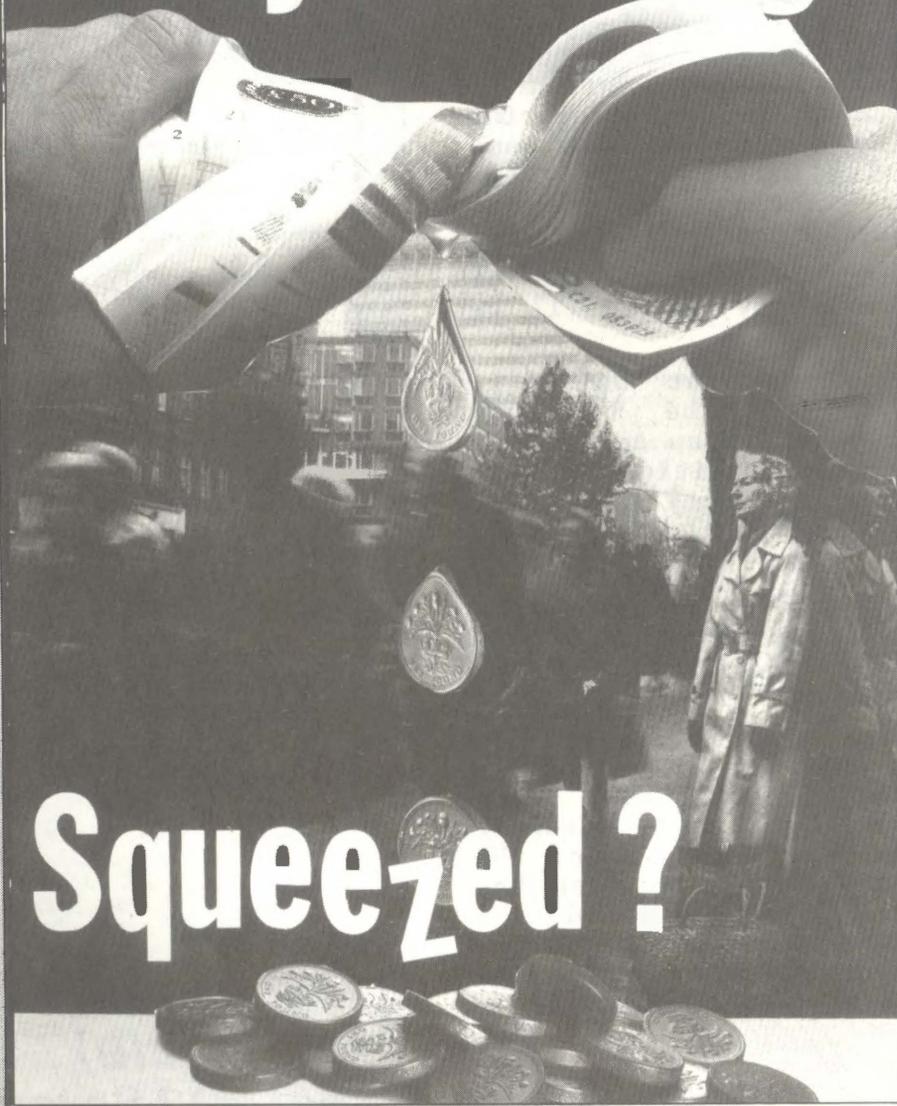


CLASS STRUGGLE

VOL. 15 NO. 6-7 JULY - AUG. 1991 30P

Are you being



Squeezed?



THE SOUNDS OF
BREAKING GLASS
—YUGOSLAVIA
ON THE BRINK

INSIDE

**Health Divide
& the Wealth
Divide**

**The National
Minimum
Wage Debate**

THIRD WORLD WARNING ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT

G7 Face 'Cancel The Debt' Demand

CLASS STRUGGLE

A declaration made by artists and intellectuals on the imperialist aggression on Iraq points out that: "The technological holocaust imposed on Iraq proves how so-called Western 'civilisation' - five centuries after the beginning of the extermination of the North American Indians - remains mad, barbaric and inhuman."

The declaration goes on to show how the 'new world order' and 'hundred years of peace' announced by President Bush mean an intensification of a war, by all possible means, against the people of the world, primarily taking the form of a war of the North against the South.

The North uses different means to pursue its ends. Wealth is transferred from the South to the North through the 1,300 billion dollars of debts. Raw material prices are kept low. Governments refuse to transfer technology. They close their markets to agricultural and manufacturing produce of the Third World. At the same time, they engulf its markets with their own overproduction. All in the name of freedom and democracy.

When all else fails, as in the case of Iraq, overwhelming military force will be used.

As the power of the Soviet Union ~~to~~ challenge the power of the USA has declined, so the power of Japan and Europe has risen. There is competition between the three great blocs. But they are united in their oppression and exploitation of the Third World.

People in Europe, too, face exploitation. While for a minority, the new Europe will bring greater wealth and benefits, many will find themselves poorer.

People in Europe must unite with those in the Third World who are the main force in the struggle against imperialism. Even now, when imperialism seems to be stronger than ever, there are many examples of the struggle to unite the people against the main enemy. These struggles and the people's organisations take many different forms. But as long as they are aimed against imperialism, we must support them.

POLITICAL PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE

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The Health Divide

The government's new health strategy document 'The Health of the Nation' sets out various targets for the health service to achieve. However, the direct link between poverty and health, publicly admitted for the first time by the Health Minister, is said to be too difficult to tackle! It is, therefore, left out!

If we compare illnesses and deaths across a range of diseases in different classes, inequality is increasing. Figures from other 'developed' countries consistently show this. It is the gap between rich and poor that matters most, rather than the overall wealth of the nation. There is evidence that this gap not only affects the health difference between classes, but is the most important factor known in the overall health of the nation. Japan, for example, has both the best life expectancy in the world, and also the most egalitarian income distribution.

It is therefore of no surprise that as the gap between rich and poor widens in this country, the death rate for men and women throughout the 15-45 year age range has been rising each year since 1985. New figures from the Institute of Fiscal Studies, commissioned by the House of Commons Social Security Committee, show the widening gap between rich and poor since the social security shake-up in 1988.

Inequality Grows

The number of people living below half average income in 1988 rose by 1.3 million, to 9.1 million. (This figure rises to 11.8 million, if

housing costs are allowed for.) In 1979, it had been 3.8 million. Between 1979 and 1988, the income of the poorest tenth of the population grew by 9.5% compared to 31.8% for the population as a whole. If we allow for housing costs, the gap is even wider: 2% and 33.5%.

It is unnecessary to tell working class people why poverty affects their health. It is obvious to them whether we talk about food, housing, education, stress, transport, working conditions or access to health care. It is also uncharacteristically honest of the Tories to say they cannot tackle these inequalities. Capitalism is, after all, based on the extraction of wealth from the majority by the minority. Every month, the papers are full of another set of bosses taking huge pay rises while their companies lay off workers. This month, we have British Gas chairman taking a 66% pay rise to £370,089 and the privatised company doubling profits to £1.65 billion, while families live round one gas fire and old people die of hypothermia.

