

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY EAST AND WEST



Revolt in Korea

See page 4

Women's Fightback pull-out: centre pages

One law for the rich

On paper the law is the same for everyone. Geoffrey Collier and Dennis Goulding were both caught fiddling a little extra money for themselves at work. Both could have been jailed, but in both cases the judge let them off lightly, with a fine and a suspended sentence. All very equal.

But in this unequal society, such 'equal' law translates into one law for the rich, another for the poor.

Geoffrey Collier was a top man at Morgan Grenfells merchant bank. He was paid £150,000 a year, but he was greedy, and tried to make more money through illegal 'insider dealing'.

Now 110 cases of insider dealing have been investigated in the last seven years, and only six people have been prosecuted. But Collier was unlucky. He was found out just after the Big Bang and the Boesky scandal in New York. The City was anxious to reassure foreign investors that they would not get ripped off in London.

Collier's case was blatant and clear. He had to be made an example.

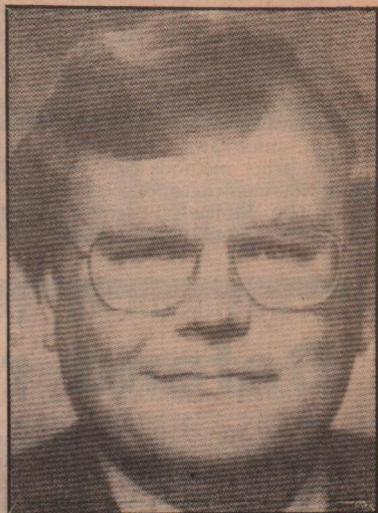
So he got fined £25,000 plus £7,000 costs. The judge let him off lightly because he thought the effect on Collier of losing his job had already been 'crushing'.

'Crushing'

Crushing? Collier has had to sell his £1 million mansion and instead slum it in a five-bedroom house in Sevenoaks with private swimming pool. He still has wealth of £700,000 — enough to let him live a life of luxury from dividends and interest alone, without ever doing another day's work in his life.

If he wants to carry on and become a multi-millionaire, he can still do it. According to the 'Independent', "it is unlikely that a man of such ability will prove unable to build another future for himself in the field in which he excels. Indeed, there are rumours that he has already taken steps in that direction in the United States".

Another for the poor



Rich man: Geoffrey Collier



Hooray Henrys and Henriettas at Henley. Photo: John Harris, IFL



Poor man: Dennis Goulding

Peter Cameron-Webb and Peter Dixon, who embezzled about £40 million from investors in the Lloyds insurance business between 1968 and 1982, have already managed to continue scot-free as rich businessmen just by moving to the US.

Compare Dennis Goulding. He is a garage storeman brought to court for stealing from his employer. He was lucky enough to have a judge of the old-

fashioned Tory squire type rather than a Thatcherite, and he got off with a fine and a suspended sentence.

The judge took "pity" because Goulding had been driven to theft by his poverty wages. He got £33 for a 42 hour week, and was trying to keep a wife and three children.

Goulding is now on the dole. He has little chance of getting a job — he stuck to the £33 job for

nine years because he thought he couldn't get another, and now he has a criminal conviction on his record. It will be more hardship for him to pay his £200 fine out of his dole than it is for Geoffrey Collier to pay £32,000 out of his £700,000 wealth.

Goulding is in the same league as people hauled into court for fiddling a few pounds extra on their social security. Collier is in the same league as the few people

who fail to get away with tax evasion.

One may get pity from a judge who believes in the duty of the ruling class to be generous to the deserving poor. The other will get sympathy from a judge who regards him as a comrade who has unfortunately stepped across the narrow line which separates

Turn to back page



Viraj Mendis must stay!

The campaign against the deportation of Viraj Mendis has called a national demonstration against all deportations for this Saturday, 11 July.

This demonstration assembles at Manchester Crown Square at noon. It must be the largest and strongest public voice against the immigration laws this country will have seen. Bring your banners to the march.

The threatened deportation of Viraj to Sri Lanka is opposed by Amnesty International, who in their report, published on 22 June, exposed the growing list of tortures and executions of those supporting the Tamil struggle.

Since 1983 over 5,000 Tamil people have been murdered by racists and the National Guard.

RACE AND CLASS

By Lynne Skipworth

The report states that 400 members of the Sinhalese community, (the majority ethnic and religious grouping in Sri Lanka), have, so far, been imprisoned and tortured under a regime which the British government still considers to be a 'democracy' for supporting the Tamils' cause.

As a Sinhalese Communist, Viraj will face certain imprisonment and probable torture and death if he is forced to return to Sri Lanka.

In April this year, David Waddington visited Sri Lanka to discuss the case of refugees from the country with President Jayewardene. The British government's statement that Sri Lanka is a democratic country is understandable when British investments in Sri Lanka are considered.

For example, 40% of Sri Lanka's income comes from the export of tea; 90% of the packet tea market is controlled from London.

The massive profits extracted by Britain from the tea plantations mean the government is bound to collaborate with the Sri Lankan régime, and is bound to act against anti-racists in Britain.

After living in Manchester for 13 years, Viraj sought sanctuary in a Manchester church in December 1986. After seven months of confinement, the likelihood of the Home Office sending in the police to remove him from the church increases daily.

It is vital for all socialists to take an active stand against the immigration laws of Britain.

We must stand against our government, in Manchester on July 11, and in our day-to-day work in the labour movement, to stop all deportations from this country.

Coach transport to the demonstration is available from many parts of the country. For details phone 061-234 3168 (office hours).

Orangeists change tack

LAST WEEK, on the eve of Northern Ireland's rowdy and often bloody Orange marching season, the province's Unionist politicians moved towards a dramatic change of tactics in their fight to get rid of the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

The Agreement, signed between the British and Irish governments at Hillsborough Castle 20 months ago, gives the 26 Counties a major say in the running of Northern Ireland.

For over a year, the Unionists have been boycotting Parliament, staying away from Westminster, where the overwhelming majority of MPs have supported Mrs Thatcher's deal with Dublin. They have refused even to

By Paddy Dollard

talk to the British government unless it first agreed to suspend the Anglo-Irish Agreement.

But the boycott of Westminster and the refusal to talk was getting the Unionists nowhere.

Like the British labour movement, though for their own reasons, the Orange politicians fervently hoped that Thatcher would lose the election and that they could do deals with a weak Labour government, as they did in the late '70s. Thatcher's victory has convinced them that they have to find some way out of the political cul-de-sac they have backed themselves into.

A 'task force' of three leading politicians — Frank Millar and Harold McCusker from the Official Unionist Party, and Peter Robinson from Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party — which was set up to explore the options now available to the Unionists, has just reported, recommending that the Unionists talk to the British government without preconditions. The MPs have already started to slink back to Westminster.

This is a change of tactics, not a softening towards the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The Unionist vote in the election was down a little, and the vote for supporters of the Agreement up a little, but overwhelmingly the Unionist population continues to regard the deal as a sell-out of their

interests to Dublin.

At Short's aircraft factory in Belfast Protestant workers have struck because the management insisted on taking down Loyalist flags and bunting.

Last weekend the police refused to let Orangeists march through Catholic areas in Portadown. The Orange Order's leaders accepted the police ruling, but youths and militants rioted and clashed with the police.

Last summer serious clashes in the marching season were avoided because the authorities repeatedly backed down. If they are repeatedly backed down. If they are going to be tough during the 1987 marching season, this summer in Northern Ireland may be a lot hotter than the last one.

Australia

Union rights under attack

Janet Burstall writes from Sydney

"At about 3 a.m. on the last day of sitting of the Queensland parliament, Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen brought down this legislation after 20 minutes debate. It effectively outlaws the right to strike for all Queensland workers" reported Arch Tudehope, President of the Collinsville Branch of the Australian Miners' Federation. He was speaking at the National Left Fightback Conference held at Easter in Melbourne.

Queensland miners had recently voted overwhelmingly in favour of their officials' recommendation for an indefinite strike to defeat the new laws.

The law they are fighting requires each union and worker taking industrial action to give seven days' notice to the employer, the state Minister for Industrial Relations, and everyone who has given prior notice that they may in any way be affected by a strike. Arch Tudehope gave an example of how someone might give notice to the Miners' Federation that



Labor leader Bob Hawke campaigning. Australia goes to the polls on 11 July.

they would be affected by a strike.

"All they would have to do is drop in to any club and tell the first person they know to be a miner. That miner then has the responsibility to tell every other miner, regardless of whether he was sitting drunk in the corner at the time."

The penalty for failure to give seven days' notice is \$50,000 against the individual worker, and \$250,000 against the union. The union and its members are held guilty of failure to comply unless they can prove their innocence.

For example, a worker would have to prove that they were not notified that someone would be affected by their strike.

This latter provision was in 1985 Queensland legislation used against power workers sacked by SEQEB. SEQEB sacked 1000 workers and offered their jobs back only under non-union conditions, without the right to strike.

Memories

Queensland workers fought back and brought much of the state to a standstill. But the leaders of the Electrical Trades Union, the Queensland Trades Union, the Queensland Trades and Labour Council, and the ACTU called off the action to negotiate with the government. A widely held view was that 'defeat was snatched from the jaws of victory'.

The ACTU promised legal challenges, publicity campaigns, days of action...but none of them worked. Now hundreds of former SEQEB workers and their families are blacklisted, living in poverty, or forc-

ed inter-state. But they do have memories!

It was somewhat sickening therefore to hear ACTU President Simon Crean warn now of the danger of 'snatching defeat from the jaws of victory' if strike action is taken against the new round of Queensland anti-union laws. Crean advocated using other methods first — constitutional challenges, publicity...

The Miners' Federation leaders have resisted considerable pressure

from the ACTU and trade union leaders of the 'left' and the right, to hold off strike action.

Workers in the Queensland Engine Drivers and Firemen's Union (FED-FA) have been on strike in defiance of the new law, and Queensland miners have been holding 24 hour stoppages.

The Federal election has now intervened and led to the Labor federal government withdrawing the legislation that was supposed to save the miners from Joh's laws.

The 'pay off' will be a High Court challenge of the Queensland Act and eventually Federal laws that will 'protect' workers from State legislation. But the government has already demonstrated that it can't be trusted. The proposed Federal law introduced penal powers on union officials and increased the discarded penal provisions on unions. It entrenched sections 45D and E of the Trade Practices Act. And then it was withdrawn.

The response of the Miners' Federation leaders has been confusing. Their initial response to the withdrawal of the Industrial Relations Bill was to announce 24 hour strikes to protest. This was despite recognising that the Bill was an attack on the right to strike.

Then they talked with the Government and agreed to call off the industrial campaign and attempt legal challenges.

This decision should be opposed by miners. Support for an industrial campaign has been running high. If rank and file miners succeed in continuing their industrial campaign we must be ready to organise solidarity.

Messages of support and donations can be sent to the Australian Miners' Federation, 377 Sussex Street, Sydney, NSW 2000.

