

Workers' Weekly

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Could the 110th Durham Miners Gala Herald a New Stage?

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE WAS SUBMITTED BY THE NORTHERN REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE PARTY ANALYSING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS YEAR'S DURHAM MINERS GALA. THE STATEMENT DISTRIBUTED BY THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE AT THE GALA AND BIG MEETING IS PRINTED ON PAGES 4 AND 5.

ON Saturday, July 9, the 110th Durham Miners Gala and Big Meeting was held, which this year was combined with a day of action in defence of public services.

This was the first year in which the Gala had been held with all the deep mines in the North East having been closed under the pit closure programme of the government and British Coal. Yet it was one of the largest gatherings of working people and their families that the North East has seen in recent times, with an estimated 20,000 people taking part in the all-day events. One of the reasons for this was that the organisers of the Gala had taken up as one main theme the defence of public services against the cuts which

are being imposed in education, health, social welfare and public services throughout the region. Thousands of public service workers were present with their banners alongside the mining communities and many other working people.

Over 5,000 gathered to hear the speeches on the racecourse, in the course of which many of the speakers mentioned that it was an honour to be invited onto the platform and to be elected by the miners to speak. This is the tradition of the Big Meet-

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Stuck with Prejudices from the Past?

IN the Labour leadership election, now moving into its closing stages, the three candidates are said to be bidding for support from particular sections of the "labour movement". Margaret Beckett is said to be trying to win the "left vote", John Prescott the "trade union vote", and Tony Blair the vote of the "modernisers", those who stand for Labour saying and doing whatever is necessary to win power.

The characteristic of the election campaign has been, however, the difficulty of finding any space between the positions of the candidates. What this shows is that none of the candidates will rise to the challenge of what is needed at the present time. Tony Blair openly advocates the market economy as the solution to the present crisis, complaining only that the Conservatives do not run it well enough. "Society has a vital role in developing and guiding an effective market economy ... the purpose of economic intervention is not so that the Government can run industry, but that it

should work with it so that industry is better able to run itself." Such statements give no indication that Tony Blair recognises that it is this market economy run by "industry itself" which has brought about the mass unemployment, the destruction of productive forces and the "jobless growth" which he claims to oppose. They do not recognise that the claims that looking after the interests of business will bring prosperity to the people have proven bankrupt. Neither do Tony Blair's leadership opponents speak against basing the economy on industry being able to run itself.

The leadership contenders have set themselves against finding the solution to the crisis because they are stuck in dogma, refusing to look reality in the eye and presenting no way forward for the working class. They merely repeat the failed so-

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On the Basic Units of the Party

ONE significant ingredient for the success of the Party's recent Consultative Conference was the work carried out by the discussion groups. By the time of the conference, these discussion groups had taken on momentum and were becoming widespread. Through exchanges of views and elaboration on the issues in the draft document, *There Is a Way Out of the Crisis*, a new sense of purpose emerged. This process was strengthened and concentrated by the conference, the plan for the coming period being enthusiastically endorsed.

In some cases, these discussion groups were organised around existing basic units of the Party; some came into being at the request of friends and supporters; others were created at the behest of the Party for the specific purpose of taking the document out among the people. While the work

may have been uneven, the discussion groups were effective and the proof of the pudding was in the participation of the comrades in the conference itself, as well as in the fact that quite a number of people expressed a wish to join the Party. Of course, in joining the Party, they will be asked to work in a basic unit of the Party.

The basic unit is a cornerstone of the Party's organisation. In capitalist society, only a handful exercise power, while everyone else stands on the sidelines, is marginalised. A communist party has as its aim the enfranchisement and empowerment of the people, which begins in embryo in the communist party, and the basic unit is the key element in achieving this. In the basic unit, the members are accountable in that they must not only take part in arriving at decisions, but also in imple-

menting them. Through this the members of a unit are able to affirm themselves and find their bearings. This combination of executive power and legislative power is fundamental to the democratic centralist principle of the party organisation.

The basic organisation is built in the bosom of the working class and people. The unit's deliberations, decisions and practical programme cannot be undertaken successfully without listening to the views and opinions of the members of the workplace or community in which it is based and whose consciousness it is trying to raise. At the same time, the regional and central bodies of the Party are able to develop and orientate the programme around the concentrated experience of the basic units. Modern experience has shown that should the Party

come to power without empowering the people themselves, then surely degeneration will follow and the gains of the revolution be lost.