The government's proposed objectives relate largely to persuading individuals to modify their lifestyle, without committing the government to spend more money on health care, nor to jeopardise any private profits.

Tobacco Profits

Take smoking, for example. There are several ways government can help people give up, or never start smoking. The easiest way is

to ban all tobacco advertising. A comprehensive study of thirty three countries by the New Zealand Toxic Substances Board established conclusively that legislation outlawing advertising does work. Since Norway's introduction of a ban in 1975, for example, there has been a sharp and continuous fall in smoking by young people. Our government remains resolutely opposed to the ban proposed by the European Commission.

The effect of this was succinctly described by a commentator: "Every day tobacco manufacturers have to recruit three hundred new cigarette smokers in this country to replace those customers who die prematurely of lung cancer and heart diseases. The marketing strategy to sustain this highly lucrative but lethal trade is straightforward. Ninety percent of cigarette smokers start before they are eighteen, so the weight of the industry's one hundred million advertising and sponsorship budget is aimed at the teenage market. That is where the potential recruits are - the lifeblood of an industry that knows its products will kill one in four of its customers."

The government's healthcare plans are not only largely irrelevant but they are cruelly unjust. They call on individuals to modify their lifestyle when government policies leave large numbers of people disadvantaged, in poverty and unable to enjoy the luxury of a choice of lifestyle.

Directors' Pay

Early this year, the stockbrokers, Kleinwort Benson, produced a 285-page book for the government, in connection with its plans to privatise the electricity supply industry.

The book was particularly aimed at prospective shareholders in the new companies, National Power and Power Gen and included information about the nature of the industry, its current financial situation and future prospects.

In a section dealing with the directors, the following paragraph noted: "The Company has established a remuneration committee, comprising non-executive Directors, to determine the remuneration and other terms of service of the Executive Directors. The remuneration committee has recommended that following the Offer for Sale the aggregate emoluments (including pension arrangements) of Executive Directors should be increased to levels which are more appropriate to a private sector company and those emoluments should incorporate performance-related payments. The Directors intend to follow this recommendation. The remuneration committee has also stated its intention, following the Offer for Sale, to review the service agreements of the Executive Directors to ensure that these are consistent with private sector market practice. In addition, at such time, the Directors will review the fees payable to the non-executive Directors."



In plain English, this announced that big pay increases could be expected, with the non-executive directors setting the rates for the executive directors who likewise would look after the pay of the non-executive directors. A clear case of 'You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours'.

National Power

On June 24th, it was announced that the Chief Executive of National Power, John Baker, had seen his salary rise by 59% to £135,000. Not surprisingly, there was a lot of public anger at this, not least from many of the company's employees, two thousand of whom expect to lose their jobs by September 1992. A week later it leaked out that this figure was for last year. He is now earning £240,000, three times more than in 1989 and almost double last year.



A very similar thing occurred at Power Gen where its Chief Executive, Ed Wallis, saw his pay rise by 169%, to just under £200,000.

Big pay increases for directors are not restricted to the electricity supply industry. The same practice can also be seen at work in all the recently privatised companies. For example, in the water industry, they range from 24% for the Group Managing Director of Anglian Water up to 119% for the Chairman of Thames Water. Highest paid executive for the latter company obtained a 33% pay rise which took his salary up to £209,000.

Largest pay increases in 1990

Company	Executive	Per cent rise
Tesco	Sir Ian MacLaurin	329.4
British Steel	Sir Robert Scholey	79.1
Cable & Wireless	Lord Sharp	61.4
National Westminster	Howard Macdonald	60.6
Cadbury	Dominic Cadbury	58.6
Enterprise Oil	Highest Paid	54.0
English China Clays	Highest Paid	53.8
Marks & Spencer	Lord Rayner	48.1
Bass	Ian Prosser	45.6
Prudential	Mick Newmarch	43.2
British Petroleum	Sir Peter Walters and Robert Horton	40.6

Highest paid directors in 1990

Executive	Company	Annual Salary	Weekly Pay
		£	£
Tiny Rowland	Lonrho	1,530,951	29,441
Sir Ian MacLaurin	Tesco	1,482,000	28,500
Lord Hanson	Hanson	1,457,000	28,019
Bob Bauman	SmithKline Beecham	1,224,000	23,538
Dick Giordano	BOC	1,024,582	19,703
Sir Peter Walters and Robert Horton	British Petroleum	996,517	19,164
Sir Ralph Halpern	Burton Group	817,000	15,712
Geoff Mulcahy	Kingfisher	754,000	14,500
Sir Paul Girotami	Glaxo	683,927	13,152
Sir Allen Sheppard	Grand Met.	639,105	12,209
Lord Sharp	Cable & Wireless	626,947	12,057
Lord Rayner	Marks & Spencer	619,961	11,922
Anthony Tennant	Guinness	615,000	11,827
Cyril Stein	Ladbroke	608,000	11,692

Source: Guardian Index of Top Executive Pay

At British Gas, Chairman Robert Evans last year enjoyed a 66% increase which put him on £370,089, no small improvement on the £222,889 he earned in 1989. At British Telecom, Ian Vallance accepted 43% which put him on well over half a million pounds a year.

Not Enough

The reaction of most people to these increases is that they are just outrageous. But that is not how men such as Sir Graham Day, Chairman of Power Gen, sees things. He went so far as to say that even on £200,000, his chief executive was still underpaid when compared with his equivalents in similar sized companies. In the same way, Sir Trevor Holdsworth, who earns £185,000 for his part-time job as Chairman of National Power, stated publicly that John Baker more than earned his money and was well worth what the company paid him.

Baker's salary had been worked out by considering the average base pay of the twenty five lowest paid executives in companies of a similar size to National Power. One might then well ask who are among the top twenty five highest paid executives.

As usual, Tiny Rowland, head of Lonrho, with an annual salary of over one and a half million pounds, is found at the top. He is followed by the head of the supermarket chain Tesco, Sir Ian MacLaurin, who received a 329% increase last year. This enabled him to push Lord Hanson, who is currently trying to buy ICI, into third place. His salary was last reported at something in the order of £28,000 a week!

Not surprisingly, many of the highest paid are to be found in the boardrooms of the big banks and building societies. During 1990, the highest paid executive was employed by Barclays. He received £553,921 some way in front of Howard MacDonald of the National Westminster, whose gross income was £497,612.

Need for Restraint

Robert Leigh Pemberton, Governor of the Bank of England, appears a long way down the list. He only got a 17% increase which put him on £155,019. Fairly recently he caused some controversy when he spoke out about the need for pay restraint in order to help get down the rate of inflation.

