

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

**DON'T PAY!
DON'T
COLLECT!**

**TUC National Demonstration
AGAINST THE POLL TAX**

Saturday 1 July
Manchester
Assemble 11.45am in Lower Mosley Street
car park. March 12.45pm to Platt Fields.
Rally 2.30pm-5.30pm

Thatcher: the beginning of the end



Thatcher is not invincible

By Eric Heffer MP

Labour has had some important gains in the Euro-elections and two important victories in the by-elections.

I am delighted. The results are an indication of the mood in society. There was a strong anti-Thatcher vote, and a lot of people clearly wanted to express their opposition to the Thatcher government.

But we have got to be realistic. There should have been a bigger swing to Labour. At a time when the Tories have got themselves exposed because of the Health Service and many other issues, Labour should be scoring more than 40 per cent.

I do not take the view that Labour's gains have come through the Policy Review. We could have maintained our previous policy on the Bomb, public ownership, and trade

union rights, and done just as well or better. There is a lot of dissatisfaction among working people, and they want this Government out.

Only 35 per cent voted in the Euro-election. Labour failed to mobilise a lot of people who are fed up. We could become very complacent and believe that Labour's present policies will lead to automatic victory. They will not.

It was good that we won in Vauxhall, but there was a very low turnout. And in Glasgow we lost a considerable number of votes to the Scottish National Party.

The results could and should have been much better if we hadn't mucked about with our policies. The way to build on the limited success we have had is to renew the fight for socialist policies.

Terror reigns in China

By Cheung Siu Ming

The first official executions have begun in China. Repression will be utterly ruthless.

Leaders of workers' and students' organisations are being hunted down, and the struggle is being driven underground.

The regime has retaken the streets and is pumping out propaganda, but the resistance is far from crushed.

The hard-liners have a big task in purging the Party. In the last decade, Mao's 'ultra-leftists' have been shunted aside to make way for supporters of economic modernisation. A considerable number of reform-minded officials will have to be expelled or neutralised. This



Butcher Deng

could be a long drawn-out process.

Meanwhile, the hard-liners will have to cope with an economy running out of control, now compounded by workers' sabotage and withdrawal of foreign capital.

Nevertheless the hard-liners have one crucial advantage — the reformists inside the Party are part of the rotten and corrupt Party apparatus and have no answer to the hard-liners' demand that the Party must never lose its absolute control.

They cannot stand up to the purges without committing the car-

dinal sin of disloyalty to the Party. The Chinese Communist Party cannot be reformed from within.

In recent days, the British media has turned the focus onto Hong Kong, with much alarm about its 3½ million Hong Kong British dependent territories' citizens. Various dignitaries, Chinese and British, have flown in from the colony to plead with the Tories for a '1997 insurance policy'.

The key point is that these people

Turn to page 2

Eyewitness from Tiananmen Square

If a right-wing Taiwan newspaper had produced this eyewitness report of the Tiananmen Square massacre, the Beijing assassins could have tried to dismiss it as a fabrication.

But it appeared in Wen Hui Bao, one of Hong Kong's two pro-Beijing, pro-Communist dailies. The editor of this newspaper, Li Zisong, is a member of Beijing's National People's Congress.

In the past he toed the Beijing line. But the massacre was too much for him to stomach.

The newspaper has apparently now gone independent. This account was edited for Wen Hui Bao by Zhao Hanqing on the basis of a telephone call from Beijing on 4 June.

I am a student in Qing Hua University. I am 20 years old. I spent last night sitting on the steps of the Monument to the Heroes of the People. I witnessed, from start to finish, the shooting and suppression by the army of students and citizens.

Many of my students have already been shot dead. My clothes are still stained with their blood. As a lucky survivor and an eyewitness of the event, I want to tell peace-loving and good people across the world about the killing.

Frankly speaking, we knew early on in the evening that the troops intended to suppress us. Someone whose status I cannot reveal phoned us at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

The call was to a neighbourhood phone station in an alley near the square. The person in charge of the phone fetched us to receive it.

The caller told us that the Square was about to be invaded and cleared. We went onto the alert. After a discussion we took some measures. We did our best to alleviate contradictions and avoid a bloodbath.

We had 23 sub-machine guns and some incendiary bombs that we snatched from soldiers during the previous two days. The 'autonomous students union' called a meeting and decided to return these weapons forthwith to the martial law troops, to show that we intended to promote democracy by non-violent means.

Last night on the rostrum in Tiananmen Square beneath the portrait of Chairman Mao, we liaised with troops about this, but an officer said that he was under higher orders not to accept the weapons.

So the negotiators failed. At around 1 o'clock in the morning, when things had become really critical, we destroyed the guns, and dismantled the bombs. We poured away the petrol so that bad people could not use it, and the authorities could not point to it as proof that we were out to kill soldiers.

After that the union told everyone in the Square that the situation was extremely grave, that bloodshed seemed inevitable, and that they wanted students and citizens to leave the Square.

But there were still 40-50,000 students and about 100,000 citizens determined not to go. I too decided not to go.

The mood was extraordinarily tense. This was the first time we had ever experienced such danger. I'd be lying if I said we weren't afraid, but everyone was psychologically braced and tempered.

Some students, of course, did not believe that the troops would shoot to kill. In a word, we were imbued with a lofty sense of mission. We were prepared to sacrifice ourselves for China's democracy and progress. That was something worth doing.

After midnight



moured cars had sped down each side of the Square from the front gate, the situation became increasingly serious. Official loudspeakers repeatedly blared out 'notices'.

Dense lines of steel-helmeted troops ringed the Square. Despite the darkness you could clearly see the machine guns mounted on top of the History Museum. There was not the slightest attempt to hide them.

We students crowded around the Monument to the Heroes of the People. I carefully estimated the crowd. Two thirds were men, one third were women. About 30% were from universities and colleges in Beijing. Most were students from other cities.

At 4 o'clock sharp, just before daybreak, the lights in the Square suddenly went out. Loudspeakers broadcast another order to clear the Square. I suddenly had a tight feeling in my stomach. There was only one thought in my head: the time has come, the time has come.

The hunger striker Hou Dejian (a Taiwan pop singer now working on the mainland) and some other people negotiated with the troops and agreed to get the speakers to leave peacefully. But just as they were about to go, at 4.40am, a cluster of red signal flares arose into the sky above the Square, and the lights suddenly went back on again.

I saw that the front of the Square was packed with troops. A detachment of soldiers came running from the East entrance of the Great Hall of the People. They were dressed in camouflage. They were carrying light machine guns. They were wearing steel helmets and gas masks.

As soon as these troops had stormed out, they lined up a dozen or so machine guns in front of the Monument to the Heroes of the

People.

The machine gunners lay down on their stomachs. Their guns pointed towards the Monument. The rostrum was behind them.

When all the guns were properly lined up, a great mass of soldiers, and armed police wielding electric prods, rubber truncheons and some special weapons of a sort I'd never seen before, suddenly rushed us.

We were sitting quietly. There were two differences between the troops and the armed police: their uniforms were different, and so were their helmets. The police helmets were bigger than the troops and had steel flaps going down over their ears.

The soldiers and the policemen started laying violently upon us. They split our ranks down the middle and opened up a path to the Monument. They stormed up to its third tier. I saw 40 or 50 students suddenly spurt blood.

Armoured troop carriers and an even greater number of troops that had been waiting in the square joined the siege. The troop carriers formed a solid blockade except for a gap left open on the museum side.

The troops and policemen who had stormed the monument smashed our loudspeaker installations, our printing equipment, and our supply of soda water. Then they beat and threw down the steps the students still occupying the third tier.

We'd stayed put all along, holding hands and singing "the People's Army won't attack the people."

The students packing the third tier had no choice but to retreat under the blows and kicks of such a large body of men. While this was going on, the sound of machine guns started up. Some troops were

knelling down and firing. Their bullets whizzed above our heads. The troops lying on their stomachs shot up into the students' chests and faces. We had no choice but to retreat back up onto the Monument.

When we reached it the machine guns stopped. But the troops on the Monument beat us back down again. As soon as we had been beaten down, the machine guns started up again.

The dare-to-die brigade of students and citizens picked up anything to hand which would serve as a weapon — bottles, pieces of wood — and rushed towards the troops, to resist them. The union gave the order to retreat to places outside the Square. It was still not five o'clock.

A great crowd of students rushed through the gap in the line of troop carriers. The heartless drivers closed the gap. 30 carriers drove into the crowd. Some people were crushed

to death. Even the flag pole in front of the Monument was snapped off. The whole square was in massive chaos. I'd never thought that my fellow students could be so brave.

Some started to push at the troop carriers. They were mowed down. Others clambered over their corpses and pushed, too. Finally they managed to push one or two carriers aside and open up a gap.

I and 3,000 other students rushed through under a hail of fire. We ran to the entrance to the History Museum. There were just over 1,000 of us left.

There were large numbers of citizens in front of the museum. We joined up with them. Seeing how bad things were, we immediately ran off to the North in the direction of the Gate of Heavenly Peace.

But we had gone a few steps when the fire broke out from a clump of bushes alongside the road. We saw no people — just the bursts of fire from the gun barrels. So we turned and ran off South in the direction of the front gate.

I was running and weeping. I saw a second batch of students running off from the machine gun fire. I saw lots of people lying on their stomachs on the road that we tried to escape along.

We were all crying — running and crying. When we reached the front gate we were suddenly confronted by a batch of troops who came running towards us from the direction of the gate. They came running out from the direction of the Zhubao market.

They did not open fire. They were armed with big wooden staves. They beat us furiously.

A large crowd of citizens came pouring out of the front gate. They clashed violently with those troops. They protected us while we escaped in the direction of Beijing railway station. The troops pursued us.

It was 5 o'clock. Dawn was breaking. The gunfire on the Square seemed to have died down.

Later I met a fellow student at the International Red Cross. He told me that at 5 o'clock the last group to escape had broken out. The machine guns continued to rake the Square throughout the entire period, for 20 minutes or so.

I'll never forget another student from Qinghua, a man from Jiangsu, who was shot and wounded but still carried on running with us. He was determined not to give up. As we ran along he touched me on the shoulder, "Could you please support me for a bit?"

I was already supporting two physically weak women students, one on each arm. I could do nothing for him. I put him down on the ground. The crowd trampled over him....

There's no way he could have survived. Look, this is his blood on my back. Half his body was covered in blood.

I'll never forget my fellow students being mown down by machine guns:

impact in China.

In Britain, the Chinese Solidarity Campaign is planning a conference to consolidate its support, and it put the campaign on a more long-term footing. A major part of the campaign's work will be to give support to the students from China who are stranded here for fear of victimisation back home.

All supporters of the campaign are urged to form supporters' groups and to get their organisations to send delegates to conference. Please contact the campaign for details at 68 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1. Tel: 01 836 8291.

More on China solidarity: page 8

From page 1

do not represent the working class of Hong Kong. Until the 3 June events, Britain and its Hong Kong agents intended to hand over Hong Kong to China, without giving the local population any real democratic control.

Our demand must be to give all Hong Kong citizens the full vote now, with rights to form political parties. A politicised and organised population of 6 million in Hong Kong is the best support for those fighting underground in China.

Thirty per cent of China's foreign revenue flows through the window of Hong Kong, and what happens there will have a major economic

The rise of the Greens

EDITORIAL

The talking point after the Euro-elections is the startling performance by the Green Party.

The Greens had hoped for something over 5 per cent. They got 15 per cent support. New members are flooding into the party, which had already grown notably among students in particular, before these elections.

Starting from a feeling that the destruction of the environment is the political problem, the Greens have developed a range of policies some of which (like a basic income for all, in or out of work), would fit into a socialist programme, others of which are 'nice ideas' but fairly irrelevant, yet others backward-looking or impracticable.

There are three main strands in the Green Party:

- The liberal wing, committed to saving the environment, but more pragmatic in other areas. Under the influence of this wing the Green Party Conference kept to a softer presentation of such policies as opposition to nuclear power or support for immigrants' rights. The Greens' electoral success came mainly in Tory-held seats and presumably from middle-class ex-Tory voters.

- The libertarian wing, more keen on direct action, more keen, for example on supporting a refusal to pay the Poll Tax.

- The socialist wing, organised in a caucus — strong among activists, favouring local campaigning and work with other socialists, including work in the trade unions.

No doubt success will bring increased tensions within the Green Party, possibly leading to splits.

In West Germany, where the Greens are well-established (though they've never got as many votes as the British Greens' 15%), the Green Party is sharply divided into 'realist', 'fundamentalist' and 'eco-socialist' factions. It remains broadly leftist — the average German Green voter sees himself or herself as more left-wing than the average Social Democratic (Labour) voter — and indeed includes the bulk of those who remain active after the



Green Party leader Sarah Parkin celebrates

collapse of the Maoist groups which used to dominate the West German revolutionary left. In France the former leader of the Greens, Brice Lalonde, has gone over to Mitterrand, while the present leader, Antoine Waechter, says 'red and green don't mix'.

We would like to attract the best elements of the Greens to the task of renovating the labour movement. We should try to work with them in the unions whether they are in or out of the Labour Party.

Many Labour Party supporters

see the Greens as a threat to Labour's electoral success. Many environmentalists on the Labour Party object strongly to the Greens standing candidates against MEPs with a proven record of support for environmental causes.

In the event, those MEPs got back in. In 17 other seats the Labour candidate lost to the Tories by an amount less than the Green Party vote; but in 7 seats the Tories lost by less than the Green vote. The evidence seems to be that Green votes came mostly from disaffected

Tory and Alliance voters rather than Labour.

It must also be true that many of those Green votes would have gone to Labour if Labour had presented a more radical alternative. Just as Neil Kinnock dumps Labour's unilateralism as a 'vote-loser', the unilateralist Greens win millions of votes!

In any event our task is to resist our own Party's drift to 'respectability', as it junks democratically decided policies for the economy, society and the environment.

Four lessons from the Euro-poll

The humiliation of the Tories in the European election reflected a broad shift to the left across Europe.

An alarming sign was the growth of the far right — especially the West German Republicans. The Socialists in France did very badly. But the general pattern was leftwards, with a significant rise in the vote of the various Green Parties.

Several issues present themselves as lessons to the European left. First, the average European turnout was 61% — although it was a

miserable 31.8% in Britain. The Euro-elections are becoming a more and more important feature of European politics as 1992 approaches.

More than in the past, these elections were read as indicators of general political trends. And there are general, Euro-wide trends, most graphically the Greens' success.

The left needs to take Europe more seriously, by linking and co-ordinating its activities. There is now a 'left' majority in Strasburg. Can the left wings of the different

parties there find ways to work together?

