

33

Published fortnightly

50p

Solidarity price £1

Strikers and claimants 25p

No 33

5 December, 1992

socialist

OUTLOOK

Inside your 20 page issue:
8-page special NHS pull-out

Another

Tory

rip-off

merchant

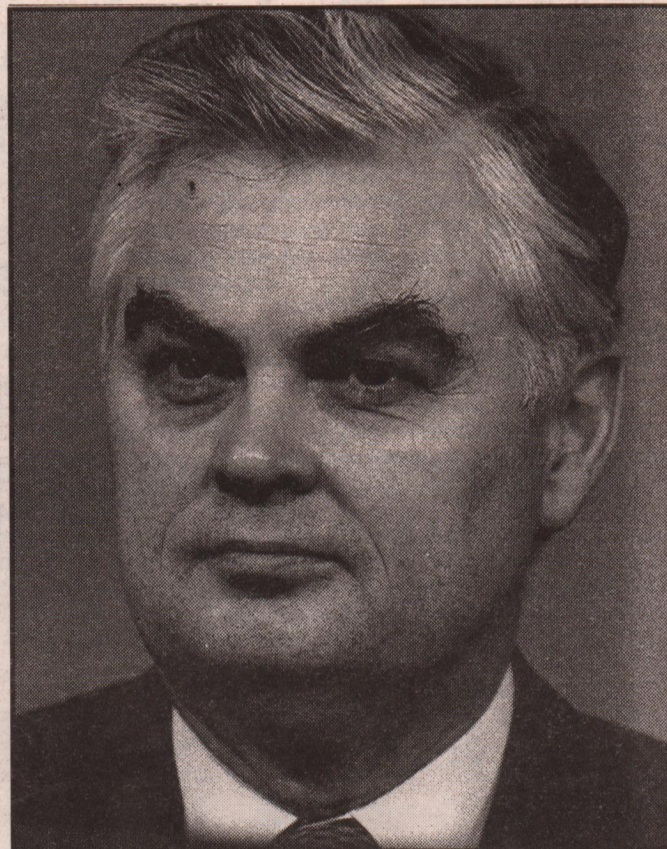


Photo: Andrew Wilard

Lil' ole wine drinker: Lamont

■ Norman Lamont's financial affairs are never out of the headlines, with questions asked over unpaid hotel bills, his overdue Access bill, and his use of tax-payers' money to help pay his legal bills. This is the man in charge of Britain's economy!

■ But in the Tory corruption stakes, his antics are small beer indeed. Mark Thatcher picked up millions for arms deals while his mum was Prime Minister.

■ And whatever their shady deals, directorships and back-handers, the biggest Tory rip-offs are those they carry through *as a government*, using the force of law to rob working people, the unemployed, pensioners and children.

■ Lamont's Autumn Statement announced a 1.5 percent pay limit that will rob every public sector worker; his cabinet colleagues are busily ripping off social security claimants and council tenants, while Michael Heseltine wants taxpayers and electricity consumers to foot the bill for his pit closure plans.

■ The whole government is ripping off working people for the benefit of the rich. Lamont must go – and with him the whole wretched Tory cabinet.

■ It's high time the TUC and Labour leaders stopped acting as Major's flexible friends and took up the fight to force them out of office. That would do nicely!

ANOTHER TORY RIP-OFF: IRAQGATE UPDATE – p2

Gotcha!

Cook's evidence nails Major's gang

Iraqgate update

SHORT OF a handwritten thank-you note from John Major, putting Matrix Churchill in for the Queen's Award for Export Achievement, it is difficult to contemplate documentation more damning than Robin Cook's Iraqgate revelations.

True, the Labour Party's outrage would be more convincing from a party that had found it in its soul to oppose the senseless carnage in the Gulf in the first place.

Labour, it seems, objects to the use of British weapons to slaughter British soldiers, but happily cheers on while they are wielded against fleeing Iraqis.

Nevertheless, Major and his past and present colleagues Margaret Thatcher, Geoffrey Howe, Nicholas Ridley, Douglas Hurd, William Waldegrave and Lord Trefgarne are collectively bang to rights.

While Major was Chancellor, Cook has shown, his private office received a copy of a letter from the private secretary of the then Trade Secretary, Nicholas Ridley, to Customs and Excise, regarding a forthcoming visit to Matrix Churchill.

The June 1990 letter notes: "I also told you that my Secretary of State would shortly be writing to the Prime Minister [then Margaret Thatcher] asking that Ministers should collectively and urgently discuss the issues connected with this case."

This was written six months before the story broke in the press, which Major has insisted before Parliament was his first inkling of the scandal.

Major's 'see no evil, hear no evil' fairy story, endlessly recycled across the Tory press, surely departs from the paths of veracity. If the erstwhile Chancellor of the Exchequer was really unaware of vital correspondence coming into

his office, his competence is obviously in question.

As Cook put it himself: "For a Prime Minister to claim he is innocent by reason of ignorance is not very attractive ... just as John MacGregor believes this government is not fundamentally corrupt, I believe John Major was not fundamentally ignorant."

A further five documents were released to the press. A June 1989 telex, marked "secret", from the then Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe to the British embassy in Tokyo proves that the Foreign Office was fully aware of Matrix Churchill's activities the month before Major took over the department.

A letter from William Waldegrave, the then Foreign Office Minister, to Lord Trefgarne, dated April 1990 and again "secret", argues: "I believe the Government would be strongly criticised if we allowed the export of [Matrix Churchill] machine tools which could be used on the supergun project. We would, with some justification, be accused of being inconsistent if not irresponsible."

Waldegrave's proposals? "I suggest, however, that we look again at the question in three months' time, when the interest generated by the 'supergun' may have subsided ... Douglas Hurd has seen this letter and agrees." Greater cynicism is difficult to conceive.

A September 1989 Department of Trade and Industry briefing on press interest in Matrix Churchill concedes the "possibility" that the machine tools "can be used for the production of military equipment ... in contravention of our policy".

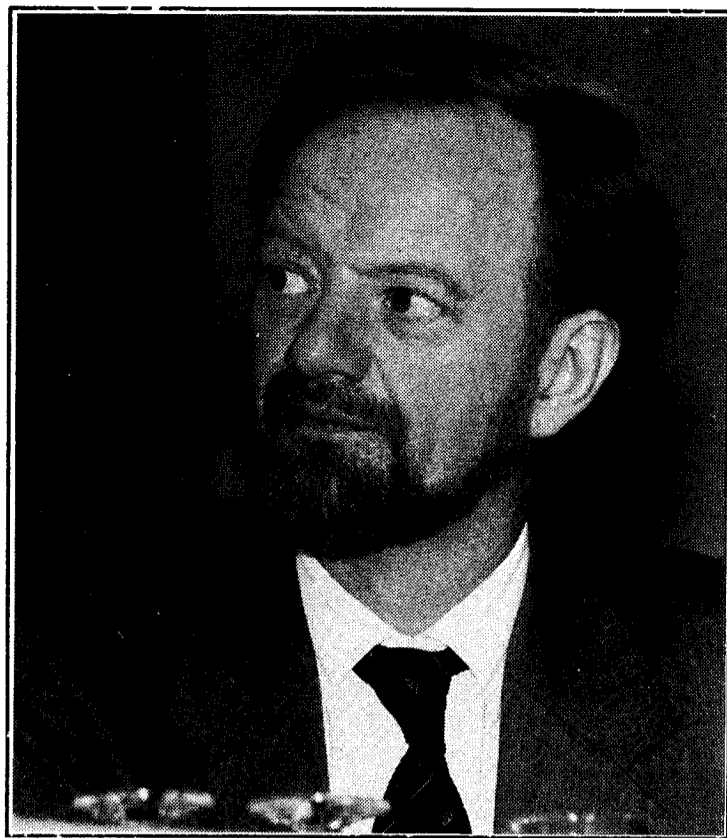
A June 1990 letter to Thatcher's private secretary, Charles Powell, shows that ghost-written letters were being sent out "on behalf of the Prime Minister" which acknow-

ledged "concerns about outstanding exports of machine tools to Iraq and confirm[ed] that the matter is under active consideration by ministers".

Lastly, confidential April 1990 DTI minutes state that "the MoD [Ministry of Defence] working group has no security or technology transfer objection to the supply of these machines tools to Iraq" despite explicit awareness of the possibility of transfer to munitions establishments.

In future, it recommends, all export licences for Iraq should be cleared with the Cabinet Office, "who are acting as coordinator in the Iraq gun context".

So far, Cook has released just 36 of the 500 or so pages of material handed over to the defence in the Matrix Churchill case, and threatens more revelations shortly.



Putting the Tories in a stew - Robin Cook

TUC rigs oil workers' link-up

By Bill Sutcliffe

SEVEN TUC-affiliated unions organising North Sea workers have formed a joint body across the sector, in a direct response to the challenge of the Offshore Industry Liaison Committee.

But the credibility of the new body - called the Offshore Industry Unions Co-ordinating Committee - has already been severely dented by a boycott from the hard right AEEU engineers' and electricians' union, the largest in the industry.

AEEU is refusing to play ball because of the presence of EPIU, an

earlier breakaway from its electricians' section, on OIUCC. The remaining participants are the TGWU, MSF, RMT, GMB, BALPA and NUMAST.

The formation of an effective joint committee had been a key OILC demand since the union's earlier existence as a cross-union rank-and-file group.

OILC general secretary Ronnie MacDonald told *Tribune* last week: "There is one simple question: is the new committee the breakthrough that has eluded us for all these years? I'm pessimistic, but I'll be delighted to be proved wrong."

While the formation of a body like OIUCC is a long overdue step, the unfortunate likelihood is that it will prove little more than a bureaucrats' talking shop.

The OILC, meanwhile, has consolidated itself as a real force in the sector, and is now the obvious choice for offshore workers serious about enforcing health and safety standards - an issue more important than wages in a relatively well-paid but highly dangerous industry.

OILC's organisational exclusion from both OIUCC and the TUC is not of its own choosing. It should be allowed into both bodies at once.

