasury, Jonathan Aitken, who accused BBC presenter John Humphreys of bias.

A year ago, a *Panorama* programme dealing with Tory gerrymandering on Westminster Council was withdrawn before the local elections in case it affected the result.

The case is a pointer to the BBC's ambivalent nature. On the one hand

the corporation stresses its own impartiality. On the other hand it is Britain's state broadcasting service, with all the government and establishment control and influence that this implies.

This does not mean that a BBC interviewer cannot tear a government minister to pieces in the studio, but it does mean that the corporation has reason to fear government retaliation, and so might be under pressure to give Conservatives like Major extra chances to present their case. It is a sort of perpetual balancing act.

Where, however, there is a broad chauvinistic consensus - such as in support of the British war of oppression in Ireland - all pretence of impartiality is dropped in favour of blatant propaganda against the 'terrorists' and for 'our' army.

Some parts of the BBC are meshed directly into the fabric of government

and carry out its policy. The World Service receives a large 'grant in aid' from the Foreign Office. World Service bias is carefully disguised in normal times - a fact which nurtures its influence - but during conflicts like the Falklands and Gulf Wars its real face is open for all to see.

BBC Monitoring, a branch of the World Service, shares premises with the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, a US government agency.

Recently the BBC's Hungarian language service received a ceremonial sword from the Hungarian authorities. The sword was given in recognition of the services the BBC performed when that country was under the 'communist regime'.

The BBC's 'impartiality' was in fact tailor-made for the foreign policy objectives of Britain and the USA.

Andrew MacKay

Do you feel good?

LAST WEEK saw the "Britain in the World" conference in London, a jolly beanfeast organised by the government and the Royal Institute of International Affairs. The 'cream' of bourgeois society was determined to hammer home a 'feel-good' factor without regard for objective reality. No wonder the whole proceedings had a distinctly Alice in Wonderland feel to them.

Douglas Hurd told the assembled stretch-limo'd fatcats that Britain's decline had ended. We have touched bottom and are rising again from the ashes, like the phoenix. The great *can* be put back in Great Britain.

Good stirring stuff, no doubt, but self-deluding propaganda of the first order. Not that it fools many people. *The Observer* curtly remarked, "Britain's reality... is that we are now a middle-ranking economic nation with a wide geographical history but very shallow purse" (April 2). Quite. British imperialism has been in a state of relative decline since at least the 1870s and, paradoxically, the end of the Cold War has speeded up this process. With the disappearance of the Soviet Union, US imperialism views its junior partner as less important.

Prince Charles, one of the moodiest and most introspective figures you could ever encounter, lectured us on the evils of a "mood of introspection" and denounced "an approach to life which appears only to denigrate, to decay and to destroy". Britain's unrelenting decline is blamed upon snipers, whingers and whiners. All in all, pathetic stuff, which would leave an imbecile unconvinced.

The fact that the "Britain in the World" conference had to rely upon second-hand, second-rate, quasi-Freudian explanations for British imperialism's decline amply demonstrates the crisis of confidence within the ruling class.

Frank Vincent

New realist disease hits NUS

JIM MURPHY, president of the National Union of Students, has declared that he is interested in "realism not revolution", which indicates that Murphy is a keen student of Blairism. He believes the NUS should place the emphasis on "pragmatic professionalism" and the use of statistical evidence in its fight against government policy, rather than resorting to "rotten eggs" - ie, any sort of direct, militant, political action.

Naturally, this involves endless cosy meetings with Gillian Shephard, vice-chancellors, college principals, bankers, bureaucrats, the Student Loan Company, etc. According to Murphy this will mean that the government "cannot accuse us of unsubstantiated rhetoric".

Not a whiff of burning barricades or petrol bombs here, not even the blast

of a megaphone. Indeed, as *The Independent* could not but help pointing out, this is "as far removed from traditional student radicalism as possible" (March 27).

All this when student hardship has reached record levels with increasing numbers in debt and one in three forced to go without food. In a recent survey, 68% of students said they faced financial crisis - a 15% increase on last year. Hardly surprising really, given the fact that students suffered a 10% grant cut last year and face 20% further reductions over the next two years.

Even more alarming was last week's NUS annual conference at Blackpool, which voted to review its commitment to student grants and consider supporting a graduate tax instead.

A graduate tax would signal the end of the *principle* of free higher and further

education, and automatically exclude the bulk of working class students. Kevin Sexton, NUS London area convenor, denounced the 'new turn' and retorted, "A graduate tax is a poll tax on education".

We suspect that the NUS is going to cave in and embrace conservatism, albeit with a Blairite face. A spokesperson informed the *Weekly Worker* that there is a "policy void" in the union and that to return to the old student grant system would cost £6 billion. It was therefore completely unfeasible.

Unlike the NUS bureaucrats - who clearly believe we should only get the education the capitalist system can afford - communists say there must be comprehensive and free education from nursery to degree level. We deserve nothing less.

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.

I want to be a Communist Party supporter. Send me details.

I wish to subscribe to the *Weekly Worker*.

