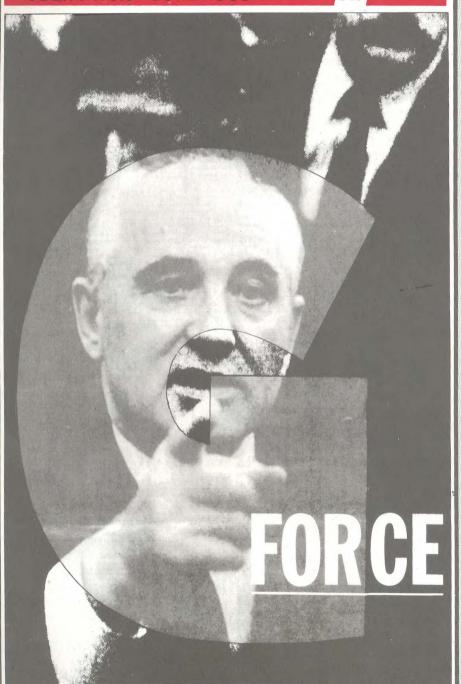
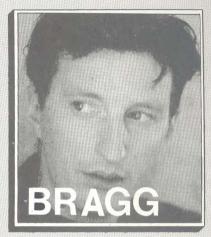
CLASS STRUGGLE

Political Paper of the Revolutionary Communist League of Britain

VOL.14 NO.5 JUNE 1990

30P





the 'Kylie and coke' antidote

Inside

labouring under false illusions Kinnock's policy review

getting men's minds off women's bodies the women's

front fighting porn in Norway

Armed forces - maket forces - nationalist forces

>>>>> CAN GORBACHEV KEEP THEM ALL UNDER CONTROL?

CLASS STRUGGLE EDWORIAL...EDWORIAL...EDWORIAU

It is one year since the armed forces of the People's Republic of China finally smashed the democracy movement, turning their guns on unarmed people. At that time, we condemned this use of violence against what was essentially a people's movement for democratic change within the framework of socialism, whatever outside forces were trying to manipulate elements within the movement.

One year on, the repression continues. Arrests, executions and imprisonments have taken place and the democracy movement has been forced underground. The Chinese leadership has modified some of its policies while strengthening the rhetoric of Marxism-Leninism. But it has listened to the just demands of the people. The last year has also seen further changes in the Soviet Union and the collapse of Soviet-backed regimes in Eastern Europe at a speed that took everyone by surprise.

changes mean the triumph of Western-style liberal democracy on a world-scale, the death of Marxism-Leninism and of socialism. But for the vast majority of the world's people, Western democracy has meant naked exploitation and oppression which today is causing increased poverty and violence. Even in the industrialised countries, like Britain and the USA, the gap between the rich and poor is growing and the system is unable to fulfill the needs of the majority.

We are told by Thatcher and Bush that these

There are important historical lessons to be learned from the experience of the Soviet Union and China. The revolutionary struggles in these and other countries will remain an inspiration to all those fighting for a more just society.

We should not be surprised at setbacks and defeats. In historical terms, the experience of building socialism is short. Rather than giving up, we should try even harder.

The events in China should teach us, once again, that Marxism-Leninism and socialist revolution cannot be copied from any other country's experience. There are no blueprints. It is only if we are apply our theory to the concrete conditions in our own country and have deep roots among the people of that country that we will succeed.

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Fighting the Poll Tax....

A small victory at Newport

Following the first unsuccessful attempt by an English local authority to prosecute those who have not yet paid any poll tax, it would appear that the antipoll tax campaign in England is entering its first major battle.

Around the country, a number of local councils are organising their next move to implement the collection of this hated tax. The London boroughs of Greenwich and Hackney and the city councils of Nottingham and Bristol have already made plans to reserve time in the local courts. At Northampton, it is reported that the council have already drawn up a list of non-payers to prosecute.

INCOMPETENCE

However behind this threat of the courts and full force of the legal system which is being used to frighten people into paying, lies a barrage of incompetence and waste of money and resources. Many councils are overcome by the sheer volume of paper involved in reminding those who have not yet paid, responding to claims for rebate and chasing up those who have changed their address. Some have spent thousands of pounds installing new computer systems. Trying to use them to collect revenue has been made worse by a lack of skilled personnel and various technical problems.

Many councils have had to double their staff: for example, the finance department of Glasgow city council has had to take on an extra 643 employees just to deal with the poll tax - and local NALGO officers reckon this is still not enough.

THE MEDINA AFFAIR

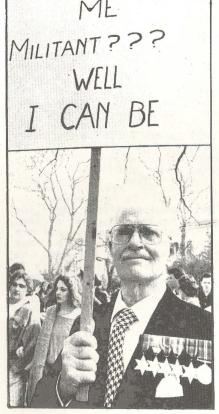
Incompetence by the local authorities was also highlighted by the events at Newport magistrates court on the Isle of Wight on June 1st. The Medina council sent out reminders to pay by second class post. But it failed to abide by its own rules, and did not wait long enough before sending out summonses to all non-payers. They also sent out a summons to a six year old boy, to a 19 year old scaffolder who had already paid, and to a couple of people who had died.

Not surprisingly many of those who had turned up at court were angered at this incompetence. One woman, mother of three and a care assistant at an old people's

home told the court "You are trying to get blood out of a stone. I want to feed my children's stomachs and I don't want to give money to people who don't know how to run the country."

MORE CUTS

The real impact of the new taxation is now becoming much clearer to see, as the various local authorities are faced with the problem of what to



spend their income on. Or, more to the point, what to cut back on.