Unite the Labour left!

December 5th sees the Annual General Meeting of Labour Party Socialists. Here COUNCILLOR STEVE FRENCH and KATE AHRENS put forward the case for a new unity of the Labour Left in the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters Network and look at the implications for the future of Labour Party Socialists.

IN THE PAST few years the rise and rise of the new realists in the Labour Party and the Trade union bureaucracy has squeezed the left into ever more defensive positions. Many activists have dropped out, or been pushed out of the Party.

Labour Party Socialists, and Labour Left groups have linked activists, but the Labour left has become increasingly fragmented and isolated.

Network

Now, the Socialist Campaign Group of MPs, together with activists from many different groups and areas, have launched the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters Network in an effort to reinvigorate and unify the left. The authority that the SCG have on the Labour left could be a decisive factor in uniting these forces.

Launched at the Socialist Campaign Group conference in Leeds in June, the Network has

have a vital role to play in building the Network. It would be folly to dissolve existing structures before it becomes clear that the Network is thriving. LPS has been unique on the left for its activity against the witch-hunt and this activity must be reflected in the network. However, the task for the left must be to aid the process of making the Network a real focus for all the left inside the Party. The best elements of LPS's activity must be retained and improved within the network.

New realism

As the Network develops, the need for LPS will disappear, and the task of fighting the new realists inside the Party and the unions can be tackled in a united and more forceful way.

This means building local branches of the Network and arguing that the campaigning orientation of LPS is adopted.

The Network presents a new opportunity to fight the Smith leadership in a stronger and more unified way than has been possible for a long time. The left can still make gains in the Party, as we saw with the victory of the left's resolution on union links at this year's Party conference. By building the Network we can create a force to be reckoned with.



Key figure on the left - Benn

built a large base of support and has been strongly welcomed by both left MPs and activists on the ground. The task now is to turn this auspicious beginning into a real organisation, with a democratic policy making structure with campaigning orientation that links the struggles.

LPS and local left caucuses

Alternatives to Maastricht

Saturday 5 December 10.30am-5pm

The Assembly Hall, SOAS, London WC1 (Euston BR)

Speakers include:

Diane Abbott MP John Atkin Tony Benn MP Pat Buttle Ken Capstick Tony Chater Megan Dobney Ron Doel Larry Elliott Alex Falconer MEP George Galloway MP Bryan Gould MP Mike Hicks Ron Leighton MP Val Little Ken Livingstone MP Alf Lomas MEP John McAllion MP Alice Mahon MP Anni Marjoram Seumas Milne Jonathan Michie Austin Mitchell MP Peter Shore MP Llew Smith MP Marjorie Thompson Marc Wadsworth

Plus speakers invited from socialist, anti-racist and peace movements in West and East Europe

Topics include: Politics of Maastricht ♦ Economics of Maastricht ♦ British economic policy after devaluation ♦ The rise of racism and the extreme right in the new Europe ♦ Unemployment, the trade unions and Maastricht ♦ Social Chapter and the trade unions ♦ Women and the new Europe ♦ Maastricht's attack on the welfare state ♦ Fortress Europe and the South

Organised by Socialist Forum ♦ Sponsored by the EPIU, FBU, FTAT, UCATT, MSF London Region, Morning Star, Socialist Economic Bulletin, Labour and the Economy Group, Socialist Campaign Group of Labour MPs.

I would like to register for the Alternatives to Maastricht conference and receive conference papers, and enclose £5 (waged) £2 (unwaged) plus a donation of £_____ Creche reqd _____

Name _____ Address _____

Tel No _____

CLP _____ Trade Union _____

Return to: Socialist Forum, c/o 1-3 Ardleigh Road, London N1 4HS.

Don't duck labour movement fight!

ANYBODY with the least knowledge of the labour movement could have written the script; surprise, surprise, the TUC General Council last week refused to back calls for strike action to defend the miners, rejecting Arthur Scargill's call for a day of action.

Meanwhile the countdown to the closure of the first tranche of 10 threatened pits goes on remorselessly. On or around January 23 they will close, unless industrial action is taken to prevent closure. The TUC, with an enormous outburst of anger over pit closures to build on, tiptoes timidly towards its 'national recovery' day on 9 December, complete with employers, wet Tories and vicars.

Meanwhile Labour's leadership sticks to safe issues like the Iraq arms scandals and Norman Lamont's credit card, but is struck dumb on mine and hospital closures, the pay freeze and Maastricht.

The antics of the leaders of the movement threaten to demobilise the tremendous outburst of anger that met the pit closure announcement, and let the government off the hook. And it has to be said that the collapse of the planned Tube strike, and the refusal of the NUM so far to project any form of industrial action to stop pit closures has made the situation worse.

For if the Tories can impose pit closures, get through the Maastricht crisis, and crucially force through the pay freeze, the medium term prospects of the workers' movement will be very grim.

How should socialists face this situation?

Photo: Andrew Wiliard



Don't leave Arthur to fight alone

Despite the do-nothing attitude of the movement's leadership, activity in the localities against pit closures remains at a high level. In the next period there are a series of national events to focus the mobilisation around.

Politically however the left must exploit the gap between the aspirations of the rank-and-file and the complacency of the leadership in the trade unions and the Labour Party. The mood is there to respond to militant anti-Toryism, for the left to take the offensive over the question of strike action to defend the miners, opposition to the pay freeze and the question of Maastricht.

In fact in the far left there is another major response against the one outlined here, typified by the SWP. In effect it says that what we can do now is sell lots of papers, hold public

meetings and recruit. Now socialist propaganda activity in this crisis is not only a good idea it is essential. Participating in labour movement protest action, without taking steps to permanently win people to socialism is mindless activism.

But reducing socialist activity to propaganda in this period is to evade the responsibility to take the fight to the bureaucracy. For the bureaucrats can shrug off any number of paper sales; it is much more difficult for them to shrug off sustained resistance in the heart of both wings of the labour movement.

This casts a spotlight on the medium-term strategic tasks of socialists. Bigger or smaller far left organisations can be trained for this period the bigger the better. But their usefulness will be very limited if they are gnomes to take refuge from the harsh realities of new realism.

Socialists have to confront the realities of this labour movement as it is. The work of constructing the trade unions and Labour Party is the product of decades of struggle. Without tremendous historic events, similar in impact and radicalising potential to the Russian revolution, there will not be new mass workers organisations built outside those which already exist.

A defeat of the current mood of resistance will of course also be a tremendous victory for the most right-wing elements in the new realist bureaucracy. That is why the opportunity has to be taken now, to push the current movement as far as it will go. And that is why socialists cannot give up the fight to construct a fighting opposition in both the Labour Party and the unions.

TUC must call day of action - Scargill

By Bill Sutcliffe

Miners' leader Arthur Scargill has officially called for a labour movement day of action to force the Tories to backtrack on their plans to destroy the coal industry.

The National Union of Mineworkers president made his demand as the TUC general council held a special session in Doncaster on Wednesday last week. The body was meeting outside London for the first time in its history as a gesture towards the crisis in the coalfields. But gestures are not enough.

'If the government continues to be impervious to our fair and reasonable case, I ask on behalf of the NUM that the general council call a national day of action involving the public and the whole of the movement,' argued Scargill. 'Is it wrong for the labour movement to act together against an insane economic policy?'

The meeting was picketed by around 200 protestors demanding a general strike. TUC general secretary Norman Willis countered that this would be illegal: 'There is no doubt that we need to intensify the campaign', he agreed, but stressed that the TUC would not put its head in any 'legal noose'.

December 9 has already been declared a 'day of national recovery', but the only strike action likely will come from small groups of

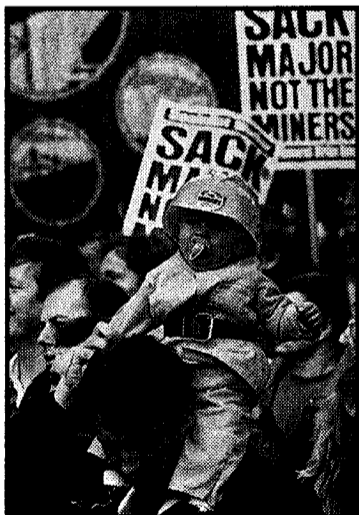


Photo: Andrew Wiliard

No time for TUC dummies

workers ready to defy both the Tory anti-union and their own union leadership.

Reportedly, the TUC is ready to call a day of action if any of the ten collieries due to close in late January are shut, but there is no indication that it would be held on a working day. Such a move would be too little, too late.

The National Miners Support Network is organising a national conference for miners' supporters at Sheffield Polytechnic students union on January 9. Other sponsors include the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee. It will be an major opportunity for the labour movement left to discuss the way forward.

Full details of the conference - page four

Give Socialist Outlook an Xmas present!

For a lot of working class people, especially those with kids, Christmas is a big hassle which they can ill-afford. But even if your budget is stretched, please consider giving Socialist Outlook a Christmas present.

Our fighting fund needs some Xmas cheer, to push us towards the £7500 figure which will allow us to replace clapped out equipment and keep the show on the road.

Many thanks to our supporters group in Haringey for their early Xmas present of nearly £300, thanks too to supporters in Brighton who sent us £70.

All this is very welcome, but we still have a long way to go. Our costs are constantly going up. And now there is an urgent need for cash to produce publicity material on the miners' fight and the political crisis.

Socialist ideas can make a difference to the political situation, but only if those ideas can be heard. You can make a real contribution to promoting the revolutionary socialist message by making a donation to our fund.

Yes! I want to support Socialist Outlook and I enclose a donation

£50 £25 £20 £10 Other £ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Please make cheques out to Socialist Outlook.

Return to Socialist Outlook PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

London Underground dispute

A victory for intimidation

By a London Underground train driver
THE PLANNED all-out strike by RMT rail union members on London Underground was suddenly called off on Monday last week. What went wrong?

Readers of *Socialist Worker* or the *London Evening Standard* probably believe the incident was a straightforward sell out by the RMT bureaucracy.

