

# weekly worker



No 95

Thursday May 25 1995



Communist Party  
Offensive 95  
Building the  
revolutionary  
alternative

Special meeting to launch the Communist Party's  
12th Summer Offensive  
Sunday June 4 at 5pm in central London. All comrades  
and friends should make this meeting a priority and join us  
in this vital fight for Party funds

# Sinking in sleaze

This week has seen the Tories collapse into a sewer of sleaze and confusion. They are reduced to saving their own skins and quite clearly the party is unfit to govern, even by capitalist standards. Rupert Murdoch would be happy with a change of government, and perhaps even the Iron Lady will consider leaving the sinking Tory ship after Blair praised her so eloquently last month. But the working class needs to get rid of the whole stinking system, not replace Tory sleaze-balls with Labour ones

TORY MP Jerry Wiggin returned from his latest freebie in South Africa to find himself in hot water. He had submitted an amendment to a bill in another MP's name to hide his own financial interest in the matter. The amendment was withdrawn before the committee hearing because the other MP, Sebastian Coe, refused to take responsibility for it.

Behind-the-scenes negotiations on Monday ensured that our errant 'fraudster' only had to say 'sorry' to the House to be let off. He said he was only trying to present his client's case in the most favourable light and he thought Coe would not mind - an apology for an apology!

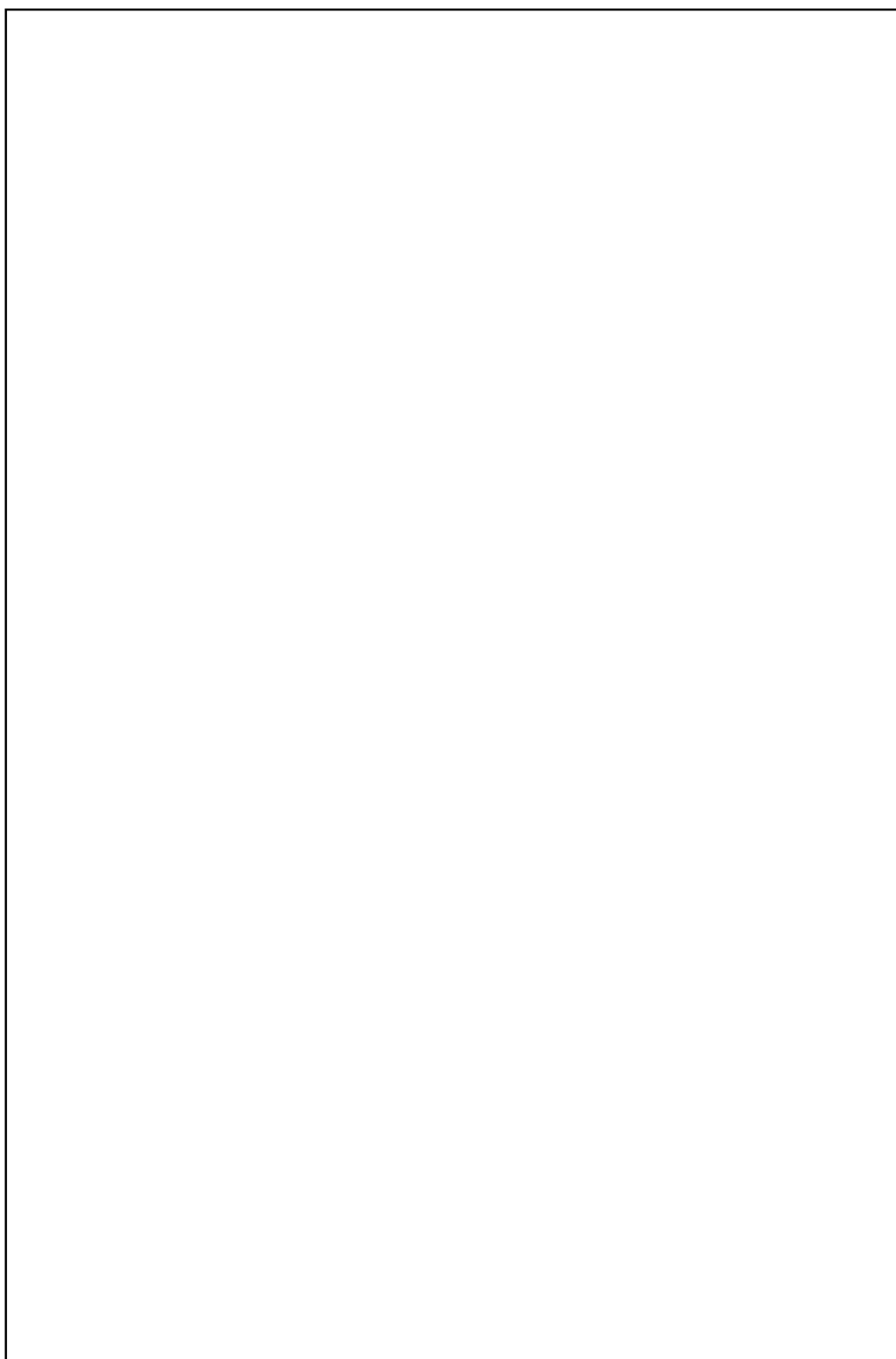
Tory after Tory dug themselves deeper into the proverbial hole and Major could not stop them. Wiggin admitted trying to conceal his interests from journalists in an interview on Radio 4. Edwina Curry claimed to be shocked, but now understood that the scam seemed to be quite widespread. The party as usual was out of control, as more evidence of the parliamentary scum rose to the surface.