Second the rise of the far right is cause for grave concern. At the moment the far right is confined largely to France, West Germany and Italy. In Spain, the far right did badly, despite conditions that might be expected to be favourable — namely an unpopular right-wing Socialist government (one of the factors in the rise of Le Pen's Front Nationale in France).

The threat of the neo-fascist parties should be taken very seriously. Europe may yet suffer severe economic recession, and in those circumstances, the right can grow. The left must fight the far right immediately.

Right wing Socialist parties have proved, on the whole, wholly unable to deliver the goods, which is the third lesson. Except in Spain, ruling Socialist parties did very badly — in France and in Greece. Why not Spain? Perhaps because of the insipid nature of right wing opposition and the overwhelmingly leftward drift of Spanish opinion, spurred on by recent industrial militancy.

So the Neil Kinnock policy-

reviewed strategy stores up electoral defeat for the future. Ask Papan-dreou in Greece.

Four, is the question of the Greens. In Britain, the Greens have emerged as a centre party, but the pattern is less clear elsewhere. What is clear is that ecological issues are recognised to be vital by more and more people.

The Greens themselves cannot solve the problems they identify, because they divorce the solution from fundamental — that is socialist — change. But that the problems are real is beyond dispute. The labour movement must take up 'green' issues on a European level.

International co-operation is indispensable for lasting solutions to ecological problems. The EC is certainly a cause of many of those problems, but greater European unity might also provide the framework in which it is easier for the labour movement to tackle them.

For the British Labour Party, one lesson of the Euroelection must be obvious. They were important — giving Labour its highest share of the vote since 1970, and humiliating the Tories. Euroelections must be taken more seriously in future.

20 years after Stonewall

Friday 27 June 1969 was the day they buried Judy Garland. And it was the night the police raid on the Stonewall Inn in New York provoked a revolt that marked the birth of the modern gay liberation movement.

This year's 'Pride '89' of lesbian strength and gay pride celebrates the twentieth anniversary of Stonewall.

In those 20 years, there has been a huge change. Britain has yet to witness the development of gay ghettos such as exist in some American cities, but lesbians and gay men are visible in a way we were not 20 years ago.

In London, but also in other cities, especially Manchester, there is a huge variety of lesbian and gay pubs, clubs, information and advice centres, newspapers and organisations.

Even Section 28, the Tories' pernicious and malicious ban on the 'promotion' of homosexuality, has failed to drive us back into the closet.

But it has — aided and abetted by reactionary and ignorant hype about AIDS — changed the climate. Measured in political and physical attacks, there is a renewed climate of bigotry.

Bigger and bigger Pride marches are helping to arrest that renewal. Each year the march is bigger. Last year the Pride march was preceded by enormous Clause 27 demonstrations. As a political issue, lesbian and gay rights is more firmly on the agenda than ever. The lesbian and gay movement is nearer to a coherent movement than it has ever been.

The labour front bench has carefully ditched its policy on lesbian and gay rights, believing it to be a vote loser.

This cowardice is a measure of Kinnockite cowardice in general.

There are hundreds of thousands of 'out' gay men and lesbian women in Britain, literally millions who hide their sexuality for fear of what public knowledge can still bring. We have a right to be recognised as a political issue by Labour — minimally, as an issue of basic human and democratic rights. Ever if there were only one homosexual in the world, he or she would have the right to human dignity. In reality, we are everywhere.

In recent years, people from mining communities, impressed by solidarity with their strike in 1984-5 have joined the Pride march. Other sections of the labour movement should be there too.

Trades Unionists against Section 28

"Out at work — campaigning for lesbian and gay rights". Trades Unionists Against Section 28, PO Box 1733, London W9 3SH, £2.50. Pride '89: Assemble 1.00pm Hyde Park, Saturday 24 June. March to Kennington Park.

'The emancipation of the working class is also the emancipation of all human beings without distinction of sex or race'

Karl Marx
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4 LETTERS

What Wilson shares with Tories

GRAFFITI

So, the breathtakingly unfunny 'comedian' Ken Dodd looks set to follow in the footsteps of fellow celebrity tax-dodger Lester Piggot and end up doing time. Good riddance!

It is well known that Dodd is a faithful Tory party supporter. However, in the course of the court case against him astounding facts have emerged.

In a feeble attempt to get special treatment for Dodd, his accountants included in their report to the Inland Revenue letters from no less than three ex-Prime Ministers, praising him as a comedian. Margaret Thatcher and Ted Heath come as no surprise.

But who's this? Yes, good old Harold Wilson, it seems, is also a Dodd fan. While he was Prime Minister he wrote to Ken Dodd thanking him for a "wonderful evening out" and inviting him to No.10.

Funny, and we thought that all Wilson had in common with Thatcher and Heath was an interest in attacking the working class!



Dobby and Maggie

Leading Soviet economists have warned that famine looms if the economy is not stabilised within 18 months.

The economists, including Dr Leonis Abalkin, who is a Soviet deputy premier, voiced serious criticisms of Gorbachev's economic policy for not being radical enough. One said Gorbachev was attempting to move "from an administrative system to a market" by promoting decentralisation and leasehold property reforms. "But," he said, "we forgot to make the rouble real money."

On the threat of famine, Professor Vladimir Tikhonov said: "If this year we don't take radical measures in agriculture, next year there will be a real famine, because we don't have enough hard currency to buy food." The economists also reckoned the real rate of inflation at 10-11%.

Sometimes small things seem to sum up what's wrong with organised religion — like the Catholic Church's use of "reliquaries", vessels made of gold and jewels for the veneration of the faithful.

They are supposed to contain sacred relics. Actually they contain rather grisly-looking bits of old bone or hair. Whether or not these remnants actually come from the saint in question, they're about as uplifting as second-hand dog turds.

What brings all this to mind is the latest *Militant International Review*. The container here scarcely bears comparison with the often fine craftsmanship of Catholic reliquaries — the magazine is singularly dim as a journalistic product, considering *Militant's* resources — but the veneration of bits of dead old rubbish is pretty close parallel to Catholic practice.

"Ted Grant," the magazine pronounces, "provides the vital link between Trotsky's ideas and Marxism Today." Announcing a book of the

collected articles of veteran *Militant* leader Ted Grant, the magazine claims that "Grant (alone) was able to apply Trotsky's theoretical principles and methods to the new phenomena of the post-war world."

This is the same Ted Grant who in the early '60s dogmatically predicted a compromise settlement to the Vietnam war and insisted that no serious economic development could be possible in South Korea — whose "perspectives" have for decades consisted of the monotonous prediction that just around the next corner is mass support for "the Marxists".

Paul Foot, *Daily Mirror* and Socialist Worker columnist, had an interesting observation to make at the Time To Go conference in Ireland.

As evidence for the Irish Protestants lacking the spirit for a fight if faced with British withdrawal he commented: "I've never heard of anyone fighting for a country that doesn't exist" — the country in question being the 'Protestant state for a Protestant people'.

Palestinians? Kurds? Ukrainians? The world is full of peoples fighting for "countries that don't exist".

Several local authorities may have to throw away poll-tax registration forms and start the registration process again, because they have used the forms to ask for information to which they are not legally entitled.

Some local authorities have asked for details of personal relationships. As the information is to be kept on computer, it must not contravene the Data Protection Act. However, many authorities are asking questions which do contravene the Data Protection Act.

The NCCL have said: "Our worst fears that the poll tax will result in an unacceptable invasion of privacy are becoming a reality."

How to run an election campaign

LETTERS

In the recent County Council election campaign I fought Cabot Ward in Bristol West as a Labour Anti-Poll Tax candidate.

Activists in other wards told me that they had been hassled on the door-steps about why their Labour candidate wasn't standing on the Anti-Poll Tax slate.

When I was selected in March we set up a campaign team which met once a week to plan who would do what, how we would fight the campaign, and leaflet contents.

We kicked off our campaign with a 'peasants' revolt' outside the council house, giving out 'Poll Tax Bills' and details of our meeting on Poll Tax, and got hundreds of peo-

ple to sign our petition. We continued to collect signatures on it during canvassing — amassing 2,000 in total, though not all Labour voters. A local Anti-Poll Tax Union was formed and has now got involved in the Avon Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Unions.

The Democrats slagged us off for advocating breaking the law and me for "not being mature enough to represent the people of Cabot"! The Tories tried to make capital out of our opposition to Section 28 and from the fact that I had previously submitted a resolution to the DLP calling for the scrapping of a costly Lord Mayor's post by the City Council.

Ron Thomas, the other Labour candidate standing as Anti-Poll Tax, and I got our knuckles rapped for standing as such — by Avon Labour Party! We were sent a letter reminding us of Labour's position on the Poll Tax and that it wasn't an Avon election issue because the

City Council collected it!

Everyone thought we had won it at the count — even the other candidates — but we hadn't, though it was a good result for us, making Cabot one of the key marginals next time.

Three days afterwards the campaign team met and we discussed the result and what the Ward had to do now. Cabot is a 'lefty' ward, with lots of young members though they hadn't done much before apart from at elections. Everyone was raring to go and kept saying how good it had been to be doing such positive action.

We decided to put out a post-election leaflet to explain that we were here for good and to include a poster opposing the Poll Tax with details of our mass registration form burning on 10 June.

20 new members joined from the election campaign.

Leon Edwards
Bristol



Chinese students demonstrating in Manchester on 6 June against the Tiananmen Square massacre.

There was also a big demonstration in London on 11 June.
Photo: A.Patterson, Profile.

Would Lenin be like Deng?

Is this supposed to be the wonderful society worth fighting for but bound to succeed capitalism anyway?

Whichever course the Chinese people take, now or in the future, they deserve the wholehearted support of people the world over. Be it a 'return' to capitalist economy or anything else, they have suffered enough and it must stop, and never be allowed to happen again, anywhere.

These recent events in China will go down in history alongside such

things as Hitler and Stalin in the '30s, and the Russian Tsar in 1905. And let us not forget the 'Red Army's' role in Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan, and Lenin's ordering of the Kronstadt massacre.

On this occasion Lenin, little doubt, would have said much the same as Deng Xiaoping, current leader of China that the movement had to be suppressed "even if they are protesting out of ignorance".

Jack London, in his book 'The Iron Heel', brilliantly and simply expresses the inevitability of the breakdown and passing away of the

capitalist system of production, using Marxist theory. But nowhere have I seen it proved, even in theory, that 'socialism/communism' is next on the historical agenda.

From what has been happening in communist China recently, and from what history shows us, let us hope that what has developed in China, Russia, Eastern Europe, etc. is a temporary aberration — a blip on the scale, and that we are not to be subjected to anything like this when evolution marches onwards.

Steve Revis
Stoke on Trent

Which way forward for the left in the unions?

A national conference for the left in the trade union movement organised by Socialist Conference

Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 November

Sheffield Polytechnic Students Union

Pond St (opposite rail station)

Saturday: registration 10.30am, conference

11.00am-5.00pm; Sunday 10.00am-4.00pm

Credentials: £6 waged, £4 unwaged from The Socialist

Conference, 9 Poland St, London W1V 3DG

The Stalinist pressure-cooker for national conflict

By Stan Crooke

The ethnic rioting between Uzbeks and Meskhetians which flared up at the beginning of the month in Uzbekistan (one of the Soviet Central Asian republics, located in the South East of the country) is the most recent and bloodiest to date of the communal conflicts which have resurfaced in recent years in the Soviet Union.

The area now covered by Uzbekistan and the neighbouring Central Asian republics was seized by the Tsarist Empire in the 1880s. The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic was created in 1924, by unification of the predominantly Uzbek regions of Bukhara, Turkistan and Khorezm.

At that time, there was no real Uzbek 'nation'. The Western concept of 'nationality' had no meaning. There was no Uzbek 'intelligentsia' in the contemporary sense of the word, illiteracy levels ran at 99%, there were no 'national leaders'.

Opponents of the Bolsheviks even went so far as to accuse them (falsely) of pursuing a policy of 'divide and rule' by establishing the Uzbek and other Central Asian Soviet Republics. Their argument was that the creation of soviet republics along 'national' lines where no nations existed was an attempt to divide potential opposition to Soviet rule.

Uzbekistan began to industrialise under Stalin's Five Year Plans, and industrialisation became rapid with the invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler, as factories were transferred from the path of the advancing Germans and relocated in Uzbekistan and elsewhere.

More recently, the official state sector of the economy has stagnated, while legal and illegal private sector has boomed. Private production is 20 to 30% of total output in Uzbekistan.

50 per cent of meat, vegetable and wool production, 62% of milk production, and 41% of egg production come from the private sector.

The Uzbek republic is reckoned to be the most corrupt republic in the Soviet Union after Georgia.

The population of Uzbekistan is a hotch-potch of different ethnic groups, but the private sector of the economy is predominantly in Uzbek hands. Uzbeks are 69% of the population.

The Meskhetians, the victims of the recent pogroms in Uzbekistan, were originally of Georgian descent. In the seventeenth century they were conquered by the Turks and underwent a process of national and religious assimilation. The majority became Shi'ite Moslems and adopted Turkish as their national language.

In 1829 the bulk of Meskhetia was annexed into the Tsarist Empire. The Bolsheviks recognised the Meskhetians as Turks. The 1926 census counted them as Turks, and they were provided with Turkish-language schools. In the mid-1930s, however, the Stalinist regime re-defined them as Azerbaidjani, and replaced their schools with Azerbaidjani-language ones.

In November 1944 the entire Meskhetian population was deported to Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and elsewhere. The regime claimed it was evacuating people in case of advance by the German army — but the German army was in full retreat.

In fact, Stalin feared that the Meskhetians might have pro-Turkish sympathies, at a time when the Soviet Union was about to place a series of territorial demands upon

Turkey for the 'return' of certain border areas to the Soviet Union.

Six months after their arrival in Central Asia, the Meskhetians were placed under secret police 'Special Settlement' control. 50,000 of the 200,000 deportees were soon dead. In 1956 the survivors were freed from secret police control, but denied the right to return to Meskhetia.

Continued campaigning by the Meskhetians for the right of return, addressed to both the Georgian and central Soviet authorities, failed to yield results, apart from the arrest of the leaders of the campaign. In 1968 a decree of the Supreme Soviet restored 'civic equality' to the Meskhetians, but no right of return.

The same year a Meskhetian delegation to Georgia was informed by the local Communist Party secretary that there was 'no room' for them in Meskhetia, but a hundred families per year might be accommodated elsewhere in Georgia. A Meskhetian delegation to Moscow was officially informed that their homeland was the Soviet Union, and that they should be glad to stay wherever they were.

In Uzbekistan they face discrimination and grinding poverty — many live in shanty towns, and unemployment is rife, especially as a result of the recent mechanisation of local cotton farms.