The climax of the recent Consultative Conference was the unanimous approval of the resolution calling on the Central Committee of RCPB(ML) to immediately begin work to formulate a programme for the class. In his speech, Chris Coleman pointed out that in formulating this programme, the Central Committee must avoid any tendency to merely phrasemonger about the need to "smash capitalism", and must base its work and programme to achieve this in real life. It is right there, in real life, that the basic units of the Party will make their concrete contribution in implementing the programme set by the Party in the coming period.

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Could the 110th Durham Miners Gala Herald a New Stage?

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ing, representing that it is the working class that is, as it were, placed on a pedestal, and to which their elected representatives owe their status. But as speaker after speaker condemned the policies of the government which have led to the devastation of the North and the disastrous cuts in public services, one might have thought that they would have pointed to the working class as the force which is going to lead society out of the crisis. Instead they called on the workers to put their faith once more in the return of a Labour government. Why should the miners and other workers continue to completely hand over the initiative in this way? It could be said that the formation of a party that claimed to represent the labouring people was at one time a step forward in the political advance of the working class. But in what way can the Labour Party now claim to be a party of labour, when it aims neither to organise the working class to take power itself, nor puts the interests of the working class and the whole of society at the centre of its policies? The fact that the pits have been closed down despite everything – the strength of the workers, the support for their cause – should give the miners and other workers cause to question what lessons can be drawn about the way the working class is organised and the wisdom of them continuing to hand over their destiny to political representatives.

What is needed so that the workers and the communities have the power to decide on such questions themselves? This is the question the working people must ask. The working class must have the consciousness and organisation to act as an independent force. It must put forward its own programme, engage in politics itself and emerge as society's leaders, as the leaflet of the Northern Regional Committee of RCPB(ML) for the Gala pointed out. In this respect, there is something forward looking about the traditions of the Gala – in the workers taking charge of Durham city for the day, in the organisation of the workers, in their own cultural traditions, and by the recognition that politics should be at the centre. At the same time, there is a backward pressure that the worth of the Gala and Big Meeting lies in backward-looking traditions, that something in the past should be preserved which is not only not preservable but is now holding workers back, or that the mere trappings of the Gala's traditions should be preserved and not their political essence.

Could the 110th Gala herald a new beginning? There are signs that it could. For one thing, the issue of the workers leading society out of the crisis was being raised by the Party, not as a force detached from the working class movement but as its vanguard, pointing the way forward and calling on the workers to build and consolidate their vanguard them-

selves. Another point is that the sectional interests of the workers must be harmonised within a single programme for the class for the solution of the crisis. At the Gala, it could be said that the seeds of recognition of that fact were present. Public service workers stood shoulder to shoulder with the miners and their families in solidarity around the nub of the struggle at this time: should the well-being of the people be put at the centre or not?

The spirit pervading the ordinary workers at the 110th Gala was of the need to look forward. In trying to capture this positive spirit from the platform, there also emerged a negative, which is that struggle will solve everything. Yes, struggle is necessary. But the workers must struggle with a perspective and a consciousness of their immediate and their long-term goals. In this respect, they must throw off illusions, illusions that were also promoted from the platform, that

it is enough to elect a Labour Party to power, that the workers must remain content with their role as wage slaves, that the working class should not emancipate itself and with it the vast majority of people, that a new society based on modern definitions is not necessary. The Durham miners, along with the rest of the working class, have a century or more of the history of the effects of some of these illusions to draw on.

The working class has the ability and the maturity to carry out its own emancipation. Today it should cease to lament the passing of an era, support those sections of the people in struggle, get organised as an independent force and appear centre stage with the programme to take society out of the crisis. If these lessons are drawn, then the Durham Gala and Big Meeting will certainly enter a new stage, and with it the working class movement as a whole.

REPORT of the PROCEEDINGS of the NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE of RCPB(ML)

June 25 and 26, 1994

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On the 110th Durham Miners Gala:

We Workers Should Engage in Politics Ourselves and Become Society's Leaders

TODAY is the 110th Durham Miners Gala and Big Meeting, which is this year being combined with a day of action in defence of public services.

The Durham Miners Gala and Big Meeting has been one of the most important political and cultural events of the working class movement, and it is a tribute to the class consciousness of the workers of the north that such an event is taking place at all when there are those that are doing everything in their power to wipe out such traditions. As the contingents of ex-miners, of workers from other industries, of public service workers and people from all walks of life march and wind their way through the streets of Durham onto the race course where the Big Meeting is held, what is uppermost in our minds? It is surely the question: what can be the way out of the crisis that society has been thrown into, what is to be done, is there a way out?