Wiggin's limp apology and backbench demands that the Nolan committee keep its nose out of MPs' financial affairs have exposed the sham of the Nolan enquiry, not to mention 'our' so-called parliamentary 'democracy' itself. The Tories' political ineptness has done a great service to the population in laying bare the corruption at the core of the system.

On a radio chat show this Saturday a Conservative claimed that the word 'sleaze' was not in the dictionary, so her party could not be guilty of it. To the rest of us it just proves there is no word in the language to describe their behaviour. The small-minded decadence of the Tories has risen to the surface as they grapple to hold onto their positions of influence in business and government. Any hope of saving the party has disintegrated: they just want to save themselves. Who can help but despise them?

All trace of unity evaporated in their rush to serve their personal interests - to blame one another for everything that they got wrong together. They seem intent only on self-destruction. The mass of the population hopes it will come soon.

But workers beware. We know from bitter experience of local government how low Labour noses can sink into the trough of corruption. Blair's promise on Monday to be tougher than the Tories on inflation can only mean stepping up the attacks on the working class. Labour has made no secret of the fact that any upturn in the bosses' profits will be at *our* expense.



Back from his latest jaunt, Junket Jerry rushes to clock in

## The RDG, communist unity and democratic centralism

Special seminar opened by a representative of the Revolutionary Democratic Group on Sunday June 11 at 5pm in London

This Sunday (May 28) the London seminar series on *Nationalism* looks at 'Nations: historic and non-historic'.

For more details of seminars contact 0181-459 7146

## Rebuilding the trade union movement in North-East London

Discussion meeting on how we can organise to fight job losses, pay cuts and cuts in public services. Organised by the Colin Roach Centre. Tel 0181-533 7111 for more details. Saturday May 27, 1pm-5pm in the Daymer Turkish and Kurdish community centre, Howard Road, London N16. £2 waged/£1 unwaged

## For the unconditional release of all Irish prisoners of war

While Mayhew talks to Sinn Fein, the conditions of the Irish POWs get worse.

Brent Communist Party meeting to discuss what we can do to support the prisoners.

'Saoirse' prisoners' campaign invited to speak. Wednesday June 7, 7.30pm. Call 0181-459 7146 for details.

**Dump the lot!**

No joke

I am not familiar with the demonology of vegetarianism, but if ‘speciesism’ means that I regard human beings as more important by far than other animals then I am guilty. If we treat animals well - and I think we should - it is for our benefit, not for theirs. I do not agree that animals have rights, but humans have the imaginative and cultural capacity to care for the entire planet rationally. The ‘natural’ environment Mark Field (*Weekly Worker* 94) refers to is a man-made environment.

Someone said, “What is good for General Motors is good for America”. I believe that what is good for the working class is good for the world. Mark kids himself if he thinks his view is not based on a “sense of moral superiority”. “All creatures have a right to a pain-free life” is clearly a moral judgement. He seems to say that the reason we need to get rid of capitalism is because it encourages us to eat meat.

Communists fight for human freedom, not “for the right to a pain-free life”. Mark rejects the spiritual dimension of mankind for a narrow, mechanical definition of the meaning of life which even underestimates the social complexity of the domestic sheep.

What animal rights activists of all shades have in common is the view that humans are the cause of other creatures’ suffering. Animals deserve compassion because they are innocent. Humans, by contrast, are guilty and deserve what they get. So the protesters at Dover are prepared to do more for animal welfare than they did to protect the miners in 1984-5.

If you want a bad joke, Hitler treated people like animals, but today’s animal rights protesters wish to treat animals better than people.

Phil Railston  
Kent

Which evil?

Some leftwing organisations seem to have an ideology based upon pure sado-masochism. Take Militant Labour for an example.

Following a report in *The Guardian* that “a group usually seen as close to Militant Labour” in the TGWU is supporting Jack Dromey in his bid to oust Bill Morris as general secretary, Bill Mullins, Militant Labour’s industrial organiser, put the record straight. He wrote to *The Guardian* and *The Independent* reaffirming that “Militant Labour is supporting Bill Morris in this crucial election”, due to the fact there is “clear blue water between Mr Morris and Mr Dromey” (rather unfortunate imagery, I thought).

No surprises there, of course. However, the ‘leftwinger’ Bill Morris has been making political capital out

of ‘red-baiting’, claiming that Jack Dromey is backed by an unholy “alliance of extremes” - which combines “Trotskyists” (ie, Militant Labour!) and Labour ‘modernisers’.

So this is where the ‘lesser of two evils’ approach gets you. You give your support to a candidate who is actively attacking you, just because he is a ‘leftwinger’. Militant Labour are content with the ‘leftwing’ anti-communism of Morris, as opposed to the rightwing anti-communism of Dromey.

What a miserable state of affairs. Who - except people who have very low horizons and are feeling down in the dumps - would want to be a member of such an organisation?

It is about time the left cheered up!  
Danny Hammill  
South London

Flush

I am thoroughly puzzled by the letter from Tom Cowan, advocating we send pencils and chalk to the beleaguered revolutionary state of Cuba (*Weekly Worker*, May 18).