Probably many Uzbeks, encouraged by their population



Meskhetian women at Fergana in Uzbekistan mourn the destruction of their home.

growth and increased economic power, look down on the Meskhetians as the people 'at the bottom of the pile' and unwanted immigrants. The fact that a minor incident in

a bazaar could lead to full-scale pogroms in a series of towns, the imposition of martial law, the dispatch of 7,000 troops and more than 10,000 refugees, underlines the

level of ethnic antagonism between Uzbeks and Meskhetians, and the bitterness of the rancid national conflicts stored up by decades of Stalinist brutality.

CLR James

An obituary by Al Richardson

CLR James, probably the most remarkable all-round intellect to have developed in the British Trotskyist movement, died in his flat in Brixton on 31 May.

Announcements in the media divide into cricket commentators, who do their best to understand his politics, and New Leftists, who do their utmost to misunderstand them. What did he really represent?

Cyril Lionel Robert James, known to him intimates as 'Nello' was born at Tunapuna near Port of Spain, Trinidad, on January 4th, 1901. He came to England with the encouragement of Learie Constantine, and after a brief acquaintance with Labour Party activists in Nelson in Lancashire, joined the Trotskyist movement in the Marxist Group, then undertaking entry work in the Independent Labour Party, where his basic political ideas were formed.

His greatest achievement at this time was to get the ILP conference to support the struggle of Abyssinia against Mussolini's invasion. The policy was reversed by the leadership by the device of a members' ballot, but his campaign for workers' sanctions — against the League of Nations' sanctions advocated by the Stalinists (during which the USSR obligingly supplied Italy with oil) — influenced several NUR branches to contact the ILP and demand that it organises them.

In partnership with George Padmore, an old boyhood friend, he helped to reorganise the African Bureau and got out the journal *International African Opinion*, an anti-imperialist journal that was smuggled into Africa with the help of friendly seamen. A ban on his book *World Revolution* similarly did not prevent it from circulating in the subcontinent.

It was this book, however, that illustrated sharply that his views were diverging from those accepted in the Trotskyist movement. Influenced

by Field and Weisbord (whose book *The Conquest of Power* James persuaded Frederick Warburg to publish) he dated the degeneration of the Comintern to an early date, and analysed some of Stalin's earlier actions, which Trotsky regarded as mistakes, as a result of deliberate policy. He similarly disagreed with the entry into the Labour Party, preferring to stay in the ILP to begin with, and then set up an open group.

For these reasons the International Secretariat decided to move him to the USA, both to 'straighten him out' and to give a free hand to his antagonist, Denzil Harber, in the newly (dis)united British Trotskyist group. It was a short-sighted error.

During the war many of the group of colonial students in Britain met to discuss their struggle for freedom from imperialist rule, and at that conference were several of the heads of state of the countries to become independent of direct colonial rule in the post-war world. Who knows how far revolutionary politics would have shaped the independence movement, if James had been left at the hub of the imperialist system to be able to continue to influence these leaders?

Nor did the policy of subordinating the needs of the international movement to the task of building up the SWP among the USA's black population pay off. Apart from the differences in social background, cultural upbringing etc, James joined the split of Max Shachtman's 'Workers' Party' from the SWP less than a year later. There he defended the position that the USSR was a 'state capitalist' society, as opposed to the workers' state position of Martin Abern and Shachtman's own 'bureaucratic collectivism'.

Realising, as Lenin had done in the previous imperialist war, that there was a serious theoretical crisis in Marxism, he did what Lenin did, and went back to fundamentals, studying Hegel once again along with Raya Dunayevskaya, the results of which were later published in *Notes on Dialectics* (1948).

The political failure of the Fourth International's perspectives at the same time led the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Party into exchanging factions: Goldman and Morrow went over to Shachtman and James ('JR Johnson') and Dunayevskaya ('Freddie Forest') went back to Cannon. But the already sclerotic SWP was not a congenial place for developing new ideas, and he was out in a couple of years.

Hard on this followed his expulsion from the USA in 1953, during the McCarthy years. His refusal to compromise with neo-colonialism led to his being placed under house arrest by Eric Williams, one of his own pupils.

His well-known works on cricket (*Beyond a Boundary*), on revolutionary history (*Black Jacobins* and *A History of Negro Revolt*) on literature and politics (*State Capitalism and World Revolution*) bear witness, not only to the extraordinary range of his interests, but also to the originality that he brought to them. For the key to James' character was that he refused to be part of anyone else's orthodoxy, and disdained to construct one around himself.

As late as the sixties (at the famous 'Dialectics of Liberation' conference) he opposed black separatism and pointed to the working class as the motor force of socialist revolution; in 1986 he was still opposing the chimera of a separate black 'bantustan' in the USA. His bookshelves were lined with the classics of literature, of Marxism, of cricket and of ancient history; there was nothing trendy or superficial about him. But his life and thought were devoted to the defence of the oppressed, on whatever continent and in whatever society.

James may not have found the answers to all the problems he so bravely confronted. But he did demonstrate that a Trotskyist training is indispensable for asking the correct questions, and this basic grounding in classical Marxism formed the real unity behind his thought. His world view was formed in the movement in this country, and by a strange final twist to the dialectic in his last weeks he was assisting Socialist Platform to bring out again his *World Revolution*, a task that we now undertake in his memory.

Workers' Liberty '89



Friday, Saturday, Sunday
July 7th, 8th and 9th
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Register now! £8,
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students) or £4 (un-
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Liberty, PO Box
823, London SE15
4NA.

Why the dockers fight to keep their gains

Billy Walsh, a now retired docker who started work on Salford Docks at the end of the Second World War, spoke to Socialist Organiser.

In my time as a docker, in the late '40s and '50s we were always on strike.

The strikes damn near always lasted six weeks. We could never refer to the six-week strike!

We used to meet on the croft on Friday mornings and it was 'Right lads, we're going back on Monday. Nobody cross the dockline until seven-thirty. You have to wait and we go in shoulder to shoulder, to show them we've won'. We did that even when we'd bloody lost!

On one strike, Georgie Norman was our unofficial strike leader. He'd fought in the Spanish Civil War.

At the time, Churchill was Prime Minister the second time. Georgie said 'Tomorrow morning, when you come down, bring your medals with you'. Everyone brought their war medals and threw them in a big tarpaulin.

We said 'What are you going to do with them, George, sell them for scrap?' He said, 'No. We'll send them to Winston Churchill and tell him straight: we fought for freedom and now we want freedom'.

I started in 1948. In those days, a bit of a road ran along the dock wall. When it was time for us to go down looking for work, they used to shut this road off with big gates.

They were f...ing cattle pens. We were treated like cattle. There was about two to three thousand men, all crammed together between these barbed wire gates, so you couldn't get out — and so you couldn't get in if you were late.

If you weren't there at five to eight, those gates were locked and that was it — you didn't just lose half a day's work, you lost a whole week.

In Liverpool and Glasgow they used to work the welting system. The idea was you worked an hour and you played an hour. Liverpool would have eight men on the welt. Four worked and four were off but those four men had to do eight men's work, so the bosses didn't lose anything by it — the same amount of tonnage had to come out of the ship.

We did a survey that showed 87% of dockers in Liverpool had bronchitis. It was all right when the ale houses were open because when you'd done your hour and worked up a sweat, you went in the ale house. But when the ale house was closed, where did dockers go? In the alleyways of the ship — there's nowhere more prone to draughts. But they wouldn't put coats on because they were so hot.

It was the unions that outlawed the welt.

Health and safety in those days was non-existent. One case in point — unloading a paper boat — newsprint. Big reels weighed half-hundredweight each. When we were discharging them, the half-reels come out four a time, on a single rope, the big reels two a time.

If no transport was available, they'd be landed on the sheds. They were landed on a drop-down door,

which made a landing pad.

One time at Seven Dock, the Old Princeline berth, the landing pad was sloping. One of the lads said 'That's it. I'm not doing that any more. Somebody's going to get killed'.

To keep the job going, the foreman gave us stick. We said we wouldn't move until they fetched the safety officer. He came along and said 'I tell you what, keep it going 'til twelve o'clock and I'll get it repaired in the lunch-hour'.

The lads carried on and next thing down one of the reels comes, hits the quayside, bounces like a rubber ball and hits the poor checker in the back of the neck. Squashed him outright — stone dead.

I later sat on the 'Safety First' committees. Do you know the docks safety inspector wouldn't accept that a job was dangerous until an accident happened? How many times did something fall out of a sling and fall down into the hold? If it didn't hit anyone, it was all a big joke.

But those were the things that used to make me cringe because I got laid out by three tons of timber down there. I was off twelve months. When I went back to work, for the next ten years every time I saw a piece of timber I used to shake.

The employers provided a rehabilitation centre, not out of the goodness of their hearts but because they wanted us back to work as quickly as possible. Most of the welfare that's been introduced in industry has not been done specifically for the work people.

At one time, every firm had their own football team. The idea is that the workers play as a team and the bosses hope it'll rub off when they come back to work — as a team. It's all production. Very very little was brought in which was truly for the welfare of work people.

A few years ago we formed a retired dockers' club. I went to the docks chief accountant and said 'How about giving us a few bob?' He said 'They get a pension, that's it.'

They don't feel any duty to the community at large. We did. At one time we used to take thousands of kids to the circus — the employers didn't do it, we did, with our money.

It wasn't until 1961 that they brought in a training scheme. The pension scheme came in in 1960 and the order came down that as of July, 1960, all men of 70 and over had to go. Two men walked into the office in Liverpool. One of them said 'If I don't join this pension scheme, can I stay on?' I asked 'How old are you?' He said 'Ninety-six'. 'How old's your mate?' 'Oh, he's only a stripling, ninety-one'.

Docking wasn't a job, it was a way of life. We weren't just mates on the docks. We lived as a community, in one another's houses.

Read Arthur Scargill's speech just before the miners' strike. He said 'They're not going to do to our industry what they did to the dock industry'. If you close a mine, you don't just lose jobs, you kill a community — the mine is the only job there is. People are born into it. It doesn't matter if they try to break out — most of them can't.

I couldn't break out of docking. We were very much like the pit villages. Look at Salford now, no one wants to live there. But they've looked after themselves — built a nice little yuppy community on



Salford Quays with houses at a hundred and twenty thousand quid each.

In the '50s there were an awful lot of problems within the T&G. We had some officials, both in Liverpool and in Manchester who wouldn't do what we thought was the right thing.

For instance, there was a fellow who was the District Secretary here in Salford. Some of the things he did sickened me. For example, the checkers went to arbitration over measurements of timber. They were on 'bare lick' — five pounds four and six a week.

There they were, head down and arse up all day long measuring timber into lengths to be transported and working overtime. They put in a claim for sixpence a standard, where it had to be measured. They took it to the National Joint Committee.

This official came down and said 'Great case — we'll walk this one'. At the next union meeting we asked him to attend, to get an update. A month later, he claimed a previous engagement. Next monthly meeting, the same thing happens. This goes on and all the time the men are suffering.

Next time, we're told the claim has been withdrawn at the workers' request. It could only have been him. We asked that he come and explain himself.

After the meeting, we all bowled up Trafford Road, arguing the toss. It was raining. A bus came round the corner and something fell off the bus into the gutter. We went across and it was the union official who'd claimed a previous engagement. One lad was going to put the boot in but we pulled him off.

The branch wrote off to the Docks Group Secretary and said we'd lost faith in this official. We got a letter back, saying any complaints had to go through the District Secretary — and this bloke was the District Secretary, so he put our letters in the bin.

It wasn't until ten years later the

union sacked him. That was only one incident but it got to the stage where there was a parting of the ways between the men and the union. That's where the blue union came in.

The blue union, called that because of the colour of its card, was the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockworkers. It was a craft union. Male children in London were born into stevedoring. They were the elite. They got a shilling a day more than the dockers did.

When I started, you tried everything and found your niche. I preferred working down below to working on the quay but it was all general dock work. Stevedores to us were the ship's foremen. If you go back to before 1922, when there were around sixty unions on the docks, they had their own union then. They maintained that craft status.

Somebody got in touch with Dicky Barret, who was General Secretary of the stevedores' union. He came up and did a tour of the northern ports. I remember going to a meeting at the old Dock Mission.

A lot of people stopped paying subs to the T&G and joined NASDU. It caused a lot of problems. Out of it came the 'noners'. The white union (T&G) wouldn't open the books to the blue union and vice versa. So a lot of dockers were in neither.

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You had to be a member of the union to get a job. Every quarter you had to get a new book and to do that you needed a clearing stamp from the blue union. The chairman of the Liverpool Board, who was also the District Secretary of the T&G, said 'You blue union men will get your new record books over

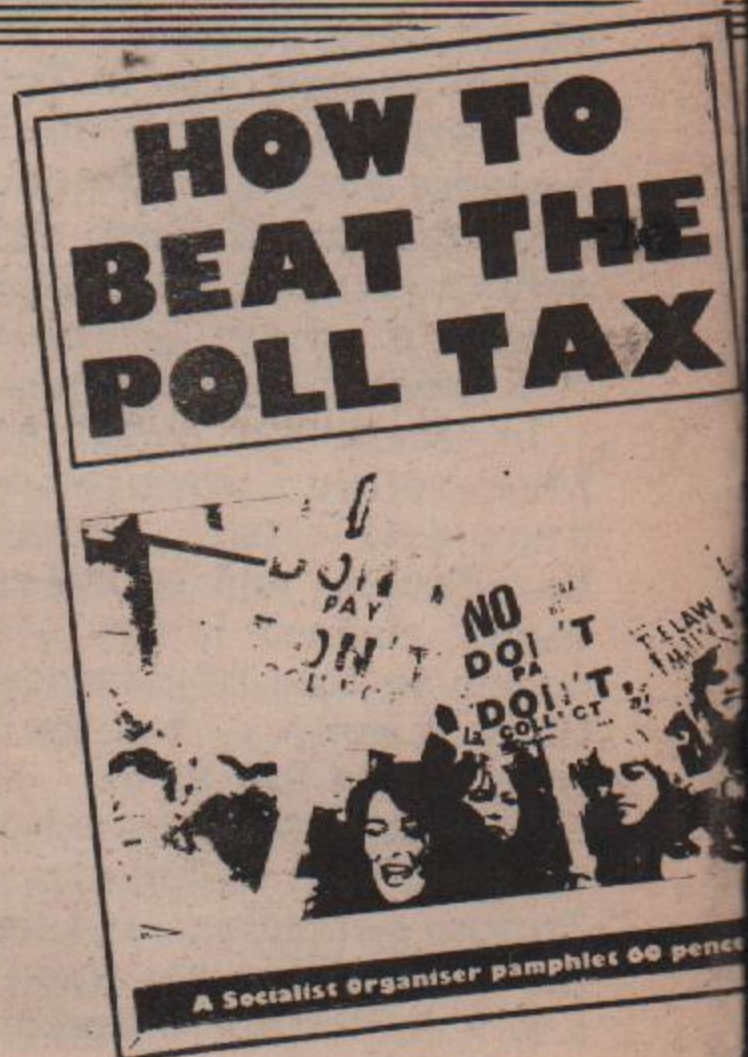
my dead body'.