Perhaps in the circles in which he moves, 17% is considered modest, except of course when workers demand it.

Labour and the National Minimum Wage

Alongside all the coverage of massive pay rises for directors, the issue of the introduction of a national minimum wage is the latest political football kicked about by Labour and the Tories. For many Labour supporters, the national minimum wage is seen as a panacea for solving low pay. For the Tories, it is seen as an instant route to high unemployment and the reduction of employers' control in the workplace. There is some truth in both of these arguments. But so far the 'debate' has failed to hit the mark. What would be the real impact of introducing a national minimum wage?

Support in Principle

In general, communists should support the principle of a national minimum wage. It would obviously not change the inbuilt structure of the economy, which relies on low pay for its survival. But it is a reform to be fought for as it would help many very low-paid people. However, there are two major problems which must be tackled to ensure that a national minimum wage could work successfully. These are enforcement of a national minimum wage, and the impact it would have on employment.

Labour's Promises

The Labour Party and the TUC have supported the idea of a national minimum wage since 1986. Their intention is to bring it in at a level of 50% of male median earnings, and then gradually increase it to two thirds of male median earnings. The figure used as a starting point is £3.40 per hour. Estimates vary. But it is commonly thought that between 20% and 35% of workers in Britain currently earn less than £3.40 an hour.

Labour says it will establish a Fair Wages Commission to police the payment of the national minimum wage, but also hopes that it will become self-regulating.

Easily Enforced?

Britain already has legal minimum wages in various industries such as retail, hotel and catering, and hairdressing. They are governed by the Wages Councils



that set rates of pay for workers 21 and over. The main rates are now between £2.49 an hour in clothing to £2.96 in most shops. However, enforcement of these rates can be difficult. Workers fear losing their jobs if they demand their rights, particularly in small, unorganised workplaces. The present Wages Inspectorate is also ineffective in policing the system.

The True Impact

Let us suppose that, for once, Labour keeps its promises and after winning power, introduces the national minimum wage at £3.40 an hour. The problem of enforcing this has been discussed above. Employment law is very weak for workers in this country. For example, you must work for at least two years with an employer before you have the right to claim an unfair dismissal if your employer sacks you. If employment law is not changed alongside the introduction of a national minimum wage, it would be easy for employers to sack workers who demanded their legal rights.

Another example is that of workers being able to prove the wage that they are receiving. Although it is a worker's right to receive a payslip, many do not and the penalties for the employer are virtually non-existent. Employers could have records showing they paid the legal wage, while in fact they were only paying half the rate! Under current legislation, it would be up to the worker to prove otherwise.

Labour has also claimed that the introduction of a minimum wage across the board would only lead to a minimal increase in unemployment. However, in small businesses, running on tight profit

margins, this would be untrue. Many businesses pay around £2.00 an hour to workers, for example, care assistants in old people's homes and security guards. The move to £3.40 an hour would close many of these businesses, or lead to redundancies or reduction in hours worked.

Other factors are also ignored by the introduction of a national minimum wage: the increasing use of part-time workers, including no-hour contracts; the thresholds for tax and National Insurance that exclude many workers from benefits.

Ignoring Millions

As usual, the Labour Party has promised a change to the system which promises benefits to many people. But in fact it ignores millions of people. For workers in trade unions, where reasonable rates of pay have already been won, the new legal wage will be easy to enforce, and for many not necessary at any rate.

For the millions who are not in unions and for whom a guaranteed wage of £3.40 would be a real gain, it is not clear that the Labour Party will bring in laws which strengthen their employment rights in such a way that they will be able to enforce their rights.

One of the main problems for the Labour Party is that it pretends that the 'nation' will benefit as a whole. Even on an issue as basic as low pay, it claims that both workers and employers will benefit. No wonder that its position is woolly and impractical! When faced with the reality of implementing a legal minimum wage, we will have to be prepared to fight for it to keep a promise it is only too ready to make before an election.

The Wealth Divide

A Woman's Right to Choose



In a recent Harris poll, four out of five people in this country supported a woman's right to choose an abortion in the first three months of pregnancy. In the younger age group, 18-24 year olds, there was 90% support - a reflection no doubt of growing up in a society where abortion has been legal since 1967. The fact that it is legal and supported by the vast majority does not, however, mean that it is available in practice.

Indeed, abortion services are constantly threatened, both by their low priority in a shrinking National Health Service (NHS) and by the vangelical minority who oppose them. For example, a recently opened day-care abortion clinic at St James Hospital, Leeds, was invaded a few weeks ago by forty anti-abortion protesters. They carried banners and models of human embryos and sat down among women waiting for treatment.

This sort of behaviour, and much worse, is common in the USA where abortion rights are in great jeopardy. Recently the USA Supreme Court has ruled that health workers in family planning clinics receiving federal funds cannot discuss abortion with patients. This means four thousand clinics will have to decide whether to forfeit federal funding or abide by

the ruling.

Other Rights

Abortion is only one aspect of women's reproductive rights which are coming under threat, from legal measures and through lack of availability. For example, female sterilisation has already been rationed in some NHS regions and the future of health authority family planning clinics is uncertain in the new marketplace NHS.

Subfertility services are a growth area in the private sector. But not so in the NHS. A fertility helpline, set up by the National Association for the Childless in July 1990, is estimated by British Telecom to have had over 11,000 attempted contacts over six months. Of the 800 who did get through, eighty percent complained that their GP was unsympathetic and many complained of lack of information and long waiting lists.

British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) has just closed its donor insemination and infertility clinics - a real blow to women as BPAS has a reputation for treating single and lesbian women who are refused help elsewhere. BPAS believe that their resources are better concentrated on contraception and that other clinics will take on the

subfertility work. But it remains to be seen if single women will be able to obtain artificial insemination by donor. It is after all the ultimate threat to men!

Europe

Other European countries all have different laws and services relating to reproductive rights and vigilance is needed as 1992 approaches. German abortion laws give rise to bureaucratic and practical difficulties such that women often travel to the Netherlands for their abortion. However, if German customs officials discover this, the women are arrested, may be forced to undergo an examination by a gynaecologist, and then prosecuted. In several countries, abortion is still illegal.

There is good news as well! Maternal mortality figures (deaths of women due to childbirth) in the UK continue to improve. In the three years 1985-87, there were 139 deaths, putting the mortality rate at 7.6 per 100,000 births. This compares with 57 deaths per 100,000 births in 1955.

History is full of wonderful women who died young in childbirth. So let's celebrate that in 1991, childbirth is safer.

Mandy's Diary

June 25th: A couple of months ago, I wrote about plans for a "women's only" car parking scheme in Birmingham. I might have known that it wouldn't become a reality. Labour-controlled Birmingham City Council has scrapped the scheme on the advice of its Legal Department and the Equal Opportunities Commission. They probably argued that such a scheme would discriminate against men! When was the last time a man was followed, harassed, intimidated, raped or murdered by a woman, in a dark car park late at night? It doesn't happen. There is not a need for "men only" car parks. So how the scheme could contravene Equal Opportunities legislation is beyond me.