In fact, the leadership played little role from start to finish. The strike was demanded, fought for and organised by rank and file activists around RMT's London Transport District Council, and called off at the behest of the same 100 or so militants.

Support was so thin that striking would have meant not

just defeat, but the sack for the small minority willing to see it through.

Three factors created this situation: vicious management intimidation; blatant sabotage by other unions; and the weakness of RMT activists themselves.

London Underground Limited (LUL) has built up a new management team over the last three years, with the express aim of smashing the unions.

In many areas, the number of managers tripled as the old guard was retired, pushed out or knocked into line by young white men brainwashed by New Management Techniques.

They made constant propaganda for the so-called Company Plan

'rationalisation' package the immediate issue behind the strike call giving the thing an air of inevitability for many workers.

RMT activists, especially the relatively autonomous London Underground District Council, which is dominated by class fighters, fought hard to mobilise the members in preparation for a strike. The RMT bureaucracy were happy to pass the buck.

The District Council provided a constant supply of leaflets, instructed negotiators to hold firm, and held mass rallies to boost confidence.

The vote for action revealed a desire to strike, but workers were not convinced we could win without the other unions. Only where local activists campaigned hard were ordinary tubeworkers ready to follow

the strike call.

Elsewhere, it was clear many were not. In some areas, union reps even resigned their positions and told members to come in to work.

Many staff were interviewed individually by management and told that if they did not sign Company Plan individual contracts, they would shortly be signing dole claims. Threats to sack strikers were taken seriously, because people knew bosses wanted to axe 5,000 jobs anyway.

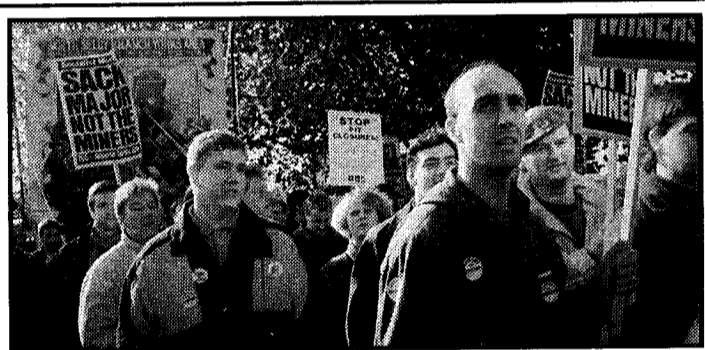
Even then we could have held the day if ASLEF - which effectively acted like a company union - and the craft unions had not told their members to work through any dispute. The ASLEF strike ballot is merely a face saver and should not be taken seriously. Credit is

due to the handful of ASLEF militants who promised to respect picket lines.

The evening after the strike was called off, around 50 people attended a District Council meeting, representing a wide range of workplaces and several different political tendencies. Yet only one said the strike should have gone ahead.

Everyone else agreed we had put up a bitter and protracted fight against the Company Plan and a defeat would have turned into a rout if we had struck.

For that militant minority tradition to be preserved, we now have to develop a strong representation under the new formula of negotiation. We have been defeated, but we are not beaten.



Miners' fight goes on

Support these events!

Saturday 5 December

HENLEY DEMO

March through Michael Heseltine's constituency
Organised by Oxford Trades Council and Henley Labour Party

Supported by NUM.

Assemble 12 noon railway station/coachpark.

Saturday 19 December

CENTRAL LONDON DEMO

to greet the Scottish marchers.

Details in next issue.

Saturday 9 January

Solidarity with the Miners

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Sponsored by NUM

Called by Socialist Movement TU Committee,
National Miners' Support Network,
Haldane Society Employment Committee,
Trade Union News.

Sheffield Polytechnic Students' Union,
11am-5pm.

Delegates from all bona fide labour movement organisations.

Registrations, £5 waged, £2.50 unwaged from:
Carolyn Sikorski, 53a Geere Rd., London E15 3PN. Make cheques to Socialist Movement (TU).

Needed: an opposition movement in RMT

British Rail militants must build a new opposition movement in the main railworkers' union, argues RMT activist SAM STACEY.

JUST AS Derek Fullick, general secretary of drivers' union ASLEF, was demanding 24 hour general strikes, his union's executive was instructing members to observe the anti-union laws and cross then-expected RMT picket lines on London Underground.

Incidents like this underline the crisis of rail union leadership in ASLEF, RMT and TSSA alike. None of them are capable, let alone willing, to fight massive job cuts in the offing, never mind privatisation.

They all rushed to sign a new bargaining deal with the bosses, which pushes many vital subjects outside the scope of national machinery. Any issue related solely to a single 'business' - that is, individual sectors such as Network SouthEast or Railfreight Distribution - can no longer be discussed at national council. Potentially, InterCity could slash wages heavily, but the unions couldn't even raise the question on the national council.

There will be major local repercussions, too. For instance, Local Departmental Committees will be broken up by business. We could see workers in the same depot, on the same grade, on widely different wages and conditions.

This latest sell-out has created widespread anger among activists. But how can militants build on this to organise resistance to both management and treacherous officials?

Motherwell branch recently hosted an unofficial meeting of Scottish branches entitled 'the crisis of leadership of the RMT'. One of the main points addressed was the need to kick out Knapp and Co. Necessary as this is, it is not the fundamental issue.

We need to transform RMT into a fighting union under membership control. In order to get it, we have to create a movement against the bureaucracy, from the ground up.

In place of their conservative apparatus, we need militant leaders,



Guard against opportunism

earning no more than skilled railworkers and subject to the control of the ranks.

The first step would be a conference, open to all individuals after a fightback, and sponsored by as many branches and District Councils as possible. Such a meeting should set up an unofficial movement, based on support within union structures, while striving to build among the broader membership.

Its basis would of course be subject to democratic discussion. But it does not require a massive 'programme' like the old RMT Broad Left. It should simply demand implementation of existing policy, which already includes strike

action against privatisation and withdrawal from the new machinery of negotiation.

Such a movement could certainly win support from people that, for instance, supported the demand of the Manchester comrades for a special general meeting over four recent victimisation sackings there.

Many RMT members are already asking what they are paying their money for, when the union is doing little to defend their interests.

The building of a new opposition, however embryonic, to win back our union, is the best means of halting the cancerous growth of demoralisation.

Striking Back

Fighting privatisation on the railways

This new pamphlet written by Socialist Outlook railworkers examines the background to the privatisation proposals, and their implications for passengers, railworkers and the environment.

It also discusses how privatisation can be fought and the socialist alternative.

Send £1.25 including post and packaging to *Socialist Outlook* PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU

British Coal's threat to sack all miners

By Bill Sutcliffe
BRITISH COAL has effectively dished out redundan-

Big demo for miners

By Rachel Newton
NALGO steward,
Manchester city council

AROUND 7,000 people marched through Manchester in support of the miners as part of the North West regional TUC day of action on November 17.

Speakers at the rally – included NUM president Arthur Scargill, Billy Pye from the union's Lancashire executive and Sylvia Pye from Women Against Pit Closures. But council leader Graham Stringer, a one-time left winger, received a none too friendly reception, to say the least. This was hardly surprising; just days earlier he had announced a staggering cuts package. The large contingent of council workers on the march were clearly incensed by the sheer hypocrisy of his speech.

The day was a real success, demonstrating a massive level of support for the miners – support many feared would inevitably decline now the pit closure crisis is no longer front page news. Pockets of workers even took industrial action to join the protest.

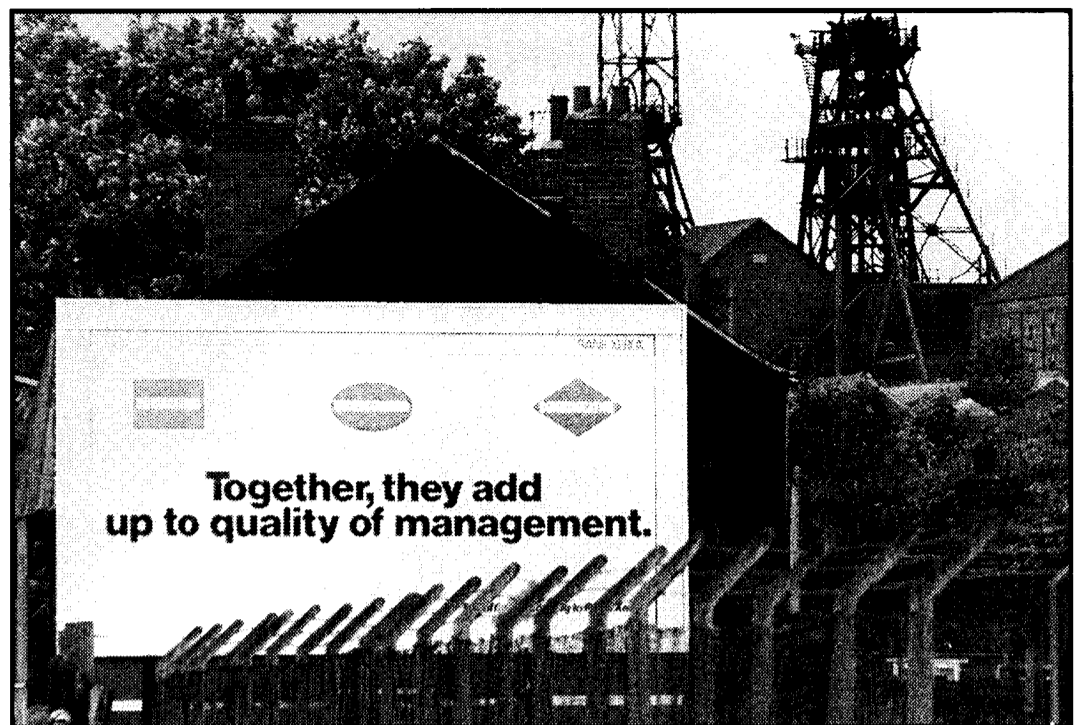
But this success came without the best demobilising efforts of the NWTUC, which restricted the turnout and effectively determined just what kind of 'day of action' it was to be.

cy notices to every one of its 50,000 employees, including those at the 19 'safe' pits not currently facing the axe. Not a single job is now safe.