Eventually, the T&G took NASDU to the TUC, which told NASDU to either return all its northern members to the T&G or NASDU would be kicked out of the TUC. If that happened, NASDU were thrown off the National Joint Committee with the employers. They'd have no negotiating rights. The stevedores passed a resolution saying 'Get rid of them'.

Dicky Barret tried to get the northern men to go back to the T&G. In Liverpool, the NASDU dockers started tarpaulin collections and got five thousand quid. They took NASDU to court. Frankie Spring, who was a checker in Liverpool said 'This case is about the freedom to belong to the union of my choice. I've paid my subs, haven't transgressed their rules. I don't want to go back in the T&G.' Judge Devlin told Barret to keep the ex-T&G men.

Some dockers in Manchester set up their own union but they were ineffectual. The terrible thing that came out of it was the 'noners', although eventually the employers took white or blue cards, so long as they were up to date, and squeezed the 'noners' out. Either a noner was off the job or the gang went out.

In the '70s, we were often on the



Do the divisions of the 1980s meet the needs of the 1990s?

A call for left unity

The left needs unity. The hard times of the 1980s have fragmented and dispersed our forces. The signs of revival in the struggle for socialism make regroupment possible — and urgent.

The industrial struggle

On the London buses and Tube, on the railways, on the docks, in local government, in the civil service, the direct industrial class struggle is renewing itself as it has not done since the miners' defeat in 1985. Workers' confidence is reviving.

Yet all these struggles urgently need solidarity. They urgently need rank-and-file links between workplaces and industries. And we have not even the beginnings of a cross-union, cross-industry rank-and-file movement that could organise solidarity and resist the attempts of the trade union bureaucracy to dissipate the fight back. The grouping which was best placed to initiate such a movement, the Broad Left Organising Committee, shows no signs of life at all. It never became more than a series of rallies gathered to listen to speeches from platforms.

We need a united left which fights to build a militant rank-and-file movement in industry.

Labour's stampede to the right

Neil Kinnock is stampeding the Labour Party to the right. At a time when the only party rapidly gaining votes is the one which clearly supports unilateral nuclear disarmament — the Greens — he wants to scrap Labour's unilateralism. He wants to commit Labour to managing capitalist market economics better, rather than replacing it with a different, socialist, economic system.

Yet the fight back from the left has been dispersed, scrappy, plagued with diversionary nationalist ideas like the demand for the repatriation of all British overseas investment.

We need a united response, clearly reaffirming socialism as workers' self-liberation — as different from state-monopoly Stalinism and statist social-democracy as it is from free-market capitalism.

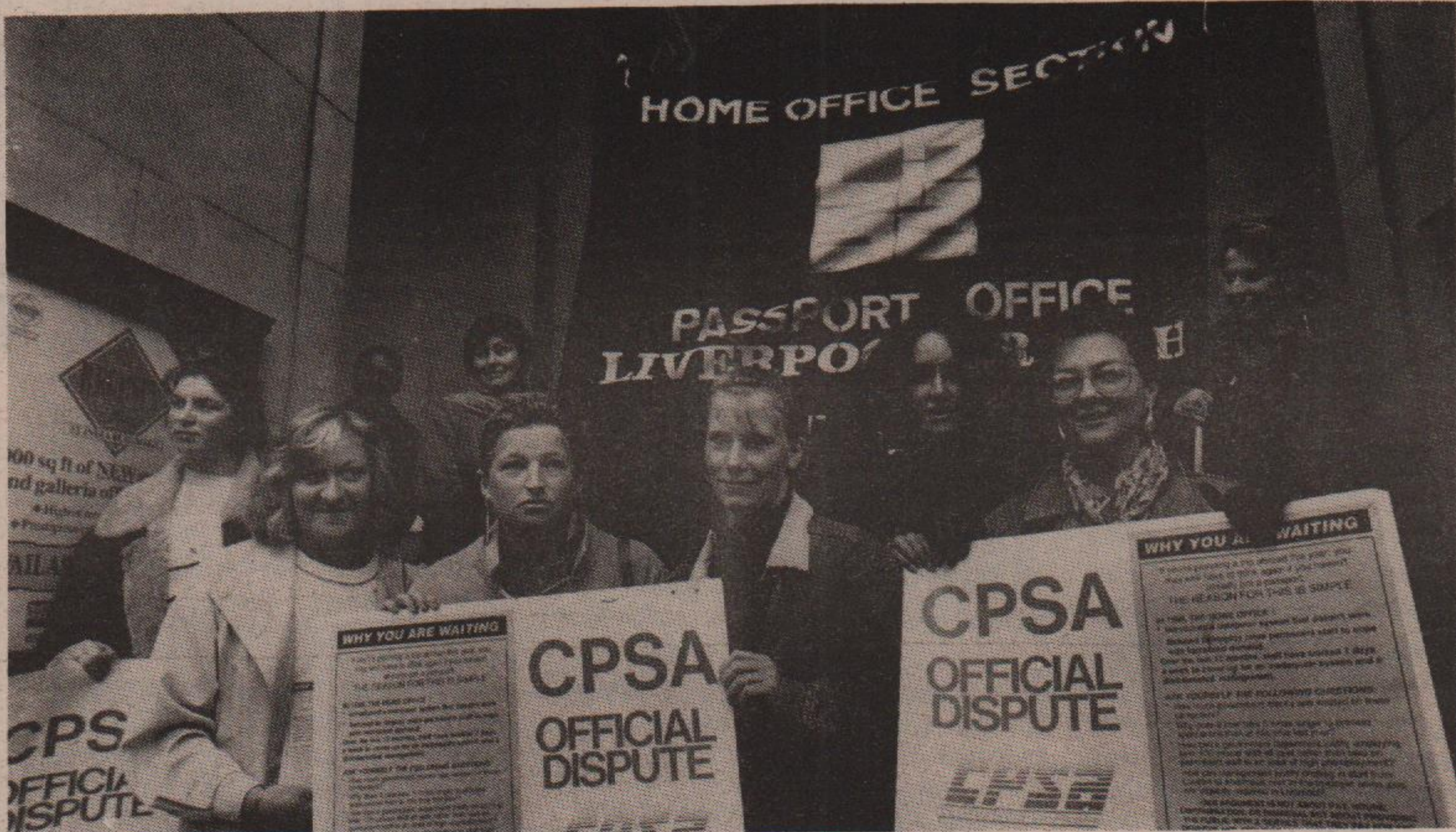
And it must be a united response within the Labour Party. Like it or not, the Labour Party, Neil Kinnock and all, is the political wing of the mass organisations of the British working class, the trade unions. Voluntarily to abandon the arena of the Labour Party is to abandon the political labour movement that actually exists, as it has developed over 100 years and more, to Kinnock and his co-thinkers.

We need a united left which fights for the politics of working-class self-liberation within the Labour Party.

The Eastern Bloc

The workers and students of China have shaken one of the world's most despotic and exploitative states. New workers' struggles in Eastern Europe are very likely.

Yet the solidarity mobilised by the left for workers' struggles in the Eastern Bloc remains very feeble compared to what is needed, or



The left is not in good shape to respond to the revived industrial struggle.

even compared to what we have done on South Africa or Chile. The left is still dogged by double standards — the idea that oppressing and exploiting workers is not so bad if done by a regime which runs a nationalised economy.

We have a duty to the workers and students of China and the rest of the Eastern Bloc to boost our solidarity. And this is also a necessary part of the job of explaining to British workers what we mean by socialism and democracy.

'Socialism', to many workers, still means something like the USSR. The left is unnecessarily on the defensive on the issue of democracy. The Tories have been able to appear as the champions of democracy within trade unions. The Charter '88 initiative, with the Social and Liberal Democrats playing a leading role, has thrown many on the left into disarray on the question of democracy.

Socialism is workers' self-liberation — a revolution made by the immense majority in the interests of the immense majority. It is democratic by its very essence. Nationalisation of major enterprises is necessary, but it is only a means to this end of workers' self-liberation. Nationalisation by a state which is controlled by a privileged minority ruling class is not socialism. Socialism is as distant from the state-monopoly regimes of the Eastern Bloc as it is from Western capitalism.

We need a united left which fights for solidarity with workers' and liberation struggles everywhere, West and East.

1992 and the internationalisation of capital

The dispute on the docks highlights the terrible weakness of international links in the left and the working class. The drive to return the docks to casual labour is international. It is especially intense in Europe, where the 1992 reforms will mean that all trade from outside the EEC can be landed at whatever EEC port is cheapest and then moved inside the EEC without barriers.

Spanish and Italian port bosses have already done what the British port bosses are attempting. French port bosses have announced that they want to do the same in the near future. Yet there is no interna-

tionally co-ordinated workers' fightback — and no left organisation which is anywhere near having sufficient roots among dockworkers to lead such a fightback.

We need left unity on a programme of workers' internationalism. Yet much of the left is defensive or in disarray over the issues raised by 1992 — not daring to continue its agitation for British withdrawal from the EEC, which is now discredited and was always a nationalist diversion, but not daring to decide to drop that demand, either.

The answer to the internationalisation of capital is workers' internationalism. Our answer to the EEC and to 1992 cannot be to look back to the days of more nationally-based capitalism, but to look forward to international coordination of workers' struggles.

We need a united left which fights for workers' internationalism as our answer to the growing internationalisation of capital, and the 1992 reforms in particular.

We also need a united left to fight to make the labour movement accessible to, and responsive to, the demands of women, black people and lesbians and gays.

We need to develop *Women for Socialism* into a mass socialist feminist movement based on working class women and their struggles. We need to support black self-organisation and to fight racism at every level. We need to develop a united campaign against Section 28 and to end all discrimination against lesbians and gays.

When we cannot achieve full unity, we need left unity on particular issues and for particular campaigns.

We should support initiatives for coordination and discussion on the left like the *Socialist Conference*, the *Campaign for Socialism* and *Labour Left Liaison*.

We should form united support committees for every major industrial dispute, on the model of the support committees for the miners' strike.

We should unite the left in the Labour Party around such rank-and-file initiatives as the *Constituency Labour Parties Conference*, whose next gathering this coming autumn has now been sponsored by the Campaign Group.

We should unite with socialists

outside the Labour Party in campaigns and support committees.

We should back the *China Solidarity Campaign*, the *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, the *Time to Go* campaign on Ireland, the *Anti-Apartheid movement*, and solidarity with the *Palestine Liberation Organisation*.

Such single issue unity will always be necessary; there will always be groups on the left which have unbridgeable divisions on one issue but need to unite on another, and we need to learn that unbridgeable divisions on one issue should not exclude unity on another. But single-issue unity is a second best.

In Britain, America and some other countries before World War 1, there were socialist movements which consisted of a great variety of groups and factions, often with overlapping memberships, which collaborated on single issues. Some people see that amiable chaos as a model for today. But it is not. Even before World War 1, the fragmented state of the British and American movements compared to others reflected weakness and immaturity rather than strength. And there is no point pretending that the disputes and divisions in the socialist movement over the last 75 years — over reform and revolution, Stalinism and other issues — just never happened.

We need to fight for unity — which means trying to thrash out a political basis for unity by debate and discussion, rather than just agreeing to disagree. Already an important step forward has been made among students, where the recently-formed *Left unity* movement unites many of the left on a wide-ranging programme.

That initiative could be a model for other areas. In every area we need to take stock of ourselves, and see whether the divisions of the 1980s really correspond to the needs of the 1990s. Let's start now!

This appeal has been issued by Socialist Organiser. We invite replies, comments, contributions and criticism from other groups and individuals on the left.

Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.



stones (on strike) over nationalisation — or rationalisation. The employers spent £70 million on Preston docks, only to find the river was silted up. And when the docks closed, a lot of local firms closed, having no direct access to the sea. A similar thing happened to Trafford Park in Manchester when the docks were run down and closed.

Thatcher says they're the green party, yet they're putting everything on the roads — they could put trade on to the water.

They've learned from Ted Heath — he tried to take us all on at the same time. This lot are picking us off, group by group.

I don't know where they get this 'jobs for life' from. The Dock Labour Scheme doesn't say anything about 'jobs for life'. They're also saying they can't sack men. There's been more dockers sacked from Manchester than any firm in the country — thousands.

And when you got sacked there, you didn't just get sacked from a job, you got sacked from the industry. You couldn't go down to Liverpool docks and get a job there — no chance. Dock workers were pulled from under the Redundancy Payments Act at the employers' request — because it suited them at the time.

Second printing now out! 60p plus 14p postage from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Free the jailed Chinese workers and students!

Pass this resolution in your trade union or Labour Party

We call on the Chinese government:

1. To free Shan Xia Lan, Qian Xumin, and Boi Dongpin, the leaders of the independent workers' union set up in Beijing on 19 May, and all other workers and students arrested for their part in the democracy movement.

2. To recognise the right of Chinese workers and students to form their own independent unions.

We resolve to affiliate to the Chinese Solidarity Campaign.

Send copies of resolutions passed to the Chinese Solidarity Campaign, 68 Shaftesbury Ave, London W1, and to the Chinese Embassy, 49 Portland Place, London W1.

According to Agence France-Presse, the 'Independent Association of Workers of Beijing' was founded on 19 May.

It rapidly enrolled 13,000 workers, and demanded recognition from the government. It published a list of ten questions to the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Its leaders were arrested on 29 May.

These were the ten questions:

1. How much money has the son of Deng Xiaoping spent on the races in Hong Kong? How much money has he deposited in the bank in Hong Kong for this purpose? Where did this money come from?
2. Zhao Ziyang and his wife play golf each week. Do they pay for this activity? With what money?
3. Has the Central Committee made an assessment of the results of the reforms in the last period? Li Peng declared at the Spring Festival that there had been mistakes. What are those mistakes? What is the real situation?
4. The Central Committee has declared that it is taking measures against inflation. The reality is quite the opposite: prices are soaring, the standard of living is constantly declining. How do you explain that?

5. As from next year, China will have to pay back its foreign debt. How much will each person, each Chinese, have to pay? Will this have an effect on living standards?

6. Deng Xiaoping has declared that he is going to improve the social situation of intellectuals from the 9th to the first grade. What exactly are the possessions of those on the first grade? Are they landowners? Does their property come from their family?

7. On the party leaders: how many residences and holiday homes do they have? How do they spend

each month? Can they let the people know this?

8. How much do the party leaders earn?

9. The Taiwan government puts three conditions for the opening of dialogue with the Chinese government. How does the Central Committee intend to reply?