The crisis is causing massive problems and hardship for the working people. One major problem facing us and our families has been, of course, the drastic cuts in expenditure on public services over nearly twenty years. The government gives the

argument that society does not have the obligation to provide services - education, health care, welfare and so on - from the cradle to the grave. Claiming that making business successful and competitive must come before everything, it says that the state should provide increasingly only for those "most in need", others must "take responsibility themselves". There is very rightly strong feeling against this attempt to move society back towards medievalism where the state has no responsibility to its members and everyone fend for themselves. The crux of this struggle is not only to oppose cuts in public services but to demand that the gains society has made against medievalism be taken to their logical conclusion - a humane society which provides the very best of all for the lifelong well-being of every citizen.

The most terrible waste and destruction of resources, both human and technical, is a further central problem facing us and our communities. The capitalist economy, geared to maximum profit, has decimated industries in the North East and left whole communities and even whole towns with virtually no employment. There are not a few towns now where the local authority or the local hospital is the largest employer! On the one

hand, the privileged minority makes fabulous profits, whilst on the other poverty, mass unemployment, low wages, devastation of the youth who are now undertrained and neglected are amongst the dreadful social ills facing the vast majority. Far from the well-being of the people being the motive force of the economy and the claims of all individuals on society recognised, we are constantly being told in the face of all logic and human feeling that, for instance, the claims of the financial institutions for their interest payments must come before everything.

These major problems against which the working class and people are struggling are an indictment not only of John Major's government, but of the whole system and bankrupt theories which put "business success" and the like and not the needs of the people at the centre of how society is run. What is needed is to reject outright these policies and to struggle with a completely opposite perspective. Why should we workers as a class not put forward our own independent programme to lead society out of the crisis? Should we not directly engage in politics ourselves, having our own aims and perspective, to act as an independent force which is at

the centre stage on all the economic and political problems of society?

The question that naturally follows is: how will the working class do this? This is the major question for discussion in the working class movement. An important question in this regard is how the working class will itself build and consolidate its own vanguard party, and restore the unity of communists around the requirements of the day. As an important contribution to

such discussions, our Party has published a draft document, "There is a Way Out of the Crisis". We warmly invite all workers and progressive people to join with us in discussing these vital questions.

On this day of the Gala and Big Meeting, we give the call:

1. Take up the programme that **There Is a Way Out of the Crisis**;

2. Oppose the cuts in education, health care and other social programmes and

furnish support to all those waging struggles in these sectors by demanding that these cuts be reversed and investments increased;

3. Reject the government's stand that individuals have no claim on society, but that moneylenders and business alone have;

4. Fight for a socialist society on the basis of modern definitions, a society in which the claims of all are recognised solely by virtue of their being human.

Northern Regional Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

9 July, 1994

Stuck with Prejudices from the Past?

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lutions of the past. Any party which fails to propose real solutions to the problems of today is bound to fail. The achievement of John Smith was said to be that he led the Labour Party to the brink of power. But the Labour Party on the brink of power has never been held in lower esteem among workers. The leadership contenders are themselves stuck with old definitions which cannot provide solutions to the problems of the present. For example, there is a world of difference between the Labour Party winning power and the working class and the whole electorate being empowered to control their lives and take part in governing, which is the demand of today. The modernisers in the Labour Party speak of

political renewal. But they miss out the essence of political renewal which is that major changes are needed to the life of the country in order to empower the people themselves. The system of Cabinet rule which began some 300 years ago as a means to keep power in the hands of the minority and out of the hands of the majority, the monopolisation of political life by the parties, needs to be replaced by a modern system in which the voters select their own candidates instead of having them imposed by political parties, whilst people must retain power in their hands even after the election is over. Without dealing with these essentials, the talk of renewal has no meaning. The Labour Party itself is stuck with the old definition

of a political party, whose aim is to go for power itself rather than having the aim of bringing the electorate to power.