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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. © April 1995

**Communists fight to save
Dundee hospital and
safeguard workers' health**

DRI fight hots up

ON TUESDAY Dundee communists organised a lunchtime protest against the closure of the Dundee Royal Infirmary.

Protesters were dressed as skeletons and injured patients to highlight the excessive waiting lists and inadequate healthcare. A coffin with "NHS RIP" inscribed on it represented the far from adequate health service which is now being stripped to the bone.

Giant UB40s symbolised the scandal of healthworkers who cannot find jobs - those who are put on short term contracts or driven out of the NHS due to unbearable stress caused by overwork. The pressure of caring for patients under increasingly difficult conditions is wearing many down.

The closure of DRI is one of the biggest scandals to hit Dundee, but it is not unique. Throughout Scotland and the rest of Britain hospitals are being closed and healthcare services destroyed.

The Dundee *Courier* on Monday quoted Ivan Jacobson, a neurosurgeon who recently retired from DRI. Speaking about the trust's plans, he said: "What they propose to put in place of DRI at Ninewells is wholly inadequate. It is utter folly and it will never work."

Doctors, patients and healthworkers are vehemently against the closure, as the Communist Party has found while campaigning. The real problem is that healthworkers feel so insecure about

their jobs that they lack the confidence and leadership necessary to mount an effective campaign.

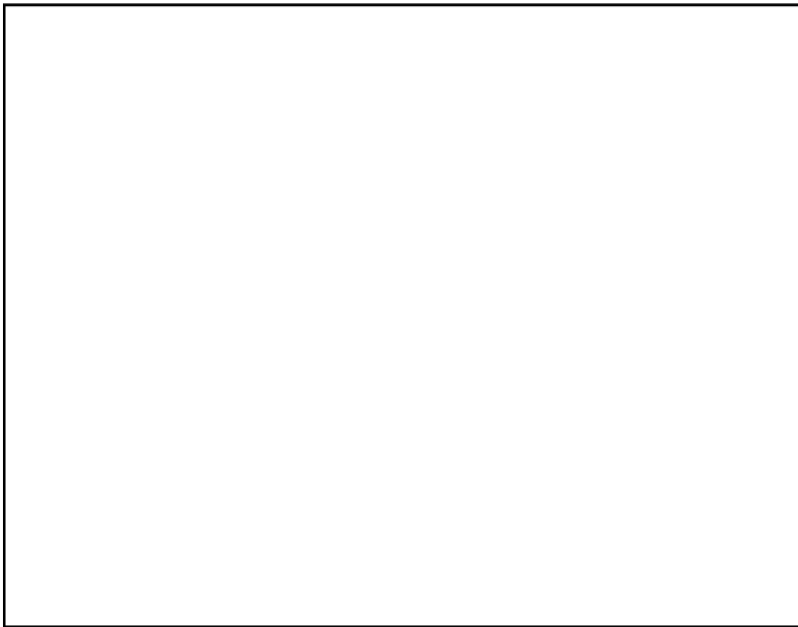
Communist Party candidates for the council elections, Mary Ward and Dominic Handley, gave out leaflets urging healthworkers and the public to join a united campaign against all cuts in the health service.

Mary Ward, speaking at the demonstration, said: "The closure of this hospital is completely unacceptable. We need more and better hospitals, not less. It is disgusting that in today's society the best technology is often not used because of the cost. It is disgusting that nurses are supposed to take pay cuts and do not know from month to month whether they will still have a job. This is the most horrific example of a system which puts profit before people's lives."

The establishment is unanimous that it 'cannot afford' the health service that we need, but nobody is prepared to take responsibility for the closure. The Dundee Teaching Hospital Trust is blaming the Scottish Office. Labour and SNP blame the Tories or Westminster. The Tories blame the council. But still they keep implementing cuts.

It is up to ordinary workers who need the health service to join with healthworkers to stop the closure of DRI and to halt the attacks on the health service nationwide.

In the Communist Party election



Candidates confer: Dominic Handley (left) standing in Lochee ward, Dundee, discusses the progress of the campaign with Phil Railston, CPGB candidate from Rochester, Kent - in Dundee to lend his support

manifesto we said: "The NHS should meet the growing needs of the population, not operate according to what capitalism can afford. NHS hospitals should be run not by appointed trusts, but democratic committees made up of trade unionists and elected local working class representatives."

The Dundee branch of the CPGB campaigns every Saturday in the city centre against the closure and against attacks on healthworkers' pay. It will be building for another rally in the near future. Watch this space or come to our regular Monday evening meetings at 8pm. Phone 01382 667517 for details.

Helen Ellis

- 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!

Communists debate with SML

WHAT TYPE of party does the working class need - the Communist Party of Great Britain or Scottish Militant Labour? These were the two alternatives being debated at a public meeting in the Hilltown ward of Dundee last week.

The meeting had been called by the Dundee branch of the CPGB - an open invitation given to all four council election candidates in this ward to come along and air their policies in public. The SNP sent their apologies, while the Labour candidate dismissed the meeting as a "publicity stunt". In the absence of the two pro-capitalist parties, a serious and comradely debate was held between Mary Ward (CPGB) and Mark Walker (SML).