DONCASTER

At Doncaster in South Yorkshire, the town council has produced a detailed financial breakdown of intended spending cuts. "Summary of reductions" indicates that during the next

couple of years, the council plans to save more than £6 million in education services, around £1 million in social services, another million in its environmental services and around £700,000 in amenities and leisure facilities. One ought to ask the question "Who is this money being saved for?"

WANDSWORTH

At Wandsworth in South London, the so-called model Tory borough set the country's lowest poll tax at £148. It was able to do this with tremendous government assistance in the shape of grants and subsidies. Out of every £1 spent there, by the council, about 80p comes from the government. In other

London boroughs, the average received was less than 50p. But even here, in this Tory stronghold, the local council leader is talking about cuts. He told his fellow councillors that they must look for substantial cuts if the borough poll tax is not to rise to over £400. The headline in the "Independent" summed it up well the next day when it said "Council seeks pupil cuts to curb poll tax"

THE SAFETY NET

Like a number of other councils, Wandsworth faces an eventual phasing out of Government so-called safety nets that were brought in to aid the transition in areas that had relatively low rates.

In other words, the poll tax levels are inevitably going to rise. So now is the time to do something about them.

CLOG UP THEIR SYSTEM

It has been estimated that the local councils might be forced to issue up to five million summonses for non-payment. If even one tenth of those affected are prepared to challenge the authorities in the local court, it could block up the legal system for months if not years. Unless they change the rules.

Question. Can the council just come and take the money if I don't pay?

Answer. No. If you don't pay the council has to send reminders. If you still don't pay the year's poll tax becomes due. If you still don't pay, the council applies to the magistrates court for a liability order. This can take months. Once the liability order is granted the council can then try to get the poll Tax that is due (plus small legal costs) from you. But it is up to the council not the court to pursue non-payers. They can ask you to provide information within fourteen days. If you don't respond to this request, the council can take you back to court where you can be fined for not giving the information.

Taken from All Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation Leaflet.

2 VIEWPOINTS

A DANGEROUS DIVERSION

by Joe Steel

The Labour Party's latest Policy Review is put forward as a mini-manifesto.

Debating the pros and cons of its particular policies is largely irrelevant. The key questions are: do they represent the interests and aspirations of the mass of ordinary people and which class interest do they serve?

The Labour Party pledges itself, to build a strong economy and a fair society. Under imperialism, those two aims are contradictory. Imperialism is based on exploitation and inequality. It is divided by class. A strong imperialist economy maximises exploitation. It cannot remove class divisions. The many are exploited by the few for private profit.

Anyone reading the Labour Party manifesto would have to believe that either imperialism had disappeared or changed its very nature. Obviously, neither is true.

It is true, of course, that under the Tories the system has undergone radical internal restructuring. restructuring has been done to save the system not destroy it. Old-style labour-intensive manufacturing in large factories has largely gone, replaced by high technology enterprises employing relatively few people. This restructuring has also created a whole new exploited sector of part-time, casual and home-based work.

However, whatever the change in form, the exploitative and oppressive oppressive nature of imperialism remains. The sexist and racist nature of society remains unchanged.

On a world scale, the overwhelming majority of the world's people live in intolerable and unnecessary conditions. British

imperialism remains part of the central heartland of the world imperialist system. The restructuring of the British system has been funded by the exploitation and oppression of the world's peoples.

Whatever short-term gains this or that sector of the people

none of their basic needs are ever satisfied. Whatever talents they have are either Whatever never allowed to develop or are used by others for profit.
Millions live unfulfilled lives, in unnecessary poverty even in (on a world scale) a relatively rich country such as Britain. Only a fundamental change to the system - its replacement by socialism - can meet the needs and aspirations of the vast majority of the people. The only losers would be the small number of people who make up the ruling class. They are the only ones who really the only ones who really benefit from the present system.

The Labour manifesto hides the true nature of the system. The state and the economy are portraved as classless. They portrayed as classless. supposedly be used to can supposedly be used to benefit the majority. This is a lie and a con. Labour perpetuates the imperialist system by hiding its true nature. Labour diverts politics into the harmless deadend of parliamentary electoral politics. It was a supposed to be a suppos deadend of parliamentary electoral politics. It uses and contains genuine struggles its own electoral ends. The non-choice between Labour and Tory only confuses people who want really radical

In a way, none of this is new. This is what the Labour Party has always done. What seems to be new is the trend not to even pretend to be socialist any more. Still however, many people will have illusions that Labour represents a that Labour represents a "socialist" alternative or a less evil than the Tories. will have to be nually exposed. The continually exposed. The Labour-Tory choice is a choice about how imperialism is to be

run, not whether it should be overthrown, which is the only real choice worth considering.

Those on the 'left' who spread illusions in the Labour Party have to accept that they are helping prop up alist system up the imperialist by diverting people into the deadend of Labour Party politics. They side-step the real struggle, which

Well, at least the Labour Party has stopped pretending to be socialist. Its new policy document "Looking to the Future" mentions socialism only once and puts forward a respectable European social democratic position. People searching for a radical new society, a society based on equality, justice and harmony with nature, rather than private property and profit, will not find any pretensions to it in the document. The system will continue. Such sentiments as "We will not spend, nor will we promise to spend, more than Britain can afford", make it clear that "Britain" will still equal the



harder, to analyse the nature of imperialism and help people through their own struggles, to see its

The Labour Party did not, course, drop out of the sky. It was an inevitable product of an imperialist system that super-exploited the people of the Third World. exploitation created wealth which allowed That allowed system to grant reforms, which allowed for the limited choices presented through the parliamentary system.