Union reps at every British Coal location have received formal written notifications of potential redundancies, covering the entire workforce, in line with the letter of current employment law.

While the company insists that the move is a technicality to facilitate voluntary redundancies, and 'should not be taken as an indication of our future employment plans', it is now legally placed to sack as much of its workforce as it sees fit.

Around 4,600 miners have taken voluntary redundancy in recent weeks, with National Union of Mineworkers president accusing British Coal



of blackmailing miners into quitting by threatening to reduce redundancy money if they didn't go straight away.

Mike Clapham, Labour MP for Barnsley West and Penistone and former NUM national industrial relations officer, argued that British Coal's motivation for sending out the redundancy notices is to circumvent the colliery review

procedure. In the long term, it wanted to split miners into core and periphery workforces, he alleged.

NUM-sponsored Labour MP for Barnsley Central, Eric Illsley, pointed out that failure to give adequate notice formed the basis of the mining unions' successful High Court injunction against the closures last month: 'They are making sure

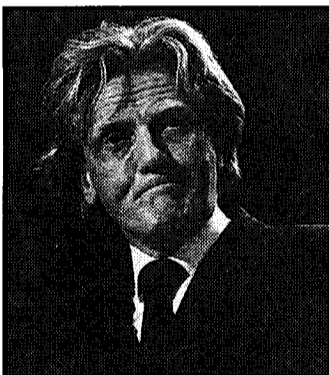
they get it right this time, sealed up and watertight.'

Both men formed part of a delegation of mining area Labour MPs which met British Coal chairman Neil Clarke last week. Mr Clarke apparently gave no indication of backtracking over the closure of the first tranche of ten pits, with the shutdowns now expected on or around January 23.

Billion pound cost of pit closures

THE NATIONAL Union of Mineworkers hired top Oxford University economics don Andrew Glyn to analyse official British Coal statistics and work out exactly what the closure of 31 pits will mean for Britain. The resulting report underlines just how short-sighted Tory chancellor Norman Lamont really is.

Glyn predicts that 24,000 miners would be thrown on the jobs scrapheap – a figure which excludes 7,600 more working for British Coal in clerical and other capacities. Some 31,500 jobs will go from BC suppliers, and the resultant loss of spending power would put at least 15,700 more out of work. All told, the move will mean 78,000 on the dole.



Money to burn – Heseltine

In 1982-83, Glyn argues, each miner produced an average 2.4 tonnes per shift. In 1991-92 this was 5.31 tonnes, a productivity increase of 121 per cent. By comparison, productivity

in the manufacturing sector has grown by 50 per cent over this period and in the banking, finance and business services sector by just 14 per cent.

Wage costs per unit of output have actually fallen in money terms over the same period, from £19.80 per tonne to just £16.06 per tonne. Yet demand has fallen from 95.1 million tonnes to 65.1 million, mostly because of increased imports of foreign coal, which rose from 3.4 million tonnes to 20 million tonnes.

Imports of oil and gas to replace UK coal output will worsen the UK balance of payments deficit by between £500-£1000 million a year, adding to inflation and cutting pay packets. They may even have an impact on exchange rates.

Public sector borrowing will rocket

by at least £1300 million in the first year as a result of redundancy payments to British Coal workers, unemployment benefit payments and lost tax income. Even then, Lamont will have to find £600 million every year after that. He'll probably try cutting back elsewhere in the public sector to rake some of the cash back, meaning more lost jobs.

Not even the closures will save much money. Half of the pits affected are actually profitable. Taken together, the 31 mines make a collective loss of just £8.5 million, a figure dwarfed by the cost of closure.

Glyn devastatingly concludes: 'This latest assault on the coal industry may well be unique in the history of economic policy in that the economy's performance will be worsened simultaneously in every relevant respect.'

'Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners' campaign re-established

By Peter Purton

A NOVEL and historic feature of the 1984-85 miners strike solidarity movement was Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners. With the groups now re-established in London, Liverpool and Manchester, LGSM is once more on the march.

A public meeting at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre last week brought together many of the activists from the previous struggle, alongside militants who have come to the fore in the Lesbian and Gay Rights Coalition and Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

National Union of Mineworkers activists from Tower colliery in South Wales addressed the meeting, calling for militant solidarity to link up the current struggles and for days of action.

An especially moving contribution came from Sian James of Women Against Pit Closures, who stressed the vital role of women, demanding that they be represented on every platform.

She confirmed her strong support for lesbian and gay rights as a result of her experiences with the previous LGSM, and pointed out the stakes in the present struggle: 'When we find out that we haven't anything left to lose,

it will be too late.'

The new London LGSM decided to twin with the three remaining South Wales pits and to carry out campaigning work throughout the lesbian and gay communities. It has affiliated to the National Miners' Support Network.

LGSM will also be supporting the TUC recovery day on December 9, going to the all-Wales demo in Ammanford on December 12 and welcoming the Scottish miners' march when it reaches London on December 19.

London LGSM meets every Tuesday at 7.30pm at the London Lesbian and Gay Centre, 67 Cowcross Street EC1 (tube: Farringdon)

Cashing in on the miners

A 48p-a-minute 'support the miners' telephone line, widely advertised in the North East, has nothing to do with the National Union of Mineworkers and all proceeds are currently going straight into the hands of private company.

The telephone number – 0891 315424 claims to be automatically registering callers on a 'national electronic petition'.

But when you ring, all you hear is a recorded message, and there is no opportunity even to leave your name and address. The 50p or so the call will cost could be far better spent by the National Miners' Support Network.

The man behind the scheme, Jock Gallagher of Broad Vision Ltd, Birmingham, told official NUM-backed campaigners in Newcastle: 'In my naivety and inexperience of the 0891 system, I had no expectation of making

money ... as soon as I learned that was a possibility, I readily said I would make donations to your fighting fund. You'll forgive me for reacting badly to insinuations that I was seeking to exploit the miners.'

The message claims: 'We will ensure that the media is made aware of the number of votes recorded from time to time', so Socialist Outlook asked Mr Gallagher – who's office number is 021 455 7949, should you wish to talk to him directly – how the polling was going: 'Haven't a clue at the moment, we are still talking hundreds,' we were told.

Asked if he had made any money, he said: 'Oh no, no, no, not yet. We've laid out about £4000. I'm not sure how much you get from callers. We've advertised in the Daily Mirror, which is fifteen hundred quid.'

Absolutely unprompted, he wrapped up: 'I'm sorry if I'm sounding like I'm hedging and vague, it's lack of information, not edginess.'

How the World Bank and the IMF organise... Third world robbery and environmental vandalism

By Peter Anderson

ON CURRENT trends, some experts say, humans could theoretically be the only species left on the planet within 50 to 100 years – a grotesque danger that highlights the imminence of environmental collapse under the weight of unplanned human economic activity.

But while the domination of economy over ecology is reaching critical proportions, the world's top economic regulators, who continue to pursue development and restructuring agendas with untold social and environmental consequences, seem purposely oblivious to the fact. This is especially true of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Even the economic results are appalling. Despite all the hype in the 1960s about 'development economics', with only a few notable exceptions most of the countries of the economic 'South' are not much better off, and many positively worse off, than they were 30 years ago.

It is not difficult to trace the immediate cause of this deterioration to the debt crisis of the 1970s, when bloated by petrodollars from soaring world oil prices, the international banks sent emissaries to the third world to offload their cash – at a price.

Worsened

The pay-back came in the 1980s, when economic conditions in the third world got seriously worse. Subjected to the economic policies of the World Bank, by the end of the decade sub-Saharan Africa actually produced *less* per head of the population than it had at the beginning – an impoverished continent became even poorer.

However while the poor countries were locked in a never-ending cycle of ballooning debt and impossible repayments, the banks shored up their finances by writing off failed loans, rescheduling debts and repairing their balance sheets. By the end of the decade, for the international banks the crisis was over.

Today from Amazonia to the Siberian forests, the seemingly unstoppable



PHOTO: John Harris

Rejecting a spiral of decline – campaigners demand cancellation of the debt

encroachment of the world market continues to wreak environmental havoc. Beyond debt and economic destruction and the sharpening of the division between rich and poor, this market logic now threatens the possible elimination of the fundamental biological diversity on which life itself depends.

According to Susan George, well-known author of *A Fate Worse than Debt*; 'I was never a fan of the ex-Soviet Union

and the countries which called themselves 'socialist', but the fall of the Berlin wall nevertheless has a negative side. The end of the Cold War has put an end to what political scientists used to call the "systems" debate. Now there is only one superpower and one system...'

Meanwhile Lawrence Summers, vice-president of the World Bank, has bluntly stated his view of the world economy and the environment, in comments made at the World Bank's annual meeting in Bangkok. He said: 'What can the West do to drive this process of reform (in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe) forward? Number one, it can spread the truth. The laws of [capitalist] economics, it is often forgotten, are like the laws of engineering – there is only one set of laws and they work everywhere.'

Evidence

Summers' staggering statement ignores the abundance of evidence which shows that if the capitalist world economy continues to exploit the world's resources in the rapacious, unfettered way it does now, the future of the planet is threatened.

An important 1986 article by Paul Erlich and others calculated that human economic activity was then absorbing 40 per cent of the 'net photosynthetic product', that is the net capacity of the

"50 species are being driven to extinction every day. At a conservative estimate, 20,000 are wiped out annually"

earth to regenerate itself, leaving just 60 per cent for all other species.

They found that this kind of activity was doubling every 25 or 30 years, which means that in a quarter of a century we would be consuming 80 per cent of the net photosynthetic product, leaving 60 per cent for all other species. And soon after the figure would reach 100 per cent, leaving no other species with access to anything.

Contradictions

Unfortunately this is not the way the people who run the world's economy see it. They fail to grasp a series of obvious and appalling contradictions which threaten the biosphere.