There are essentially two distinct approaches to what could broadly be called ‘international solidarity’ - that of proletarian internationalism and that of charity mongering.

Proletarian internationalism places at the centre of all of its work the revolution in Britain as our greatest service to the world revolution. Such an approach can certainly encompass tangible immediate international support in the form of money or goods. But everything - including such proletarian ‘Red Aid’ - would be subordinate and linked to the fight to raise the working class to the position of ruling class. *Then* it would be in a rather stronger position to deliver some real effective solidarity to the isolated and emaciated revolution in Cuba.

In contrast, Tom seems to suggest that *individuals* send small amounts of money. But if that is actually a solution, why did he go to Cuba in the first place?

After all, he must have spent around £800-£1,000 getting to the island. He arrives home aflame with revolutionary passion advocating people send ... £10 each: £20 if they’re feeling flush. If such pitiful amounts stumped up by individuals actually made a difference one way or the other, why didn’t he just stay in South London and send a proxy donation on behalf of 100 or so would-be punters?

From the standpoint of either charity or proletarian internationalism, the working class of Cuba can be forgiven for being somewhat underwhelmed.

Mark Fischer  
East London

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

Anti-racist careerist’s fall from grace

STRANGE HOW the mighty fall - then again, perhaps not.

Marc Wadsworth, at one stage, was the national secretary of the ‘respectable’ (ie, Labourite) Anti-Racist Alliance and one of the leading lights in the ‘official’ anti-racist movement.

Then the gods struck. He was voted out as ARA secretary, which may have had something to do with his fisticuffs with Ara’s chair, Ken Livingstone (who had unwisely raised the delicate issue of Wadsworth’s salary).

Now, fresh humiliation. At the Trade Union Congress black workers’ conference in Scarborough this month,

where 15 delegates were contesting 14 places on the TUC race relations committee, poor old Marc came bottom of the list - and it is expected that he will lose the black sections elections this month for a place on Labour’s ruling executive.

Marc is rapidly losing all his friends, except for the ever loyal *Morning Star* of course, who have always adored him. This probably explains why its report on the conference mysteriously failed to mention the non-election of Wadsworth, despite the fact that it listed all the successful candidates.

Frank Vincent

Reformist call to ban revolutionary funds

COMRADES around the country are currently preparing themselves for our annual fund-raising drive - the 12th Party Offensive. As they do, they will be amused by a pristine piece of compressed opportunism in last week’s *Morning Star* (Monday, May 15), paper of the Labour Party-loyal Communist Party of Britain (CPB).

Commenting on the Nolan committee’s inquiry into ‘standards in public life’, the editorial puffs, “There should be a blanket ban on donations to British political parties from abroad.”

The *Star* even suggests that “all donors” to political parties “of £1,000 or more” be “recorded”. What a perfect illustration of naive reformist faith in the state! What a brilliant example of the danger of ‘national roads to socialism’ espoused by the CPB.

We are not in the business of offering advice to capitalist parties. But the *Star*’s prescriptions apply to everyone, it seems - a “blanket ban”, they say.

First, should we in principle stand against accepting donations from ‘abroad’? How *can* we if we want to call ourselves genuine communists - that is, true *internationalists*?

Compare the attitude of Lenin and the Bolsheviks to the tired revisionists of the CPB. Communists in Russia knew that their revolution in 1917 was dependent for its survival on other revolutions. World revolution was its salvation.

The agony of isolation seemed to be at an end in late 1918. The German revolution exploded. Lenin demanded that by the spring of 1919 an army of three million be raised in Russia “to help the international workers’ revolution - for the German working masses, for the German toiling millions, once they have made a start with the spirit of revolt ... we begin to propose brotherly union,

*bread*, military help.” (Emphasis in original).

At a time when revolutionary Russia was undergoing one of its most severe crises, with famine looming, the Soviet government sent two train-loads of grain to Germany. The new ‘Labour’ leaders of that country - the ideological and political foreparents of the CPB, brought to power on the back of the still evolving revolution - stopped the convoy at the frontier.

Later in 1923, when despite the efforts of the reformists the German revolution again seemed imminent, two solidarity funds were set up - one for grain, the other for gold. The wives of revolutionary Russia were invited to donate their wedding rings for the sake of the coming world revolution.

The *Morning Star* would not have to look even as far Germany for political parties receiving ‘foreign’ donations. The Communist Party in this country received sizeable amounts from the USSR. For many years the *Star* itself was the recipient of Soviet ‘donations’, in the form of advanced orders for the paper! This ended with Gorbachev, of course. But don’t opportunists have short memories?

The key difference between the donations of the early years of the communist movement and later was *political*, of course. Money was used at first for principled revolutionary action: later, the Soviet bureaucracy carried favour, influence and diplomatic silences with their ‘largesse’. The *Star*’s windfalls belonged to this latter period, naturally.

Real communists understand that there was absolutely nothing wrong with the world’s first workers’ state materially aiding the world revolution. But unlike the *Morning Star*, we would never accept donations with strings attached. Our principles are not for sale.

The *Star*’s second call - for donations to political parties over £1,000 to be “recorded” - is, if anything, even more disgusting, even more anti-communist.