Letter

Defend reselection!

Lol Duffy's success in nearly unseating Tory Lynda Chalker whilst fighting on a straight class struggle ticket will have put the wind up not just the Tories but also the Labour leadership. This and other increased majorities for the 'hard' (i.e. solid) left in the North has caused Neil Kinnock to try and head off any ideological analysis of his campaign's failure — he warns against "the affectations of ideology" wasting our time in "self-indulgent seminars".

Certain Labour Party tops at the same time are talking about the need for merging with the Alliance. This will not happen, says Roy Hattersley, but does he really mean it? Allowing the Tories to dictate the agenda, he talks about "extending party democracy through one person, one vote" so that "extremes of left and right can be marginalised, just like Margaret Thatcher is able to do in the

Conservative party. This is a very strong position for any party leader to be in".

The writing is on the wall comrades! Opening up party democracy is fine, but what Hattersley means is changing the way MPs are selected by local parties so that there is no longer any way of holding them accountable to the local rank and file. Once this is accomplished, local parties can protest all they like about mergers with the Alliance, they'll have no means of holding their MPs in check.

Socialist Organiser must campaign all out to throw back the NEC's proposed changes to the way MPs are selected, both in the run up to and at this year's Labour party conference. We can't afford to let this one slip by.

SAM DEEDES,
Salisbury

Fight the Tories, not the left!

As the well-worn saying has it, those who don't learn the lesson of history ending up repeating it. Thus Neil Kinnock and his supporters are now set to repeat what Labour leader Hugh Gaitskell and his cronies did immediately after the October 1959 General Election.

Labour had lost the elections of 1951 and 1955 and after it lost the third successive election in 1959 the Right went on the offensive to wipe away any trace of socialism from Labour's identity.

They launched a campaign to get the Labour Party to agree to drop the commitment to socialism embodied in Clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution.

Hell

All hell broke loose in the Party, and the Gaitskellites were ultimately defeated. Now here we go again, with Neil Kinnock and his friends "doing a Gaitskell". This time too the Right must be defeated.

It was not socialist politics which lost us the election. Socialism had nothing to do with Labour's national campaign.

In the constituencies, from Islington North to Wallasey, in which left-wing socialist campaigns were run, Labour did better than average, usually far better.

The Right and Centre ran Labour's national campaign, not the Left.

It was essentially the policies of the Right and Centre which the electorate rejected. And not only were their policies rejected by the electorate — their entire approach was discredited by the experience of the election.

Socialist Organiser
PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

01-639 7965.
Latest date for reports: first post Monday or by phone, Monday evening.
Editor: John O'Mahony.
Typesetting: Upstream Ltd, 01-358 1344.

Published by Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.
Printed by East End Offset (TU), London E2.
Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.
Signed articles do not necessarily reflect to views of Socialist Organiser.

Labour fought a very good media-centred campaign for four weeks but the Tory victory proves that what was needed was an anti-Tory crusade through the years leading up to the election.

That's what we need now — an anti-Tory crusade. Immediately after the election Neil Kinnock talked as if he had understood that. He hasn't.

EDITORIAL

He thinks that the main enemy is in his own party. He believes what the irreconcilable enemies of Labour write in the press. That Labour must become more Thatcherite if it wants to win elections.

But why should people vote for a second-string "caring" Thatcherite party? In any case, though Thatcherism may 'work' for some of Mrs Thatcher's supporters, it doesn't work and never can work for the labour movement.

Labour needs to go out to convince people to believe in a different — working class — outlook on life. Labour needs to go on the offensive now against Toryism.

Poll tax

The 'poll tax' with which the Tories propose to replace the rates will hit millions of people



CPSA national pay rally. Photo Andrew Wiard, Report

badly, including many who voted Tory. Labour can turn the country against the Tories on this issue and defeat them.

There will be other issues. But Kinnock wants to fight the left. That is a tragedy and a shame.

The left and those who want to get on with fighting the Tories have no alternative but to fight to stop Kinnock and his friends.

Like we stopped Gaitskell.

In the course of the struggle and debate now opening up, the left will have to sort its own ideas out too. Liberating working class socialism needs to be restated not only against the Thatcher-driven Right and Centre, but also against the bureaucratic Stalinist and Fabian counterfeit of socialism.

Debating socialism

By Tim Anderson

The main themes of Socialist Organiser's Summer School, "Workers' Liberty '87", held in Manchester last weekend concentrated on two themes taken from the last two issues of Workers' Liberty magazine — the retreat from class politics by sections of the left, and the tasks confronting the labour movement after the general election.

In the opening session, Lol Duffy, Labour candidate for Wallasey, described the campaign there which reduced Tory Minister Lynda Chalker's majority from 6,700 to 279. He argued that the campaign to involve the Labour Party in the day to day concerns of working people must continue after Labour's defeat.

In other sessions Norman Geras spoke about those on the left who

have tried to theoretically justify their retreat from Marxism and have ended up by rejecting class politics.

Simon Pottinger, a Vice-President of the National Union of Students, in a session on the 'Rainbow Coalition' took up the way in which these ideas are being brought into the labour movement in Britain.

And John O'Mahony, editor of Socialist Organiser, summed up these discussions in the final session by explaining that part of the responsibility for the defeats of the working class was the failure of Trotskyists to build a political alternative within the British workers' movement and how Socialist Organiser must redouble its efforts to rearm the labour movement with ideas that are able to take the working class forward.

Other themes of the weekend included the history of British Trotskyism; Ireland; the current situation in the unions; the struggle in South Africa; aspects of women's struggles; and basic introductions to the ideas of Lenin, Trotsky and Gramsci.

All in all a pretty good weekend. Be there next year!



Victimised miner Paul Whetton addressed Workers' Liberty '87

Grisly excavations

By Jim Denham

THE GRISLY excavations on Saddleworth Moor have been followed in predictably morbid detail by the entire tabloid press.

Today went so far as to hire a helicopter to get some close-ups of Ian Brady as he searched Shinybrook for the grave of Keith Bennett.

Meanwhile the publicity-hungry Tory MP for Saddleworth, Geoffrey Dickens, muscled in on the action with his claim to know about a "third killer". This turned out to be a reference to Myra Hindley's brother-in-law David Smith, cleared by the police 22 years ago.

Police discounted Mr Dickens' claims as 'nonsense'.

All this press attention (and Detective Chief Superintendent Copping's search itself) is of course justified by the need to put the families of the victims out of their torment. But Friday's Express carried an interview with the brother of victim Pauline Reade, describing the condition of his mother, who lies in a Manchester psychiatric hospital:

"She really does not know what is going on at all. It is as though she has blanked all the horror out. It all started going wrong for her when the police started digging again..."

Meanwhile, those relatives who are capable of reading the newspapers will no doubt have been most heartened to read in Friday's Sun that "The body dug on the moors could still be in good condition... because the peat it was buried in may have stopped oxygen reaching it".

Free pass for the Digger?

THE DIRTY Digger's acquisition of Today gives him control of one-third of the entire national press in Britain.

Such a takeover would normally have to be referred to the Monopolies Commission, but Trade and Industry Secretary Lord Young decided this was not necessary because the future of the paper was in jeopardy.

Exactly the same thing happened when the Digger acquired the Sunday Times, and before that the Sun.

Could it be that the government's willingness to see the Alliance-supporting Today fall into Murdoch's hands has something to do with the fact that every paper he takes over sooner or later adopts the ultra-loyal Thatcherite stance of its proprietor?

As Tory MP Jonathan Aitken commented, "Should we not at least give Mr Murdoch a free pass and have done with it?"

Ms Henry's claim to fame

THE DIGGER wasted no time in putting his man as editor of Today, which left a vacancy at the helm of the News of the World.

This has now been filled by one Wendy Henry, described in a Sunday Times profile as a "no-nonsense Northern lass".

Ms Henry's main claim to fame (as far as journalism goes) is her Sun 'interview' with Falklands widow Marcia McKay. This harrowing exclusive turned out to be a complete fabrication, and Wendy was suspended for two weeks.

She now describes it as "a very stupid thing to do. I learned a lesson from that". Like not to get caught, presumably.

Incidentally, Ms Henry was once a member of the International Socialists (forerunner of the SWP), and part of an oppositional tendency that SO traces its roots back to. Someone who knew her then says, "She was always a dilettante, nowhere near as serious politically as her twin sister. She liked hanging round with the 'big names' in the group. You know the sort."

Ms Henry does not deny her past, but comments, "My beliefs are million times more right-wing now!". Surprise us!

GRAFFITI

Tory hive-off jitters

Even Tory councils are not keen on hiving off council services to private enterprise, according to a recent report.

They have tried it, and found the private contractors inefficient. Savings are small, and often less than zero if the bureaucratic costs of contracting-out are taken into account.

Bus deregulation, according to a new study by Peter Stanley of Oxford Polytechnic, has meant worse services, and wage cuts for busworkers.

Wages have been cut by up to 50%. But in most places the same companies still run the services, only with bigger profits and without public control. Where new operators have come in, the result is congestion on the busiest routes and worse services in other areas.

Another verdict on privatisation was delivered this week by the National Consumer Council. It says that Telecom service has got worse since privatisation. Users are more

Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)



Norma Kitson was arrested outside the South African embassy last Thursday. She had been standing on the pavement outside the embassy with four Labour MPs in a bid to establish the right to picket. After the MPs left the police swooped and she was arrested.

dissatisfied with Telecom than they are with still-nationalised electricity, gas and water services.

Telecom has cut charges for big business users while increasing them for most ordinary households.

Privatisation doesn't make sense — except for the Tory government, which sees it as a weapon to break up public sector trade unions, and their friends who make quick profits from it.

From Vietnam to Contragate

The team responsible for selling US arms to Iran and channelling the sales money to the Contras in Nicaragua may have been operating for over 20 years.

According to the leftist Christian Christic Institute, Oliver North, Richard Secord and others have been running a secret or semi-secret international dirty tricks team. They started in 1966, in a 'Special Operations Group' which carried out

over 100,000 assassinations of civilians in Vietnam.

Two associates of the team were responsible for the CIA's campaign against Salvador Allende's government in Chile. After 1977 it went unofficial, though its members continued to hold high offices in the US state machine. The Christic Institute says that the team has financed itself by illegal arms deals and drug smuggling.

In a separate revelation,

Oliver North has been identified as having helped to write an official plan for putting the US under martial law in a crisis.

In the event of a nationwide uprising of the black communities, military commanders would take over from the elected authorities.

Death

The US, alone among the richer capitalist countries, still has the death penalty. It also has the highest murder rate of the advanced countries.

Instead of concluding that the barbarity of the death penalty simply compounds the barbarity of murder, some US politicians now want to increase fear of the death penalty by reintroducing public executions. This being a technological age, the executions would be broadcast on TV.

One prisoner on death row commented that it was no use. People are so used to seeing violent killings on TV that the quiet procedures of a legal execution would just be boring...