But as the slogans on the walls at election time say: "If voting ever really changed anything, then elections would be made illegal."

ON LABOUR

SOCIALIST PATH

rich property owners, financiers and business executives and it is their profits which are to be protected.

So the Labour Party is not socialist. It will not lead us to the future the majority require, and nothing in its history or in its day to day work, like the local poll tax protests, contradicts this view.

However some of the policies outlined in "Looking to the Future" are just demands , or steps in the right direction, and should be welcomed as such.

NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE.

The plan for a national minimum wage, for example. It proposes a minimum wage level of 50% of the median of men's earnings, or £3.20 at 1989 rates, and states this would initially benefit four million people on low pay. An hourly minimum wage is a very important demand for the working class, especially women and national minority workers, and the rate suggested would benefit huge numbers. The legislation would

have to be tight so that parttimers, short-term contracts
etc were not excluded.
Homeworkers would have to be
specifically included to
prevent a "self-employed"
label denying them
benefit. Many European
countries have a minimum wage
which works only according to
the strictness of legislation.

CHILDREN'S NURSERIES

Another promise is the target of giving every three and four year old child a chance of nursery education. This is of such importance to working class families, especially women, that the vague term "target" needs clarifying. Britain lags far behind many European countries in childcare provision... Will the proposed "Ministry for Women" have any effect here? The Labour Party's track record on women is terrible; the executive only voted on extra women last year by making extra seats rather than replacing any of the men!

BENEFITS

Some more definite promises will mean important short term

gains for people at present in desperate money troubles with the poll tax. They promise an increase in retirement pension of at least £5 a week and £8 per couple, and an increase in child benefit. They claim that tax changes will raise £2 billion in the first year from the higher paid. Can we believe these promises to redistribute wealth? Can we forget the last Labour government (see separate box on "inflation").

COLONIALISM - NO CHANGE

There is no commitment to withdraw troops from Ireland. At least, with the dropping of socialism, we need no longer expect the Labour Party to withdraw its troops from a colonial war..until it is forced to. There are, however, promises of ending the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), stripsearching and the use of plastic bullets.

These are promises we must hold them to.

For some of the most oppressed in Britain, the manifesto holds out no hope at all. There is no mention of a change in immigration laws. After all, the Labour Party introduced them in the first place, and state racism seems set to stay the same. There is no discussion of the rise of fascism and racism in the Europe we are about to unite with.

WORTH A STRUGGLE

If the Labour Party tries to put "Looking to the Future" into practice, the farce of parliamentary democracy will continue and British imperialism will remain in power with troops in Ireland, racism unchecked, and the bleeding and destruction of Third World countries continued. However there are certain policies which it is worth working for. In struggling for implementation of the minimum wage, nursery provision, benefits, the repeal of the PTA, the ending of stripsearching and plastic bullets, the inability of capitalism to deliver the goods will be shown up. It is good that socialism has wriggled free of the Labour Party which has bound and gagged it for all these years

INFLATION: THE SAME OLD STORY

The news this month is that inflation is 9.4%, the highest for eight years. The main cause of the recent increase is the poll tax which added a full one per cent to the inflation figures. Other factors pushing inflation up have been the budget increases on petrol, cigarettes and alcohol, plus dearer prescription charges, council house rents, television licenses, water rates, gas and electricity.

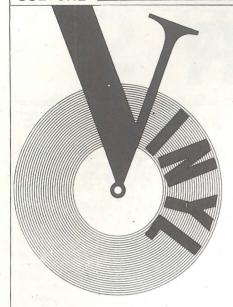
We do not, however, hear the government blaming the poll tax. We are told that in order to reduce inflation, wages must not be allowed to increase. The government will kindly do all it can to keep wage settlements low... The old lie is back in circulation: "Inflation is caused by wage increases."

What actually happens if workers are successful in their wage demands, is that profits are reduced. That, of course, is why they want our pay kept low. They want us to pay for their crisis.

A FAMILIAR STORY?

Have you heard all this before? If so, you may remember the last Labour government, who in their attempt to prop up capitalism, used the same old lies. The "social contract" of the 1970's which limited pay increases to 5% was based on the lie that wage increases cause inflation. The lie went unchallenged by the Labour 'left' and successfully shifted the burden onto the working class and boosted profits. Then, as now, the gap between rich and poor, widened. Between 1974 and 1976, the wealthiest 1% gained an extra 2.5% of the country's wealth.

We need not be taken in by their lies. We know that capitalism tries to hide behind fancy economic jargon. But at the end of the day, a small number of rich people are making a lot of money out of our labour. We know the poll tax is a rip-off and has caused inflation to shoot up. We know wage increases are needed to keep up with inflation and pay the bills. We know wage increases reduce the bosses' profits.







Bragg about socialism

In recent months, following the events in China, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, Western politicians and the media have been trumpeting the death of Marxism and socialism.

If we listen to them, people all over the world are now ready to embrace the "coke and Kylie" lifestyle that they promote so vigorously.

Fortunately, there are still antidotes to this hype. Billy Bragg, the singer and songwriter from Barking, has just released an album of socialist songs. In political terms, Bragg has always aligned himself with the Labour Party. In 1986, he helped to found 'Red Wedge', a cultural vehicle to promote the Labour Party to young voters in the run-up to the last general election. Since that time, he has seemed to distance himself from the Labour Party and take a broader view. He has supported progressive struggles, both here and abroad, such as the miners' strike in 1984-85 and more recently, anti-poll tax benefits.

