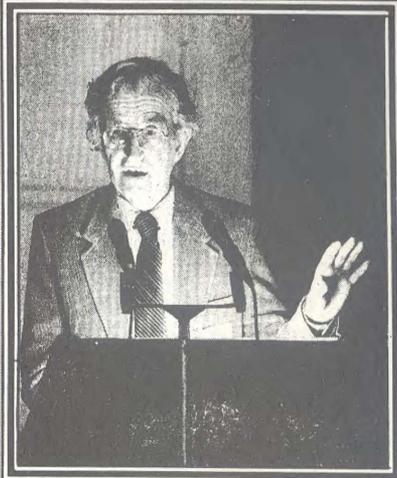


CLASS STRUGGLE

VOL15 NO1 February 1991

30P



● *Chomsky on the new and old world orders*

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the war at home

NO BLOOD FOR OIL

RESIST
THE
WAR
DRIVE

CLASS STRUGGLE

The armed forces of Western imperialism, headed by the USA and its loyal ally, Britain, have launched a massive attack on the small Third World country, Iraq. This attack has been spearheaded by round-the-clock bombardment of Iraq, destroying the country's economy and killing thousands of people.

Behind the propaganda smokescreen, the basic issue is control of oil: price per barrel and rate of production. The economies of the industrialised countries have been built on the basis of a supply of cheap oil. An increase in price would intensify the current economic crises, particularly in the USA and Britain. The fact that most of the world's oil is found in Third World countries and is a valuable resource belonging to their peoples is not considered relevant.

Iraq has been attacked because last summer it threatened to upset the control of the West over the price and supply of Middle Eastern oil. The war is also intended as a warning to any other country who dares to challenge the world order as proclaimed by President Bush.

The reality of the situation in the Middle East is, of course, complex. It is true that the Hussein regime has consistently suppressed national and democratic struggles within Iraq. It has also colluded with imperialism to build up power in the region. But these are not the reasons for the present war.

Self-determination, freedom and democracy are being used as convenient slogans for the US and Britain who have repeatedly shown their contempt for these rights in practice.

Opposition to the war around the world has reflected an understanding of these issues. Millions of people have demonstrated their opposition to Western imperialism. The longer the war goes on, the greater will be the opposition, including within the imperialist countries themselves.

We have to work to build the anti-war movement, primarily on the basis of the demand for the withdrawal of the imperialist forces. The issues of democracy within Iraq, self-determination for the people of Kuwait, of Kurdistan and Palestine are for the Arab people to solve without outside interference.

POLITICAL PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE

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FORTUNES OF WAR

What price for oil?

The heaviest cost of the Gulf War will be paid, in both the short and long term, by the Arab people, particularly the Iraqis. But people in Britain will also have a cost to pay to keep oil cheap for our governments and big business.

The most immediate cost will be the lives of young men and women in the army. While some pilots and navigators have already died or been captured, this is nothing compared to the casualties that will occur in a protracted land war.

The British army reflects the class structure of our society. In the lowest ranks, the majority have joined up as an alternative to unemployment or low-paid work. There is a high proportion from the poorest regions of England, and from Scotland and Wales.

No doubt at present many soldiers and their families are solidly behind the war. But this will change if casualties rise and they are forced to ask what they are dying for. The longer the war goes on, the less effective becomes the rhetoric about "our heroes" and "fighting in defence of democracy and freedom".

Writers of articles in the financial pages of our papers are blunt about the purpose of the war. For example:

"The reason why Saddam Hussein could not be allowed to take Kuwait with impunity is simply that it would have left them (the Iraqis) in effective control of the world oil market. It was Iraq,



Anti-war laser projection by Polish artist Krzysztof Wodyczkoof. Skeletal hands holding an M16 assault rifle and petrol pump were projected onto Franco's Arch of Triumph Monument at the entrance to Madrid. The word behind asks 'How many?'

remember, which pressed the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) early last summer to set its target oil price at \$25 a barrel rather than \$21 that was eventually agreed. If there had been no Western response to the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam could have

enforced any price he liked...

"An OPEC cartel under Saddam's tutelage would have exacted a considerable and indefinite cost... The world recessions of 1973-4 and of 1980-2 were the worst since the Second World War and both were caused by the sudden shift of purchasing power for oil consumers to the oil producers."

In order to keep down the cost of oil, the British government is prepared to fight a war that costs nearly £30,000,000 a day. One of the Tornado planes, of which six have been lost so far, costs £21 million, and when loaded up for a bombing mission carries £1.4 million worth of bombs.

Yet we are told there is no money for schools, hospitals or better social services. One way or another, whether directly through an increase in taxes or further cuts in services, it is we who will have to pay the costs of this war. The war is not being fought in the interests of the majority of people here, any more than for the sake of freedom and democracy in Iraq.

Major surgery: war on wards

Large-scale plans have been made in Britain to set up a network of military hospitals within National Health Service (NHS) hospitals to cope with Gulf War casualties.

With the outbreak of war, selected wards were emptied up and down the country. These will be separate military facilities guarded by armed police and military personnel. Only NHS staff with special identification will be allowed in.

In some cases, big general hospitals' surgery capacity will be reduced by 35%. Already patients are being refused beds in order to keep

them vacant for war casualties.

Staff are told that there is no problem with overtime pay. All costs will be paid by the military. Money for extra equipment (not available because of NHS cuts) is suddenly available.

The Health Minister claims that all this has boosted morale among NHS staff. However, many think that these ward relocations (closures to NHS staff) will help health authorities balance their books as many have had to make cuts because of the underfunding of the health service.

Mandy's Diary

Dec 9th: There was a major article in the 'Sunday Times' magazine today about how men are the oppressed sex because women call them names. Jane Fonda is quoted as saying: "I still believe that women are the superior sex" and Anna Raeburn: "I regard men as a pleasant pastime but no more dependable than the British weather."

Surely this writer is not serious? It's too pathetic for words! But just in case he is, I will say this: In view of all the murders, rapes, physical and sexual assaults that men inflict on women day in, day out, being called pleasant but undependable is getting off very lightly indeed!

Dec 25th: Just as we were settling down after Christmas dinner to listen to the Queen's speech, I was naive enough to say to my brother: "Wouldn't it be great if the Queen were to make a stand for peace in the Gulf? You know the kind of thing: In this season of good will to all men(!), can't we resolve this matter by peaceful negotiation? Set a good example to our brothers and sisters in other countries, what?" And he was naive enough to reply: "The Queen won't talk about the Gulf. She can't be seen to be making political comments."



