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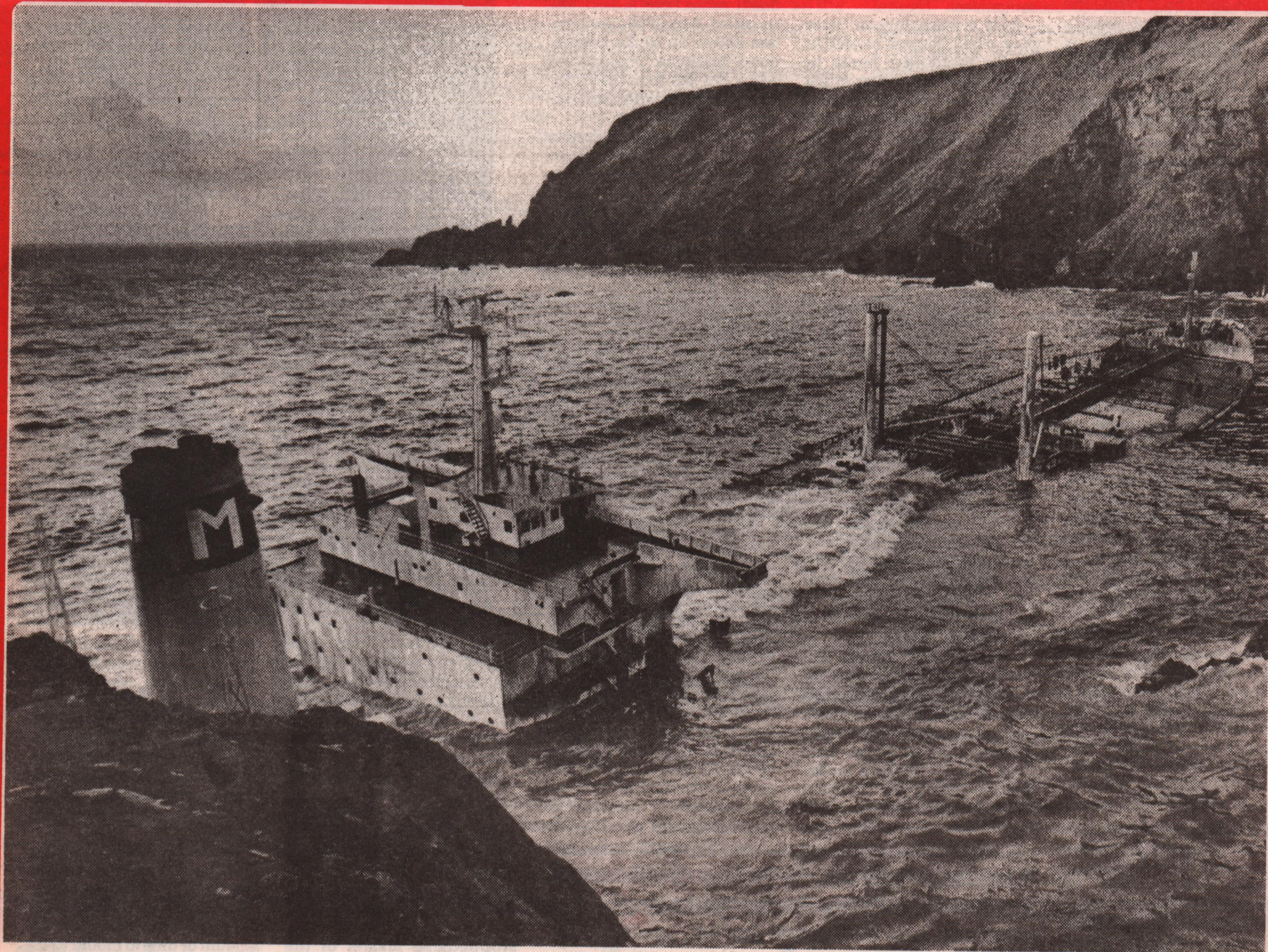
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socialist **OUTLOOK**



Capitalism

fouls

**Crude logic of tanker
profiteers - see p2**

things up

Crude logic of tanker profiteers

By Dave Osler

OIL TANKERS and the free market don't mix. While the exact cause of last week's disaster in the Shetlands is yet unknown, the big picture is clear.

Multinational oil giants have deliberately run down their fleets, chartering vessels voyage-by-voyage on the spot market, centred on London and Oslo.

But a boom in tanker building after the oil shocks of the mid-seventies has created both an ageing world fleet and substantial overcapacity, driving down freight rates and encouraging owners to cut every corner they can.

Vessels are 'flagged out' - re-registered in low tax countries, where safety standards are only loosely enforced. Cheap third world and East European ratings are hired, despite inability to speak the same language as officers. Some are untrained; certification is available for cash on the back streets of port towns.

Owners even argue returns are so low it is uneconomical to invest in new vessels. With insurance companies picking up the tab for any spills, operators have every incentive to run rustbuckets into the ground - sometimes literally. At the current rate of scrapping, the present world tanker fleet would last another 200 years.

Tragedy

The tanker involved in last week's tragedy, Liberian-registered but American-owned and crewed by Filipinos, Greeks and Poles, illustrates many of these trends. In January 1992, the Braer's crew wrote to the International Transport Workers Federation claiming that they were underpaid and the ship was inadequately manned.

Press attempts to proclaim beneficial owner B+H Maritime Services as 'a quality operator' are simply 'bollocks', a senior shipping journalist who wrote just such a story told *Socialist Outlook*. It even

sub-contracts responsibility for running many of its ships to specialist ship management companies.

B+H is essentially an 'asset play' outfit, formed to cash in on the temporary boom in secondhand ship prices in the late eighties. The main cause of the bull market was Norway's recently abolished K/S system, which gave extensive tax breaks for purchasers of secondhand shipping. Syndicates of small investors - 'dentists', as the in-joke went - rushed to buy up sometimes poor quality vessels, often from Greek owners.

Investors

Norwegian and US investors used B+H to raise money on the New York stock exchange to buy ships, work them at a profit, and sell up at the top of the market. But prices have now crashed. B+H are losing money almost as fast as the Braer is losing crude.

The Braer was working for US oil company Ultramar, which reacted to the incident by promptly arresting a B+H ship discharging at one of its refineries as security for its lost oil.

'Independent' owners like B+H own 64 per cent of the world tanker fleet. Oil companies control 18 per cent, with state oil and shipping concerns holding a further 18 per cent. Over half the world's tanker fleet, including the 1975-built Braer, is over fifteen years old. Some 1,563 vessels of this type

There has been much media hype about double hulls - providing two skins for additional protection. Indeed, the so-called MARPOL convention drawn up by the International Maritime Organisation will make this compulsory for all new tankers after July this year.

Many experts fear double hulls are themselves dangerous. Norwegian shipbrokers Fearnleys - a top name in the sector - warned last year: 'Double hull tankers up to medium size have proved to be safe to operate. But it is important to be aware that crackings increase with ship size.'

Modern tankers are generally massive. At 85,000 dwt (deadweight tons, a measurement of carrying capacity), the Braer is medium-sized compared to 240,000-plus dwt VLCCs (very large crude carriers) and 330,000-plus dwt ULCCs (ultra large crude carriers).

Double hulls, Fearnleys added, will protect against cargo tank holing only at low speed. And the risk of leakage into void spaces increases the chance of catastrophic explosions.

Authoritative

An authoritative comparative study of 17 different tanker designs commissioned by the US government in 1991 came out for double hulls, but concluded: 'Knowledge regarding the precise cir-

'Knowledge regarding the precise circumstances and structural effects of actual tank vessel accidents is so inadequate that any assessment of design alternatives will produce results that are dependent on the chosen assumptions and accident criteria - artificial rather than actual criteria.'

still in service were built in or before 1977; 464 were over twenty years old, exceeding the usual maximum design life of a modern vessel.

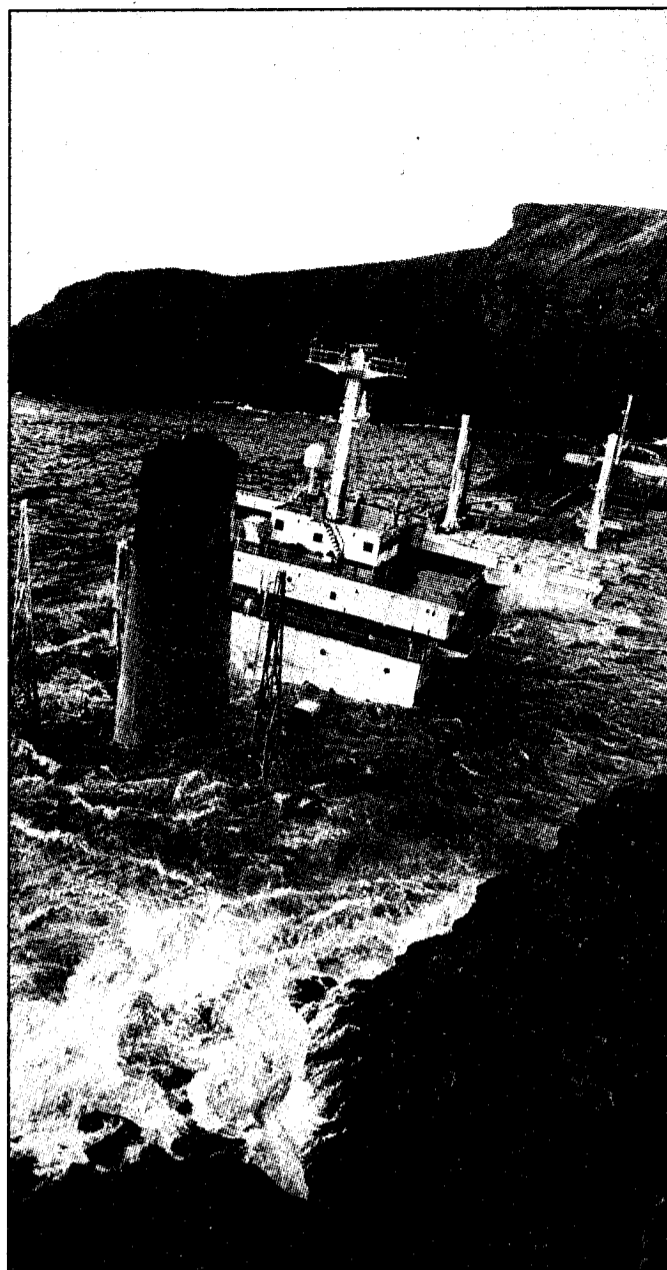
stances and structural effects of actual tank vessel accidents is so inadequate that any assessment of design alternatives will produce results that are dependent on the chosen assumptions and accident criteria - artificial rather than actual criteria.'

