

weekly worker



No 91

Thursday April 20 1995

Celebrate May Day!

London march and rally,

Monday May 1

Join the CPGB contingent at
Highbury Fields (Highbury tube)
11.30am for march to Clissold Park
Ring 0181-459 7146 for details

Sack the Tories! Sack Blunkett!

Dump the lot!

This week the teachers have been denounced and threatened by Tory, Labour and union leaders alike. Teachers are right to respond to attacks on education with ballots for strike action. Demonstrators are right to harangue Blunkett after his disgusting promise to be more Tory than Tory in office. But we must go beyond the slogan 'Sack the Tories'

THE LABOUR Party and the National Union of Teachers is leading a hate campaign against teachers fighting and demonstrating for their rights and for better education.

This campaign is backed by the whole of the bosses' press, most notably the *Daily Mail* which promises to help the union leadership find and discipline teachers who demonstrated against Blunkett at Saturday's NUT conference.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the NUT, threatened demonstrators with expulsion from the union. Blunkett claimed, "Any teacher behaving as they did would not be fit to stand in front of a class". NUT president John Bills said, "It is open to any governing body to decide what to do with teachers who bring their schools into disrepute." We expect nothing different from the bosses' Labour Party and should expect nothing different from the NUT leadership which is tied tightly to Labour and traditionally warns off strike action so as not to upset them.

But, despicably, so called left organisations - Socialist Teachers Alliance and the Campaign for a Democratic and Fighting Union within the NUT - also condemned the demonstrators.

The bosses' press attempted to blame the motions for strike action as well as the demonstration on militant 'extremists'. But conference overwhelmingly rejected a debate on the demonstration and the call for disciplinary action. Blunkett



NUT members defy the leadership and vote for strike action over class sizes. Rank and file members will have to hold the executive to the conference decision

subsequently backed down, only worried that sacking the demonstrators would "turn them into martyrs".

The NUT and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers have passed motions for strike action over class sizes. The National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers is expected to follow suit. This hardly represents the views of just a few leftwing militants, as the press claim.

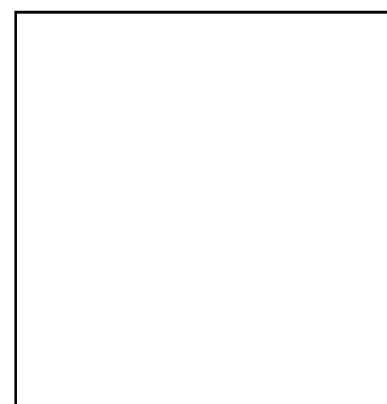
Two years ago it was Militant which was being witch-hunted by the Labour-loyal NUT, this year it is the Socialist Workers Party and the left in general. Actually,

most of the schools with classes of anything up to 47 pupils are located in the shires - not the most militant areas.

But action following the conference is not guaranteed, as we know from bitter experience. The NUT leadership recommended a vote against strike action, so a positive ballot will depend on the work of rank and file militants building for a united strike against education cuts.

The SWP slogan, shouted at Blunkett, was typically disarming - "Sack the Tories" - as if Blunkett had not proved beyond all doubt this week that the Labour Party might not be the lesser of two

evils for teachers, but could actually be worse than the Tories in office. Over the last two weeks,



McAvoy denounced teachers

backed by Blair, he has not only condemned strike action but also threatened to sack teachers in 'failing schools'.

Of course, from Blunkett's rightwing point of view these failing schools have nothing to do with overworked teachers - who are often responsible for classes with over 30 pupils - lack of funding for schools or an education system and society which offers children no future.

The Labour Party has made clear that it will attack not just teachers, but all workers just as viciously as the Tories in the interest of their only concern - the bosses' profits. In the run up to the local elections they are treating working class votes with contempt.

They know that whatever they say, the working class, and even the left will, in the absence of any alternative, vote Labour to "Sack the Tories". Now Labour and Tory are just competing for the rightwing vote - and Labour is winning.

To build a militant working class movement which can tell not only the Tories, but Blunkett as well, where to stick their education cuts we need to build our own Party capable of fighting for what we need, not what Labour or Tory say they can afford.

The CPGB is standing in the local elections as part of that work to reforge the working class's Communist Party.

Don't vote for Labour or Tory attacks - vote Communist and join us in that struggle.

Vote communist on May 4!

Leftist criticism

It is disappointing that a supporter of the Party and a regular reader of our paper should so miss the point of the interview with Vic Turner.

I refer to the letter from Danny Hammil (*Weekly Worker* 90) which is an ill-conceived attack on a supporter of ours who is also a Labour Party councillor. It would be a little strange therefore if Vic did not identify with left Labourism, but the important point is that he also identifies with the Communist Party. I think his comments brought this out very well.