10. What in your view do the following expressions mean: political party, revolution, counter-revolution?

We expect ten replies to these ten questions, published rapidly in the newspapers.



A Statue of Liberty still standing in Shanghai last week

Australia's Right in disarray

Janet Burstall reports from Sydney

Many Australians recently got a glimpse of the usually secret methods of bourgeois politics.

John Howard, Thatcher-admirer yet commonly perceived as a wimp without charisma, was overthrown as leader of the conservative Liberal party and the Opposition. He was replaced by Andrew Peacock, the man Howard displaced three years earlier.

The leadership challenge was announced only 12 hours before the meeting at which it took place. The media and Labour politicians speculated as to whether a soufflé could rise twice, Peacock being considered more a man of style, with a taste for Gucci, than a man of substance.

When the soufflé emerged victor, 44 votes to Howards' 27, he claimed that he had been drafted by popular demand to challenge for the Liberal leadership only a few days earlier.

Within a week, the Four Corners television programme interviewed two of Peacock's main supporters, one of whom was on Howard's front bench. They bragged about how they had plotted and schemed and lied since January to organise the numbers for Peacock, while keeping it a secret from all but a small circle. The burden of having kept the secret for nearly five mon-

ths was released in a torrent of details of their plotting, including that Peacock had been fully informed at least two weeks beforehand.

The embarrassed Peacock fumbled to cover up his obvious lying. Radio listeners phoned in their shock and disgust at the dishonesty of the politicians.

In *My Life* Trotsky wrote that it could be very educative for the masses, if only movie cameras could get behind the facade of democracy and the doors of the bourgeoisie to record the secret machinations which show how politics is really conducted. A little of this is what happened on the Four Corners programme.

The leadership tussle also illustrates the difficulties facing the conservative forces in Australia. Their ground has been so thoroughly occupied by Labor, and the trade union bureaucracy is so effective at stifling and diverting working class opposition, that it is difficult for the conservatives to establish a convincing political profile.

Howard attempted to emulate Thatcher after her visit to Australia last year, and stirred up an anti-Asian immigration debate. But this alarmed the capitalists, who rely on good trading relationships with Asian countries and skilled immigrants from Asia.

Peacock has opposed Howard's stand on immigration. But his victory doesn't represent a victory for

any particular policies or programme. It is more a victory for charisma and ability to lie more convincingly in making statements that touch a popular chord, such as the decline in workers' living standards under Hawke.

The conservatives have suffered setbacks in Queensland. A by-election showed a swing of 17% against the ruling National Party following the resignation of a minister who had been exposed as corrupt. Former Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen's National Party administration is now widely recognised as corrupt.

In Tasmania, the biggest vote yet in Australia for Green candidates has resulted in a Parliament where neither Labor nor Liberal has a majority. The former Liberal government has 17, Labor 13 and Green 5. Negotiations for the forming of a government, and counting to finalise the seats in Tasmania, may take a few more weeks.

Tasmanians had been regarded as doggedly conservative and hostile to environmentalists, during the campaign to save the Franklin River from being dammed in 1983. The Tasmanian Liberal government took its gung-ho rape-the-environment attitude too far, and

drove former anti-environmentalists into the arms of the Greens with a project for a paper mill with highly toxic emissions. Labor, in typically opportunist fashion, had half-heartedly followed rather than led, opposition to the Liberals, and hence has not gained from the Liberals' losses.

The Socialist Workers and Communist Parties are delighted with the Greens' gains. They ignore the fact that the politics of the Greens are capitalist. The main point they make about Tasmania's economy is that small businesses should be fostered. There is much in their environmental policies for workers to support, but they are not a vehicle for the development of a working class programme for socialism.

Socialists can hope that the general crisis of the conservative political parties will make Hawke, Keating and the union leaders less able to use the danger of the conservatives as a reason for not fighting the Labor government.

The continuing two-week occupation of Cockatoo Island Dockyard by 300 out of 1600 workers, against sell-off by Labor, shows that some workers are willing to fight.

ACTIVISTS' DIARY

Saturday 8 July
Workers' Liberty summer school (two days). Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19

Saturday 8 July
West Midlands Socialist Conf. Trade Unionists' day school. Star Club, 136 digbeth, Birmingham, 10.00am. Registration £1.50 (50p unwaged) to Nick Hay, 49 Watt Rd, B23 6EU

Wednesday 26 July
Bristol SO: 'Socialism, Europe and 1992'. Speaker: Neil Stonelake. Shepherds Hall, Old Market, 7.30

Friday 15 September
CLPs Conference. Speakers include Alice Mahon, Audrey Wise, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer. Sheffield, 7.30. Contact Lol Duffy, 11 Egremont Prom, Merseyside L44 8BG. (051 638 1338)

Saturday 16 September
CLPs Conference. Speakers include Alice Mahon, Audrey Wise, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer. Sheffield, 10.00am

Friday 3 November
History Workshop Conference 1989. Salford University. Contact Helen Bowyer, 51 Crescent, Salford M5 4UX (061 736 3601)

Saturday 11 November
Socialist Conference 'Building the Left in the Unions'. Sheffield Poly Student Union, Pond St, 10.30. Credentials £6 waged, £4 unwaged from Socialist Conference, 9 Poland St, London W1

Wednesday 21 June
Bristol SO: 'What's wrong with New Realism?' Speaker: Martin Barclay. Shepherds Hall, Old Market, 7.30

Wednesday 21 June
Northampton SO: 'Support Chinese workers and students'. Speaker: Cheung Siu Ming.

Thursday 22 June
Stoke Campaign Group: 'Support Chinese workers and students'

Friday 23 June
Campaign Against Repression in Iran: 'Defend Salman Rushdie'. Old Theatre, LSE, Houghton St, 6.30

Friday 23 June
Manchester SO: Debate on Ireland with Geoff Bell (Briefing) and John O'Mahony (SO). Millstone pub, Thomas St, 7.30

Saturday 1 July
TUC poll tax demonstration, Manchester

Friday 7 July
Troops Out Movement public meeting with Sinn Fein councillor. Tottenham Town Hall, 7.30

WHERE WE STAND

Socialist Organiser stands for workers' liberty East and West. We aim to help organise the left wing in the Labour Party and trade unions to fight to replace capitalism with working class socialism.

We want public ownership of the major enterprises and a planned economy under

workers' control. We want democracy much fuller than the present Westminster system — a workers' democracy, with elected representatives recallable at any time, and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

Socialism can never be built in one country alone. The workers in every country have more in common with workers in other countries than with their own capitalist or Stalinist rulers. We support national liberation struggles and workers' struggles worldwide, including the struggle of

workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their own anti-socialist bureaucracies.

We stand:

For full equality for women, and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. For a mass working class-based women's movement.

Against racism, and against deportations and all immigration controls.

For equality for lesbians and gays.

For a united and free Ireland, with some federal system to protect the rights of the Protestant minority.

For left unity in action; clarity in debate and discussion.

For a labour movement accessible to the most oppressed, accountable to its rank and file, and militant against capitalism.

We want Labour Party and trade union members who support our basic ideas to become supporters of the paper — to take a bundle of papers to sell each week and pay a small contribution to help meet the paper's deficit. Our policy is democratically controlled by our supporters through Annual General Meetings and an elected National Editorial Board.

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Last year's Socialist Conference

This 'twin track' is a dead end

John Bloxam reports on the third Socialist Conference, held in Sheffield on 17-18 June

The most positive thing to come out of this event was the plan to organise a trade union conference this November under the auspices of the newly-declared 'Socialist Movement'.

Since the 'Broad Lefts Organising Committee' was reduced to a still-birth by the domination of *Militant*, such an initiative to get a broad range of the trade union left together has been much needed.

The first Socialist Conference was called in Tony Benn's Chesterfield constituency in 1987, sponsored by the Campaign Group of MPs, the Socialist Society (a group mainly of left academics), and the Conference of Socialist Economists. This third conference declared itself a 'Socialist Movement'.

As well as the unions, there are, or at least should be, other areas where the Socialist Movement can provide a valuable framework for left unity. The first Socialist Conference launched *Women for Socialism*; last year's Conference provided the springboard to launch the Constituency Labour Parties Conference.

This year's conference was substantially smaller than last year's. *Socialist Outlook* and *Briefing* have worked themselves into a dominant position in the organisation of the venture, and at the final plenary session, for example, they made sure that they got the lion's share of the speakers.

The promised open debate was thus often not very open. There have been some real advances. On Europe, the Socialist Movement has clearly moved away from the left's traditional nationalist 'Britain out' position towards a drive for international workers' unity.

But on Ireland the policy statement submitted scarcely recognised the existence of the Protestant minority, and *Socialist Organiser* supporters were called 'racists' for daring to disagree with Sinn Fein.

What does the change of name from 'Conference' to 'Movement' mean? An alternative Policy Review statement has been produced. But instead of a coherent direction for action there is the so-called 'twin track strategy' — working both inside and outside the Labour Party.

In fact this strategy has an in-

creasingly sectarian drift. Strategy documents from the organising committee put the emphasis on working outside the Labour Party, said that Kinnock's victory at this year's Labour Party conference would be "a mere formality", and dismissed the prospect of turning as many CLPs into campaigning organisations as impossible.

Most of the people at the Conference must have been Labour Party members, but for them the Conference meant a weekend of talk about vague but radical action outside the Party, rather than a session of organising to fight inside the Party.

The Socialist Workers' Party, whose main message to left-wingers is 'leave the Labour Party', praised the Conference.

So far the attempts to give the Socialist Conference some substance between Conferences — local groups, and events like its Poll Tax conference and Local Government conference this year — have been feeble.

Despite the decline in numbers at this year's conference and the clotting of the organisation by the increasingly sectarian Briefing organisation, the Socialist Movement can provide a useful framework for debate and cooperation. Maybe we can make a start with the trade union conference.

Tories press ahead on loans

By Liz Millward

Kenneth Baker is talking about student loans again. Along with the rest of the Tories he is prepared to ignore the following facts:

1. That the banks don't want to administer a loans scheme.
2. That the Treasury has refused point blank to administer it.
3. That students don't want loans.
4. That college authorities aren't very keen.
5. That the cost to the taxpayer, per student is likely to be around £100 a year more with a loans scheme than without it.
6. That a student will borrow £420 but pay back a lot more. And plans are for students to borrow even more and so pay back even more. This won't encourage more people to study, it will discourage people.

In other words, student loans are a totally stupid idea. The best way to get more people into education is to offer more and bigger grants. Kenneth Baker knows this, the rest of the Tories know it. But they are determined to introduce their pet loans scheme anyway. Why?

Simple — at the moment lots of people get their further and higher education without paying to keep themselves while they study. The Tories hate this. For them education should be bought — available only to people who have lots of money.

In fact most students (the vast majority) do pay to keep themselves at college, and their parents pay too — since the Tories came to power 'parental contributions' have increased by 200%. But that isn't enough for the Tories, they want everyone to pay.

The Tories want us to pay for our health care, our dental care, for our eye tests, for our children's school books, and now they want us to pay for the privilege of going to college — and not only to pay, but to pay interest as well so that some City banker can make a profit out of us.

The Tories call this process relieving the tax-payer's burden. The government cuts things like health and education spending, then uses the money to finance a tax cut. That seems to make sense.

Except that the cuts in public spending hit poor people, and the tax cuts benefit rich people. which is the Tories economic plan in a nut-



Student demo last year.

Photo: Ian Swindale.

shell.

In addition to all the cuts in education over the last few years, the Tories now want to lend students the money to go to college. That means that students not only pay to keep themselves while they study, but they pay money (interest on the loan) to the banks as well.

In an ideal world that would make everybody happy except the students and the people who couldn't afford to take out a loan. Unfortunately for the Tories student loans cost so much to administer, (and they have to be underwritten because not surprisingly many students don't repay them) that it costs more to lend the money than it does to give it away. About £100 per student more in fact.

And that money comes from the taxpayer. So the Tories are planning, in all seriousness, to simply give the banks a lot of taxpayers' money. That is essentially what the loans scheme boils down to.

What the Tories are hoping is that once we've got used to the idea of paying to keep ourselves at college (and most students already have) then we'll be more prepared to pay tuition fees as well. At that stage the sums work out a bit better for the Tories — polys, universities and colleges all financed by 'private

money', McDonalds College Oxford, Marks and Spencers Polytechnic etc.

This would be a dream come true for Kenneth Baker. He's just working up to it gradually.

Of course every time the Tories reduce the student grant, lend money instead of give it, and start to charge tuition fees, more and more people find they can't afford to go to college. The only people who don't care about the rising cost of a college education are the rich — the people who benefitted from the tax cuts, who already have private health care, who own shares in the banks which make the profit out of student loans.

Those people have been getting steadily richer since the Tories came to power, and make no mistake the privatisation of education will make them richer still.

Kenneth Baker has threatened to introduce a Loans Bill to the next Parliament in November. Our job is to stop him. There will be a demonstration right at the start of term directed at Tory Party Conference and we should make it our biggest one ever.

We must make sure that every student is involved in our campaign against loans from day one of next term and we should use the summer to prepare for that campaign.

Wipe away the tears!

By Jill Mountford

If you think of the saddest song (The Little Boy Santa Claus Forgot) and the most tear-jerking film (Lassie Come Home) you feel pretty upset, yes?

But neither a child alone at Xmas with no toys nor that special canine friend facing danger can induce the sorrow that will sweep the campuses when the news breaks that Gill Lewis, 'el supremo' of the National Union of Students women's campaign, has resigned only two months after being re-elected to the position of NUS women's officer.

Many tears of joy were shed by sisters at NUS women's conference when Gill was overwhelming re-elected, and now so soon after those celebrations the same sisters faces are all red and swollen again, this time with tears of sorrow. 'Tis a mournful day.

But there is one consolation. Gill's main task — no, not to lead a campaign to defeat the poll tax, or campaign for creche facilities on all campuses, or even a campaign for tampon machines in all colleges — no, I mean the main task, to stop a Socialist Student supporter from being elected as NUS women's officer,

has been achieved.

Gill confessed that she had been pushed into standing again, and that she had suffered ill-health throughout the second and third terms. She said, therefore, that her full commitment could not be guaranteed for the new academic year.

I, for one, am genuinely sorry if Gill is suffering ill health, but I suspect Gill's biggest health problem is her politics. Gill until recently was a member of the Communist Party and a peddler of *Marxism Today* (she rejoined the Labour Party publicly and immediately after her re-election as women's officer). She is soft on the Stalinist states, has consistently voted with the Democratic Left leadership, is noted for her support for the official student unions in the Eastern Bloc and consistently votes against SSiN proposals to support the independent students unions, such as NZS in Poland.

