SOCIALS ER

Fight for a general election!

Kickthe Toriesout!

hursday's local elections are sure to be another milestone in this detestable government's decline and fall. Voters everywhere will declare their opposition to the Tory poll tax, Tory health service 'reform', and Tory interest rates.

Last minute Tory propaganda has centred on Labour councils' "overspending", and tried to show that ratepayers' money is wasted. A Tory leaflet in one London borough claimed that over £75,000 had been spent on a lesbian and gay unit. Since they also claimed that the council budget came to around £1500 per person, that means that about fifty people paid for the lesbian and gay unit. Hardly a case of massive profligacy.

But the Labour Party must not sit on its laurels. Labour is high in the polls, but largely on the strength of anti-Tory feeling. Labour needs to turn that mood into a solid and

lasting pro-Labour movement.

Neil Kinnock should launch a big campaign to force an early general election and win a Labour victory.

election and win a Labour victory.

Labour should support those who are fighting the Tories now. It should support people who are refusing to pay the poll tax, or can't pay it, instead of joining in with Thatcher to attack them. Labour should lead, or it will leave millions of people disillusioned and demoralised.

The end of Thatcherism is in sight. The Labour Party must be sure not to let the Tories squirm their way out of crisis.



Poll Tax forms burned in Bristol. Photo: John Harris

Make Labour back trade union rights!

trade union leaders have launched a campaign for the right to strike.

The "Campaign for Free Trade Unions" demands:

• The right to belong to a trade union, to recruit fellow workers into unions and to have your union recognised by the employer for collective bargaining;

• The right to be active in your union and to take industrial action

without the fear of the sack;
• The right to strike, to picket effectively and to take industrial action in support of other groups of workers, without fear of losing your job or legal attacks on your

• The right of union members to determine their own rules, in line with ILO Convention of Freedom

of Association.

Launching it, Leslie Christie of the civil service workers' union NUCPS, and Colin Christopher of the furniture trade union FTAT,

"In 1989 a government was condemned by a committee of experts of the International Labour Organisation (part of the United Nations).

"The cause was this govern-

ment's repressive legislation against trade unions. The ILO found that this legislation was contrary to international conventions on nine counts.

counts.
"That government was not in Chile, Romania or South Africa. It was the British government.

"In 1987 George Lake, a London docker, received the British Empire Medal for his services to the dock industry. He was nominated by the Port of London Authority. In 1989, the PLA sacked George Lake for

his trade union activities.

"Following the Zeebrugge ferry disaster, Tommy Wilson was awarded the Queen's Medal for Gallantry, Within a year, P&O sacked Tommy Wilson for his trade with a cethrities.

union activities.

"At GCHQ Cheltenham, 18 workers have been sacked for being members of a trade union and the rest of the workforce barred from joining a trade union.

joining a trade union.

"These attacks on trade unionism are coupled with reductions in individual workers' rights such as those covering maternity benefits, redundancy pay and industrial tribunals.

"We support free trade unionism abroad; we demand free trade

Turn to page 2



Student unions must fight poll tax!

By Mark Sandell

n the next few weeks the National Union of Students will decide its priorities for the coming year.

The left in NUS will have to argue for a coherent strategy capable of uniting NUS's 1.5 million members in the battle for better living standards, decent education and — because of the threat of voluntary membership — the very right of NUS to exist in its current form.

The context is quite simple. Although shaken the Tories are still in government and the poll tax and loans are major attacks on cash in

the poll tax is already leading to an assault on the Further Education Sector of education.

In NUS itself the left — centrally

Left Unity — has made gains at the level of NUS's NEC. The NEC, which takes over fully in midsummer has a number of our supporters in central positions.

Emma Colyer was elected as the next National Secretary. Steve Mitchell is the new Vice-President Further Education and Janine Booth is the new NUS Women's Officer.

There has also been some shift to the left in the general shape of the NEC. However the central problem of the Kinnockite Labour Student's leaders blocking action still re-

The next year will only be successful if the NUS Left can find a way to build an activist-based movement in the colleges which is capable of going round the Kinnockites if they continue to get in the way of the fight against the poll

The basic shape of our campaigns is clear: the poll tax is the major issue in the country, its implication for the Tories, students and Further Education are massive. We must join the fight.

More to the point - since very many activists are involved already we must lead and strengthen the college anti-poll-tax campaigns.

This should be relatively easy as NUS passed our policy of Don't pay, Don't Collect at its Xmas 1989 conference. It is not policy that is missing, just the political will of the Kinnockites.

NUS should link the poll tax up with the loans issue. Loans are still set to be implemented next academic year. Although the campaign to oppose loans fizzled out at the end of last term, we still need to fight the Tories on the issue.

We should use the poll tax issue to refloat the loans/grants cam-

NUS should also run a political

campaign explicitly against the Tories — on the poll tax issue. NALGO is running quite an effection of the policy tive poster campaign in the run up to the May elections. There is no reason why NUS could not adopt a similar college-focused strategy. The second major area of NUS's work must be to build and strengthen our union. This means a

drive to pull more unions (mostly from Further Education college) into NUS, tied to improving participation inside NUS's structures.

The immediate need is the Tories' threats to introduce voluntary membership, and our only possible response is to build a mass union.

The only way to prove to potential affiliates that NUS is worth joining is to provide relevant campaigns for the Further Education

sector. This means:

Oppositon to the poll tax and the cuts;

Fighting for decent grants;
Getting better facilities for the

'Emergency conference' call is a diversion

By Paul McGarry

Militant posturing or just dim? It's often difficult to

The Militant operate on the basis of one idea only to be repeated as often as possible. Usually the idea is dull, abstract and harmless. However this month's 'idea' could cause real damage.

They are calling for an Emergency conference of the National Union of Students on the poll tax. They can do so if they get 25 student unions to support the call.

The problems:

The problems:

• Such a conference would cost at least £75,000.

• The money should be spent on the poll tax campaign.

· The conference would be held in

late June or July.

• Consequently it would be badly attended, with no delegates from Further Education colleges and dominated by right wing sabbatical officers from Higher Education colleges.

NUS already has a good policy on

the poll tax.

The consequences:

• Depending on the backlash, the left might well lose at the special conference. We might end up with a policy

of Pay and Collect. Militant would let the right off the hook while simultaneously setting up the NUS left for attacks over wasting £75,000 plus! Brilliant idea!

The poll tax issue would be obscured by a fight over the cash.

The alternative: Left Unity says NUS should organise an NUS activist conference (rather than an Emergency conference). Such a conference would be much observer.

much cheaper.

It could be sooner, and so bigger. It would organise students who want to fight the poll tax, rather than mobilise the right who want to pay their poll tax and smash the left in NUS.

If the NUS Executive at its next that the poll tax and smash the left in Sus.

meeting refuses to call an activist con-ference then an Area NUS should organise the event. If we loose at the next NEC, we may well win when the new NEC takes over during the sum-

Anyway the central point is not the bureaucratic manouvres the left can pull
— but organising the movement on the ground.

The issues are:

NUS democracy
Fighting the poll tax.

Building a mass, campaigning

union. These are the central elements around which that movement must be built

Build the demo!

Don't Pay! Don't Collect!

 Stop loans! No benefit cuts!

Wednesday 17 October, Leeds Called by West Yorkshire NUS. More details: 0532 452312

A party responsive to women?

WOMEN'S EYE

By Liz Millward

sing women's new roles in society as one reason, the Labour leadership is hoping to restructure the party conference.

If Kinnock has his way, the re-structured conference will be little more than a rally to rubber-stamp ideas generated by the 'National

Policy Forum'.

This new body is to consist of 170 people (method of election or selection yet to be announced), with a built-in quota of women. How big this quota will be, and who will choose the women has also yet to be announced.

One justification for the change is the more positive, active place of women in the party. The constitution reflects the era in which women had only just got the vote, and few women worked - or so the argument goes.

Unfortunately for Kinnock the constitution also reflects the era of the end of the last Labour government when the left won a number of fundamental changes.

This was also the era which saw the rise of organisations like the Women's Action Committee which have campaigned for a greater say for women within the party.

If Kinnock and Co were genuinely concerned about the rights of women to be represented in the party, they should consider the following demands which have been consistently raised by women.

1. Real power for the Labour Women's Conference including the right to elect women directly to the

2. A woman on every parliamentary shortlist not just those without a sitting MP.

Instead of democratic change, to involve more women, the party leadership proposes to give us a 'quota' on the decision making body. Even if the quota is 50%, that will be a total of 88 women as opposed to the thousands who could be involved through women's sections and women's conference.

In addition the Party leadership could make another change to show how responsive Labour is to women's needs. The change would be a simple one. Put a 3 line whip on all future parliamentary abortion debates.

This would prevent the disgusting spectacle of 20 Labour MPs voting against democratically decided party policy, and another 32 abstaining

or not voting at all.

A total of 52 Labour MPs, including the Deputy Leader of the party could not bring themselves to vote against reducing the time limit for abortion to 18 weeks. This despite the fact that an 18 week limit would bring misery to thousands of women and despite the fact that party policy is quite clear on this issue.

A party wishing to be genuinely representative of women would demand an accounting from each and every one of those 52. Such a party would also want to know why other MPs, like Frank Field (one of many) voted in favour of a 20 week time limit, and against 28 weeks.

Restructuring party conference structure could do a lot for women. In the early '80s the left-inspired changes were based on increasing the accountability of MPs and the NEC to the membership.

Much of this accountability will be removed when a small body such as the one proposed is in charge of making party policy. And who would MPs like Hattersley and Field be accountable to them, when they vote in line with their conscience and against women's in-

With both the Tories and the anti-abortionists on the run, now is the time for a massive campaign to change the abortion laws decisively in favour of women. To back new laws up, we need more and better family planning and sex education services, free abortions for all who need them, and self-referral for all early abortions. Labour should make election promises now on

these issues.

But who will put such a proposal forward? Not a 'national policy forum' that's for sure.

A rank and file labour women's movement could organise for such changes. But only if it had the power to intervene in national con-

Make Labour back union rights

From page 1

unionism in Britain."

This month Labour Party leaders are expected to publish a new policy document pledging a Kinnock government to continue many Tory restrictions on trade union rights. According to Labour front-bencher Derek Fatchett, "national strikes over local redundancies are likely to be illegal under a Labour govern-ment" (Sunday Correspondent, 22

But trade union opinion is moving against this line. At last year's Labour Party conference, a composite moved by Wallasey Constituency Labour Party demanding a Workers' Charter of union rights won two and a quarter million votes. Last weekend MSF conference called for the next Labour government to repeal all anti-union laws, and for the TUC to wage a campaign for union rights with marches, rallies, a lobby of Parliament and a day of action.

We need a sustained drive through this year's trade union conferences and for Labour Party annual conference, to commit Labour to the principles outlined by the "Campaign for Free Trade Unions"

The new initiative will complement the efforts already being made by Wallasey CLP and other supporters of the defeated composite from 1989 Labour conference. Sup-port for the Workers' Charter was won at the North-West region Labour party conference at the end of March, and a broadsheet outlining the Charter and the arguments

for it is being published this week.
For copies of the Workers'
Charter, write to PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. For the "Campaign for Free Trade Unions", contact NUCPS, 124/130 Southwark Street, London SE1 OTU; or FTAT, Fairfields, Roe Green, Kingsbury, London NW9 OPT.

Sponsors of "CFTU"

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Milken leaves the court

The system which produced Michael Milken

EDITORIAL

financier Michael Milken came out of court last week in New York, well dressed young professionals' applauded him.

He had pleaded guilty to charges of fraud and conspiracy which could bring him up to 29 years' jail when he is sentenced in October (but probably more like 5 years in a low-security 'country club' prison.)