June 29th: Another little gem to add to my collection of signs in the rear windows of cars: **"This car is being expertly driven by DEBBIE: ex-call girl, ex-nympho, ex-maniac, ex-pensive."** And again, a woman was driving! Why does she tolerate it?

June 30th: Women who refuse to tolerate sexism and sexual harassment at work get a helping hand from the new European Community regulations to be published this week. Companies will be urged by the government to follow a code of practice aimed at reducing sexual harassment. Although the code will not have the force of law, it will make it easier for women to claim sexual harassment at industrial tribunals and in company disciplinary hearings. It would be an important boost for workers demanding the removal of objectionable pictures.

Five types of "unwanted conduct of a sexual nature" are listed in the code:

1. Physical: unnecessary patting, pinching or brushing against another worker's body, assault, and coercing sexual intercourse.
2. Verbal: unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sex, innuendo or lewd comments.
3. Non-verbal: pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures, objects, or written materials, leering, whistling, or sexually suggestive gestures.
4. Intimidation: offensive comments about performance at work, dress or appearance.



5. Requiring 'sexual compliance' in return for job perks or advantages.

The fact that this was "met by a mixture of ridicule, disbelief and delight" shows just how widespread and deeply entrenched the problem is!

July 2nd: The man who was sent to prison for raping his wife had his appeal heard in the House of Lords today. He's got nerve, I'll say that for him. He is arguing that women consent to sex when they marry, and it can only be revoked by mutual agreement or a court order. (Show me where in the marriage service it says: "I agree to have sex any time you want it.") He quotes a principle established in 1736, when married women were regarded as their husbands' property. He argues that since the law has not been changed, it still stands. Let's hope the Lords are not such fuddy-duddies as to go along with him.

July 10th: Three weeks ago, the baby food company, Farley, conducted a survey among 431 mothers with babies under 18 months. Four fifths of the women questioned said that motherhood made them feel like second-class citizens. I know the feeling. There are many situations where you feel you have to apologise for having children with you and for what they might do. I can remember for example, queuing in the bank with a two-year-old who suddenly ran out of the door. I ran after her and brought her back. But I had lost my

place in the queue. Everyone stared at me. There was nothing for it but to join the end of the queue.

I used to take my children to meetings, concerts, restaurants. I don't any more. I got sick of feeling guilty every time they made a noise and people glared at me. It even happened in the doctor's surgery, would you believe?

And how many times have I struggled on buses with baby, pushchair and shopping, when other passengers do nothing but sit and stare?

So I wasn't surprised, although very saddened, to read today of the woman who was turned away from an exhibition because she had her baby with her.

The exhibitors had agreed a "no children" policy. Our society is very anti-children. But most people have them, at one time or another. Children are a fact of life. Imagine how children feel if everywhere they go, they are not wanted, they have to sit still and be quiet and they can't be part of what is going on. It's no wonder that some of them grow up with anti-social attitudes.

And a "no children" policy is discrimination against women, because it is usually women who stay at home with them. You don't see men walking into an exhibition with a baby in a sling or queuing in the bank with a two-year old, or struggling on a bus with a pushchair, baby and shopping. They have wives to do that for them, while they get on with the important things in life.

YUGOSLAVIA CRUMBLES

At the end of June, the Yugoslav army acted against the secessionist movements in Croatia and Slovenia. After months of discussing the issue, the parliaments of the two republics had decided to declare their independence. They were opposed by the central government all along, but believed that it was Serbian dominated, and unable and unwilling to negotiate separation with them.

History

Yugoslavia came into being following the First World War. Serbia tended to dominate things from the beginning. The entire area which now makes up Yugoslavia was conquered by the Ottoman Turks between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Serbs had put up a stout resistance, but were crushed at the Battle of Kosovo (now at the heart of the region of that name, which has an Albanian majority).

Gradually, after the Ottoman advance reached its highwater mark with the siege of Vienna in 1683, the Turks were pushed back further and further into the Balkans. Austria (later to become the Austro-Hungarian Empire) advanced to take over the Hungarian, Slovenian and Croatian-inhabited areas. Then, early in the nineteenth century, the Serbs revolted against the Turks, and established a small, independent state, with Russian support. They were not satisfied with this state, as most Serbs remained outside it, and for the next ninety years, Serbian nationalists worked towards the day when they could bring all Serbs into one state.

Events snowballed at the beginning of this century. There was a Serbian minority in the border areas of Bosnia, to Serbia's north west. But Bosnia and Herzegovina were detached from the Ottoman Empire only to be swallowed up by Austria-Hungary in 1908. In 1912-1913, the Balkan War resulted in the expulsion of Turkey from all but a toehold in Europe, and Serbia more than doubled its territory to incorporate Macedonian and Albanian areas to its south, as well as other Serbian regions.

Serbia's leaders now looked to the north, to the neighbouring



Slav lands under Austro-Hungarian rule. The chief body now working to detach these areas from Austria-Hungary was a secret society called the Black Hand, which dominated the Serbian intelligence service. Serbian intelligence supplied weapons and money to the Young Bosnians, who wanted to overthrow Austrian rule.

First World War

On July 28th, 1914, one of them succeeded in assassinating the visiting heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, triggering the crisis which led to the outbreak of the First World War a month later. (Given the increasing rivalry between the major imperialist powers, any crisis could have led to armed conflict: the First World War was just waiting to happen.)

As a result of this war, Austria-Hungary ceased to exist, with consequences that were not always happy. Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia were joined with Serbia and the small south Slav state of Montenegro to form the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and

Slovenia. The new state included Hungarian and Italian minorities, and yet it did not contain all the south Slavs: a Slovene minority remained in Carinthia, southern Austria. It became Yugoslavia by name in 1929.

Croatian nationalists twice left the Yugoslav parliament between the two World Wars, and some Croats gave their support to the far right nationalist group, the Ustashi, one of whose members assassinated the King of Yugoslavia during a state visit to France in 1934. When Nazi Germany overran Yugoslavia in 1941, it made use of the national divisions within it to try to weaken resistance and find allies. Most of Slovenia was annexed to Greater Germany; the rest, to Italy. Croatia became nominally independent, under a puppet Ustashi regime. A puppet regime was also established in the shrunken remnant of Serbia, which lost Macedonia to Bulgaria.

The Communist-led partisan movement against the Axis powers spread to most parts of Yugoslavia. Besides German and Italian forces, it took on

A RECENT VISIT

Contributed

At the end of May, I went to Yugoslavia with my family for a fortnight's holiday. I knew before we set off about the growing tension between Serbia and Croatia. But as we were going to stay at Lake Bled in Slovenia for seven days before going down to the Istrian coastline, I did not feel too worried.

