



Last Saturday's 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference on the need for a new socialist party, nearly 200 attended Photo: Alan Clark

\* Conference reports: pages 4, 5 and 6

\* Letters: page 2

## Liverpool dock strike

Rally

### Six months!

London coach leaves 7am from York Way next to King's Cross station

Lambeth coach details  
0171-737 2134

● After the 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference

# HARD (BUT NEW) WORK AHEAD!

**LAST Saturday's conference on the need for a new socialist party can be counted a real success.**

The 'Crisis in the labour movement' conference opened with speeches from Liverpool dockers and dockers' wives, organised as Women of the Waterfront, and the discussion brought in a wide range of speakers.

Trade unionists, members of several parties and political organisations — the Labour Party, Socialist Labour Party, Militant Labour, Communist Party of Great Britain as well as the WRP — comrades from Africa and the Indian sub-continent, workers in unemployed centres, pensioners, Workers Aid for Bosnia organisers, anti-asylum bill campaigners, fighters against racism and fascism, defenders

**BY CLIFF SLAUGHTER  
WRP secretary**

of democratic rights, opponents of the Criminal Justice Act, fighters for a socialist united Ireland, students, scientists and writers, as well as socialists from western and eastern Europe.

The main resolution of the conference is printed on page 5 of this week's Workers Press. It makes a clear call for work for a new party of the working class and not the proclamation 'from on high' of a new party.

What is being worked for is a new party of the kind the working class needs in its fight for socialism and not just the signing-up of individuals who agree on basic socialist principles.

The new party must come out of the struggles and the

life of the working class along with struggles that aren't directly 'working class' because it is the working class that represents the striving of the whole of humanity for a better and not a worse future.

It must reflect the needs of these struggles and it must begin to take them forward in a new way.

Therefore, it is proposed that at this time the discussion on the need for a new socialist party be concentrated in the support groups to be built everywhere for the dockers' strike and for subsequent struggles.

### Resolved

It was also resolved that those at the conference work to call regional conferences on the need for a new party. All these will prepare a further national conference in October this year.

The discussion must reach out to and include the Socialist Labour Party and its members and all those in the various Socialist Alliances and other working-class parties.

Five major themes are highlighted by the dock strike and came out last Saturday:

■ The conference welcomed the emphasis placed on the need for a party of the working class and not 'supplied' to the working class.

■ The form of work now proposed is directed deliberately at overcoming the division between the 'industrial' and the 'political' arms of the workers' movement.

■ The structural crisis of capitalism brings into the struggle millions of oppressed and exploited people not organised in the traditional working-class organisations (trade unions and parties) and

millions who rise up against the wanton destructiveness of capital (as in the defence of the environment or against militarism). The new party must strive to unite all these with the organised working class.

■ The reconstruction of the working-class movement — with the building of a new party at its centre — means in the first place the rebuilding of working-class internationalism.

■ More and more the focus of all struggles will be the need to get rid of the anti-union laws.

We stressed in opening the conference that this must be understood as a great beginning. It is the responsibility of all of us who were at the conference to now engage in this new work. The task is a long and difficult one: the recon-

struction of the working-class movement after decades of betrayal.

### Confidence

But the great struggles of the working class must give us confidence. In particular, the Liverpool dockers' turn to internationalism, their recognition that they need to be a political and not only an industrial leadership, their insistence on working-class democracy, and the way they have inspired their fellow workers, show that the possibilities are great.

It will be hard work. And it will be new work. One Liverpool docker said that the last weeks had changed his life — he had done things he never dreamed he would do.

We shall win in the fight for a new party if we realise that such a change is necessary for every one of us.