LIVE PERFORMER

As a live performer, Billy Bragg is direct, honest and approachable. His music is simple and unfussy. He often appears with just a microphone and an old electric guitar.

His voice is rough and powerful, best suited to his quicker songs. He sings as easily about love and sex, as he does of war and politics. Between songs, he has developed a very funny line of banter, and he quickly creates

a great rapport with the audience. This is his great strength. He never appears to be removed from the people he is singing for, never a "star" or a "personality". It is easy to imagine yourself up there singing and strumming along with him.

THE INTERNATIONALE

His new album 'The Internationale', features seven songs. The title track is a reworking of the original late nineteenth century version. The tune remains. But Bragg has rewritten the lyrics. It is a broad, optimistic song, full of international ideals and rallying cries. I cannot say if it is an improvement on the original, as I don't know the lyrics for this.

The next two tracks are both written by Billy Bragg. "I dreamed I saw Phil Ochs last night" is an unaccompanied homage to the 1960's protest singer. Bragg obviously feels he is carrying on the work of the likes of Phil Ochs.

"The marching song of the Covert Battalions" is an attack on American imperialism. It is typical of his writing:

"Here we come with our candy and our guns, And our corporate muscle marches in behind us For freedom's just another world for nothing left to sell And if you want narcotics we can get you those as well. We're making the world safe for capitalism."

Side Two opens with 'Jerusalem', the famous hymn

by William Blake. I am glad he has rescued it from the last night of the Proms, as it is an attack on the capitalists emerging in the industrial revolution, not a song of praise to imperialist versions of "freedom" and "democracy". 'Nicaragua Nicaraguita' celebrating Nicaragua's revolution is sung unaccompanied in Spanish. A simple and moving song.

The version of 'The Red Flag' is a pleasant surprise, as it uses the original tune (The White Cockade). This is much better than the Labour Party version, "a sprightly reel,

not a funereal dirge", as the sleeve notes say.

The final song on the album is 'My youngest son came home today' by Eric Bogle, who wrote the anti-war ballad 'The Band Played Waltzing Matilda'. It is a song about the war in Ireland:

"An Irish sky looks down and weeps
Upon the narrow Belfast streets
At children's blood in gutters spilled
In dreams of glory unfulfilled As part of freedom's price to pay
My youngest son came home today."

The fact that Billy Bragg has released this distinctly uncommercial record at this time illustrates his commitment to his ideals.

If you haven't heard Billy Bragg before, this might be a good starting point, and, if you get the chance, go and see him live. He is well worth a listen.

Mandy's Diary

May 5th: Rape in London increased by 14% last year and sexual assault by 26%. Two thirds of the 912 rape victims already knew their attacker. Yet the police response, as usual, was to warn women against putting themselves in situations where they could be at risk. As if rapes were caused by women.

It could be that the apparent increase in rapes and sexual assaults is the result of a higher percentage of these crimes being reported. Perhaps more women are being convinced that their attacker will be brought to justice, and not set at liberty to rape someone else. I hope so, but can't help feeling cynical I hope so, but after talking to a woman her experience. She was called to service on a jury, and one of the cases she heard was a rape case. After hearing all the evidence, the judge declared that since there were some inconsistencies in the young woman's story (and what woman in that situation wouldn't be a little frightened and confused?) he instructed the jury to find the defendant not guilty.

The jury never had the opportunity to decide for themselves what their verdict was. Why bother to have a jury at all? I suppose it keeps up the appearance of a fair trial, even though there is no justice in reality.



May 30th: Well, what sort of a bank holiday did you have? At least the good weather enabled us to take the kids out, so we weren't reduced to staying in and watching 'Telethon'. We only saw an hour of it, but that was enough. I felt pretty sickened by the whole thing. When it wasn't sad pictures of handicapped children with cute little faces accompanied by slushy sentimental music, it was a quick appearance by the

rich and famous, persuading us to part with hard-earned cash.

"Wasn't Michael Aspel wonderful for the hours he worked?" we were told, when junior doctors work a hundred hours a week year in year out, and other hospital staff regularly spend a night "on call", having done a day's work, and then go back to work again the next day.

Don't get me wrong. I'm pleased to see that people care about those less fortunate than themselves, but resources and facilities which people need should be provided as of right, by the government, not left to charities in the hopes that they can find a way to pull at people's heartstrings and purses.

If ordinary people are prepared to cough up £25 million a year, it suits the government very nicely. They can carry on cutting services which people need; and spending our taxes on repayments of loans to big business and nuclear power stations, top people's salaries and such like.



June 1st: I have just been reading about a survey of Crossroads Care, a service which provides voluntary stand-in help. Cuts in services have led to six

million people, most of them women, having to look after elderly dependants at home.

As many as 35% felt totally isolated. Some had been violent to those they looked after. Some were under so much stress that they contemplated suicide. Most of them felt trapped in the home with no respite from care and related duties like shopping and housework. Most felt that no-one would listen to them or cared about them.

A good many carers were angry about the lack of resources available but many were fatalistic about the situation. For most, caring is a full-time job. 80% of those in the survey were not in paid employment, although 40% wanted to return to work.