Danny, I think, needs to remember that our Party will be built by incorporating revolutionaries from all sorts of backgrounds and ideas. Many of these - I hope - will come from left Labourism. We, of course, have to win the battle for the correct revolutionary road, but when workers are moving in that direction communists must encourage that positive move and develop it rather than batter them with the disagreements that we may have.

Comrade Vic's insight into the workings of the left in the Labour Party and his experience and reputation both as a councillor and trade union leader will be of tremendous benefit to the Party.

Our discussions and work with Vic Turner I hope will develop the ideas and practice of both Vic and the Party as a whole.

Lee-Anne Bates
North London

Tory fighter?

Willesden and Brent Chronicle (April 13) ran an article about Brent Tory councillor Carol Shaw facing disciplinary action for supporting Labour against axing grants for nurseries.

The vote was claimed as a great victory and Carol approvingly quoted as saying that the budget was not her problem!

It is difficult to decide who is the biggest hypocrite here. A Tory whose party in government is slashing spending and increasing taxes on the working class. Or the Labour councillors proud of their vote to keep the nurseries open, but busy balancing the budget - ie slashing services. These are councillors who are part of a party which is cutting services and workers' pay throughout the country wherever it is in power.

We should not be surprised though that the local rag has never bothered to publicise Brent Communist Party's campaign against all cuts and all closures. Building a society actually fit for all to live is a bit too much to stomach for Labour, Tory or the *Willesden and Brent Chronicle*.

Louise Rush
Brent

Press hype

The press has gone into overdrive as usual over the NUT conference. This seems to be an annual occurrence either because of the lack of news over the Easter weekend or because of the increase of the left influence at conference which always sends the bourgeois press into palpitations.

The demonstration on Saturday which so frightened Blunkett and which McAvoy described as a "mob" consisted of less than 20 people and came nowhere near to Blunkett. He did not seem to be nearly as terrified as the press made out. He did not even mention the incident at a following fringe meeting, until questioned.

The increase in the left has always

been a concern for the NUT leadership and they are no novices at red-baiting. But it is hardly surprising, when the union is doing nothing, that the vast majority of its members will not be interested in its activities.

The real point is that teachers up and down the country are angered by cuts in education, but lack any leadership from the unions to stage an effective fight. The press talk of mad left militants wanting revolution was in response to a ballot for a one day strike. Hardly barricade time.

The SWP did well to attack Blunkett; teachers (militant or otherwise) around the country shared their sentiment. The demonstrators must be defended against press, Labour and NUT red-baiting. But 'Ditch Labour' would perhaps have been a more appropriate slogan than 'Sack the Tories'!

Julie Hart
Manchester

No freak

The suggestion that the five year plan was a "freak" is not one with which I agree. Soviet society was a natural progression - and regression - of social and economic relations within the isolated master socialist state - the USSR - and its servant states in Eastern Europe (established for mainly military reasons) and Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea (supported by the USSR for their strategic military potential against both the USA and China).

The isolated socialist state was a workers' state, even though it was administrated by a bureaucracy rather than democratic workers' control. The bureaucracy was after all a product of the working class revolution in Russia 1917, and its initial fight to survive.

The economy of the world's first isolated socialist state was post-capitalist - that is post-bourgeois capitalism - but it was not pre-socialist. It was the first step toward socialism, which only by the ending of the state's isolation in the world, could go any further toward communism. So what of the soviet economy?

The soviet economy was *workers'* state-capitalism. The USSR was a part of the world economy and the world economy is capitalist. The USSR, then, was a workers' capitalism. If the isolated socialist state were to survive there would have to be profits made to fund the development of production in the USSR and raise workers' living standards - or else suffer the defeat of the soviet government at the same time as giving leadership to the world revolutionary movement.

Unfortunately neither were sufficient profits made, and if there were, they were squandered by the bureaucratic caste, and the leadership of the world revolution was completely thrown out the window in favour of socialism in one country.

The bureaucratic administration made mistakes of which the two above are just a few. Bureaucracy will inevitably become a fetter on any isolated socialist state which will strengthen the return to bourgeois capitalism. Bureaucracy in any future workers' state must be kept at a minimum and not allowed to grow into a beast as the soviet one did.

What the USSR shows us is that in the event of there not being a world revolution, all is not lost.

The USSR was not a freak or bastard social formation but a very genuine and troubled one indeed. That shows us some of the problems of organising a workers' state - a task we hopefully will get to have a go at again, and should not be lightly dismissed.