Well, you could have knocked us both down with a feather! Peace on earth and goodwill to men flew out of the window as soon as she opened her mouth.

Instead it was: this evil must be stopped at all costs and all power to the elbows of our boys in the Gulf.

And the moral of that is: we

should never have been so naive as to expect anything else.

Jan 2nd: Did you have a turtle-free Christmas? We had Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles on tracksuits, T-shirts, hats, shoes, gloves, socks, carrier bags, pencils..... It hasn't been easy to buy a present for my three year-old that didn't have turtles on it. This is the freedom of choice that our wonderful Western democracy gives us.

This evening he greeted his father coming home from work by charging down the hallway fully clad in turtle gear and stabbing him with a plastic knife which he brandished like a sword.

Jan 11th: An article in the 'Telegraph' today describes male chauvinism in public schools where girls are now being admitted, although still in far smaller numbers than boys. Marlborough College, for example, is aiming at a ratio of 2 to 1 boys to girls, the reasoning being: "Girls grow up faster than boys If you go for parity then you risk having a school in which girls dominate."

This would be too awful to contemplate, so girls are 'kept in their place' by insults, sexist comments and occasional physical assaults. In 1986, the Master said that a female pupil "is not able to carry real weight in the school, but in a male cake she is much more than mere icing on the top, more like a special ingredient of spice". The 'Telegraph' commented: "Relegated to such insignificance by the Master, it was hardly surprising that chauvinism was endemic among the boys."

It is of course the male pupils in public schools who go on to take the top jobs in industry, the armed forces, the civil service, Parliament, etc. It is these sexist and male chauvinist attitudes which rule the country and set the scene for the rest of us.

Jan 17th: The movement against the War in the Gulf has not managed to stop the war. America and Britain never seemed to want to negotiate a settlement. In all modern wars, it is the civilian populations that come off worst. In the case of this war, it will be all the people of the Middle East, especially

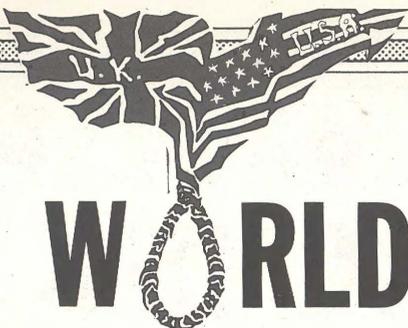
of Iraq, who pay the highest cost, but particularly the women and children.

In this country, women have only a small part to play in positions of power directing this war and in the army. But they will play an important part in the movement against the war. Women will also be important as relatives of the soldiers in the British army. There will no doubt be an immediate response to support the army. But if the war goes on for some time, particularly the land war, the soldiers and their families will start asking questions about why they are fighting and dying.

Jan 23rd: Meanwhile, in the Health Service, some small victories have been won. East Birmingham Health Authority claims it is an Equal Opportunities employer but it has been found guilty of 'unlawfully discriminating' against two female employees on grounds of their sex. Both applied for senior posts but one job was offered to a man who was less experienced and the other to a man who was on a lower grade than either of the women.

The Health Minister Virginia Bottomley has announced that more than £1.5 million is to be spent to encourage qualified women doctors to develop their careers in medicine. The money will be spent on part-time training posts for women doctors, a retainer of £290 a year to encourage those not working to keep in touch with advances pending their return, and on a new scheme to increase the number of women surgeons. Mrs Bottomley said: "Almost equal numbers of men and women qualify from medical school, but only 15% of consultants are women, and only 3% of consultants in surgical specialities are women. It is essential that attention is paid to the problems faced by women doctors if the NHS is to make full use of this major asset and resource."

Let us hope that there will be a proper analysis of the problems facing women doctors, both in practical terms, such as the need for childcare facilities, and flexible working hours, and in terms of the attitudes of their male colleagues.



NEW WORLD ORDER?

We reprint below an shortened version of an article carried in 'The Independent' reporting a speech given by Noam Chomsky, a veteran critic of US imperialism:

The Gulf War has nothing to do with the maintenance of a 'new world order' as claimed by President Bush and his Western allies, but is being fought to protect the old world order, in which the West savagely repressed former colonial empires to protect its economic interests.

That view was promulgated ... by Professor Noam Chomsky... when he addressed the annual conference of the Catholic Institute for International Relations...

Professor Chomsky ... was applauded warmly when he argued that the American governmental and business elite see oil as "our resource", as if the fact that it is located in foreign countries is merely a "geographical accident".

History showed that the enemy to world order, as defined by Western policy-makers, is independent nationalism. Citing American treatment of Latin America and South-east Asia, he argued, that only Third World forces regarded as legitimate by the US were "those who understand and serve US priorities".

Obviously, it was preferable "for propaganda purposes" if such Western-sympathising regimes were democratic - but if not, it made no difference.

In a paper accompanying his talk, Professor Chomsky wrote: "The cynicism is transparent. Until 1 August, Saddam Hussein was an ally and favoured trading partner. His criminal atrocities were easily overlooked; others whose records are as unsavoury as his continue to be amiable friends."

He added: "In reality, Saddam Hussein became the new incarnation of Hitler and Genghis Khan when he revealed himself to be a 'radical nationalist', who rejects the doctrine that the energy reserves of the Gulf are to be controlled by the US and

reliable client states. At that point, his monstrous record can be invoked as a propaganda device."

Similar examples of a quick transition from amity to enmity included Manuel Noriega in Panama, who had been aided and supported by the US until he ceased to serve its interests.

FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY

The West's assertion that it is pursuing the war in defence of "freedom, justice, world order and democracy", could be discounted, as could the excuse of self-defence as a "guise for intervention". Both were "invariant features of statecraft", used to justify causes pursued out of economic and political self-interest.

The posture adopted of preventing a powerful neighbour from bullying weaker countries could not be sustained. If that were the case, the Western allies would have intervened in the Indonesian suppression of East Timor, at the cost of 200,000 lives. That suppression, Professor Chomsky said, "made Saddam Hussein look like a Boy Scout". He also cited the continuing United Nations and World Court strictures on its economic embargo of Nicaragua.

Opposition to the war went unarticulated in powerful circles, because the western concept of democracy was that the "rascal multitude" should be barred from playing any real role....

The Cold War had been a war primarily conducted against the Third World. Now that the Cold War had ended, its purpose - of ensuring that the Third World remains subservient to the dominant powers - would continue to be pursued, but "in a different rhetorical framework".