Robust

Modern tank vessels are less robust than their predecessors, it goes on: 'Existing design standards should be strengthened to ensure proper corrosion protection, dimensions of structural members and use of high-tensile steel.'

'Furthermore, naval architects traditionally have not designed tank vessels ... to withstand collisions and groundings. Design based on the possibility of accidents, a practice common in many industries, should be considered for tank vessels.'

The Braer's machinery



reportedly failed after water got into its fuel tanks. There is considerable mystery as to how this happened. Unscrupulous suppliers commonly contaminate fuel to increase profit.

So what should the left be saying? As long as it is necessary to move cargo by sea, disasters will inevitably happen. Shipping is unavoidably a dangerous game. An estimated 80 per cent of maritime accidents are down to human error. Little could have stopped the master of the Exxon Valdez being drunk on duty.

But it is necessary to rigidly enforce safety, and hang the expense. Commendably, French oil giant Elf Aquitaine unilaterally implements its own tight safety vetting procedure for chartered vessels in place of the standard industry formula.

There must be adequate provision of rescue services. Yet many salvors have gone out of business in the last decade as the provision of what will always be a stand-by service has proved unprofitable.

Astonishingly, the UK now has no dedicated salvage tugs, and relies on smaller harbour tugs like the one which eventually reached the Braer. Substantial areas of world searoutes are simply no longer covered.

Independent

An independent survey last year concluded: 'Unless remedial action is taken, there will be further decline in the global availability of salvage resources.'

This is a clear case of market failure best remedied by state

intervention. The French government stations two large salvage tugs, Abeille Languedoc and Flandre, off its north-west coast; South Africa maintains two of the world's largest salvage units, Wolraad Woltemade and John Ross (a name synonymous with shipwreck everywhere, it seems).

France and South Africa also force laden tankers to stay further off the coast than a master looking for a fast passage might choose, increasing the amount of time to mount a rescue.

'Coffin ships'

What seafarers call 'coffin ships' have to go. While the Braer was making the headlines, 17 Russian and Greek seafarers perished in their lifeboat after abandoning the 30-year-old Coty 1, a 4,000 dwt Panamanian flag bulk carrier taking a consignment of cement from Greece to Sicily, in heavy seas.

Lloyd's Register statistics show that 250 were killed in 34 casualties in bulk carrier-type ships, notorious for poor maintenance, in the seventeen months from January 1990.

An emergency replacement programme could put tens of thousands of unemployed shipbuilding workers across the world back in a job. Unfortunately, after the Tories' virtual destruction of Britain's once powerful - and once nationalised - shipyards, very few of them will be in this country.

Dave Osler is a regular contributor to leading shipping and cargo publications and won industry awards for his outstanding coverage in 1989 and 1991.

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Only mass action can defend the miners

The refusal of the coal and rail unions meeting on 6 January to take any action to defend the miners was a disaster. Their decision to go back to their own executives to consider a work 'stay away' (possibly on 15 February), and meet again on 12 January, has the hallmark of a dangerous foot-dragging exercise with little sign that action is being seriously contemplated.

The danger now is that all the possibilities contained in the great popular movement generated by the original announcement of the pit closures - reflected in the two mass demonstrations of 100,00 and 200,000 - will be frittered away.

That movement deepened the crisis of the Tory government, began to change the political situation and gave real hope that the years for retreat could be reversed at last.

It was a chance for the unions to begin to turn the tide. The left was right to demand that the next logical step should be for the TUC to call a one-day general strike to build the movement towards more sustained action. A late call by the TUC got 200,000 people on the streets under banners of the trade unions and Labour Party.

The NUM has done well in the courts and has shown the actions of the government in closing the pits to be illegal. But this battle

cannot be won in the courts alone. Nor can the government-controlled review procedure be seen as the answer either.

The recommendations it makes will be based on political criteria, not economic or industrial ones. They will close as many pits as they can get away with.

Stayaway

A major new impetus is now needed in the campaign. An officially-backed work 'stayaway' by the mining and rail unions would be a big step forward, but it would have

challenged, as they were on the day of the big weekday NUM demonstration.

The public sector unions have talked of co-ordinated strike ballots and strike action. Such action would get a massive response, and would rock the Tory government to its foundations.

The TUC should stop its vague talk about 'rolling campaigns', and lead and co-ordinate such a strike movement. We need a fight in every public sector union for joint action - in defence of jobs and against the pay freeze.

The mining industry cannot be separated from the public sector as a whole, and if the miners are to win a convincing victory they are unable to be able to do it alone. A militant public sector fightback is there a direct way of defending mining jobs as well.

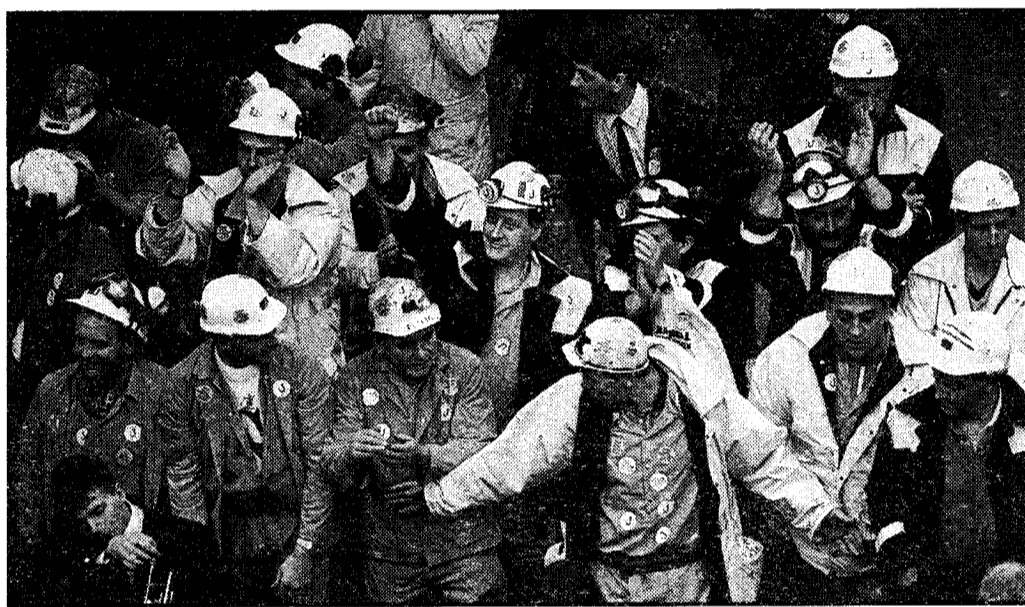
The solidarity movement which has sprung up since the announcement of the pit closures is very important and kept the issue alive with countless demonstrations, events and meetings at local as well as national level.

This campaigning energy however must also be turned in to the unions to ensure that effective action is taken before

the die is cast and pits are closed.

A stay away, if it is agreed, should be fully supported as a minimum step. But the movement is going to have to face the reality that only strike action will save jobs in the pits and in the public sector, or confront the wage freeze imposed by the Tory government.

Andrew Ward



to be seen as, and organised for as, a day of collective strike action and not left to individuals.

Any authoritative call would get a massive response, whether it was in solidarity with the miners, or in defence of the public sector more generally. The anti-union laws can be chal-

Globocop threatens Iraq, part II

SO GEORGE Bush, as his parting gesture, is threatening to bomb Iraq again. His logic, and that of his flunkies in the United Nations Security Council, is absurd. The US has declared a 'no fly' zone in southern Iraq; and the Iraqis have put ground-based missiles on their own territory, which is of course 'a threat' to the US.

This comes at a time when the US is engaged in a gigantic international military effort. US marines occupy Somalia, a huge fleet sails off the coast of Yugoslavia and the bombers in Saudi Arabia and the Tomahawk missiles on US ships in the Gulf are prepared again.

The targets are ideologically well-chosen. Saddam is a genocidal despot, Somalia is starving and strife-torn, Bosnia is the victim of Serb 'ethnic cleansing' and worse. Enter the cavalry to enforce the New World Order of peace and justice.

Or so it seems to those who

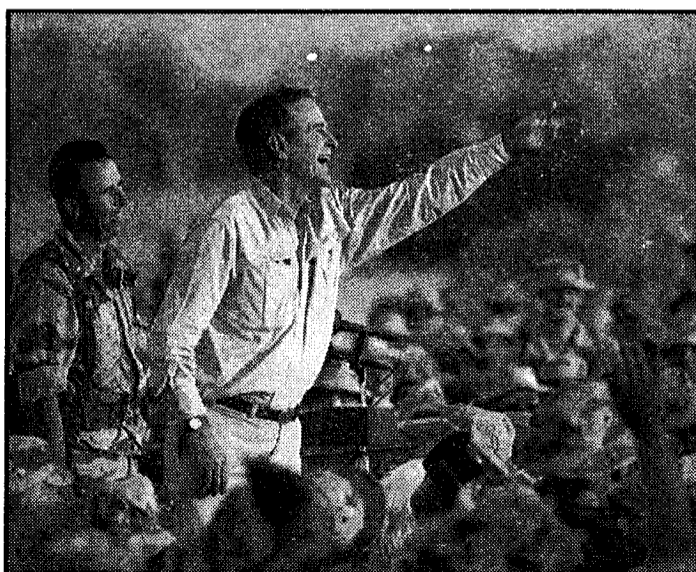
refuse to examine elementary facts. The US intervention in Somalia is aimed at confronting growing Islamic fundamentalism in the Horn of Africa. The US would love to enforce a military presence in eastern Europe. And pressure on Saddam serves to buttress and strengthen the pro-US reactionary alliance in the Middle East.

Expelled

Contrast this willingness to intervene in defence of 'peace' and 'justice' with the role of the US over the 400 Palestinians expelled by Israel, stranded on the freezing mountains of the Lebanese border.

It is the US which has wielded the big stick, publicly and privately, against any attempt to get the UN to act on the issue. Peace and justice Bush style is highly selective.

But there is little point in trying to judge US intervention 'issue-by-issue'. The pattern of US intervention is unmistakable; emboldened by its success in the Gulf war the US is



Bosnia, Somalia, next stop the Gulf?

accustoming the world to the persistence of its overseas military interventions.

This is part of the long-term strategic game that Globocop is playing. US economic strength is declining and competition with Japan and Germany worsening. World-wide military intervention is the one

weapon which Globocop can wield that no other imperialist can match. And with it goes diplomatic, political and ultimately economic gains.

At the same time, left-wing and anti-imperialist opposition to US intervention is at a rock-bottom low. The movement against the Gulf war was

big, but not really mass. The tradition of opposition to imperialist military adventures must be rebuilt.

From that perspective, the left has to wage a battle against illusions that Western intervention will solve the problems of the masses in any country.