A communist party is in the business - supposedly - of revolution. As such, it attracts the hatred, the attacks, the bans and proscriptions of the ruling class and its state. In the history of our movement, literally *millions* of our comrades have been murdered, tortured, imprisoned and exiled. To preserve their freedom to make revolution, our parties must, as Lenin’s Communist International put it, be “combat organisation[s] for the revolution”. The famous 21 conditions of affiliation to the International insisted that all communists “place no trust in bourgeois legality. They have the obligation of setting up a parallel organisational apparatus which ... can assist the Party to do its duty to the revolution” (Condition no3, passed in 1920).

The idea therefore that financial contributors to the revolutionary party should be “recorded” - presumably by the state - and that this information should be freely available is perverse. It shows just how loyal the reformists around the *Morning Star* are to the bourgeois state.

Readers can be assured that while the 12th Party Offensive of the CPGB is prepared to take donations - big or small - from partisans of the working class from any part of the world, we definitely won’t be publishing personal details of contributors for the bourgeois press and secret service to pore over.

Our Summer Offensive - set this year at £25,000 for the months of June and July - is the high point of our year’s *revolutionary* work. We call on all readers and supporters to fight to make this year’s a huge success.

Ian Mahoney

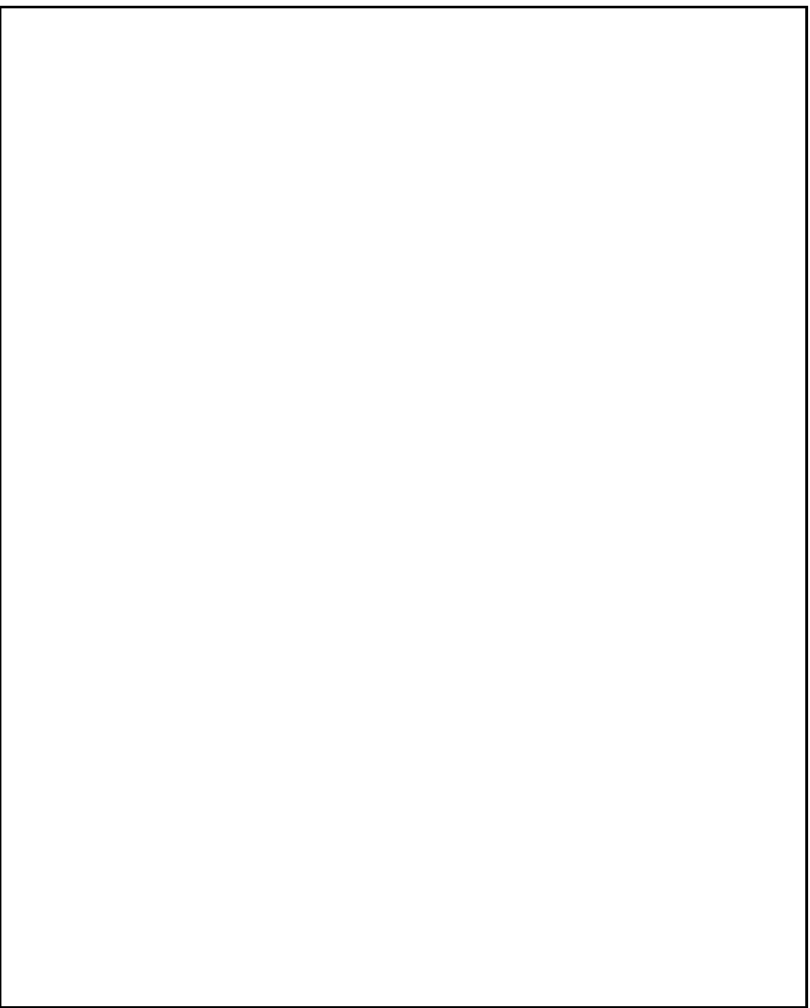
The devil you know ...

THE ELECTION contest for the post of general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union exposes the complete bankruptcy of the ‘lesser of two evils’ arguments. Just about the entire left has called upon union members to re-elect Bill Morris, the ‘soft left’ candidate, in order to keep out Jack Dromey, who aligns himself with the ‘new Labour’ right.

The two main points used to back up these calls are, firstly, that Dromey was openly in favour of dumping Labour’s meaningless clause four. In fact Morris too wanted to ditch it, but had to abide by his executive’s instructions in voting to keep it at the special party conference. Secondly, Morris wants the Labour Party to commit itself to a minimum wage set at around a pitifully low £4 an hour, but Dromey, it was alleged, was toeing the official wait-and-see line. Now, however, Dromey has called for at least the £4 rate as well.

The only British region of the union not to back Morris was, ironically, the Broad Left-dominated North West. Equally ironically, the ‘leftwinger’ Morris has used the region’s backing for Dromey in a red-baiting attack on his opponent. Peter Clee, a leading activist in the region, told me: “Morris, in victimising union officials and refusing to back the members here, has treated us disgracefully. People are saying we should back anyone who stands against him.” For the North West, *Dromey* is the lesser of two evils!