INTERNATIONAL LAW

The crucial difference enabling the US to engage in war in the Gulf was the end of the Cold War, which enabled the diversion of forces from other parts of the world. "Ten or fifteen years ago the US would not have been able to send massive conventional forces to the Gulf," he said.

It was equally implausible for the US and its "lieutenant", Britain, to promote their war in the name of upholding international law. Both governments "have always regarded international law as an annoying encumbrance". The two Atlantic states, he said, have run a long campaign against the United Nations, and were jointly "far in the lead in blocking Security Council resolutions".

Despite the anti-Soviet rhetoric, the cold war was primarily a war against the Third World for control of its resources

In the case of the Gulf dispute, both nations had "consistently tried to undermine diplomacy and negotiations. Opposition to 'linkage' - the connection of the dispute over Kuwait to the Israel-Palestine question - was merely the means to block a diplomatic solution. That response by the Western powers was logical, since they were inevitably weaker in the diplomatic area than the military one, where the US enjoys a monopoly of power which it has every interest in retaining.

A key consequence of the Soviet collapse is that the US is "more free than before to use force", creating a renewed temptation to go it alone rather than trusting to diplomacy. He argued that, apart from Britain, "the major industrial powers showed little interest in military confrontation".

The new invention was not the new world order, but the notion of America as the West's mercenary policing force; the new principle: "We carry out the intervention and other people pay for it."



OPPOSITION TO WAR GROWS

The longer the war in the Gulf goes on, the greater will be the opposition to it. While the polls tell us of a big majority in favour, there is little support among Britain's black national minority communities for the war.

The most solid opposition comes from the two million Muslims who live here. On Friday, 18th January, mosques in Bradford condemned the war and led prayers for peace. One man probably expressed the feelings of many when he said:

"We want all non-Muslim forces to be pulled out of Muslim holy land, to let the Arabs solve their own problems. We are extremely angry that the Americans have rushed into a war without any respect for one billion Muslims around the world..."

On Sunday, 20th January, a national conference of Muslim organisations voted overwhelmingly to condemn the US and British aggression and called for immediate withdrawal of non-Muslim forces. Sher Azam, President of the Bradford Council of

Mosques, explained why an earlier position demanding the simultaneous withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait was no longer of equal importance:

"The situation has changed because of US aggression. Therefore we have first to remove the biggest danger and that is the mighty force of the US and their allies. Once they leave the Gulf, the problems of the area can be discussed."

A further resolution expressed Muslim solidarity with the Palestinians: "We condemn the continued Israeli occupation of Palestine... we believe that unless the Palestinian issue is resolved there can be no hope for a long-term peace in the region."

There is broader opposition to the war among other black people, who do not necessarily see the issue in religious terms but are opposed to the continued aggression and exploitation by imperialism of the resources and people of the Third World.

The Committee to Stop the War in the Gulf needs to unite

with this broad anti-imperialist feeling. But it will need to challenge some of the people within the peace movement who see the main target as being Saddam Hussein and the main demand as Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

It will also need to be prepared to defend black people from the growing number of racist attacks which have resulted from the "patriotic" pro-war and anti-Muslim fervour that has spread among many people. One of the tabloid papers, has been advocating that all Muslims who do not support "our boys" should be deported. School children have been attacked in school and the number of attacks on black people in the streets and in their homes is growing alarmingly.

The Gulf War has brought a long standing anti-Muslim strand in British racism to a head. The link between the anti-imperialist struggles of the peoples and nations of the Third World and resistance to racism in Britain is clear and one that the peace movement cannot ignore.

INTERNAL WAR

While its armies are supporting the US, the British state has launched its internal war against Iraqi, Palestinian and other Arab people living here.

A number of Iraqis have been detained and are being held as prisoners of war on the basis that they are members of the Iraqi armed forces. Little has been heard of this group.

Another fifty seven Iraqi and Palestinian people have been arrested and are under threat of deportation under racist immigration laws which deny them basic democratic rights.

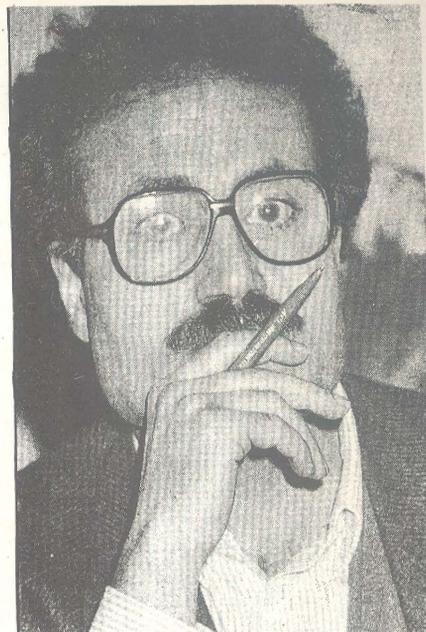
Their cases are heard by a secret advisory panel, whose timetable originally allowed them thirty minutes each to argue their case. Even with more time however, the detainees have little chance to defend themselves. They have no right to hear the evidence against them that "proves" that they are a "risk to national security". They can only guess what the charges are.

Among these fifty seven currently detained is Abbas Cheblak, a Palestinian writer who has lived here for sixteen years and whose two children are British citizens. In 1989, the Home Office gave him indefinite leave to stay. In a letter to the papers on 29th January, friends and supporters of Abbas Cheblak pointed out:

"..Abbas Cheblak has publicly campaigned for human rights in the Arab world, has spoken out against Saddam Hussein's aggression and, over the years, has consistently advocated .. the need for a just and peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute...

"It is particularly ironic that such a writer with such beliefs should now be robbed of his freedom and his basic human rights in the Britain he has come to consider his home..."

Solicitors and others have pointed out that Britain is probably in breach of the Geneva Convention in its



Abbas Cheblak

treatment of detainees.

Other EEC countries have also acted promptly in expelling Arabs. In the last week alone, there have been reports of expulsions from Italy, Greece and France.

STATEMENTS BY MARXIST-LENINISTS

Belgium

From the Editorial in 'Solidaire', weekly paper of the PTB (Party of Labour of Belgium), 9th January, 1991.

The position of workers' organisations must be clear: an absolute 'No' to the war.

The reasons for this are:

Firstly, it is an unjust war, an imperialist war. The rich nations intend to 'teach a lesson' to the Third World: submit and accept the exploitation of your raw materials, pay your debts conscientiously and don't revolt, or we will intervene militarily. In this confrontation the international workers' solidarity movement must choose to ally itself with the South.

