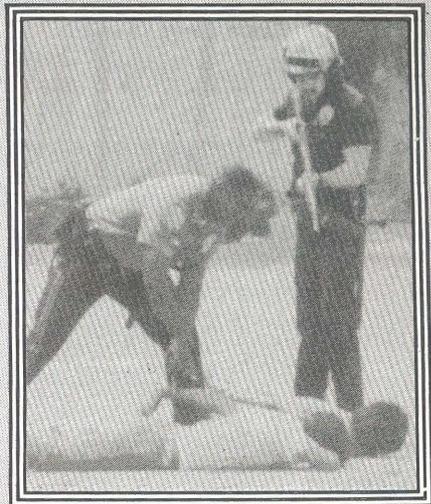


CLASS STRUGGLE

JUNE 1992

30P



LOS ANGELES
UNDER THE GUN



**Election defeat
for democracy**

**Citizenship
threat to north
of Ireland
nationalists**

**Victory in
Afghanistan**

WORLD FACING ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER

GOING UP IN SMOKE — RIO SUMMIT PAGES 6&7

CLASS STRUGGLE

This issue of 'Class Struggle' looks at some of the issues that will be debated in the forthcoming 'Earth Summit' to be held in June.

It is clear that the present ecological crisis affects people all over the world. But the effects are different in North and South. In the North, we are concerned about air and water pollution, from industry, traffic and radiation. There is concern about the destruction of wildlife and vanishing species.

For many people in the South, the threats are similar but more severe. Their basic means of earning a living from the land or rivers are under threat. The threat often comes as a direct result of IMF and World Bank dictated policies to increase exports, which lead for example to selling rain forests for timber or pulling it down for pasture for cattle. A way of life that has been ecological sustainable for hundreds of years is being destroyed in the massive transfer of resources from South to North, through the so-called World Debt.

These fundamental issues of imperialism and its drive for profit are central to solving the world's ecological crisis.

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'Class Struggle' apologises to all its readers for the fact that it has not been published for several months.

The League has been going through a period of discussion of its basic stand. In a period when many changes have been taking place in the world, it was important to re-examine our positions. While we still uphold the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, it has been necessary to look critically at our past policies and practice.

We are now nearly at the end of this first stage in our discussions, which include debate about what kind of publication we plan for the future. It is likely that this will be the last issue of 'Class Struggle' but that we will begin putting out a regular publication again in the next few months.

POLITICAL PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE

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A Defeat for Democracy

John Major is the new ringmaster of Britain's repressive and increasingly centralised state



The general election was the usual power game between different sections of the ruling class. Naturally, many people were depressed to see the same old Tory faces returned again - especially younger people who have never known a Labour government. But Labour's failure in itself was no loss to the working people and oppressed sections of the community. All Labour represents is a different method of manipulating the capitalist economy.

This time, however, there was a real loss - a defeat for democracy. A hung Parliament was a possibility, even seemed a likelihood. And that would have given opportunity for the progressive democratic policies of the Liberal Democrats - particularly proportional representation (PR) and the policies of national freedom of the Scottish Nationalists, Plaid Cymru and even, to some extent, Sinn Fein, to be forced on a Labour-led coalition.

THE STRONG CENTRE

The victory went to the presently dominant section of the ruling class, presently (although not inevitably) linked with the Tory party. The main interest of that section is the strong state. Not a strong state in social democratic terms - controlling the economy through nationalisation, etc. - but in political terms, strengthening the centre against the regions and the localities, eroding democratic rights and popular influence, producing a more repressive system through more powerful police and armed

forces, a stricter penal system, fewer legal rights, etc.

The hung Parliament would have given influence to the forces allied against that dominant section and opposed to centralisation of state power. These stand for loosening the fetters on the oppressed nations of Scotland and Wales. PR could not only make Parliament more representative but would also weaken the power of Parliament and government. PR could thus tend to a degree of real democracy and some erosion of the power of the ruling class.

The principal effect of such constitutional reform would be to prevent any one party ever having an overall majority again (or at least to make that unlikely). Thus the influence of disparate parties, representing different groups and tendencies, would grow at the centre. This in turn would encourage centripetal tendencies. Regional, national, class and gender interests would gain influence. The central state, a political machine of repression, would be weakened. Examples of this process can be seen in many European countries practising PR.

LAST WEEK OFFENSIVE

The real danger of this scenario, through a hung Parliament, seems only to have become clear to the Tories, representing centralisation of state power, towards the end of the election campaign. The constitutional questions began to be pushed forward by the decentralising forces, even reluctantly by the Labour

Party. The Conservatives reacted by a major offensive against decentralisation and democracy, emphasising the "Union" between England and Scotland, condemning PR - even to the extent of the absurd antics of 'The Star' newspaper which suggested PR could bring a threat of fascism. And in this final offensive, the Conservatives were able to recruit the support of the most backward and ignorant sections of the electorate - the so-called Essex men and C2's - who, of course, were ignorant because the decentralising forces had never bothered to educate them to the contrary.

Another aspect of this emphasis on the strong centralised state is the lukewarm attitude of that section of the ruling class towards European unity. The SNP, Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Democrats are right to see increasing European unity as contributing to decentralisation and democracy in the UK. The strengthening of Europe will inevitably lead to the weakening of the nation states and the British imperialist bourgeoisie sees the threat to its national domination.

This then was the main aspect of the election and the real defeat for the interest of the working people, women and the oppressed nations and national minorities. It remains to be seen whether the opportunity to fight the centralising tendency of the dominant section of the ruling class will arise again in five years' time.

Profits and Losses



Canary Wharf, in London's Docklands, has become a symbol for the Tory economic strategy. At the end of May, Olympia and York, the company responsible for its development, was declared insolvent and put into the hands of administrators.

Coming three days after the collapse of another giant property and retail company Mountleigh, it provoked fears of a knock-on effect on the property market as well as about the implications for banks. It is estimated that banks have lent a total of £40 billion to UK property developments. If the value of the property declines, the banks stand to lose huge amounts.

FLAGSHIP

Canary Wharf, with London's highest office skyscraper, has been the flagship for policies for urban redevelopment. When complete, it should contain 10.9 million square feet of office space. Up to the present, 4 million only have been finished and of these, about half has been occupied. With the future of the development now in the hands of its bankers, hundreds of jobs are at risk and the completion of the extension of the Jubilee Line which is necessary to make the development practical. It is now uncertain that contribution from O&Y to the cost of this will be forthcoming.