● The contradiction between the open economy and the closed biosphere means there are not 'market signals' to tell us we are in danger. The price of logs from a tropical forest, for example, in no



An impoverished Third World becoming even poorer

"The World Bank and the IMF found in the third world debt the perfect instrument to force integration of the indebted countries more tightly in the world capitalist economy"

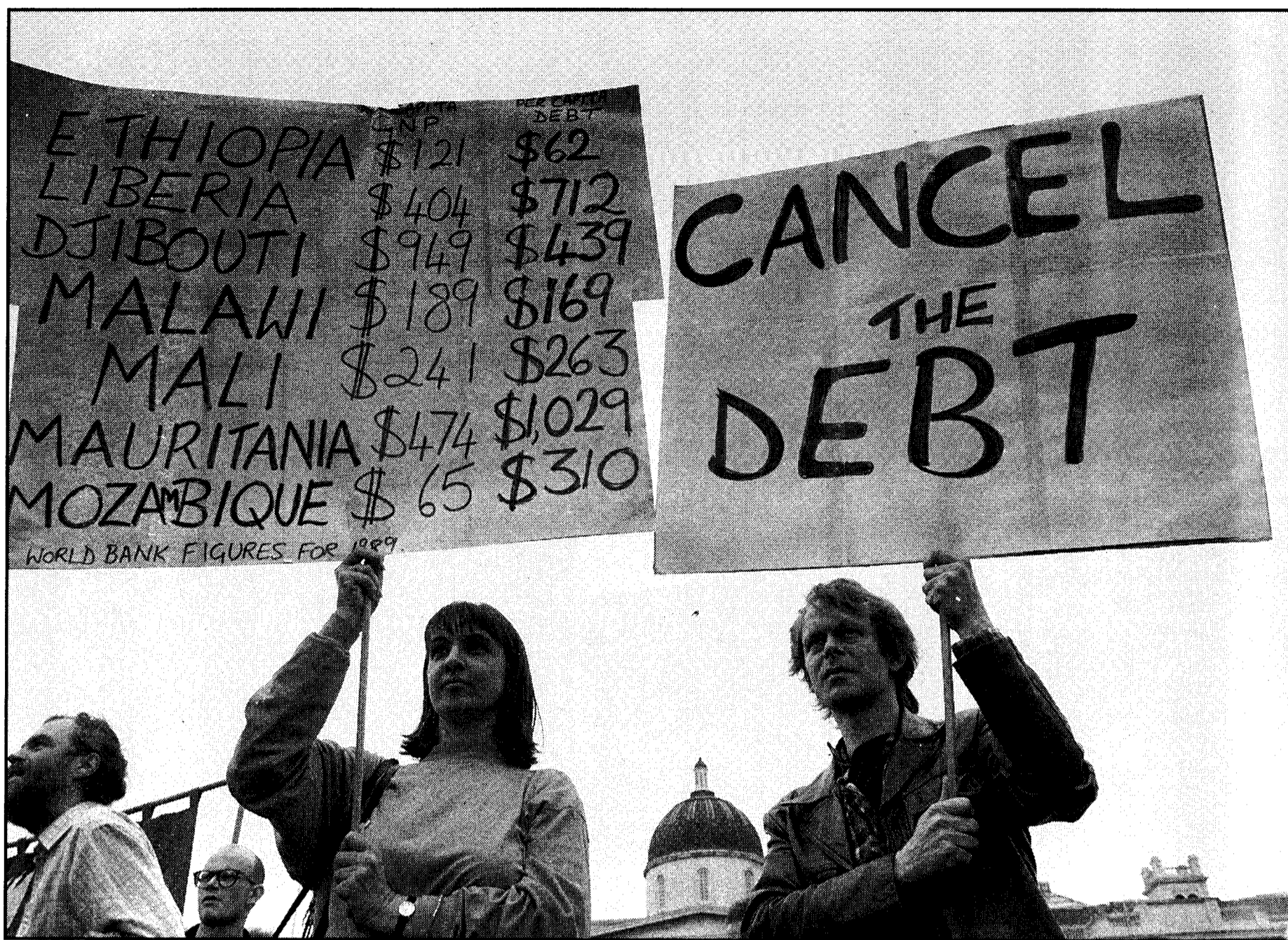


PHOTO: John Harris

way represents the value of the forest in stabilising the climate, or as a habitat for flora and fauna, and the home of biodiversity.

Although the price can tell us something about scarcity, that does not always work until it is too late. Market signals do not tell us anything about what we throw away.

Signals

The market is not going to send us signals if there is too much carbon dioxide in the atmosphere or too many CFCs. The World Bank's finance wing called the International Finance Corporation is making a large loan to Egypt to build a factory to produce air conditioners and refrigerators with CFCs.

The market is not going to tell us that the ozone layer is only one-third of what it should be.

- The logical outcome of leaving the market to itself is dramatically growing inequality within countries and between countries. Even within the United States the family income (let alone assets) of the richest 1 per cent is 115 times that of the lowest 10 per cent. On a world scale the disproportion runs into thousands of percentage points.

- Relying on the market to do everything makes it impossible to define social or developmental objectives.

Despite all this the World Bank and the IMF are imposing a market system universally, most emphatically in the third world. In fact, the world market is the most brutal of all markets because there are not many rules, while in most states there are at least certain social rules and safety nets, however inadequate.

The World Bank and the IMF found in the third world debt the perfect instrument to force the integration of the indebted countries more and more tightly into the world capitalist economy. They say poor countries must export more, supposedly to grow their way out of the

debt, but the effect is entirely different.

A recent study of African raw materials by the Transnational Institute showed there is absolutely no hope for Africa to overcome its debt through the export of commodities, because terms of trade are declining, more synthetic substitutes are being used, improved technology means lower raw materials inputs are required, and there is increasing competition from Asia.

But overwhelmingly the main problem is the net transfer of wealth out of the poor countries into the rich. In 1982 the indebted countries of the South owed the North £365 billion. Ten years later, having paid over £591 billion in debt service, they owed £660 billion.

Doubled

The countries of the South are overall 60 per cent more in debt than they were at the beginning of the 1980s. Africa's debt has doubled. The debt of the poorest nations has more than doubled. In that time the poor nations have paid the equivalent of more than six Marshall Plans to the rich. Every minute £68,000 is paid by the poor to the Western banks.

'Everything that stands in their path is destroyed', says Susan George of the dominant institutions. 'Nature stands in

"In the next couple of decades the best case scenario is that 15 per cent of rain forest will be lost. It could be a terrifying two thirds"

the way of profits, so nature must be disregarded. Culture stands in the way of market extension because culture usually involves community ties, solidarity, reciprocity. The state is often in the way because it tends to regulate and even sometimes to protect the poor and more vulnerable groups, so the state must be reduced to the lowest common denominator.

The World Bank and the IMF step in

"In 1982 the indebted countries owed £365 billion. Ten years later, having paid over £591 billion in debt service, they owed £660 billion"

to determine for many countries whether the currency is devalued or to define macro-economic policy or set foreign policy (along with the US government). Such was the case when Egypt joined US forces in the Gulf and was immediately awarded a one-quarter reduction in debt, unachieved by any other nation.'

The only way out of the debt, poverty and environmental destruction quagmire is planned action on a global scale; but this action is thwarted by the existing capitalist global institutions.

A few facts indicate the scale of the problem:

- We are within a few years of losing 15-25 per cent of the total of earth's biodiversity, but no one really knows what this really means in terms of the number of species lost, because no one has any real idea of the number of species. In the last five years more than 300 new fish species have been identified in the Amazon region alone.

- Harvard biologists estimate that 50 species are being driven to extinction every day. Other experts put the figures much higher. Even on a conservative estimate 20,000 species are wiped out annually.

- Probably as many as one fifth of terrestrial plants are threatened, and in the US about 3000 native plants are considered in short-term danger of disappearing altogether.
- The scenario for the next couple of decades in the Latin American rain forests ranges for a best case loss of 15 per cent of total area, to a worst case of a terrifying two thirds.

Species have always been lost in the natural process of evolution. But scientists believe that the natural rate is now

exceeded by a factor of 40,000.

For example, 'green revolution' agriculture has forced peasant cultivators to abandon farming with self-reproduced seeds which were the result of thousands of years of natural evolution, and replace them with genetically identical and vulnerable standard varieties.

Homogenised global thinking and destruction of diversity is nowhere more apparent than in the area of so-called development economics, in which it is considered that all economies must pass through the same stages on a predetermined path of economic growth. In this process there is simply no account of history, of culture, of nature, which is, at best, there to be tamed or exploited.

The development professionals in places like the World Bank are highly skilled in thinking globally and experts at acting locally, forcing people to conform to their own view. In doing so they do not just homogenise space, they telescope time as well.

The negative implications of homogenised global thinking are also revealed in cultural, intellectual and linguistic practice through the use of collective nouns like 'humans' and particularly the term 'we', as in 'we are destroying our forests', a familiar phrase of many bureaucrats, UN commissions and moralists.

'We' are almost never responsible for these crimes, and using this terminology only makes it harder to see exactly which people and which institutions are the real perpetrators.

So long as the ideology and practice of the so-called free-market system prevails without being contested, the fate of the world hangs in the balance.

What's happening to the Sandinistas?

THE FSLN is suffering from a process of political disorientation that began long before the electoral defeat in 1990 and has worsened since then. Here VICTOR PRISMA attempts to answer this question, casting a spotlight on the weaknesses of FSLN policy both before and after the electoral defeat.

Tensions inside the FSLN have mounted as a result of conflicting social interests which have not been overcome in policies that can appeal to the masses and reorientate the FSLN itself. This has meant that the efforts of social movements to defend their gains against the Chamorro government have been thwarted, leading to a restoration of capitalist political dominance.

State interests

The ten years of FSLN rule saw an important political evolution: from an authentic revolution at the beginning, to a situation where state interests prevailed over popular interests.