She stands alongside the DL leadership on China — that is, in failing to make solidarity with Chinese students and workers in their fight for democracy and against their slaughter. She is also one of the growing breed of careerists who argue that the working class is dead, that nowadays everyone is sort of middle-class. She is one of that particularly ignorant breed of politi-

cians who cannot picture a worker outside of the stereotype — ie, a man wearing clogs and a cloth cap. Gill's softness on Stalinism allows her to be as unprincipled as necessary, to bureaucratically carve out the hard left in NUS. Gill, like the DL leadership, is a hypocrite and partial to double standards, providing they're her own.

Gill, the greatest feminist to hit NUS since Julie Grant, made no reference to her party affiliations or politics in her election address, but instead pronounced that she was standing as 'a woman working for women' and yet at the same time she played a central role in ensuring the attack on other women, particularly Socialist Student women, for their political affiliations and policies, often distorting and taking out of context articles written by us.

Gill, the greatest feminist to hit NUS since Julie Grant, was party to a particularly foul and disgusting anti-feminist attack on women Socialist Student supporters when Communist Students put out a bulletin proclaiming boldly that women in Socialist Student were merely part of Simon Pottinger's harem.

Gill Lewis and her cohorts tried to make out that they're some sort of pure breed when it comes to women's politics; and that their world political

perspectives stand apart from their feminism, but it's plain that Gill's feminism is contaminated by her Stalinism.

Anyway, on a lighter note, and putting both me and Gill in a bit of a quandary — imagine Hilary Lucas's face when she finds out that Gill Lewis is resigning! What a picture! After all, the only reason she didn't start for the post she so deserved was that sister Gill was standing. It looks like Gill has fouled her own nest a bit here.

As for Maeve, who can she now call upon to make those really vicious anti-Trot speeches necessary to whip up the hysteria at NUS Conference when the DL is about to lose a vote? Those speeches really were Gill's forte.

There is some good news in all this. We do have a women's officer for next year. Yes, Maeve and Gill discussed it and decided to ask Natalie Jennings, who was elected to NUS women's committee from the lesbian caucus.

Gill then took it to the women's committee and politely asked everyone if they'd like to stand. Unfortunately for the DL, only Natalie could take on the responsibility of being NUS women's officer at such short notice.

So cheer up sisters, wipe away those tears, put a little make-up on those red eyes. All is not lost.

How trial by media blights lives

CINEMA

Belinda Weaver reviews 'A Cry in the Dark'

Mention the names of Michael and Lindy Chamberlain these days, and you're likely to draw a blank. But mention the 'dingo baby' case and you'll probably get a response, even now, even here.

The famous Australian case, which began in August 1980 with the disappearance of baby Azaria from the Chamberlain family's tent at Ayers Rock, has long been a newspaper headliner.

For the Chamberlains, the case was a long nightmare that irrevocably altered their lives. They lost not just their baby daughter, but their privacy and their good names, and their marriage was almost destroyed by the unrelenting pressure of the case.

'A Cry in the Dark' tells the story from the Chamberlains' point of view, and it tells it clearly and dispassionately, separating facts from errors, myths and distortions, something that was impossible in the hysterical atmosphere of the time. The film is on their side.

Based on the book, 'Evil Angels', by John Bryson, 'A Cry in the Dark' is a very disturbing film, since it indicts not just the media whose persecution of the Chamberlain family reached horrific proportions, but also the entire Australian public who condemned Lindy and Michael unheard.

In tiny snippets throughout the film, different people chat about the case over dinner, in bars, in front of the television. Almost all condemn the Chamberlains. What is so frightening about these casual remarks is how familiar they are, and how seemingly innocent. Yet they all add up to a witch-hunting atmosphere.

The case was impossible to ignore, so it's hardly surprising that speculation and gossip were rife in all sections of the population. The case attracted the usual ghouls who became fixated on the accused in famous trials, but it also caught the imagination of millions of Australians.

In the film, one of Lindy's small sons is accosted in the street by a woman avid for knowledge. When she grabs the boy and demands to know what had really happened to baby Azaria, she is simply asking the question millions wanted to know. What really happened at



Meryl Streep as Lindy Chamberlain

Ayers Rock?

Lindy claimed a dingo had taken the baby from the tent, and the first inquest confirmed the findings, and exonerated the Chamberlains from blame. But later, Lindy was accused of murder, and found guilty. Two appeals failed to overturn the conviction and she spent four years in goal before being released on compassionate grounds. She and her husband were later granted a full pardon.

The film quite clearly shows that Lindy never had the slightest chance of a fair trial. The defence's case was complicated, and largely based on forensic evidence that the jury found hard to understand. The prosecution tried their hardest to demolish the dingo option, but completely failed to make a case for murder.

At no time during the trial did they ever try to establish a motive. In the absence of clear proof either way, the jury opted for a guilty verdict, and Lindy went to jail.

What probably drove them to a guilty verdict, despite a favourable summing up by the judge, and although the prosecution had not proved their case beyond all reasonable doubt, was the intense public dislike of the Chamberlains, which the press had carefully fostered. No jury could fail to be influenced by the press reports which treated the Chamberlains with

unrelenting hostility and ridicule.

Lindy and Michael were Seventh Day Adventists, and this aroused prejudice. The Chamberlains' statement that their religion had helped them bear their tragedy infuriated the public, always quick to condemn people who were in any way 'different'. Lindy's calm demeanour also alienated people. Had she wept, or shown grief, people might have swung behind her. When she refused to be what people expected of her, they turned savagely on her, and she was guilty in the eyes of the public before she even got to court.

When Lindy appeared, stony faced, at the trial, an observer remarked: "Look at her! Enough to turn the milk sour."

Performances from Meryl Streep as Lindy and Sam Neill as Michael are both excellent. Sam Neill so strikingly evokes Michael Chamberlain that he almost cancels out memories of the real Michael. Meryl Streep on the other hand has no real physical likeness to Lindy, yet she manages to suggest both Lindy's mask-like determination to guard her feelings, and also the tumult of the feelings under the mask. It's her best performance to date, and she wrings a lot of feeling out of her flat, uninflected Australian accent.

Though the Australian public come in for criticism for their pre-

judices, it is really the press who are indicted in 'A Cry in the Dark'. The foot soldiers of the press waged an almost military campaign against the Chamberlains.

In the movie, microphones and video cameras are the weapons thrust into their faces whenever they step out of doors, the Chamberlain children are no longer able to play outside, and in one horrific scene, Lindy and Michael are menaced by three circling helicopters from the television networks. They no longer have any place to hide.

The vitriolic press campaign almost broke the Chamberlains, nearly destroyed their marriage, and they no longer live in Australia. Media persecution of that type is not unknown in this country, and it has driven many people to breakdown and even suicide. Yet the press rampages on, gleefully destroying lives and reputations as it goes.

The Chamberlains survived, despite a decade in the spotlight, and they had the hollow triumph of seeing the press there to cheer them on at the end when Lindy was released, and later when they were cleared from blame. The press, with complete inconsistency, switched tack after Lindy was convicted. From 'uncaring mother' and 'murderess', she had changed into that other press perennial — the innocent victim of injustice, the underdog.

A free press is an important freedom, yet a free press geared to profit can be a vile and dangerous thing, as cases like the Chamberlains' show. Lindy should have been tried by an unbiased jury of twelve, not by a hostile press concerned only to exploit and distort the tragedy for its own commercial ends. With the press whipping up hysteria, Lindy's trial was a mockery in which, against all rules of justice, she had to try to prove her innocence, rather than have her guilt proven by the prosecution.

Trial by media is an abomination, pandering as it does to bigotry, ignorance and prejudice. Even a guilty person should not be subjected to the kind of persecution the Chamberlains endured. It is simply inhuman.

Ironically Lindy finds greater peace within goal than out in the media spotlights, and her fellow prisoners (mostly aboriginal women and, like Lindy, outsiders in Australian society) are kinder and more understanding than the hostile public outside.

After revealing that Lindy and Michael were pardoned and found innocent, 'A Cry in the Dark' ends with the words "The fight to restore their lives goes on." Amen.

Bemoaning revolution

TV

By Vicki Morris

At the start of every documentary we should be given a short biography of the person who compiled it.

Not of the order of 'so-and-so has two children and a dog and spends his time between his house in Dorset and a flat in Bayswater'. But, certainly, 'so-and-so gained a diploma in Media Studies at Leeds University in 1960-odd and now contributes regularly to New Statesman/The Spectator'.

Then you could get an idea of where he or she was coming from.

Next, the documentor should be made to say, 'this is what I think about and this is what I fight for; this is my theory on this particular subject, and this is how I intend to prove my point during this programme'.

Then you could decide if indeed you wanted to watch the programme; look out for the tricks they might use to make their point; and write to the TV companies to ask that, in future, they make programmes which simply tell the truth.

Perhaps I do like my documentaries as dry as dust, but the 'Inside Story — Road to Terror' programme about the Iranian Revolution, hastily put together to commemorate the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, irritated me with its generalisations and gimmicks.

What am I talking about? Things like bursts of religious music, especially towards the end of the programme. For most people in our society, choirs are usually 'heavenly' and this device was used to impress upon the audience that the 'truths' the programme attempted to convey are good for all time and God-given.

The programme-maker pursued the line that all revolutions degenerate into power, struggles between the groups of people who made the revolution and despotic domination of everyone else by the group which gets the upper hand.

So he drew a comparison between the terror after the French Revolution, and the atrocities of Ayatollah Khomeini's regime after the Iranian Revolution.

He carried the comparison to such a ludicrous extent as to imply that there was something of ironic historical significance in the fact that lots of Iranians fleeing Khomeini's own terror went to live in Paris.

What seemed to be a reasonable history of the Iranian Revolution and its degeneration was muddled with tedious comparisons of that ilk, and the undaunting pursuit of its maker's hobby-horse.

Documentary-makers have a duty to let the facts speak for themselves. When they come at a subject with some axe to grind, too often they find facts to fit their model but, although thankfully for the discerning, the framework usually creeps a bit and gives the game away.

Horrifying pictures of people hanged by Khomeini, and the accounts of the executions, given by their surviving families, reminded us of one of the greatest tragedies of our time.

But, as the families explained, there is no going back on the Revolution. Even if you could undo events, you would not want to. The principles of the revolutionaries still remain to be realised when conditions are more favourable. And they will be.

Considering that he pretended a concern for the victims of revolutions which go wrong, the programme-maker showed scant respect for them in his manipulation of their testimonies to fit his shallow theory.

The documentary ended uncomfortably with the poignant, and by now famous, scene of a Chinese student stopping tanks in Tiananmen Square. I could only assume from the general tone of the programme that its maker considered the Chinese people tragically misguided in fighting for democratic rights...because even if they got them, they wouldn't know what to do with them.

Botulism breaks out!

LES HEARN'S SCIENCE COLUMN

The latest outbreak of food poisoning in Britain is the relatively rare botulism.

The name 'botulism' comes from *botulus*, Latin for 'sausage'. This name was chosen because sausages were particularly prone to infection with the bacterium that causes botulism, *Clostridium botulinum*.

Botulism is rightly feared, as the poison produced by *C. botulinum* is one of the most deadly known. One milligram of botulinus toxin can kill 30 million mice or 1.2 million guinea pigs. One ounce could kill hundreds of millions of people.

C. botulinum comes from an illustrious family. Its relatives include the bacteria responsible for gas gangrene and tetanus. Botulism has historically

had a high death rate — up to 75%. Indeed, the celebrated German pathologist Virchow is said to have proposed, when challenged to a duel, that sausages be used as the weapons.

Colostridium bacteria are unusual in that they are unable to use oxygen. Indeed, oxygen is a deadly poison to them. They get their energy by fermenting sugars or proteins, releasing lots of gas in the process.

Their normal habitat is in the soil or in animals' intestines. If conditions are unfavourable (eg. too much oxygen), they produce spores which lie dormant until things improve.

The spores can be spread by the wind, so clostridium bacteria are widespread and can easily settle on food. The bacteria are killed by heating but the spores are more hardy. They can resist boiling for hours and even pressure cooking for a few minutes.

If any spores survive, they can germinate if the oxygen level is low, as in a tin, at the centre of a piece of meat or a sausage, in a fish or in hazelnut yoghurt (the cause of the recent outbreak). Food that does not seem spoiled can still contain botulinus toxin.

The toxin is absorbed from the gut, unaffected by stomach acid or protein-digesting enzymes (even though it is a protein). Dried toxin can also be absorbed by breathing, so precautions against this must be taken by laboratory staff working with *C. botulinum*. Understandably, researchers into chemical and biological warfare have paid close attention to this poison.

In the body, botulinus toxin has a particular affinity for the ends of some nerves in the spinal cord and supplying muscles. It sticks to those nerve endings, preventing them from passing on messages. A progressive paralysis occurs, as the muscles stop getting instructions to contract.

Double vision and drooping eyelids are the first symptoms, followed by paralysis of the eye muscle and incoordination of the eyes. Next, there is difficulty with swallowing, speech and breathing. Death comes from respiratory or heart failure.

Swift treatment with the anti-toxin results in recovery with little ill-effects. Delay allows the toxin to become more firmly fixed to the nerve endings and the anti-toxin is of less use. The victim must

be kept alive by artificial ventilation of the lungs and feeding until the body has cleared the poison from itself. Recovery is usually complete.

The fact that no-one has died in the present outbreak suggests either than levels of toxin were extremely low or that a less powerful form of the toxin was involved or that modern techniques of intensive care are more effective in preventing deaths.

In the last outbreak in 1978, four people became ill through eating salmon from a defective can. Two died. In the most famous case, in 1922, a Scottish fishing party set off from a well-known hotel for Loch Maree. Their packed lunches included sandwiches made with wild duck pate. Within 24 hours eight had died.

Ironically, the toxin can be easily destroyed by boiling for ten minutes, but this is not usually done with cold cuts of meat or salami-type sausages.

The additive, sodium nitrite, is often put into meat or sausage to give them a nice red colour. It also seems to inhibit the growth of *Clostridium botulinum*. What a pity it also seems to encourage stomach cancer!

Ron Todd and the docks strike

INSIDE THE UNIONS

By Sleeper

No-one likes recriminations and name-calling. But the fact remains that the present impasse in the docks dispute is largely the responsibility of Ron Todd and his supporters in the leadership of the TGWU.

What is the explanation for Todd's miserable performance and — more importantly — what can we do about it? The first thing that needs to be said is that we are not talking here about individual cowardice or corruption. In fact, Todd's personal record is somewhat better than that of most trade union leaders.

He started out as a fairly militant Fords shop steward at Walthamstow and, later, Dagenham. As the TGWU's chief negotiator, he gave some real

leadership to the 1978 Fords strike that succeeded in squeezing 10 to 16% rises out of the company and helped finish off the Labour government's 5% pay ceiling.