As things turned out, later fighting took place and people died in the area around which we travelled and Ljubljana airport, into which we had flown, was bombed. But I was not to know that this was going to happen when I entered the country for my first visit since 1966.

I was interested to see how things had changed. But I was much keener to discover what was going on now. I knew that this would not be easy: language is always a problem and you cannot just walk up to people in the street and ask them their views.

the Croatian fascists, and also came to blows with a Serbian-based partisan group, which it considered to have a chauvinist position towards the other nationalities. After a costly and courageous struggle, the Communist-led partisans liberated the country.

Under Tito

Following the war, under the leadership of Tito (himself a Croat), the Communists countered the historic divisions within the multi-national state by repressing nationalists of all kinds, while simultaneously turning Yugoslavia into a federal state, of equal republics. While Tito was alive, this seemed to work. But the old problems have surfaced once more since he died. Central economic planning on the Soviet model was only tried briefly in Yugoslavia, and there were wide differences in the pace of development of the different republics and regions of Yugoslavia. Serbia actually lagged behind Croatia and Slovenia, although the poorest part of the state was the region of Kosovo. Economic factors intensified national conflicts. Many Slovenes, in particular, believed that, as the wealthiest of Yugoslavs, with more in common with the countries to their north culturally than with Serbia, they could be better off becoming independent and fully integrated into the West European economic and political system.

Every nation has the right to self-determination, the Slovenes and Croats included. If they wish to leave Yugoslavia, they should not be stopped from doing so. Yet they may well find that establishing new mini-states in a world dominated by transnational corporations, and in which a West European superpower with Germany at its core plays a major role, could leave them with as many problems as it solves.

One further point: when British politicians mouth support for Slovene and Croat aspirations, they might be reminded how many of them supported going against the wishes of a majority of Scots for a national assembly in the devolution referendum not so many years ago.

Growing Tension

Each day I looked at the newspaper headlines and front page photographs. From them I could sense the growing tension. But it was not until the last day of my holiday, that I was able to get any real insight into Yugoslavia's crisis situation. This came from a long conversation I had with the old woman in whose house we stayed. What she told me did not explain everything. Because we had to converse in German, much was lost or not fully understood. But what I was able to translate helped me understand a lot better what is involved in Yugoslavia today.

Our landlady - let me call her Anna - began by telling me that she had been brought up in Slovenia, but had lived for the last forty years since getting married in Croatia, near her husband's village. This helped her to be neutral (she probably meant objective) about the situation in a country where nationalist views seem to cloud every issue.

Privatisation

The first thing Anna talked about was the general economic situation. Just like in England, we have got privatisation and market forces. As a result, a few people have become very well off, but many have become much poorer. There are thousands of people with no jobs now. Many are young people. They are angry and they want to blame something or someone. But they don't know who or what.

In the past we were all poor. But we were all poor together. There were no great differences between us. Now when people are poor, they are much more left on their own. I am not a Communist. But I think that things were much better for the ordinary people in the past.

Danger of Fascism

Then Anna lowered her voice and went on to say that there is a real threat of fascism gaining ground in Yugoslavia. In some parts of Croatia, those who hold power at local level have links with the Ustashi movement. During the war, the Ustashi fought alongside the Nazis; they carried out many atrocities particularly against the Serbs. Maybe now you can understand better why those Serbs who live inside Croatia are afraid, literally for their lives. But then she went on to talk about the Chetniks, extreme Serbian nationalist. In her words, they were just as bad as the Ustashi. One is against the Serbs just because they are Serbs. The other is against the Croats, just because they are Croats.

Many Nations

I asked whether there had always been such bitter hatred in Yugoslavia. Our history is complicated, Anna said. But there has been nothing like what is going on now, since the end of the (Second World) War. There are thirty three nationalities living in this country, and when Tito was in power, we managed to get along reasonably well. Since his death, splits and national differences have come right out into the open, and the extreme right wing groups have exploited them.

I asked Anna about the government and her opinions on its actions in dealing with the issues. Her reply seemed confused, or maybe I just did not understand. She thought the government was trying to use the army, as a sort of peace-keeping force, as a buffer between warring groups. But at the same time, she kept referring to Belgrade as imperialist, and when I enquired about events in Kosovo, she replied that the trouble between the Albanians and the government was all the fault of the latter.

Soon our conversation came to an end, as my limited German dried up and I could not longer understand what she was saying. The next day we said 'Auf Wiedersehen', but even now watching the events in Yugoslavia unfold on the television, I remember much of what she had told me.

Philippines

In 1990, the Philippines government commissioned from the United Nations Development Programme a study of the economy, which was published this April. This study pointed out that the Aquino government had failed to achieve economic recovery. Among the reasons for this, the UN report gave the government's insistence on paying off foreign loans. It said that if creditors prove unwilling to grant debt-relief, the government should simply default in payment.

The Philippines owe around US \$28 billion. But economic growth is falling. In order even to keep up payment of interest, the government has to increase the exploitation of their resources for export. This leads in turn to further impoverishment and dispossession of the people and resistance, led by the Communist Party and defended by the New People's Army.

In 1986, Aquino declared that the Philippines would pay back all its debts. This has led to the opening up of new areas for exploitation of timber and mineral resources; suppression of trade unions; development of the sex industry to attract tourists and the continued export of labour, mainly women, to earn foreign exchange.

The People Pay

The results for the people were summed up: "The Filipino people are paying for the foreign debt through higher costs for basic commodities and services such as rice and oil and education; through inadequate funding of government programmes such as feeder roads and bridges, irrigation, electrification, new schools and health centres; a lack of interest in the development of labour intensive, domestically oriented industries; the imposition of more taxes; continuing inflation.."

The Freedom from Debt Coalition has worked out a comprehensive programme as an alternative to paying back the debts, including: a moratorium on foreign debts; disengagement from loans that do not benefit people; limit debt service to 10%; oppose IMF and World Bank conditions; using funds saved to alternative programmes that benefit the people and developing effective options to counter retaliation by the financial institutions of the North.



A CYCLE OF POVERTY

Women's organisations in the Philippines have pointed out that while the majority of the people suffer as a result of the foreign debt, it is women who bear the brunt of poverty and exploitation, as in many other countries in the world. In a article, 'The Debt Crisis: A Cycle of Poverty', the effects for women of this western-imposed system are spelled out:

*** Although women make up half the world's population, they account for only one third of the recognised labour force.

*** Women put in more than sixty percent of the world's working hours. But their wages and salaries constitute only one tenth of total wages and salaries paid.

*** Women own less than one percent of the world's wealth in terms of land and property, capital and the means of production.

*** Women's work and responsibilities are largely unrecognised, unvalued and unremunerated; much of their work is invisible as a result of it being relegated to the domestic and private sphere.