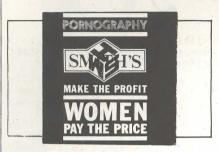


for handicapped people

"community government care" plans, elderly people will be encouraged to stay at home, but no extra money is pledged. Attendance allowance, which supposedly compensates carers who have had to give up their jobs is currently £37.55 a week. Compare that with the fees charged by private old people's homes! The cost of caring for an elderly person is obviously much more, so it is not surprising that the government wants to shift the responsibility onto shoulders of individual women rather than make the necessary provision.

A report from 'Caring Costs', a coalition of 31 voluntary bodies, states that nine out of ten carers have financial problems as a direct consequence of looking after a spouse or parent.

GET YOUR MINDS



In the light of the current "Off the Shelf" campaign in Britain it is interesting to see what has been achieved in other countries. We print below an account of the struggle against pornography in Norway, which has been waged by the Women's Front.

••••••

The Women's Front of Norway was founded in 1972. Right from the beginning it was concerned with sexual oppression. To be sexually oppressed means to looked upon or treated as an object for sexual arousal and/or for satisfaction associated with a display of power by men in general or one particular man.

women of all ages and all classes of society are subjected to sexual oppression. Its form ranges from pictures of women in advertisements and news stand pornography to the most cruel acts of terror such as rape and murder. Pornography reflects the power relations between men and women in society, where men are people and women are servants of the people. Pornography is the presentation of women as sexual objects, without a value of their own, but as a means of pleasure and a plaything for men. Pornography popularises, glorifies and encourages hatred and acts of violence against women.

POSTERS TORN DOWN

In 1975 some women working in the public trams in Oslo grew sick and tired of seeing advertisements for pornography magazines in the trams, of seeing women pinned up like pieces of meat, degraded and commodified. So one day they simply tore the posters down. And it caused a riot! The newspapers wrote about how crazy and aggressive women had become these days. The management became worried about their income from the advertisements and their rebellious women workers. The

union was confused and the male public was disturbed. But the women started thinking and acting. The new women's movement had got started.

In the seventies a slide series about pornography was made. Women felt it was important to show what pornography really was. They started the slow work of raising the consciousness of the Norwegian public. They went around the country, to schools, youth clubs, public meetings, different organisations, with the slide series. And within a few years Norway had been covered.

In the seventies there were also illegal actions against pornography. Women went into stores, carried out loads of magazines and made bonfires in the street while giving speeches about the degrading effect pornography has on women. The public became concerned and took a closer look at the message of the women.

TELEVISION PUBLICITY

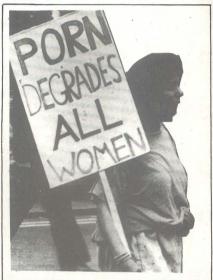
In 1983 there was a breakthrough: the slide series was shown on Norwegian television. This caused waves of protest throughout Norway. Local groups against pornography were formed in their dozens. Fifty thousand people signed a petition. Lots of women were taught how to give the slide series lecture and started travelling around to schools, youth clubs, military camps, public meetings and organisations. The demand for the slide series was greater than we could cover.

Pornography stores were raided by angry women who threw everything in the store out into the street. One action group "locked" forty news stands one night by putting glue in the locks, preventing pornography being sold next morning. Graffiti could be seen everywhere.

Lots of women and men joined the anti-pornography ranks, demanding Norway as a pornography free zone. Women marched into stores, demanding that the owners stopped selling material degrading to women,— and they did. One large supermarket chain declared publicly that it would stop selling porn magazines.

Our main enemies were the pornographers, but also Narvesen, a nationwide news stand company. This company is the main distributer of magazines to all gas stations, grocery stores and other news stands. The Norwegian

government owns 20% of the stocks in this company so we also held the government responsible for selling and distributing pornography. The company was under constant pressure from women activists who never gave them a moment's peace. The Narvesen company tried to counteract with an advertisement campaign which said "Shall the bonfire burners decide?" and the people who attended the meetings said "Yes, let them decide. Women must define sexism and the oppression of women".



POLITICIANS CATCH ON

The politicians started picking up that there was a rebellion going on and that women were angry. For politicians movements at grassroots level are dangerous, so they tried to stop them. They also tried to think how they could profit from them. The national elections were coming up, and maybe they could transform some of the anger and movements at grassroots level into votes for themselves. So they started racing down the corridors of parliament, competing to be the first to hand in a bill for a new law on pornography. The one we had was last revised in 1905 so it was surely needed.

We have three laws which affect the pornography industry. Two of them have come into force since 1985. There was one which was introduced in 1985 after continuous political pressure, and it penalises "sexual descriptions" that are "humanly degrading", but it also emphasises pornography that includes children, violence and sadism. So now we

OFF OUR BODIES!

are putting pressure on the police and the prosecuting authority to take action centrefolds of and ordinary regarding magazines degrading pornography, which surely is "humanly degrading". Another law that affects the porn industry is the law against video violence. This can also be used against pornography involving violence against women.

A third law that was passed in January 1988 tries to control the video market, which has been expanding greatly in Norway over the last ten years. Lots of video shops have opened all over Norway. One million video machines have been sold, and with a population of four million, this means that most people have access to a video machine. Children and young people are using video films as entertainment, and the films they watch are often pornographic or full of violence. For kids it is a status symbol to have seen certain film titles, which are the ones that are violent and of course sexist.

The video market went wild a long time before the politicians realised should try to control it. Only this year the law was passed requiring the registration of video distributors, rental shops and film titles.

So far we must conclude that this new law has not been effective in cleaning up the video market, mainly because the authorities do not put any force behind it.

new law After the pornography was passed in 1985, we waited to see what the new law meant. Some people won", but for most of us it meant a continued struggle. We had lost faith in politicians and knew that laws mean knew that laws mean nothing in themselves, if the and prosecuting authorities do not give priority to the issue. And we soon found out that they would not do that without continued pressure.