Secondly, because our Government will not fail to use this pretext to dismantle whatever social progress we have made.

Thirdly, because it will be the workers who will pay for this war: with their lives, but also with price increases, attacks on their wages, unemployment and more cuts in social expenditure.

'No war in the Gulf'. 'We will not pay for this war'. These

slogans help expose the true nature of capitalism. The conflict in the Gulf shows how far the system is founded on the inordinate accumulation of wealth by some, and constitutes a permanent source of crises and wars. Trade unionists who understand this must fight more strongly for the rights of Belgian workers.

Germany

Statement by the MLPD (Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany), 18th January, 1991.

On the night of January 17th, the USA began the Gulf War by massive air raids on Iraq. Immediately after the war began, US President Bush declared that this war was for a "new world order". Perhaps a world order in which unrestrained imperialism can plunder all the developing countries?

The USA is economically so shaky that it is very sensitive to even small increases in oil prices. At the same time, because of the weakness of the Soviet Union, former power relationships in the Near East have come apart. The reactionary Hussein regime, which has been supported by the USA itself, believed that it could use the

situation to its own advantage and annexed Kuwait.

This gave the USA the ideal opportunity to use the slogan "For the liberation of Kuwait" to justify the biggest military occupation of a strategically important area since the Second World War. From the beginning, the USA has planned to eliminate Iraq.

US President Bush claims that it is a question of freedom and self-determination for a small nation. Was that also the motive for the US aggression against Vietnam, Grenada, Nicaragua and Panama?

.... Those who say they are the friends of the people are in reality their worst enemies.

The war which has now begun is directed above all at the anti-imperialist struggle of the Arab masses. For from these masses comes the real danger for imperialist domination in the Gulf, and not from an anti-people regime like Iraq. By trusting in their own strength, the Arab peoples and the Kurdish people can free themselves from imperialism and their reactionary regimes.

Now, it is a question of strengthening resistance to the war with mass demonstrations and strikes.

No war for oil

Iraqi Democrats against war in the Gulf

War in the Gulf is immoral and unnecessary.

It is immoral because it makes victims of the same millions who have suffered for years the atrocities of Saddam Hussain's regime, propped up with arms and credits by West and East.

It is unnecessary against a small, underdeveloped country which has only recently gained independence but is still totally reliant on foreign trade, including for food.

We say: No to war.

The third world is full of conflicts: about water, oil, colonial borders, national aspirations and religious rights. A "New World Order" needs civilised ways of resolving such conflicts. The massive concentration of arms technology and troops, threats and ultimatums, compound rather than resolve problems.

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS

FOR REGIONAL CONFLICTS

It is right for the international community to contribute to just and lasting solutions to regional conflicts. But this contribution has to be based on the reconciliation of the interests of the nations concerned rather than on short-term economic and political expediency. The era of colonial overlords has gone and its legacies will have to be resolved peacefully. The best contribution the industrial world can make is to stop the sale of military technology and work out a schedule for the mandatory destruction of all nuclear and chemical weapons in the area, including in Israel. Only this, and the restoration of the rights of the Palestinian people, could create trust and partnership in the Middle East.

DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

IN A MULTICULTURAL WORLD

No party to this conflict has any pretence on the defence of democracy and human rights. For years, the West was aiding Saddam's regime and vilifying Iran and Syria as barbaric and terrorist. Overnight they switched sides. Saddam's atrocities are remembered while the new allies' inequities are glossed over. The medieval neo-colonial regimes of the sheikhs of Arabia are a travesty of legality and human rights, and an affront to the dignity of the Arabs and the international community. Israel's racist, military-settler and expansionist nature is becoming clearer every day.

We call upon the international community to actively support the struggle of the Iraqi people and all other Middle Eastern people for representative democracy while preserving their national and cultural identities. This should include the national rights of the Kurdish people in Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria.

The Middle East is not a map. It is not sand, oil and a few bands of terrorists. It is packed full of cities; modern and ancient; kindergartens; libraries; hospitals; factories; schools; mosques; churches; synagogues; cinemas; universities; rivers; villages and fields. It is above all packed full of nations proud of their diverse and rich heritage in this cradle of civilisation. Recognition of this fact is the starting point for a lasting and just solution to this crisis.

January 1991

Iraqi Democrats Against War in the Gulf, c/o Committee to Stop War in the Gulf, 2nd floor, 5 Bradbury Street, London N16 8JN.

Over the first day of the new Gulf War, reports suggested that the western air offensive against Iraq had been highly successful. Thereafter, it became clear that its impact had not been as devastating in military terms as first thought. Iraq still had mobile Scud rocket launchers; only about one tenth of its air force was confirmed as destroyed. It began to look as though this war would be longer and harder than first expected.

As war approached, opinion polls indicated that about as many people were opposed to going to war as supported it, in both the USA and Britain. Breakdowns of responses by sex showed that a clear majority of women were against war. This was remarkable. In Britain, most of press coverage of the Gulf crisis for five months was pro-war. This was the stance of all the mass circulation tabloids. 'The Star' went as far as to advocate the use of nuclear weapons. A small number of MPs took an anti-war position. But the great majority of the three major parties' MPs were essentially in agreement on pushing ahead to war. Shortly before war broke out, the leading figures in the Church of England and Catholic church in Britain declared that a war on Iraq to "free" Kuwait would be just. In spite of all this establishment solidarity, half the people, through their own good sense and the work of the anti-war movement, opposed a war. That they were unable to get a corresponding proportion of their MPs to take the same stand shows how unaccountable those representatives are, and the limitations of British bourgeois democracy.

If the voice of the people had been translated into parliamentary voting power, Britain's drive to war might have been halted. Over in the Middle East, progressives want western forces out of the Gulf and an Arab solution to the conflict at the head of the Gulf, and that's what they have been concentrating on putting forward.

At the same time, they have been looking back at how the conflict arose, and many have concluded that everything would have turned out differently if the Arab world had had democratic, accountable governments. Syria, Egypt and Morocco would not have thrown their lot in



with the US-British forces in the Gulf. Kuwait would have been a better place to live for all its population and would have been a tougher nut for Iraq to crack. But then, a democratic Iraq would not have embarked on military adventures against its neighbours, and instead, would have concentrated on guaranteeing progress for its people.