For many people, Canary Wharf symbolises the speculation and profiteering in property of

recent years. Instead of investing money in manufacturing industry, research and development, capital has been poured into city property developments for short-term profits. The banks have been only too ready to encourage this boom, which seems to be fast turning into a slump.

FREE ENTERPRISE?

The image created for Canary Wharf and the whole of the Docklands Development has been one of free enterprise and go-ahead business development as the way forward.

This has been contrasted with the old way of doing things, with massive state control and expenditure.

But this image is misleading. It conceals a double standard similar to that operating in the world of pay. Whereas the low-paid must not ask for higher wages in order not to price themselves out of work, the higher-paid need big pay rises as an incentive to them.

Similarly, the free enterprise image conceals massive amounts of government money, in other words, tax-payers' money that have gone into this so-called free market scheme.

WHO PAYS?

'The Independent on Sunday', of 31st May, asked some blunt questions about who pays?

On the question of who will pay for the banks' losses, the answer was:

"Ordinary account-holders, including personal customers and small businessmen. They

will suffer higher interest rates and will incur myriad charges which the banks would not dare impose on their larger corporate customers. Prices of houses and flats in Docklands will fall again. House prices will be affected if banks keep interest rates high to recoup their losses."

The paper also asked whether the tax-payer has subsidised Canary Wharf?:

"Yes, though it is difficult to quantify the extent. Land was sold cheaply to Olympia and York - the National Audit Office criticised the price in 1988. The developers paid £8 million for 46 acres (£174,000 an acre) owned by the development corporation, of which 26 acres was under water. Prices in the area were then at least £1m per acre and reached £5 million an acre by November 1988....

"The development corporation will have spent £1.6 billion of grant aid by the end of this financial year. This includes the costs of land reclamation, and most of the costs of the light railway and new roads in the area....

"The third subsidy has still to be paid. Owners of buildings within enterprise zones can set the construction costs against future profits, so that they avoid corporation tax of 33 percent. In Canary Wharf's case, the potential subsidy ... is probably £1.3 billion....

"The fourth subsidy is the government's £1.1 billion share of the cost of the Jubilee Line extension to the Docklands. This would not have been planned had it not been for Canary Wharf...."

The amounts of money are so big they are difficult to imagine. But, think if those amounts had been spent on decent housing, new hospitals, better public transport, education or other services needed by the people.

It is important to remember too that while the Tories have reduced income tax to 25%, the overall burden of taxation has gone up, mainly through indirect taxes like VAT.

Ordinary people have been paying a greater proportion of their wages into projects like Canary Wharf to boost profits for the big companies. No doubt, it will be our money too, that will be used to patch up a deal in which so many big institutions have a stake.

WOMEN'S NOTEBOOK

April 23rd: The World Women's Congress for a Healthy Planet was held in Miami in November 1991. It brought together 1800 women activists from 83 countries, the majority from developing countries, with the intention of formulating and promoting environmental policies which place women at the centre of decision making. The preliminary declaration of the World Women's Congress states:

"We know that the major causes of environmental degradation are economic systems that exploit and misuse nature and people, pollutants and waste of industry and military technologies. We are outraged by the suggestion that women's fertility rates (euphemistically called population pressures) are to blame. Unchallenged, this analysis lays the groundwork for the re-emergence of top-down, demographically driven population policies and programmes which are deeply disrespectful of the basic human rights of women, as guaranteed in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women."

A Malaysian woman spelt out the effects of toxic waste-dumping on people's daily lives. She told how a Japanese consortium had sold radioactive waste to Malaysian villagers as 'fertiliser' for their gardens and window boxes. Now the children in the villages are dying of leukaemia.

The women from the North who attended gave a sympathetic hearing to the women of the South, who testified to the effects of Northern greed and challenged Northern assumptions about population growth. Four days of exciting talks produced the Women's Action Agenda 21, which was endorsed by the Secretary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) to be held in Rio in June 1992, and adopted as part of the proposals for debate in Rio. It includes demands for the cancellation of all foreign debts and the transfer of military resources to positive, life-enforcing programmes.

April 24th: Feminists in Germany have launched a campaign against travel companies taking tourists to centres of prostitution in South-East Asia. They



Development Update

estimate that three-quarters of the tourists are men, and that three-quarters of the men go there for sex. A spokesperson said:

"Western customers troubled by the fear of AIDS are turning to younger and younger children. In Thailand virgins are increasingly in demand."

Representatives from Western and Third World countries met recently to discuss joint action against paedophiles operating on an international scale. Germany is drafting a bill which will make child abuse by German men punishable even if committed outside Germany. Britain at present is doing very little despite being the largest source of 'sex tourists'.

April 25th: The Women's TUC, which met earlier this year at Blackpool, will be the last to include men. In the past some delegates have felt that men took over control of the event. The vote was a narrow one but produced a clear mandate for this to become a women-only event.

Resolutions discussed at this year's conference included low pay and the need for a minimum wage, unemployment, part-time and 'flexible' working hours.

April 29th: The women sewing machinists at Fords at Dagenham whose industrial action in 1968 resulted in Barbara Castle's 1970 Equal Pay Act now face losing their jobs. As from 1995, Fords plan to buy seats for their Fiesta, Escort and Orion models instead of making them. The move will cost 430 jobs at Halewood on Merseyside and Dagenham in London.

May 5th: 49 more

organisations today joined the 61 companies and public bodies in the Opportunity 2000 initiative, which is committed to increase the proportion of women in senior jobs. Together these organisations employ 5 million people, or a fifth of the workforce.

May 6th: The Advertising Standards Authority revealed in its recent report that it upheld 101 of more than 300 complaints about the offensive portrayal of women in advertising. That's a start, but it still leaves 200 which were not upheld! One of those upheld was a full-page advertisement depicting a barefoot woman with a ripped skirt and blouse, under the headline: 'Don't be a slave to Networking'.

One successful outcome was the banning of advertisements for sanitary protection from TV before 9pm. A small victory, but nevertheless it is a relief no longer to be fending off questions from small children at teatime such as: 'Mum, what's that for?' Meanwhile, the Broadcasting Standards Council has carried out research into 'Women Viewing Violence' and found that continually seeing themselves portrayed as victims makes women more fearful. Even a programme like 'Crimewatch' can subtly contribute to women's perception of themselves as more vulnerable and less important members of society.