Since becoming the General Secretary in 1985 Todd has fought a continual battle against a well-organised right-wing within the union, in order to keep the T&G broadly on the 'left' in both TUC and Labour Party terms. He was a leading 'Friend of the NUM' on the TUC general council during the miners' strike. At the 1987 TUC Congress he denounced Eric Hammond as a 'jackal' over the EETPU's scabbing at Wapping. To date, Todd has continued to defend the T&G's long-standing policy of unilateral disarmament.

No, Todd is not a gaffer's man and he is not a blind follower of the 'New Realism' that now dominates both the TUC and the Labour Party. But he is a reformist and a bureaucrat — terms that are not on this occasion intended as insults, but as a straightforward description of the political tradition he stands in and the role he plays within the trade union movement. For all his past will-

ingness to defend his members' interests and to stand by basic labour movement principles, Todd's vision is fatally flawed by his commitment to the structures and organisation of the union over and above the interests of the members that he will back the struggles of his members, while those struggles do not bring the union into direct conflict with the full force of the law and the state.

In all of this, Todd stands foursquare in the traditions of his predecessors, Moss Evans, Jack Jones and Frank Cousins. Like them he stands on the 'left' of the movement; like them he is not without personal integrity and even courage; like them he is a machine man for whom the union structures take priority over class struggles.

When in 1972, militant dockers defied the Heath government's National Industrial Relations Court (NIRC) and waged a campaign of secondary action and picketing against containerisation, Jack Jones was quite prepared to face arrest and jail rather than recognise the NIRC. But when the NIRC proved (in Jones' words) 'too clever to find that

course' and instead hit the union with £55,000 in fines and the threat of losing another £100,000 in damages, Jones fell over himself to disown the action — even to the point of threatening to withdraw the credentials of militant stewards.

This is precisely the tradition Todd stands in. The present docks dispute has shown up the limitations of Todd and his supporters with brutal clarity. No-one blames Todd for taking some precautions to protect the union's funds. But against the present government and its panoply of anti-union legislation any serious fight will eventually come up against the law one way or the other. Militants in the TGWU need to set about building a rank and file movement that puts the requirements of the struggle first. Immediately, that means fighting for all-out action in the docks before the Scheme officially finishes at the end of this month: we should demand that Todd give such a lead, but recent events have shown that we can place no reliance on him.

Mixed mood in engineering

There was a lot of fighting talk at the special Confed conference called on 9 June to discuss the engineering unions' campaign for the 35 hour week.

However, the mood amongst delegates was mixed. One delegate reported that at British Aerospace a mass meeting of 6,000 had voted nearly unanimously to support the Confed executive's strategy of indefinite strikes in a limited number of large profit-making companies. But others expressed doubts that all the burden of a national dispute could be put on the backs of a small number of better organised workers.

This caution was reinforced by the fact that many activists remember the lock-outs that followed the 1979 engineering dispute at places like Rolls Royce.

Nevertheless at least the campaign has

begun. Confed secretary Alex Ferry even went so far as to say that the national officials could sabotage the action if they wanted to, and the fact that they haven't was proof that they were genuine. The executive's strategy of striking in selective locations is the best way to build momentum, he said, and proof that they are serious.

But major problems remain. Can the indefinite selective strike strategy advocated by the Confed executive have any real possibility of success?

The answer must be no. Selective action from the most militant sections may be a useful means of opening the dispute. It could no doubt boost the confidence, interest and involvement of weaker sections who may be doubtful at our real and growing bargaining strength.

If this isolated selective action is prolonged for any length of time it could

strain the loyalty and solidarity of those sections called out. They could not be expected to take all the weight of a national dispute on their shoulders. What is worrying is that the executive refused to be drawn on whether that action would be quickly extended.

If selective strike action is to be pursued then its conduct must be under the control of the shop stewards and convenors representing those being called out. They should meet as soon as they are called on to ballot. They are the best people to judge and should have the right to decide how long the selective strike can last and at what stage the issue has to be put to the overall engineering membership.

Increasing numbers of engineering workers are finding themselves working under CSEU/EEF-negotiated conditions but are denied full involvement in the Confed because their employers have pulled out of the EEF or have never chosen to affiliate.

It is crazy that we should allow the bosses to isolate these workers from the wider solidarity of engineering workers in this way.

At the May 4th Confed executive council Bill McGinnis of the GMB proposed that workers in non-federated companies should be called upon to submit the Confed claim for reduced hours, preparing the ground for parallel action alongside workers in the federated companies.

That proposal does not appear to have been discussed. It should have been and it should be acted upon now. The industry we work in has not been as profitable as it is now for the last 20 years. But workers have never been treated as badly, especially where our union organisation is weak.

Now is the time to turn the tide, but this can only be done if at every stage there is full discussion of the difficulties facing us and how they can be overcome at shop steward level. CSEU districts should campaign to involve stewards as the executive has called them to.

Tube struggle

The unofficial Tube strike on Friday 16 June was another success.

This sixth 24-hour strike, called at two days' notice, caused severe traffic congestion. The impact was increased by strikes at four bus garages in South London.

Tube drivers want a minimum £6.43 hourly rate, without strings, for One Person Operated trains. Guards would get extra pay to match.

As we go to press, an official strike of all 10,500 London Underground workers is planned for Wednesday 21 June. It is against the bosses' attempt to rip up all established work conditions and promotion channels for station staff, and to create a docile and 'passenger-friendly' workforce.

It is essential that all Tube workers stick together in a united fight against the bosses. Tube drivers agreed at a mass meeting last week to strike on 21

June alongside the station staff. The unofficial action by drivers inspired the station staff's heavy vote for strike action. That in turn boosted the confidence of railworkers on Network South East, who organised unofficial

action before voting for a national strike. Tube workers should use this new mood to build up to all-out official strike action.

London steel erectors are still on strike over pay. Their London-wide stewards' committee has called for financial support.

Strikes in Australia

Australian dockers struck for one day on 20 June over employers' attacks very similar to those in Britain.

The bosses want to get rid of three thousand dockers, mainly older ones, and return the industry to casual labour.

The dockers' union, the Waterside Workers' Federation has been negotiating with the employers over this plan, but called the protest strike because the bosses are going for compulsory as well as voluntary redundancies.

NUR members on Newcastle Metro went on a one-day strike on 8th June in support of a pay claim.

The strike was solid. Of the 5 trains which ran, 2 were driven by supervisors. There were very few scabs and only one NUR member turned up to the main depot for work on Sunday morning.

IN BRIEF

Union leaders of 29,000 manual workers at ICI have thrown out an 8.8 per cent pay offer.

BBC union delegates meet this Thursday, 22nd, to discuss the bosses' new offer. It is much the same as the 7% imposed earlier, but includes a £200 lump payment and the promise of a pay review next year.

London steel erectors are still on

Talking about Europe

WHETTON'S WEEK

A miner's diary

A lot of people who should have voted Labour in the Euro-elections and the by-elections didn't because Labour didn't present a positive alternative.

Still the results do underline the fact that people are fed up with the Tories. And people are becoming more aware.

People are talking about Europe and the European elections in a way they have not done before. I think we are going to see much more interest in future. I have heard miners at my pit, for example, discussing the differences of pensions, wages, and hours for miners across Europe.

The organisations which monitor the different conditions for labour across the continent are beginning to pick up on the poor deal we get under Maggie. That's why the Tories are backpedalling on Europe.

The Tories have got to pull something off before the next election. They may even try to pull us out of Europe. The next couple of years will be very interesting.

We took a good contingent up to the National Miners' Gala last weekend.

I was pleased to see that there was quite a good turnout from Notts. It was a magnificent march and was well received on the streets of Barnsley. The public was pleased to see us and applauded us on our way.

I listened with interest to the speeches made by the National President, the Chair of the TUC, Dennis Skinner, and Peter Heathfield.

I found that some of the things Arthur Scargill was saying really echoed my own sentiments. We did not join the Labour Party so that it could manage capitalism better than the capitalists. The decision to abandon unilateral nuclear disarmament was a tragedy.

There were miners present from all over the world — from Nicaragua, Chile and Czechoslovakia. It was a great day out.

I agreed with Scargill's comments about strike action. You will not achieve anything without industrial action.

It's the only answer we've had, since the very beginnings of the labour movement. We are not going to get anywhere until we face up to that and act accordingly.

The laws have pressurised the dockers back to work. There is a pattern. The law courts are used to stop industrial action, to frighten and divide.

The Tories have ruled for ten years by fear. But now at last workers are standing up again and fighting back. Workers who are prepared to stand up and fight need all our encouragement and support.

Paul Whetton is a member of Manton NUM.

Quite a lot going on

By Nik Barstow

The traditional joke about the Town Hall workers' union NALGO, that its initials stand for Not A Lot Going On, was disproved by our union conference in the second week of June.

In the Local Government section the leadership was defeated when they opposed calls to put some flair, and money, into the campaign for industrial action over pay by a national newspaper campaign of 'Vote Yes' adverts. They only won by a whisker when they opposed calls for future wage claims to be flat-rate, not percentage, ones, so they benefit low-paid members.

In other sections the mood wasn't as clear. The union's health branches accepted a divisive pay and restructuring offer from the Health Service bosses. But complaints about lack of leadership on pay and the NHS White Paper had grown, and the conference backed joint union strike action as a key to defending the Health Service.

The gas branches, for the first time ever, overturned their section leadership and rejected an offer on pay and are planning action to win more.

The industrial tensions came to the surface across all sections of the union in demands, some successful, for greater democracy and accountability.

General secretary John Daly announced the day before the conference that he will not stand in the election for the post forced on the union by Tory law. This gives the right-wing Executive a headache: how to find a credible candidate.

The Executive wanted only a 'confirmatory' ballot for General Secretary after they had made the decision. They were resoundingly defeated. They wanted to stifle further discussion on extending NALGO democracy — they lost.

They tried to head off the demands of black, women, and lesbian and gay members for rights of self-organisation in the union — and often lost.

Moves to make union democracy central to negotiations on NALGO's proposed merger with NUPE were defeated, but only thanks to *Morning Star* supporters splitting from the left. Plans for an open conference of the left in NALGO on who should be supported for General Secretary — and what policies the left should push — could rattle the Executive even more.

On wider policy issues, it was a mixed conference. The left lost on Poll Tax, but NALGO did become the first sizeable union to sponsor the *Time To Go* campaign on Ireland.

The debate on Ireland was, however, nearly closed down — by the motion's movers! The Scottish District cooperated with the Executive to pull every procedural trick in the book to get their own motion off the agenda. But conference virtually forced them to move the motion, and carried it.

The launch of *NALGO Action*, a new bulletin for activists, fitted the new spirit of the conference. At a highly successful, informative and enjoyable fringe meeting, we agreed to produce urgent bulletins on local government pay and the NHS White Paper. Delegates from over two dozen branches agreed to press their branches to sponsor the bulletin.

NALGO ACTION: copies available from Islington NALGO, 1-2 Orlestone Rd, London N1 (01-354 7470). Local Government Pay special out on 10 July.

NALGO BROAD LEFT open conference to discuss policies and the General Secretary election: 22 July, Manchester. Contact: Chris Hill, 56 Hartley Ave, Leeds LS6 2LP (0532 446838 h, 462947 work).

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

Why the dock strike collapsed

The collapse of the unofficial strike on the docks is a serious setback.

On Saturday 10 June the unofficial National Port Shop Stewards Committee called for a national strike in defence of the conditions associated with the Dock Labour

Scheme.

The next day a mass meeting of Liverpool dockers voted to back the call. Jimmy Nolan, speaking for the Liverpool stewards, made it clear that he expected all the registered ports to be out by the end of the week.

That didn't happen. Why? The key test for getting an unofficial national strike came the next day, Monday 12 June, at Southampton. After a mass meeting lasting almost four hours, Southampton's registered dockers voted to continue working. This was a real kick in the teeth for Liverpool, Tilbury, Bristol and other smaller ports who were already out on strike.

The T&G's local officials and the local stewards played a key role in stopping any action. Despite an earlier commitment to the National Port Shop Stewards Committee that they would argue for a strike in Southampton, the stewards committee presented a united recommendation to the Monday mass meeting to continue working, though several stewards were obviously unhappy. Two factors played an important part here.

Firstly, the stewards were put under intense pressure from the T&G official machinery to stay within the law and back Ron Todd's strategy. Ron Todd even went on breakfast TV before the Southampton meeting to argue against a strike.

Ron Todd has found himself playing this role as a result of his determination to stay within the law at all costs. So when the judges decided to use any old biased excuse to stop actions, Todd had to go along with them.

It should be clear by now that it is just not possible for the dockers to effectively defend themselves by sticking to Todd's strategy of staying within the law at all costs.

Todd even overruled official T&G docks delegate meetings which wanted an immediate indefinite strike in response to the Court of Appeal's ruling.

Secondly, Southampton is a booming port and there is a lot of talk in the air of a local deal. Southampton T&G official Dennis Harriman has already floated the idea.

Once Southampton had voted not to strike it made it a lot more difficult to get other ports to join the strike. In particular, Hull, which had voted to continue working after the Appeal Court ruling.

According to reports, Tilbury stewards considered picketing out Hull after the Southampton vote, but decided against it after the Port employers had made a direct threat to use the law against stewards in the event of 'secondary picketing'.

Instead the Tilbury stewards opted for a 'dignified retreat'. One Tilbury docker explained: "We're going to go back to keep the lads united so we won't be isolated and we can fight again."

Rail: step up the action!

By a railworker

As this report is written the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) strike set for Wednesday 21 June is on. The attempt to get an injunction by British Rail — on the basis of their claim to have found 32 railworkers who had not had a vote — was thrown out of court.

Presumably BR thought that only the flimsiest of arguments was necessary these days to get strikes declared illegal. Maybe the judge was a little embarrassed by the idea that 32 supposed non-voters could overturn an 8,971 majority for strike action. The law has got to look a bit impartial in these matters.

Within 30 minutes of their case

being thrown out BR had been able to find three appeal court judges nearby and able to hear their appeal. But the appeal was thrown out.

As the law is used more cynically, the respect workers have for it is diminished. That provides the opening for unofficial action. No doubt the judges would have had this in mind when they reached their decision. And clearly the Tories got a fright over their hammering in the European elections.

Wednesday's strike action is a big step forward in the battle over wages and in defence of the machinery of negotiation. However, we will need to step-up the action. The one-day strikes should be the spring-board for all-out action.

Now is the time to strike back, with the tubeworkers and London busworkers also in the fray.



Revolt on the railways

By a Southern Region guard

A seven per cent pay rise — railworkers couldn't give a XXXX for it.

The one-day strike called on British Rail has triggered a sharp and positive upsurge amongst railworkers in the South East.