BR food

On no account must railworkers tell angry passengers that there's no food on the train because the private contractor didn't deliver it. An instruction from BR says that it would be even worse to point the finger and say that Trust House Forte was to blame. No: railworkers are under orders to mutter vaguely about "acute operational difficulties".

Undaunted by these difficulties, BR bosses are now planning to privatise all of what remains of BR's catering service.

Jury-nobbling



Your friendly local jury-nobbler

Jury-nobbling is a trade in its own right, according to the London police. "There are a number of people in London who very likely specialise in jury-nobbling as a trade...The amount of criminal money available is horrendous", says Assistant Commissioner John Dellow.

Dellow didn't say this,

but the other jury-nobblers are the police, who vet jurors in major cases.

US children

Over 20 per cent of children in the US live in poverty, according to US government figures. The percentage has increased from 14 per cent in 1969.

REVOLT

Over the last month there has been a massive explosion of popular opposition to the dictatorship that rules South Korea. Clive Bradley looks at the roots of the revolt.

'Korea in crisis — the threat to the Olympics', headlined the American magazine Newsweek on 29 June. From this and other media coverage of recent events in South Korea, you could be forgiven for believing that the burning question of the hour was whether or not the hundred metres hurdles will take place in Seoul next year.

In fact, South Korea is witnessing a powerful movement for democracy that has forced its authoritarian, right-wing government onto the retreat, and calls into mind the massive struggles that toppled the Philippines' President Marcos in 1985. Korea's Chun Doo Hwan, like Marcos, enjoys the support of the US — and like Marcos is a vicious dictator.

Huge demonstrations of students, increasingly joined by middle-class protestors, have been met with ruthless violence. In particular, tear gas has been used to beat resistance down. But the protestors have turned into rioters — and now it looks like there will be, at least, some democratic reform in South Korea, although that may not satisfy the militant youth.

Student riots demanding democracy have been taking place for some time in Korean universities. The current wave of unrest followed the death of a student in police custody in January: he was drowned during interrogation.

Then when Chun announced that discussions on Korea's constitution — and therefore promised elections — were to be postponed until after the Olympic Games in 1988, opposition reached immense proportions.

Street battles

Students fighting street battles with riot police were watched sympathetically by market traders and office workers — and then the onlookers started to join in. According to the Financial Times, even young stockbrokers took the weekend off to support students occupying Myongdong Catholic Cathedral in Seoul early in June.

When the students eventually left, 10,000 white-collar workers moved in to occupy it in their place.

After further clashes and student demonstrations the government has backed down. Roh Tae Woo, Chun's

successor, has called on the President to accept all the popular demands for elections, including presidential elections, and to resign if he will not.

It is a gambit: Roh believes that with the popularity that he can win by posing as a national hero favouring democratic change, he can defeat the opposition parties in the elections themselves. It's a case of recognising which side his bread is buttered. And there is some evidence that the gamble might pay off.

But it will not be plain sailing. The opposition United Party for Reunification and Democracy, led by Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung — the recent formation of which shocked Chun into cancelling the elections — is very popular.

Concessions

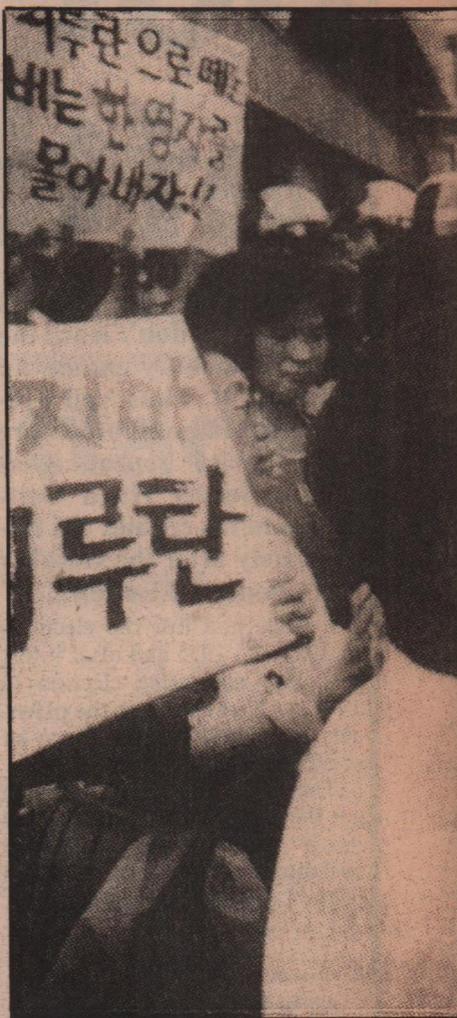
Moreover, the street fighting will not go away. The death of a student after three weeks in a coma following a previous confrontation with police provoked more rioting on 5 July. The government has been forced to make further concessions — releasing 177 political prisoners from jail.

What lies behind the recent explosion in South Korea is the country's remarkable social and economic development. The Economist recently described the country as 'the greatest economic success story of the past quarter of a century'.

Since the mid-1950s, industrial production in South Korea has increased fifty times over. Exports rose one hundred times over. Gross National Product grew by 9% a year. GNP per head was by 1985 on a par with Argentina and above Portugal: twenty years before, the country had been as poor as a country like Cambodia.

Literacy is higher in South Korea than it is in the USA. More people in South Korea go on to higher education than do people in Britain. There has been a big growth in mass consumption — of cars, for example. Food has fallen as a proportion of consumption from 54% in 1971 to 44% in 1985 — which is to say that South Koreans spend more of their money on non-essential goods.

Although average incomes are quite low (about £360 a month), there is less stark inequality in South Korea than in many newly industrialising countries. A relatively affluent middle class — the people now seen braving the tear gas along with the students — has emerged. In 1985, 53% of South Koreans considered



themselves middle class.

South Korea, in other words, has dragged itself out of 'Third World' status. Manufactured goods now account for the vast bulk of its exports, for example — in sharp contrast to the traditional image of Third World countries relying entirely on the export of food or raw materials.

How has this come about? In 1945, at the end of World War Two, and after 40 years of Japanese occupation, Korea was divided. In the North, Kim Il Sung emulated China and the USSR. In the South, Syngman Rhee got the backing of the West.

War

From 1950 to 1953, a war between the two Koreas embroiled large numbers of foreign troops — in particular American — in the country. After the war, a demilitarised 'no man's land' was created between the two states, an area still hotly disputed.

The Western war for democracy, like later such wars, did not, of course result in a regime even cosmetically democratic.

While Kim's North Korea is austere and repressive even by Moscow standards, South Korea has been as cruel and authoritarian as most close allies of Washington. Rhee was eventually forced to resign in 1960 following student protests and accusations of corruption. His successor Chang Myon, was a disaster, and Park Chung Hee took power in a military coup in 1961.

It was under Park that the South Korean economy flourished. Like similar 'miracles' — in Brazil, for example — South Korea depended upon brutal repression of all opposition, and the suppression of the working class.

The model that South Korea followed was Japan's. They borrowed Japanese production techniques



Student protestors

IN KOREA

1917
YEAR OF REVOLUTION

Kerensky turns against the soldiers

Monday 29 May

War Minister Kerensky issues a decree against fraternisation at the front. A meeting of the Simonovsky regional soviet in Moscow calls for nationalisation of the major branches of industry, the introduction of workers' control, and introduction of price controls on basic consumer goods. The Executive Committee of the Krasnoyarsk Soviet threatens requisition of the Abakan factory if the demands of the striking workforce are not met. The Executive Committee of the Erivan Soviet resolves to introduce the 8-hour working day as of 15 June. A mass meeting in Voronezh condemns the ban on meetings and passes a resolution in support of the Kronstadt Soviet.

In Kharkov a general meeting of delegates of factory committees and trades unions declares impermissible any strikes not sanctioned by the appropriate trade unions, and declares that factory committees must operate within the policies adopted by the trade union organisations.

Tuesday 30 May

The Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet declares its support for the government's proposal to deprive deserters of the franchise; it calls for all citizens to be enfranchised as of the age of 20, and all soldiers as of the age of 18. The Provisional Government decrees new penalties for acts of indiscipline at the front. The Elisavetgrad Soviet of officers' and soldiers' deputies demands an ending of rations for the families of deserters.

Fraternisation continues amongst soldiers of the 19th Corps on the Northern Front. Soldiers in the 2nd and 7th armies on the South-Western front ignore orders to take up new positions, as do soldiers in the 11th company of the 21st rifles regiment (40th cops) on the Rumanian front. In UFA a Muslim military soviet is established.

Workers at the Paramonov factory in Petrograd demand money from the factory-owner for weapons, and requisition his car for the use of the factory committee and the factory Red Guards.

Wednesday 31 May

Bolshevik deputies elected to the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies meet in the Tauride Palace to plan their intervention into the Congress. The workers' section of the Petrograd Soviet of workers' and soldiers' deputies votes by 173 to 144 in support of a resolution advocating transference of all power to the soviets; it is the first case of a Bolshevik resolution being supported by the workers' section of the Soviet.

A meeting of the Khamovnichesky Bolshevik regional committee (Moscow) resolves to withdraw all support from the Moscow Soviet's newspaper, due to its non-revolutionary political stance.

The Skorokhod factory committee (Petrograd) demands the dismissal of the factory manager and the return to workers of all fines paid since the opening of the factory in 1907. The metalworkers' soviet of the Rogozhsky region (Petrograd) declares that the trade union must be contacted by any factory intending to take on new workers, and that new workers may be taken on only with the approval of factory committees. Workers at the Gena factory in Odessa take over the plant.

The Executive Committee of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Soviet sends a telegram of solidarity to the Kronstadt Soviet.



The middle class in revolt

Among the students, reports describe some groups as 'Marxist' — although it is unclear of what ideological bent. General anti-Americanism is popular among students, and among widening layers of society.

The working class is a potentially vital force in South Korea. Industrialisation has of course brought with it a modern working class and neither Korea's leaders nor foreign observers have been unaware of the dangers it might present to them.

Like other parts of Asia, South Korea has seen the development of 'free trade zones' where multinational companies can make low-wage, low-tax financial killings. In 1975, the Times warned: 'If South Korea's 11 million strong labour force is a key to the country's development, it is also a potential source of trouble. Wage rates are among the cheapest in the world. Strikes are prohibited by law... Since (1971) the penalty for striking has been a prison sentence for up to seven years.'

Nevertheless, there have been strikes, including a ten-day stoppage

at Daewoo Motor in 1985, a coalminers' strike in 1986 and some strikes in textile factories. In April 1987, taxi drivers in Seoul struck for half a day.

There is not yet anything but the most rudimentary trade union movement, however. The illegal strike at Daewoo saw a rank and file leadership take control of bargaining — wresting control from the official union leadership. The workers won a 6.7% wage increase. Shortly after, coalminers won a 9% rise.