The sharp-suited yuppies, so the *Independent* reports, saw him as a class-war hero, struck down in battle by the laws of the dominant

According to Milken's friend Marc Belzberg, "It was very much class war going on in American industry. Managers were acting like they owned these companies, and they answered to no-one. Mike Milken simply came up with a tool that helped to make them listen'

This was not a class war of the poor against the rich. It was a 'class war' of the new rich against the old

On one side, the Establishment; on the other, Milken and his partners, from poor or middling backgrounds, mostly Jewish, and resentful of the Anglo-Saxon Pro-testant bias of the old rich. Both groups made fortunes from the sweat of millions of workers in the USA and in the Third World countries which toil to pay off debts to US banks; but about the division of the spoils they quarrelled bitterly.

The Financial Times calls Milken "the most influential American "The minute of the spoils they quarrelled bitterly."

financier since JP Morgan", which I guess amounts to the same thing as the Independent's description, "the century's most powerful

Milken invented the 'junk bond'. A 'bond' is a piece of paper sold by a company to raise money. The buyer is paid interest on the face value of the bond, or has the option of selling the bond to a third party.

A 'junk bond' is simply a bond offering a very high rate of interest but relatively little security, or, in-other words, a relatively high risk that the company which promised the interest payments will go bust and the bond will become waste

His decline and fall started in 1986, when a former associate, Dennis Levine, was arrested. Ivan Boesky, Milken's company Drexel Burnham Lambert, and many others have fallen victim since then to inquiries by the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

Did the Establishment gang up

against the interlopers? Maybe; but it's hard to see how the 'junk bond' binge could not have ended in a crash and a scandal.

More and more risky deals were made. Speculation piled upon gamble upon corner-cutting upon speculation.

Milken's office, according to the Independent "operated as something of cross between a protection racket and a wager-rigging

"Milken... was able to extort money from at least one client by threatening to drive their stock price down, force another into a hostile takeover, order the country's largest arbitrageur to warehouse stock illegally for him, and create artificial prices for many of his junk bonds".

Milken's 'class war' will end like other such squabbles within the capitalist class: some of the new robber barons, like Milken, won't make it; others luckier, will be accepted into the company of the old robber barons.

Milken was an archetypal capitalist success story. At his high school he was head cheerleader. At university he made money managing investments for fellow

In his early days on Wall Street, he would take the bus from New Jersey each morning at 5.30, wearing a miner's helmet so that he would have enough light to study financial paperwork. Then he moved to Beverly Hills, where he would start work at 4 each morning, to be in time for the opening of the stock market in New York. His company, Drexel, used to organise an annual junket in Beverly Hills called 'The Predators' Ball'.

Such are the efforts that capitalism rewards. They never had much to do with producing useful.

much to do with producing useful goods and services. Milken is clearly a person with extraordinary drive and energy - though apparently no more subtle creative talents - and all that energy was directed to help-ing one lot of rich people rip off another lot of rich people, and a lot of poor people besides.

The poor people besides.

The poor people will foot the bill.
One of the offshoots of the junk bond binge was the collapse of America's Savings and Loans companies (roughly, small building societies). S&L bosses put their money into risky speculations which failed. The federal government had given guarantees to the ment had given guarantees to the small savers, so has to bail them bail-out wil Ine American taxpayers as much as \$500 billion — \$2500 for every child woman and man in the US!

And many workers lost their jobs because of Milken too. The great wave of takeovers and asset-stripping financed by junk bonds made an orientation to quick profits and quick gains compulsory for US corporations.

Long-term investment was shelv-Costs were cut recklessly. Businesses going through a slow period were ruthlessly chopped.

In the 1930s, the writer Scott Fitzgerald expressed his disillusionment with capitalism by saying that the system which had produced the heiress Barbara Hutton could not possibly last many years more. A system that produces Michael Milken does not deserve to last

There's 'scum'... and there's villains

PRESS GANG

By Jim Denham

hile David Waddington and the prison authorities were faffing about, playing footsie with the Strangeways rioters, the Sun knew exactly what was needed: "JAIL SCUM MUST BE CRUSHED - send in the

But Waddington proved to be a man of straw, if not a closet liberal. The SAS were never called in and the whole business ended peacefully.

The Sun now has its doubts about Waddington's fitness as Home Secretary. After all, he is supposed to be a honger and great things had been expected of him: "The impression was that behind the plain, blunt exterior there lurked a plain, blunt and tough man... But then came the Strangeways meeting... Instead of apologising for the meeting... Instead of apologising for the shambles of cowardly inaction, Mr Waddington went to the House as if he

Waddington went to the House as if he were triumphantly announcing the relief of Mafeking. In this lawless age, we still need a strong man at the Home Office.

Does Dave think he is up to it?"

Thanks to Waddington's new-found liberalism we were not only denied the invigorating spectacle of the SAS 'going in' and killing a few malcontents, but the definate impression was given that criminals are not just 'scum' who deserve everything they get. This sort of softness towards known enemies of the law and order is exactly the kind of wet, liberal, do-gooding nonsense that the liberal, do-gooding nonsense that the Sun hates. Criminals are criminals and

Sun hates. Criminals are criminals and should be treated as such.

Except that is, for a few special criminals. Like poor old Charlie Wilson, gunned down in cold blood last week at his Marbella villa.

The Sun gave Charlie a grand send-off with a front page story about his dog, Bobo, (slain with his master) and two inside pages of tribute along the lines of "Charlie was a likeable, old-time villain who couldn't walk a straight line if he tried. He wouldn't know what to do with himself if he wasn't involved in some sort of ramble". Sun readers could even dial a special number and hear 'I like it', the Gerry and the Pacemakers hit that Charlie apparently sang "as the Train Robbers counted out their loot at a farmhouse hideaway in 1062". their loot at a farmhouse hideaway in

The Sun did make the point that Charlie's untimely end was probably the result of drug dealing activities. But even in this field, it seems Old Chazza was basically a Good Egg: Joe Cannon (a 'former bank bandit' according to the Sun) explained that, "the big boys don't want to share with anyone. There's no honour among the drugs barons now. It's a dog eat dog world". Oh dear, oh dear, what is the world coming to?

But the Sun's very favourite villains are, of course, the Kray Brothers, now immortalised on celluloid. The Sun paid the brothers an estimated £100,000 for

the brothers an estimated £100,000 for serial rights to their book 'Our Story' a couple of years ago. Since then the paper has campaigned for Reggie's release from prison (sadly it seems to be accepted that Ronnie must stay in Broadmoor for the rest of his natural) and now the film is out, The Sun is busy regaling its readers with colourful tales

of East-end daring do.

Last Monday's paper had a four page pull-out feature including the moving story of how poor Reggie "thought a robin was his dead wife", a first-hand account of the death of Jack "the Slat" McVitie and detailed profiles of all the old 'Firm' — ranging from 'Scotch Jack' Dickson (a 'loudmouthed drunk'') to Ronnie Bender (''A marvellous bloke... he's still a diamond''). Whether the Sun paid Mr Tony Lambrianou for these insights is not disclosed.

It seems that if you're a 17 year old remand prisoner on the roofs of Strangeways, you're 'scum'. But if you're a drug baron or a psychopathic gang boss, you're really a sort of working class hero as far as the Sun is concerned. Especially if you've been portrayed by a pop star in a film.

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

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Those 'junk bonds' allowed speculators and quick-money people to raise vast amounts of cash at lightning speed, and provided the wherewithal for America's vast takeover boom in the 1980s. The bosses of big, sober, old-established companies suddenly found brash young capitalists taking over their businesses and carving them up for

Some people made great fortunes from the 'junk bond' binge. Milken took \$550 million in salary alone in 1987, and is estimated to have at least \$1 billion left to him today, after paying the \$600 million fines agreed with the court last week.

Bonanza for the bosses

GRAFFITI

ritain's top bosses made their biggest increase in earnings for ten years in 1989, according to an official

Directors' salaries rose by 14.3%, and they now average £59,636 a year. More than half the directors surveyed receive annual bonuses worth an extra £10,420. 69.4% of directors have company cars, more than

peaking of the intolerably rich, Matt and Luke the Bros Goss apparently owe American Express £58,000.

And Matt Goss is having difficulty selling his luxury flat in Maida Vale, poor dear. Accor-ding to one property dealer, "Matt has spent £240,000 on the flat and unrealistically expects it to sell for more. But the truth is no grown-up would want

att Goss would obviously have no difficulty paying his prescription charges, however.

Having just been stung to the time of £6.10 for the privilege of healing a particularly painful mouth ulcer, I would like to use this opportunity to express the outrage I felt was a bit unfair to direct at the young woman who works in the chemist's

Neil Kinnock had better abolish prescription charges when he's elected, or he will have one angry tax payer from Camberwell to answer to.

s everyone knows, the world's most exciting and implausible soap opera stars the rather monosyllabically named Mr and

Mrs Trump.
Donald, mega-rich casino owner and saucy philanderer, recently signed a contract, meaning a full legal document with lawyers and witnesses and

everything, with his wife Ivana (Ivana Trump? Joan Collins eat your heart out!) to the effect that they were each allowed to have sex with whoever they liked for the next month without this being grounds for divorce.

Donald started the whole thing going three months ago when he walked out on her declaring that divorce was what he wanted.

Ivana has now told newspapers: 'The last thing in the world I want is to date. love my husband. Men are the last thing on my mind'

Which only goes to show how difficult open relationships can

eanwhile Donald Trump's fortune declined last year by \$1.2 billion. Another person who probably doesn't normally worry about prescription charges.

atching TV, say American psychologists who should know, I suppose, takes less concentration than eating.

After watching TV for two and a half hours, you lose all analytical skill, or enjoyment. Even after you've switched it off, you are less alert, more passive, and more bored. It will take two hours for your brain to

Well, that's helpful knowledge anyway. Next time you settle down to drown your sorrows with a bottle of vodka, three slices of toast and some dreadful black and white movie recommended in last week's Guardian, just remember that you're only making it worse.

Do something else. Read a book by Marx, that should take your mind off it. Or exercise those vital analytical skills thinking about the national question in Eastern Europe in the last years of the nineteenth century.

The same researchers also discovered that people enjoy themselves more when they are talking to their friends than when they are bored watching televsion.

Who pays these people?

Keep Labour's grassroots alive!

LETTERS

fter a year in office as CLP Membership Secretary, during which I have enjoyed the friendly help and co-operation of the Head Office staff who maintain the new national system. I have come to believe that the system could lead to serious losses to CLPs unless it is modified to ensure that the computer technology, which can be a splendid servant of the Party, doesn't take us over as a very bad master.

The current Clause V(2a) of CLP Rules, entitled "Enrolement of Individual Members", reads (with effect from January 1 1991): "An application to become an individual member shall be submitted by the member shall be submitted by the individual or by an affiliated organisation on a membership application form to the Head Office of the Party together with the membership fee. The applicant's details shall be recorded on the national little age of the provisional tional list as a provisional member."

This is too restrictively formal, and doesn't give sufficient weight to the variety of human nature. The Constituencies should continue to have the power of local enrolment, for exceptional use where the national procedure is too cumbersome, particularly with some older

Unless Head Office "reminders" that subscriptions are due are supported by voluntary on-the-spot collectors who are able to receive cash, issue temporary membership renewal documents, and forward the money in cheque form to Head Office, there will be serious loss by defection. People will join, receive Labour Party News, and drop out after a year or two because the Par-



seems just a leadershipdominated correspondence-club to

I therefore appeal to all who read this to ask their CLPs, via their branches, to forward to the Party Secretary to 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT, for consideration by the National Executive Committee, the following proposed changes, of a minor nature, to the Constitution; and to ask their CLPs to submit them as a formal Constitutional Amendment for the 1990

DELETE Paragraph (a) and SUBSTITUTE "An application to become an individual member shall be submitted by or on behalf of the individual, on a membership form together with the membership fee, to the Head Office of the Party where practicable, or otherwise to the Constituency Party. The applicant's details shall be recorded on the national or constituency list as a provisional member, and Head Office shall notify this addition to the Constituency, or vice versa, without delay, so that the details are recorded by both.'