Peter Clee continued: “They are a pair of shithouses together. It is a case of the incompetent ‘leftwinger’ against the ‘competent’ rightwinger. I am still undecided. Perhaps we ought to be



Dromey with a statue of Bevin, attempting to cleanse himself of Morris’ red-baiting

saying, “These are our demands: this is what we should do,” and only vote for a

candidate who supports them.”  
Peter Manson

From *Workers' Dreadnought*, paper of the Workers' Socialist Federation, May 22 1920

## Workers' Dreadnought office raided

ON FRIDAY May 14 the *Workers' Dreadnought* office at 152 Fleet Street was raided by detectives from Scotland Yard ...

They placed under arrest the manager, Harold Burgess, ... alleging him to be guilty of conduct likely to cause disaffection amongst the troops.

Comrade Burgess was conveyed to Canon Row police station and spent the night in the cells, bail being refused ...

As the case is pending we will not at this juncture make any comment upon it, but will ask comrades to be present at Bow Street on Saturday May 22 at 2pm in order to support comrade Burgess and hear the case for themselves.

In the meantime see that you get a copy of *Soviets for the British*, ... *To British workers* and the *Workers' Dreadnought*, for these are the publications for distributing which comrade Burgess has been arrested. Read them and judge for yourselves.



## Fevered imagination

REPORTS in the press that the incurable disease Ebola is a mass threat to the world are nonsense. All viral diseases (such as the cold, flu, chickenpox, etc) are 'incurable', but the overwhelming majority of people recover as a result of the body's own resistance. The two people infected by Ebola in Europe both recovered.

The disease was spread in Ethiopia by 200 people being injected with the same unsterilised syringe. Conditions in Zaire's hospitals are so bad that the medical staff had no protective clothing.

If there were any real risk of the virus spreading in Western Europe a vaccine could almost certainly be produced in weeks: unlike with Aids the survivors all show normal anti-body response to infection and there does not seem to be wide variation of viral type.

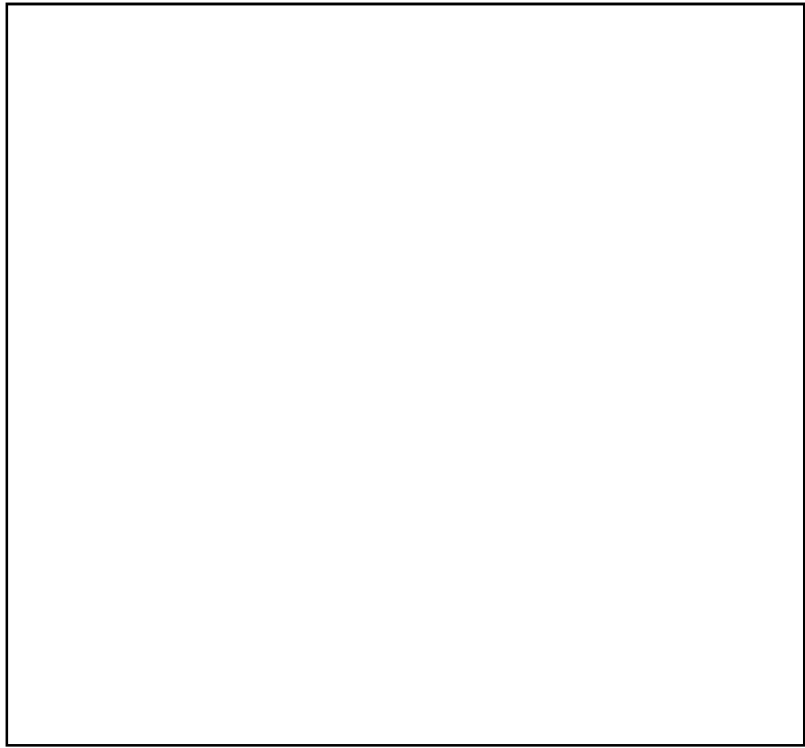
However the World Health Organisation is in utter disarray and, at the moment, it would be unable to take on the problem of eliminating the disease as it once managed to do with smallpox.

It is true that the conditions of abject poverty suffered by most of the world's population form a permanent threat to the health of everyone. The *New Scientist* last week reported the result of research showing that, not only did areas of poverty act as a reservoir for disease, but that poor diet also causes infectious diseases to mutate. It cited China as the major area for the development of new flu viruses.

The 'cure' for Ebola lies in combating global poverty - and that means getting rid of the diseased capitalist system which creates it.

*John Bayliss*

# State tools



### Gay police pose for the press

IT WILL come as no great surprise to our readers that the British Army has been accused of being "perverse and irrational" - such is the nature of British imperialism and militarism in general.

This accurate assessment of 'our' army follows the decision to sack three servicemen and one servicewoman on the grounds that they were homosexual - an obvious 'disability' when it comes to combat, it seems.

When those sacked attempted to take the army to the High Court, in order to rule the automatic bar "perverse and irrational" and in breach of European and domestic law, it was decreed that the High Court did not have the power to interfere with the ban on homosexuals from military service, as the matter should be left to those "who have both the military and political responsibility for the armed forces ... this is not an area into which the courts should venture". Tony Blair took a similar line. In other words, the army is a law unto itself.

The army is indeed falling behind in the 'PR game'. The police now has its own 'Gay Section', which was spotted at a police conference with its own banner. We can rest assured that its commitment to anti-homophobia will be as principled as its commitment to anti-racism - remember the 'anti-racist' murders of Joy Gardner and Brian Douglas?