What then is the significance of the labour leadership campaign for workers? It is that the onus of finding a way out of the crisis lies with the working class alone. A Labour government may well follow John Major's, but no policies to lead society out of crisis are being proposed by the Labour leadership contenders, even when Labour is in opposition. The promotion of the Labour Party as a prospective party of government reflects the fact that the system of Cabinet rule is outmoded and ripe for change. As in the past, the Cabinet of the elected government has taken absolute

power and is pursuing policies totally against the interests of the electorate. This shows the need for fundamental change to prevent this occurring. But rather than make the changes which are needed, the bourgeoisie finds it better to bring in a different party, one which follows the same policies but creates illusions that capitalism can be made to work.

The Labour Party denies that the working class has any role to play or is the force to bring about the transformations in society which are needed. The working class needs to take up its own independent programme and fight for the support of all sections in leading society out of crisis and bringing about the construction of a new society.

Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) to hold important Celebration and Consultative Conference

FROM August 12 to 14, the 16th Consultative Conference of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) will be held in Ottawa, Ontario. During the same weekend an important celebration will take place marking the fifth anniversary of the work that CPC(ML) started of organising the working class and people on the basis of modern definitions.

This work of CPC(ML) was initiated in 1989 precisely at the time when the collapse of eastern Europe was gaining momentum.

In an article in *Progress Report*, the Party's newspaper, CPC(ML) explains the significance of this work. "CPC(ML) presented a programme of action during this period and strove very hard to take advantage of the situation in favour of the working class. Its strong performance in 1992 and since then, and its increasing influence

is testimony to this work. What was needed is a fighting programme and CPC(ML), through its vigorous work, gave rise to one within the framework of its overall plan for the period, of creating the subjective conditions for revolution. CPC(ML) worked out its theoretical considerations, including the most important according to which Marxism-Leninism is a valid and indispensable theory to open the path to progress and affirmed that socialism is the next stage of society. It worked out the ideological consideration that any deviation from the plan set for this period must be vigorously opposed in an all-round way, especially by waging resolute and irreconcilable ideological struggle for the implementation of both the immediate and the long-term plan."

Further on, the article says, "The Consultative Conference will provide a forum for CPC(ML) which

is engaged in winning the advanced elements of the class by establishing and strengthening basic organisations in the class. It will also provide the opportunity to identify in precise terms the main areas of theoretical and practical work necessary for achieving this success." All discussions, the article continues, will centre on the problems CPC(ML) faces in this work.

RCPB(ML) is pleased to say that it has accepted an invitation to send a delegation to attend the Conference and Celebration. *Workers' Weekly* wishes the Consultative Conference every success in its deliberations, and is sure that it will fulfil its aims of further elaborating the tasks set by CPC(ML)'s Sixth Congress for this period on the basis of modern definitions, and in setting the next five-year programme of CPC(ML) on the same road as the work of the past five years, according to the decisions of the Sixth Congress.

THERE IS A WAY OUT OF THE CRISIS

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Great loss of President Kim Il Sung

The sudden death of Kim Il Sung, leader of the Workers' Party of Korea and President of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), on July 8 at the age of 82 is a great loss to the world anti-imperialist, democratic and communist movements. *Workers' Weekly* mourns the loss of this great revolutionary, statesman and people's leader, whose death has been received with shock and a sense of disbelief by workers and progressive people throughout the world.

This great loss has occurred at a time when the DPRK finds itself under complicated circumstances, both generally at this stage of world history when countries like North Korea and Cuba are a thorn in the flesh of world reaction who are preaching the demise of socialism and communism, but more particularly when the United States and other powers, whose manoeuvres have been countered under Kim Il Sung's leadership, have been applying hostile and retrograde pressure against North Korea.

The Central Committee of RCPB(ML) has sent a letter of condolence to Kim Jong Il, son of President Kim Il Sung and an important leader of the Workers' Party of Korea. The text of the message is printed on the following page.

As the letter points out, the figure of Kim Il Sung has been central to the heroic struggle of the Korean people for national liberation and reunification over five decades. Kim Il Sung devoted his life to the great cause of national independence and socialism.

Tributes and condolences for Kim Il Sung have poured in from across the

world from state and government leaders, and from the communists and progressive figures.

Hardial Bains, national leader of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist), said in a letter of condolence that the life and work of Kim Il Sung have great significance because "he fought throughout his entire life for the highest ideals of the twentieth century, for national independence and socialism". He also said that the great achievements of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the past 40 or so years are testimony to what can be achieved when human beings are placed at the centre, and President Kim Il Sung was

at the head of this human effort. "He was the organiser and mobiliser, the theoretician and pathfinder" of the Korean people's struggle for national liberation and reunification.