Gary Salisbury
Hertfordshire

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

'Impartial' imperialism

TALKS WILL begin soon between Sinn Fein and British government ministers. As neither side has the remotest interest in returning to armed confrontation, the dispute over 'decommissioning' of arms is clearly related to a jockeying for position before those talks commence.

The government position is that Sinn Fein must commit itself to "seriously discuss" decommissioning IRA weapons as a pre-condition for talks. Sinn Fein spokesperson Martin McGuinness responds that such a unilateral declaration would amount to "an IRA surrender". It would be politically impossible, especially at a time of republican commemorations over the Easter period.

In reality Sinn Fein is genuinely willing to talk about arms: "We are prepared to discuss every issue, even on

Harassment in Hulme

EARLIER this month Simon McGurk, a supporter of the Troops Out Movement, was stopped near his workplace in Hulme, Manchester by two people who identified themselves as Special Branch officers.

They asked him for his views on the Irish ceasefire, because, after all, "We are all interested in maintaining the peace process". Simon replied that he was not prepared to discuss the question with them and in any case, as they appeared to know so much about him, he was sure that they would be fully aware of his views from having tapped his phone.

The two agents then pressed him for information about other Irish solidarity activists. "They said they would make it worth my while," Simon told me. "They offered me cash in hand and a phone number to ring, but I told them what they could do with both".

The incident shows that the state is intent on intimidating anybody who might be viewed as having the slightest opposition to British imperialism's continuing domination of the Six Counties. Simon has no connection with any Irish group opposing the ceasefire.

Roger Harper, Communist Party candidate for Hulme in next month's local elections, commented: "Harassment of the large Irish community in this area of Manchester has increased in recent months. The state obviously thinks that the poverty and deprivation in Hulme will throw up people ready to take their dirty money".

Peter Manson

Fighting fund

HARD on the heels of Manchester branch, comrades in the Luton area launched their election campaign this week, raising £97.67 at the weekend. Some Party branches and cells took a rest after the Dundee election campaign and totals throughout the country dropped. After an extremely hard working campaign this is to be expected, but we must remember that this month is going to be even busier (and even more expensive, moneywise).

The *Weekly Worker* is planning a special edition for May Day, and with all the propaganda we are printing for the elections, money is urgently needed. So after the Easter break fundraising must be given renewed efforts.

If you are not involved actively in the election campaigns please send your financial support at this busy time.

Linda Addison

British terms, for the sake of the peace process," Gerry Adams, the party's president, said at the weekend.

British imperialism, of course, does not have the slightest intention of giving up *its* weapons. But the government has successfully diverted attention away from that little matter, by focusing on the paramilitaries. 'Peace' will come, it pretends, when both loyalists and republicans have surrendered their weapons.

Ministers are having regular meetings with loyalist representatives, despite the

latter's statements that they are not about to give up their own arms. At the same time as the discovery of loyalist arms caches, all this has the effect of provoking republican complaints about government one-sidedness.

Not that this will concern John Major's administration. Criticisms of his lack of impartiality between warring 'terrorist' factions are much preferred to condemnations of the true British role of brutal oppressor of the Irish people.

Jim Blackstock

Republicans remember the Easter Rising at a rally at Crossmaglen, County Armagh, but peace with imperialism dominated the speeches

Review

Nationalist road?

The Downing Street Declaration - new unionism and the communities of resistance, Republican Workers Tendency 1994, pp33, £1.00

THIS PAMPHLET by the RWT, a communist group with a left nationalist bias, reflects much of what the British revolutionary left is currently saying about the Six Counties. It also has an interesting angle of its own. Its main thesis runs as follows:

The Downing Street declaration is the major plank of a new strategy to underpin the union, under threat from communities of resistance, led by the Provisionals. The declaration, by not crushing the Provo's hopes that they might yet gain a seat at the negotiating table, draws them on towards the constitutional nationalist dead end. At the same time conservatives cement their strategic alliance with the unionists through the implicit offer of a new Stormont.

The pamphlet continues: the Provisionals are now busy allying themselves to the SDLP and the governments of the Irish Republic and the US, all of which are consistent opponents of the cause of Irish republicanism. The spectre of the 1922 treaty is raised. But the context of the new unionism is wider than just the Six Counties; it is a counteroffensive against a general nationalist attack against the UK state, which is also being fought out in Scotland and Wales.

There is of course some merit in what is written, although it does not lie in the main thesis already outlined. If another potted history of the Six Counties political struggle were needed, then this pamphlet performs that task. Its identification with the fight of the nationalist communities, rather than simply the republican movement, is an identification with the wider political interests of the working class. And it offers telling parallels with South Africa and Palestine.