IMPACT OF WAR

Anti-war mobilisations culminated in huge protests across Britain on January 12th, three days before the UN deadline to Iraq to quit Kuwait. Nearly 100,000 demonstrated in London; 8,000 in Glasgow and Manchester, and thousands more in local protests organised by the Committee to Stop War in the Gulf. Then the war broke out. More protests followed.

Opposition will grow the longer the war continues and the costlier it becomes. It

is important, if this process is to be accelerated, that those who oppose it ask awkward questions, and get to the truth of what is going on.

What is the extent of Iraqi civilian casualties? The western forces play down their number, saying that the "pinpoint" bombing has meant that few civilians were killed. Saddam Hussain has played down their number, in order to exaggerate the strength of Iraq's air defence system. However, refugees fleeing to Turkey and Iran told of heavy civilian losses. Given the record of "precision" bombing, the location of Iraqi military and war-sustaining facilities in or near cities, and the fact that the US and Britain claim to have hit nuclear reactors and chemical weapons plants, the suggestions that only a few dozen people have been killed must be dismissed.

How is the western war effort going? On the first day,

there was a flood of reports suggesting that the US and British air forces were devastating Iraq's strategic installations and obliterating its air warfare capacity. As Iraq fired off missiles at Saudi Arabia and Israel, and it emerged after five days that only one in twenty Iraqi planes had been destroyed, it began to look as though the war would be a lot tougher for the western allies than anticipated.

The war's impact beyond the immediate area has been serious. The Philippines, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Yemen have lost tens of millions of pounds of income from migrant workers who have lost jobs in Iraq and Kuwait, and (in the case of the Yemenis) Saudi Arabia. The Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip have lost 10-20% of their income as a result of the Gulf crisis, including around 75% of the funding for the West Bank's main hospital, in East Jerusalem.

Around the Arab world, opposition to the war has been growing. Demonstrations have taken place in all the Arab states in North Africa, as well as Jordan and Yemen. Three quarters of a million demonstrated in Tripoli, Libya, and 400,000 in Algiers. Morocco called back troops from the Western Sahara to prevent demonstrations. The Syrian government was so afraid of popular protest when the war began that it pulled its elite forces out of Lebanon and redeployed them in and around Syria's major cities.

Arab popular opposition to the Gulf War is not based on support for Saddam Hussain's occupation of Kuwait, but on opposition to western military intervention in the region and support for an Arab solution to the conflict. We stand with the Arab people, in defence of the independence of their countries, and call for a ceasefire and western withdrawal. When that has happened, the chance to find an Arab solution can be pursued.

But whatever occurs, the face of the Middle East is being transformed. All the regimes in the Arab states which have been drawn into this conflict have become shakier, and it is unlikely to be long before the first one falls to popular resistance or a military coup by nationalist soldiers. Pressure will grow for the demand put forward by the Palestinians during their three year old Uprising to be met. But first, the war must be ended.

Thousands say 'Stop the war'

Opposition to the Gulf War is showing itself in mass demonstrations all over Europe and the USA. In Britain, although the protests have been smaller than elsewhere, the 'Campaign to Stop the War in the Gulf' is supported by CND, the Green Party, Plaid Cymru, Labour MPs, trade unions, the National Union of Students and church groups. It is against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and upholds Kuwait's right to self-determination but does not see the present war as a way of solving the problems. It calls for a period of sanctions and a negotiated peace.

groups, some Labour Party groups and some internationalist groups such as the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Iraqi Democrats against War in the Gulf, Organisation of Revolutionary Workers of Iran, Americans for Peace and others. Also present were the ever-vocal Socialist Workers' Party who chanted 'US Out of the Gulf, US Out of the Gulf, and Britain', with no sign of support for Kuwaiti independence. The Revolutionary Communist Group had a big banner declaring 'Imperialist Troops Out of the Gulf. British Hands off the

on the same day in several other cities, including Glasgow, Manchester and Bristol. In most small towns, local campaigners were on the streets in vigils, leafletting and collecting signatures for petitions.

The following week, January 19th, after the war had started, demonstrations were again held in London and other cities, including Leeds. On January 26th, the Committee against War in the Gulf called for the emphasis to be on regional demonstrations and protests to be followed by a mass protest in London on February 2nd.

Popular protest has not been able to stop the war being launched. But it can still have an impact on the length of the war and the aggressiveness of the US and its allies in the Middle East. Growing opposition may help deter the USA from going further and planning longer-term military targets in the region. US imperialism must be targeted, as well as Britain's role and our basic stand must be one of solidarity and support with the Arab peoples.



The huge march and rally, of about 200,000 people, that took place in London on January 12th, was organised by the campaign and attended by a range of groups as well as individuals. At least half the marchers appeared to be individuals, marching under no specific banner but propelled onto the streets by their own horror at impending war. Carrying placards saying 'Choose Peace' and 'Stop the Countdown to War', they formed an impressive part of the march, indicating how deep is the desire for a principled stand for peace.

Other banners followed: CND and other peace groups, women's groups, environmental

Middle East. Self Determination for Kurdistan. Victory to the Palestinian Revolution'. (All well and good, but I thought this war had something to do with the invasion of Kuwait.)

There was the usual discrepancy about numbers between the organisers and the police. As one TV comedian said later, the police must be issued with special specs which blot out three quarters of the people! The numbers can best be envisaged by the fact that when the front of the march reached Trafalgar Square about 3 p.m., the last quarter of it had still not left Hyde Park.

There were big demonstrations

World Outcry

Throughout the world, in all five continents, since the war began there have been massive demonstrations for peace and against American-led aggression.

In the USA itself: Veterans of the anti-Vietnam war led a 75,000 strong demonstration in San Francisco the weekend after the start of the war. 20,000 marched in Los Angeles. In Washington, the National Coalition to stop US Intervention in the Middle East led 25,000. In Chicago, on 15th January, 100 people people were arrested when 1,000 demonstrators blocked roads and scuffled with police during the morning rushhour. In Minneapolis, protestors shouted: "Hell no, we won't go. We won't fight for Texaco."

In Australia: Thousands of protestors marched through cities chanting "No Blood for oil" and "Bring the frigates home". The two largest demonstrations were in Adelaide and Sydney, where 10,000 people recreated the atmosphere of the anti-Vietnamese War demonstrations of the 60's and 70's. Vietnam veterans marched to the US and



Rally in Duisburg, Germany: "No Blood for Oil! Resistance!"

Israeli consulates with members of trade unions, human rights groups and environmental organisations. One placard, referring to Bush's least favourite vegetable, read: "What if Kuwait's main export was broccoli?"