*** Women perform forty to sixty percent of all farm work in the Philippines.

*** Women are concentrated in low status, low-paying work which does not lead to their empowerment.

*** Many women work a triple day: in the home, in subsistence economic activity and in wage labour.

*** Women are increasingly solely responsible for families.

*** Globally about 500 million people suffer from malnutrition, women and children being the most affected.

*** Globally about 20 million people die annually of hunger related causes and one billion endure chronic undernourishment and other poverty deprivations - the majority are women and children.

*** Women are the majority of the world's refugees.

*** Women are the majority of the world's illiterates.

*** Women are the most marginalised and disempowered in the development process.

CANCEL THE DEBT

On July 13th, protestors marched through London to protest against the G7 Summit. Leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the USA meet in London on July 17th. Publicity has focussed on the possibility of a deal with Gorbachev who will meet with G7 leaders after their meeting. Far more important will be decisions of the meeting in relation to Third World debt and the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Protestors demanded 'Cancel the Debt'. Speakers at the rally included those active in movements against IMF-imposed 'austerity programmes' and against repayment of the debts: Leone Briones, from Freedom from Debt Coalition, the Philippines; Hussan Sunmonu, General Secretary of the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity and Martin Khor, Third World Development Network, Penang.

Stealing the Wealth

Direct exploitation of the resources of the Third World by Western companies continues of course, in many different areas. The big companies, based in Western countries and Japan, also continue to make huge profits from their manufacturing subsidiaries in Third World countries. But in the last decades, control through financial means, loans and subsequent repayments, has become an increasingly important way that the West and Japan drain the wealth of the peoples of the Third World. Between 1983 and 1990, for example, developing debtor countries paid the North US \$325 billion more than they received.

In order to receive loans, Third World governments are usually forced to submit to the conditions of the IMF or World Bank, the biggest financial institutions concerned. These conditions mean cutbacks in services to people, removal of subsidies on food and other necessary goods and an export-led strategy which does nothing to develop the local economy.

The result of these policies by the North has been major setbacks for most Third World countries, with increasing poverty, death rates and declining standard of living, even if they have meant growing wealth for the minority. The organisers of the demonstration on 13th July quoted Luis de Silva, from Brazil:

"I tell you the Third World War has already started. This war is tearing down ... practically all of the Third World. Instead of soldiers, there are children dying, instead of the destruction of bridges, there is the tearing down of factories, hospitals, and entire economies. It is a war over the foreign debt, a



war which has as its main weapon, interest."

Political Control

In recent years, some governments in the Third World have threatened to refuse to pay back the debts. The financial institutions of the North became so concerned that they worked out various deals to negotiate delayed repayments. Speculators have even started buying and selling debts from the banks. Cancellation of debts has also become a major political weapon which the North can wield to put pressure on other countries. Egypt, for example was rewarded for its support of the USA in the Gulf War, with complete cancellation of all its military debts.

While any delays or re-negotiation may give governments a breathing space and give short-term relief to the people, in the long-term the only solution is for the debts to be cancelled. There can be no justification for this transfer of wealth from the poorest countries of the world to the richest.

'Cancel the Debt' is a just demand that should be supported.

For more information, contact:
Cancel the Debt,
c/o IFAA,
23 Beventen Street,
London N1 6BH.
Tel: 071-281-8148.

RTZ- IN WHOSE INTEREST?

On May 23rd, representatives of communities worldwide made their protests at the annual general meeting of British company, Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ). They testified before shareholders that RTZ and its associated company, CRA were involved in projects which threaten hundreds of indigenous people in the Philippines and Australia.

Rikki Shields, an aboriginal Australian, relayed a message from the Martu people of the Western Desert of Australia in which they vehemently opposed the opening of a uranium mine on their traditional land: "Our whole way of life is being changed against our will.. The mining companies steamroll through our beloved lands..."

From the Philippines, Manny Na-Oy, testified on behalf of the community of Tabbak in Mankayan province, where CRA

is in a joint venture with the Philippines company, Lepanto. Manny relayed the community's fears that one hundred and fifty indigenous farmers and their families would be removed from their ancestral lands, while their waters would be polluted and their sacred burial sites dug up.

Others representing overseas communities included John Bamford, who had been asked to intercede on behalf of the Mineworkers' Union of Namibia; Phil Toyne, the leader of a recent expedition to Ecuador... and Liem Soei Liong from Indonesia concerned about the impact of a CRA goldmine on Dayak people on the island of Kalimantan.

For more information, contact:
People Against RTZ,
218 Liverpool Road,
London N1 1LE,
Tel: 071-609-1852.

BUILDING A FUTURE

Following the conclusion of the peace talks in London on May 28th, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) assumed state responsibility and became the Provisional Government of Ethiopia. The talks were followed up by a meeting on July 1st to determine the nature of the transitional government which will lead Ethiopia to the first democratic elections in its history.

Immediate Needs

Immediate relief assistance is needed, on a large scale. There is an urgent need for fuel and trucks, and spare parts, especially tyres, to move the food stocks available in Assab and Djibouti. Cash is needed to purchase what grain surpluses there are in Ethiopia. These are not enough to meet all the country's needs, but their purchase will enable people to hold out until the aid promised by the international community arrives. This is a very urgent matter: while the European Community has promised 400,000 tons of food, relief aid deliveries from the EEC can take a long time. For those now facing starvation, particularly the sick, the elderly and the young, even a month's delay could prove fatal.

Rehabilitation & Recovery

The provisional government is preparing an integrated proposal for countrywide relief and recovery programmes. It will be calling upon the international community for relief supplies to drought victims and refugees throughout the country, for rehabilitation inputs to enable people to

become active producers, independent of food aid, and for assistance in restoring and maintaining essential services in communications and transportation, health and education.

The provisional government has announced a plan for demilitarisation of Ethiopia. The Dergue had built up an army of over 450,000. These people need to be retrained to enter civilian life. The new army will be about 60,000 strong.

The new situation in Ethiopia means that donors can be assured that funds or goods sent to Ethiopia will not now be held back from sections of the population for political or military reasons, but will be distributed on the grounds of need. In fact, most military vehicles have been diverted into the nationwide relief organisation.

(Information from the Relief Society of Tigray, European Office, 211 Clapham Road, London SW9 0QH.)

You can help by putting pressure on your MP and MEP demanding that the British government and the EEC give urgent aid to the new government. Write to them!



The wars which have wracked Eritrea and Ethiopia for so long have now been brought to an end. But the problems facing the country are enormous. Seven million people face starvation. The treasury has been looted by the old regime. The country is awash with arms. For so long the country has been geared to war. Now peace presents a unique opportunity to tackle these problems. If the international community acts now with speed and resolution, mass starvation can be averted and Ethiopia can be helped on its democratic path.

Aseffa Mamo, Public Relations chief of the EPRDF London office, talks about the situation in Ethiopia today.

"Our priorities are to restore order in the country, to facilitate the relief operation to all those in need, whether Ethiopians or refugees, and to restore and maintain essential services. Of course, all these are intrinsically connected.