In paragraph (c) DELETE "the application" and SUBSTITUTE "each national application".

In paragraph (d) DELETE "reply is received" and SUBSTITUTE "chiestian is recified."

'objection is notified'

In paragraph (g) after "made" INSERT "to Head Office".

ADD new paragraphs: (i) "Exceptionally a Constituency Party may renew or revive an individual's membership, and its receipt will be in evidence of full membership, but a copy thereofy shall be sent without delay to Head Office; such local power of revival shall not be allowed after a lapse of more than fifteen months'

And (j) "Constituency Parties shall advise Head Office of members' deaths, name changes and removal."

Frank McManus Calder Valley CLP

Imperialism in Lithuania's history

hile no radical should wish to suggest that Lithuania should not have the right to selfdetermination and autonomy it is time that it was pointed out that the case is not as black and white as it gets painted in the western media.

It is worth asking what would happen if a province of a Western country made a similar attempt to secede? After all the USA fought a civil war (and twice earlier used force) to prevent states seceding and the Ulster troubles are largely fought because two counties and one town were coerced against the wishes of the majority of their population to stay as part of the UK rather than sharing in Ireland's Home Rule when six of the nine counties of Ulster were arbitrarily

divorced from the rest of Ireland in

It is alleged by people on behalf of Lithuania - including an official spokesperson of the Lithuanian Popular Front speaking on Radio Four News — that Russia has always threatened Lithuania and Lithuania has never been a threat to Russia. In 1939 the Baltic states were illegally incorporated into the Soviet Union with no historical

It does the Lithuanian cause no good to make such claims.

Lithuania and the other then miniscule Baltic statelets were initially created by the Livonian Order, (allied to the Teutonic Knights) as part of the "Drang nach Osten" in the 12th Century. Slave peoples, both those that were then independent and those that belonged to one or other of the thirteen mediaeval Russian states, were subdued by Christian German people who claimed that slav meant slave and that all slavs so should be.

Is it any wonder that Ruassian and other Slav nations should consider that the products of that colonising mission are an imperialist

Lithuanians — unlike the Letts, Livonians, Courlanders, Estonians, and other Baltic peoples — emerged from the obscurity of being a pocket handkerchief statelet in the Middle Ages and became a significant empire.

Having conquered large areas of Russia and all but taken Moscow itself, Lithuania has no real right to complain of the fact that Moscow reversed the position a few centuries later and made Lithuania part of the Russian Empire.

Certainly continued maintenance of this after the revolution hardly accorded with Lenin's promise of self-determination for all the peoples of the Empire; but remembering that for those first few years of the Soviet Union there well as foreign-financed former Tsarist armies, fighting within the old Empire, the lapse is understan-

As a result of that intervention the Baltic peoples were detached from the Soviet Union, and somewhat arbitrarily divided into three states, ruled by pro-Western (generally military) dictatorial and

semi-dictatorial regimes.

In the course of time they became pro-Nazi regimes and though Hitler (during the Stalin-Hitler Pact) was to hand them over to Stalin, there were leaders of the regimes who were to aid and abet the invasion by Hitler of the Soviet

Never been a threat? No historical justification, other than the Stalin-Hitler pact?

Laurens Otter, Wellington, Salop

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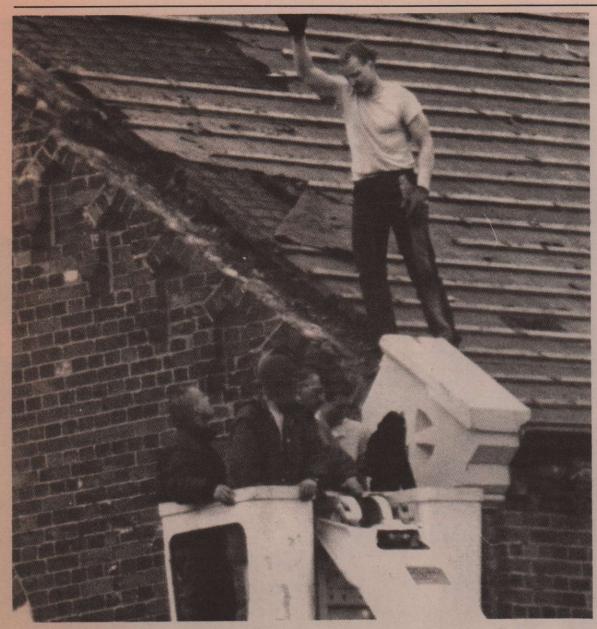
ick Carter's letter (SO no. 445) misses the point about the ANC and allegations of ANC torture.

Obviously socialists must support all forces in South Africa who are fighting apartheid. There is no need however, to delude ourselves as to the true nature of the resistance organisations.

The ANC is prepared to be as vicious as necessary in order to maintain its position of dominance in the liberation movement and its aim of a democratic revolution which leaves untouched the central levers of capitalist power. Thus the July 1988 issue of 'Sechaba' (the ANC's theoretical journal) contained this classical Stalinist slander.

"The most dangerous development of late is the attempt of the state to arrest, detain and torture leaders of the democratic move-ment whilst allowing Trotskyist organisers to agitate unhindered. It is clear who benefits from such organised confusion"

The charge is that Trotskyists help the state and are thus 'enemies of the people'. We know what happened to enemies of the people in Stalin's Russia. In South Africa in the '80s they could face physical attacks and even death at the hands of the 'comrades'. What will they face in the '90s. How many more 'unavoidable casualties' will there



The last defiant rebels come down from the roof of Strangeways prison. They now face long additional sentences, a long time in solitary confine-ment, and a routine of being shifted from jail to jail. Photo: Paul Herrmann, Profile.

Build on the prochoice victory

By Cate Murphy

he anti-abortionists suffered a convincing defeat last week when MPs voted to liberalise the abortion law.

While MPs voted overwhelmingly to lower the upper time limit from 28 to 24 weeks, three amend-ments which will take the law beyond the provisions of the 1967

Act were passed.

By a majority of 215 votes MPs approved abortions over 24 weeks, and with no upper time limit, in the case of "grave permanent injury" to the physical or mental health of the woman — the so-called "social grounds". Similarly, there is now no upper time limit for abortions on the grounds of foetal abnormality.

Equally important was the decision to separate abortion law from the 1929 Infant Life Preservation Act. Under this Act, which took precedence over the 1967 Abortion Act, doctors could be prosecuted for aborting a "viable" foetus. Viability was deemed to be 24 weeks. Consequently, few doctors would risk carrying out a termina-tion after 24 weeks, despite the 28-week limit allowed by the 1967

Removing this threat of prosecution means doctors will no longer have to err on the side of caution when carrying out abortions. Had the Infant Life Preservation Act still been in force, the 24 week limit would, in practice, mean 22 weeks.

Now, 24 weeks means 24 weeks.
The anti-abortion lobby were dismayed by the result. They were confident that they could win a reduction to 22 weeks, for all abor-

tions. But they were defeated on that by 46 votes, and they have seen the pro-choice lobby win our most significant victory since the 1967 Act itself was passed.

But, although the "pro-lifers" had promised that they would not bring restrictive abortion legislation back in the lifetime of this Parliament, Anne Widdecombe has now pledged to campaign to reverse the exemption clauses when the Embryology Bill returns to the House of Commons.

So we can't relax. And attempts continue to ban lesbians and single women from access to donor insemination.

Ann Winterton's original clause, expressly denying lesbians and single women access to DI, has been re-worded and, as an amendment in the name of the Lord Chancellor, will state that the future welfare of the child must be taken into consideration when deciding who is

"So while we celebrate the extension of abortion rights, we must argue that we won't compromise on the issue of choice for all women, and step up the campaign for the right of lesbians and single women to have equal access to reproductive rights."

"suitable" for fertility and DI treatments.

The rationale for this re-wording is clear: the bigots hope it will go through on the nod, with MPs not fully aware of its implications. Undoubtedly, the Code of Practice — yet to be worked out — will specify in more detail which women will be deemed "fit" mothers: lesbians and single women almost certainly will be excluded.

So while we celebrate the extension of abortion rights, we must argue that we won't compromise on the issue of choice for all women, and step up the campaign for the right of lesbians and single women to have equal access to reproductive

Also still to be debated is the demand for self-referral, where women themselves will be allowed to decide on whether or not to have an abortion, up to 12 weeks, without having to get the agreement of two doctors. This would significantly reduce the number of late abortions, as doctors exercising their "consciences" would be unable to prevent women from having an abortion. The campaign should continue to fight for this amendment to be passed, so that Britain is brought into line with the majority of European countries.

Nor should we forget that liberalising the abortion laws is meaningless if you live in Birmingham, where few facilities and provided, and many doctors refuse to grant "permission" to women seeking NHS abortions. To make the abortion law effective, we should campaign for better NHS facilities, sex education and contraception: that is the way to cut down on late abortions. Reversal of the cuts in government funding that have threaten up to 50% of family planning clinics must be fought for.

The campaign launched this week by MPs for better facilities, and contraception is an important part of the continuing fight for real choice: we should also encourage affiliations to the National Abortion Campaign, to build on the successes won in Parliament, and win an extension of our abortion and reproductive rights.

Will Walesa become a new Pilsudski?

Second and final part of an interview with Jozef Pinior of the **Socialist Political** Centre (Poland) with Mark Sandell and **Martin Thomas**

What do you think are the pro-spects for building a left wing within Solidarity?

It is a real possibility, not only within Solidarity but also with peo-ple from the former opposition against Stalinism.

For instance, there is now a move to the left by Karel Modzelewski. He was the author with Kuron of the Open Letter to the Party in 1964 revolutionary socialist ifestol. Modzelewski is now a senator in parliament, and he is a university teacher in my university in Wroclaw. In parliament he has organised a group to defend the workers.

He is moving to the left. He is not a revolutionary or a Trotskyist, but he is moving to the left. We have to

support such positions.

We have to support everyone in Solidarity who is open to the left, who wants to discuss with us, who is against unemployment and pauperisation, and have a broad movement without sectarianism.

Do you still think you were right to boycott the elections last year?

It was obligatory for us. We had a really broad base at that time. On 1 May in Wroclaw we had a demonstration of about 15,000 people. It was a potential movement for more democracy than offered by the Round Table.

Our analysis was correct. But perhaps the boycott was a little sectarian. I'm not sure now.

How immediate do you think the threat from the right is in Poland? I see two dangers. The first

danger is state authoritarianism. Walesa wants to be president. As president, if he wants to introduce the IMF programme, he must attack workers' rights — the right to strike, the right to free trade unions and so on. We could have something similar to Pilsudski's

and so on. We could have something similar to Pilsudski's system before the Second World War — state authoritarianism.

Another danger is the rise of a reactionary, chauvinistic, antisemitic movement, with populist

I'll try to explain the difference by comparison with Poland between the wars. There were two sources of authoritarianism in Poland then.

There was a nationalist movement, National Democracy, the biggest political party in Poland, openly anti-semitic, petty bourgeois. Some currents in it were fascist.

Another source authoritarianism was the Pilsudski current. Pilsudski came from the pre-First World War Socialist Party, but after the war he was a military leader, not a socialist

He created an authoritarian state, not on a nationalistic position, but on a state position, based on the state bureaucracy, the state apparatus, the military apparatus, and so on. His coup d'etat in 1926 was supported by the Socialist Party and the Communist Party!

I think they supported the coup d'etat because they were afraid of fascism from National Democracy. How is Walesa motivating his bid for the presidency?

He says the changes in Poland are going too slowly. He calls for the complete overthrow of the nomenklatura. It is only propaganda, but it is his demand.