As to the main thesis however, the Downing Street Declaration was no

master stroke of cunning unionist strategy. It was more like a vacuous stop gap from a programmeless government perched on the edge of oblivion. The pamphlet's main problem is rooted in the left nationalism of the RWT comrades. Although in its introduction and conclusion it mentions a "republican road to communism", it does nothing to develop this programmatic pronouncement. In fact, the underlying perspective seems to be that the forces of nationalism have a revolutionary role to play by breaking up the UK state. And the left should tail these forces or else: "The consequence of leaving it to the nationalists to take the lead in the break up of bureaucratic multi-national states can be seen in the ex-USSR and ex-Yugoslavia." (p33)

This left nationalism cannot understand the principles of anti-chauvinism, internationalism and working class unity which should always guide communists.

It fails to oppose nationalist tendencies within the workers' movement almost as a point of principle. On the contrary, the programmatic statements of the pamphlet decline the task of fighting for an independent politics of the working class. Instead it lines up the RWT as apologists for sectionalism and separatism within the workers' movement.

In light of recent developments within the Six Counties the CPGB welcomes all contributions to the discussion of how to take revolutionary politics forward. This pamphlet is such a contribution, but the comrades have got it quite wrong. It is not a republican united front for the break up of the UK which the working class needs but a mass Communist Party for the overthrow of the bourgeois ruling class.

Steve Riley

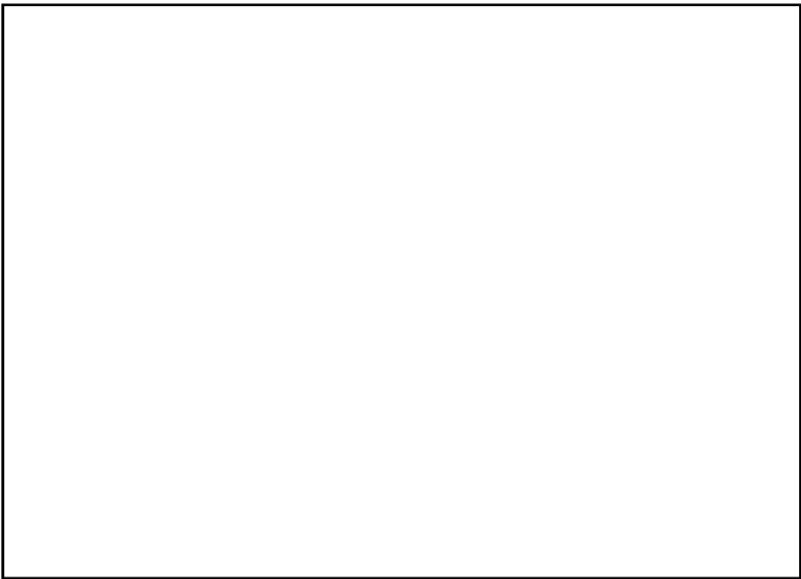
Not all roses for Blair

TONY BLAIR’S plans for a ‘market-friendly’ clause four were undermined last week when Unison voted to retain the ‘nationalisation-friendly’ clause. The decision to oppose the Blairite rewrite was taken at a private delegate conference on April 13, where the final vote stood at 55-47. This must have come as a blow to the rightist National Political Committee of Unison which had recommended acceptance of the Labour NEC endorsed draft (albeit, of course, with reservations). The rewrite was rejected by delegates from *all* of Unison’s regions and a Unison spokeswoman confirmed that the vote will be binding on Unison’s delegation to the Blair instigated Special Labour Conference on April 29.

By all accounts the Labour big-wigs had been counting on Unison’s support, which will command 11.7% of the union bloc vote at the conference. The Unison decision must have sent the Blairites scurrying to their pocket calculators, as the unions as a whole will account for 70% of the votes, with the rest going to the constituencies.

The Transport and General Workers’ Union, with 14% of the vote, is ‘committed’ (watch this space) to opposing the rewrite, while the MSF - which will wield 3.8% of the vote - has not yet made a final decision. Taking into account all the smaller unions with two per cent of the vote and less, the new clause four is unlikely to attract more than 60% of the union vote - and it could be a lot less. All is not rosy in the Blairite garden, even if the green shoots are highly visible.

It was not too surprising that Unison should reject the ‘market-friendly’ clause four, with its celebration of the “enterprise of the market” and “the rigours of competition”. Unison



Rodney Bickerstaffe, joint president of Unison, upset by the vote against Blair’s rewrite

members in local government and the health service have been particularly hit by the Tory government’s enforcement of compulsory competitive tendering and other market-driven policies, which have forced down wages and seen a steady worsening of working conditions. No wonder that several of the delegates at the April 13 conference said they were “repelled” by Tony Blair’s rewrite, with its evangelical glorification of capitalism.