"Many people predicted a bloodbath when we entered Addis Ababa. There were thousands of government soldiers and hundreds of automatic weapons in the city. (Later more than 80,000 automatic weapons were handed in.) As it happened, after some fighting at the presidential palace, we established peace and order very quickly. All observers have commented on the discipline of our fighters....

"The EPRDF programme calls for multi-party democratic elections, under international supervision, and for the right of self-determination to be guaranteed for all Ethiopia's nationalities up to and including the right to secede.

"Unity is only meaningful if it is voluntary. The best guarantee of unity is a democratic Ethiopia, at peace, where all nationalities have equal rights, politically, economically, culturally and linguistically.

"If some nationalities decide, after the holding of democratic referenda in which all options are presented to the people, to seek independence, that is their right. To deny this right is not only wrong, it means war, and you do not need a referendum to tell you that the overwhelming majority of people in Ethiopia and Eritrea want peace....

"What we want now is help to fight the famine and the development assistance to help Ethiopia stand on its own two feet....

"...The very name of Ethiopia has become associated with famine and starvation. With peace and a democratic government, there is no reason why Ethiopia could not feed itself and even export food to our neighbours."

What Cause for Celebration?

On June 21st, the Queen and leaders of all the big political parties attended the parade to greet the victory of the West over Iraq in the recent Gulf War. This 'celebration' in Britain was relatively low-key compared with events in the USA. But it still marked one step in the process of covering up the truth about what went on in Iraq; the reasons for the war and the nature of this war.

Since the end of the war, more information has become available showing the importance of the disinformation war that had been waged. This war was largely aimed at people in the West. In the Third World, people have long seen through the lies of western governments and agents.

The first stage in this disinformation war was preparation leading up to the war. It aimed to make people believe that the Iraqi army was massive and powerful, armed with all kinds of horrific and 'illegal' weapons. Journalists have written about this stage in a recent paper for the International Press Institute.

Disinformation

For example, David Beresford, of 'The Guardian', wrote:

"I found myself lurching on different occasions with field intelligence officers who gave details of supplies of chemicals held by the Iraqis in front-line positions and how they intended using them. It was with chagrin that I realised, in the aftermath of the war, that there has been no evidence whatsoever that the Iraqis had chemical agents in the Kuwait theatre of operations."

When the war actually started, there was little accurate reporting of the effect of the bombing within Iraq. The war

Declaration of artists and intellectuals on the imperialist aggression against Iraq, February 1991.

The strategic aims of the Western powers were unequivocal:

- *** to ensure control over the oil resources of the Middle East so as to determine the amount produced, and its price.
- *** to uphold the regimes in the area, especially those of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which guarantee Western control over oil.
- *** to destroy the military and economic potential of Iraq, the only Arab country capable of questioning the imperialist and Zionist domination of the area, and prepared to do so.
- *** to install permanent military bases and station fleets throughout the area, with the aim of imposing Western command.
- *** to guarantee Israeli supremacy over all Arab nations.
- *** to deny Arab nations access to military technology, which would enable them to oppose military forces.

was presented as a video-game, with precision bombs hitting targets and little mention of the suffering and damage to people and the economy. There was little publicity of the fact that the vast majority of bombs dropped were inaccurate. It has now been revealed that even the RAF refused on occasions to bomb targets ordered by the USA, because of their concern about civilian deaths.

Most notorious of all, was the cover up and dressing up in the language of victory, of the massacre of Iraqi troops, already in retreat from Kuwait, many of them waving flags of surrender. It is now thought that between 100,000 and 200,000 Iraqi soldiers lost their lives in the war, as many as half of them in the 100 hours of the final phase. A recent Greenpeace report estimates that as many as 25,000 Iraqis were killed on the Basra road and other retreating convoys from Jahra to Iraq.

Covering Up

The media in Britain has continued its disgraceful record by not reporting the results of fact-finding missions that went to Iraq after the war ended. An all-French team, comprising a

professor of medicine, an army general and lawyers described what they found in Iraq as "apocalyptic". They said that it was the first time in history that an entire country had been forced back into a state of underdevelopment, the consequences of which were "incalculable". Only one newspaper in Britain, 'The Glasgow Herald' has reported this in depth. Their correspondent wrote:

"Massive allied bombing of Iraq, combined with a trade embargo still in force despite Baghdad's acceptance three months ago of the UN resolution ending the Gulf War, have made large-scale famine and epidemics a certainty...."

The effects of the war have been disastrous for other Third World countries as well, through diversion of resources to the military attack. A report by Britain's non-government development agencies said: "At least forty developing countries are facing the equivalent of a natural disaster... Millions have seen their poverty deepened by the wider effects of the crisis."

This so-called new world order, much heralded by Bush, means increased exploitation for the majority of the world's people. There is little new about this. What is new is the lack of challenge from the Soviet Union and China, who are now themselves dependent on the imperialist order.

For the people of the Third World, it means increased determination to oppose the existing order. People in Britain and other countries of the North, who themselves face growing oppression and exploitation have to see through the layers of disinformation and take a stand with the anti-imperialist forces of the South.

The barbarous aggression of the imperialist world against Iraq marks the beginning of a new hundred year war, a war between the North and the South, or, more specifically, a war which the power structures of the North will wage against the peoples of the South, but also, in other forms, against their own workers.

The spontaneous popular reactions engulfing the Third World since the beginning of the Iraqi holocaust, announce a new dawn for humanity.

Five centuries of genocide, carnage and humiliation have nourished the hatred of the oppressed for their aggressors. In spite of the terror set up by the collaborating regimes, the people are organising for struggle. They are striving to master science and technology as weapons of liberation.

Whatever the twists and turns of the new Hundred Years War, imperialism will come to an end and the people will eventually be victorious.

WE ARE NOT THAT NAIVE

For well over a year, British propagandists have been selling the "all party" talks, organised under the auspices of Northern Ireland Minister, Peter Brooke, as a major peace "initiative".

Of course, Sinn Fein did not get an invitation to the party, even though they represent 35% of the nationalist electorate. Not that they were surprised or even disappointed. Gerry Adams pointed out shortly after the talks had begun that Sinn Fein "is not critical of the current British process because we are not involved... if it produces a permanent and peaceful political solution, we will welcome it. But we are not that naive."

Talking Loud, Saying Nothing

Inevitably the talks - which, let us remember, were "talks about talks" - came to

nothing. For ten weeks after its April 26th meeting, the Anglo-Irish Conference was suspended so that unionist politicians could sit down with the SDLP and the Alliance Party to agree a format for involving the Dublin government in the talks.

Wrangle followed wrangle as the unionists tried to postpone the day when they might have to sit down with Dublin government ministers. Eventually they announced that, if the next scheduled meeting of the Anglo-Irish Conference went ahead on July 16th, they would pull out of the talks. Faced with this ultimatum, Brooke chose to end the talks himself rather than see them collapse.