This does demonstrate, however, that gay rights, like anti-racism, is being incorporated into mainstream bourgeois politics. And, like racism, discrimination against homosexuals is becoming officially 'unrespectable' too. The bigots of the army and judicial establishment are holding out against this trend.

Communists are the true enemies of all prejudice and oppression, which is pervasive under capitalism.

Our future Red Army will admit all to its ranks, regardless of sexual orientation, in the fight against our common oppressor.

*Eddie Ford*

## Fightback in Istanbul

LAST WEEKEND witnessed yet another attack on the Alevi community and workers living in the Gazi district of Istanbul.

After the uprisings in March (see *Weekly Worker* 86) state repression of leading activists was massive. A local teacher, Hasan Ocak, was detained by the political police in the presence of many witnesses. Two who witnessed his torture submitted depositions, but the police claimed that they did not detain him at all. A campaign under the slogan, "He was detained alive - we want him back alive", was launched.

In many cities in Turkey and abroad, including London, week-long hunger strikes were staged to gather international support and put pressure on the Turkish government. Under internal and international pressure the Ministry of Interior was obliged to initiate an 'investigation'. However this delaying ploy did not come to anything. During protest demonstrations many people, including Ocak's mother, were arrested and detained.

After 55 days of campaigning his tortured body, strangled by a wire loop, was found buried as an unidentified corpse in Istanbul's paupers' cemetery.

There was a big funeral march displaying the defiance and determination of the people. After the march cars full of rightwing activists came to Gazi and a neighbouring district and used pump-action shotguns to fire into Alevi community centres.

This time the local people were

prepared. They chased the assailants and captured a few. Immediately thousands of people filled the streets and erected barricades. The police and other officials, seeing the determination of the people, decided to defuse the situation.

After a few hours of demonstrations and negotiations the locals handed over the fascists - a little bit beaten, but safe and sound - to the police, on condition that the event was broadcast on TV. The barricades were staffed until dawn.

The situation remains tense in all *gecekonddu* (shanty) districts of Istanbul. The left forces are trying to build defence organisations based on cooperation between different political groups. Sadly, however, this intention broke down several times due to the petty bourgeois rivalries and politicking displayed by these groups. Some also attach an over-emphasis to the importance of these events, as if they were heralding immediate revolution.

Meanwhile the Islamic political movement is seeking to move forward the weekend to include Islamic Friday. It is seeking new legislation to inaugurate the sessions of parliament by prayers. The weak coalition government, which contains the social democrats, is flirting with these ideas. On top of this the military is threatening a new onslaught on the Kurds.

On the other hand the instincts and determination of the working class are becoming more apparent. The working class is preparing for a hot summer.

*Aziz Demir*

# 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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## First union conflict with the coal owners in 40 years

THE MASSIVE 'Yes' vote of NUM members in the newly privatised coal industry has surprised many, including RJ Budge, the principal owner.

It shows a remarkable social courage, given the fact that the miners have had so much stuffing kicked out of them over the last ten years. It marks a determination to start a fightback. As one of the lads, commenting on live radio, said: "We've got to stop taking shit some time. We've had enough."

Budge, who started off from his background of a cosy family business and 'man to man' speaking, has ended up as the boss of a multi-million pound operation. He appears to have drafted in some high-flying advisors who are urging him to get tough. Mr Budge, if he wants some sound advice, should sack whoever it is that is whispering over his shoulder and follow his first instinct, which was to sit down and talk to the union.

This is not British Coal or the NCB with bottomless coffers to fall back on. This is a greatly over-stretched business on a knife's edge. Charging into combat with the NUM is what the British Coal directors with nothing to lose got off on. Budge will find it painfully less exciting. The cost to his business for a one-day strike action could be between 10 and 15

million pounds. The cost of a 23% pay increase (the same size as the one he gave himself) would be about five million per year.

Budge and his backers are relying on the many non-unionists now working in the industry to break the strike. The union must launch a simultaneous campaign to win these workers back into the union. The signs are that the first stirrings of action are bringing back people who had left it because they thought the union had hung its guns up.

A victory is urgently needed to restore the union's credibility and rewin its 100% membership throughout the industry.

The Yorkshire Miners' Gala this year is at Wakefield on June 17, leaving Margaret Street (at the back of the Town Hall) at 10.30am. The Hatfield Main branch of the NUM has made an open invitation to all members of the revolutionary and progressive movement to march with our band and banner on that day. March around the village, beginning at 7.30am from the Pit Club, Stanforth, Doncaster. There is a miners' folk music evening that night and it looks to be a great day. Call 01302 84365 for more details

## Dave Douglass

Dave is vice chair of South Yorkshire NUM panel



Raise  
your  
sights!