Blitzing Iraq didn't remove Saddam, it inflicted untold suffering on the Iraqi and Kurdish masses. What is stifling the ability of the people of Bosnia to resist ethnic cleansing and mass rape, is not the lack of American marines, but the Western-imposed arms embargo that hits Bosnia but has little effect in Belgrade.

The flurry of US military activity in the last days of the Bush presidency has been said to signify an attempt to straightjacket Clinton, committing him to a series of foreign interventions. Maybe. But Clinton has dissented from not one of Bush's overseas adventures; there will be no change in US militarism from that quarter.

Hard Labour wipes out pit jobs

By Dave Osler

WHEN IT comes to pit closures, past Labour governments make Michael Heseltine look like an amateur.

Not for nothing did Lord Robens, former Labour MP and head of the old National Coal Board in the 1960s, once boast: "Under Labour we shut pits at a faster rate than when the Conservatives were in office... a pit closure almost every week for four years was achieved."

It was Atlee's first post-war Labour administration which undertook nationalisation of the coal industry on 1 January 1947, fulfilling the demand of generations of miners. The move was literally greeted with rejoicing across the coalfields.

No official strikes

The 1947 National Union of Mineworkers conference even carried a resolution declaring: "There are now no opposing sides in the industry". The NUM would not make any strike official, and unofficial ones faced prosecution.

Yet the expropriators had not exactly been expropriated; instead, they were given compensation from the state worth far in excess of their assets.

Moreover, Labour governments and Conservative governments alike have ever since prioritised profitability over mining jobs and the socially necessary production of coal.

The Conservative Party returned to office in 1951, and four years later commenced widescale cut-backs in the industry. Over the next nine

years, the workforce fell from 700,000 to 517,000 while the number of pits was cut from over 850 to under 600.

Yet the right-wing dominated NUM in this period did not look to industrial action to save jobs. They based their strategy on the eventual return of a Labour government.

Just a few months before the first Wilson administration in 1964, unions were led to believe that Labour wanted the industry to produce 200m tons of coal a year.

But once in office, new mini-



NUM's right wing old guard: Gormley with stalinist Mick McGahey

ster of power Fred Lee denied any commitments had been entered into.

Lee told NUM conference in 1965: "Coal has a future, there is no occasion for alarm... but efficiency, costs, and the resulting prices are absolutely paramount."

Shortly afterward, plans for British Coal to produce 170m tons a year were announced. By 1967, the figure was slashed to 140m. But spending on nuclear power was boosted massively.

It was in this period that miners began the depressing

process of moving from pit to pit and even area to area as the closures came in thick and fast.

A wave of unofficial strikes against Labour's policies in 1969 and 1970 were the precursors of national strikes in 1972 and 1974, which sparked off the events that forced the Heath government from office.

The 1974 Labour government realised the miners' massive social weight and offered a compromise in the shape of the so-called Plan for Coal.

A ten year programme meant the construction of new pits and the extension and

modernisation of others. 'Joint production drives' and 'productivity incentive schemes' were designed to increase productivity by 4 per cent a year. Achieving such targets inevitably translated into more job losses.

Prime minister Harold Wilson said at the 1975 NUM conference: "What the government is asking for the years ahead, what the government has the right to ask, the duty to ask, is not a year for self but a year for Britain."

The NUM leadership took the bait and consistently tried to push through wage deals linked to productivity. In September 1974, for instance, 61.5 per cent of miners rejected one such incentive scheme in a national ballot.

By 1977, Labour's pay policy desperately sought to hold the line at a wage increase of under 10 per cent, a figure far less than inflation. NUM leader Joe Gormley again tried to sell the membership an incentive scheme in order to play ball with the government.

Despite being rejected at the union's annual conference, the package was put to a national

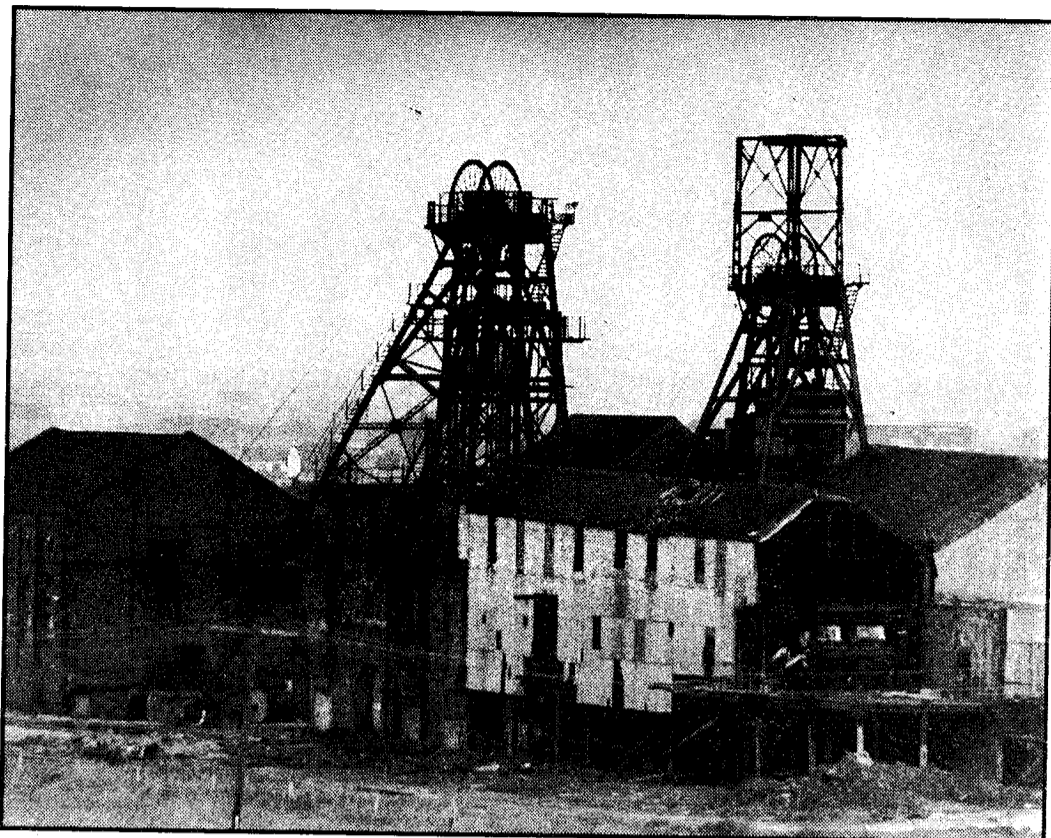
vote at the leadership's insistence. The then energy secretary, Tony Benn, argued that the scheme should be given a "fair trial" on the grounds that is managed to "avoid the evils of past piecework schemes, which set men against men and lowered safety standards".

Nevertheless, it was again rejected. Ignoring all democratic expressions of miners' wishes, the government, the Coal Board and the NUM nevertheless went ahead with local productivity schemes.

By introducing massive differentials in wages between areas and breaking the unity forged in 1972 and 1974, the move largely created the divisions that became so tragically evident in the great strike of 1984-85.

By the end of the last Labour government, coal output had further slipped from 117m to 105m tons, and 23 more pits had closed with the loss of a further 11,000 jobs.

Part two of this article will examine Labour's role in the 1984-85 miners' strike



A new Bill for Labour? 'Clintonisation' process gathers pace

By Paul Clarke

BILL CLINTON became Labour's latest factional surrogate last weekend as arguments erupted over what conclusions to draw from his triumph in the US presidential election.

On one hand, newspapers reported a growing clamour for 'Clintonisation' from the Labour right wing. On the other, Centre-Left politicians attacked the 'Clintonisers' for wanting to turn Labour into a party like the American Democrats.

The source of the row is an article by Philip Gould, the former Shadow Communications Agency co-ordinator, and Patricia Hewitt, the deputy director of the Institute for Public Policy Research and a former senior aide to Neil Kinnock, in the launch issue of *Renewal*, the Labour Co-ordinating Committee's new quarterly journal.

The article, titled 'Lessons from America', argues that Labour must emulate Mr Clinton's success in discarding the Democrats' image as 'the party of the poor and of the past' and forging a 'populism of the Centre rather than the Left' which can appeal to the majority. Labour should shy away from confrontation and project 'non-political politics'.

While not advocating wholesale conversion to Democrat policies, it notes that the Democrats' present fusion of economic

interventionism and social conservatism 'may or may not' be appropriate for Britain.

Such enthusiasm for Clinton is a cover for an attempt by party 'modernisers', led by Tony Blair, the Shadow Home Secretary, to distance Labour from the trade unions. This objective has now been echoed by John Smith and top union bureaucrat John Edmonds (GMB), who have declared the aim of scrapping the block vote this year.

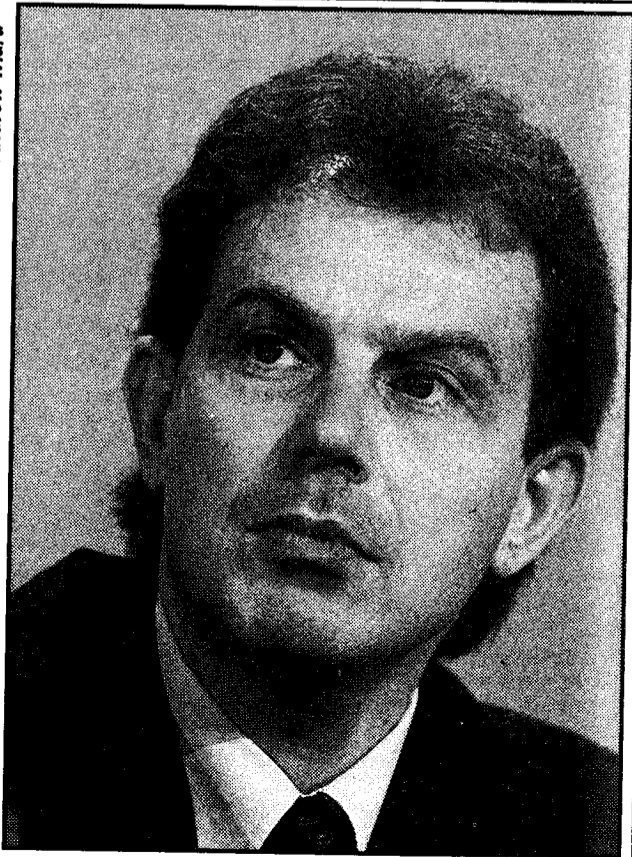
Blair appears to see openings for himself in the repeated references by Clinton campaign chiefs to their success depending upon a strong, young, attractive candidate. Certainly none of these could be said to apply to John Smith.

In rejecting this approach John Prescott claimed that 'it is a matter of the heart and soul of the Labour Party', while even traditionalist rightwingers like national executive member John Evans have expressed disquiet.