The erosion of the social base of the revolution, provoked by the war and the economic crisis, favoured a change in the balance of forces which led to the electoral defeat of the FSLN in 1990. A rightist coalition (UNO) took power. Shocked by its defeat, the Sandinista leadership launched an appeal to defend the conquests of the revolution with the hope of preserving its gains.

But what gains were there to defend? There were mainly of an institutional political character; first, the constitution and the institutions; the army and the property distributed by the Sandinista government – the agrarian reform – and the property acquired by the FSLN itself.

Participation

No mention was made of the need to defend the Sandinistas' economic model nor the social policies, and still less the influence, not to mention the participation, of the people in economic management.

Why? Because the model was already worn out, and by 1988 replaced by an adjustment policy strongly marked by monetarism.

Social policies decreased together with the regulating role of the state. Popular participation in decision making had been very weak – something recognised by Daniel Ortega himself in an interview published in 1991, when he said the policies which would have been followed by the FSLN if it had won the elections would not have been very different to those pursued by the new government, except for 'social sensibility'.

The FSLN presents the revolutionary heritage only in institutional terms. Thus: 'We obtained a national state, a constitution, a democratic, parliamentary framework and an army'. Most of these did not exist before, and that is why they are identified with the gains of the revolution.

For domestic and international politi-



Not sure what Chamorro holds

cal reasons the new government ended up accepting this institutional framework.

Counter-revolutionary

Because of this, the counter-revolutionary character of the government was not clear to the Sandinista leadership.

The term 'counter-revolutionary' was reserved only for the far-right 'Somozistas'. The government was described as being in the centre and the FSLN entered into negotiations with it.

More than eleven meetings have been held between the FSLN and the government since 1990, including eight focusing on social conflict. Agreements have been forged on the executive, the army and the economy. Without this, thought the FSLN, stability would be jeopardised; and the FSLN would not gain from instability and crisis, even if came back into government.

On the basis of these agreements, a centre group was formed in the FSLN representing a certain continuity with the post-1988 FSLN positions; an orthodox economic vision, with social considerations taking a back seat to state interests, and a search for stability and development in alliance with certain sectors of the bourgeoisie.

Struggle

After the electoral defeat the FSLN did not manage to develop a strategy which could appeal to the masses in a framework of democratic political struggle.

Before 1990 the revolutionary project was already in crisis; its image was completely damaged after the adoption of monetarist measures. But the six months after the electoral defeat were particularly chaotic.

Even if the FSLN leadership did not seem to be directly threatened, the authority of its leaders appeared to be diminished as a result of the scale of the

defeat and lack of political vision. A feeling of mistrust, mixed with declining authority and credibility, arose concerning a leadership that once was considered infallible.

The party was full of rumours about the effects of the electoral avalanche, revealing a deep malaise that had been obscured by party discipline.

Subsequently, the Front, attached to a fetishistic conception of power, attempted to cling onto its institutional positions to the detriment of an analysis of the socio-economic forces at work.

Stabilisation

The FSLN subordinated defence and articulation of the material interests of its mass base among the poor to a scheme for political stabilisation of the country.

Thus, the FSLN found itself politically disarmed and increasingly dependent firstly on conservative political stabilisation and then, to preserve that, on the neo-liberal economic policies of the government.

This was clear in the FSLN's support for privatisation, which placed the unions and social organisations in a position of having to negotiate from a defensive position, and in its disorientation in face of state restructuring and deregulation of the economy.

The leadership thought it could manoeuvre in the upper circles and contain the capitalist restoration process. The slogan 'govern from below' was only an empty compensation for the rank and file, upset by defeat after so many sacrifices.

Nothing stood in the way of the rapid economic restructuring which restored the power and the rights of the strongest sections of the employing class.

All social roles were changed; a high level of conservatism and co-option of personnel was introduced into the army, the police, state functionaries and even the FSLN itself, as well as in its satellite

organisations.

The state created by the revolution with the aim of assuring a certain class equilibrium which the FSLN also intended to use to preserve the revolutions gains, is leaking from all sides. Business, the preservation of certain places in the political system, the co-option of functionaries, the development of the market, and the liberalisation of the economy have gradually reduced the progressive and regulatory aspects of the state.

The free market needs the establishment of order and the maintenance of social hierarchy that it is now creating.

A bourgeoisie is being reformed, and the FSLN is tied to this process at several levels.

Intermediary

These are the factors which have led the FSLN into a situation where it plays the role of intermediary between different interest groups within the framework of capitalist restoration.

In the absence of an overall strategy, the organisation tends to function as a feudal network of interest groups with an essentially corporatist dynamic.

It is perfectly possible that the sum total of the Sandinista revolution will be the refounding of the national state and the political system, but this means the restoration of the old class society.

The FSLN can become a bureaucratized party in which corporatist dynamics are predominant. But it can also be renewed as a party that will be an indispensable component of social equality and participation in the political system that it will create and continue to develop.

The above is edited from an article which first appeared in International Viewpoint, fortnightly magazine of the Fourth International.

Craziness to order

Single White Female

Starring Bridget Fonda, Jennifer Jason Leigh

Reviewed by Louise Whittle

ALISON JONES (Fonda), a young, successful middle class woman advertises in the personal column for a flatmate, following a fight with her live-in boyfriend. A number of women apply, all polite, pleasant white women, but all with a different stereotypical quirk which puts Alison off.

She eventually settles for a seemingly 'stable' woman who calls herself Hedra (Leigh). Unfortunately seeing is not believing.

Hedra quickly becomes dependant upon Alison and tries to disguise her needs by sublimating them into over-protection from 'outside forces'.

When Alison is sexually assaulted by her boss, Hedra defends her more fiercely than Alison herself was prepared to. Alison, has mixed feelings about this defence: 'I hope you never get angry with me, Heddie'.

However, it is when Alison is re-united with her boyfriend that Hedra's insecurities spill over into murderous action. She drops any pretence at being anything other than completely crazy. The film then degenerates rapidly into a slasher movie.

Hedra had a twin who she says was still-born, but who, we later find out, died in a drowning accident. The implication is clearly that this accident is centrally responsible for her later 'madness'.

This film could have been a good suspense film but fails. Instead it collapses into ridiculous plot twists and a hopelessly simplistic view of mental illness.

These types of 'psychological' (Hollywood standard) films are becoming very popular; from Fatal Attraction, The Hand that Rocks the Cradle and Cape Fear to Single White Female. All share some essentially flawed central tenets - the helpless crazy person, the blamelessness of society, the sanctity of the family unit.

They also tend to share (for the purposes of stringing out the very thin story line) a bizarre view of how hard it is to kill a 'crazy' person. Witness the resurrection of Glenn Close in Fatal Attraction after apparently drowning. A similarly astonishing resilience is demonstrated by Hedra in Single White Female.

The few moments of genuine suspense, the very good acting and the excellent suspense-thriller potential are all sadly suffocated by the retreat into the 'safe' formula of a psychological thriller.

The great disappointment is that very few mainstream directors seem willing to break out of the stranglehold that Hollywood maintains over what a 'successful' plot can be.



Palestinian women outside the house where three have just been killed

Victims of Zionist terror

Making Women Talk - the interrogation of Palestinian Women Detainees

Written by Theresa Thornhill
Published by Lawyers for Palestinian Human Rights. Price £5.99

Reviewed by Terry Conway

MAKING Women Talk doesn't make cosy bed-time reading. My apprehension that within this thin volume I would find graphic descriptions of the agony and anguish endured by women involved in the Intifada proved correct.

The book outlines the legal framework within which security of-

fences are tried, and catalogues the interrogation methods, often using extensive quotes from the women themselves.

It comments on the attitudes of the military personnel involved to the women in their custody. The humiliation of sexual harassment, the degradation of courts in which your interpreter is one of the enemy, the grief born of miscarriage as a result of torture are powerfully depicted and damned on these pages.

Thornhill analyses the findings of the Landau commission, set up by the Israeli government in 1987 to investigate the methods of the security services in dealing with 'terrorist' offences following revelations of obstruction of a previous inquiry into a summary execution by security forces of two Palestinians involved in a hi-jacking.

She is damning in her judgement of this report, which concluded that the use of psychological and 'moderate physical' pressure of those suspected of hostile terrorist activity was not only necessary but permissible under the law as it

stood.

She points out that the published recommendations of the report amount to an acceptance that state security can only be maintained if the judiciary countenances convictions based purely on confession evidence obtained by the use of torture, as well as alluding to the sinister role of a secret appendix which outlines a code of guidelines of precisely what is and is not permitted - or perhaps it should read what can and can't be got away with!

The weakness of the text is not mainly that it is couched within a legalistic framework - indeed the cataloguing of Israel's many breaches of the Geneva Convention is a powerful part of the argument - but the fact that its conclusion peters out into insisting that the only appropriate action for readers of the book is international lobbying.

Thornhill's book can provide inspiration and ammunition to anyone who supports the cause of the Palestinian people. Don't be bound by her conclusions but read the book.

Murdoch methods take over at Mirror

By an NUJ member

The Daily Mirror - Britain's only mass circulation pro-Labour newspaper - is in deep crisis following the sacking of over 100 production journalists at its London head office. Fears are also growing that newly-appointed rightwing bosses herald a marked change in political direction.

All editorial staff - including members of both the National Union of Journalists and the recent rightwing breakaway British Association of Journalists, and those not in either - were holding a consultative ballot on industrial action as Socialist Outlook went to press.

Problems started with the recent installation of David Montgomery, a man schooled at Rupert Murdoch's News International, as chief executive of Mirror Group Newspaper. Ulster Unionist Montgomery has a long union-busting track record. After the subsequent management reshuffle, two of MGN's three main titles are now edited by ex-Murdoch men.

MGN publications, which also include the Sunday Mirror, the People, Sporting Life and

Scotland's Daily Record and Sunday Mail, have stepped up campaigning journalism following the death of their crooked proprietor, former Labour MP Robert Maxwell, late last year.

But the company is now controlled by banks out to recoup some of the millions of pounds Maxwell owed. Montgomery's brief is to increase profitability and prepare a future sell-off.