# Health unions hold their fire

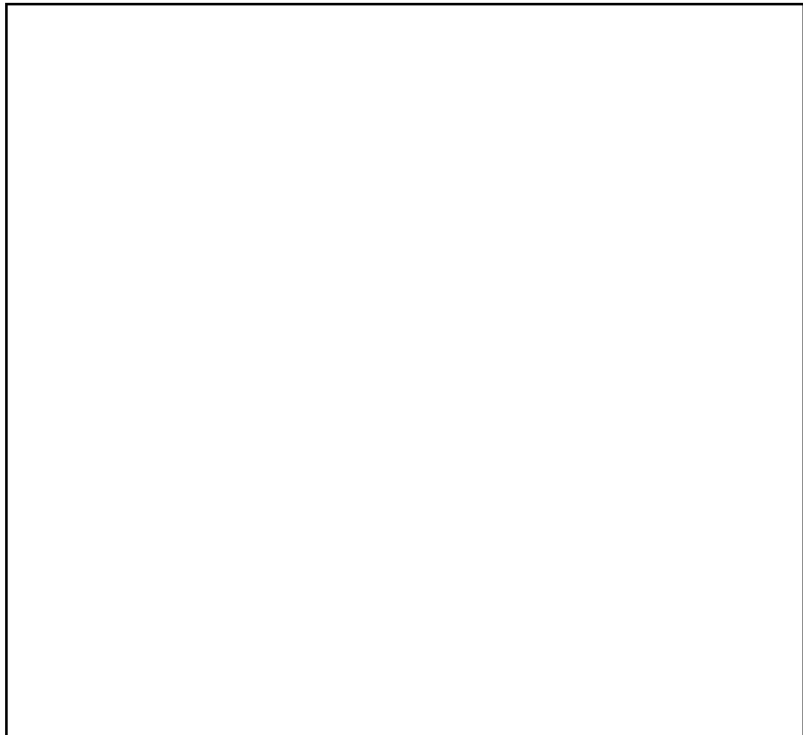
FACED WITH almost the entire NHS workforce ranged against it, it now seems inconceivable that the government will not, sooner or later, beat a temporary retreat in its drive to impose local pay deals.

Unions representing 800,000 healthworkers are ready to formally ballot their members on industrial action. Unison, the largest health union, is armed with 91% support for action in its recent membership consultation, to which more than 40% of the 440,000 members responded. Senior health service managers quickly agreed to talks with the unions, after Unison's head of health, Bob Abberley, announced a "period of grace" until July 5, when the ballot is due to begin.

This delay will allow time for the Royal College of Nursing to ballot its 300,000 members on dropping its no-strike clause. The Royal College of Midwives (36,000 members) has also suspended its strike ballot for a month, while the Health Visitors' Association (16,000) says that it too will need that long to draw up its complete membership list before it is ready to ballot.

Under the law any action has to be taken within 28 days of the ballot result, so it is clear that Unison, the RCM and the HVA are delaying to allow the nurses to get on stream. These signs of union coordination are of course welcome in themselves, but the "window of opportunity" for talks will also allow the government to plan its own strategy. It will continue its efforts to divide helathworkers - both through the local negotiations ploy and along union lines - and attempt to weaken their resolve through piecemeal concessions.

Healthworkers have been handicapped by the pitifully low



**Anger amongst healthworkers runs high, but many accept that 3% is the most they can expect**

expectations which their leaders have instilled. Unison's original claims of between eight and fifteen percent increases in pay have sunk without trace - a national spokesperson recently had to look up details of the official demands in order to inform the *Weekly Worker* - and a national three percent unconditional award would now be considered by all the unions as a stunning victory.

Three percent would in fact represent a pay cut, but the RCN's Christine Hancock has stated she would be happy if *most* of her members could achieve that, through local negotiations.

Healthworkers themselves will have to organise for action and push far beyond the limits set by the bureaucrats.

Whatever the outcome of the dispute, one thing is certain: things will never be the same again for the great mass of health service workers. In the words of health minister Gerald Malone, the "professional standing" of the RCN has been called into question, as it continues the process of transforming itself into "just another union", along with the other 'professional' bodies. This is a process which we can only welcome.

*Alan Fox*

# More unhealthy lies

LAST MONDAY evening a petition containing over 10,000 signatures was handed to Dundee's NHS trust board by a delegation of Communist Party activists from the Dundee branch. The event marked the culmination of work by the Party in the city against the closure of Dundee Royal Infirmary.

The trust's reaction was predictable. Accepting the petition, chief executive Tim Brett, attempted to "settle fears" which Mary Ward, CPGB branch secretary, and local people had over the proposals. He maintained that National Health services in the area were safe in the trust's hands and that the proposed move and 'centralisation' of services in the city's Ninewells hospital would merely be a "challenge for management".

According to Brett, the exercise had little to do with cost cutting measures, but was predominately based on medical needs and re-organisation, which would "guarantee" a better

service for the area.

At a public meeting on the same evening the trust board went out of its way to convince its audience that the changes were in everyone's interest. Two consultants from DRI, who supported the proposals, were used - not that successfully, it must be said - to cajole everyone.

As Mary pointed out at the meeting, "Just because there are two senior staff speaking in favour of the proposals, it doesn't mean to say that they are correct". It was no big surprise that Albert Jacobson, a retired consultant from DRI, who had previously spoken of the "organisational chaos" that would be caused by the proposals, was *not* mentioned from the platform.

Comrades from the CPGB were able to expose the trust as slick, professional liars, as Mary Ward forced them to confirm their previously undisclosed plans to close not only DRI, but also Kings Cross Hospital and Dundee

Limbs Fitting Centre - news which rocked the community for days. The trust insisted that all decisions had been arrived at democratically after consultation with the local community. This was overwhelmingly rejected by the meeting, which pointed out the past and present failures of the trust to adequately publicise their so-called consultation exercises.