But the unions themselves are closer to the Japanese company union model than to a real trade union movement. So far there does not seem to have been any developments towards radical militant trade unionism on the pattern of South Africa or Brazil. And the industrial working class has remained detached from the current struggle for democracy.

Thus, so far, the working class has yet to impose its mark on the struggle in South Korea.

Workers

But it surely will. South Korea, more clearly perhaps than any other country, has broken out of the fixed allotments of the 'Third World' in the international division of labour. Indeed, many socialists, who insist that industrialisation such as South Korea's is simply impossible, must find the country something of a headache. Old-fashioned 'Third Worldist' solutions are very obviously irrelevant to South Korea.

There might be a broad, democratic popular movement that results in a parliamentary democracy but goes no further. That would at least be an advance. But it would not alter the basic conditions of life: South Korea is firmly established as a capitalist society, and a seriously revolutionary movement would have to be socialist and based on the workers.

Korea at the moment looks like it is following the path of the Philippines. Even the slogan of 'people's power', borrowed from the Philippines, is popular in the Korean demonstrations. But despite the two parallels, there are striking differences.

The South Korean regime is still far more stable than Marcos's was before his fall. So far, the army has remained fairly solidly with the government.

And the Korean opposition is far less developed politically than the anti-Marcos movement, or movements. We are still in the first stages of the struggle in South Korea.

But we can be sure that this struggle will go on featuring in the headlines, and that South Korea will soon give rise to new political movements, forged out of these early stages, rich in lessons for socialists everywhere.



Students attack riot cops



Oppositionists: Kim Young Sam and Kim Dae Jung

and managerial methods — including company compounds for single workers, who work up to 12 hours a day, six days a week.

But 'growth plus repression' often stokes up new explosive contradictions for the ruling class, as people begin to demand political rights to go along with a rising standard of living.

Park was assassinated by the leader of the Korean CIA in 1979 for not being right-wing enough, and after another coup, Chun was declared president. One of his first acts was the brutal repression of an uprising in the city of Kwangsu in 1980. As many as one thousand people were killed, as the army moved in. Demonstrations calling for democracy had taken the city over.

That set the tone for Chun's regime. Recently his advisors, including in the US, have been urging a controlled shift to democracy. Under the impact of the mass movement, his designated successor has been forced to speed the process up a bit.

The opposition party is firmly liberal. Kim Dae Jung is the more radical of the two Kims, but as

Newsweek commented, 'by American standards, he might rank as a liberal democrat'. They propose a move to democracy and the 'reunification' of Korea — North and South.

The regime, which is deeply paranoid and has security scouts watching for Northern spies everywhere, has accused them of being communists as a result, and three members of the Party for Reunification and Democracy have been prosecuted. In fact, Chun himself — and indeed all the forces involved in the two Koreas (the US, the USSR and China) are in principle in favour of reunification.

Americans

Kim Dae Jung wants the American garrison of 41,000 troops to go — but not until Korea has been unified under a democratic government, which is another way of saying he wants them to stay.

Death from a distance

Belinda Weaver
reviews 'Chronicle
of a Death Foretold'

'Chronicle of a death foretold' is slow and rather stately, like an opera without music. It's not dramatic. We know a man will die, we see the build up to the killing, but we're held at a distance from it.

Set in a nameless South American town, it's narrated by the Doctor, an old man come back to the scene of the crime all those years ago. In recalling the tragedy of the killing of his best friend, Santiago Nasar, he brings it to life again before our eyes. The Doctor is haunted by his memories. He has made the trip up river to look over the records of the trial, revisit places, and talk to those who still remember.

Santiago is killed to avenge the honour of Angela, a bride returned to her parents on her wedding night, when Bayardo, her husband, discovered she wasn't a virgin. Forced by her twin brothers to name her seducer, Angela screams out the name of Santiago. The brothers sharpen their knives and drink to keep their courage up for the killing.

The Doctor knows, but cannot understand, that the whole town knew in advance that Santiago would be killed, yet no one tried to avert the tragedy. Only one person tried, by note, to warn Santiago. The police, the priest, the townspeople — all knew, and all ignored it. The Doctor is tormented — he wants to understand, to know how and why such a thing could happen.

He believes that Santiago was innocent of seducing Angela, and that he was killed in place of another man.

The Doctor mourns Santiago sincerely, and the death shattered him, but it is the loss of a dear friend, rather than the nature of the killing, that upsets him. He questions the code of honour that demands a death to avenge a seduction, but he questions it mainly because the consequences for him were tragic — he lost



his best friend. He doesn't condemn the stupidity of a system where men can sleep with as many women as they like without marriage, but where a bride must be a virgin, and where a girl leaves the strict control of her father only to go to the strict control of a husband. In such a system, a woman can be virgin, wife or whore. She is defined totally by her sexual relation to men.

The film is based on Gabriel Garcia Marquez's story of the same name. Perhaps the story is richer than the film, which seems full of

promises that go nowhere. The film hints of depths and mysteries that then never get revealed — it's full of loose ends and dead ends.

The character of Bayardo seems to promise much — the wealthy, enigmatic stranger who gets off the boat one day in search of a bride. But Bayardo never develops; he marries, he's deceived, he departs. Even his brief reappearance at the end leaves us in the dark.

Angela is even more of a mystery. At first she is adamant about not

marrying Bayardo. She seems contemptuous of his show off ways, and she resents her parents' eagerness to conclude so financially suitable a match. It seems only too plausible that she should take a lover to spite her parents.

Yet from the moment she marries Bayardo, she conceives a doglike devotion to him, grieving for him after he has left her, and visiting their abandoned home as if it were a shrine. We never discover her true feelings.

The film is beautiful to watch, and

satisfying even though it doesn't hang together too well. The film is haunted by what has been left out. Watching it, you experience that faint sense of incredulity you feel watching operas — the plots seem so over the top, with people dying or killing for love. Yet women in many countries today are ostracised or punished for the 'crime' of not being virgins, so we shouldn't just think the film is about some quaint old fashioned custom that we've grown out of in these sophisticated times.

Three pamphlets that challenge the left

By Colin Foster

Three new pamphlets have just appeared under the Workers' Liberty imprint.

Arabs, Jews and Socialism collects together a unique discussion which first appeared in the pages of Socialist Organiser. 54 pages long, it includes 49 articles and letters, mostly from the last 4½ years, with two new pieces and an introduction.

Authors represented include Lenni Brenner, author of 'Zionism in the Age of the Dictators' and 'The Iron Wall', Moshe Machover (a founder of Matzpen), Tony Greenstein, Andrew Hornung, Jeremy Green, SO editor John O'Mahony, and others.

All the debate revolves around one issue: what rights does the Israeli-Jewish nation have?

In the 1940s, and up to 1967, most left opinion in countries like Britain was strongly pro-Israeli, and tended to dismiss the plight of the Palestinian Arabs as a secondary problem. That has changed dramatically — partly because of the crimes of Israel on the West Bank and in Lebanon, and partly because of the growing influence in the left of Arab nationalism (and of Third World nationalist ideas more generally).

Now most of the left are 'anti-zionist' in the sense that they want to undo what Zionism did, and destroy the Jewish nation in Palestine. For obvious reasons, they don't put it in those terms — even to themselves.

Socialist Organiser, too, supported this 'secular democratic state' policy,

Arabs, Jews and Socialism £1.80; **The New Anglo-Irish Treaty** £1; **The 1987 general election and the Marxist left** 50p. All available from PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA. Cheques payable to SO; add 20% for postage (minimum 20p)

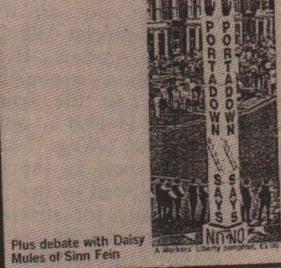
The 1987 general election and the Marxist left

By John O'Mahony, Jack Cleary, and Martin Thomas

A Workers' Liberty pamphlet 50p

The new Anglo-Irish Treaty

By John O'Mahony



Plus debate with Daisy Mules of Sinn Fein

Arabs, Jews and socialism

The debate on Palestine, Zionism and anti-semitism (including "Trotsky and Zionism")

A Workers' Liberty pamphlet

In the late '70s, one or two comrades came to think that the 'secular democratic state' was a fantasy, and over some seven years they gradually convinced a majority that support for the Palestinian Arabs' just demands must be coupled with recognition of the right of Israel to exist.

The discussion has also tackled other issues. If 'anti-zionism' means comprehensively undoing what Zionism did, then it is inescapably anti-Jewish — both against the Jews in Israel, and against that big majority of Jews world-wide who instinctively identify with Israel. Back in 1977, when Socialist Organiser still held firmly to the 'secular democratic state' policy, we had already condemned those who wanted to 'ban Zionists' in British colleges.

Now we realised that this 'banning Zionists' in Britain was inextricably

linked with the programme of 'banning Zionism' in Palestine — and that most of the left was, despite all good intentions, **anti-semitic**.

Agree or not, you should study this discussion.

The 1987 general election and the Marxist left collects articles from Socialist Organiser around the time of the election together with one from Workers' Liberty no. 6.

During the election, some SWP members were visibly stung by our editorial challenging them to canvass for Labour, and the 'Revolutionary Communist Party' made efforts to pull disgruntled Labour leftists around itself. Both those tendencies are now trying to brand us as 'opportunists'. The pamphlet goes on the offensive, and poses the debate in terms of their abstentionism.

It also challenges Militant's mysti-

fying formula of 'Labour government with a socialist programme'. And it puts awkward questions to the soft left: Labour's election campaign was run according to their political prescriptions, and within those terms was very well done, but obviously it wasn't enough.

We argue the case for a revival of genuine working-class socialism in the labour movement.

The New Anglo-Irish Treaty contains some small reprints from SO, but the bulk of its 50 pages is new material — a comprehensive and painstaking analysis of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, written in early 1986, and a survey of events since then.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement has been described by most of the left in simplistic, not to say ridiculous, terms: it is an attempt to 'copper-

fasten' the partition of Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Protestants are rebelling against it only because they don't know what's good for them.

The reality is different. Britain has concluded that it cannot find a purely 'internal' solution to stabilise Northern Ireland, and has tried to bypass the Protestants — the major obstacle to its strategy since the early 1960s — by a deal with Dublin. The strength of the Anglo-Irish Agreement is that it does not depend on the consent of the Northern Ireland majority, and thus cannot be destroyed by that majority as long as London and Dublin hold firm.

Within that strong framework, the British government then hopes to develop towards power-sharing, devolved government and relatively 'normal' politics in Northern Ireland.

Simply to counterpose Catholic Irish nationalism to the Anglo-Irish Agreement is a dead-end. The Protestant resistance which the Agreement tries to bypass and manipulate is strong and compact enough that it **cannot** be defeated by a Catholic-nationalist movement. A serious attempt at taking the Protestant resistance by storm in that way would only lead to bloody civil war and repartition.