In Europe: There have been protests in many countries:

***** In Spain:** On 18th January, more than two million workers went on strike for more than two hours against Spanish involvement in the Gulf War.

On 23rd and 24th January, hundreds of thousands marched for peace in Madrid, Barcelona and other cities. They demanded the withdrawal of the three Spanish warships.

***** In Belgium:** 10,000 demanded the withdrawal of Belgium ships and planes from the Gulf.

***** In Italy:** About 300,000 have demonstrated in towns and cities all over the country.

***** In France:** On 18th January, in many factories there was a strike lasting at least a quarter of an hour.

***** In Germany:** In Berlin, on 17th January, 20,000 marched for peace. In Bonn at least one quarter of a million people marched on 26th January. There have been demonstrations in cities all over Germany including Düsseldorf, Magdeburg, Cologne, Münster and Duisburg.

In South East Asia: As well as anti-war protests there has also been support for Iraq:

***** In India:** Pro-Iraqi demonstrations have been held.

India has a Muslim minority of 100 million.

***** In Pakistan:** In several cities protestors took to the streets to condemn the air attacks against Iraq and the presence of 12,000 Pakistani troops in Saudi Arabia. An Islamic party recruiting fighters for Baghdad was besieged by volunteers.

In Peshawar, police fired teargas and baton-charged about 800 students trying to march on an American cultural centre.

All over Africa, there have been demonstrations:

100,000 marched in **Algers.** Algerians volunteered to fight for Iraq.

100,000 marched in **Morocco.**

Teargas was used to break up a demonstration in Nouakchott, the capital of **Mauritania,** in West Africa.

In Khartoum, **Sudan,** thousands of demonstrators marched on 19th January, burning effigies of President Bush and shouting "Death to Israel".

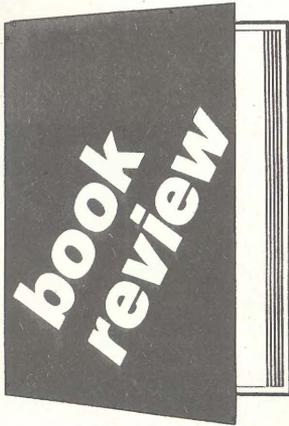
In South Africa: About 2,000 protestors in Athlone, outside Cape Town, burned American and Israeli flags.

But the best attended demonstration took place in **Libya,** where Colonel Gaddafi led anti-war protests joined by one million people. Protestors shouted: "Stop the Bombardment of Iraq", "Stop the War Immediately" and "Kuwait has the right to self-determination".



Protestors outside the American embassy in Amman, Jordan.

The Rebirth of History



countries. Indeed, opposition forces often co-operated and particularly in 1989, events in one country had a direct influence on the speed of the revolution in its neighbours:

"The emergence of huge popular movements before and during the revolutions in almost all countries was determined by the will to defeat the common enemy, the Communist Party in power. By the end of 1989 these movements had carried out their initial task, in some cases brilliantly. During the second phase, the period between revolution and

ROLE OF THE WEST

Whether such a "third way" is possible is of course a debatable question. But Misha Glenny points out how Western governments have dealt harshly with the new governments and political parties, demanding harsh conditions for any aid. He is particularly critical of the role of the USA in their interference in the Bulgarian elections, when they gave \$1.3 million to the opposition front. The US openly worked for the defeat of the ruling party, the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), because unlike

The national question in Europe

It was only one year ago that events in Eastern Europe were in the headlines. Remember Checkpoint Charlie and the pulling down of the Berlin Wall. The "velvet" revolution in Czechoslovakia. The execution of the Ceausescus. We were told that this was the "end of history"...

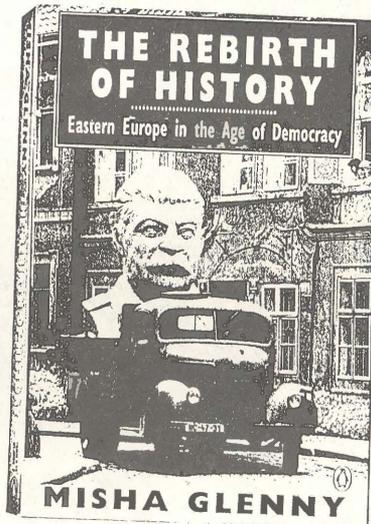
'The Rebirth of History' by Misha Glenny is a popular account of the revolutions that swept Eastern Europe in 1989 and 1990. The writer has reported on Eastern and Central Europe for many years, for both 'The Guardian' and the BBC. He recounts the background to recent developments and shows how each country has its unique history. As colonies of the Soviet Union, mainly controlled by Moscow, these differences tended to be covered up to re-emerge in the last year.

As his title implies, Misha Glenny sees the recent revolutions not as the end of history, even if the end of an era, but as the beginning of a new period in which the various countries could go in different directions. He is critical of the way that the Western media has lost interest, particularly in the Balkan countries.

This informative book contains a general introduction and conclusion with chapters on Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria.

BROAD FRONTS

There have been common developments in the different



elections, fragmentation took place to varying degrees...." (p.188)

Misha Glenny also points to common political currents, including an unwillingness to apply labels of 'left' or 'right', use the term 'socialism' or even 'social-democracy'. Nevertheless:

"...the political platforms of these successful political movements as well as Solidarity in Poland, have one element in common. All of them stress the need for a complex programme of social welfare - above all, they are all committed to combating inflation and unemployment during the transition to a market economy. None of them is prepared to apply a radical free-market economic policy in order to guide their country towards market mechanisms." (p.200)

other countries, it had simply declared that it could not afford to continue paying back its foreign debt and unilaterally announced a moratorium. (The BSP still won the election.)

Misha Glenny sums up Western policy: "The Western economic strategy developed towards the post-revolutionary states in Eastern Europe has clearly been designed to coerce them into the swift construction of a market or capitalist economy along lines preferred by the West. By March 1990 those political forces that were not playing ball had begun to feel the effects of discrimination...." (p.198).

THE NATIONAL QUESTION

But probably most interesting from our point of view is the emphasis that Misha Glenny gives to the national question in his analysis. For many "Marxists", the national question, particularly if we are talking about Europe, is not seen as relevant. The argument goes that the industrialised countries of Europe had gone beyond the national stage, largely a question of the formation of nation states, to advance to the stage of the "pure" class struggle. The RCL, along with some other Marxist-Leninists, have come to an understanding that the national question is rather one of the key questions for us to understand. The analysis in this book confirms this view.