He criticises the Mazowiecki

government from a free-market position — that they go too slowly with the privatisation of the economy. Evidently he wants to control the new wave of radicalisation in Solidarity.

He says the situation is very bad because we don't have privatisation yet, we don't have the free market yet, the nomenklatura is still in control and so on.

Since the split in the PPS(RD) your group is mostly confined to Lower Silesia and Warsaw. Do you have plans for spreading to other areas of the country? Yes. We want to work on a na-

tional scale. We work together with the workers in rank-and-file Solidarity in Upper Silesia, and other areas.

We're organising a publishing house, and we're publishing a mon-

thly bulletin.

What are your relations with the KRET group. [Mandelites]? We co-operate. Our differences are tactical. They want to build a

political party now, and we think that is impossible — we must build a political centre first. How is building a political centre different from building a political

In our opinion we must be in the mass movement. We must be careful not to build a political party which will be sectarian, a political party outside the workers move-

But don't the KRET group want to be inside the mass movement

Yes. But if we create a political party now there is a danger of being

outside the mass movement. There is a danger of being marginalised.

What are your relations with left-wing groups in other countries in Eastern Europe?

We have very good relations with

We have very good relations with the United Left in East Germany, with Petr Uhl in Czechoslovakia and with Kagarlitsky's group in the Soviet Union.

We are discussing the project of an international bulletin, and of an international confernce, maybe in the summer or autumn.

What are your relations with what remains of the PPS(RD)?

We are open to everybody who has left positions in Poland. If the friends from the PPS(RD) are in the class struggle in Poland, with workers in the strike movement, in anti-semitism, we will work

together.
We don't agree with them on some positions. They say Solidarity is a transmission belt between the government and the masses. That is a completely sectarian position. Solidarity is like a social-democratic trade union movement not a Stalinist trade union movement.

Before the municipal elections they created a list with a group which is close to the PPS in emigration. We didn't agree with that.

Other differences are on history, relations to the October Revolution, Trotskyism and so on.

The expelled the Trotskyists. It was a completely sectarian move, in my opinion. It was absolutely horri-

If they will be in the class struggle, it is possible to be together in



1972: Mass strikes free jailed dockers and smash Heath's anti-union laws



1977: Firefighters battle against Labour government

Lessons of the seventies

In 1972-74 great trade union struggles brought down a Tory government. Yet it was followed by a **Labour government** which carried out cuts on the behest of the IMF. Martin Thomas draws the lessons for today.

n June 1970 the Labour government was voted out of office. The new Tory government started out with a proto-Thatcherite free-market policy.

Tremendous trade union strug-gles over the following three and a half years finally crippled it and forced it into an election which it

lost in February 1974.

As a huge TUC demonstration against the Tories' anti-union laws made its way down the Embank-ment in March 1971, the left-wing AEU leader Hugh Scanlon jumped onto a bench and told the seething crowds that we must kick the Tories out and get Labour back in.

But — he felt obliged to add — this must not be another Labour government like the last one. It must be a Labour government with a socialist programme.

The slogan "Labour government

with a socialist programme", or "Labour government with socialist policies", had been the stock-intrade of the Trotskyists since the 1940s. To the Trotskyists it meant that they were cleverly combining the need to relate to the Labour Party with the need to argue for their revolutionary programme. To the average worker listening, it meant only that the Trotskyists wanted a Labour government and leftish policies of some sort.

The slogan was not transitional, but just a bit of ambiguous word-

play. If it should get any grip at all, it could only be miseducational, by implying that socialism was a blueprint to be executed by a Labour government rather than an effort of self-liberation by the working class working class.

And, indeed, the Trotskyists were

unable to provide the militants of the early '70s with any means to get a grip on politics. The Trotskyists echoed the spontaneous slogan "Kick the Tories out!" They "Labour government with a socialist programme" or "General strike to kick the Tories out!"

But "General strike to kick the Tories out!" was ambiguous too. To the Trotskyists it meant "General strike for revolution"; to anyone else it mean "General strike to force a general election", or, in other words, "General strike whose revolutionary potential the govern-ment can readily disarm by calling an election"

All this left Harold Wilson in charge of the political alternative to the Tories. There would be a few token Trotskyist candidates in the February 1974 election, but they were token candidates with token

The Trotskyists supported Labour. But most of them had no orientation to the Labour Party at all. Militant mumbled its routine propaganda about nationalising the top 200 monopolies.

ome of these issues were thrashed out at the time, in the Marxist magazine, Permanent Revolution (early 1973).
Reviewing a book which argued

that the working-class character of the Labour Party was withering away it agreed that active workingclass involvement at ward level was declining. Many workers had lost patience and turned to direct in-dustrial militancy instead.

That could be a step forward "as

long as we understand that the way 'forward' to revolutionary politics is not a simple linear succession of steps."

But "the inability of direct industrial action short of general strike to come to grips with the whole of 'Tory'-dominated society imposes the need to consider governmental alternatives on workers". The Labour Party retained its trade union links, and its ability to channel workers' political activity.

It had been important to "disinter" Lenin's concept of the Labour Party as a bourgeois workers' party; most of the Trotskyists had come to think of it as just the "workers' party".

The slogan "Labour government with socialist policies" was "fantasy-mongering". But socialists needed to raise specific demands on Labour, "to mobilise workers against the Labour leadership", and argued that "the Labour Party [remains] a major — bourgeois — force in the politics of the working class. It will not die away of

esides its reluctance to come to grips with the Labour Party at all, one other political problem crippled the revolutionary left in this period.

The Tory government was applying to join the Common Market. Most trade union leaders were alarmed at the prospect that their places in the corridors of power, already threatened by the Tories' domestic policies, would be further menaced by a shift of authority to Brussels.

Wilson opportunistically denounced Common Market entry as
being "on the wrong terms".
Labour's deputy leader, Roy
Jenkins, consistently voted in
Parliament for entry and against
Labour Party policy.
Both in the country at large, and
in the Labour Party, it seemed that
the Common Market was the great
issue of the day which separated
right from left.

right from left.

When the Common Market had first become an issue in British politics in the early '60s all the Trotskyist groups had said that the socialist answer should be neither to oppose nor to endorse entry, but to build working-class links across Europe. Now they all allowed themselves to be swept away by the wave of nationalism. They all rallied to the anti-European cause (with only one exception, Workers'

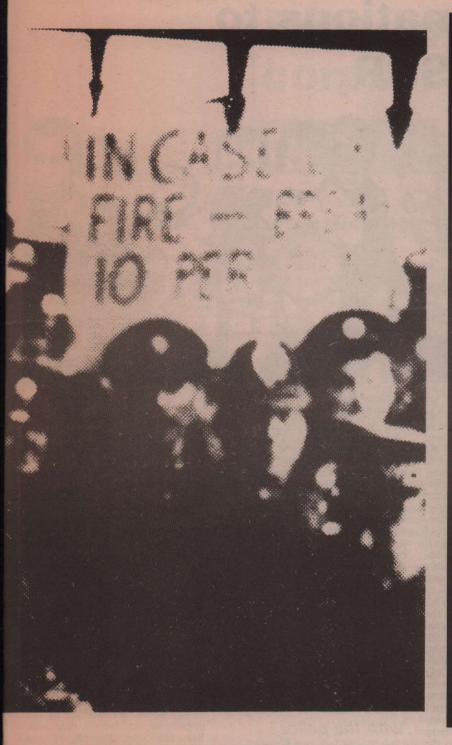
For the mainstream reformist left, opposition to the Common Market was logically linked to their basic economic programme, the "Alternative Economic Strategy" which emerged in 1972-4. They proposed import controls, price controls, increased public spending, selective nationalisations, and 'planning agreements'' between a Labour government and major companies - in short, a siege economy, but oriented to welfare rather than to war.

The Trotskyists criticised this nationalist strategy, of course; but how could the criticism make much sense ly en argui

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The left and the EEC

As a great wave of anti-EEC British chauvinism swept the labour movement in the 1970s only one paper, Workers Fight, maintained an unambiguous and clear socialist and internationalist position. One by one every other left paper dropped the traditional approach of 'whether in or out the fight goes on'

'whether in or out the fight goes on'.

To illustrate how far some groups were prepared to travel in order to be 'part of' the anti-EEC campaign we reprint the front page of Socialist Worker at the time of the EEC referendum in 1975 (below left) and quotes from a lead article from the paper's forerunner, 'Labour Worker' written by today's editor of Socialist Worker Chris Harman.



BOSSES' MARKET BOSSES' BRITAIN NO CHOICE VOTE!

These arguments for and against entry into the Common Market are essentially argumen's about how different sets of capitalists are to maintain their profits. It should not be our concern to argue one way or the other, for either way the profits are made at our expense.

When Labour leaders commit themselves on one side or the other, they are only committing themselves to one interpretation or another of the needs of the existing ruling class.

Instead we must prepare to meet the organisation of bosses on an international scale with the international organisation of the workers. This demands real links being forged between workers in different national branches of international companies.

Rather than be diverted by an argument we are powerless to implement, it is these links we should be looking to. The only answer to the international combine of the bosses, is the international combine committees of the workers.

when they were simultaneouslorsing the mainstream left's tent that links with Europe is be opposed because they if thwart the nationalist

fter 1970 Labour swung left with remarkable rapidity and adroitness, considering iserable chaos of the last few of the 1964-70 Labour

e 1973 Labour Party conce was probably, on paper, the left-wing Labour Party conce ever. Labour committed to the nationalisation of the s, insurance companies, shipng, and building land, and "a mental and irreversible shift balance of power and wealth our of working people". here will be howls of anguish the rich," said Denis Healey.

the rich," said Denis Healey. Effigures for individual Labour membership — unreliable se of the practice of counting imum of 1000 members for constituency — actually showslight continuation of decline 1970 to 1974. In fact there was a certainly a revival of active pership, though a modest one. Ediving force for the left shift of so much the constituencies trade union leaders. Many of were now left-wingers and great pressure from their

bers.

e shift in the union leaderships produced a shift in Labour's nal Executive, which by 1973 ominated by the left. The Parime was loosened up. When wing MPs like Dick Taverne teg Prentice were de-selected, BC did not intervene to save The list of "proscribed hisations" was formally hed in 1973, after years of

aken over by Militant in 1970,

at a conference where there were only 126 delegates. In the early '70s it grew, and allowed *Militant* to recruit substantially. For the first time it became a force to be reckoned with in the same leage as the IS/SWP, the Healyites (still

"A Labour government with no organised opposition from the left"

numerous then, and not completely mad until 1974), and the IMG.

Militant's politics — which guaranteed that the YS would do nothing more radical than listen to countless speeches about nationalising the big monopolies — and the new liberalism of the NEC allowed peaceful coexistence.

n February 1974, harassed by a miners' strike and a Middle East oil crisis, the Tories called a general election.

Labour emerged as the biggest party, though without a majority, and with a lower share of the total vote than at any time since 1931; the big gainer in votes was the Liberal Party.

The price was now paid for the left's failures over the previous four years. Scanlon, Jones and the other left-wing trade union leaders had come to an agreement with Wilson, the so-called "Social Contract" signed in February 1973, which was

supposed to provide for welfarestate improvements in return for wage restraint. The mainstream Labour left was politically crippled by its dedication to the anti-European cause.

European cause.

Most of the Trotskyist left had been unable to add anything but radical-sounding rhetoric (and absence from the Labour Party!) to what the mainstream left said.

The result was a Labour government with no organised challenge from the left.

In 1974 the Labour government repealed the Tories' laws curbing trade unions and forcing increased council rents, and there was a tremendous wave of wage strikes. Tony Benn, as Industry Minister, offered government aid to worker co-operatives in enterprises threatened by closure. Several shop stewards' committees wrote to Benn asking for their enterprise to be nationalised. Labour won a majority in a new general election in October

Britain Jurched into economic crisis. Profits slumped to almost zero. Jack Jones and Denis Healey got together to propose the answer: a £6 limit on wage rises, imposed in July 1975.