The only serious alternative to the Agreement is an attempt to get across to the Protestant workers with working class politics — politics which support the just revolt of the Northern Ireland Catholics, but link it with a consistently democratic programme which also offers guarantees to Ireland's Protestant minority.

CPSA: vote yes!

By Mike Grayson

CPSA members are currently balloting on whether to take all-out industrial action in furtherance of their pay claim. So far, the government has refused to budge from its pathetic offer of 4.25%, despite many weeks of regional and selective action. We must now face the fact that only an all-out strike can win.

No CPSA member will need to be reminded of the poverty wages we subsist on. Many people get less than £5,000 a year, and few of us get more than £7,000. Yet the government is willing to do nothing to combat this disgraceful situation amongst its own employees. If we want a decent living wage, we are going to have to fight for it. In this sense, we can't afford not to strike.

But the fight has now escalated beyond even the question of this year's pay. We are also talking about the survival of the union as a national, unified organisation.

The Tories have made it plain that they want to see merit pay and regional pay introduced. The first would make the annual pay award dependent on getting a good report from the manager: the second would break CPSA up into a series of geographical areas, each fighting its own corner with local unemployment levels used as a stick to keep wages down. If we give in this year, it will be harder to fight the introduction of these policies.

Nor will the attacks stop there.

Already the Tory 'Think Tank' has talked about reducing the Civil Service to a small nucleus of permanent staff, to be supplemented at 'peak' periods by agency staff. A fightback now over pay will show the government that CPSA is not going to see itself split apart and dismantled.

Our union has not experienced an all-out indefinite strike before. Many members may hesitate to take such a step. But we have to recognise that other strategies have been tried and proved inadequate.

The Tories can sit out rolling programmes of regional action. In 1981, the government sat out over 20 weeks of selective action aimed at hitting revenue collection. In 1987, we must bring out our full strength.

We have the ability to bring government departments grinding to a halt; to hit ports and airports; to flex an industrial muscle that cannot be weakened by the Tories stockpiling resources (as their stockpiling of coal helped defeat the miners).

We should also make immediate overtures to SCPS members to join our continued struggle. Their leadership pulled out of the action without consulting the membership, many of whom are outraged and are still prepared to stand by their colleagues in CPSA.

We can still win. Our victory would be a shot in the arm for fellow workers in other services and industries. The Tories, though still preening from their election success, are not an unbreakable monolith. We have the power to win, if we dare to use it.

Vote yes for action! All out to win!

TGWU

Todd backs MSC

John Bloxam reports from the TGWU conference

ON TUESDAY morning, 7th, 1000 delegates at the TGWU's biennial delegate conference at Scarborough discussed the Tory government's slave labour schemes.

Nobody could be found to oppose the main resolutions, condemning the schemes and underlining the need to organise the workers on them on trade union rates and conditions. More resources were needed from the union to do this.

But one resolution from a Liverpool branch was heavily defeated. This was mainly because of its call for Community Programme schemes to be extended from one year to five years, but it also contained specific demands aimed at backing up the demand for trade union rates and conditions on the schemes.

Without such demands, the rest of the resolutions are in danger of becoming mere rhetoric.

In his reply to the debate, TGWU general secretary Ron Todd argued that the union should not withdraw from the Manpower Services Commission (MSC), despite its decision to boycott the Job Training Scheme (JTS). He said the time was not right. The union should keep fighting 'inside' the MSC for change.

The conference Standing Orders Committee had made sure there could be no debate on this when they ruled out an emergency motion calling for withdrawal from the MSC.

The debate on 'one member, one vote' in the Labour Party will take place on Thursday 9th, and the union's leaders will be supporting the 'electoral college' version. *News on Sunday* distributed a freesheet with much space given over to Neil Kinnock's views on the issue.

Neil Kinnock himself will be addressing the conference on Wednesday. However, the TGWU Executive Committee decided, to back 'one

member, one vote' only on the casting vote of the chair.

The conference is clearly not in the mood to be dictated to by the platform. After insisting on having time to discuss the issue, the conference on Tuesday morning unanimously condemned the General Executive Committee for breaking the decisions of the 1985 conference which banned the recruitment of 'agency labour'.

The annual general meeting of the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA) took place two days after the election and was characterised by feelings of frustration and even anger — for two reasons.

Firstly, at the sectarian antics of the Green Party, several of whose candidates stood in marginal seats. Predictably they received mostly derisory votes — an average of 672 or 1.3% — and will always do so unless proportional representation is brought in. However, in several seats, their votes were substantial compared to the majorities, and in two seats, York and Dulwich, their votes were greater than the Tory majority over the losing Labour candidate (York — 637 compared with 147; Dulwich — 432 compared with 180).

So the Greens may have cost Labour two seats and might easily have affected other results. Was there nevertheless some logic behind their choice of seats to contest? In the case of "Nuclear Jack" Cunningham at Copeland, there clearly was, but what possible justification could there be for opposing Kate Hoey in Dulwich who has quite a good record on the environment? And why stand against Islington South's Chris Smith, Vice-President of SERA? He was defending a majority of 363 and the Green candidate got 382. Luckily, enough voters switched to Labour to give Chris a new majority of 805.

The minority of SERA members



CPSA strikers leaflet a UBO in Birmingham. Photo John Harris.

Manchester City Council

Council faces crunch

By Sarah Cotterill

THE Tory General Election victory has brought crisis to Manchester City Council. There is a danger of cuts and job losses.

Manchester, like other left-wing Labour councils, has used creative accountancy and rate rises to fudge through past budgets. Their aim was to hang on until Labour won the election.

But Labour lost. And now the labour movement is demobilised and ill-prepared.

Council leaders reckon that there will be a gap in the 1988 budget of £100 million. As a Labour Party document states, "Following the general election, there is no prospect that any further financial means of deferring the budget problem can be found".

In its last budget, the council turned to rent and rate rises to balance its books. This meant Manchester workers paying for the Tories' cuts. In any case it is no longer an option.

Already some Labour and trade union leaders are talking about mak-

ing 'humane', 'socialist' cuts. There is no such thing! And cuts in jobs through natural wastage and not filling vacancies will amount to a serious cut in services and worse conditions for the remaining workers.

The City Labour Party is meeting on 22 July to decide its position. In the run-up to that meeting, ward and constituency Labour Parties are meeting, and so are council unions.

SO supporters are arguing for a policy of no cuts in services and no job losses, and a confrontation with the government, demanding additional central government money.

There are a number of obstacles to the adoption of this perspective. Already there are rumours that sections of the council Labour group are preparing to break away and form a coalition with the Tories and Liberals.

The best way to stop this is by the Labour Party adopting a clear anti-cuts stance and immediately organising a mass campaign with the unions. This pressure could force the doubters to stay in the Labour Party.

The Tories are not invincible. They can be beaten by a well-organised anti-cuts campaign. If the council fights the Tories, they will get the backing of the workforce.

SERA

MAKING LABOUR GREEN

By Les Hearn

who are in the Green Party bore the brunt of the voiced feelings of the meeting. It was felt that while SERA members of the Labour Party consider it their duty to win Labour to environmentalism, SERA Green Party members don't consider it their duty to win the Green Party to socialism.

In Chris Smith's keynote address, he called for a dialogue between Labour and the Green Party to end the conflict.

Chris felt that in any future recovery of Labour, environmentalism had to play a large part. As he put it, the "politics of compassion" had not been able to overcome the "politics of self-interest" — particularly in the South of England. Perhaps Labour needed to put forward a politics of enlightened self-interest — after all, protecting the environment would benefit individuals and the community as a whole.

This brings us to the second cause of frustration and anger. Labour already has these policies but fails to promote them. Not even Labour's vote-winning policy on phasing out nuclear power received national airing though the Tories were clearly frightened (witness their climb-down on nuclear waste dumps just before the election was called). In places like Southampton, Brighton and East Anglia, close to nuclear reactors, Labour might now have some MPs, instead of none at all. In Chris's con-

stituency, Labour had raised environmental issues on all leaflets and in addition had written to all voters within a few hundred yards of the North London Line, along which nuclear waste regularly trundles. No doubt, this limited the damage caused by the Green candidate, the anti-gay propaganda and "loony left" hysteria.

This led to Chris Smith's other theme: that of changing Labour's environmentalism from just a list of measures to something that runs through all aspects of policy, including *economy*. Chris stressed the opportunity lying before SERA, despite the election. We now have a group of 16 SERA MPs, including Joan Ruddock, Robin Cook, Neil Kinnock (!) and Dafydd Elis Thomas of Plaid Cymru; two peers (Lords Melchett and Brockway); six MEPs and several dozen councillors (including a couple of Greens). We also have the affiliation of several important unions.

Undoubtedly, the Tory onslaught on the environment will continue, particularly since William Waldegrave, Tory environment spokesman who actually seemed to care about the environment, has been booted aside in Thatcher's reshuffle. Labour is now in a position to fight against this, both in parliament and, more importantly, outside.

Copies of SERA's campaign guide, *Labour and the Environment*, are available, price £1 including p&p, from 9 Poland Street, London W1V 3DG.

1917

YEAR OF REVOLUTION

Thursday 1 June

A general meeting of the Skorokhod works condemns any new offensive in the war and protests at the dissolution by the Provisional Government of the 45th, 46th, 47th and 52nd infantry regiments of the 7th Army for refusing to obey orders. The crew of the Aurora demands of the Petrograd Soviet that it ensures the despatch of all police to the front.

A meeting of workers of the telephone-manufacturing factory in Moscow declares its support for the activities of the Kronstadt Soviet, and condemns the entry of "socialists" into the Provisional Government as aiding and abetting the imperialist war. A district peasant congress in Orsk calls for an immediate end to the war. In Minsk the Central Bureau of Trade Unions issues union-membership figures: 20 trade unions, with an overall membership of 6,000.

Friday 2 June

A meeting in Petrograd of soldiers of the 176th reserve infantry regiment approves the decision of the Kronstadt Soviet not to obey instructions of the Provisional Government, and calls on the Petrograd Soviet to overturn its decision not to support the Kronstadt Soviet. By order of the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Soldiers' Deputies of the 12th Army, F.P. Khaustov, a member of the editorial board of "Okornaya Pravda" (Trenches Pravda), is arrested, accused of having insulted Minister of War Kerensky.

The Archangelsk Soviet approves a policy of co-operation with the Provisional Government and appeals to soldiers to continue the war. The Central Bureau of Trade Unions in Kherson approves the decision of the Kherson Soviet of 31 May to establish control over the activity of local organs of the Provisional Government. Soldiers and sailors demonstrate in Revel in support of the decision of the Revel Soviet to dismiss the provincial commissioner.

Prisoners-of-war employed in the Sudzhenka mines (Tomsk region) send a letter to the local soviet declaring their solidarity with Russian workers in the struggle for socialism, and appealing, "for equal labour, equal pay with the comrade Russian workers".