The slide series pornography had already been changed. The pictures of pornography with children, animals and sadism had been taken out. We realised most people were against this anyway. We started focussing on pictures of women as commodities, as objects for masturbation, as prostitutes and willing sex slaves.

We started fighting the video



industry, pointing out that with films in addition to magazines the porn industry was expanding. The emphasis in the struggle is now on the video industry, although we

have not forgotten the printed material.

Also action against live sexist shows has increased: strip shows, wrestling and wet T-shirt shows. A few years ago these shows did not exist in Norway, but with increasing commercialisation they are now very common. Frequently there activists demonstrating outside, or entering the stage inside, trying to stop the show.

MAKING LINKS

We have also started to look outside Norway. We saw that a lot of pornography came from abroad, and realised that it would not help to have Norway as a pornography free zone, if the world was full of it. have been inspired feminists like Andrea Dworkin, and have started to build international links with women in solidarity against a global industry producing hatred of women.

For the Women's Front the struggle against pornography has meant a lot. We saw new connections in the oppression of women. We saw that pornography is an enlarged reflection of the contempt for women we meet in more or less hidden forms every day. We still have a long way to go before violence against women is considered as serious as other kinds of violence. Women get lower wages than men . For

thousands of women each pay day is a confirmation that their work is worth less than men's work. It took seventy years of organised struggle to acheive a law giving women abortion rights, but the contempt for women that we met in that struggle is not gone. Rape victims still undergo humiliating court trials. Statistics show that you only have a good chance of winning the case if you were killed by the rapist, or if he raped you in a public place with lots of witnesses.

These are just a few examples to show that the porn industry's view of women does not exist in isolation. struggle must take place on all fronts. We have to look at the situation for women in society as a whole, both locally and globally. We must fight for a society where our place is not determined by the fact of being male or female.

struggle has made us realise that we can change. We have become stronger and have learnt to trust our own strength and have become more difficult to subdue. Most of all we have experienced that we Norwegian women can fight for the kind of society want.



At the beginning of June, Presidents Gorbachev and Bush concluded another summit meeting in the glare of international publicity.

This summit meeting agreed treaties about cuts in long-range nuclear missiles and eliminating stocks of chemical weapons. Minor agreements were made on issues like student exchanges and airline travel between the two countries.

But most commentators knew that there would be little commentators knew agreement on major issues that at would be discussed in particular, summit, the issue of the position of a reunited Germany within Europe, and its membership of NATO, and the independence of Baltic states. Many people also question how much it is still in the power of the two superpowers, both deep in economic crisis, to dictate and control events which have moved at a speed that has wrongfooted most politicians.

In particular, while Gorbachev met with Bush, events back home in the Soviet Union were seen as more important than the talks going on in Washington and many questions were being asked about how long Mr Gorbachev can survive. More popular in the West than at home, Gorbachev can argue that he needs Western support, for example, in the form of trade deals, to prop up the man with whom Mrs Thatcher has said she can "do business".

At the beginning of the summit meeting, Gorbachev heard the news that his arch rival, Boris Yeltsin, had been elected, on the third round of voting, as President of the Russian Federation. His election took place shortly after announcements of price increases, as part of the process of speeding up economic reforms and bringing in a "regulated market economy." This resulted in large-scale panic-buying in Moscow, with sales being restricted to residents only and a vague promise to withdraw the price increases and hold a referendum on the issue of economic reforms.

The Soviet economy is in deep trouble. A recent 'Financial Times' report summed up the results of five years of perestroika as follows:

"....a deeply divided and weakening central government has pursued policies that were internally contradictory and too often ill-considered.... In the spring of 1985, acceleration of the country's social and economic development was Mr Gorbachev's main demand. This acceleration programme was a

AN EMPIRE BREAKS UP



disaster, exacerbating bottlenecks in the economy and providing a boost to largely unproductive investments.

"The failure of crash programmes of the traditional kind seems to have gone some way towards persuading Mr Gorbachev that something different and more radical was required....

The report then outlines the "more radical" different programmes that have been proposed and sums up: "These would include elimination of the budget deficit, monetary reform and acceptance of a degree of inflation... Such an emergency programme could be followed by a radical price reform, which would, in turn, set the basis for market formation of prices, greater decentralisation of enterprise, a vigorous antimonopoly policy and partial convertibility of the convertibility rouble....

"The market cannot just be a pretend "socialist" one. It must be a real one, with real consequences and real casualties...."

The price reforms announced at the end of May by Soviet Prime Minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov, were clearly an attempt at beginning this process. "We have no more money,"he declared. "We have no more gold to buy grain." He had told the Supreme Soviet that the country had spent an extra 3 billion roubles on importing an additional 27 million tonnes of grain in the past four months alone.

But people were quick to

realise who would be the casualities of this "market" reform. The price of bread was to triple from July 1st. From next January, there would be 100 percent price increases in meat, fish, milk and cooking oil. Miners have threatened a renewal of the strikes that paralysed the Soviet economy last summer and at the time of going to press, at least two of the republics had voted to reject the package of "reforms." Although they have little real power to carry through this decision, their votes reflect the growing political crisis within the Soviet Union.

There are two fundamental forces rising in opposition to the plans of the Soviet leadership. First is the growing opposition from the working class who realise that it is they who will be the casualties of the "reforms". Apart from the miners' strikes last summer, the May Day parade with its banners saying "Hands Off the Working Man's Pocket" were a warning sign.