However we should not look upon the Unison vote as a victory in any real sense, no matter how much we enjoy seeing the Blairites squirm and wiggle. It is all very well for Arthur Scargill to breathlessly declare, “We are now in striking distance of winning the union vote at the Labour Party conference”, but rushing to the defence of the anti-

communist inspired ‘old’ clause four against the free-market inspired ‘new’ clause four does not advance genuine socialism by one jot.

Militant rank and file members of Unison should be fighting to make their union independent from *all* bourgeois political parties - which, naturally, includes the Labour Party - and to transform it into an effective fighting machine which is not afraid to take on the bosses.

There are grounds for optimism. A leaked internal report from Unison, quoted in *The Independent* (April 15), states: “It is widely accepted that the current clause four does not express our values and beliefs clearly”. The Communist Party would give a hearty ‘amen’ to that!

Eddie Ford

Two evils

BILL MORRIS, ‘leftwing’ general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, is to face a leadership challenge from Jack Dromey, the union’s public service national secretary and husband of Blair’s employment chief Harriet Harman. Curiously, the ‘official communist’/Labourite *Morning Stars* says Dromey’s challenge will “give fresh impetus to the left” (April 12).

Dromey, who supports the Blairite line of ‘new realism’ and the new ‘market-friendly’ clause four, is standing on a platform - if you can call it that - of spending “less time on politics, more time in the workplace”.

Interestingly, even though Dromey sounds like a typical Blairite ‘moderniser’, he used to be closely identified with the ‘Euro-communists’ of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and was instrumental in the legendary Grunwick strike of 1977. Perhaps that is why he describes himself as a “modernising traditionalist” - ie, a hideous hybrid of fossilised ‘official communism’ and on-the-up Blairite ‘socialism’.

What we must make clear is that neither Morris nor Dromey deserve our support, even though it is tediously inevitable that the reformist and revolutionary left will cling on to the ‘lesser of two evils’ ideology and back Morris.

The Communist Party says no support for any candidate who condemns the working class to the position of a *permanent* slave-class, with no chance of a decent life.

Danny Hammil

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.

From *The Call*, paper of the British Socialist Party, April 22 1920

Russia - Lenin, the wonder-worker

ACCORDING to the New York *Nation* of March 6, which draws its information from the files of the *New York Times*, during the period since the beginning of the Russian Revolution Petrograd has fallen into the hands of the reactionaries six times, has been burned twice and twice been in the grip of complete panic. During the same period it was constantly dying of hunger, and revolted against the Soviet government six times.

Lenin’s feats are still more wonderful. His government has fallen 37 times. He has quarrelled and been reconciled with Trotsky five times, has died ten times, has been arrested 16 times, and has fled 72 times. He has been seen in Germany, in Spain, and on the Lake of Geneva.

C · P · G · B · T · Y · E · A · R · S

JULY 31 1920
JULY 31 1995

Why did Lenin consider the German revolution to be of central importance?

This Sunday (April 23) the London seminar series on Modern revolutionary moments opens with the Spartacists, 1918-19.

Next week the series on *Nationalism* looks at Nations: objective and subjective. Seminars are in central London at 5pm every Sunday. For more details, call 0181-459 7146

P0 strike against local contracts

NEARLY 900 Newcastle delivery workers have been out on strike for two weeks against Royal Mail’s plans to destroy their national agreements and impose new contracts.

One worker told us, “This is not just a strike against the terms of the new contracts but against the attempt to destroy national agreements.”

At the moment Newcastle is an isolated case, but Royal Mail plans to impose the same local agreed contracts on offices throughout the North East if they can push them through in Newcastle.

The contracts demand more work with less pay. Like bosses everywhere they are trying to squeeze more out of fewer workers by speedups and pay

cuts. It is proposed that the shift will start at 3.30am instead of 5.15am, overtime agreements will be abolished as will night duty allowances. Deliveries which are already overloaded will be increased for individual postal workers.

Other offices are not yet being balloted but the Team Valley sorting office which has already shown support is to be balloted.

The union is trying to keep the action local but it is important that all postal workers in the North East ensure a victory for the Newcastle strikers. Otherwise the new draconian conditions will be imposed throughout the area and national agreements torn up.

Linda Addison

TB hits low paid

THERE HAS been a 12% rise in the incidence of tuberculosis in the UK over the last decade. The figures are still low by comparison to other areas of the world. Cases per 10,000 are: in Britain 1, in the US 10 and in Bangladesh 90 per year. Three million die every year from TB and the figures are rising.