Obstacle to Progress

So the talks, originally intended to lead to some form of devolved government in the

north of Ireland, fell apart over procedure. None of the harder political questions - how much devolution the British government and unionist politicians were prepared to countenance and how much power they were prepared to share - ever got onto the agenda. The unionists as ever proved the obstacle to making any progress: unable to share a table with nationalist Ireland, they were hardly likely to share the running of a country.

The really big and outstanding issue, the question of British involvement in Irish affairs, was never really up for discussion. Brooke's "peace plan" failed, like all other British government initiatives, because it refused to face up to this fundamental question. It failed to recognise that the real problem is the Northern Ireland state itself and the British presence which keeps it in place.

Hidden Agenda

At the end of the day then, after all the fanfare it was all a bit of a disappointment. Peter Brooke hinted that he might try to revive the talks but did not sound convincing. But he should not worry too much because, after all, perhaps the talks did serve their real purpose. As early as June last year, an IRA spokesperson warned that the British government has "nothing to lose and everything to gain from these pseudo-talks. They are seen to be trying to move towards political accommodation. When the talks break down or fail to produce a devolved arrangement, the local participants will be blamed. The whole process is about creating the illusion that the British have initiated political movement. While all these games continue, of course the British are allowed off the hook and can avoid the main question of a solution to their involvement in Ireland."



Judith Ward to Appeal

Lawyers are preparing an appeal for Judith Ward. Judith is serving a life sentence for the 1974 bombing of an army coach near Leeds, which left nine soldiers, a soldier's wife and two children dead. She received further sentences for two non-fatal bombings in Buckinghamshire and London.

Judith maintains that her confessions, which she later retracted, were forced out of her by the police when she was mentally unstable. She denies that she was ever an IRA member.

The IRA has always stated that she was not a member and that

they were responsible for the bombings.

The forensic evidence against Judith was prepared by Dr Frank Skuse who was discredited in the Birmingham Six case.

Judith, like the Birmingham Six, the Maguires and the Guildford Four, is a scapegoat victim of the anti-Irish backlash to the successes of the IRA's military campaign in the 1970's.

Maguire Family Fight On

The Court of Appeal recently decided that the Maguire Seven were "innocently contaminated by nitro-glycerine".

This is widely seen as an attempt by the state to carry out a damage limitation exercise after suffering a defeat by the victory of the Birmingham Six.

It is also seen as an attempt to salvage the discrediting of alleged scientific evidence used to frame Irish people in this country.

Irish people never had much faith in British justice. But it is interesting to note that a healthy scepticism about the courts has spread to wider circles. A recent issue of 'Laboratory News', a trade paper not known for its sympathies with the Irish struggle, commented in its editorial:

"Although the Appeal Court last month ruled that the convictions of the Maguire Seven should be quashed on the ground that the possibility of innocent contamination could not be excluded, the judges refused to censure the scientists whose tests were the sole basis for the original convictions.

"This was widely interpreted as showing that the English

criminal justice system could not bring itself to admit that it could make serious mistakes.

"At the core of the Maguire Seven case was rotten science. No controls were run at the same time as the original tests, so the results were scientifically questionable.

"In addition, the scientists kept quiet about tests that produced negative results. Although the Appeal Court judges criticised them for that, astonishingly, they ruled that no miscarriage of justice had resulted.

"Even though the scientific basis for the convictions was discredited, the judges still persisted with the view that the hands of the Maguire Seven had been contaminated with nitroglycerine. They speculated that it was possible that those whose hands were contaminated with nitroglycerine were innocently contaminated by contact with the towel in the bathroom in the Maguire house.

"But this towel has never been produced in evidence, and there is no evidence to conclude who contaminated the towel in the way suggested.

"By allowing the appeals on the grounds of such

speculation about innocent contamination, the Appeal Court judges may have provided a way of salvaging the reputations of the scientists involved, but the scientific community should not accept this whitewash.

"With this serious mishandling of science by the highest court, the criminal justice system has collapsed, and the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice must come forward with recommendations that will ensure that public faith in it can be restored."

The Maguires are justifiably angry about this latest failure of the British state to deal out justice. Particularly bitter are the family of Guiseppe Conlon (one of the Maguire Seven). He died in prison in January 1980, a victim not only of British injustice but also of medical neglect while he was in prison.

These seven Irish people were innocent victims of British injustice. Their struggle to clear their names reaches a new stage in September when the public inquiry headed by Sir John May reconvenes to consider further their case. That inquiry has already condemned the 'scientific evidence' produced by the prosecution.

On 14th November, 1990, Dessie Ellis was extradited to this country to face trial on charges under the Explosives Substances Act of 1883.

On 13th February, 1991, these charges were dropped. Instead of releasing Dessie, the courts brought two new charges against him under the Offences Against the Persons Act and the Criminal Damage Act.

It is internationally accepted practice that a person can only be extradited to face specific charges. The British state is going against that international norm by changing the charges after extradition.

A judicial review refused to rule on the change in charges. Instead, it was left to a pre-trial hearing to decide.

That pre-trial hearing was held before Justice Swinton Thomas, who was the judge in the trial of the Winchester Three, who were later released on appeal.

Thomas refused to drop the charges against Dessie and the trial is due to start in October.

Dessie himself is recovering from his hunger strike. He



has been transferred to Parkhurst prison, Isle of Wight. There are no facilities for remand prisoners in this gaol and he has to suffer the full restrictions of a convicted prisoner, even though he has not been convicted of any crime.

Dessie was innocent of the original charges, as well as

the new ones. He must be released. An active campaign, based in the Irish community, with the involvement of Dessie's family in the leadership, has been set up in London.

Justice for Dessie Ellis,
c/o Haringay IBRG, Hornsey
Library, Haringay Rd, Crouch
End, London N8.

In the current 'October', we are pleased to reprint an English summary of a book by a leading comrade in the Norwegian Marxist-Leninist Party (AKP-ML). The AKP (ML) has for many years been active in the Women's Front in Norway. The contribution by this comrade, Kjersti Ericsson, is therefore based firmly in both theory and practice.

The article on 'Feminism and the Left in India' also shows how active women have been. The article makes it clear that the role of women and the women's movement is being debated and discussed at many different levels within the Left.

The basic position of the RCL is that we have to apply the scientific method of Marxism to the question of women but that many of the positions held by the Left on women are a crude economist version of Marxism.

In this issue of 'October', we try to take this debate forward by looking at some of the arguments around the basis of women's oppression, an important question if we aim to build a society which removes the basis for oppression as a pre-condition for moving to full liberation. We look at the question of reproductive rights, a key aspect of women's oppression. And we try to put the struggle for women's liberation within the context of the overall struggle against imperialism.

We hope that this journal will take the debate forward. We look forward to hearing the views of our readers and receiving contributions from you.

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