Second is the growing nationalist movements, most recently highlighted in the struggle of the Baltic states for independence but growing in different parts of the Soviet Union. In the last weekend of May, 23 people were shot dead by Soviet troops as the people of Armenia celebrated their independence day.

In many places, class and national opposition is linked to other issues such as the destruction of their lands and livelihood, for example by industrial or nuclear pollution. The extent of the damage to the environment is immense.

.....

"In the republic of Bylorussia, one quarter of the land has been destroyed by the fall-out from the Chernobyl disaster - contaminated with Caesium 137, which will last for decades to come.

POLITICAL CRISIS.

Instability and opposition is growing within the Soviet Union. The election of Boris Yeltsin, once party chief in Moscow and sacked by Corhachev Gorbachev, represents disillusionment with the policies of the leadership, and Gorbachev in particular. Yeltsin is a demagogic leader who has promised faster reforms without spelling out the consequences of these reforms for people's everyday lives. More recently, he has also stood on a platform of independence for the Russian Federation, building on sentiments of national chauvinism among the Russian people.

In the short-term it may be possible for Gorbachev to work out a political compromise with Yeltsin. He has shown himself in the past, to be quick to shift his ground, in order to make compromises necessary to hold onto power. But whether sooner or later, Gorbachev's position is under threat. He may use the dictatorial powers that were voted to him, as President, by the Soviet Parliament in March of this year, to enforce change. Another possibility being discussed is that the military will move either to force Gorbachev to take harder measures or to replace him.

It is not only the situation within the present boundaries of the Soviet Union that is unstable. Within Europe as a whole, have events than predicted. In faster particular, the process of the re-unification of Germany has moved faster than the politicians planned threatens to upset and the A re-united Germany will make up the strongest imperialist power in the region and may not take kindly on restrictions its This military capabilities. is clearly one factor in the internal struggles in the Soviet Union and in the summit meeting with the US. But it also has huge implications for of countries Western Europe as well, as Germany will dominate the European The "common "common community. The European home" spoken of by Gorbachev looks unlikely to be a peaceful home for any of us.

Nicaragua

The two superpowers may have lost their ability to dominate and control many of the smaller countries of the world. But a recent article carried in 'Time', June 4th 1990, shows how deals between the Soviet Union and the USA went on behind the scenes, in the period leading up to the recent election in Nicaragua.

The article presents this as an important achievement of US diplomacy. It is clear that the US used the fact that the Soviet Union needs financial and economic support from the USA to bring pressure on them to stop their support for the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and for the FSNL in El Salvador.

In particular, the Soviet Union, agreed to send back a Soviet freighter, 'Vladimir Ilyich' with its cargo of four helicopters intended for the Sandinistas. The Soviet Union also put pressure on the Sandinistas to stop their political support for the armed struggle in El Salvador.

The article also points out that the Soviet Union has now turned the tables on the USA and is using similar tactics to put pressure on the USA to force the Cristiani government in El Salvador to negotiate seriously.

Whether the end result is positive or not is not the main point. In both cases, the USA and the Soviet Union treat the forces they support as puppets, to serve their own long-term interests rather than the interests of the people they represent. This was made clear in a statement by a Soviet academician, quoted in the article, which echoes similar views by British colonial writers: "To maintain one's influence in a situation, it is often necessary - in fact, it is usually necessary - to both give and withhold. Especially in Latin America, where every leader thinks he is some sort of mystic God, diplomacy requires dealing as one deals with children. If you say no all the time, you are ignored, even if, as a parent, you hold all the theoretical power."

Radiation City

An article in 'The European', on 1st June, reported on protests in Semipalatinsk, in Soviet Central Asia, about the high level of radiation in the area as a result of nuclear tests that have been carried out there.

More than 700 nuclear weapons have been detonated at the nuclear test site in the area in the past 40 years, more than 100 of them above ground.

The paper reported: "But until recently the very existence of the site was an official secret, although local people knew what went on because of the blinding flashes, mushroom clouds and man-made earthquakes. However, they were completely unaware of the dangers from radiation. They did not even know what radiation was."

As a result of the protests, the Kazakhstan Supreme Soviet voted to close the testing site immediately. The Soviet

government has not agreed to this but has cut the number of tests being carried out.

Meanwhile the protests go on. One resident explained: "Every family has a member who is sick because of the nuclear tests. Children without arms or legs, or unable to speak, or who go mad, are being born. Many young people have committed suicide, and many people are dying from cancer."

Govind Kelkar

We print below the final section of an article about the situation in India, written up from talks with Govind Kelkar, during her recent visit to England.

National Struggles in India

Khalistan is one. Kashmir is one. Then there are a lot of national ethnic groups in Assam, asking for border land, and Jharkhand, this is also a question of ethnic struggle. But the difference between them is that Kashmir and Khalistan is a question of asking for their own state, outside India. Things have gone beyond autonomy. If you look at the recent election trends, in Kashmir you have only 5% to 7% voting. Three persons were elected. One person got elected unopposed. There was no-one to oppose him. Only 5% to 7% voted. The others stayed out. They did not believe in this kind of election.

With regard to Punjab, the man who shot Mrs Gandhi, his widow and his father have been elected without any effort, just on his name. A man who is a leader of a Sikh group, who was in jail quite some time for so-called anti-state activities, also got elected. So the people's verdict is that he is cleared. And the killing of Mrs Gandhi has become a political act, and in this way the people have made their choice. They do not want to remain within a state which oppresses them. This is Punjab.