The left had already been shattered by its huge defeat in the referendum on the Common Market, in June 1975. Wilson had sacked Benn. The October 1975 Labour Party conference showed its resentment by voting Denis Healey off the NEC and replacing him with Eric Heffer, but supported the £6 limit

In March 1976 Healey pushed through a huge programme of public spending cuts which he considered necessary to get a loan from the IMF. 37 left Labour MPs initially voted against the cuts—defeating the government—and then fell into line when Wilson called a vote of confidence. The Parliamentary Left then collapsed

and ceased to be a force.

The NEC remained left-wing. At the 1976 conference it moved a document which called for the nationalisation of the banks. In November 1976 it supported a demonstration against the Labour government on the question of cuts, which mobilised 80,000 workers in London on a working day.

In 1978 Labour Party conference

In 1978 Labour Party conference voted against the government continuing wage controls: it was the government's defiance of that vote which led to the "winter of discontent" and Labour's ignominious defeat in the May 1979 general election.

ut the left opposition was all piecemeal. There was one notable opportunity for something better.

The Labour councillors of Clay Cross, who had defied the Tory government's legislation to enforce rent rises and suffered disqualification and surcharge, called a conference in 1974 to demand redress from the new Labour government. Some socialists at that conference proposed the launch of a coordinated rank-and-file movement of the left in the Labour Party. But the dominant force in the conference

was Militant. They turned it into a lecture hall, and nothing came out of it.

The IMG agitated bombastically with the slogan "Unite the left against Wilson". It was no good, since (1) they had no programme for this unity other than the "Alternative Economic Strategy" reworded in Marxist jargon; (2) no force on earth could have stopped the "Left against Wilson" fragmenting anyway; and (3) the IMG themselves did only marginal work in the Labour Party.

So the left opposition in the labour movement was piecemeal. By 1978-79, however, it was strong and widespread.

The official membership figures (by now completely misleading) showed a continuing slight decline over the 1970s, from 690,000 in 1970 to 666,000 in 1979. There was observably, however, no exodus from the Labour Party like in 1966-70.

More and more of the leftists who had shunned the Labour Party in the late '60s and early '70s were now going in to it. The question was, how would they organise and what would they argue for once in there?

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Trotsky on the right of nations to break away from the USSR

Leon Trotsky wrote this article (here abridged) in 1939, arguing for the right of the Ukrainians and other minority nations in the USSR - to have their own states if they wish

n one of the tiny, sectarian publications which appear in America and which thrive upon the crumbs from the table of the Fourth International, and repay with blackest ingratitude, I chanced across an article devoted to the Ukrainian pro-

What confusion! The authorsectarian is, of course, opposed to the slogan of an independent Soviet Ukraine. He is for the world revolution and for socialism — "root and branch". He accuses us of ignoring the interests of the USSR and of retreating from the concept of the permanent revolution. He indicts us as centrists. The critic is very severe, almost implacable. Unfortunately, he understands nothing at all (the name of this tiny publication, The Marxist, rings rather ironically). But his incapacity to understand assumes such finished, almost classical forms as can enable us better and more fully to clarify the

Our critic takes as his point of departure the following position: "If the workers in the Soviet Ukraine overthrow Stalinism and reestablish a genuine workers' state, shall they separate from the rest of the Soviet Union? No." And so forth and so on. "If the workers overthrow Stalinism..." then we shall be able to see more clearly. shall be able to see more clearly what to do. But Stalinism must first be overthrown. And in order to achieve this, one must not shut one's eyes to the growth of separatist tendencies in the Ukraine, but rather give them a correct political expression.

"Not turning our backs on the Soviet Union," continues the author, "but its regeneration and reestablishment as a mighty citadel of world revolution — that is the road of Marxism." The actual trend of the development of the masses, in this instance, of the nationally oppressed masses, is replaced by our sage with speculations as to the best possible roads of development. With this method, but with far greater logic, one might say, "Not defending a degenerated Soviet Union is our task, but the victorious world revolution which will transform the whole world into a World Soviet Union," etc. Such aphorisms come cheap.

The critic repeats several times my statement to the effect that the fate of an independent Ukraine is indissolubly bound up with the world proletarian revolution. From this general perspective, ABC for a Marxist, he contrives however to make a recipe of temporising passivity and national nihilism. The triumph of the proletarian revolution on a world scale is the end-product of multiple movements, campaigns and battles, and not at all a ready-made precondition for solving all questions automatically. Only a direct and bold posing of the Ukrainian question in the given concrete circumstances will facilitate the rallying of pettybourgeois and peasant masses around the proletariat, just as in Russia in 1917.

True enough, our author might object that in Russia prior to October it was the bourgeois revolution that unfolded, whereas today we have the socialist revolution already behind us. A demand which might have been progressive in 1917 is nowadays reactionary. Such reasoning, wholly in the spirit of bureaucrats and sectarians, is false

from beginning to end.

The right of national self-determination is, of course, a democratic and not a socialist principle. But genuinely democratic principles are supported and realised in our era only by the revolu-tionary proletariat; it is for this very reason that they interlace with socialist tasks. The resolute struggle of the Bolshevik Party for the right of self-determination of oppressed



Famine victims in the Ukraine 1932. Stalin deliberately promoted mass starvation as a way of controlling the rural population.

nationalities in Russia facilitated in the extreme the conquest of power by the proletariat. It was as if the proletarian revolution had sucked in the democratic problems, above all, the agrarian and national problems, giving to the Russian Revolution a combined character. The proletariat was already undertaking socialist tasks but it could not immediately raise to this level the peasantry and the oppressed nations (themselves predominantly peasant) who were absorbed with solving their democratic tasks.

Hence flowed the historically inescapable compromises in the agrarian as well as the national sphere. Despite the economic advantages of large-scale agriculture, the Soviet government was compelled to divide up large estates. Only several years later was the government able to pass to collective farming and then it immediately leaped too far ahead and found itself compelled, a few years later, to make concessions to the peasants in the shape of private land-holdings which in many places tend to devour the collective farms. The next stages of this contradictory process have not yet been resolved.

The need for compromise, or rather for a number of com-promises, similarly arises in the

field of the national question, whose paths are no more rectilinear than the paths of the agrarian revolution. The federated structure of the Soviet Republic represents a compromise between the centralist requirements of planned economy and the decentralist requirements of the development of nations op-pressed in the past. Having con-structed a workers' state on the compromise principle of a federa-tion, the Bolshevik Party wrote into the constitution the right of nations to complete separation, indicating

"The sectarian, as so often happens, finds himself siding with the police, sterile speculation on the superiority of the

covering up the status quo, that is, police violence by socialist unification of nations as against their remaining divided."

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 work-

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 liberation struggles and workers' struggles worldwide, including the struggle of

workers and oppressed nationalities in the Stalinist states against their own antisocialist bureaucracies.

We stand:

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Against racism, and against deportations and all immigra-tion controls. For equality for lesbians and

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

For left unity in action; clari-

ty 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

thereby that the party did not at all consider the national question as solved once and for all.

The author of the critical article argues that the party leaders hoped to convince the masses to stay within the framework of the Federated Soviet Republic". This is correct, if the word "convince" is taken not in the sense of logical arguments but in the sense of passing through the experiences of economic, political, and cultural collaboration. Abstract agitation in favour of centralism does not of itself carry great weight. As has already been said, the federation was a necessary departure from centralism. It must also be added that the very composition of the federation is by no means given beforehand once and for all. Depending on objective conditions, a federation may develop toward greater centralism, or on the contrary, toward greater independence of its national component parts. Politically it is not at all a question of whether it is advantageous "in general" for various nationalities to live together within the framework of a single state, but rather it is a question of whether or not a particular nationality has, on the basis of her own experience, found it advantageous to adhere to a given

In other words: which of the two tendencies in the given cir-cumstances gains the ascendancy in the compromise regime of a federation - the centrifugal or the centripetal? Or to put it even more con-cretely: have Stalin and his Ukrainian satraps succeeded in convinc-ing the Ukrainian masses of the superiority of Moscow's centralism over Ukrainian independence or have they failed? This question is of decisive importance. Yet our author does not even suspect its existence.

Do the broad masses of the Ukrainian people wish to separate from the USSR? It might at first sight appear difficult to answer this question, inasmuch as the Ukrainian people, like all other peoples of the USSR, are deprived of any opportunity to express their will. But the very genesis of the totalitarian regime and its ever more brutal intensification, especially in the Ukraine, are proof that the real will of the Ukrainian masses is irreconcilably hostile to the Soviet bureaucracy. There is no lack of evidence that one of the primary sources of this hostility is the sup-pression of Ukrainian in-dependence. The nationalist tendencies in the Ukraine erupted violently in 1917-19. The Borotba Party expressed these tendencies in the left wing. The most important indication of the success of the Leninist policy in the Ukraine was the fusion of the Ukrainian Bolshevik Party with the organisation of the Borotbists.

In the course of the next decade, however, an actual break occurred with the Borotba group, whose leaders were subjected to persecution. The Old Bolshevik Skrypnik, a pure-blooded Stalinist, was driven to suicide in 1933 for his allegedly excessive patronage of nationalist tendencies. The actual "organiser" of this suicide was the Stalinist emissary, Postyshev, who thereupon remained in the Ukraine as the representative of the centralist policy. Presently, however, Postyshev himself fell into disgrace. These facts are profoundly symptomatic, for they reveal how much force there is behind the pressure of the nationalist opposition on the bureaucracy. Nowhere did the purges and repressions assume such a savage and mass character as they did in the Ukraine.

Of enormous political importance is the sharp turn away from the Soviet Union of Ukrainian democratic elements outside the Soviet Union. When the Ukrainian problem became aggravated early this year, Communist voices were not heard at all; but the voices of the Ukrainian clericals and National Socialists were loud enough. This means that the proletarian

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Burn Lenin's corpse!

vanguard has let the Ukrainian na-tional movement slip out of its hands and that this movement has progressed far on the road of separatism. Lastly, very indicative also are the moods among the Ukrainian emigres in the North American continent. In Canada, for instance, where the Ukrainians compose the bulk of the Communist Party, there began in 1933, as I am informed by a prominent participant in the movement. participant in the movement, a marked exodus of Ukrainian workers and farmers from com-munism, falling either into passivity or nationalism of various hues. In their totality, these symptoms and facts incontestably testify to the growing strength jof separatist tendencies among the Ukrainian

This is the basic fact underlying the whole problem. It shows that despite the giant step forward taken by the October Revolution in the domain of national relations, the isolated proletarian revolution in a backward country proved in-capable of solving the national question, especially the Ukrainian question which is, in its very essence, international in character. The Thermidorean reaction, crowned by Bonapartist bureaucracy has thrown the toiling masses far back in the national sphere as well. The great masses of the Ukrainian people are dissatisfied with their national fate and wish to change it drastically. It is this fact that the

revolutionary politican must, in contrast to the bureaucrat and the sectarian, take as his point of departure. departure.

If our critic were capable of thinking politically, he would have surmised without much difficulty the arguments of the Stalinists against the slogan of an independent Ukraine: "It negates the position of the defence of the Soviet Union": "disrupts the unity of the

Union"; "disrupts the unity of the revolutionary masses"; "serves not the interests of revolution but those of imperialism". In other words, the Stalinists would repeat all the three arguments of our author. They will unfailingly do so on the

morrow.

The Kremlin bureaucracy tells the

Soviet woman: inasmuch as there is socialism in our country, you must be happy and you must give up abortions (or suffer the penalty). To the Ukrainian they say: in-asmuch as the socialist revolution has solved the national question, it is your duty to be happy in the USSR and to renounce all thought of separation (or face the firing

What does a revolutionist say to the woman? "You will decide yourself whether you want a child; I will defend your right to abortion against the Kremlin police." To the Ukrainian people he says: "Of importance to me is your attitude toward your national destiny and not the 'socialist' sophistries of the Kremlin police; I will support your struggle for independence with all my might!"