This follows weeks of phoney war with an overtime/rest-day working ban, and sitting on the sidelines watching London Underground workers doing the business with six one-day strikes. After all, British Rail services carry passengers right into the heart of London from commuterland, and BR workers were failing to support the tubeworkers' actions.

Many BR workers welcome the one-day strike specifically because it coincides with the tube strikes following the NUR's overwhelmingly successful second ballot of all its Underground members.

The response by rank and file railworkers to the anti-7 per cent pay campaign is especially important as it proves how firmly they reject BR's imposition of 7%. It went into our pay packets a few weeks ago.

Many workers are well aware that BR could equally well impose an even lower pay settlement next year, and 0% might well be the figure. BR has simply dug itself even deeper into its trenches, firing

out at least three propaganda letters to all BR workers' homes in this area, and cynically using ACAS as a cover for its manoeuvres.

What the BR Board has failed to realise is that the present mood amongst railworkers is not simply to do with pay, but a complex reaction to the lousy conditions, sackings (two workers were recently sacked at Kings Cross station), deteriorating health and safety, Driver Only Operation (as a result of the guards' overtime ban British Rail management imposed DOO working on some lines in the Purley area a few weeks ago), and the tragic effects of the Train Crew concept.

Railworkers have no time for the British Rail Board anymore — as for negotiating in good faith, the BRB went to ACAS with the NUR last week and, after 40 minutes, announced it was going to the courts to stop the strike.

At the same time, BRB's own guidelines to supervisory staff have indicated that they have decided to tread very carefully with rank and file workers over this issue.

There is a huge potential at local level amongst railworkers in the South East. Now we need to co-ordinate and build on that.

The judges' decision at High Court and the Appeal Court shows quite clearly that they bottled it and now it's our chance to take up the struggle against the 7% and overturn BR's whole strategy.

Where now for the dockers?

Despite the end of the unofficial action dockers can still rebuild the fight to defend the conditions associated with the Dock Labour Scheme.

The very least that Ron Todd can now do — after he has devoted so much energy to preventing unofficial action — is to ensure that the T&G gets another whacking great majority in the ballot that must be called whatever the outcome of the Lords' deliberations.

Dockers need to use the time that they've now got to rebuild support for a strike to defend the conditions of the Scheme. The National Port Shop Stewards Committee must find ways of getting over the arguments for action to the rank and file in places like Southampton and Hull.

The T&G has to hold firm to its commitment to no local deals. Rumours of such deals in Ipswich and Southampton only help to further divide the dockers' forces.

In addition, dockers need to look

to ways to involve all dockers, registered and non-registered, in a fight for a decent national agreement that includes all the positive gains for dockworkers associated with the Scheme.

Jimmy Nolan summed up the mood for a fight that still exists when he said: "If the appeal for an official strike is thrown out, then we will strike unofficially."

That determination is inspiring, but the officials should not be let off the hook. If the court throws out the appeal then the T&G must call an official strike regardless.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

INSIDE:
China, Women
against fundamen-
talism, Policy
reviews

Price 10p

June 1989

The Single European Market certainly isn't being introduced to benefit women. It is designed to increase profits.

But if we tackle it the right way, we could upset the bosses' plans and gain a lot from the limited breaking-down of barriers between nations.

1992 offers us the opportunity to close the gap in social rights and benefits that a decade of Thatcher has widened, leaving women in Britain among the worst off in Western Europe.

Parental leave, the right to get your job back after having a baby, and equal pay for work of equal value are commonplace in most West European states. But the Tory government has slashed maternity rights, twice increased the qualifying period that part-time workers need in a job before they get maternity rights, and decimated nursery provision through its cuts in central government money for local councils.

EEC measures that would have meant real improvements in working-class women's conditions, such as equal rights for part-time and temporary workers, have been consistently vetoed by Britain's Tories. A decade of anti-union laws and craven capitulation by union leaders has allowed Thatcher to reverse many of the gains won by women over previous years of struggle.

But a Single European Market, whether the bosses like it or not, must increase the pressure for the harmonisation of workers' conditions between countries. It won't be automatic, of course. How much levelling there is, and whether it is levelling up or levelling down, will depend on struggle by the labour and women's movements.

The Western Europe of 1992 will be nothing but a bosses' club if the labour movement retreats into little Englandism and turns its back on the opportunity to fight with workers across Europe for better conditions. But that depends on us.

For women, the priority must be to campaign for social measures which allow us to play an equal role in the workforce and level-up everywhere to the best conditions across Europe.

In West Germany, for example, women have the right to 32 weeks' maternity leave paid at 80 per cent of earnings. In Britain it's six weeks' paid maternity leave if you have worked for the same employer for two years (or five years, if you work less than 20 hours a week).

At present 46 per cent of women in Britain who become pregnant don't qualify under these rules, and consequently lose their jobs. A central demand should be the entitlement of all women, part-time or full-time, temporary or permanent, to paid maternity leave and automatic reinstatement in their job on returning.

On nursery care, we should learn from Italy, which probably has the best childcare provision in the world — not only in number of places and low cost, but also in the range of provision, from childminders and play groups to community nurseries.

Every woman worker should have nursery provision as a right — not just the highly-skilled and highly-paid. The tax on workplace nurseries should be ended.

Parental leave — which in some countries is allowed for up to five years with no penalties — and the right to work part-time until the

WORKING WOMEN OF EUROPE UNITE!



Continued inside

Support Chinese workers and students!

By Liz Millward

Supporters of the pro-democracy movement were publicly sentenced to death this month in China.

Their crime? Taking part in demonstrations not ruled illegal until afterwards. Their trials were a farce — both verdict and sentence decided beforehand.

The protestors were accused of rioting, of anti-government activity and of murdering soldiers. The real murderers and criminals are those who caused the deaths of thousands of unarmed civilians — the old men who lead the so-called Communist Party.

Three weeks ago, working class people throughout the world were rejoicing that the students and workers occupying Tiananmen Square were still unbeaten. The protestors said they had had enough of their oppressors, that they would run the cities themselves, and that they wanted to decide their own futures. In this they had the support of most of China's people.

Far from rioting or looting, ordinary citizens were organising food supplies in strike-bound cities, discussing politics and spreading information. The Chinese workers

and students were demanding an end to 40 years of totalitarian Stalinist rule. They wanted a democratic China.

Two days later, thousands were dead, tens of thousands wounded, and the revolution smashed. When the 27th Army marched into Beijing, the students and workers could not fight back. They had no weapons, no soldiers loyal to them, no time to prepare for battle.

But the Chinese working class won't make the same mistake again. The people occupying Tiananmen Square tried to accomplish their goals peacefully. They thought their own people would not fire on them. They were wrong. But next time the revolutionaries will be ready to fight, and they will have more than passive support from those troops who also want democracy.

At the moment, in the midst of the current terror in China, it is difficult to hope for the next rising. The Chinese government has declared that 'no-one will escape', the borders have been closed to prevent pro-democracy activists leaving China and hundreds and thousands of students and workers have been rounded up for show-trials, imprisonment and death.

The government is getting away with its terror because it controls

the army, the police and the media. Chinese TV is constantly broadcasting about the massacre that never happened, about heroic soldiers, and about the evil 'counter-revolutionary' protestors.

But the people aren't fooled. The Chinese working class know what really took place in Beijing, and they know that the real heroes are the young men and women now being denounced.

The pro-democracy movement has already existed underground for several years: it has, according to many rumours, formed an independent trade union, and an independent student union.

The Chinese revolutionaries have links right across the world, and there is an underground network to help people escape from China. The current regime, try as it might, cannot kill everyone who took part in the risings and strikes.

Even if it could, the problem would not disappear. The Chinese regime is the problem, and at least many hundreds of thousands of Chinese workers know that while the Stalinists remain in power the people will never be free. The Chinese workers and students have proved that they can take power — it is only a matter of time until they do.



Demonstration outside Chinese Embassy. Photo: Insight.

No tears, fight back!

Linda To spoke at a Chinese Solidarity Campaign meeting on 11 June

In the past five weeks, we have gone through the greatest struggle in our hearts. Although we are thousands of miles away from our comrades who are fighting for democracy in China, we know we are with them. We shared their belief, and echoed our support.

I remember it was reported in the newspaper about a village woman who saw the soldiers shooting at students and civilians — she cried

out: "It's not the time for tears, it's time to fight back!"

Thousands of students and workers joined hands to stop the troops entering Tiananmen Square. A week later, the massacre broke out.

We cried, because the government betrayed their people. We cried, but we are not disillusioned. We are angry, but we'll turn this anger to greater strength. We are hopeful, because their spirits are not crushed. We know it's a long road, but we'll never give up.

There are hundreds of thousands who died for this cause, we'll never forget, and we are determined to follow their footsteps. Democracy will never die!

Oppression and suppression exist

in every part of the world, all those oppressed should unite together, pull our strength together, fight for our rights and a better society, a society that people decide, not the dictators, bureaucrats nor privileged class.

We should be thankful to the students, their flesh and blood, that inspire and awakened the whole world.

We learnt from them, from their courage to challenge the oppressor, their determination to fight for freedom and equality. We will not let their blood shed in vain; we urge your conscience and turn their beliefs into reality.

We have had enough tears, it's not the time for mourning nor grieving, it's time to fight back!

Chinese Solidarity Campaign

By Emma Colyer

The Chinese Solidarity Campaign was set up about five weeks ago with its main aim to organise the strongest possible support for the students' and workers' movements in China.

The movement arose as a result of the mass mobilisation of Chinese people in pursuit of democratic rights, and against corruption and bureaucratic privilege within the Chinese Communist Party.

The campaign remembers the many who have lost their lives in the heroic struggle for democracy, and condemns without reservation their brutal massacre by the Chinese government.

The Chinese people's bravery is an inspiration to us all to oppose the violation of democratic rights wherever and whenever they occur. The campaign will not go away now, just because China is not first on the news bulletins everyday; it will continue, as the Chinese people will continue to fight for their demands — for:

- an end to government and Party corruption;
- the implementation of full democratic rights, including the right to free press, speech, association and the

freedom to demonstrate, protest and strike;

• legal recognition of all independent students' and workers' organisations. These organisations must be controlled by the students and workers themselves and have a full role in the management of China's political and economic affairs.

The campaign must act now to defend those many who are in detention or hiding, and those who fear for their lives and safety in light of the chilling reign of terror now unleashed in all parts of China. In particular, we must do all we can to ensure the safety and well-being of the Chinese students presently in Britain.

It is quite clear that the Tories have not taken actions in support of the democracy movement in China, as we see by their refusal to grant visa extensions to Chinese mainland students, necessary financial support to those students whose study grants have been cut off or provision of work permits to those students who have concluded their studies. They have exposed their 'outrage' at the massacre in Beijing as no more than crocodile tears.

However, the Labour Party has been little better: witness Gerald Kaufman's disgraceful response to our brothers and sisters who wish to come to Britain.

All socialists should be arguing for

the right of people wishing to come to Britain to be able to enter, regardless of whether they hold British passports.

We should also be arguing for the right of Hong Kong people to determine their own future through democratic self-government, and for the breaking of all student and trade union links with the Chinese government and all bogus government-backed organisations.

Instead, the British labour movement should be establishing solidarity links with the newly-formed independent student and trade unions in China.

Lastly, the lives of thousands massacred must not be forgotten, the struggle for democracy, for an end to bloodshed and purges of pro-democracy supporters, for the release of all political prisoners will continue, and it will continue until victory.

The Chinese Solidarity Campaign resolves to bring together all individuals, community and trade union organisations, political parties, etc. who support the struggle by the Chinese students and workers for greater democracy and equality. It is an independent, non-party organisation which aims to be broad-based, democratic, accountable and at all times with political leadership by the Chinese community in Britain. Show your support for the Chinese students and workers — join CSC! Write to us at 68 Shaftesbury Avenue, London W1.

Ministry for Women

By Cathy Nugent

We believe the proposed new Ministry for Women remains the right way to tackle the complex prejudice and discrimination that still face the female majority.

"This Ministry would be close to the centre of power in Whitehall yet accessible to women through their active involvement at regional and local levels. It would ensure that government is informed of women's real needs and that these are placed high on the political agenda."

Fine words, full of good intentions — but that's about all there is to the Policy Review's references to women and what a Labour government would do for women.

There are some — vague — promises aside from the commitment to establish a Women's Ministry:

- to flexible working hours to ensure that women will be more able to cope with childcare responsibilities;
- to the right for women to return to full-time employment after periods out of work caring for dependents, with opportunities for re-training;
- to strengthen Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination legislation;
- to increases in Child Benefit;

The Policy Reviews express a commitment to improve nursery provision, to establish a minimum wage, and to introduce parental leave.

Doesn't sound too bad on paper, does it? But you don't need to be a die-hard cynic to think, 'I'll believe that when I see it'.

Labour has constantly failed to take up opportunities to champion the cause of women. The Tories have launched attack after attack — Labour's front bench has been virtually silent, save for scoring a few parliamentary debating points. On the Alton Bill campaign, conference commitments were ignored — women were stabbed in the back. The parliamentary timetable did more to stop Alton than Kinnock and co.

The Policy Review's paper commitments to women have a great deal more to do with electoral expe-

diency than political commitment. It is the truism of the year that women are going to be more and more important in the labour force. Many employers are looking 'woman-friendly'. Any political party which fails to accommodate to these developments does so at its cost.

Moreover, as the Euro-election results showed, the idea of a 'social Europe' is becoming more popular. Euro-law seeks to guarantee various social rights, and in the Thatcher years has been a backstop in protecting the rights of women in various areas. Thatcher's negative attitude to European social policy has done her damage. Labour would be foolish indeed to fall into the same trap.

But this is not only the new European-minded Labour Party — it is Kinnock's new model centralised Labour Party. Kinnock's leadership has brought about a massive rolling back of democracy in the party — it's only necessary to look at the Policy Review process itself to see that. As things stand we'll be hard-pressed to hold any Labour government to account in the not unlikely event it will renege on its commitments.

A Ministry for Women could not

1. We aim to build a mass campaign of action against the major attacks being mounted on women's rights, such as the right to control our own fertility, the right to health and childcare facilities, the right to work, the right to live in this country with the partner of our choice, the right to maternity leave and job security for mothers, the right to wages, benefits and legal status independent of a man, the right to organise as trade unionists and as women.

These rights and many other, many not yet won or consolidated, must be defended and extended in face of the onslaught against women by this government.

2. Such a mass campaign has to be part of a labour movement response to the Tory attacks. We aim to provide a focus for united action by women already organised in the labour movement and in campaigns and groups of the women's move-

SOCIALIST

ORGANISER

**Make Labour
councils
resist**

DON'T

PAY!

DON'T

**DON'T
COLLECT!**

**FIGHT THE
POLL TAX**