More damning is that the increase in the UK is accounted for by a 35% rise among the lowest paid in Britain. Hackney was pinpointed by the press last week as an area where the rise is very dramatic.

The homeless charity, Crisis, reports that rates of TB among homeless people in England and Wales are 200 times the level in the general population.

It is a disease closely associated with

leprosy and Aids, helping them to spread. It can be prevented by good housing and adequate diet.

Air travel has been indicated as one area where the disease is passed on, travelling in a confined space from areas where there is a high incidence to low incidence areas. But it is spreading most among people who rarely, if ever, use air travel.

It can only be stopped by a world health programme that requires not so much increased medical support, important though that is, as a rise in living standards, decent housing and diet. The rise in TB is a particularly alarming example of capitalism in its more decadent and barbaric phase.

John Bayliss

A taste of bosses’ ‘democracy’

CAMPAIGNERS in Kent against both live animal exports and the new proposed rail link are learning the truth about the bosses’ democracy - *they* do what *they* like.

According to *Kent Messenger* (April 12) a senior Maidstone council officer claimed privately that his borough had been disenfranchised by the Select Committee of MPs considering protests against the rail link bill. On the same day Judge Simon Brown overturned the victories of the animal protesters with a legal judgement defending the absolute right of animal transporters to export live animals.

I am in favour of humane conditions for domestic animals and railway tunnels to protect the environment. However, neither group campaigns for the extension of democracy - without which their campaigns must fail.

Nor do they take up issues vital to the masses like full employment, proper health care, affordable housing for all, etc.

These groups fear the power of the working class more than they fear central government. But capitalism in difficulty will oppose even the most modest demands unless forced by mass pressure.

We must defend animal rights protesters against the attacks they received at the hands of the police on Tuesday. But the public order act has been used against our demonstrations without a whimper from those now so concerned with animal rights.

Arthur Lawrence

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

I wish to subscribe to the *Weekly Worker*. ☐

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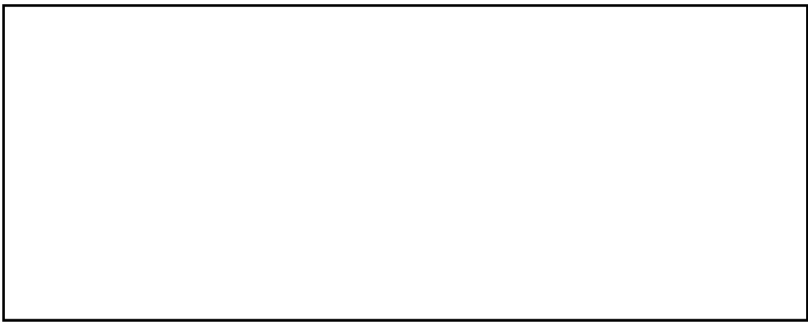
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Hulme family deportation

EVERY DAY 14 people on average are expelled from Britain. They have, in one way or another, fallen foul of the immigration laws. Many have spent years in this country and overwhelmingly they are working class.

One person facing ‘enforcement action’ is Florence Okolo who came to the UK from Nigeria in 1989 to join her husband. Since then the marriage broke up, and she and her two young daughters face expulsion on the grounds that her immigration status is dependent on her living with her husband.

Florence has a degree, but has been forced into a low paid cleaning job at Manchester Metropolitan University. She is also a trained teacher, but cannot afford the fees to obtain the British qualification she needs.

“I work for my living; I pay my rent,” Florence told me. “Why do they want to get rid of me?”

“Back in Nigeria I have no family, no job, nowhere to live. My children speak only English.” Awele, 10, and Anwuli, 6, both attend St Philip’s school in Hulme. The staff and children have given their full support to the campaign. They recently organised a candlelit protest, circling the school building.

With the backing of the Okolo Family Defence Campaign, she has spoken at several public meetings in the North West, including those called to support the campaign against other deportations.

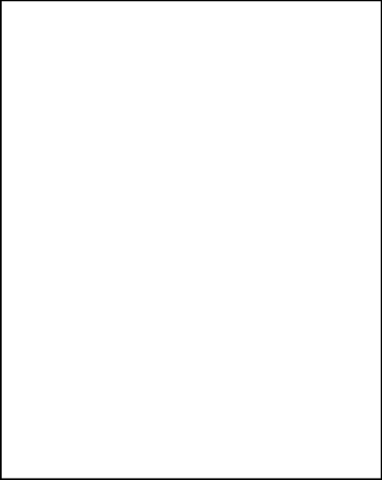
“Nobody will speak for me,” says Florence. “I know I’ve got to do it for myself. Once I stood up to speak my nervousness just disappeared. But the support has been unbelievable. It gives me the strength to carry on fighting.”