The sectarian, as so often hap-pens, finds himself siding with the police, covering up the status quo, that is, police violence by sterile speculation on the superiority of the socialist unification of nations as against their remaining divided. Assuredly, the separation of the Ukraine is a liability as compared with a voluntary and equalitarian socialist federation: but it will be an unqestionable asset as compared with the bureaucratic strangulation of the Ukrainian people. In order to draw together more closely and honestly, it is sometimes necessary first to separate. Lenin often used to cite the fact that the relations between the Norwegian and Swedish workers improved and became closer after the disruption of the compulsory unification of Sweden and Norway.

AGAINST THE

120 years after the birth of Lenin

By Sean Matgamna

wenty-something years ago, I vividly remember feeling a shock of emotional horror when I read an account by, I think, Ignazio Silone — or could it perhaps have been Victor Serge? - of how, one drunken night in Moscow in the late '20s, the author and a friend had seriously talked about burning Lenin's mummy.

Not because they were hostile to Lenin, but on the contrary, because they believed the cult of Lenin, of which the sainted medieval mummy on display in Red Square was only a part, to be a gross offence against the real Lenin and what he had represented.

I saw immediately that they were right, and that it would be far better, more communist, and indeed more "Leninist", to burn the waxy remains of Lenin than have them continue there on show for Stalin. Yet the initial shock I felt — a feeling of Oedipal sacrilege, perhaps as if Lenin were both Pope and father - told its own story of how powerful the Lenin cult was; and that is probably why I remember it so

The Lenin cult was strong even with people who believed they should hate and seek to destroy all cults, religions and pseudo-religions, including pseudo-political

religions. The cult was in its entirety a creation of Stalin. Up to his collapse at the end of 1922, a year before he died, Lenin had immense authority within the Bolshevik Party and within the Communist Interna-tional it had founded in 1919. But he was primus inter pares, first among equals.

Lenin had to argue and fight for his positions, using the methods appropriate within an organisation of self-respecting militants. Sometimes he was in the minority, as on the issue of peace with Germany, a matter of life and death for the revolution.

It was Stalin and his partners between 1923 and 1925, Zinoviev and Kamenev — whom he would have shot in 1936 — who made Lenin into a secular all-knowing god, the Russian "God the Son" to Marx's universal "God the Father"

Lenin had tried to get rid of Stalin, and had spent his last strength attempting to organise a campaign against Stalin's Great-Russian chauvinist activities in Georgia and against the growing bureaucratism of the state, centred increasingly on the new-minted (1922) General Secretary of the par-

He had broken off all personal relations with Stalin, and written to the Bolshevik Party congress asking them to remove him. But Lenin's memory, like his corpse, was a prisoner of the speedily fledging bureaucratic dictatorship.

The bureaucrats used his writing and their own alleged continuity with Lenin as a source of authority in the struggle which began in the autumn of 1923 between the working-class Trotskyist opposition and the Stalinist apparatus.

They were the Leninists; those

who in fact continued Lenin's real

politics, Trotsky and his comrades, were lapsing back to Menshevism or 'had never really broken with it'

As Kamenev — who, with Zinoviev, broke with Stalin in 1925 and joined the working-class opposition for a while once he had understood what was happening in Russia — said to Trotsky, looking back, "The trick was to link up our disputes of 1923-4 with the old disputes in the decade before the revolution'

Party history was stereotyped and falsified to provide the ruling Stalin faction with ideological labels and categories into which to try to

slot their current opponents.

"Lenin" was a source of authority, but Stalin and his allies decided what Lenin was, backed up by the power of the State and its organs of a game of ideological blind man's buff. propaganda and repression. It was

At the beginning Stalin certainly did not know where he was going or what he represented. He knew enough, however, to give himself a lot of help with his interpretation of "Lenin".

"Lenin".

He used Lenin's death to open the doors of the party — which had considered itself under siege, holding on in Russia until the European workers' revolution could come to their aid — to vast numbers of careerists who could be relied on against the revolutionary workingclass forces. Naturally he called this influx of careerists "the Lenin

levy".

The more things moved away from Bolshevism and socialism, the more "Leninist" they were proclaimed to be. Stalin's version of the history of Bolshevism and of the revolution began to play the role in Russian society that the tales about the life and sayings of Jesus played. the life and sayings of Jesus played for centuries in the lives of intensely Christian countries.

Lenin's comrade and wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, was to live out her last 12 years as Stalin's political and moral prisoner, a publicly honoured living political mummy. But she had spoken the truth in 1926 when she said that if Lenin were still alive, he would be

Lenin's mummy came to symbolise his place in history — the dumb dead icon of a regime he would have loathed and fought as long as he had breath in his body; the official ventriloquist's dummy through which others could speak, albeit in a pastiche of his own words, phrases and ideas; the cardboard-thin image assigned roles he did not play, often the opposite

of those he really played.

That is what "Lenin" has been for more than six decades. When bureaucratic factions fell out in Moscow or Beijing, they argued in terms. terms of Lenin-thought, "Leninism", like medieval religious-political figures arguing their own interests in terms of Biblical texts.

When Hungarian W barricades behind which to fight the Russian Army in 1956, they used statues of Lenin to taunt the Russians. Most of the people on either side would not have suspected that Lenin could not possibly have chosen to be anywhere else in that grim Budapest except on the bar-ricades and with those fighting the Russian Army.

Lenin had written some of the most profound and powerfully felt argument in favour of national selfdetermination. He had infused the Russian labour movement - which was to break down the walls of the Tsar's prison house of nations with his own spirit on this question. Without knowing it, those Hungarian workers acted as if under guidance of some benign spirit of historic truth!

The official Stalinist state cult of "Lenin" was not entirely negative,



Stalin, the gravedigger of the revolution.

for they did publish his books and pamphlets, in vast editions and at cheap prices. It was even possible to read what he said and to learn by analogy what he would have thought of those who staged their annual military parades to glorify the Stalinist version of Asiatic despotism around his mausoleum.

More than that too, as my own experience will show. Long ago, in the late '50s, I was a teenage Lenin

cultist!

I had joined the Young Communist League, wanting a communist revolution, but painfully ignorant about it all. Then I learned that we believed in peaceful revolution! By way of votes to elect "Labour, Communist and Progressive" Members of Parliament!

Of the British Parliament!

The British ruling class would surrender peacefully? For anyone who knew Irish history this could not make sense.

I'd just been beaten up in a Salford police station by two cops investigating vandalism at a timber yard from which I'd been sacked for trying to organise a branch of the TGWU, and that stiffened my dogmatic ingrained conviction that revolution was not just a matter of winning elections. I didn't believe it. Couldn't.

But I couldn't argue against it, either, not against people who could quote Marx in support of the

Then I read Lenin! Lenin dealt with the argument that "Marx believed in peaceful revolution" in a polemic with Karl Kautsky, The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky.

Yes, said Lenin, replying to Kaut-

sky, Marx did say you could get a peaceful revolution in Britain and in the USA, and maybe in Holland. Was he right?

I think he was right, said Lenin. So do I believe that we can now, in 1919, have a peaceful revolution in Britain? No, I don't!

What was Marx's reasoning 50 years ago? He argued from the fact that there was no military-bureaucratic state machine in Britain or the USA, as there was in the other capitalist countries. His conclusions were probably valid then. But is the world still what it was when Marx analysed it? Are Britain and the USA still without the military-bureaucratic state?

No, they are not. No, Marx's conclusions of 50 years ago are not valid any longer.

Lenin was immensely respectful to "authority", to Marx and Engels

- and before 1914 to Karl Kautsky — but he never reasoned from authority. He brought it in to back up his own argument. He brought in what Marx said, and used it to help him think about what he was analysing.

There could be no more direct contrast with the way the Stalinists used Lenin's words as themselves

used Lenin's words as themselves proof of whatever they were trying to prove at a given time.

History does show that Lenin could indeed be used as the source of dogmatic certainties as interpreted by various "Leninist" popes. But you could not read arguments like the one about peaceful revolution, critically and with your mind open, without learwith your mind open, without lear-ning to think for yourself. Lenin did not offer you a priori

dogmas, or his own pontifications, he offered you reasonings. No matter how dim you were, no matter how strongly inclined to settle in to the self-hypnosis of quasi-political religious certainties, Lenin — the Lenin that exists, the books — did not accommodate you.

He dealt in and offered you a Marxism which was historically rooted, conditional, evolved and evolving

evolving.

That Lenin is vivid and alive still. He cannot tell us much about many of the things that have come into existence in the world in the 66 years since he left it, but he can teach us how to think about it as

Sections of the Russian bureaucracy now favour an open repudiation of Lenin, and also of the October Revolution, by the Russian state. Gorbachev — who to and represents ferent class from the class Lenin belonged to and represented - apparently still wants to go on arguing for his programme in the old Stalinist way, invoking aspects of Lenin's writings that suit his needs. That cannot last if Gorbachev and his faction carry through their full programme, which is now, on current evidence, a programme of restoring capitalism. They too will

break with Lenin.
Good! The sooner the better! The sooner they relieve Lenin from his long posthumous captivity, the sooner the workers in the Stalinist states and elsewhere will feel free to explore Lenin's real ideas and what he really fought for.

The day they burn or bury the poor dead remains of the great iconoclast Vladimir Lenin will be a good day for socialism. And for Leninists.

Terrifying violence, not explained

Edward Ellis reviews 'The Krays'

erhaps it was an impossible task, to make a film about two psychopathic murderers (who are still alive and can presumably sue) which is both believable and explanatory.

But if it was impossible, perhaps ti should never have been attemp-

The question mark over 'The Krays' is whether it glorifies its central characters. Ronnie and Reggie Kray are depicted here as weirdos, emotionally inadequate, unspeakably and terrifyingly violent, and although it is less clear to me if this is intentional, completely stupid, unless some would see genius in their obsessional drive for personal power.

But are they not really what every macho little shithead would dearly love to be? Because, above all, they

If this odd and unpleasant film

succeeds in one thing, it is to convince you that you really wouldn't want to mess with the Kray twins. just mess with them. You wouldn't even have to have messed with them to get your throat cut for no reason, it seems; or, to be more precise, less your throat than the sensitive part of skin that connects you mouth to your ears and holds your face together. I would not want to be in the same hemisphere.

And what your average macho shithead would make of it, I really cannot say, I suspect that if you've half a mind to find the Kray brothers sympathetic and emulable,

you will. If not, you won't.

But that should not absolve the film itself of all responsibility. If it explained, or at least investigated, the underlying psychological drives of the Krays with any conviction, at least it would put questions in the minds of their small-scale suc-cessors. Or it might. But it does not explore the psychological drives with any conviction at all.

The explanation for Ronnie and Reggie's proclivities for slicing peo-ple up is real do-it-yourself psychology. They were twins, right? And so they had this uncanny, almost telepathic relationship together. And Ronnie really didn't like it when Reggie talked to girls (so this closeness was altogether not

Also, they had a domineering mother, bless her, working class salt of the earth but a bit smothering and a weak father, oh and he was a petty criminal (like father, like

The film doesn't directly address the issue of Ronnie's homosexuality. It is acknowledged; and I think even the real hard-cases watching would get a bit irate with Stephen Berkoff (Cornell)'s tirade against poofters, seeing as how Ronnie is such a mean bastard. But I imagine that the impression, for most viewers would be that the little coterie of queers' around Ronnie was all part of his general unsavouriness.

He was a psycho, so it is hardly surprising he was queer; nor is it surprising that there should be other queers hanging around, all possessed, it would seem, of such feeble and violent characters.