May 9th: 20% of pregnant working women in Britain do not qualify for maternity pay, and 40% do not qualify for maternity leave which guarantees them their jobs back. Britain's scheme is the most restrictive in Europe, and the only one to give part-timers fewer rights than full-timers.

On Monday 11th May the European Parliament will consider a maternity directive which would introduce a qualification for maternity pay after 12 months' working for the same employer, and guarantee working mothers at least 14 weeks' leave on £52-50p a week. At present full-timers must work for the same employer for two years and part-timers for five years, to qualify. 90% of wages are paid for the first six weeks of leave, followed by 12 weeks at £39-25p.

Green Sticking Plaster

June's Earth Summit reflects growing concern around the world about the environmental crisis. On the whole, the solutions being debated reflect a green sticking plaster approach rather than any radical rethink about the way the world's resources are used.

The 'New Scientist' in May commented that when a factory causes pollution, there are two ways of dealing with the problem. The first involves bolting some cleanup technology to the discharge pipe or smokestack. The second means rethinking the whole industrial process, substituting less toxic material or recycling. The journal comments that this can be applied to the planet as a whole and that the approach of the Earth Summit represents the first of these two rather than a serious look at long-term and sustainable development.

For many people in the Third World, particularly women who do most of the agricultural work, these questions are not about luxury or consumer goods but of immediate and urgent survival. The answers lie in a complete change in the present economic system.

We should not look to the Earth Summit to provide radical answers. It will at best provide small gains, of the green sticky plaster nature, which are nevertheless to be welcomed. Most important probably will be the publicity surrounding the Summit which puts questions of the environment at the centre of the agenda.

The biggest environmental gathering ever planned is due to take place in Rio, Brazil, in June. Called the Earth Summit, it will be attended by world leaders and hopes to agree action on global warming, biodiversity and funding for the environmental agenda of the future.

With the Earth Summit only a few weeks away, President Bush is reported to have made some really helpful comments:

"He would not agree to any proposals that might damage the US economy." "He will veto any clauses ... that suggest that rich Western nations were guilty of 'overconsumption' of the world's resources." "He refuses to accept any target for stabilising emissions of carbon dioxide from burning fossil fuels by the year 2000."

Overall the US accounts for 23% of the world's emissions of carbon dioxide but only 5% of the population. (Association for the Conservation of Energy, 1991)

But the US is increasingly isolated in this stance on environmental issues. The Earth Summit, originally proposed by the UN Commission on Environment and Development, aims to adopt a statement called Agenda 21 "to chart a new course for sustainable development of the planet". This includes not only commitment of money by the Western nations but calls into question the whole

problem of the Third World Debt.

The Third World pays back twice as much to the industrialised world as it receives in aid. The industrialised countries gave \$14 billion in aid and \$13 billion in loans to the Third World, but forced these developing countries to repay \$54 billion in debts and interest on debts. (UNICEF, 1988)

Japan has taken a lead in the preparations, supporting the summit's proposal that the Western nations commit \$10 billion a year as a first step towards the goals of the conference. This money may be administered by the Global Environmental Facility of the World Bank, and most governments now support the setting up of a new UN institution to oversee implementation of the summit's decisions. Almost all the world's industrialised nations have been ready for two years to stabilise their emissions of carbon dioxide. The exceptions? Britain and the US. Britain recently set a target of stabilising the level of emissions by the year 2000. But the US still refuses to set any target.

The summit's leaders are leading from the front. Maurice Strong, the summit's Secretary General, is demanding not \$10 billion but \$125 billion a year from Western nations. The Commission's Chairwoman,

Norwegian Prime Minister, Gro Harlem Brundtland, called on the rich nations to write off most of the Third World Debt which is retarding and distorting development. She demanded that all developed nations should meet the UN target of giving 0.7% of their GNP in aid by the year 2000.

The richest nations now have per capita incomes 65 times those of the poorest nations - a disparity which has doubled in the past thirty years. (UN, 1992)

Another UN body, the UN Fund for Population Activities, has been making radical calls too. Its annual report calls for a direct attack on the roots of poverty as the only way to slow population growth and redistribute resources. It includes unfair trading systems, international debt and the low status of women in its causes and calls on the developed world to cut back on its consumption of resources.

At home, our government drags its feet. Plans to create a single powerful pollution agency, the cornerstone of John Major's green manifesto, have been shelved.

But a rising tide of awareness and anger, especially among young people, is evident in Britain. This year's Comic Relief programme at Easter amounted to a hard-hitting yet accessible TV programme on the causes of world poverty. Unequal trade, Third World Debt and other examples of exploitation were graphically but simply explained and the strengths and courage of Third World people highlighted.

The cost of immunising all the developing world's infants has been estimated at \$500 million a year - about the cost of ten advanced F14 fighter aircraft. (UNICEF, 1988)

Even if President Bush is successful in vetoing and weakening the Earth Summit, the importance of environmental issues, and the causes of the problems in the very basis of the imperialist system is becoming clearer. The movement for a better environment is a growing force for change.

AFRICA'S FOOD CRISIS

This article is based on a speech by Sithembiso Nyoni, executive officer, programme coordination and development for the Organisation for Rural Associations for Progress, Zimbabwe. It is reprinted from 'Women in Action', 4/91, paper of Isis International.

I am not a very important woman in international terms, but I am very important in that I am directly involved in the struggle. I am very interested in women and sustainable agriculture for one reason: my community and I are in a food crisis. Because of this crisis, we are interested in sustainable agriculture, not for luxury, not for economic reasons, but first and foremost for our survival.

We are aware even at village level that the main causes of our food crisis are economic and political. They are a direct result of our governments and multinationals taking the control and the means of production from us, the people, who should have the right to feed themselves. The food crisis is not our problem as before at the village level. It is a national problem and we are just the victims of that national crisis. We are also aware that this crisis is directly related not only to our politics and to our economic situation, but it is also directly related to our environmental crisis in Africa.

As a woman, environmental decline means that I have to walk long miles to fetch firewood and water. I have very little time, therefore, to grow vegetables and other food.

And because the environment has deteriorated, my soils have also deteriorated. So, even if I have seven children and some go miles to fetch water, others miles to fetch firewood, and I take another group to the land, we still do not produce as much as my grandmother used to produce. Therefore, if my agriculture has to be sustainable, my environment also has to be sustainable. We have to have a sustainable environment, a sustainable economy - something that will help my total surrounding, my total way of life.