Saturday 3 June

The first All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies opens in Petrograd, attended by 822 delegates with full voting powers, and 268 delegates with consultative voting powers. Present at the congress were 105 Bolsheviks, 285 Social Revolutionaries, 248 Mensheviks, 32 Menshevik-Internationalists, and 73 non-aligned socialists.

A number of crews on ships of the Baltic Fleet refuse to accept Verderevsky as new commander of the fleet, after his appointment by the Provisional Government, in place of Maksimov, elected to the post by the sailors. The provincial governor in Kazan bans agitational activity by visiting members of the Kronstadt Soviet. In Troitsk, workers and soldiers prevent an attempt by reactionary officers to arrest the chairperson of the local soviet.

By a majority-vote the Revel Soviet overturns its decision of 26 May to sack the local provincial commissioner and to advocate all power to the soviets.

Sunday 4 June

In the morning session of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, the Menshevik Liber calls for support for the coalition government, opposes the transference of power to the soviets, and advocates raising the fighting capabilities of the army. Lenin addresses the evening session and condemns the coalition government as bourgeois and imperialist; he calls for an end to the war through the transference of power to the revolutionary proletariat.

A meeting of the Union of Proletarian and Student Youth in Moscow resolves to affiliate to the Moscow committee of the Bolsheviks and open up a club of the Union of Youth. The Vladimir Soviet of workers' deputies sends a telegram of solidarity to the Kronstadt Soviet, expressing indignation at the slanders levelled against Kronstadt by the bourgeois press. A meeting of workers of the Mathieson factory in Kiev condemns the war as imperialist and advocates transference of power to the soviets. The bakery workers' union in Tula calls for the requisition of private bakeries.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

Child abuse: the press still tries to stop us thinking

By Mick Ackersley

THE HYSTERICAL witchhunt against Dr Marietta Higgs and the Cleveland social services department continued this week.

It took an extra nasty turn in the House of Commons on Monday 6th when right-wing Labour MP Stuart Bell made sensational allegations that social workers in Cleveland had deliberately falsified figures for sexual abuse of children so that they could claim extra money for their department.

An allegation like that should be taken with a lot of scepticism when it is made under privilege in the House of Commons in the middle of a press uproar against dedicated professionals who did their duty by the children as they saw it.

We don't know enough to disprove Bell's seemingly wild allegations. We don't know how many — if any — were mistaken of the several dozen (not 200, as originally reported) diagnoses made by Dr Higgs and her colleagues that children had been sexually abused.

We do know that, though the number of children that Dr Higgs said had been abused is exceptionally high compared with other areas, it is about what you would expect according to the assessments of experts about the vast hidden scandal of undiscovered child sex abuse.

That being so, the hysterical press campaign against Higgs and her colleagues is a disgrace and a bad service to Britain's children.

Last week, when the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children published its yearly figures for child sex abuse, showing an increase of over 100% on the previous year, the startling increase seemed to make some of the baying press pack catch their breath for a moment.

But only for a moment. The campaign is now continuing as if the NSPCC figures had never been published.

But the figures should make everyone think. The outcry against Dr Higgs is the work of people who don't want to think about the issue.



"It's class action or surrender"

"THE ONLY alternative to mass class action is abject surrender".

That was the keynote of what Arthur Scargill told delegates to the National Union of Mineworkers conference at Rothesay in Scotland this week. He said:

"Our union continues the long struggle for victimised members, we continue the struggle against pit closures, job losses and for decent wages and for better conditions of our members against a background of high technology.

We continue because there is no other choice — the only alter-

says Arthur Scargill

native to mass class action is abject surrender, and I suggest that's no choice at all".

The NUM faces a new assault by the Coal Board and the Tories. They are driving wedges deep into the NUM with the demand for 'flexible working'.

Welsh miners have agreed to six-day working in return for the Coal Board opening a new pit at Margam in South Wales. If that

will bring mining jobs to their area, they reckon it makes sense.

The majority at NUM conference is expected to oppose 'flexible working', and to call a national NUM ballot on the issue. If the ballot goes against 'flexible working', as it should, the South Wales miners will face the choice of ignoring national decisions or risk the Coal Board scrapping plans for the giant new colliery at Margam — a grim choice.

Arthur Scargill pointed out that flexible working would split the union and lead to the loss of 40,000 mining jobs nationally and the closure of at least 31 more pits.

After South Wales, other areas will come under pressure to accept 'flexible working'. Scargill passionately appealed to the delegates to respond to the Coal

Board offensive with one united national policy, democratically decided at NUM conference and binding on all miners.

The alternative was to let Mrs Thatcher's servants who run the Coal Board split and wreck the national union.

Next week we will carry a full report of the NUM conference.

One law for the rich

From front page

respectable profiteering from outright cheating.

And when it comes to class war there is not even "pity" for workers. Hundreds of miners are still sacked because they were active in the 1984-5 strike. During and after that strike, 11,000 miners were arrested, 150 were jailed, and 900 were sacked.

Not a single police officer has faced charges following what the police did in that strike.



Where now for the left?

Workers' Liberty no. 7 surveys Labour's election defeat on 11 June and argues that socialism isn't dying — what's dying is an old Fabian/Stalinist bureaucratic counterfeiter, which should be replaced by a fight for workers' liberty East and West. Also in this issue: CLR James on black politics; exiled Solidarnosc left-wing Zbigniew Kowalewski on Gorbachev; Clive Bradley on modern misuse of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution; and more. 90p plus 30p postage from SO, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

TGWU Moat House dispute

62 workers sacked 2 April 1987, and have picketed ever since.

Mass lobby outside Moat House Hotel, Paradise Street, Liverpool

Saturday 11 July, 12 noon.

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

New series no. 2. July '87. 10p

Four pages of ideas and argument

INSIDE: Maternity rights; Women and tranquillisers; Inside the unions; Women's magazines; Campaigning in Wallasey.

STOP RESOLUTE THATCHER'S ONSLAUGHT!



The Tories' plans for us in the next four years were outlined in the Queen's Speech last week. The plans are to make the working class pay for the excesses of their rich friends.

While the Tory Transport Secretary and member of the Guinness family, Paul Channon, will gain £120 a week from the proposed new poll tax, an unemployed person from the extremely poor London borough of Southwark, will pay nearly double what she or he does at the moment. Those who cannot — or won't — pay will go to prison.

The children of the rich have their well-stocked and staffed schooling paid for them, leave education with their futures in Daddy's firm ensured, and live off their inheritances. Meanwhile, working class youth face cuts in education, will be expected to pay for 'extras' like music, or do without. And when they leave school, jobless, will have to 'work' for their dole or receive none.

Local councils will be forced to privatise essential services so that only profitable enterprises will operate, jobs will be lost and wages cut. So, while the rich drive around in their Rollers and BMWs, the rest of us will lose our public transport.

While the rich pay for their hospital treatment, many working class and poor people will die for the want of medical attention.

While the rich sit smugly in their leafy suburbs, the rest of us will

By Jean Lane

watch our refuse build up uncollected, and our roads and buildings going uncleaned and unmaintained.

Tenants will be thrown off council estates so they can be done up and sold off, at prices no council tenant can afford, to provide town apartments for business people.

Not only will we lose our services, jobs, houses and dole, we will also lose our right to elect our local representatives as council responsibilities are taken over by the rich business friends of the Thatcher Government.

And, just in case you decide to fight all this, legislation will further weaken the trade unions and give scabs a free hand in the courts.

Women will bear the brunt of these policies. The women of families who can't afford to pay for services will have to fill the gaps. The women who cannot afford their own cars will be less safe, or put on curfew, because of lack of transport.

Mothers will be providing for children who can get neither work nor benefit. And women workers, many of whom work part-time because of these responsibilities, will lose more in rights, wages and conditions as the ability of the unions to

fight is drained away. The women of the working class will suffer the most.

But the women of the working class are fighters: Women Against Pit Closures being the most recent and militant example. If ever there was a need for a working class-based women's movement, now is the time to build it. Many people will have to fight or go under. That is the stark reality of Thatcher's "freedom of choice" society.

Women will fight. But it needs to be united and co-ordinated because we cannot afford defeat. The women's sections in the Labour Party must draw in the many women who worked around Labour's election campaign.

The women's sections must be turned out to the local housing estates to build and support fights against the attacks. We must argue for the unionisation of more part-time workers and for the building of women's sections in the trade unions.

Above all, we must argue for all the areas where women are fighting to be brought together into one movement — a working class-based women's movement that WAPC put so firmly on the agenda — and that the politics of that movement are socialist.

Society must be run on the basis of people's need, not for profits for the few. That is the only answer to the onslaught that we know the Tories are planning, but which they need not get away with. It is up to us.



Hit back at the Tories

Work A woman's place



We need active, outgoing unions that campaign for women

USDAW women's committee

Trudy Saunders takes a look at what's going on in the workplaces and trade unions - from a woman's point of view.

The example of the Women's Committees in the shopworkers' union, USDAW, shows that it is when women workers band together in an organised group that their demands are most forcefully put forward and dealt with.

Over 18 months ago, USDAW set up its first Women's Committees (a National Women's Committee and eight Divisional Women's Committees). At its annual conference this year, the union members overwhelmingly endorsed the work carried out by these committees.

The committees were set up with the following aims:

- to improve the social and economic position of women.
- to increase the participation of women at all levels of the union.
- to develop collective bargaining demands reflecting women's needs.
- to secure equality of treatment of women at work.

The women's committees have instigated and developed workshops on basic skills (eg. speaking, note-taking, confidence) and on specific

issues such as sexual harassment. They have also set up women-only courses.

They have begun an investigation of casual and part-time work in retailing and have drawn up a list of collective bargaining demands for part-time workers.

Work is going ahead on researching the effects to health of VDUs and the risks to pregnant women, and women wishing to become pregnant.

The union's equal pay training programme is being extended to full-time officials in order to develop skills in negotiating equal value for equal work and to stamp out sex discrimination in the workplace.

The committees have also been successful in making health screening facilities available to greater numbers of workers. They are committed to ensuring a widespread provision of cancer screening facilities.

Action is being developed to improve the terms, conditions and job opportunities of USDAW women workers by drawing up a survey comparing the lot of male workers to women workers.

The committees also plan to do work on sexual harassment, stress in retailing and the participation of black women in the union.

Similar committees should be set up in all trade unions.

Sexism keeps women out

Most, if not all, women in trade unions will have suffered sexism in one form or another from the men in their union. And this, among other reasons, may have put them off from becoming fully involved in the union. A recent survey carried out by EPIC Industrial Communications for the Inland Revenue Staff Federation (IRSF) made just this point.

Women members of the IRSF told interviewers that sexism and chauvinism from men in the union were the main reasons for them not being fully involved. The report also showed that women's domestic responsibilities prevent women from playing a full role within the unions, and argued that the unions must recognise this and deal with it if they are serious about fully involving women members.

Statistics show that there is no union where women are fully

represented in terms of their membership on union national executives, as full-time officers or as conference delegates.