Equally, Reggie's relationship with his wife, who commits suicide because she can't stand the absolute because she can't stand the absolute loss of independence that results from her marriage, isn't plausible. "You don't have to buy clothes any more", he tells her. "I'll buy them for you", (meaning, she doesn't even get to choose them). "But I want to buy them myself," she want only he really doesn't know says, and he really doesn't know what she's on about.

Okay, he was thick-skinned and possessive, not to mention crazy, but he can't have been that stupid. The woman is barely able to open her mouth she is so unhappy, and he doesn't even notice it.

This is indeed, one of the film's themes. As their grandmother says (twice, just in case you miss it the first time), boys never grow up, even when they're men they think they can boss everyone around.

Dearly beloved and fatally con-

sumptive Auntie Rose echoes this sentiment, in the movie's key-note speech; boys never grow up, but girls have to, or society would col-lapse. She had a much harder time in the war than any man in a nice

clean tank did. With this, she coughs up blood and splatters herself to death.

The film tries to say something about the lives of working-class women. Ronnie and Reggie are the product of a male-dominated world in which women take the strain and men get the glory... And this is so even if the women, like Mrs Kray, bear part of the blame for the overweening way they bring the boys

But this theme is dealt with neither with much subtlety nor, again, much conviction.

Yet unsubtlety is the film's selfconscious hall-mark, and although the result is extremely odd, I begrudgingly admired it. The story is told at a level just off reality: it is slightly surreal.

The twins often speak and move in unison.; often, they do not speak at all, but there is a sort of hypnotic inevitability to their actions, as when they have a public boxing match and punch each other stupid (giving Mother — played incidently by Billie Whitelaw, who obviously thought that this less-than-completely-real lark meant there was no point in putting on an East End accent — the opportunity to insist, portentously, that they should fight everyone else but not

Everybody is larger than life, from the manic schoolteacher demanding a marvellous word from his dumbstruck pupils (until Ronnie and Reggie volunteer, in unison 'crocodile') to Stephen Berkoff's rival gangleader, who gets shot through the head in a a pub near Whitechapel tube station. Even the richest which is as grussome as violence, which is as gruesome as you are likely ever to see, has a per-

culiar, almost ritualised quality.
This is a very strange film. It does not glorify the Kray twins, at least not deliberately. But it does not really condemn them either. And nor does it explain them.

It seems merely to have taken the ingredients of their story and used it to tell a sort of Once upon a time in America meets East Enders. I couldn't see the point of it. Maybe that's the point?

Ron and Reggie with one of their victims

Who fears to praise Red Seventeen?

SONGS OF LIBERTY AND REBELLION

Who fears to praise Red Seventeen? Who quails at Lenin's name? When cowards mock at Trotsky's fate Who hangs his head in shame? He's Stalin's knave, or bourgeois

Who scorns the Old Cause thus, But honest men and women Will raise a shout with us.

We praise the memory of the dead Of Lenin's friends long gone Who led the workers in revolt, An army, not a throng. All, all are gone, but still lives on The cause of those who died And honest men and women Remember them with pride Remember them with pride.

They rose in dark and evil days To set the workers free, Their own lives fed the living flame To burn out tyranny.
But bourgeois might half vanquished

Some fell and passed away, And others spun 'neath Stalin's gun — But we fight on today!

We strive to free all those who live In bourgeois slavery
And glory in the names of those
Who fought for Liberty.
Grim bourgeois might won't vanquish

But fall and pass away, And honest men and women Will speed them on their way.

Yes, we dare praise Red Seventeen, We honour Lenin's name. Though cowards mock the socialist

We'll raise it high again! Yes, Stalin's knaves and bourgeois Can scorn the Old Cause thus, But honest men and women

Will raise a voice with us.

We hail the memory of the brave, Of Trotsky's 'durate few

In China, Russia too.
Though all are gone, they still live on,
Their cause won't go away
And honest men and women
Still sing their song today.

Then here's their memory, may it be For us a guiding light
To win us Workers' Liberty
And teach us how to fight.
Through good and ill continues still
The Cause that thrives unseen, That brought the bourgeois tyrants

In Nineteen Seventeen.

This is an adaptation — or, better, a palimpsest — of one of the most effective and popular political songs ever written: John Kells Ingrams' 'The Memory of the Dead''. Better known as 'Ninety eight', it has been sung by Irish republicans since the early 1840s, when Ingrams, a student of Trinty College, Dublin first published it in 'The Nation', then the paper of Young Ireland.
'Ninety Eight' was 1798, when a series of doomed republican risings erupted in Ireland, stimulated by the Great French Revolution.

Revolution.

After 1842 'Young Ireland' was beginning to counterpose the ''98 Tradition' of insurrectionary, secular republicanism to the narrow, and mainly Catholic, constitutional nationalism then dominant under the leadership of Daniel O'Connell. O'Connell too, had turned out with his gun in '98 — to defend 'order' against the rebels and their French allies. "Who fears to speak of 'ninety eight..."

French allies. "Who fears to speak of 'nine-ty eight..."

Large numbers of Irish workers have sung 'Ninety eight' in the last 150 years, and not only in Ireland.

It has been sung on ships, picket lines and in military camps; in the mines of Pensylvania, Australia, Scotland, and on docks building sites and engineering works all across the world, wherever a part of the Irish diaspora has settled.

Many of those migrant workers who sang "Ninety Eight" had to learn to sing other songs too — the Red Flag, the Internationale...

It is a fair guess that Ingrams, who was

It is a fair guess that Ingrams, who was later to publish a book (which I haven't read) outlining the then current bourgeois economic wisdom, would disapprove of this attempt to adapt "Ninety Eight".

But, I believe, quite a few of those who have sung "Ninety Eight" over 15 decades would approve.

I take the music from Desmond Greaves' "The Easter Rising in Song and Ballad", published by the Workers Music Association, where it goes with another adaptation "Who fears to speak of Easter Week".

Sean Matgamna

Who died in Spain, France, Germany

The ozone layer we don't want

LES HEARN'S SCIENCE COLUMN

zone is of vital importance to us as it reduces the amount of dangerous ultra-violet rays reaching the Earth's surface from the Sun.

These rays would otherwise cause skin cancers and cataracts to humans, as well as possibly upsetting the balance of life in the oceans by killing off the top layers of plankton (microscopic plants and animals on which the rest of the sea life depends).

Ozone can do its job wherever it is in the atmosphere but, fortunately for us, it is found mainly in a layer some 15 miles up, where the atmosphere is ex-tremely rarified. I say "fortunately" because ozone is an extremely dangerous gas.

Ozone is, as most readers will know, a form of oxygen. Readers should also know that without the usual form of ox-ygen we should soon die. What is so difOrdinary oxygen is not such an in-nocuous substance as you might im-agine. It is a strong oxidising agent and many things react with it, often buring or exploding. The Challenger explosion involved pure oxygen mixing with pure hydrogen with enough heat from the rocket motors to ignite the mixture. However, in the absence of heat to start the oxidation process, oxygen is often quite placid.

Not so ozone! This has three atoms per molecule compared with oxygen's two and this is sufficient to make it ex-tremely reactive. Ozone oxidises anything that moves and most things that don't. It is particularly dangerous to living things.

At a concentration in the air of just 50 parts per million (ie. about a mouthful in a cubic metre), it is fatal in 30 minutes. 1.5ppm for two hours causes coughing and excessive sputum production, a defensive measure of the body Half a ppm causes names Half a ppm causes nausea and headaches while 0.1ppm causes eye, nose and throat irritation with premature ageing if exposure is for a

long enough period.
Incidentally, 0.1ppm is the limit recommended by the Health and Safety Executive as the average over an 8 hour

What then is the relevance of all these facts? The answer is that we are exposed to low levels of ozone and that sometimes the levels may not be so low. Ozone is a high energy substance and high energies are needed to make it, just the sorts of energies found when elec-trical machines like motors, generators, photocopiers and laser printers operate or when any electrical sparks occur.

Ozone accounts for the tangy smell associated with electricity which is quite noticeable in the London Underground. It is sometimes produced in heavily

polluted city atmospheres when bright sunlight falls and its high reactivity results in the formation of "photochemical smog". This sort of ozone pollution is very harmful to plants and has harmed agriculture in plants and has harmed agriculture in the property and the state of sunny areas close to big cities such as are found in California.

More worrying for us is the increase in ozone pollution in the modern office and many other places, as copiers, fax machines and laser printers become cheaper, smaller and more widespread. Instead of being in well-ventilated cor-ridors, such machines are frequently in the same room as the office workers — and even on the same desk!

Some companies fit ozone filters to their printers but these become less effective as the machine gets older. Other companies don't fit filters at all.

Many of the vague feelings of ill-health reported by workers in office blocks may be due to exposure to this insidious poison gas. The only good ozone layer is the one that's 15 miles

A boring sort of victory

INSIDE THE UNIONS

By Sleeper

ndustrial disputes are supposed to be exciting, even glamorous, affairs: heroic picket-line battles, starving families, bosses and union leaders slagging each other off on the telly, tense late-night negotiations — that's the kind of thing we all expect.

The trouble with the national engineering dispute (aka the "Drive for 35") is that it's been rather ... well, bor-

You could be forgiven for not noticrou could be forgiven for not notice ing that this dispute was happening at all, despite the fact that it has rumbled on for nearly 9 months. Neither the capitalist press nor the left papers have paid much attention. This is partly because of the deliberately low-key nature of the campaign itself: from the start Bill Jordan of the AEU and Alex Ferry of the Confed (Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions) have played their cards very close to their collective chest.

their collective chest.

Only selected groups of workers have been called out, after being scrupulously ballotted. The "hit-list" of companies has been carefully chosen, starting out with large profitable outfits like Rolls Royce and British Aerospace. Strike pay of £150 (later reduced to £60) was provided by a national law.

of £150 (later reduced to £60) was provided by a national levy.

The left's lack of enthusiasm for the campaign is partly explained by a general dislike and suspicion of Bill Jordan: some people in the AEU "Broad Left" even argued that no support should be given to the campaign, because to do so would lend credibility to Jordan's empty posturing and to Jordan's empty posturing and associate the left with a campaign foredoomed to failure. This attitude was not (quite) as ridiculous as you might think. The "Drive for 35" did not arise from any obvious rank and file pressure but was cooked up by Ferry, Jordan and Laird was consciously based upon the German union IG Metall's 1984 campaign for a 35-hour week (which ended with a 38½-hour set-

tlement).
AEU left-wingers also remembered that the Engineering Employers Federation had already offered the "phased introduction" of a 37½-hour week in exchange for "total flexibility" throughout the industry. In 1987, and again in 1989, rank and file revolts had succeeded in persuading the AEU National Committee to throw out the EEF's proposals against the wishes of Jordan. Bro. Bill's public insistence that the 35-hour week had already been paid for by productivity increases throughout the industry did little to allay fears that the final outcome might well bear an uncanny resemblance to the

deals that had previously been rejected.
At first, it looked as though the cassandras of the left might be right: the Confed leaders encouraged local deals that fell far short of the official demand for 35-hours without strings. The November 1989 NEI Parsons deal for a 37-hour/4½-day week by 1992, plus strings like the ominous commitment to a "review of shop steward structures" was a watershed. Jordan, Ferry and Co predictably hailed it as a "major breakthrough" and it set the pattern for dozens of subsequent local deals. By mid-January *The Economist* was praising "Mr Bill Jordan...who has quietly won a reduction in hours for most of his

The left was less impressed, concentrating its fire on the extensive strings that accompanied most of the deals. At BAe Chester, for instance, 37 hours was achieved at the cost of removal of washing up time, bell-to-bell working, agreement to perform "alternative" work as required, acceptance of sub-contractors, the lifting of overtime restrictions, flexible shift working...etc,

Less attention was paid to a potentially much more dangerous consequence of the Confed strategy: the employers announced that they were pulling out of national negotiations altogether, effectively ending the very concept of a national agreement. This could yet prove to be a very serious set-back, especially for workers in smaller, less well organis-ed plants. The Confed's response came from their Press Officer: "The strategy remains the same, except instead of try-ing to win ten or twelve local deals we will now have to win hundreds and

The strings accepted in many of the local deals are, of course, bad news. But local deals are, of course, bad news. But they are not necessarily a complete disaster: they can be fought step-by-step on the shopfloor and their impact minimised by effective rank and file organisation. For most workers in engineering, the important thing was the precedent of a 37-hour week had been set ..