NATIONAL CRISIS

Now, I said that this crisis is not my crisis as a village woman, nor is it a crisis for the rural families, it is a national crisis. From my experience in Zimbabwe and Southern Africa, I have also discovered that it is a regional crisis.



If I were one of those African Third World rulers, do you know what I would do?

I would go back to my people, to the village. I would be aware of the global connections that are acting upon me and my people. But in order for me to be realistic and equip my nation to stand up and deal with those crises, I would go back to my people, and strengthen them first. After all, my power should be their power.

But our rulers today - our ministers of agriculture today - are busy interlinking with the multinationals, with international markets, and forgetting that we are the basis of their power. If we are starving, they should be ashamed. While we are starving, they have the power to ask for more and more aid over our poverty.

BACK TO THE PEOPLE

I would go back to my people because as a village woman, I know what it means to be without a seed. I know what it was in the good old days when I used to go and harvest and come back and select the seed for the following year. And I know that because of the hybrid seed, I can no longer do that.

But I can tell you, when one day, I was in a meeting in Harare and I stood up to say that kind of thing, the then minister of agriculture stood up to say, "Here is a woman who wants to take people back to the 18th century. That is no longer possible." And yet I know that before, I had control over my seed. I could select the seed for the following year. But because today I am using the hybrid seed, I cannot re-use it. I

have to go back to the one who controls the seed.

I know also that my well is in my field so that when I come from my agricultural chores, I can take a bucket of water back home. But where I have used lots of fertilizer around my well, my water has become contaminated by that fertilizer.

I know that if you intercrop, some crops during the drought will survive, others will die. But my agricultural experts tell me not to do that because it is primitive.

And I know what roots from the bush I can dig up and mix with what I grow at home in order to make a nutritious meal for my children. But the nutritionists in town think I should feed my children Pro-Nutro and other breads whose names I don't know.

If I were one of those rulers, I would go back to my people because now it is no longer a question of keeping up with the Joneses. It is a question of survival for the village women of Africa. I would go back and help those women to survive.

My crisis is not mine alone. I am just a victim. It is our crisis. Therefore let us strive for sustainable systems of agriculture beginning from our environment and then moving on to the political and economic systems that are acting upon me and dominating me in such a way that I no longer think of making a contribution to my own destiny.

If I do not control food, there is nothing else I can control in this world because food is also used as a political weapon on me and my children.

The Palestinians of E

"For some years commentators have been talking about the demise of Sinn Fein, about Sinn Fein having peaked, about Sinn Fein's vote in decline..... What the Hillsborough Treaty did, or rather the hype about it, was to allow the British to bring in a series of anti-democratic measures aimed at isolating Sinn Fein. The recent series of by-elections show that Hillsborough, and the various measures brought in the wake of Hillsborough, or in tandem with it, have not had the effect their authors desired. Our support remains solid If we can do that in the context where our news are censored, where we are misrepresented, where our opponents enjoy the patronage of sections of the media, where we suffer daily harassment, then we have to point out as we did at the time of the introduction of these measures that they only serve to perpetuate the struggle, not to end it."

Gerry Adams, interviewed in An Phoblacht/Republican News, September 5th, 1991.

If it was ever intended to bring about a just and lasting peace in the North of Ireland, then the Hillsborough Agreement - also known as the Anglo-Irish Accord - has quite clearly failed. Seven years after the deal was signed by Margaret Thatcher and Garret FitzGerald, justice and peace seem as far away as ever.

Of course, the Hillsborough Agreement was never intended to bring justice and peace to the North of Ireland. British policy towards Ireland has only ever had one substantial purpose - to isolate republicanism and undermine support of the Republican Movement within the nationalist community.

Every means towards this end has been tried. Censorship, assassinations of Republican activists and imprisonment go hand in glove with the campaign of random sectarian murders carried out by



" I'm not British, I'm in a British state against my will. I'll never willingly accept living in a British state. Changes to the Constitution will leave me and my people stateless, homeless, exiled, a Palestinian. "

Europe

loyalist terror gangs. Meanwhile, the media speculates about, the unionist politicians demand, the British government seriously considers the idea of reintroducing internment.

Behind all these manifestations of British rule in Ireland is the assumption that the nationalist population can be intimidated or coerced into giving up the demands for civil rights and national unity. But it was their refusal to do so and the growing support for the Republican Movement throughout the 1980's that forced the British government into the Hillsborough Agreement.

ENLISTING DUBLIN

Changing its tactics, but not its long-term strategy, Britain now sought to enlist the help of the Dublin government in its efforts to defeat republicanism. Dublin were only too happy to oblige, attempting to represent Hillsborough as a 'historic' development. Britain, it seemed, had finally recognised the Irish government had a role to play in the affairs of the North.

However, both Thatcher and FitzGerald were agreed that the primary aim was "order and stability" in the North. "Security matters", namely extradition and cross-border co-operation between the police and military, figured high on the agenda of all parties to the agreement. Support for the constitutional nationalism of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) was another important consideration in the face of electoral advances by Sinn Fein.

Meanwhile, and despite the impression given by unionist politicians that something real had been surrendered to Dublin, hopes of Irish unity were put on the back burner. Speaking in Brussels, shortly before the agreement was signed, Garret FitzGerald admitted: "Our nationalist hopes and aspirations must take second place in the short term to providing a stable, peaceful society."

Sovereignty - the question of who has the right to govern in

THE CONSTITUTION OF IRELAND

(Enacted by the People on 1st July 1937)

THE NATION

ARTICLE 1

The Irish nation hereby affirms its inalienable, indefeasible and sovereign right to choose its own form of government, to determine its relations with other nations, and to develop its life, political economic and cultural, in accordance with its own genius and traditions.

ARTICLE 2

The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas.

ARTICLE 3

Pending the re-integration of the national territory, and without prejudice to the right of the parliament and Government established by this Constitution to exercise jurisdiction over the whole of that territory, the laws enacted by That Parliament shall have the like area and extent of application as the Saorstát Eireann and the like extra-territorial effect.

Ireland - was never seriously in question in 1985 or ever since. In fact, it is becoming increasingly clear that the Irish government is prepared to abandon all claims to sovereignty over the North of Ireland.