In the end, though, defence of the status quo is no defence against the Clintonisers. The politics of John Smith are a useless continuation of Kinnockism, which in 1987 and again in 1992 was shown to be incapable of producing victory.

The Clintonisers will make gains because they are seen at the moment as the only people with something radical, if extremely right wing, to say.

Andrew Wliard



Face of future social democracy? Tony Blair

Strong support for NUM at Sheffield conference

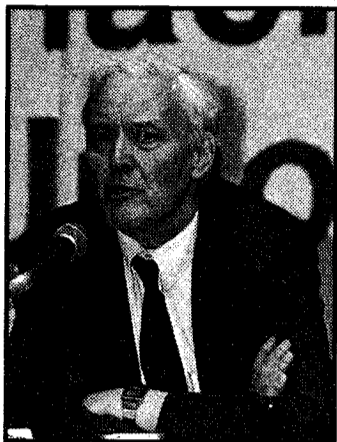


by Alan Thornett

A CAMPAIGN for strike action in support of the miners, and full backing for the Greenham style camps to be set up at the gates of the threatened pits by Women Against Pit Closures (WAPC) were amongst the decisions taken by a very successful solidarity conference on January 9.

The conference, which was called at short notice by the Socialist Movement Trade Union Committee and the National Miners Support Network was attended by 450 people delegated from trade union and labour movement organisations.

It had the full support of the NUM, and adopted a statement from the union which called for a one-day stay-away in defence of the threatened jobs and the mining industry.



Urging unity: Benn

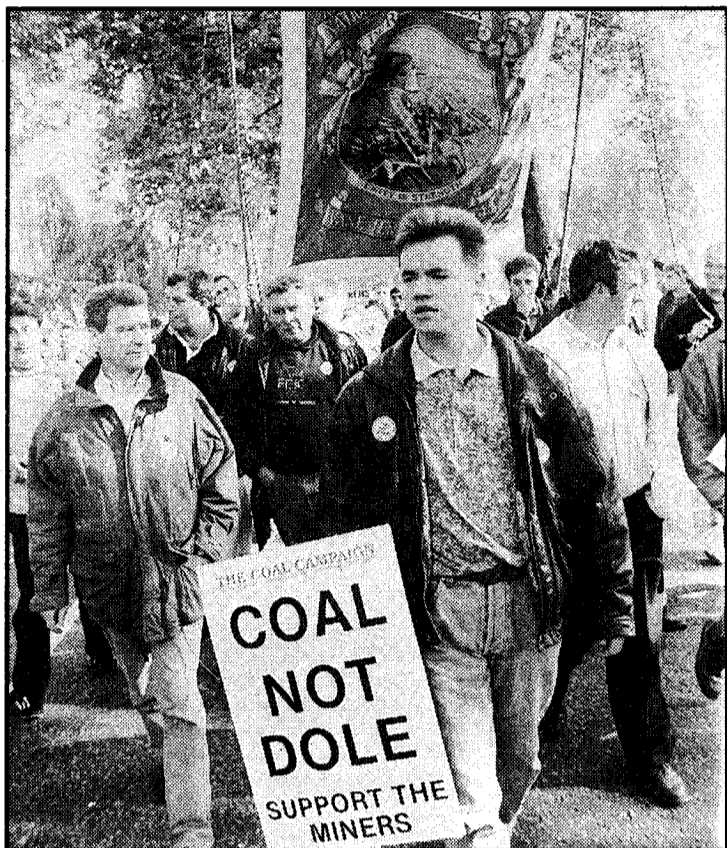
Introducing the Statement in the opening plenary, Idwell Morgan from the NUM National Executive Committee, stressed that the only acceptable outcome for the NUM was that all of the threatened 31 pits would be kept open. There could be no compromise on this

and no victory short of it. The closure of a single pit would be a defeat for the NUM he stressed.

Six other speakers were on the platform, among them John Hendy, QC, who represented the NUM in the recent victory in the High Court where the Government was found to be in breach of the law.

Tony Benn stressed the need for unity across the movement in defence of the miners. Carolyn Sikorski from the SMTUC spoke of the historic role of women in trade union struggles. Two speakers from WAPC outlined their plans for the camps on the gates of the immediately threatened pits.

The other speaker was Bob Crowe from the RMT NEC who had attended the recent meeting between the rail and mining unions which considered a stay-away day in support of the



Miners' fight is entering crucial phase

miners. He said, to applause from the conference, that the RMT Executive would be meeting on Tuesday of this week and the Left would be proposing a ballot of the whole of the RMT membership in support of a one-day stay-away.

This approach, that any stay-away called should be organised as strike action in order to make it effective and not left vague or just to the individual worker, was echoed both in the discussions in the regional and individual union workshops as well as in the decisions of the conference.

The final plenary not only took resolutions from the workshops but gave a platform to speakers from a number of important strikes taking place at

the present time: the Islington NALGO strike; women from the Annie Hall dispute; women from the Middlebrook Mushrooms strike in Hull who are picketing super-markets; and Asian women in support of the Burnsalls strike in the West Midlands, who got a tremendous reception from the conference and a prolonged standing ovation.

In addition to this the conference voted to organise a recall conference as soon as the next stage of the struggle becomes clear.

The conference represented an important step forward for the miners support movement and provided the basis for some important new initiatives to be taken.

Polish miners strike for jobs

By Steve Kaczynski

POLAND was rocked last month by a miners' strike in Silesia, the country's main industrial region, on a scale reportedly exceeding even those held in the heyday of Solidarity.

The British media stayed surprisingly quiet - perhaps they feared a dangerous example.

While a new year's eve peace deal between the government and the union leaderships made a return-to-work likely at the time of writing, the dispute lays down a marker for future struggles.

Small-scale protests began on December 14, but escalated so rapidly that even the hostile local media reported that 350,000 workers were on strike by Christmas - around one per cent of the country's entire population.

There were no indications of any scabbing, while rail, steel, textile and tractor factory workers in other parts of Poland gave ready support.

The miners' grievances flow from the regime's current 'restructuring' programme, which could cut the

country's coal mining capacity by as much as 50 per cent.

The government has promised "social guarantees" to mining areas; whether they are worth the paper they are written on remains to be seen.

Solidarity leader Wacław Jastrzębski has promised that strikes will resume if the government did not stick to its agreements or showed bad faith. He may have to back up his words with actions pretty soon, as the diktats of the International Monetary Fund give the government little room for manoeuvre.

Under Stalinist rule, the miners enjoyed a relatively privileged position. Nevertheless, they were at the forefront of the Solidarity cause in the early eighties, and many paid with their liberty and even their lives after the crackdown of 1981.

Ironically, a decade later it was former Solidarity chief Lech Wałęsa who, as national President, accused strikers of destabilisation, and it was Solidarity veteran Jacek Huron, now minister of labour, who threatened the working class with repressive measures.

Most of the strikers were from the



Wałęsa

mainstream NSZZ Solidarity, while others were from the far smaller but more militant Solidarity '80 and the Kontra union, linked to the anti-semitic Confederation for an Independent Poland.

The ex-Stalinist OPZZ confederation sent messages of support and threatened a general strike from mid-January but generally took a more cautious line. This did not stop a pro-government MP accusing ex-communists of instigating a strike patently of Solidarity origin.

The free market is coming apart in Poland thanks to the more positive parts of Solidarity's contradictory legacy. Socialists should seek to help as well as learn from the struggles of the Polish working class and link up the struggles in our two countries.

Bullets fly as mines fightback reaches Albania

by Steve Kaczynski

Miners in Albania, Europe's poorest country, struck last month in support of demands including higher wages, shorter working hours and more holiday pay.

They were apparently joined by oil workers, although information about this dispute is scanty.

On 22 December, the government called for crisis talks on the grounds that miners were undermining "economic reform and foreign investment".

Reuters news agency reported that a number of the 6,000 strikers at the Bulgiza chromium mine in the north of the country went on hunger strike in protest against police use of live ammunition and rubber bullets in an effort to drive them back to work. There were at least two injuries and several arrests.

An angry crowd at Bulgiza besieged the mayor's office on December 23, throwing stones and chanting the name of an arrested strike leader.

The Albanian government threatened to use the full force of

the law if there was not a return to work by December 25. Albanian radio has claimed general compliance.

President Sali Berisha and his Democratic Party were heavily praised in the West when they took power in place of the Stalinists who had ruled the country since 1944. Now the "democratic" mask has slipped.

Meanwhile, Nexhmije Hoxha, widow of the country's longtime Stalinist ruler Enver Hoxha, who died in 1985, is to go on trial for corruption and abuse of power.

Solidarity with the Miners

WOMEN'S CAMPS AGAINST CLOSURES
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Barnsley 0226-202687

Women Against Pit Closures NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION LONDON SATURDAY FEB 6
Assemble 11am
Embankment, march to Hyde Park

Picket NW region TUC
Saturday February 6,
Mechanics Institute,
Manchester

LOBBY

TUC General Council
Demand action to support miners
Congress House,
Great Russell St, London WC1
8am Weds Jan 27

LOBBY

SE Region TUC
Demand action to defend miners
Saturday January 16
9am, Congress House,
Great Russell St
London WC1

January 1933: how the Nazis took power

This month is the 60th anniversary of Hitler's accession to power. Sixty years on, the spectre of fascism is far from dead, especially in Germany. In the first of the three-part series TOM HAGEN looks at how Hitler's Nazi party took power.

ON THE EVENING of 30 January 1933 Berlin was taken over by tens of thousands of Nazi Brownshirts in a torchlit march to celebrate their leader becoming Chancellor. They were joined by thousands of members of the *Stalhelm* ('Steel Helmets'), the paramilitary force of the extreme right-wing nationalist German National Peoples Party (DNVP).

Like everyone else, the street thugs of Nazism were stunned by the ease with which Hitler had come to power. For there had been no Nazi insurrection, no fighting of Brownshirts and Blackshirts at barricades against the *Reichswehr*, police, the Social Democratic *Iron Front* or even against the Communist Red Fighters Front. Hitler had simply been appointed Chancellor of a coalition government in a perfectly legal way by the ageing President Hindenburg.

The response of the social democratic SPD and the Communist KPD was catastrophic. Spontaneous strikes broke out. Delegations of social democratic workers rushed to their party headquarters demanding a last ditch open fight against the Nazis. A minority in the leadership of the KPD demanded in a stormy meeting at the giant Karl Liebknecht House headquarters, far too late, a united front with the social democrats to crush the Nazis.

But the SPD leadership replied that civil war would only aid the Nazis; and the KPD leadership replied with the infantile slogan 'after Hitler, us' insisting that Nazi rule would be a short interlude.

Sections of the right wing parties believed that Hitler would be a prisoner of the coalition, a pathetic delusion. For Hitler immediately ordered that the police and army collaborate fully with the Brownshirts against the workers' movement.