By February, the Confed could claim 66,000 workers had won a reduction in hours (the EEF admitted to 19,000). And the campaign has had an obvious knock-on effect well beyond companies covered by the Confed/EEF arrangements: 20,000 workers in the Scrap Metal Federation won a 37-hour week with no strings earlier this year; this month, Rover agreed to give all production workers a 37-hour week, while some workers will move to a 31½-hour week in exchange for radical shift patterns and "continuous production".

The Rover deal will undoubtedly become a bench-mark for the rest of the

motor industry.

Before we all become over-excited and start taking back all the nasty things we've ever said about Bill Jordan, it's worth remembering that the Confed campaign has not achieved its stated objective of 35 hours without strings throughout engineering. It does repre-sent an important step forward and, certainly, the pessimists and ultra-leftists were entirely wrong to write off the campaign as they did. But much more could have been achieved. Significantly, deals like NFI Parsons and BAe Preston

were only accepted after close and contentious votes; BAe Kingston held out for 23 weeks against the strings.

For once the old cliché about the rank and file being more willing for fight than the leadership was true. But Jordan's "top down" strategy minimised rank and file influence. It's been a limited and rather boring victory.

Field faction: 'don't vote Labour'!

From 'Tribune', 27 April

rank Field has been dealt an embarrassing blow by some of his supporters in Birkenhead.

Mr Field has been trying to use every option, within the rules of the Labour Party to overrun his deselection as candidate for Birkenhead. But now, 34 members of the constituency's Egerton Ward have written to Neil Kinnock and to the local papers urging voters not to support the Labour candidate in their ward in the next week's local elections.

The 34 claim that there were ir-

regularities in the way in which the can-didate, Phil Williams, a sitting coun-cillor was selected. But they also object to the fact that he has been openly critical of Mr Field, and backed the successful candidate, Paul Davies, in the

parliamentary selection.
Peter Kilfoyle, Labour's north west regional organiser, has warned the 34 that their action puts them in serious breach of Labour's rules and has confimed that Mr Williams was seleted according to those rules.

The flagship is sinking

By Cate Murphy

he Tories' flagship is sinking. This week's local council elections will see huge Tory losses, with Labour predicted to win over 600 seats.

And it will be down to one issue: the massive hostility to the poll tax.

Panic has gripped the Tory party. Back bench rebellion among Tory MPs is growing, forcing Thatcher to order a re-think on the poll tax, in an attempt to stem rising unpopularity.

This week a top-level Cabinet committee, chaired by Thatcher herself, was set up to reform the poll tax. A range of options are being considered, including a banding system reflecting ability to pay; or, more likely, powers for central government to cap all councils who set a rate higher than a governmentdictated level.

The first option would mean abandoning the fundamental principle of everyone paying the same, leaving a system closer to local income tax.

The second option undermines the premise of local government ac-countability, the motivation behind the introduction of the poll tax. Central government would bear all the responsibility for the poll tax, and attract all the opposition and

Either option would be a major U-turn on the principles on which the poll tax has been introduced, and a defeat for Thatcher. But to press on regardless will damage the Tories' electoral chances.

Labour is benefiting from the anti-Thatcher, anti-Tory backlash, but it's not because of anything Kinnock and Co. have done to lead the fight against the Tory tax.

As the anti-poll tax campaign continues to grow, with more and more demonstrations, and trade unionists taking up the battle for non-implementation, the Labour leaders have distanced themselves further from grass roots activists.

This must change if the anti-Tory

vote is to be translated into a pro-Labour vote. Labour Party and trade union rank and file activists must fight to force our leaders to back the non-payment and nonimplementation strategy that can see off the poll tax for good.

We need to build the biggest, broadest campaign possible, uniting non-payers in the community with workers fighting wage arrestments

Labour Party Socialists

Conference

Saturday-Sunday 19-20 May

at Sheffield Poly Student Union, Pond Street.

Registration from 10am, Saturday

Credentials £10 (delegates from organisations); £6 (waged individuals); or £3 (unwaged) from PO Box 118, Chesterfield,

Derbyshire S44 5UD

and redundancies in the workplace and force the Labour and TUC leaders to back us.

ction by trade unionists in refusing to co-operate with prosecutions of non-payers, and deducting poll tax from wages and benefits will be crucial to the success of the anti-poll tax campaign in the coming months. It is vital that they are organised and drawn into the campaign.

The Socialist Movement Trade Union conference last November, attended by over 500 trade union and labour movement delegates, mandated the elected Trade Union Committee to organise a working conference for trade unionists against the poll tax.

We approached the All Britain Anti Poll Tax Federation in early March to join us in organising a broad conference. Tony Benn issued an appeal for support for this conference, and over 60 trade union branches and trades councils, together with the CPSA and NCU Broad Lefts, backed it.

The Federation stalled; then called their own conference for 23 June, and only then agreed to meet the Socialist Movement, simply to tell us they wanted no Socialist Movement involvement in the con-

Plainly, the 23 June conference has been called simply to do down the Socialist Movement. *Militant*, the main force in the All-Britain APT Federation, has previously shown little interest in the trade union aspect of the fight against the poll tax. And if the founding conference of the Federation is anything to go by, the trade union conference will be less a serious conference than a rally. There is no room for workshop debate and discussion. According to Federation Secretary Steve Nally, it will focus exclusively on wage arrestments, with no discussion on fighting cuts and redundancies.

Such sectarianism may help the fortunes of Militant, but it will not encourage building a broad-based, united campaign of all forces against the poll tax, which is necessary if we are serious about fighting and defeating the poll tax.

We will still need a democratic, open, broad-based conference to thrash out a strategy that can win trade unionists to nonimplementation. Delegates to the June conference should demand that the Federation joins with the Socialist Movement in organising such a conference for the autumn

Defend AEU democracy!

By Tom Rigby

he on, off, on, off, affair between Bill Jordan and Eric Hammond is back on again.

At its national committee last week, the engineering union AEU voted to open talks with "kindred unions on the basis of our democratic structure whether inside or outside the TUC on the understanding that the amalgamated union would be affiliated to the TUC." This vote re-raises the prospect of a merger with the EETPU.

Last year, a successful campaign from the rank and file half dan's desire to merge with the electricians on the basis of abolishing the AEU's democratic structure.

If it were on offer, a merger with the EETPU which preserved the role of the AEU's district committees, national committee and appeals court would be a positive development. However, it is

As merger talks develop, we can expect Jordan's commitment to AEU democracy to wane and his affection for the EETPU's rigid semi-Stalinist command structure to increase.

The left should not become compla-cent because of the inclusion in the union's policy of a formal commitment to defend it.

Strike ballot forces climb-down

By Roy Webb

embers of the Town Hall workers' union NALGO in Southwark, South London have voted 54%-46% against an allout strike - but only after the strike ballot forced a climbdown by the council.

The council's ruling Labour Group met during the period of the ballot to consider the management document. Under pressure, the Labour Group threw out management's proposals, and instructed management to go away and

negotiate a new agreement with NALGO and the other Council unions.

The document had proposed the complete abolition of the procedures for assimilation' (slotting redeployed staff into jobs similar to their old ones) and all union involvement in any negotiations on reorganisation.

It refused to say that any jobs would be safe. Protection of earnings for redeployed staff was to be reduced from

the present three years to two years.

The 46% vote for a strike is a strong base on which we can hope to win any future ballot for strike action should negotiations break down again. Many new members applied to join NALGO during the period of the ballot

IN BRIEF

Inflation, which is set to go over 10% this month, has pushed employers' demands for increased productivity and changes in working practices out of annual pay talks according to the ACAS annual report.

The power workers have been offered a 10% wage rise, dealing a serious blow to the Tories' economic policy and increasing pressure on pay.

Railworkers have been told

by their union leaders that only a strike can win more than BR's latest pay offer of 9.3%

Low paid hospital workers have been offered a mere 7.8% rise. Roger Poole, architect of the ambulance workers disastrous settlement earlier this year, described the offer as 'the best we can achieve through negotiation'. Workers should vote no in the ballot.

Thirteen ambulance crews walked out in South East London last week in protest as the absence of backdated allowances in their April wage

Workers' Liberty 1990

A weekend of socialist discussion and debate 29-30 June and 1 July 1990 University of London Union Malet Street, London WC1 Organised by Socialist Organiser

The end of Thatcherism

Millions refuse to pay the poll tax. Industrial militancy revives. Labour leads the polls. The Tories quarrel among themselves. The economy is in trouble. This could be the end of Thatcherism. But are socialists ready to take the opportunities? Workers' Liberty 90 will discuss and debate the ideas we need to make a left alternative for the 1990s.

SPEAKERS INCLUDE

Harry Barnes MP
Robin Blackburn
Robert Fine
Sue Himmelweit
Alice Mahon MP
Adam Novak
John O'Mahony
Mark Perryman
Jozef Pinior
Hillel Ticktin
Speakers from the opposition
movements in Czechoslovakia and
East Germany

Sessions include

THE END OF THATCHERISM

- * The fight against the poll tax
- * The left in the Labour Party
- * The left in the trade unions
- * 1992
- * Renewing socialism

REVOLUTIONS IN EAST EUROPE

* Round table with socialists from



Eastern Europe

* Symposium on the nature of the Stalinist systems

* Debate: the left and the Eastern

* The USSR today

* Feminism in East Germany

* Workshops with socialists from Eastern Europe on what's happening in their countries.

RENEWING

- * Is Marxism outdated? A discussion with Marxism Today
- * Market socialism
- * Did Leninism cause Stalinism?
- * Green and red politics

INTRODUCTORY

- * Capitalism
- * Socialism from below
- * Reformism
- * Stalinism
- * Revolutionary socialism today

ISSUES FOR SOCIALISTS

- * Nicaragua: what went wrong?
- * China: will the democratic movement revive?

- * South Africa: is apartheid on the way out?
- * What would socialists do about prisons?
- * What way for lesbian and gay liberation?
- * The new technology of childbirth

Other courses on

MARXIST ECONOMICS OUR HISTORY AND THEIRS THE POLITICS OF WORKERS' LIBERTY

And extra sessions on

* The politics of football * Freud and
Reich * Is the world dying * Myths in the
movies * Chaos theory * The novels of
Salman Rushdie * Racism in Fortress
Europe * Anti-semitism in the USSR *
Which way for the student left? * and
much, much more

This Agenda is provisional. A full timetable will be available nearer to the date of the school.

Friday-Saturday-Sunday 29-30 June, 1 July 1990

Noon to 7pm Friday 11am to 6pm Saturday 10am to 4.30pm Sunday

University of London Union Malet Street London WC1

Five minutes' walk from Euston Station. Nearest tube stations: Goodge St, Russell Square, Euston Square, Warren St.

Creche provided, accommodation provided, food available, socials Friday and Saturday evenings.

Tickets		Student/	
	Unwaged	low waged	Waged
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21 May	£6/£5	£12/£10	£18/£15
Before			222122
27 June	£8/£7	£15/£13	£22/20
On the			************
door	£9/£8	£18/£15	£25/£22
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Name			
Address			

Enclose £_____ for Friday/Saturday/Sunday at unwaged/student-low wage/waged rate. (Delete as appropriate).