Some 100 freelancers working on the Mirror have been sacked by its new editor, David Banks, with no warning and no pay-off as they turned up for work one morning.

While these journalists are described as casuals, in most cases, the word is extremely misleading. Many have worked on the paper full time for several years.

'Casual shifts' are traditional on national newspapers. It is a good way for the bosses to try out young journalists from local papers and arrange holiday and sickness cover.

For established hacks, it is a chance to make £80-£100, cash in hand, editing sports pages on the Sundays. While such 'moonlighting' is technically against the NUJ rulebook, the proscription was all but unen-

forceable.

With widespread recruitment freezes and severe financial cutbacks over the last few years, the practice has mushroomed, and nowhere more so than Mirror Group. For many journalists made redundant in the recession, shifts were an obvious lifeline.

But casual workers have virtually no legal rights. While the money is relatively good, there is no holiday entitlement or even sickness cover.

And of course, if the boss doesn't like your face, you're simply not invited back. Comparisons with building workers or the offshore sector are not unfair.

There is also a political dimension to the Mirror crisis. Editorials have stressed that the paper would continue to back Labour at election times. However, an unnamed MGN management source quoted in the Financial Times said that the paper would carry less "ranting propaganda" and concentrate instead "on issues of real concern to readers, like mortgages and other consumer issues".

The Mirror's star columnist Paul Foot - an SWP member and Britain's most widely-read



revolutionary socialist journalist - has rightly remarked: "I'm amazed at how unconcerned the Left is." Even Neil Kinnock, the former Labour Party leader, has publicly commended the dismissed workers, while John Smith's office said that he was

"anxious about the validity of the assurances given about the political stance of the paper." As Foot concluded: "The future of the papers depend on how much workers here can stand up and assert their independence against this management."

ANC and the National Party Riding into the sunset together?

By Charlie van Gelderen

THE CURRENT which has carried South African CP leader Joe Slovo away from Marxism (albeit in its debauched Stalinist form) has become an avalanche.

The president of the SACP has finally abandoned the struggle for a democratic South Africa, based on majority rule, as enshrined in the ANC's Freedom Charter.

In an article in the current issue of *African Communist* he proposed what he terms 'a short-term solution to South Africa's problems'. He says that since no side has won the struggle for power during the long years of open confrontation, neither side can expect surrender at the negotiating table.

Going nowhere

But this does not draw him to the conclusion that revolutionary marxists drew long ago - that negotiations *per se* would get the liberation struggle nowhere - but to the conclusion that compromise is inevitable.

He goes even further. There should be no question of dismantling the apartheid state. Civil servants, including police and army officers should be given guarantees that they would keep their jobs in a post-apartheid (sic) South Africa, and if necessary be granted amnesties.

In an interview in the *Independent* (30 October) he says: 'I'm not pandering to white people ... I am acting in the interests of a lasting democratic transformation because the new fledgling democracy, if it emerges, will face a period of inordinate social and economic problems which will require the broadest national effort to resolve.'

'...most important, within the ambit of basic democratic principles we should try to min-

imise those forces which could provide the potential for right-wing destabilisation and sabotage, what I call counter-revolution.'

'...even if the ANC gets a 60 or 70 per cent majority in the first constitutional election, it will achieve political office but will not really achieve control over the essentials of the state framework or the state operators. The civil service will; be exactly the same the day after, the same with the judiciary ... the army ... the police force and so on.'

Stages

So now we know what Slovo's theory of achieving socialism in stages really means (he still says he thinks socialism is the 'only sensible form of human existence'). The first stage means no socialism at all. Everything stays just the same with a few black faces in the cabinet and, maybe, a dozen or so black generals in the police and army.

The mineowners and finance capital will still be in control of the economy, white farmers will still dominate the ownership of land.

'We're not talking of equality' says Joe Slovo 'but we are talking of meaningful participation'.

Slovo's line has now been endorsed by the ANC leadership at its mid-October summit, which laid the basis for the so-called *Strategic Perspective*.

It suggests that the question of job security, pensions and a general amnesty (for civil servants and military personnel who have kept the wheels of apartheid oiled) may need to form part of a negotiated settlement.

National unity

It also suggests that a government of national unity may be necessary after the adoption of

a constitution 'in which the ANC and the (ruling) National Party are the main players.'

This policy of capitulation has been scathingly attacked by Pallo Jordan, a member of the ANC National Executive Committee.

In an article entitled *Happy Trail to you, or Riding into the Sunset together?*, he argues that long-held ANC goals aim for not only for the creation of a democratic state but also for the dismemberment of the racist state.

He says: 'It is these organs of white minority state power that we are now being told should

Communist Party banners on ANC demo: Slovo shows what 'stages' theory really means



not be tampered with to enable the liberation movement and the regime to ride blissfully into the sunset together.

'We have to keep in place a public service that has no interest in serving the mass of the oppressed who are the ANC's constituency; keeping in place a public service that will do everything to undermine the

democratic government; and keep under arms the agency that can ensure the democratic state can touch the public service when its disloyalty is uncovered.'

'A national liberation movement that did this would not be riding into the sunset, it would be building its own funeral pyre.'

Air controllers mount challenge to Yeltsin



Wanting punch-up: Yeltsin

BORIS Yeltsin's first major clash with organised working class resistance seems likely to begin on December 1 with an all-out strike by air traffic controllers.

57 out of 130 regional air traffic control centres have voted to join the dispute, which is decisive for the future survival of the union: the controllers' union federation is regarded as second only to the Russian miners in its level of organisation.

Though relatively well-paid by Russian standards, controllers' wages have been hit by Yeltsin's 2,000 per cent inflation, and they are demanding parity with their counterparts in the west.

Another grievance is the victimisation of three leaders of the union's

short-lived strike at 20 centres on August 15. Negotiators have refused to back down from their demand that legal proceedings against those who struck in August.

On November 20 their threatened indefinite strike was declared illegal by Russia's procurator general.

Yeltsin's government, perhaps taking a leaf out of Ronald Reagan's book and recalling his clash with PATCO, is determined to show its credentials as a union-buster to the western bankers.

It has said it will use members of the armed forces to break the strike; but these lack the technical skills to operate a complex civilian service. If they take over, it will not just be Yeltsin who is flying into trouble.

Germany Bans on Nazis won't work

By Paul Clarke

LESS THAN two weeks after 300,000 people marched against racism, three Turkish people, two women and a young girl, were murdered on 23 November by Nazi thugs when their flats were burnt down in Moelln in northern Germany.

In response the German government banned the tiny Nazi Nationalist Front, and warned of tougher action against far-right groups.

The murders came on the same weekend as street fighting between Nazis and left wing protestors in Berlin and East Germany, which resulted in one person being stabbed to death.

The flats in which the three Turkish women were in one of several buildings throughout the city set on fire by the Nazis.

Since the burning down of an immigrant hostel in Rostock in August, far from stopping, attacks on immigrants and asylum seekers have increased. Virtually every night there is news of more attacks throughout Germany.

The Nazis are beginning to build a mass base amongst youth, especially

in the East. But bans won't stop them, because legal action won't deal with the root causes of the Nazi surge.

Worse, bans, and the statement by Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters in favour of depriving far-rightists of their vote and civil liberties, threaten repressive laws which will be used against the left and the workers movement.

Already the police are aiming their main fire at squatters and 'left extremists'.

The social basis of racism is the vast growth of unemployment in the ex-GDR, and the rise in unemployment and insecurity throughout the country. At the same time, the leaders of both major political parties, the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, have capitulated to racist arguments, agreeing to immigrants and asylum seekers are the 'problem'.

Germany of course does have migrants from war and economic catastrophe in the eastern bloc pressing on its borders. It is predictable that racist groups would attempt to use this to build support.

But the wanton destruction of the industries of the former GDR, to the benefit of West German capital, and the 25 per cent unemployment this has

caused, gives the Nazis the ability to build a mass base.

Fighting fascism means building mass labour movement action against the Nazis, and winning the argument against racism. It will be exceedingly difficult to do that without making a political fight against unemployment, the destruction of social welfare services and the other effects of the crisis in the ex-GDR.

Self-defence against racist attacks and building groups to guard immigrant hostels is of course a vital necessity, and something which the whole of the German far left supports.

But in the German far left, 'autonomist' semi-anarchist groups have a big weight. But their line of simple street fights with the fascists won't win the fight for an alternative programme in the labour movement.

● *Dutch nazi skinheads have confessed to beating to death a 53-year old German man in Wuppertal because they believed he was a Jew. After a row in a restaurant in which he called them Nazi pigs, they beat him to death, doused his body with alcohol and set fire to him, before dumping his body on the Dutch-German border near Venlo.*

Revolutionary Christmas Presents from Red Repro

Framed photos of revolutionary leaders. Choice of Kollantai, Trotsky, Marx and Engels. 5" X 8" (£4) or 12" X 16" (£10).

T-Shirts

Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Fourth International, Intifada (£8 each)

Cancel the Debt, Unshackle the Unions (£6 each)

Also

Tapes of revolutionary songs from France (£5) and Italy (£4)

Send to Red Repro, Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU. Please add £1.25 for each order post and packing.

Defeat the Child Support Act! Tories target single mums

By Marian Brain

THE CHILD Support Act could be more aptly called the Treasury Support Act. Coming in to force in April 1993, it aims to force 'absent fathers' to pay maintenance to mothers on benefit. Far from being a progressive piece of legislation it is viciously racist, sexist and anti-working class.

The key aim of the Act, like so many pieces of Tory legislation, to force the working class to pay another slice of the cost of the capitalist crisis. Under

the guise of 'helping women' the Tories aim to save money, and also bolster their ideal of the family; in particular that the state should have no role or responsibility in the care and financing of children.

Even before the Act comes into force, the government is attempting to track down 'absent fathers' and force them to pay maintenance, even when neither the mother or child wants this contact.

They are not concerned if fathers are driven down below Income Support level. They do not care if this ensures that the mother and children of his

second family are impoverished.