Many union branches have affiliated to the campaign, especially Unison, of which she is a member - as have Manchester, Tameside and Stockport trades councils.

Tony Openshaw, secretary of the defence campaign and a worker at the Cheetham Hill Immigration Aid Unit, told me: “This is not a campaign we can win through legal argument, so we are banking everything on winning public support.”

Artist draws in support

CHRIS GRASS, a new Communist Party supporter, has used her talents as a street pavement artist to the full in the election campaign. She caused quite a stir outside St George’s Park in Hulme with her chalk drawing complete with



Marcus Miller, CP candidate for Moss Side, Manchester, calls for workers’ unity to smash immigration controls

Marcus Miller, communist candidate for Moss Side in Manchester commented, “This case is one among many examples of why the working class must unite in fighting *all* immigration laws. They have nothing to do with the myth of overcrowding, but are designed to criminalise migrant workers.”

Peter Manson

The Communist Party manifesto for the local elections demands:

- An end to all police raids
- For the right to migrate to and from Britain
- An end to immigration controls. If a product is legal, so must be the worker who produced it
- Full citizenship rights for all workers

Join the demonstration in Manchester against deportations
Called by the Okolo Family Defence Campaign
Saturday April 29 12 noon
Assemble All Saints Park, Oxford Road, Manchester

the slogans “Vote for a better future” and “Support Florence Okolo”.

Several people stopped by and promised to vote for Roger Harper, the communist candidate.

Manchester against CJA

THE CAMPAIGN against the Criminal Justice Act is alive and kicking in Manchester.

The first people to be charged under the new law were activists from Earth First, who occupied a crane in Manchester as a protest against Laing’s involvement in the M65 development and against the Act itself.

At the court case a crowd of 80 people

turned up to support the Laing Four. There are further court cases to be heard on July 3 in connection with the crane occupation.

Manchester Freedom Network is arranging funds to pay legal costs, and meets on the second and fourth Monday of each month. For further information contact 0161-232 1598.

Roger Harper

For details of Manchester election work contact Roger Harper on 0161-226 6133. For other areas ring 0181-459 7146

Dark at St Barts

WHILE THE wards at St Barts are standing empty, waiting lists are getting no shorter and on occasion patients are being left on trolleys for hours at the Medway hospital due to lack of beds. Similar situations exist all round the country thanks to the government’s health policies.

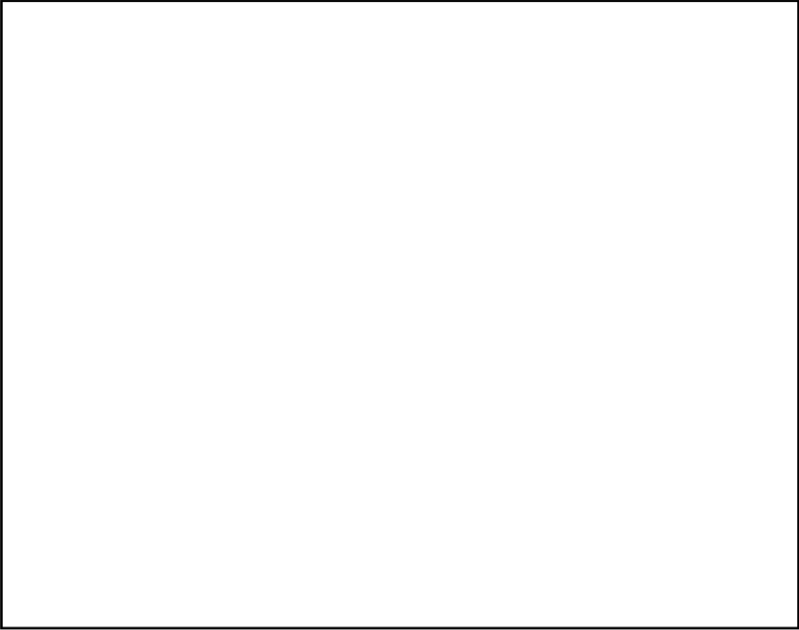
A nurse in Luton told us: “Although Luton and Dunstable is not threatened with closure, everyone knows its service is way below what people here need and should expect. It is being run down because of lack of funding, rather than being improved. It’s the same story everywhere”.

Nurses are being offered below the cost of living pay rises exemplifying the government’s true attitude. Life is cheap and should be cheaper, not a view that will lead to adequate healthcare for all.

Over 200 ancillary and clerical staff from UCH and Middlesex hospitals sent this message to the government when they took one day strike action. The strike was against proposed ‘multi-skilling’ by which management intends to ‘free’ workers up to do the work of three people for the pay of one.