THE UNITY OF IRELAND

This is seen most clearly in the current debate over proposals to amend or delete Articles Two and Three of the Irish Constitution. Formulated in 1937 by Eamonn de Valera, they state:

"Article Two: The national territory consists of the whole island of Ireland, its islands and the territorial seas.

"Article Three: Pending the re-integration of the national territory, and without prejudice to the right of the Parliament and Government established by this constitution to exercise jurisdiction over the whole of that territory, the laws enacted by that Parliament shall have the like area and extent of application as the laws of Soorstát Eireann and the like extra-territorial effect."

In 1937, fifteen years after partition, these articles affirmed the right of the Irish people as a whole to territorial integrity and their right to govern themselves as one entity, both rights violated by partition. They also accepted that until

these rights were restored, the twenty six counties would operate as a sort of 'state in waiting' for the Irish nation mentioned in Article One of the Constitution.

Although the Irish government never made any serious efforts to end partition, for northern nationalists Articles Two and Three remained a powerful symbol. Cornered in the new statelet in the North, a permanent and terrorised minority, the articles did at least entitle them to Irish citizenship. And it is precisely this which is under threat.

The Hillsborough Agreement has been clearly discredited in political terms and Britain is now keen to push towards some form of devolved government in the North. Unable to suppress the demands for nationhood by force and intimidation, and unable to deter their continuing support for the Republican Movement, the British government now wishes to legislate Ireland's northern nationalists away. President of the twenty six counties, Mary Robinson, seems more than willing to make the necessary constitutional adjustments.

Were this to happen, as Bernadette McAliskey has pointed out, nationalists in the North face the prospect of becoming the "Palestinians of Europe", stateless, homeless, exiled, abandoned forever at the mercy of the British government.

The war Britain can't win

The last eight months have rarely seen Northern Ireland out of the headlines. The only exception was during the recent general election when the three major political parties showed their unity in opposing the legitimate right of the Irish people to freedom and justice. All three major parties were also united in keeping discussion of Britain's Vietnam, the war being fought on our doorstep, out of the election.

THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

The ability of the IRA to inflict billions of pounds of damage both in the North of Ireland and mainland Britain was clear to see. Targets were always military or commercial, attacked often at night or weekends. The clear intention was to hurt the system oppressing the Irish people, not the ordinary people. Civilian casualties, inevitable in a war, were very few and regretted.

This was not luck as some British spokespersons claimed but a clear policy. There is evidence that some of the casualties were the result of the British state forces ignoring warnings (always given) or reacting slowly to them.

On several occasions, it has been admitted (but not widely reported) by senior British

spokespeople that they cannot defeat the IRA militarily. This reflects the fact that the nationalist population see the IRA as part of their community. Also, it has been admitted that the quality and ability of Volunteers has increased over the years.

The armed wing is only one part of the Republican Movement. Despite massive repression and media censorship, the Movement has continued to develop its all-round campaign to take up all the issues facing the Irish people. Republicans are realistic and know they are involved in a long struggle and that they need to face up to their own shortcomings.

The Republican Movement is the only organisation putting forward constructive policies for unconditional talks to bring about real peace based on social justice.

ELECTION AND SDLP

Despite a 1% drop in its share of the total vote, Sinn Fein's share was 10% overall (30% of the nationalist vote) and is higher than the Alliance Party's share. Sinn Fein remains the fourth largest electoral party in the North of Ireland. This despite a total media censorship for the last four years. Gerry Adams' defeat in West Belfast was not quite the defeat that the British state claimed. He maintained his share of the vote, winning 447 votes less than in 1983, and only 36 less than in 1987. The successful SDLP candidate only beat him by 584 votes. That victory was achieved not because the nationalist people preferred the SDLP but because an estimated 3,000 unionist voted tactically for the SDLP in order to exclude Sinn Fein.

Two other constituencies, Fermanagh/South Tyrone and Mid-Ulster could have returned nationalist MP's, if the SDLP had agreed to Sinn Fein's proposals to stand only one agreed nationalist candidate. They refused and unionists won both seats.

Lessons will be learned by the nationalist people. The SDLP has shown in practice its willingness to collude with pro-British unionists rather than forces dedicated to free their homeland.

THE UNIONISTS

Since last October, the unionist paramilitary organisations (with help and encouragement from the British forces) have increased their attacks on Sinn Fein activists and ordinary nationalist people.

They attack and kill people just because they are Catholics. They carry out terrorist activities. Their tactics are fascistic.

In contrast, the Republican Movement calls on the nationalist people not to respond by tit for tat assassination of people just because they are Protestants.

THE BRITISH STATE

The response from the British state is increased repression. In November 1991, a further 600 troops were sent in and 1,400 part-time members of the Ulster Defence Regiment were transferred to full-time. 600 more troops were sent in February 1992. More of the same that has done nothing yet to bring peace.

On mainland Britain, extensive raids have gone on amongst the Irish community to try to catch members of active service units based here. The majority of people arrested have been released uncharged. A few have been charged with trivial offences. The recent exposure that Special Branch have no information about IRA activities on the mainland and the replacement of the Special Branch by MI5 has brought a backlash of revenge against the Irish community. No lessons seem to have been learnt from the Birmingham Six or Guildford Four cases.

Talks about talks continue under the latest (eleventh) direct ruler, Mayhew, but will get nowhere. Continuing the same bankrupt practices is the order of the day.

Peace will only come when it is based on justice. This in turn can only come about with the ending of partition. Britain must get out of Ireland and the Irish people as a whole allowed to determine their own future.

JUDITH WARD

Free after 18 years

Yet again, the British state's frame-up of an innocent person has fallen apart.

Judith Ward was a victim of anti-Irish hysteria and the determination of the so-called forces of law and order to get anyone in the aftermath of the 1974 coach bombing on the M62.

The police knew that she was 92 miles away at the time; that she was mentally ill and that her statements were full of inaccuracies and contradictions. The forensic evidence was also unreliable.

Judith's problem was that she was alone with no family to campaign for her like the Birmingham Six.

Indeed, it was with the help of some of the Birmingham Six and Anne Maguire that a campaign was set up to highlight her plight and finally got Judith released!

Uprising of the Dispossessed

The justified angry response by Afro-American people in Los Angeles and other cities in the USA, following the racist verdict in the Rodney King assault case, exposed the true nature of US society.

The trial verdict was a symbol of the treatment that the white-dominated society deals out to the forty million Afro-Americans, every day. With the exception of a small number of middle class black people, Afro-Americans - the descendants of slaves - are still denied the basic freedom for which they fought so long and hard.