The burning down of the Reichstag (parliament) building, probably by the Nazis themselves, was used as the justification for a witch hunt against all workers' organisations. The powerful Prussian police force was put under Nazi control.

In this atmosphere of witch hunt, new elections were called for March 1933. The Nazis, sweeping all before them, won a staggering 17 million votes, becoming easily the largest Reichstag party. When the parliament met again, many of the SPD and Communist deputies were not present; either dead, already in concentration camps or having fled into exile.

Dead democracy

Parliamentary democracy was by March 1933 stone cold dead. Astoundingly the Communist International and the underground KPD leadership continued to claim that Nazi rule would be short-lived, and that the Communists would soon come to power.

How had this catastrophe happened? The Nazi victory combined three things; the winning over of central sections of the big German bourgeoisie to anti-parliamentarism; the building of a mass Nazi movement out of the ranks of the frenzied middle classes and impoverished *lumpen proletariat*; and the insane tactics adopted by the SPD and KPD leaderships.

But for all these factors to come together required the construction of a counter-revolutionary leadership with immense capacities of tactics, organisation, propaganda and subterfuge. This was provided by Hitler and the team around him. The tragedy was that Hitler faced a Communist Party whose leadership had been lobotomised by Stalinism.

Germany emerged from the first world war defeated and impoverished. Socialist revolution broke out in November 1918, and the two main socialist parties, the SPD and the more left wing USPD (Independent Social Democrats) took the power in coalition, based on the strength of workers' councils.

Capitulation

The question the workers' movement faced was precisely what to do with the power; institutionalise the power of the councils, or re-establish parliamentary democracy? The right-wing SPD leaders decided on the latter course, and the centrist leaders of the USPD capitulated, resulting in the split by Rosa Luxemburg to form the small German Communist Party.

Incensed by the drift of events, Berlin workers rushed into an ill-advised attempt to seize power through a putsch. The SPD leaders, in early 1919, called in the counter-revolutionary *Freikorps* to crush the workers.

Out of the defeat of the 1918-19 revolution parliamentary democracy, the Weimar Republic, was re-founded.



But economic and social stability was elusive. Economically ravaged, Weimar Germany also faced huge reparation payments to the allies as a result of the war.

The ongoing crisis reached a climax in 1923. By then the majority of the USPD had been won over to fuse with the KPD, forming a mass revolutionary communist party. In October 1923 the KPD, under contradictory orders from Moscow, flunked a pre-revolutionary crisis, calling off an attempt to seize power. The order to call off the rising failed to reach Hamburg, where the Communists engaged in a week of bitter street fighting, but were eventually crushed.

Germany's default on reparation payments also led in January 1923 to the French occupation of the Ruhr. Alarmed by Germany's continued instability, international imperialism decided on decisive action to bolster the German economy and stabilise the political system.

Thus in 1924, under the Dawes plan, the United States began to pump huge loans into German industry, and national and local government. For the first time since 1919 the SPD was ejected from any participation in government.

On the basis of these huge loans German industry began to revive. Moreover, loans to SPD local authorities enabled municipal works to be expanded. The number of unemployed fell, and 'municipal socialism' flourished.

From 1924 onwards the KPD, under orders from Moscow, began to adopt the insane theory that social democracy was the 'left wing of fascism' and the 'main enemy'. Ultra-leftism in the KPD

was also propelled by a genuine current of working class leftism, borne out of hatred of the SPD for its counter-revolutionary role in the 1918-19 revolution.

Right turn

This ultra-leftism was briefly abated in 1926-7, when the Comintern made a 'right' turn, and joint activities were taken up with the SPD. Most successful was a joint campaign for the expropriation of the ultra-rich German princes; Hitler's defence of the princes brought one of his worst political defeats.

But the short-lived boom conditions brought about by the Dawes plan did not lead to a lessening of the class struggle. On the contrary, big business attempted - along with the bourgeoisie in all major imperialist countries - to 'rationalise' through the fusion of firms into big trusts and by closing down inefficient plants.

Hitler's movement was until the mid-1920s very small. His attempt to seize power in the 1924 Munich 'beer hall putsch' was a fiasco, routed by a detachment of 100 armed police. Hitler, sentenced to five years in jail, served less than one, during which he wrote *Mein Kampf*.

By the mid-1920s Hitler had decided that the path to power lay through the winning of support among the leaders of the giant capitalist trusts. He had therefore to try to combine winning a mass base, using elements of anti-capitalist demagoguery, with assuring potential capitalist backers that he would maintain capitalism intact, while defeating 'Marxism' - ie the KPD and SPD, and the giant ADGB trade union federation.



In 1927 he decided upon two things which would ensure a future breakthrough. First he made a turn away from trying to build the Nazis in the big industrial towns, towards the rural population. Nazi agitation had fallen on stony ground among the workers in the big cities. But hard-hit farmers, classic petit-bourgeois small owners, proved a more fruitful recruiting ground. Among them the Nazis found eager support for denunciation of the 'Jewish' bankers and the socialist parties.

Second Hitler turned to politically defeat the 'anti-capitalist' elements in his own party, the 'left' fascists led by Otto and Gregor Strasser, supported for a period by Goebbels. Taming the wilder elements among the Brownshirts was vital to sustaining a base among big industrialists. This conflict was never fully resolved until the 1934 'night of the long knives' when the Brownshirt leaders were murdered by the rival SS.

Countryside

Recruitment in the countryside pushed Nazi strength towards the 100,000 mark – still a small party by the standards of the mass workers' parties;

In the 'red' inner-city strongholds the Nazis never approached the power of the workers' parties. But the desperate unemployed were repelled by the capitulations of the SPD leaders. It was the KPD, and above all the Nazis, who attracted the new unemployed. But the Nazis also began to build a base among the ruined urban middle classes.

after all, the SPD had at this point *one million* members.

As the world economic crisis worsened in 1928 fierce labour battles broke out. The coalition government led by Catholic Centre Party Chancellor Wilhelm Marx, proposed sweeping reductions of unemployment pay.

When a compromise proposal was rejected by the ADGB social democrat union federation, it was clear that Marx was in big trouble with the right wing and big business interests, who now thought him unable to tame the workers. Defeated in the Reichstag, Marx resigned.

But the 1928 elections were a disaster for the bourgeoisie: the social democrats and Communists won more than 13 million votes between them (3.7 million for the Communists), and all the right wing parties lost out. The Nazis were reduced to 810,000 votes. The SPD formed a coalition government with one of their own members, Mueller, as Chancellor.

There now opened up a completely new political situation. Mueller was a prisoner of his centre and right-wing coalition partners. His government carried out a series of cutbacks attacking the workers, as well as agreeing huge expenditure for the military.

But this was not enough for big business, alarmed by the strong showing of the workers' parties. Constant pressure to adopt ever more right wing policies was piled on Mueller.

Hitler now made a big political turn, towards a 'united front of the right wing'. It was becoming increasingly clear that the big bourgeoisie was split on the very issue of parliamentary democracy and the Weimar republic. Hitler turned to to make a common front with the leader of the DVPP right wing, Hugenberg, who had the loyalty of the paramilitary *Stalhelm*.

This united front, topped off with a huge joint demonstration of the Brownshirts and *Stalhelm* in Harpsburg, gave Hitler immense prestige among the right-wing bosses, who began to see him as the leader of a serious movement who could defend their interests.

For Hitler, the united front tactic was a way of building a solid force in German politics which would split the bourgeoisie on the issue of parliamentary democracy.

While the alliance with the *Stalhelm* forces was immensely unpopular with some of the more 'radical' SA Brownshirt streetfighters, contemptuous of old-fashioned right-wing monarchism, it was in fact a brilliant tactical move. Hitler had constructed a right wing bloc in which the Nazis were the most dynamic force, the only ones capable of constructing a mass counter-revolutionary movement.

Nazi breakthrough

Mueller's fall was a matter of time; the collapse of his government led to the 14 September 1930 general election in which the Nazis made their spectacular breakthrough, leaping from 850,000 votes in 1928 to 6.4 million. This represented the end of the new relationship of forces which had been established in 1928 by the upsurge of the workers' parties. It also represented the effects of the 1929 stockmarket crash, and the huge economic crisis now exploding in Germany.

To prepare for this situation Hitler had made his turn towards big business, to the alliance with the Hugenberg right wing, and to building a mass rural base; a mass force and powerful right-wing bloc had been established for the next stage of the push for power.

On the other hand the SPD had been compromised by the role of Mueller in government; and the KPD hamstrung by its crazy theory that the SPD was the 'left wing of fascism' and its refusal to make a united front with the SPD.

Now the SPD was evicted from the government, and Bruening of the Centre Party became Chancellor. Unable to get a parliamentary majority on key proposals, he began to resort to government by decree; Trotsky called his government 'Bonapartist', a form of authoritarian government, dispensing with parliamentary majorities, and balancing between the classes.

The SPD decided to 'tolerate' Bruening, not to defeat him in a vote of confidence, for fear of letting in the extreme right. In confidence motions, only the KPD and Nazis voted solidly against Bruening.

'Third period'

The KPD was now fully in the grip of the 'third period' ultra-leftism, which held all parties but the Communists were now part of fascism, and the SPD because of their left face the most 'dangerous'.

Now Thaelmann, Neumann and Remmele, the key KPD leaders, unleashed 'storm in the streets'. KPD fighters fought against Nazis and social democrats alike. Occasionally the KPD and Nazis would make a secret pact to disrupt SPD meetings. Local attempts to make common cause with social democratic workers were stamped on.

But the SPD held its grip on the big majority of class conscious workers. The KPD embarked on the crazy 'red unions' attempt to forge their own unions outside the ADGB; and advanced the 'united front from below' which refused to address demands to the SPD leaders, but urged SPD workers to join KPD front organisations – ie to put themselves under the leadership of the KPD!

For the leaders of big business, increasingly disenchanted with bourgeois democracy, Bruening's Bonapartist regime was not right wing enough. Eventually he suffered the fate of Mueller, and was replaced by arch reactionary von Papen.

The salami tactics of the right-wing bloc were now clear. At each parliamentary crisis a new, more right-wing government, was installed only to be further undermined from the right.

Failure

The failure of the bourgeoisie to build a single, stable party representing right-wing bourgeois democracy made every parliamentary coalition open to being brought down.

Within the right-wing bloc the Nazis were easily the most dynamic force. The 1929 crisis had opened up the road from the rural mass base built in 1927-29, to a new orientation to the unemployed in the cities. The workers' organisations were now engaged in a life-or-death battle to prevent the Nazis building an urban mass base.