The Treasury, not mothers, will pocket all the money paid to women on Income Support; it will also pocket part of what is paid to mothers on Family Credit, Disability Working Allowance and student grant/loans.

DSS officers are already terrorising single mothers to name the father, demanding to know his whereabouts, asking for photos, threatening to cut off their benefit if they do not co-operate. This is illegal. We must stop their illegality now, and in doing so make the Act unworkable when it comes into force, just as we did with the Poll Tax.

From 1993 single mothers on grants or benefits will be fined £8.49 a week for refusing to give information about the father. This could propel women into having forcible contact with fathers even if they are violent and precipitate custody battles, especially for lesbian mothers.

It will give racist, sexist and homophobic DSS officers enormous discretionary powers. The Act will pressurise women into taking low-paid or illegal work even where it makes them poorer, rather than risk their



Under the Tories the kids aren't alright

safety or children in unwanted contact with fathers.

It is thus an attack on the rights of single mothers, the right to unhindered state benefits. The Child Support Agency is establishing computerised records on absent fathers' incomes, taxation and housing from Inland revenue and local authorities.

This has already involved walking into their workplaces and questioning employers and co-workers. The Act targets Black families, for almost half Afro-Caribbean families are headed by single mothers; and although it is often kept quiet, there are many single Asian mothers now.

Men of African, Asian and Caribbean descent are more likely to be unemployed, on lower wages, and supporting more dependents than

white men and therefore will be harder hit. And the courts might use 'failure to maintain' as grounds for deportation.

Key tasks in the campaign against the Act include the following:

- Affiliate labour movement and campaign organisations to the Campaign against the Child Support Act
- Circulate material from the campaign
- Report all DSS harassment and illegalities
- Press local authorities to adopt a policy of non-cooperation with the Act
- Get trade unions to force employers not to co-operate with the Act.

To contact the campaign write to:
PO Box 287, London NW6 5QU.
Phone 071-837 7509.

Burnsalls demo boosts strikers

By Bob Smith

The 19 workers, mainly Punjabi women, on strike at Burnsalls electroplating plant in Smethwick, led 500 people on a protest march past the plant last Saturday. The strikers are fighting very low wages, appallingly unsafe working conditions, and a 19th Century, petty dictatorial, management regime.

Bill Smith, local organiser of the strikers' union GMB, declared the union's unequivocal support for its striking members. Avtar Jouhl, Indian Workers Association president, called for political and financial support for the strikers and described the dreadful bullying and victimisation they had suffered.

Lynn Jones, Labour MP for Selly Oak, brought messages of support from Tony Benn and many other Labour MPs. Mike Willis, NUM executive, stated that it was essential that disputes like Burnsalls and the miners were linked, and that the TUC took effective action to support them.

Joe Quigley, the GMB official responsible for the strike, argued it was essential to bring down the Tory government, and commit the next labour government to repeal all anti-trade union laws, as well as giving real power to industrial tribunals and the Health and Safety executive. Noel McCreavy, TGWU convenor at Longbridge, also spoke.

The Burnsalls strike is against conditions suffered by hundreds of thousands of workers in small, low-paid factories run by unscrupulous employers.

It has many parallels with the historic strikes at Grunwicks, Mansfield Hosiery and Imperial Typewriters. The TGWU and GMB are launching a joint campaign to unionise isolated and low-paid workplaces; Burnsalls is crucial for the credibility of their campaign, in the West Midlands at least.

For donations and speakers contact Danny Parry or Joe Quigley, 021-550-4888.

Anne-Marie Sweeney, of the Oxford Womens Film Collective, is making a one-hour film about the dispute for Channel 4.

Lambeth strike against racism

By expelled Labour Councillor Steve French

Thirty one Lambeth pay section workers have been on all-out strike for the last month. This is the culmination of a 30 month-long gradings dispute.

Five white officers were regraded to a higher scale than the thirty one predominantly black workers who do the same job. The council leadership and management have refused to negotiate. Their solution is to propose that the white officers be downgraded!

Whilst refusing to entertain NALGO's demand for talks, the council leadership called in the Greater London Employers Association (GLEA) hoping to impose their judgement. However, the GLEA offered full settlement of the claim as a legitimate option for the council to adopt.

This was the only proposal which could have settled this

dispute, but having looked to the GLEA for help they rejected this unfavourable - for them - option. The director of finance hasn't even sent his promised letter of apology to the thirty one, who he accepts have been 'unfairly treated'.

Now Chief Executive Herman Ouseley has found employment as boss of the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) whilst overseeing institutional racism within Lambeth council.

The strike is solid and the workers will now argue for an escalation of action across the council. Meanwhile the Borough faces £25 million in cuts but the Council leadership prefers to face down this strike rather than ally with the workers in their inevitable struggle against cuts.

Messages of support and requests for speakers should be sent to Lambeth NALGO 6a Acre Lane, Brixton SW2.

Construction Safety Campaign and the Tory Lord How much is human life worth, Viscount Ullswater?

By Dave Osler

CONSTRUCTION is easily the most dangerous industry in Britain. Around 130 workers are killed on site every year, with hundreds more injured, often seriously. An additional 4,000 die industrial diseases such as emphysema and asbestosis. Even on official Health and Safety Executive figures, the carnage is at a terrifying all time high.

HSE concedes 70 per cent of deaths and injuries are preventable. But no employer has ever been jailed for causing death, or serious injury through their negligence. Indeed, management face prosecution in less than one per cent of all incidents involving construction site deaths.

Last week, the rank-and-file based Construction Safety Campaign lobbied parliament to draw attention to a situation which, in the words of Scottish Labour MP Sam Galbraith, amounts to an annual Piper Alpha disaster.

All of which makes the comments of employment minister Viscount Ullswater - issued as press release just before the protest - all the more disgraceful. I can do nothing better than quote verbatim:

'Health and safety legislation should not impose a burden out of proportion to its benefits, employment minister Viscount Ullswater said today.

Speaking at the Transmanche-Link Bi-National Health and Safety Seminar in Ashford, Kent, Viscount Ullswater said:

'We must recognise the need to strike a balance between ensuring health and safety at work and over-regulation, which has the potential to stifle growth.'

Turning his attention to the construction industry, the Viscount - educated Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge and therefore unlikely ever to have risked his life on a building site himself - adds helpfully: 'Experience has shown that on sites where health and safety is properly managed, and the design, planning and construction

phases are also properly integrated, accidents can be avoided. Such sites may also enjoy a payback in profitability because of their organised approach to health management: accidents cost money.'

Accidents cost money. There you have the bosses' concerns in a nutshell. In the press release, the phrase is both underlined and printed in bold. Accidents actually cost lives, your lordship.

'Excessive regulation is not funny, whatever its source. It damages jobs and leaves no-one better off ... recovery will not be assisted by imposing unnecessary burdens. My job is to ensure that no legislation imposes a burden out of proportion to its benefit.'

The seminar's sponsors, incidentally, were the construction consortium currently engaged in building the Channel Tunnel. The project has claimed at least ten lives so far. God forbid TML should be overburdened with 'excessive regulation'.

300 Club

More fun than Sun bingo!

For just £5 a month you get the chance to win £50 in our monthly draw. We give better odds than the football pools and we're a more deserving cause than Littlewoods!

Yes, count me in!

My bank
 Bank address
 My full name
 My bank sorting code My account number
 My address
 Please pay to the Co-operative bank PLC 78/80 Cornhill, London EC3V 3NJ (sorting code 08-02-28) for the account of Socialist Outlook Supporters fund (account number 70186297) the sum of: (in words) (in figures)
 on the day of (month) 1992
 and thereafter every month until countermanded by me in writing.
 Signed Date
 Please complete and return to Socialist Outlook, PO Box 1109, London N4 2UU.
 Do not send directly to your bank.

socialist OUTLOOK

It's not just the Tories...

It's a right royal rip-off



Getting on like a house on fire: Queen and Emir of Kuwait exchange tax-deductible



Help the homeless - got £60 million for a cup of tea Guv?

THE TAXPAYER is picking up the £60 million tab for the fire at Windsor Castle. In return, the Queen and Prince of Wales are to start paying tax on their private income from next year, and £900,000-worth of hand-outs to eight minor royals will be axed. Big deal.

Making the boss of a caste of state-supported hereditary billionaires Britain's head of state is not just a bad joke. It is a serious restraint on democracy itself. The monarch is an integral part of the bourgeois state which can appoint and dismiss governments at will.

All socialists should be unconditional republicans by definition. We argue for a democratic socialist republic - a workers' state. But we recognise that even a republic on the basis of capitalism would still be a step forward for democracy.

Even the Queen's belated and doubtless grudging conces-

sions are an absolute con. She is reportedly trying to make out that her taxable wealth is a mere £50 million, and that after deducting 'legitimate business expenses', it will take four or five years even to repay the latest handout. Bollocks, Ma'am.

The Queen is the richest woman in the world, with the royal fortune widely estimated at £6000-7000 million. Phillip Hall, a leading authority on royal finances, estimates the Queen has investments worth £330 million, yielding £19 million a year.

Sandringham and Balmoral castles are worth another £100 million, and the royals cop £56

million a year in taxpayers' dosh annually.

Then there is the annual £3 million revenue from the Duchy of Lancaster, not to mention the antiques, jewels, racehorses and art collections, and an ocean-going liner passed off as 'the royal yacht'. All this has been tax-free since 1937.

Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes last year tabled a bill calling on the Queen to pay tax. Even thoroughly blue-blooded Tory Michael Ancram MP - heir to the Marquess of Lothian and married to the Duke of Norfolk's daughter - has demanded such a change. Not a dickie

bird from the Labour front bench.

Major's announcement of the latest measures came in response to a planted question from Labour leader John Smith. It was the sort of sycophancy normally displayed by backbench Tory toadies out to curry favour with the whips.

The Queen last week remarked that 1992 had been an 'annus horribilis', or horrible year. Not half as horribilis as 1917 was for the Romanovs, your Majesty. Anyone know the Latin for 'year of revolution'?