In Cuba, President Fidel Castro said Kim Il Sung was an "ardent defender of socialism and a sincere and loyal friend" and Cuba would be eternally grateful to him for his support for the Cuban revolution and Cuba's struggle to defend its sovereignty. "The fact of having a common enemy added to what we had in common, which increases the grief of our people, of our Party and of all the comrades in the revolutionary leadership." He added that relations between the two countries were forged in the anti-imperialist struggle and that Cuba will continue to defend "the conquests of socialism along with the dear Korean people".

At the same time, leaders of the US, Britain, Japan and other countries involved

in putting pressure on North Korea in recent months mixed their expressions of condolences at the death of Kim Il Sung with statements that they hoped the North Korean government would decide to act "as a responsible member of the international community". The South Korean government placed its army on full alert and it was reported that Japanese and US troops were also placed on operational alert.

Workers' Weekly condemns these provocative and thoroughly disrespectful statements. It is quite sure that the Korean people will turn their grief into strength, unite around the leadership of the Workers' Party of Korea, and carry on their struggle along the path charted by Kim Il Sung of independence, national reunification and socialism. It reiterates that, as the Central Committee's message concludes, our Party will always firmly support the Korean people in these endeavours.

Denounce the slanders against Kim Il Sung and the Korean people

Almost immediately after President Kim Il Sung's death was announced, the South Korean authorities began to circulate rumours about an "imminent power struggle" and the "danger of mass unrest".

The media is continuing to give credence to all kinds of baseless speculation emerging out of Seoul. Much of the speculation appears aimed at undermining the cohesiveness of the

the highest leadership posts.

In addition, the bourgeois press in Britain has surpassed itself in spewing out the most outrageous propaganda against Kim Il Sung personally, as well as against the people of North Korea, against the Work-

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Message of Condolence on the Death of Comrade Kim Il Sung

To Comrade Kim Jong-Il
Secretary of the Central Committee
Workers Party of Korea

July 11, 1994

Dear Comrade Kim Jong-Il

On behalf of all the militants of our Party, and voicing the sentiments of countless others in Britain, we should like to extend to you and to the heroic Korean people our deepest and most heartfelt condolences on the sudden and untimely death of the great leader of the Korean people, Comrade Kim Il Sung. His passing, at such a crucial and difficult period for your country, is indeed a great and tragic loss for the Korean people. At this complicated juncture in history, it is also a great loss for all those struggling on a world scale for peace, for the independence of nations and for socialism.

From the time when he joined the struggle against Japanese colonialism as a youth, through the time he became leader of your people fifty years ago in the most turbulent days of its history, right down to the very latest days of provocative and hostile pressure by the United States and other powers, Comrade Kim Il Sung has devoted his life to the great cause of the national independence of your country and of socialism. He has been central to the heroic struggle of the Korean people over five decades for national liberation and reunification.

We are sure, however, that the Korean people, led by the WPK and united behind its leadership, will turn its grief into strength and will continue on the road so steadfastly and wisely charted by Comrade Kim Il Sung, the road of independence, national reunification and socialism. In this you will have the firm support of our Party.

Chris Coleman

on behalf of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)

Denounce the slanders against Kim Il Sung and the Korean people

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ers' Party of Korea and against Kim Jong-Il. Much of this propaganda is beyond the dignity of any serious commentator even to quote. Rarely has such filth been flung together even for such fascist dictators as Franco, Hitler and the rest.

Such hysterical slanders churned out for the consumption of democratic and working people betray the fact that the bourgeoisie, having proclaimed social-

ism and communism dead and buried, cannot bear to see a country prosper where the people have chosen their own social system and where they are working to build socialism, to build a modern society free of the exploitation of one by another. They wish it every ill in the world, and want to nail the lid on its coffin. But socialism represents the future for mankind and cannot be buried by reaction painting it in lurid colours.

The DPRK is a society which places the well-being of the people at the centre and not the interests of the rich. Workers and democratic people in Britain must denounce and reject the slanderous propaganda of the bourgeoisie on such a society, and oppose all the recent manoeuvres of the United States and other big powers to threaten and destabilise North Korea. Furthermore, Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, needs to think a little more

carefully before passing such judgements on Kim Il Sung as: "History will not be kind to this man."

Working people have to reject the bourgeoisie's propaganda which tries to paint a humane society as the most oppressive, one where the people are working to build the social system of their choice as one where the people have the least initiative, and must stand firm with their class sisters and brothers in North Korea.