In fact, in the 'red' inner-city strongholds the Nazis never approached the power of the workers' parties. But the desperate unemployed were repelled by the capitulations of the SPD leaders. It was the KPD, and above all the Nazis, who attracted the new unemployed. But the Nazis also began to build a base among the ruined urban middle classes.

In order to sustain the march back to the cities, Hitler was compelled to allow support for some workers' struggles, most notoriously the 1932 Berlin transport workers' strike, when Nazis and Communists jointly staffed the picket lines and fought the police. The KPD also crazily supported the Nazi attempt to bring down the Social Democratic Prussian regional government, dubbing the Nazi-inspired referendum the 'red referendum'.

With von Papen in power, and using a KPD attack on a Nazi march in Altona as the excuse to dismiss the SPD government in Prussia, Hitler's road to power was open. But at the last free elections in November 1932 the workers parties still polled more than the Nazis.

Now only a joint call by the workers' organisations for a united front to defeat the fascists could win the day. That call never came.

Plebeian base

Hitler came to power because decisive sections of big business, fearful of proletarian revolution, abandoned bourgeois democracy. He came to power because he masterminded a right-wing bloc in which the Nazis were the decisive force, building a plebeian base for counter-revolution.

Once the bourgeoisie had abandoned democracy, only a left united front, with the KPD as its propelling core, could stop the march of the fascists and open the road to socialist revolution. Bone-headed ultra-leftism and sectarianism prevented that from happening.

The craven role of social democracy was predictable. Added to it the suicidal line of the Stalinised KPD, directed from Moscow, brought the historic defeat the world's most powerful labour movement, sealed the fate of Europe's Jewish population, and made the second world war inevitable.

In our next issue: Trotsky, the KPD and the united front.

Ireland still looking for Mr Right

By David Coen

WHEN FORMER Taoiseach Charlie Haughey decided to do up his office a few years ago – on the public purse, of course – local wits dubbed the gleaming limestone building, scrubbed clean of Dublin smog, the “Chas Mahal”.

But the man's less-than-spotless reputation was the main factor in his fall from power in 1991 and his activities in government continue to cast their long shadow over his Fianna Fail party.

An inquiry into the complex connections between past Fianna Fail governments and the collapsed meat empire of businessman Larry Goodman even sparked off Ireland's recent election after a conflict of evidence between Haughey's successor Albert Reynolds and coalition partner Des O'Malley of the Progressive Democrats.

Fianna Fail lost 10 seats in Dublin and the larger urban areas, mostly to Labour. The party, which has dominated politics since the foundation of the Free State, failed for the

sixth successive election to win an overall majority and secured its lowest percentage of the vote since de Valera led it into the Dail in 1927.

A longer term process is at work as Fianna Fail's traditional base of small farmers, small town bourgeoisie and urban working class cracks under the combined pressures of austerity, economic crisis and the declining influence of the Catholic Church.

Labour more than doubled its seats from 16 to 33 in the 166-seat Dail and was in a position to dictate who formed the government.

Mixture

The Irish Labour Party is an eclectic mixture of libertarian socialists like Michael D. Higgins, republicans such as Declan Bree and the fiercely anti-nationalist Jim Kemmy, combined with radical petty-bourgeois elements who favour “modernisation”, and who formed the core of Mary Robinson's support in the presidential elections.

The next government is almost certain to be a Fianna

Fail/Labour coalition, despite the newspaper editorials urging a “rainbow coalition” between Labour, Fine Gael and the Progressive Democrats.

Labour leader Dick Spring has been a fierce critic of Fianna Fail corruption and one of two people wrongly expected him to hold out for the rotation of the office of Taoiseach with Reynolds, but he seems likely to settle for minister of foreign affairs and the post of Taniste (deputy prime minister).

Spring's highly public but ultimately abortive courtship of Democratic Left was based on recognition that participation in a right-wing government would leave him exposed on his left flank.

The Workers' Party lost its one remaining seat while the Democratic Left, which split from the Workers' Party last year, is down from six seats to four. Sinn Fein's percentage of the vote dropped from 1.8 per cent to 1.6 per cent.

While the overall vote for the right-wing parties is still about 68 per cent, the serious differences between them means that political instability is likely



Certainly not Mr Right any more: Charlie Haughey

to continue, adding to the opportunities for the left.

The fragmentation and shift away from the ‘civil war’ parties can also be seen in the vote on constitutional amendments held on the same day as the general election.

Abortion

A woman's right to information and to travel abroad for an abortion were both passed, but an amendment allowing abortion where the woman's life

was threatened (except by suicide) was defeated. Pro-choice activists had called for a no vote on the last issue, as it did not allow abortion in cases where the woman's health was at risk.

One of the conditions of Labour participation in a coalition is a Bill to legalise abortion in some cases and to try to get the constitutional ban on divorce removed, as well as liberalising the law on homosexuality.

Republican marchers face charges

Fight Casement Park frame-up!

By Tom Wilson

MORE THAN forty Irish nationalists in Belfast are being framed in a case related to the killing of two British soldiers at a Republican funeral in 1988.

Five men received life sentences for abetting murder. The point here is that none of the accused were involved in actually killing the soldiers; their conviction rests on an interpretation of the legal doctrine of common purpose, hitherto unknown to UK law, and only previously seen in South Africa.

The background to all this lies in a series of extraordinary events which profoundly affected the nationalist communities in the north of Ireland during March 1988. The

tragic sequence of events began when three unarmed Republicans, including Mairead Farrell, were shot dead by the SAS in Gibraltar. The anger at the shootings was shown by the huge turnout at their funeral held at Belfast's Milltown Cemetery.

At this point the Loyalist Michael Stone launched a murderous hand grenade and gun assault on the mourners. Three men were shot dead; more than 30 were injured.

Victims

Some days later the funeral took place of Kevin Brady, one of Stone's victims; the night before it another Catholic had been murdered by the UDA.

The cortege therefore started off in a mood of high tension. A car drove



Now illegal? Republican funeral

into the funeral at high speed; as frightened mourners surrounded the vehicle its two occupants produced revolvers and a shot was discharged. Everyone in the crowd believed – understandably – that they were once again under attack, and responded accordingly.

A courageous group of mourners, all unarmed, advanced and disarmed the two men. The car was searched for bombs, and were then moved to nearby Casement Park – where it was discovered that they were British soldiers.

Sometime later an IRA active service unit arrived, took the soldiers into custody, and shot them. The members of this unit have never been identified or arrested, but many others have.

The burden of the state's case against the accused is that they had a ‘common purpose’ with those who actually carried out the killings.

This is particularly absurd when three of those currently serving life sentences for aiding and abetting murder, Pat Kane, Michael Timmons and Sean Kelly, were not even present at Casement Park, and could not possibly share a common purpose with an IRA unit whose existence they were not even aware of.

Like all the accused, the crime they were truly guilty of, was attending a Republican funeral and having the audacity to defend themselves.

Two soldiers were killed, and the state is looking for vengeance. It has never been explained what the two out-of-uniform soldiers were doing, and why there were no soldiers or

RUC men present at the scene until well after the incident was over.

Other serious doubts about the state's behaviour over these trials have emerged. Identification of defendants depends very largely on poor quality video film shot from an army helicopter some hundreds of feet above the confused and tumultuous events in the narrow streets of Belfast.

The right of the accused person to silence has also been effectively removed. In the case of Sean Kelly, Mr Justice Carswell specifically referred to his refusal to testify as grounds for inferring guilt.

These matters and others are being raised by the Justice for the Casement Park Accused Campaign, c/o Green Ink Bookshop, 8 Archway Mall, London N19 5RG.

Letter

Errors in LPS report

CHRIS BROOKS' report of the Labour Party Socialists Annual General Meeting (*Socialist Outlook*, December) is particularly ill informed and mischievous.

While the AGM was small, it should be remembered that the AGM took place on the same day as a major conference against Maastricht and various actions in support of the miners, probably reducing the attendance.

LPS does not just draw together a section of the Labour left 'for united action around party conferences'.

While work around conference is an important part of what LPS does, it has been primarily about campaigning, explicitly wanting to link up struggles with the fight against the right in the party.

LPS was responsible for launching Labour Against the War and Labour Against the Witch-hunt, neither of which was/is simply about activity at conference. In this respect LPS is very different from much of the Labour left.

The report is one-sided in its implication that the development of the Socialist Campaign Group Supporters Network is a defeat for LPS.

On the contrary, if the Network is a success it will represent what LPS set out to achieve and will be welcomed by most LPS activists, many of whom have been at the forefront of getting the Network underway.

Most of the points put forward by *Outlook* supporters at the AGM on the relationship between LPS and the Network and how the Network should be built were adopted.

Only the (important) one that if the Network develops into a serious democratic, campaigning force the need for LPS will cease was defeated.

The reasons this development has taken place outside LPS are complex, but can be largely attributed to the Socialist Movement, of which LPS is part, and the way it and *socialist* have alienated many who are committed to building the left in the Labour Party with links to activists in the unions and campaigns.

In his endeavour to present LPS as merely a battleground for various tendencies, Brooks seems unaware of the fact that *Labour Briefing* effectively withdrew from LPS over a year ago to concentrate on building itself.

And he restricts himself to primarily reporting (in a rather jaundiced way) those debates at the AGM in which there were differences between *Socialist Outlook* and *Socialist Organiser* supporters.

While the debate on Maastricht was important, and *Socialist Organiser's* view that imperialism still retains a progressive element should be refuted, he fails to mention that resolutions were passed unanimously defending the Labour Party-Trade Union link and condemning the launch of *Red, Green and Radical* in the place of *socialist*.

He does not mention that the AGM was opened with speeches from the NUM and strikers from Sheffield and Islington NALGO branches.

On pit closures, Brooks writes 'a resolution calling for a one day general strike to support the miners to prepare a general strike to kick out the Tories was also defeated.'

Yet the resolution passed *did* call on the TUC to call a day of action against pit closures. Such a day of action is a general strike in all but name.

To my knowledge it is not the policy of *Socialist Outlook* to call for an indefinite general strike, especially one limited to kicking out the Tories.

The idea that what Trotsky called 'the highest form of class struggle short of an armed insurrection' should have such a limited aim is nothing short of ridiculous.

Pete Firmin, London

New ways of screwing the workforce

The Nissan Enigma: Flexibility at work in the local economy

By Philip Garrahan and Paul Stewart

Reviewed by a Car Worker

THE NEW management techniques (NMT) affect, or soon will do, nearly every working person. But where is the big debate about the implications? Where are the questioning academics and the investigative documentaries on TV?

In fact the silence is almost deafening, and this is no accident. Strong vested interests resent any idea of a critical debate about these issues.

These vested interests and the lack of any serious questioning are well explained in this book in relation to the pathbreaking Nissan plant in Sunderland. They were part of the settlement for building the Nissan plant in Sunderland rather than another depressed area.