Eight percent of Afro-Americans live below the poverty line. Many live in inner-city slums which come close to slums in third world cities. Between 1973 and 1990, the average yearly income of black high school graduates declined in real terms by 44%.

In Los Angeles, 75% of the black population rely on inadequate welfare payments to survive. Infant mortality rates amongst black people are the highest in the USA. Life expectancy for Afro-American males is lower than in parts of the Third World. Black people are much more likely to be imprisoned or sent to the gas chamber or electric chair. Their communities have massive drug abuse problems: illegal drug trafficking was forced on the community by the Mafia and others while the law enforcement agencies stood by and did nothing.

This has been the reality for the Afro-American communities for decades in the midst of the richest, most powerful country of the world.

The uprising occurred in the middle of the presidential election campaign which is an irrelevant farce for black people. Very rich white males competing to head a white-dominated system that considers black people as unwanted and marginal. Afro-American communities, along with a growing number of other national minority people, and poor whites, are an underclass for whom the system cannot and will not meet their basic needs.

ARMED RESPONSE

Bush and the might of the US state machinery had only one response to the uprising.

The black community was surrounded by a massive armed



'The tape was the big evidence to me... They couldn't see... they were blind and couldn't get their glasses clean'

Quote from Virginia Loya, one of the Rodney King jurors, about the other jury members. She was the only juror to publicly disagree with the verdict.

invasion, which also protected the white surrounding areas. 1,000 Federal law officers were joined by 2,500 infantry men and 6,000 National Guardsmen. A further 1,500 infantry men were held in reserve. Armoured cars were involved. All this was in addition to the regular armed police.

By the time that the National Guard was withdrawn a week later, 44 people were dead; 1,900 injured and 2,000 black people had been arrested. There had been 2,500 episodes of fires and property damage causing an estimated one billion dollars worth of damage. Bush offered less than one third of that, much of it as loans, to repair the damage.

Of the 44 people killed, three were white, three were Hispanic and the rest black.

No doubt Los Angeles will quickly cease to hit the

headlines. But the issue and the determination of the Afro-American people to fight for justice will not go away.

As one of the Afro-American people who lost everything in a fire was quoted as saying:

"I'm from Mississippi and I remember the white vigilantes and the Klu Klux Klan as a child. When I left that state they had hanged black people from the trees. Now we are victims of something we haven't done, and that ain't fair. But those who did it have the right to be angry. I remember the Watts riots of 27 years ago and they were angry then. But now it's worse."

A spokesperson from the National Association for the Advancement of Black People predicted that unless there was urgent real action, then it would not just be a long hot summer ahead, but a number of long hot years.

Organising from the grassroots

In Britain, leftist ideas of organising have often been based on a narrow form of trade unionism. This has concentrated on men working in big workplaces, such as factories or mines. The unions have often found it difficult to organise women, many of whom work part-time and in small workplaces. There has also been a false separation between issues relating to work and the community, industry and the environment.

As the workforce becomes increasingly fragmented and economic gains at the workplace become more difficult to win, finding new ways of organising will be crucial. The following article, reprinted from 'The New Statesman/New Society' describes how one community has been mobilised on a broad basis.

LICENSE TO KILL

By Jeremy Seabrook

Bhilai, in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, is the site of Asia's largest steel plant. With its ancillary industries, it employs 100,000 people. The 30-year old plant, a Russo-Indian collaboration, sends its pollution over the countryside, filtering the sun through perpetual cloud. Core workers at Bhilai have regular employment, but for those on the periphery and in support industries, the work is casual, dangerous and ill-paid; factories, where women are locked in for the night; opencast iron-ore mines where workers' deaths by rock-falls are concealed by unscrupulous owners. The people of the area, known as Chattisgarh, are tribals and untouchables. They remain poor among some of India's richest natural resources.

Bhilai's workers were organised by AITUC, the trade union of India's Communist Party, but it proved indifferent to the conditions of casual labourers - the majority. Shankar Guha Niyogi had begun work in Bhilai in 1962, but was dismissed for organising the workers against the AITUC. He turned his attention to the exploited - and it was believed, unreachable - casual workers in the iron ore mines, women and men earning only a few rupees a day, living in squalor in dusty shacks on devastated hillsides.

For thirty years, Niyogi fought for the social and economic improvement of oppressed people. From the mid-1970's, he formed the base of an alternative that would avoid ecological ruin as well as exploitative labour, which provided health care, eliminated alcoholism, raised women's status, devised technology to enhance not supplant human labour. The movement became the



Chattisgarh Liberation Front. Not only a trade union, it also offered protection to those released from bonded labour, to the slum-dwellers of Raipur, child labourers, farmers, women deserted or abused for the sake of dowry. Several hundred thousand people benefited and today, the red-green flag flies all over Chattisgarh.

It dominates Rajhara, a town with the richest iron deposits in India. The dust has turned rivers red, and transformed the trees into rusty metal sculptures. Rajhara is like a tropical mid-19th century Rhonda - a frontier town of chaotic shacks and cheap hotels.

RED GREEN MOVEMENT

But there is tension and suppressed energy in the air. It is Republic Day weekend and tomorrow there will be a demonstration of the red-green movement, a protest against the inertia of the authorities in tracking down those who killed Niyogi last September. He was shot with six bullets through the window of a hut as he slept.

Everyone knew his life was in danger. Attempts to jail him on false charges, to bribe and threaten him had failed. Anonymous letters had named the likely assailants. Niyogi left an audio-cassette, in which he recorded the identity of the conspirators; the owner

of Bhilai's largest liquor company and the owners of the steel factories with their armies of thugs.

He had made enemies, starting with the struggle against the liquor lords. Women had been the principal agents of this effort, which had badly affected the profits of the alcohol industry. Then the industrialists of the ancillary factories had been forced to observe the law of India, by granting minimum wages and basic safety facilities to the casual workers. The ruling industry-controlled BJP Hindu party in Madhya Pradesh also had good reason to hate Niyogi. Niyogi had made the police's work of extortion and intimidation more arduous. The authorities have taken pains to represent Niyogi's murder as a factional fight between extremists.