The national question in Eastern Europe crops up in many different forms. There

is little doubt that the "broad popular fronts" or mass movements that brought about the revolutions of 1989 were made up of many different forces, from right to left wing, religious and nationalist forces, trade unions and intellectuals. Solidarity in Poland was the classic example of this drawing on both the strength of the working class and of the Catholic Church. But this book gives other examples, including the unity between Romanian people and the Hungarian minority in the period of the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime. Obviously, in the post-revolutionary period contradictions then appear between forces that had been united.

Once the domination of the Soviet Union was removed, old as well as new contradictions emerge, including important national questions. The question that got most attention in 1990 was of course the re-unification of the German nation, which on the one hand fulfilled just demands for the unification of a nation while at the same time threatened smaller countries, both in Europe and elsewhere, with the threat of growing German imperialism.

But there are many other historical questions relating to nations in Eastern Europe, particularly in the Balkan area. Many of the states that exist now, only have a short history with relatively arbitrary borders. The result is for example that a section of the Romanian people live in Moldavia, in the Soviet Union while Romania itself has a big Hungarian minority in Transylvania; the Albanian people are split between Albania and those living in Kosovo in Yugoslavia. Similar divided nations and national minorities can be found throughout the area.

Possibly the area most divided by national differences is Yugoslavia. Under Tito, a federation structure was combined with strong central leadership which held Yugoslavia together. More recently this structure is breaking up and the country is nearing civil war.

Even in Czechoslovakia, the question of the Czech and Slovak nation is one of the central questions that any future government has to get right if it is going to hold the country together.

In Bulgaria, 10% of the population is Turkish and the "Turkish question" has played a major part in developments in this country over the last few years. In the summer of

1989, the old party leader Zhivkov ordered a racist assimilation of the Turkish minority, a policy which backfired on him and led to his overthrow. Misha Glenny also points out that a major error of the opposition front in Bulgaria (the UDF) had been to expel the Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF) whose primary aim was to defend the Turkish minority. He describes a UDF rally and the racism towards Turkish people:

"The first evidence of this (deeply felt suspicion) was provided on a bitterly cold December morning in 1989, when speakers at a mass opposition demonstration ... proclaimed that the opposition must



A demonstrator gives his opinion of the Soviet Union in Riga, where thousands marched in support of independence.

defend the rights of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria. They were greeted with boos, catcalls and the chanting of anti-Turkish slogans." These views clearly mirror the racism of Western Europe. Other similar examples are the widespread racism towards the Vietnamese guest-workers in Eastern Europe. Misha Glenny remarks that anti-Vietnamese jokes are common throughout Eastern Europe and demands for the forced repatriation of Vietnamese workers had been raised in both Czechoslovakia and East Germany.

Other negative aspects of nationalist tendencies in the area include anti-semitism and the widespread repression and discrimination against Romas, or Romanies in different countries.

Misha Glenny considers that federal solutions have to be found to guarantee the rights of national minorities as well as small nations in a new and

different Europe. Otherwise, he predicts, that with growing economic difficulties, Eastern Europe could plunge into a period of great instability, including civil war.

We have to develop our analysis of the complex nature of the national question. While at one level it seems that Eastern Europe is joining with the West in euro-racism towards non-white people and the Third World in general, there are also immensely complex issues involved in other aspects of nationalism, in the area. Nationalist forces that may have been progressive in the struggle against the Soviet Union may represent a reactionary force

in the present situation. The answer is clearly not that we have taken any mythical "pure" class stand but that we have to make a concrete analysis of the different class and national forces involved, and to take into account the question of women within the different strands, an aspect only touched upon in this book.

Recent events in the Baltic states and other less well reported struggles in other parts of the Soviet Union show that an analysis of the national question is a key question for the 1990's, not only in the Third World but in most of Europe as well.

'The Rebirth of History' Eastern Europe in the Age of Democracy, by Misha Glenny, is published by Penguin Books at £4.99.

MONEY FOR

BREAD

NOT WAR



In Turkey the official rate of inflation is 55%, the true rate is probably closer to 80%. An average worker has to work half an hour to earn the price of a loaf of bread, 7 hours to earn the price of a kilo of meat and 800 hours to earn the price of a refrigerator! Since the military coup in 1980, the share of wages in the national income has fallen from 43% to 17.4%.

The mines in Turkey are state-owned and the conditions in which the miners are forced to work are extremely dangerous. Each year on average around seven thousand are hurt and thirty five killed.

This is the background to events of the last couple of months. On November 30th, the 48,000 mines of Zonguldak, a town of one million inhabitants on the Black Sea, struck in the biggest all-out industrial action in the country since the military coup in 1980. Daily massive demonstrations were organised involving women, students, school children and local shop owners. For two days the shops in Zonguldak were closed in solidarity and for three days parents did not send their children to school in order to show their support. The response of the Government of President Ozal was predictable. On the one hand it threatened to close down the pits and, on the other, it brought in tens of thousands of soldiers and riot police from all parts of the country.

Shortly after, 130,000 engineering workers went on strike. On 3rd January, the country had its biggest one day general strike in ten years. (In Turkey it is forbidden to organise a strike.) So the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TURK-IS) declared that on that day, the workers "would remain at home". The aim of the tens of thousands of trade union members was to demonstrate their support for the striking mines. On the day, over 500 people were arrested. The Government used the issue of the Gulf War as an excuse for banning the strikes but the workers have ignored the ban and have made "No to War" one of their main slogans. One placard in the early days of the struggle read "No to money for the war against Iraq, money for bread".



March to
Ankara

Turkish miners
out on strike

MARCH ON ANKARA

On January 4th, the miners decided to go in hired vans and mini-buses from Zonguldak to the capital Ankara, in order to demonstrate outside President Ozal's palace. But an enormous force of police and army prevented them from leaving the town. As a result they decided to walk the 150 miles to the capital! After 4 days walking in extremely harsh conditions and being forced to sleep in the open air at night, they had almost reached the Istanbul to Ankara main road when they came up against a 7,000 strong blockade of army and police. All along their march, they had been provoked and intimidated by the Turkish forces of law and order. But outside the village of Eskicaga they were halted by water cannon and bull-dozers.

Despite the breaking of the miners' march, they are still on strike. In their struggle for more wages they have also been protesting at the war preparations of the Turkish Government. Three weeks ago in a 40,000 strong demonstration in Istanbul they demanded "No bloodshed for the interests of the USA and the oil companies".