The local and national media were uniformly sycophantic; the local council gave Nissan control of a huge area around the plant. Every hint of criticism was

seen as endangering the plant.

This events were not by chance; Japanese companies work on the basis of joint control of component companies, extending their control outwards from their own workforce. And an important part of this control is to stop criticism.

Garrahan and Stewart see themselves as initiating a debate, one which is important for all of us. Breaking the wall of silence is a vital first step towards combatting the attack on workers which the new management techniques represent.

Most workers will recognise something in the book happening to them - 'teamwork', 'quality led', 'flexibility' or any of the other fashionable parts of NMT.

In the academic world, so far NMT has meant tame writers and pro-NMT 'experts' boosting their research grants by proselytising in favour of NMT.

Passive acceptance

Breaking the pro-NMT monopoly in the academic world is part of the process of breaking down the passive acceptance of NMT in the unions across a wide spectrum from new realists to plain reformists who accept the ideology of 'profitability' and 'competitiveness'.

The book explains that not all Nissan workers are happy with the NMT regime; that the claims of democracy in NMT mean in



Japanese workers are already under the hammer

fact 'participation without determination, involvement without control'.

It shows how workers are disciplined via 'quality', how in order to carry out an operation in a standard way they have to have their thinking controlled.

Workers have to be simultaneously thinking of their own task, while checking their suppliers and on the tasks of others who are part of their 'team'.

Thus peer pressure in team working is part of what the authors call a 'regime of subordination'. Garrahan and Stewart quote a company training manual which explains that 'where there is no consensus' the team leader decides what is to be done. So in reality the company maintains complete control.

In this system there is no room for dissent. Workers who don't fit in are shown the door. Today it is individual workers, in the future it can be whole groups.

The 'Company Council' where workers sit in is just a stooge body. Nissan have solved the union 'problem' by having a single union deal with the AEEU, in which the union plays no role in the factory except collecting subs; the company asks workers to join the union!

The authors argue the importance of ideology in the subordination of workers. They say: 'it is the absence of an alternative world view that allows company notions to prevail.'

Where individual workers feel isolated and see the world other than through company eyes, there can be no counter-culture in which alternative views can develop.'

Nissan started from scratch and is thus not the norm. In other places, where NMT will be introduced, unions already exist with established agreements. But Nissan shows us where we will end up if NMT is not fought.

What spooked Harold Wilson?

Smear! Wilson and the Secret State

By Stephen Dorril and Robin Ramsay

Reviewed by David Coen

HAROLD WILSON has undergone something of a retrospective rehabilitation of late, with a spate of material looking back - often nostalgically - at the Labour governments of the sixties and seventies.

But when Stephen Dorril and Robin Ramsay (publishers of *Lobster* magazine) write about Wilson, they do so in the spirit of the old adage that just because you're paranoid, it doesn't mean nobody is trying to get you.

The book catalogues 'the longest sustained campaign against a major politician in British history'. Wilson's resignation in 1976 was prompted, the authors say, not by the torrent of manufactured press

scandals covering everything from his relations with his secretary to a rumoured communist cell at number 10, but simply by his desire to retire at 60.

The book shows how secret service attempts to discredit Wilson were actually instigated by sections of the ruling class that favoured a more class struggle-based approach to the problems of British economic decline and increasing trade union militancy of the early seventies.

There is little doubt these elements were planning a coup, especially after Labour's victory in the second general election of 1974.

Wilson had been President of the Board of Trade in the first post-war Labour government and as such encouraged trade with the USSR, making several trips to Moscow.

Many of the contacts he made in this period, especially those in the import/export business, were held up as evidence that Wilson was a Soviet agent. It was even suggested that Gaitskell was murdered by the KGB to ease Wilson's path to the Labour leadership.

Yet ironically, Wilson himself used the secret state against the labour movement, most notably in

the 1966 seamen's strike. Labour's leadership even used information from right wing industrialists or organisations against the left.

The Wilson story can be divided into three periods. First, the attempts to keep Wilson and Labour out of power, which finally failed in 1964; second, Wilson's deal with the US; third, when the bourgeoisie's strategy switched to replacing Labour with not just a normal Tory government, but one headed by a right-wing class struggle leadership.

Dorril and Ramsay argue that from 1964, Wilson covertly backed US cold war policy, especially in Vietnam. Nevertheless, this did not prevent the active CIA participation in campaigns against him and systematic promotion of Atlanticism within the Labour Party.

But the book is most interesting (and most disappointing) in its account of the post-1974 period, especially the emergence of Margaret Thatcher within the Conservative Party.

Much of the framework for this book came from the writings of former intelligence officers Fred Holroyd and Colin Wallace, who both served in Northern Ireland. But

there is disappointingly little information on the links between counter insurgency in the six counties and the struggle over the future direction of British politics.

Army reluctance to move against the 1974 loyalist strike which bought down the power-sharing executive had overtones of the Curragh mutiny of 1912, when it refused to move against armed loyalist opposition to the Home Rule Bill. The lesson was presumably not lost on Harold Wilson at a time of coups and rumours of coups, nor on Edward Heath.

The authors' thesis is that most plotting in the period resulted from an internecine battle between MI5 and MI6 and its numerous hangers-on, determined to find a role to replace its diminished responsibilities after the collapse of the empire.

They may have too easily dismissed the idea that shadowy groups bridging the (anyway narrow) gap between the intelligence services and the Tory right, together with such elements as Aims of Industry and the Freedom Association, conspired to remove not just Wilson but also Heath.

Kenyan masses must break from nationalists

By Bala Kumar

The result of Kenya's recent election – conceded after two years of growing popular discontent against the dictatorship and financial and diplomatic pressure from western governments – was predictable long before polling day.

The ruling Kenya African National Union party was always going to lose its parliamentary monopoly but remain the largest single party. Its leader Daniel Arap Moi would stay president on a minority vote.

Urban riots in 1990 were followed by the formation of Forum for Restoration of Democracy, a credible opposition based on the Kikuyu and Luo ethnic groups and dissident layers. But personality clashes saw the movement divide into Kenneth Matiba's FORD-Asili and veteran nationalist Odinga Odinga's FORD-Kenya in the run-up to the election.

While the urban middle classes were attracted to FORD's pro-democracy platform, the group represents a vehicle for the Kikuyu bourgeoisie, which had flourished under Kenya's first leader, Jomo Kenyatta.

However, Moi has freely distributed state largesse to his own minority Kalenjin people. Despite his rhetoric against 'tribalism', he has done much to foster ethnic divisions.

Last year saw many KANU-orchestrated killings in rural areas, designed both as an outlet for the frustrations of the landless and an attempt to drive the confused peasantry into Moi's arms.

Up to 50,000 peasants have been dispossessed, with 15,000 in refugee camps and 1,000 dead. The victims were Kikuyu, their assailants suspected to be Kalenjin.

Western-supported democracy movements are mushrooming across Africa. With the end of the 'communist' bogey, capitalism in crisis now seeks to scale down its proxy wars and expensive client regimes.

Siad Barre in Somalia fell after the US stopped financial and military

backing after the collapse of Ethiopia's pro-Moscow junta ended the need for a satellite in the region. Likewise, the withdrawal of American support has destabilised Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko.

Democracy movements are no longer exclusively based on the intelligentsia and urban professionals. International Monetary Fund-instigated austerity packages have created widespread recognition of the complicity of African governments with foreign capital and mobilised large sections of the population from all classes.

It is not in imperialism's interest to be outflanked by popular movements which could even topple their rulers. With opposition groups generally favouring free market policies, shifting support from even longstanding allies is not the gamble it would once have been.

But the absence of independent working class formations is depressing. Many leftist intellectuals – still carrying the ideological baggage of Stalinism and nationalism – even argue this is good, because the task is to consolidate bourgeois democracy and not advance working class, let alone socialist, demands. But class independence is now a vital step.

KANU was formed as a multi-class party. Like so many other nationalist parties, it created a single trade union federation, co-opted the leaders into the party and then broke working class struggles.

Strikes were a major weapon in the anti-colonial struggle but were banned when they threatened the neo-colonial elites. Social contracts were enforced to keep wages down and minimise industrial action.

In Zambia, the Movement for Multi-party Democracy rode to power on the back of the workers and poor peasants. It is now throttling them with austerity policies. Moi or no Moi, the same fate faces Kenya's oppressed until they wrestle state power for themselves.



Mark Salmon

Protected by police bans: West Midlands fascists

West Midlands Demanding the right to march against Nazis

By Jack Starkey and Pete Bloomer (Birmingham CARF)

LABOUR MOVEMENT activists in Walsall, West Midlands, are proposing a defend their right to march against fascism with a demonstration at a date in January or February this year.

The moves comes after police vetoed a march in Bloxwich, organised by Walsall District Labour Party, at extremely short notice last October.

Councillors arrested

Labour councillors John Rothery and Alan Paddock, and ex-councillor Pete Smith, were arrested when they turned up at the pre-arranged meeting point in defiance of the police ban.

Other demonstrators found their

coaches and cars turned back on the motorway.

Bloxwich has recently seen a dramatic increase in intimidation and propaganda from the fascist National Front and British National Party groupings. There have also been Ku Klux Klan-style cross burnings. Yet police apparently insist that racism is not a problem locally.

1,000-strong

Nevertheless, a planned rally at Walsall went ahead, and was attended by 1,000 people. The meeting, addressed by Clare Short MP and West Midlands TUC chief Sid Platt, declared its intention to march in the new year.

Birmingham Campaign Against Racism and Fascism is supporting that call, and is calling for a statement to be circulated nationally opposing the Police ban.

The labour movement and the black community have to right to march anywhere and this must be made clear to West Midlands Police – a force with an atrocious record of racism, intimidation, falsified evidence and corruption.

Thumbs up for unions?

Trade unions are no longer regarded by the general public as left dominated and are now seen as more moderate than at any time since opinion polling on the subject began 20 years ago.

According to market research commissioned by that bastion of labour movement moderation, the GMB general union, fewer people (34 per cent) agree that 'most trade unions are controlled by extremists and militants' than disagree (42 per cent).

The positive factor of +8 per cent compares with negative factors of -20 per cent in 1990, -40 per cent in 1984 and -43 per cent under the last Labour government in 1979.

Only 24 per cent agreed with the old Tory chestnut that unions have 'too much power', the lowest figure ever recorded. Some 80 per cent said yes to the question in 1979.

Popular perceptions of 'red moles' were always wide of the mark. Nevertheless, these latest results also reflect a very real drop in strike activity, Marxist influence and rank-and-file organisation.

Other results are more encouraging for us 'militants and extremists'. Some 63 per cent of the public agreed with the proposition: 'Bad management is more to blame than the trade unions for Britain's economic problems today'. Only 14 per cent disagreed.