The EPIC report ends with a number of proposals aimed at increasing the role of women in the union, including a need for change in attitudes; for equal opportunities to be fought for more vigorously; for a full discussion on the report.

These recommendations are all very well, but how do we get male trade unionists to take them seriously and fight for them? History shows that men are unlikely to take up women's demands or issues unless they are forced to, by women organised together within the union.

If you have any information on issues affecting women in your workplace or trade union, please send them to Women's Fightback, PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.

Debbie Williams looks at maternity benefits

The price of motherhood

With the return of Thatcher for another five years, it is expected that the 'party of the family' will introduce legislation that will further erode the employment rights of women workers and their entitlement to maternity benefits. For working class women, pregnancy brings with it financial and social pressures; with job insecurity, unemployment and the pressure to be a 'good mother'.

While the number of part-time women workers increases, it is this group of workers that will be particularly affected by maternity rights changes. Already Britain has the worst employment rights for pregnant women in the whole of Europe. At present only 2 out of 10 women return to work after having a baby. Compared with countries like Sweden (8 out of 10 mothers return to work) this figure is appallingly low.

Since 1979 we've seen women in firms with less than six workers lose their right to have their job back after having a baby. If you are a part-timer employed for 8-16 hours a week, you will have to work for five years before you are protected against unfair dismissal or have the right to be moved to a safe job if your work endangers your pregnancy.

Further proposals would take away from women working between 8-12 hours all employment rights, and for women working between 16-20 hours, or in firms employing 5-9 people, the right to return to work after having a baby.

The government has rejected EEC attempts to give minimum parental leave of 3 months to any working parent looking after a child. And the idea of 'paternity leave' (leave for fathers) seems impossible for them to comprehend. Instead, the Tories have said that leave should be left to negotiations between workers and bosses. In reality it will mean workers in non-unionised and small workplaces having no rights at all.

Also, it is clear that the attacks on trade unions and local authorities will

undermine the hard-won maternity rights of many more workers.

The major changes to maternity benefits introduced on 6th April this year will mean that, for the first time since 1911, many women will not receive a penny towards the cost of having a baby.

The universal maternity grant of £25 was abolished and replaced by a 'means tested' grant of £80 payable only to women receiving Supplementary Benefit or Family Income Supplement. Over 500,000 women each year will lose out and women on Supplementary Benefit stand to lose over £100 each.

Maternity allowance will now be paid by the employer (like the present Statutory Sick Pay scheme) and women will have to pass a stricter 'recent work test' and have a more recent National Insurance contributions record. It is estimated that bet-

ween 70,000 and 94,000 women will lose out. The introduction next year of the 1986 Social Security Act will also see the Tories abolish free milk and vitamins for low paid working mothers.

With the Tories having a clear majority in Parliament, there seems a certain inevitability about the introduction of further attacks on maternity rights. However, this is no excuse for sitting back and waiting for five years until the next general election. We have to carry on the anti-Tory campaign that was started during this election and combine that with a campaign inside the Labour Party.

'Only 2 out of 10 mothers return to work.'

Anyone who read Labour's proposals on maternity benefits will know that, at best, they were vague. While Labour commits itself to maintaining a universal maternity grant, it

doesn't specify how much it will be. Remember, too, that the last Labour Government (1974-9) did not increase the maternity grant at all!

Labour must be committed not only to replacing laws which have taken away women's rights, but to replacing the present system with one that meets the real needs of women. This would include paid maternity leave for the first year; paid paternity leave (where relevant); the right to return to work up to five years after having a baby; the right of all women workers to be protected against unfair dismissal; the right to a safe job if your work endangers your pregnancy; a massive extension of local authority nursery provision; introduction of 'full maintenance' in place of the present maternity benefit system (ie. an allowance equal to a national minimum wage); universal maternity grant at a realistic figure (ie. 500).

We need to actively campaign inside the Labour Party for the introduction of such policies. This should be combined with turning the Labour Party outwards to campaign on this issue in the communities. Leaflets putting the case against the Tories should be handed out at shopping precincts, outside Mothercare shops, launderettes, factories and offices, for example. Labour Party members should talk to women, explain the issues, and bring them into the party. We should organise public meetings (including daytime ones), pickets at local Tory Party HQs and at the Department of Employment and the DHSS.

We must also take the campaign into the trade unions, forcing them to take up the fight against Tory attacks. All too often issues such as maternity benefits and rights are the first to be dropped off the agenda. We must ensure that they are not marginalised, but that unions fight for the rights of their women members and take up such demands as the right to return to work and for more workplace nurseries.

Real women only e



The image

SINCE THE 1970s, women's fiction has been widely published by the likes of Virago, The Women's Press, Pluto and the rest. Yet with prices averaging £4 it's hardly surprising that most women can't afford to read them.

What alternatives are there? Yes, you've guessed it — the glossies!

I can remember when I was about 20 having a craze for them. I wouldn't just buy one a month, but about four or five.

I'd usually buy one at a station and get on the train and dream about how it would be if only I had more money, if only I was a size 8, if only I didn't have freckles.

Glance into any newsagent, and there will be a multitude of women's magazines on sale — weekly or monthly, from 30p to £1.50.

Occasionally some carry well-informed articles on things like cervical cancer, contraception or sexual harassment at work, but in the main, they are boring and offensive.

Most are aimed at white heterosexual women, so God help you if you're a black lesbian who's got fed up with Spare Rib! Even the ones aimed primarily at Black women, such as Roots, Ebony or Essence, concentrate on beauty and very little else.

I looked at Women's Own. It's only 35p and the cover of the 17 June issue said "over 5 million readers each week". Impressive, eh?

This week's special was "Has Diana decided yet who William will marry?" — an insult to anyone who has had to go through with an arranged marriage.

Also included is a feature on Letitia Dean — Sharon from EastEnders — on how she's celibate and would rather curl up with her two dogs. Does Wicksy know?

After Letitia comes the special on Bob Monkhouse. Apparently, the critics have been cruel to Bob throughout his career, and he talks about the strain on him and his wife.

It says nothing about his being a boring racist or how he showed his true blue colours by campaigning for the Tories during the recent general

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All too often issues like maternity benefits and rights are the first to be dropped off the agenda.

eat half a potato

Talking point

by Tracy Williams

tion — but for 35p, you can't see 'exclusives' and the truth, can you?

The best was to come — Part Two of Victoria Principal's plan that would change your life! It's true that you can change you if you starve yourself half to death for 30 days — a change for the worse — but change your life? Come on!

Victoria kindly supplies the readers with a menu planner. Get a load of it!

Day 14 : Dinner
red fish and dill
dressed green beans
and a boiled potato

sounds nice enough, but half a potato! What are you supposed to do with the other half? Save it for a treat? And who would go to the trouble of boiling half a potato? Cot-

tage cheese, maybe, but this diet must be a cruel joke.

And if you think that's bad, it gets worse with part of a story by agony aunt Clare Rayner called Jubilee. Here goes.

"...she could smell the daffodils even more strongly and their scent, mixed with the scent of him made her dizzy with excitement..."

"Then it all changed. His hand pulled at the bodice of her gown and tugged at her skirt, reaching, stroking, holding.

"She felt his lips against her breasts and could not breath at all. This was unbelievable and somewhere deep in her mind she cried..."

Would you tell your problems to a woman who glamorises rape?

If you're not already one of the five million readers, you could always give the other magazines a go.

So here's a rundown of some of them:

Options (monthly): If the options in your life are whether you can afford a new pair of school shoes for the kids or pay off the gas bill, then forget it.

Tatler (monthly): If your name's Camilla and your best friend Henrietta had a private enclosure at Ascot, then your picture will be in it.

Working Woman (monthly): If you work on the check-out at Kwik Save you could be fooled into thinking it's relevant. It's not.

Home and Garden (monthly): Next time you need a furniture grant from the DHSS take this with you and show them the price one has to pay for a Terence Conran coffee table.

Cosmopolitan (monthly): If you care passionately about the world (ie. once wore a CND badge when you were 14), have a man (your man, not the next door neighbour's) and you like to breakfast in Soho and orgasm in New York, then you're probably writing for it.

And, finally, the newest of the glossies, **Elle** (monthly): If you like wearing your puffball skirt with your baseball cap and always carry your **Filofax** and **Durex** to warehouse parties, then maybe one day you or a distant friend will be on the cover.

Failing this you could read **Women's Fightback**.

The bitterest pill

By Marry Blenner Hasset

THE IMAGE of the pill-popping housewife is as familiar as that of the drinking man. The reality behind the image is bleak and depressing.

Tranquillisers are amongst the most commonly used drugs in the Western world. They are prescribed twice as often for women as for men.

In 1980, nearly 40 million prescriptions for tranquillisers were written by GPs alone, at a cost to the Health Service of almost £30 million.

Tranquillisers are in widespread use, yet we know little about them. Here are some facts.

Fact 1 There is no significant difference between the effects of the drugs like Valium which are marketed as tranquillisers and the effects of the drugs like Dalmane marketed as sleeping pills.

They may have the same effect, but calling them by two different names doubles sales, and drug companies' profits.

Fact 2 Drugs like Valium, Ativan, Mogadon, Dalmane and other brands of Benzodiazapene can have unpleasant and potentially dangerous side effects. People taking them can get addicted physically and psychologically. Coming off them suddenly even after medium-term use may cause serious withdrawal symptoms.

Fact 3 Tranquillisers may provide some relief from stress and anxiety but, according to medical research, it is doubtful whether they are effective for periods beyond four months. Yet many women stay on tranquillisers for years.

So why do doctors prescribe tranquillisers — and what for? Mostly they do it because tranquillisers are an immediate solution to the problems that working class women face, such as bad housing conditions, too many kids, unemployment, and the stress of 'trying to make ends meet'. It's easier than providing a decent living standard for everyone.

Living in hell

Tranquillisers are commonly prescribed for women during menopause. Below, Bridget Morehead talks about her experience.

"MY MENOPAUSE started when I was 49. I'm 54 now, and it's only recently that I've started to feel normal again.

Up until the 'change', as I call it, I'd always been really active. Working full time and bringing up four kids, you don't get a minute to yourself, never mind worrying about your health.

But when all the kids left home, I began to feel different. Firstly, I couldn't sleep at night. I'd feel exhausted, but I still couldn't sleep.

The doctor prescribed me Tramazapan. I started on 40 mg a day and at first I thought they were great. Six months later, I was still on them and also taking 60 mg of Activan — and living in hell.

It's hard to explain what the menopause is like. Some women just get hot flushes, but it hit me bad.

What with that and the tranquillisers, it left me feeling suicidal at times, because you just can't see that things will ever get better.

Every day grows darker as the depression grows stronger. At this point, I'd lost my job because I couldn't go to work. I couldn't even get out of bed for about six weeks



and I couldn't bear food.

I'd always been a good eater but I was scared even to try to eat, because everything made me feel sick, even the smell of food. I went down to six and a half stone.