But the union was always non-violent. Inspired in part by Gandhi, Niyogi drew on Marx and Mao to create a non-dogmatic popular movement that integrated the work, social and cultural aspects of its members' lives. A fierce solidarity was forged of a kind that has become archaic in the west. One of its proudest monuments is the hospital built by the workers of Rajhara. Next door to the hospital is the union hall. It has been turned into a shrine to Niyogi's memory. His portrait and chair have been garlanded with marigolds and strewn with crimson rose petals. On the office walls are the shoes and work tools of those killed in police shootings over the past two decades.

Chattisgarh has had its martyrs before. In 1856-57, in a time of drought, Vir Narayan Singh mobilised peasants in the interior forest. When landlords refused to open their granaries, he went with an army of tribal people to loot them, promising to return what they had taken in a better season. He was hanged by the British in 1857.

THOUSANDS MARCH

On the day before Republic Day, the police presence around Bhilai and the neighbouring towns is heavy. They are closing the road to trucks and buses bringing people to the city. In spite of this, 25,000 are on the streets, with about 6,000 in Rajhara. They walk solemnly, exhibiting the discipline that even the industrialists

concede has been one of Niyogi's great contributions to their factories. Workers carry provisions and tools on their heads. A barefoot procession of injured humanity, their common purpose the only weapon of the dispossessed.

Niyogi had resisted total mechanisation of the mines, which would have thrown thousands out of work. He devised a compromise: the most arduous manual labour was eliminated, while safeguarding jobs. Now he is dead and 'liberalisation' is growing, pressure is being renewed for mechanisation.

The testimony of those whose lives have been transformed by his work is very affecting: bonded labourers, now members of the union, some bonded for three generations for the sake of a loan of Rs 200 (£5) and a few kilos of padi; now learning a trade through the 'polytechnics' established by the Chattisgarh Liberation Front. In the slums of Raipur, the green and red flag flutters from rickshaws. Driving is the only work open to the men - degrading labour. The women work as domestic servants or vegetable sellers. The people here migrated from Orissa, twenty years ago, displaced by environmental degradation. "We were weavers then," they say. "But the demand for handwoven cloth has gone. In Orissa we were

happy. Here we are not happy, but we can eat." Child workers tell of ten and twelve hour days: Pramila, 11, working as a domestic servant, Sukhnam, 10, sole family wage-earner, working in a vehicle repair shop until 10 p.m., children helping their parents make bidis or agarbatti at home for Rs5 a week (9 pence).

WOMEN'S ORGANISATION

Some of the most inspiring work of Chattisgarh Liberation Front has been the formation of a women's organisation that has set up a popular tribunal to deal with wrongs against women - desertion, rape, abuse. A committee deals with each case. Parties to the dispute make their depositions. The committee makes recommendations, which are shared at a public meeting. If the people agree, they undertake to implement the recommendations. A recent case, where a woman was murdered for her dowry, was registered by police as suicide. The women established that it was murder. The committee's verdict was that the family should be socially boycotted and the man not permitted to marry again: punishment enough in an Indian village. This initiative is unique in India - a mix of popular justice, tempered by the movement's deep humanitarianism.

Since Niyogi's death, new

members have come to the trade union. In one industrial estate in Raipur, where the workers of only one company were affiliated, there are now 12 whose employees have sought the protection of the red and green flag. But today's India, which has been busily conforming to the prescriptions of the IMF, World Bank and Gatt, is against them.

To service its US\$70 billion foreign debt, India is desperate to be competitive in world markets. This means the price of its cheap labour must be maintained. Paradoxically, the west, with its dedication to human rights, has inspired policies of 'liberalisation' that lead to the persecution and abuse of those who defend the poor and the unprotected.

Social activists and human rights workers gathered in the neighbouring city of Nagpur on the weekend of 14-15 February, to create a national movement of solidarity with the people of Chattisgarh. They are asking whether the assassination of Niyogi is not the supreme act of a 'liberalisation' to remove all obstacles to the free play of market forces. Does that much-trumpeted 'death of socialism' mean it is legitimate to do away with socialists, as they have done away with Shankar Guha Niyogi?

THEY ARE STEALING THE GREEN FROM OUR FLAG

AMAZONIA



"The rubber tappers aren't saying that nobody should lay a finger on the Amazon. No. We've got our own proposals for organising production. The rubber tappers and the Indians have always grown their subsistence crops, but they've never threatened the existence of the forest. It's the deforestation carried out by the big landowners to open up pasture for their cattle that is threatening the forest. Often, these people are just speculating with the

land....

"The landowners use all the economic power at their disposal. They bribe the authorities... They also use the law. They request police protection for the workers hired to cut down the trees saying it is their land so they can do whatever they like with it. They accuse the rubber tappers of trespassing when we try and stop the deforestation....

"The other tactic the landowners use, and it's a very effective one, is to use hired guns to intimidate us.

"We are sure this will be the landowners' main tactic from now on. They are going to fight our movement with violence and intimidation. There's no doubt in our minds about that....."

From an interview with Chico Mendes, leader of the rubber tappers in Brazil, assassinated December 1988.

Declaration of the Peoples of the Forest:

The traditional peoples who today trace on the Amazonian sky the rainbow of the Alliance of the Peoples of the Forest declare their wish to see their regions preserved. They know that the development of the potential of their people and of the regions they inhabit is to be found in the future economy of their communities and must be preserved for the whole Brazilian nation as part of its identity and self-esteem. This Alliance of the Peoples of the Forest, bringing together Indians, rubber tappers and riverbank communities, and founded here in Acre, embraces all efforts to protect and preserve this immense, but fragile life-system that involves our forests, lakes, rivers and springs, the source of our wealth and the basis of our cultures and traditions.'

National Council of Rubber Tappers, March 1989.

PEOPLES WAR WINS FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE

Long march to victory for mujahideen

In April, for a short period, Afghanistan became headline news again for the western press, as the old President, Najibullah resigned, his government and army fell apart and the mujahideen finally took the capital, Kabul.

As we go to press, a fragile agreement has been reached between the different mujahideen groups. Peace is uncertain. But hundreds of refugees from years of war in their country are leaving Pakistan to return to their homes.

When the Vietnamese liberation forces drove their tanks into Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, many people saluted their great victory. A glorious socialist future for the people of Vietnam turned out to be a romantic illusion, as Vietnam launched its own invasion of neighbouring Kampuchea; debts to the Soviet Union had to be repaid; internal repression and domestic economic problems multiplied. But none of these difficulties could change the significance of the victory of the Vietnamese people.