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Speakers:

TONY BENN MP
Peter Purton

Wednesday 27 January 7.30pm
Ealing Town Hall, Uxbridge Rd., Ealing
Organised by Ealing Trades Council

Mushrooming support for sacked women

By George Thompson

IN MID-NOVEMBER 89 women workers were sacked by Middlebrook Mushrooms at Pateley Bridge near Selby, after an overtime ban.

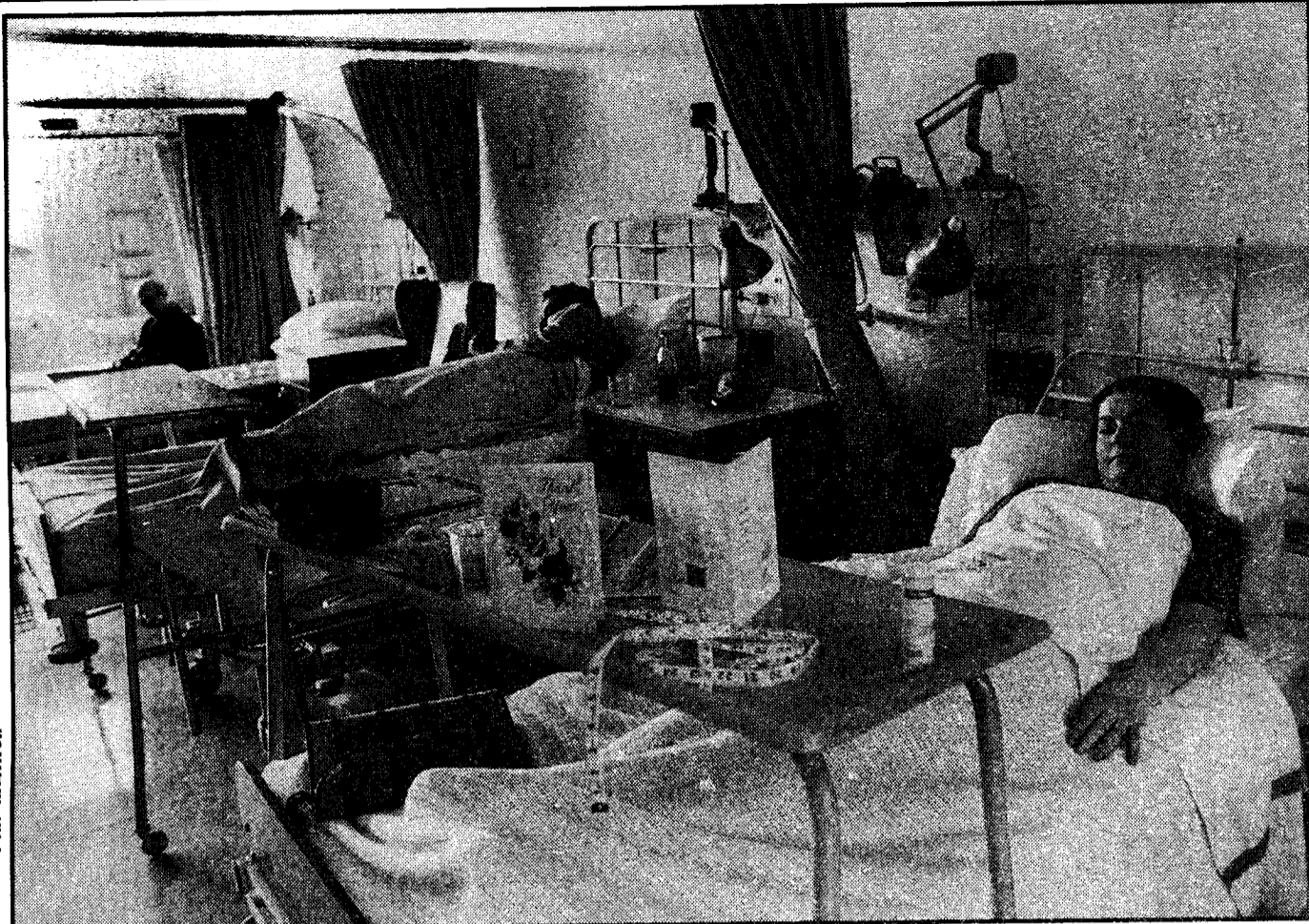
TGWU workers at the company had refused to accept a pay cut and enforced Sunday working. Last year they were only paid nine per cent above minimum rates and had a pay freeze.

The sacked women have been holding daily pickets at the Pateley Bridge farm, but have been prevented by the trade union laws from picketing other Middlebrook farms.

They have also organised protests at supermarkets supplied by Middlebrook, which include most of the big ones - ASDA, Safeway, Sainsbury's, Morrisons and Marks and Spencer. They have called for a boycott of Bookers, Middlebrook's parent company.

The dispute has been supported by local Labour parties, NUM and miners support groups - many of the women are from mining families.

Wider support is urgently needed for the women's struggle. For information, donations and speakers contact: TGWU, Bevin House, George St, Hull.



Phil Maxwell

With hospitals announcing temporary ward closures and halting non-emergency admissions all over London, patients, health workers and doctors are anxiously waiting for Virginia Bottomley's announcement on which hospitals are to close as a result of the Tomlinson Report. Health union COHSE is preparing for an offensive to smash the government's 1.5% pay limit on NHS staff.

Burnsall pickets face scabs' acid test

Bob Smith

THE 19 STRIKERS at Burnsall's Electroplating, 10 Downing Street (honestly), Smethwick, near Birmingham, are continuing their picket into the New Year.

Before Xmas several brutal attacks were made by the scabs, and the strikers (mainly Punjabi women) defended themselves.

West Midlands Police (notorious for their bigotry and racism) took it upon themselves to arrest two of the male pickets after one incident.

But they were released after the police failed to manufacture any credible evidence.

The scab violence continues however: pickets have been

spat on, kicked, punched and GMB official Danny Parry was threatened with a Stanley knife.

Earlier in the dispute a scab attacked the picket with an iron bar, he was restrained, but it was the pickets that faced a court case.

Acid has been thrown at GMB officials and strikers cars. The police are carrying out an investigation (4 weeks already). Burnsall's has gallons of the stuff. The police seem more interested in bothering the strikers about their coke brazier and caravan (donated by the victorious Alcan strikers).

North Staffs Women Against Pit Closures and the NUM Scottish Marchers, plus delegations from Trentham and Littleton NUM, have visited the picket. The strikers spoke with Peter Heathfield and Paul Foot at the Trentham NUM Rally, on Saturday 15 December and received a large collection after speaking at the HEM Heath (NUM) Social Club.

A Support Group to develop the struggle is being set up at the Indian Workers Association, Soho Road, Handsworth. Delegates are expected from Support Groups in London and Oxford.

Further information, donations and speakers: GMB, Thorn House, 2 Birmingham Road, Halesowen B63 3HP. 021-550-4888

Annie Hall picketing: the effect is shattering!

by Keith Sinclair

AT A TIME when employers like to deny the impact of any picketing it makes a change to have an employer claiming that 'picketing has had a calamitous effect on the business.'

Such, however, was the claim made by one Gerrard Henry in the High Court in December when he sought an injunction to prevent picketing of his shops in Beverley, Pocklington and York.

Henry had sought the injunction against three former employees, the husband of one of the women involved and Hull Trades Council.

The background to the court case is this. Henry employed the women involved when he ran a company called Decidedly Different Clothing Company.

One of the women, Ann Kavanagh, was sacked by Henry two years ago. Ann Kavanagh took Henry to an industrial tribunal and was awarded £6,500 compensation.

Before the money was paid, Henry wound up the company, sacked the remaining employees, but continued to trade as 'Annie Hall'. The women involved are campaigning for the £6,500 award to be paid to Ann Kavanagh.

In November, a delegation of Annie Hall women joined a demonstration in Hull against pit closures. Since then, Hull Trades Council has been supporting demonstrations to discourage shoppers from using the Annie Hall shops.

Picketing in York and Beverley was stepped up for the Saturdays before Christmas, potentially lucrative shopping days. The protests were obvious-

ly rattling Henry and he sought a High Court injunction to stop the picketing.

Hull Trades Council approached sympathetic lawyers, who were willing to take on the case. The judge rejected Henry's move for an injunction, and the picketing has continued.

Without the presence at court of the defendants and a sympathetic barrister, the injunction would have been granted and damages of thousands of pounds incurred.

The women were employed knitting very expensive woollen garments

such as jumpers at £170 a time. They were not in a union.

But scandalously their subsequent attempts to join a union have proved fruitless. Neither the GMB nor the TGWU have taken the opportunity to recruit a group of women who have shown their ability to wage a campaign that any union should be proud of.

The campaign for compensation for Ann Kavanagh continues.

Further details of the campaign are available from Hull TUC, PO Box 128, Hull.

UNITE TO FIGHT! PUBLIC MEETING READING

THURSDAY 19
JANUARY 1993,
7.30pm

- Support the miners
- No pay freeze
- No public sector cuts
- NO TO PRIVATISATION!

Reading Trades Union Club, Chatham St., Reading

Speakers from UCW, RMT, NUM etc.

Organised by Reading Trade Union Council and Reading RMT; supported by NUM, UCW, TSSA, MSF.

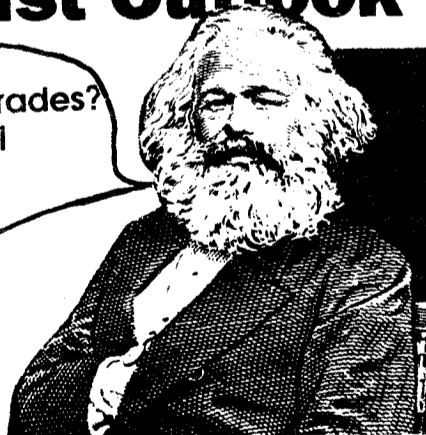
Interested in Voluntary Work?

Voluntary HIV organisation for the north west, George House Trust, is currently recruiting as volunteers people with organisational skills to work in areas such as fund raising, campaigning, training, information and publicity.

If you are interested call us on 061 839 4340 before 5 February 1993.

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socialist **OUTLOOK**



Act now to back the miners!

WOMEN HAVE moved to the forefront of the fight to save the coal industry, with plans for Greenham Common-style camps outside the ten pits in most danger of closure.

The first such camps, modelled on the peace camps outside US nuke bases in Britain in the early eighties, opened outside Yorkshire's Markham Main colliery and Trentham colliery near Stoke-on-Trent earlier this week. Others were expected to follow in short order.

The move has been initiated by Women Against Pit Closures, with full backing from the National Union of Mineworkers. Women supporters are welcome to stay at the camps.

WAPC is also organising a demo through London on February 6. Details on page five.

WAPC national demo London Feb 6