Halil Elibash, a miner at the Kozlu pit said: "I have worked here for 18 years. I earn 400,000 lira (£70) a month. When I went to register two of my children for school, I found that the school books for one of them would cost 120,000 lira. The school books for two of my children will cost me half my monthly wage. What are we supposed to eat this winter?"

A NEW BEGINNING

The actions, not only of the miners, but also by other groups of workers represent an important new beginning for the workers' movement in Turkey, after all the defeats imposed by the military since 1980. In addition to the 130,000 metal workers who have been on strike for a month, 85,000 textile workers have now stopped work following fruitless discussions with their employers.

Send messages of solidarity or write for further details, to:

'The Solidarity Committee with Striking Miners - Turkey'
c/o Trade Union Support Unit
Liberty Hall
489, Kingsland Rd,
London E8 4AU

Hands Off Dessie Ellis

— END EXTRADITION —
— FREE DESSIE ELLIS —

On 17th January, the Birmingham Anti-Extradition campaign held a successful public meeting. Martha Ellis, the sister of Dessie, was the main speaker.

Martha outlined Dessie's case and the hunger strike against extradition. She explained how the campaign had grown from six people in Eire to become a mass movement with international support.

Martha contrasted the response north and south of the Irish border. In the north, despite the 'mass oppression and army occupation, people were not afraid. They came out and gave their support. They were politically aware.

In the Twenty six counties, there was support but people were less politically aware. There was repression there, too. The Special Branch intimidated people and there were arrests of people who got involved. Ten thousand wrote "End Extradition" on ballot papers in the elections. There was no support from MP's in the Irish Parliament; none from Mary Robinson (the new President) or from trade union leaders.

As Martha said: "Power and money was all those people

were interested in. Not people's lives or justice."

Martha informed the meeting that Dessie is gradually recovering from his hunger strike and is now helping prepare his legal defence. She criticised the British government's use of conspiracy laws and for still failing to provide any detailed evidence against Dessie, despite having had years to do so.

WAITING FOR RELEASE

Father Taffe (of the Birmingham Six Campaign) also spoke at the meeting. He reported that the Six are well, in good spirits and looking forward to their release.

The history of British justice was diabolical. It was clear that Irish people could expect no justice in English courts. British law lords were only interested in protecting the government and the police. It was clear from the action of the law lords that if they had been in any other jobs they would have been retired on grounds of ill health. It was unthinkable that the Twenty Six Counties government should hand over their citizens to such so-called justice.

Solicitor Mike McColgan outlined to the meeting how the law in England was changing for the worse. How

increasingly the police were concentrating on public order issues and intervening in industrial disputes. He was concerned that people were not campaigning against these changes although he saw some hope in single-issue campaigns. He also criticised the Labour Party for going along with these erosions of civil liberties.

Marge Bridle used the tabloid press coverage of the Gulf War to illustrate what people were up against in raising the issue of Ireland. She is a Labour councillor who visited Belfast. She said people did not know what it was like living in the war zone of West Belfast. She quoted one opinion poll of November 1990 which showed 59% in favour of troops out of Ireland and 55% in favour of a re-united Ireland.

Marge had to admit that discussion on Ireland had stopped in the Labour Party. But she still claimed that it would be a Labour government that would get the troops out. She called for links to be built between the Labour Party and Sinn Fein.

Martha Ellis summed up the spirit of the meeting in her comment: "It's a war in the North of Ireland. People go on about the Gulf. But what about Ireland?"

Women's Delegation to Ireland

March 8th has been celebrated as International Women's Day since 1910 by women in struggle all over the world. For the last ten years women from England, Scotland and Wales have travelled to the north of Ireland to support the International Women's Day picket of Maghaberry Gaol where Irish Republican women prisoners are held subject to intimidation, harassment and strip-searching. The delegation is also a chance to show solidarity with other women in the north of Ireland and gain an insight into life under the shadow of British occupation. Delegates are encouraged to use their experience in ongoing support work when they return home.

- You can support the delegation by:
- * Sending a donation
 - * Offering childcare for those women going on the delegation
 - * Sending solidarity greetings with the delegation from any group you belong to
 - * Organising action here for International Women's Day and raising the issue of how Irish women are being treated in gaols in Ireland and England at

STOP strip-searches

DEMONSTRATE

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PICKET of DURHAM PRISON IN SUPPORT OF IRISH PRISONERS OF WAR SUNDAY 10th 1:30pm MARCH

Organised by the Irish P.O.W. Campaign

events on March 8th.
* Inviting a delegate to come and speak to your group after they come back

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
BIRMINGHAM, P.O. BOX 1032
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In the new '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 a combination of theory and practice.

The article on Feminism and the Left in India and Sri Lanka 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.

'Class Struggle' is the political paper of the Revolutionary Communist League.

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OCTOBER

THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE



A Special Issue on Women....

A Marxist-Leninist view from Norway

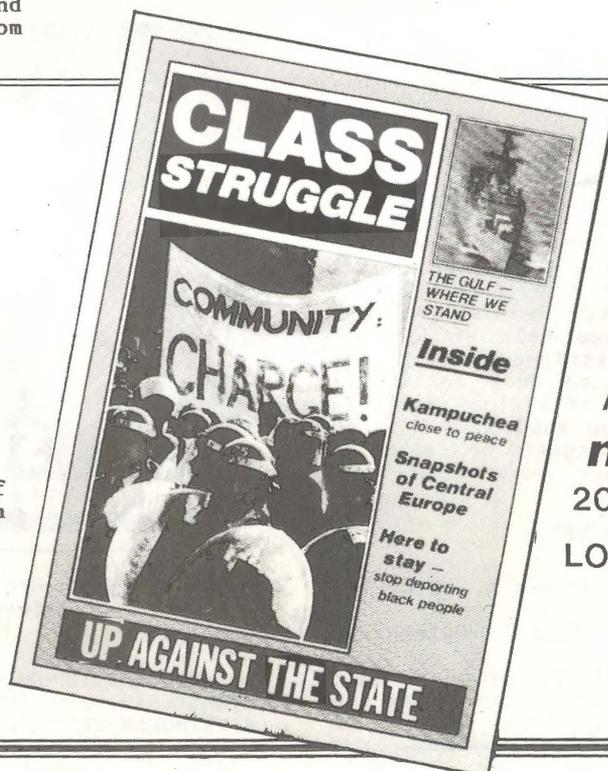
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