I think I would have drunk my way through the menopause but even alcohol made me feel sick.

All the time I kept going back to the doctor. Eventually he sent me to hospital with suspected gall bladder trouble. At the end of all the poking and prodding, they found nothing wrong with me, and you know what the doctor asked me about — my marriage and my sex life!

It was a helpless situation because there's no-one to turn to, and you feel so alone.

Eventually one of my daughters suggested going to a herbalist. I'd never thought of it before, and it was expensive — £12 for your first visit and about £6 for your herbal tonic. But my husband paid, and I went.

The herbalists talked to me about my health in general, and got me to change my diet. Then I met a woman who worked as a drugs counsellor, and I asked her if she knew anything about tranquillisers.

I used to think it was kids on smack who went to drug counsellors, not married women with four grown-up kids. Never in my life did I think that one day I'd be addicted to tranquillisers.

The counsellors were lovely people, really understanding and positive, but the withdrawal symptoms were friggin' awful.

I didn't come off the pills straightaway, but reduced the amounts gradually. I used to get pins and needles all over my body. I couldn't bear noises. Even sitting next to someone talking on the bus set my nerves on edge.

Lights were a problem, too. Everything would seem much brighter. Some nights, I'd sit in front of the telly and, if the lamp was on, I'd have to sit with a tea towel over the side of my face where it was shining.

I couldn't concentrate on anything and I lost any confidence I'd had. It was one big nightmare.

The worst thing was knowing that if I took one little pill, it would knock me out for the night. But when you wake up feeling like nothing on Earth, you have to face it all again.

So I stuck it out, God knows how I did it, but my husband was really good, and my kids as well. Last Christmas I took my last tranquilliser — never again.

I've even started going to a homoeopath now in Liverpool, who has helped me to realise that being ill wasn't my fault and that there are hundreds of other women on council estates just like me."

Bridget is now working part time and has started adult education classes.

Useful reading
"Women and tranquillisers" by Celia Haddon, Sheldon Press, £2.50
"Cry of the innocent" Thesis by Judith Jerome, c/o Tranx, 17 Peel Road, Wealdstone, Middlesex, £2.00
"Trouble with tranquillisers", Release Publications Limited, 1 Elgin Avenue, London W9 3 PR. Tel: 01-289-1123.
Emergency Number: 01-603-8654 (24 hours)

Women, resistance and revolution

Belinda Weaver starts our new series on socialist theory, "Women and Class", with a look At Sheila Rowbotham's book 'Women, Resistance and Revolution'.

It's said that we only retain 10 per cent of what we read. If that's so, then giving books a second reading is not a bad idea — maybe we'll retain a different 10 per cent this time around.

When the book itself is about history that's been forgotten and has to be rediscovered over and over again, then the book becomes something to keep going back to "lest we forget".

When we think of the 'women's movement', we usually think of the 1960s or else we think of Mrs Pankhurst and the suffragettes. What Sheila Rowbotham's book, *Women, Resistance and Revolution* reminds us is that the suffragettes weren't the beginning, but rather the continuation of one strand of early feminism.

Alongside the largely middle class suffragettes existed a more proletarian women's movement, led by Sylvia Pankhurst and Eleanor Marx. While the suffragettes chained themselves to railings in the West End to try to secure the vote, Sylvia and Eleanor organised women workers in the East End into trade unions and in struggles around basic issues of survival — food, jobs, etc.

Before those women in the 1890s, there were the women of the Paris Commune of 1870, who often fought more heroically than the men, and women who joined the French Revolution of 1789.

Struggles

As you go back in time, various flashes of women's struggles — for identity, for independence — light up the great hidden store of women's history.

Women appeared early on in the role of religious dissenters. In the absence of any democratic institutions of government, religious dissent was the only way to show opposition to the status quo. In the Puritan movement, women could claim to be the equal of men — women could be prophetesses and preachers, and they could obey a 'higher order' than the male head of a household.

As ideas of the Enlightenment spread — ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity — and the ideas of the Owenite communes, women who took up these ideas enthusiastically often came up against male hostility to their activities. At first many individuals fought back, only to be broken by the struggle. Slowly, painfully, the idea of working together with others, of organising,

Women and Class

came to be seen as the way forward.

Feminism then had more than one strand, as it does now. Middle class women wanted greater access to education, and greater independence from men. But for working class women, the struggle for education had to take a back seat to basic questions of survival. These women took part in bread riots and in demonstrations against the brutality of early capitalism. For them, their aspirations could only be met by a new kind of society.

They were anxious to link up with workers in struggle, though workers were often unwilling to link up with them. The feminist cause then was not 'respectable'. To some women, this signalled the need for women to go off on their own to organise, rather than be beaten down by men in trade unions and other movements.

But, again, as history shows, women who tried this path ended up at a blank wall. They didn't have the power to make the changes they wanted, so the struggles ended up broken. Where women stayed in the trade unions and fought to have the issues taken up, some progress has been made. Trade unions now have equal opportunities, positive discrimination, maternity rights and equal pay as part of their programme for members.

In the women's movement today, we find the same kind of strands. We're a product of our history. Some of us see that women can never have true equality with men under the capitalist system, because it's a system that puts profit above human needs. It suits the system to have women doing unpaid work in the home and to reproduce a new generation of workers with little or no financial assistance from the state.

But we recognise too that just struggling for a new society won't guarantee equality for women once that new society is achieved. Sexism is deeply ingrained in men. Women will continue to have to struggle for their liberation — it won't just suddenly come right the day after



Match Girls' Strike, 1888

capitalism is overthrown.

Lots of women reject this view. Blaming men, rather than the economic system under which we live, they have separated themselves from political ties with men, and gone on to organise separately.

This is a dilemma women have faced through history — to try to realise their aspirations by linking their struggles with those of other groups, such as male workers, or to build a separate women only movement.

If women have been driven to separatism, it's because men have shown themselves very reluctant to let women join their struggles in the past. Some early feminists who participated in the French Revolution and the Paris Commune were scorned and derided by men. Men often begged such women not to reveal themselves as feminists, since this could only harm the main cause. It sounds familiar — we still hear that today.

It's easier to be part of a women only movement than to fight to have women's issues taken up in the workers movement, to fight sexism head on. But only by linking the struggles of oppressed people can change be made. Otherwise, struggles are marginalised. Only united action can win.

All women are oppressed. But a woman worker has more in common with a male worker, even if he is a sexist, than she has with a middle class woman. Women like that also have dilemmas — what nanny would best suit their children, what is the

women have a stake in the system.

This is not to belittle autonomous women's groups. These women are enormously active — the number and range of women's groups and services is huge; rape crisis centres, peace camps, women's refuges, health centres, therapy centres, women's self-defence classes, abortion campaigns — the list is endless. Women have gone on to begin building the kinds of services and structures that will be necessary if women are to be liberated.

But this kind of self-help is not enough, and it dissipates the energy needed to build a strongly political movement that can bring change. As Rowbotham's book shows, women at all periods have been able to live in the cracks and crevices of the system — the early 'free unions' between women and men, the first experiments in communal living — these could all exist within the system because they didn't fundamentally threaten it. And again, for women to organise for themselves necessary services like childcare just lets the system get away with not doing it.

Women are still oppressed today. To console themselves, many women have spun out a theory that women are better than men; women are able to produce the miracle of birth, women don't fight wars, women are the hope and future of the human race.

This may console some, but believing oneself 'better' isn't much help when the stark facts show that women in work are paid less than men, have less access to promotion, have more boring jobs, and have to scratch around trying to get childcare so they can earn what they can. And many can't get work at all.

We live in the system — opting out can't work. The energy going into making the system more bearable could be channelled into changing the system once and for all.

Rowbotham's book shows us that, however haltingly, women have been trying to do that for centuries. The method was to link up with existing struggles so that women's struggles weren't marginalised. In reminding us of that history, even if we only keep 10 per cent of it, Rowbotham's book deserves a second reading.

Wallasey Women

"I got involved with the campaign because Eric, my husband, did. All I was going to do was make tea. But by dinner time I was totally involved and I just wanted to do more."

Barbara Smith, a part-time worker at Premier Foods, speaks for a lot of working class women in Wallasey who felt inspired by a local election campaign which has already led to a new Labour Party women's section being set up in Leasowe.

The campaign to elect Labour's Lol Duffy ended up a mere 279 votes short of overcoming Tory Lynda Chalker's 6,708 majority.

Linda Amis, from Leasowe, told Women's Fightback, "I've never really understood politics before, but now I'd like to get involved because I want a better future for my kids."

The campaign was organised to maximise participation by women. "I like the way people mucked in together and helped each other out: everyone was there to do what they had to do."

The Wallasey campaign was fought on a socialist platform, arguing for a fighting alternative to the Tories around the central issues of unemployment, health, education and housing.

Women held a lively picket of Lynda Chalker's surgery, for example, on the questions of the Tories' abolition of the maternity grant, attacking the turn to the right.

A van load of police were called to

clear us out that day.

We also held a lobby to highlight the eight years of Tory attacks on women. Chalker said in 1983 that women with kids should be stopped from working. A delegation of women went to see Chalker on the cuts in benefits. We found her a heartless, ignorant woman — so much for all women being the "caring sex".

Rich and privileged women like Chalker and Thatcher are our enemies.

When the result came through on election night we shed a few tears, for sure. But the next day we started again.

Women on the Leasowe Estate — which suffers from being starved of resources and has had to fight to stop the drug pushers from moving in — have organised a women's section. Trish McQuire told Women's Fightback, "We've organised it to involve the ordinary women on the estate, and also to take up the issues that men miss out — lighting for the streets; nursery schools to be better equipped, and more of them. We want to show that women don't have to sit at home and wait for the men. We can get up and fight for what we believe in."

The next period will see further attacks on women's rights, as well as rights of all workers. Wallasey's campaign shows that working class women will be at the forefront of the fightback we have to mount.

Where we stand

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

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

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

ment, and to involve women who do not relate to these movements.

3. We aim to strengthen the position of women in the labour movement, and fight for it to take our needs as a priority. We will encourage and aid the organisation and consciousness of women as women in the labour movement, and fight for the aims and demands of the women's movement in the unions and labour organisations.

We fight to change the sexist atmosphere in the labour movement, and for positive discrimination and changes in arrangements and practices to enable women to play a full

part at all levels. We fight for the implementation of the TUC Charter of Women in the unions.

We fight against the labour movement's reflecting in any way the oppressive ideas about a woman's role, which can undermine women's ability to fight back, and dangerously divide the movement. We ally with all those fighting for rank and file control, democracy and accountability, against those who hold back and sell out our fight. Never again a 'Labour' government that ignores party decisions, serves the bosses and bankers, and beats down workers' living standards and struggles.

4. We aim to co-ordinate and assist those women in the Labour Party, and the trade unions, who are fighting for these aims.

5. We are for direct action, solidarity as women and as workers, and for maximum mobilisation for all actions against the capitalist system that exploits and oppresses us.