Small local hospitals are being closed on mass around the country. For most people this replaces easily accessible, local and more personal care with great impersonal, underfunded health factories that the government has chosen to build in order to take advantage of economies of scale. There is still time to save St Barts if enough pressure is brought to bear.

Ann Widdecome claimed in *Kent Today* (April 12) that “ever advancing



Communists campaign outside Dundee Royal Infirmary against closure

surgery and medicine have created levels of demand which no party is able to satisfy.” Take us back to the good old days when life was nasty, brutish and short but at least nobody complained seems to be her underlying message. The health service is underfunded - even Germany and France spend twice as much on healthcare as Britain. Longer life, better health and modern technology means labour productivity has vastly increased. In comparison to this the cost of healthcare is insignificant. Or it would be if the government was

capable of mobilising it.

The campaign to save St Barts is high on the agenda of the Communist Party’s election challenge in Kent as it is throughout the country. In Manchester both Withington and Booth Hall are threatened with closure.

Manchester branch of the Communist Party will be joining healthworkers and local activists in giving Virginia Bottomley the reception she deserves when she visits Manchester on Friday April 28.

Phil Railston

Dundee campaign to save hospital

ACTION by the Dundee branch of the Communist Party to save the facilities at the Dundee Royal Infirmary continued this week with a letter writing campaign to the local press.

As a result, people have been in touch with branch members from as far away as Forfar to pledge support for the campaign and to ask for copies of the CPGB’s petition.

Marie MacKenzie, the Unison steward at DRI said, “What we need is a public campaign to save this hospital. The unions in here cannot do it on their own. Your campaign is certainly getting things moving. I will raise your suggestion of a support group at the

next branch meeting.”

Mary Ward said, “The next stage is to move the city centre streetwork into the housing estates. We intend to have thousands of signatures to present to Dundee Teaching Hospital Trust at its meeting on May 22. There is no argument for closing this hospital other than cost. It is an exercise which will cost lives”.

The CPGB is taking the lead in this campaign. With massive public support they are forcing the Trust, the unions and the Labour Party to put the item of DRI firmly on Dundee’s political agenda.

Nancy Morelli

More education cuts

THE LIBRARY in central Luton will have to raise about a third of a million pounds to just maintain the standards it has at the moment. These have fallen since it opened in the early sixties. The county council claims it does not have the funds and the money is supposed to be raised by private sponsors.

Lack of funding and expansions in the local university population has meant the library is increasingly unable to serve local needs. Needless to say the university is equally badly resourced, while its student intake continues to rise.

A large number of the population in Luton is not literate in English and yet the provision for foreign language books is very poor. This is not only true for Asian languages but also a variety of European ones, particularly Italian.

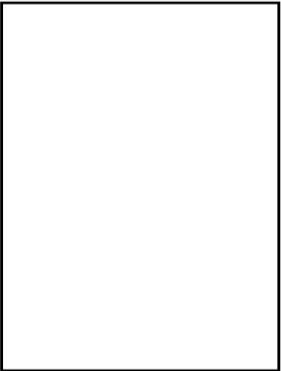
The education facilities in Luton in general are very poor and as the library lies in the poorest part of Luton it is particularly useful for the children in this area, who quite often do not have the space at home either for general study or homework.

The library is in great need of computers and electronic search facilities. What the council is proposing is that the library raises money by

allowing private firms to sell in the library space - and this is bound to worsen the facilities.

Any working class policy that puts our needs first must demand an extension of the library service in Bedfordshire and this can only be provided on the basis of more funding not less.

Tom May



Tom May, CP candidate for Dallow ward, Luton

Medway’s dead council

GILLINGHAM Liberal Democrats have called for a referendum on whether the Medway Towns should be merged into a single unitary council. They oppose the plan, as did the government reorganisation review. However environment secretary John Gummer is intent on ordering a second review because the first did not reach the conclusion he desired.

It will be interesting to see if the referendum will take place only in Gillingham, where the Liberal Democrats have a majority, or if Rochester will be offered a vote too. Perhaps the rest of Kent should have the right to a vote on the Medway’s right to self determination.

Local government union Unison will support a no vote to a unitary authority because it correctly deduces that the main reason for the reorganisation is to slash local government services and sack staff by the thousand. Rochester Labour group has no such qualms. The working class is of no concern to them.

Unitary authority or not, local government in reality just administers local affairs on behalf of central government. The only use a seat on the council has is as a platform to expose what is happening and to support working class action to defend our interests in the area.

While Unison is right in exposing the use to which local reorganisation will be put, members need to be aware that Kent County Council can not be relied on to protect jobs and services. Only the power of the class can force the government to back down on that.

Phil Railston