A small country had resisted first French, then American aggression. Even all the might of the great American superpower, with all its troops, bombs, napalm and aircraft, had not been able to defeat a people determined to fight for their freedom and independence.

The same is true of the long and hard struggle of the Afghan people against the other superpower, what was the Soviet Union. Yet few saluted the people's victory in Afghanistan.

Like the Vietnamese, the Afghan people has a long history of defeating all invaders, as British armies found to their cost in the nineteenth century. The form of their resistance to the Soviet army and its Afghan puppets was, of course, different from that in Vietnam. The Vietnamese struggle was led by their communist party and the whole nation united behind Ho Chi Minh whereas in Afghanistan a coalition of different groups made up the resistance. Unity

was based on opposition to the Soviet Union and a common Islamic ideology. And, as in Vietnam, there are many difficulties ahead in Afghanistan.

Yet, once again, the people of a small and poor country, has defeated the army and government of an outside power, many times more powerful and wealthy. The Soviet army was able to impose great suffering on the people. But in the end, their determination to free their country won through. It is an important lesson for all those struggling for a better world.

REVOLUTION OR COUP?

The main cause of the war in Afghanistan was the rivalry between the two superpowers, the USA and the Soviet Union. Following the Second World War, the USA adopted aggressive expansionist policies and their defeat in Vietnam in the mid-seventies signalled a major retreat. Afghanistan was in a strategic position, bordering on the Soviet Union, China, Pakistan and Iran. The internal politics of Afghanistan were affected by world developments as well as events in Pakistan and Iran.

Both the Soviet Union and the USA interfered in the politics of Afghanistan for many years before the invasion by the Red Army in 1979. The traditional king who had attempted to bring in some reforms was overthrown by pro-Soviet elements in a coup in 1973. When this ruling group appeared to be moving away from its pro-Soviet position, it too was overthrown in

another coup in 1978, carried out by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and known by them as the 'April Revolution'.

Throughout the seventies, the Soviet Union was the predominant influence. It signed trade agreements and built its influence in Kabul in particular through numerous Soviet technicians and military officers.

SOCIALIST RHETORIC

As in the case of Ethiopia, the Soviet Union backed an elitist, militarist organisation in the PDPA, which used socialist rhetoric to disguise repressive policies which had nothing to do with the needs of the Afghan people. One of the main preoccupations of the Soviet Union, apart from supplying weapons, finance and training, was to try and patch up the endless squabbles between different factions of the PDPA. Its main power base was among Soviet educated and trained intellectuals and professionals in Kabul, and as time went on increasingly among the military, particularly among officers. In a country in which about 88% of the people live off the land, the PDPA never even set up an organisation of farmers or peasants.

Before the coup in April 1978, people in the countryside lived semi-autonomously, free from central government control. More important than factional fights in Kabul or hidden intrigues with the Soviet Union were ties of family, religion and the many different nationalities that make up Afghanistan.

MILITARY COUP

The 'April Revolution' was, in fact, a military coup. Without any organised base among the people, however, the PDPA announced that it would skip the stage of a united front and impose a revolution



from above. One of its leaders, for example, declared: "In the great April Revolution, in spite of the fact that it triumphed according to the general and particular laws of the epoch-making ideology of the working class, the army played the major role of the proletariat, that is the powerful centre of the victory."

In other words, ignore the majority of the people, call the army the working class and impose a revolution from above with weapons and finance from the Soviet Union.

The kind of revolution that they were to impose was shown by the so-called land reform of 1978. This was to be carried out by committees of officials, backed by army and police and was easily sabotaged by money-lenders who refused to lend money to any farmer with new land. While land reform was no doubt necessary in the countryside, this was not a serious attempt to carry it out.

Decrees on women's rights were similarly ineffectual and went directly against many local customs. The fact that such reforms were not seriously intended was exposed by the fact that it was well-known in Kabul that top PDPA leaders refused to implement them in relation to their own family affairs. They were, in fact, mere window-dressing, dictated by the Soviet Union, to fool

the world into thinking that the PDPA was bringing progress to a "backward, feudal society".

MOUNTING RESISTANCE

The reformist face of the PDPA was soon stripped away as it faced mounting resistance in the countryside. The literacy programme soon ran into problems. The PDPA sent out city women in skirts, guarded by the army, to "educate the village women". When in one village, people refused to send women to the literacy centre, the team from Kabul ordered guards to drag the women out of their houses. In a few days, the whole area rose up in rebellion against the government.

By 1979, the PDPA government faced full-scale rebellion in different parts of the country. They resorted to massive arrests and repression. The rebellion in the countryside led to increased economic difficulties as the harvest was not collected.

Factional fighting within the PDPA increased, including coup attempts by sections of the military. One leader followed another. Towards the end of 1979, there were already over 30,000 Soviet troops within Afghanistan and at the end of December, the Soviet Union gave full backing to a new leader adopting the fiction that he had invited the Red Army into the country.

The history of the continued resistance of the people to the armed might of the Soviet Union is better known. Although vastly superior in arms, the Soviet army could never control the countryside. It could, and did, unleash all the horrors of modern weaponry on unprotected civilians. The mujihadeen fought a classic people's war, based in support from the people. The Red Army bombed villages. Civilians were napalmed. So-called anti-personnel weapons were used, some disguised as brightly coloured toys to attract children. The aim of such Soviet weapons is the same as the American equivalents used in Vietnam, to demoralise the civilian population.

Many in the West were misled by the socialist rhetoric of the PDPA and the Soviet Union and failed to support the resistance. They accepted ideas of the backward, feudal nature of the resistance. They saw the Red Army as liberating the people of Afghanistan, bringing progress and reform.

But essentially the Afghan people was fighting for their right to self-determination and national independence, whatever form their resistance took. It was this just struggle that was the main reason for the withdrawal of the Soviet Army in 1988 and the victory in Kabul in April of this year.

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.

At the end of March of this year, New Era Books had to close, after many years of selling progressive journals, papers and books. This was due to growing costs of keeping a bookshop going in London.

The League is grateful to all those who have worked for and supported New Era Books in the past. It has served as an important distribution point for printed material and meeting place. It could not have done this without committed support from workers, supporters, customers and volunteers over the years.

'Class Struggle' will be sold by individual sellers and other bookshops in different cities. We plan to produce three more issues of the paper in its present form in 1992. In this period, we will be holding discussions on the best form for a new publication to be launched in 1993. Please let us know any comments or suggestions!

OCTOBER

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