The debate centred on the nature of socialism, and the correct attitude towards the Labour Party. SML comrades claimed they recognise the need for revolution and the overthrow of capitalism if there is to be a fundamental change in society. However, this contrasts with the ambiguity of their paper *Militant*, where there seems to be an aversion to the use of the 'R' word - revolution - and the easier anti-Tory line is plugged. This is known as opportunism.

It is the duty of all those who call themselves communist, Marxist or revolutionary to honestly tell the working class what is needed to achieve socialism, not disguise it with reformist language. We need to smash the bourgeois state through class struggle, not through parliament or local councils. The reformist and revolutionary roads are different paths to *different* ends, as Rosa Luxemburg pointed out.

Since its wholesale expulsion from Labour at the end of the decade, ML has found it difficult to junk its loyalty to that party. However, its current paper does not call for a vote for Labour in seats where SML is not standing, and this seems to be a change. It was obvious from the meeting that the relationship with the Labour Party is at least under debate in the organisation. If only it was published, the working class would be a lot wiser.

What Militant and its members must face up to is that the working class in Britain does not need a 'Real' Labour or a 'Militant' Labour party. The task of all revolutionaries is to reforge an independent, *revolutionary* working class party - a communist party.

Nick Clarke

Shock exposé: Che Guevara human!

The bourgeois press has been amusing itself with articles and comments about Che Guevara, the great Argentinian-born revolutionary communist, who was murdered by counter-insurgency forces in Bolivia in 1967.

The sudden interest has been sparked off by the publication of *The Motorcycle Diaries*, which chronicle the life of the young Che as he motorcycled around South America with his close friend, Alberto Granado.

Shock! Horror! Che drank red wine and used to get drunk sometimes. He even had sex. The great revolutionary, it would seem, was a mere mortal. Tear down your dog-cared Che posters now!

The bourgeois press imagines it can kill off Che's inspiring revolutionary example by these 'scandalous revelations'. The knock-out blow seems to be the disclosure that Che - wait for it, comrades - was not 'politically correct'. The young Che, they cretinously accuse, was "a bit of a racist", because he pointed out that centuries of slavery and oppression in Brazil had made the black population 'lazy', that it was reduced to a state of impotence and despair, believing any sort of political protest to be futile.

While the cynics sneer, the diaries only enhance our admiration for Che Guevara, who is revealed to be a deeply humane and compassionate person.

Danny Hammill

From *The Call*, paper of the British Socialist Party, April 8 1920

The 'New Poor' and the Always Poor

THE *DAILY NEWS* has, during the last four weeks been printing heart rending letters from those whom it terms the 'New Poor' - middle class people who, living a pretty comfortable existence before the war, have for various reasons not had their incomes increased to keep pace with the rising cost of living ... We read how these poor folk now have to do without a maid ... how the wife has to find the cheapest market, make a joint last two or three days, make the children's clothes, take in a lodger ... The workers who have always been poor would be amused at these tales - they have had a lifelong apprenticeship at saving and scraping; in mending boots and clothes, buying offal and cheap cag-mag to eat; they are used to the mother, the seven-days-a-week slave, not having a decent gown or hat to sally out on a Sunday and so stays at home ...

Ah, good friends of the middle class, we know what *poverty* is. You haven't got down to *that* yet. We hope you will not.

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75
YEARS
JULY 31 1920
JULY 31 1995

Defending the pretence of socialism

Out of the furore over clause four, I was at one stage confident that some sort of real socialism would come to the fore. But at the moment Blair seems to be carrying the day and even some elements of what might be called the 'accepted left' are going along with him.

Clause four - *whatever* your position on it - is simply not going to be there if and when Blair has his way. There will no longer be even the pretence of socialism. Blair's alternative to the existing clause four is not going to produce anything other than the 'mixed economy' - capitalism. Well, we've lived under it and we certainly know what *that* means.

The left are naturally very concerned. They have always clung to clause four as something worth defending. Many thought that they would never actually see it implemented, but nevertheless it was something to cling to. There is going to be a real fight, whatever the

leadership says.

The last thing we wanted was to have to devote our energies to that. The working class is facing attacks on so many fronts - unemployment, bad housing and cuts in education for instance. *These* are the issues we should be fighting on.

As far as the leadership of Labour is concerned, the vote of the working class seems to be taken for granted. That in itself is not a socialistic attitude. The dilemma that the working class is going to face - especially as there are no trade unions giving a strong lead - is 'the lesser of two evils' trap.

It will be in the position of saying, "Well, Blair is not as bad as Major" or "He's not as bad as the Lib-Dems". But it's Hobson's choice really.

Blair knows this and this is where he gets his confidence from. He feels safe to attack clause four and ditch socialism. This is why I believe the kickback from the left has to come quick and has to come strong.

Vic Turner, Labour councillor in the east London borough of Newham, is also a supporter of the Communist Party. He gives his view on the left's attitude to clause four