There is clearly much resentment over the proposals, but workers must take matters into our own hands and demand that local medical services are organised for local needs, not on the perceived needs of a small number of bureaucrats.

The Dundee branch of the CPGB has forced the pace of the campaign to date and will now be setting up a NHS support group.

For information on the inaugural meeting contact Mary Ward on 01382 667517.

*Gareth Phillips*

# NUT stitch-up

OVER THE next few weeks members of the National Union of Teachers are being balloted for a one-day strike over class sizes.

At the NUT's Easter conference delegates voted against the advice of the leadership to conduct this ballot. The leadership lost every single debate and vote. It consistently argued against any action, saying again and again that parents and teachers would not support it.

It is desperate to keep in line with Blair's 'new Labour' as it moves to the right. Until recently the NUT and Labour Party had similar education policies. Now Blunkett is indistinguishable from a Tory education secretary.

Doug McAvoy, the union's general secretary, launched a major attack on the left in the union. His end-of-conference address consisted largely of an attack on the democracy of conference. He personally knew what 'real teachers' were thinking better than the elected delegates.

Since then he has written to every single member, claiming that leftwing extremists want to take over the union. This has been backed up with regular mailings into schools urging teachers to oppose the strike. Members have received a glossy brochure with their ballot papers explaining why they should not support the action. All the

literature that McAvoy has sent out to undermine conference decisions has been paid for by the union. His actions have been fully supported by the rightwing majority on the executive.

McAvoy and his supporters have argued that the strike would isolate the teachers from parents. Yet the NUT leadership refused to support one of the biggest demonstrations of recent years, organised by the parents' and governors' pressure group, Fight Against Cuts in Education. The leadership portrayed Face as a front for "political extremists" and only finally agreed to back it when delegates forced them to do so. However, parents and governors in Face have expressed support for teachers taking strike action.

Across the country teachers, parents and governors are realising that action is the only way to fight back against the crisis created by Tory underfunding. However a one-day national strike, important though it should be in providing a focus for the many current local campaigns, is unlikely by itself to seriously shake the government. It will need to be followed up with further militant actions.

Whatever the result of the ballot on class sizes, the leadership will continue its attack on union democracy, as it tries to bind and gag activists, so that they do not upset Tony Blair.

*Tony Coughlin*

# Winning tactics

THE BITTER stand-off disputes at three Rolls Royce aero-engine plants, where workers are continuing their weekly two-day strikes, look no closer to being settled.

Five hundred research workers at East Kilbride are fighting to keep their jobs in the face of company attempts to transfer their work to Derby, while at Coventry and Bristol the battle is against enforced six-day working and pay cuts.

On Wednesday around 50 workers from East Kilbride and Coventry's Ansty aero-engine section picketed the company's annual general meeting at the plush QE2 Conference Centre in Westminster. The mood was very determined, and the strikers are pleased by the excellent response from their fellow workers to the £2 weekly levy in their support.

However, while some of the pickets said that the main purpose was to gain publicity, the leaflet issued to shareholders from East Kilbride's joint shop stewards' committee stated that the reason was "to ask you, as a

shareholder concerned with future profitability of Rolls Royce", ... to oppose "the breaking up of this unique and outstanding team ... renowned for its loyalty ... East Kilbride is consistently the company profit centre ... A business case for closure cannot be made ..."

This kind of appeal can never be successful. Whose advice will the profit-seeking shareholders take: the workers', whose main concern is their own jobs, or management's, whose *only* motivation is profit?

The leaflet implies that Derby workers are somehow less deserving of the work. But surely, if workers are to resist the company attacks, the solidarity achieved through the levy must be built upon?

David Little, a union activist from East Kilbride, told the *Weekly Worker*: "We are consistently reviewing our tactics. We are in a very determined mood." Winning tactics have to depend on the workers' own strength and unity, not on appeals to managers and shareholders to see sense.

*Peter Manson*

# The Queen and the litter lout

ONCE UPON a time Queen Elizabeth visited her loyal subjects of Chatham, only for Gill Emerson of Gravesend to throw a handful of seditious leaflets at the royal person's limousine. The state decided to exact a penalty. But Gill's only crime was to litter the road. It should be noted that the state and Gill have crossed swords in court before, leaving the local magistrates licking their wounds and thirsting for revenge.

Completely at variance with the triviality of the offence, the court imported a stipendiary magistrate to replace the normal bench, and the Crown Prosecution Service appointed a barrister to prosecute the case. Gill did not attend the court hearing on Monday May 15, having pleaded not guilty by letter. She knew the magistrates had no regard for democratic rights and expected a fixed penalty fine.

The court had other ideas. She was found guilty in her absence under the Environment Protection Act. Then her letter was treated as contempt of court and she was arrested and brought to court. The charge of contempt was dropped, but she was in court for her sentence.

Afterwards Gill commented, "Seeing as they could have fined me £4,000, I suppose I was lucky to get off with £700. I haven't got it, so I cannot pay."

Gill has no illusions about the undemocratic nature of the legal system nor its vindictiveness.

"I am being punished for a legitimate protest. The only rights we can rely on are the ones we can defend," she said. "We need to organise to dump the whole rotten system - monarchy and all."

*Phil Kent*