There is an attempt by the government: "We will provide a healing touch to the people. People have felt hurt." But I think things have gone beyond a healing touch.

Now opinions are divided among Marxist-Leninists. Some groups think that nationalities have the right to have their own states. How can you keep suppressing them? They are basing their analysis on Engels and Lenin. They have analysed the nature of

the Indian state and its expansionist policies within South Asia: Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal. Their attitude is: what happens at home, it's the reflection outside. But other



progressives and Marxist-Leninists are not really very happy with this kind of solution. They think the nature of Indian society and the Indian state has to be transformed. Forming their own state is not a solution.

They say: "What would Punjab be outside India?"

But I look at the question:
"What is the people's
verdict?" The people have
decided. Then what is the
thing that you can really
check?

The other thing is, in Kashmir recently, Kashmir's state minister was dismissed and they sent another man who was known for two things: for being a very efficient administrator and also for being a supporter of the Emergency under Mrs Gandhi. This was called the hard option. They could not control the situation so they had to send this man. Now the man is know for these two things, and to what extent he will be acceptable to the people of Kashmir is highly questionable. You cannot run any part of the country at the point of a gun. This is a lesson which has been learned earlier and they should not have made this kind of mistake. There is also the new fundamentalism. In this election, more than 80 seats have gone to the right wing who demand the Hindu Nation State. And some people say that the sending of this man to Kashmir is dictated by this Hindu right wing, because they support the new National Front government. If they withdraw their support then it will be critical. So how can you run any part of the country on these policies?

But what is surprising is that all progressives who are involved in the democratic rights struggle are not really supporting the demand for a separate state either of Punjab or of Kashmir. Some are supporting it.

How can you suppress people in terms of asking them to live with you, because they have felt so oppressed, and systematic oppressive policies have been engineered and generated and carried out on the people, and the people have the right to have their own state. It is a question of self-determination. And as a feminist, I strongly support this kind of thing. When the social relations within the family become so oppressive, the woman has to take a decision to move out, and to have her own family, or to have a separate existence. Now the same kind of extension applies to people outside. That is the analogy that I support.

The End In Sight?

'A Pathway to Peace' contains the uncensored views of Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Fein.

The book deals with an age-old problem, one that is the same now as it was in 1918, the last occasion when the Irish people nationally were able to vote in a general election; when Sinn Fein, with a political programme that demanded complete independence for Ireland as a whole, won almost 70% of the votes cast.

PARTITION

In 1922, partition was imposed on the country by Lloyd George's government. It was George's government. It never submitted for anv ratification and imposition has ever its since denied the Irish people their to national determination. It has led to a situation whereby: "The British government by its direct control of a part of Ireland, exerts a political influence over all of Ireland, ensuring through partition that Irish politics neutralised and distorted with British political influence maintained."

Having established the historical context in which to develop the debate, Adams proceeds to outline the way forward, along a pathway that can, in his opinion, lead to peace.

Although a Republican, he does not here argue exclusively for a Republican system of government or any other system for that matter. The book Pathway to Peace

Adams

Alams

Democracy is not just about voting in elections. It is about people having control: the ownership of Ireland by the people of Ireland

concentrates on Ireland's right to national self-determination. As Adams comments in his Introduction: "The choice of the type of society chosen in that context is a matter for an Irish nation, freed from outside interference."

SELF-DETERMINATION

What then does Adams mean by self-determination? In Chapter Two, Peace with Justice, he says: "Self-determination is universally accepted to mean a nation's right to exercise the political freedom to determine its own social, economic and cultural development without external influence and without partial or total disruption of the national unity of territorial integrity."

Sinn Fein seeks a new constitution for Ireland which would include written guarantees for those presently constituted as "loyalists". This would recognise present-day social reality and would include, for example, the provisions for family planning and the right to civil divorce.

From 'A Scenario for Peace', May 1987.

The control of wealth by those who produce it can only be achieved when the majority class - the working class - are in power. The political democracy capable of creating such a just society will not emerge outside of the context of national self-determination.

Multi-nationals are presented by the government with the people's money and the people's labour; then they take away the profit that is created by the people.

An independent Ireland, one in which the Irish people would have economic and political independence as a united nation is not in the political, strategic, cultural or economic interests of the British establishment. In this regard, elements of the Irish establishment share a common interest with the British.

These criteria have not been observed by Britain in Ireland for years. As a result, Ireland has not known peace for years.

THE SOUTH

Two issues of particular importance covered in this book are the current situation in the South and the position of the Protestants in the North. In Adams' view, the twenty six county state has failed the test. "The symbols of freedom have been won, but the essence of freedom is still denied us." He blames successive Dublin governments for the present social and economic mess.

addition, he refers three political factors which have also contributed to the present situation in South. Firstly, the absence of a radical political leadership, secondly failure by anti-imperialists to link partition in a way with relevant country's social, economic and cultural malaise and thirdly, the effect on the population of state-imposed censorship in the shape of Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act.

Adams thus believes that the situation can only be corrected when an Irish government is found that is prepared to set aside the parameters set upon it by Britain. In others words, to demand the right for national self-determination.

continues over...

A Pathway to Peace (continued)



THE PROTESTANTS

With respect to the Protestants in the North, Adams appears, at first reading, to make an outlandish statement when he says that in

reality national selfdetermination is the only real option which permits unionists minus their veto an involvement as of right in the shaping of their future on equal terms with all other Irish citizens.

Adams stresses that the slogan 'Brits Out' is not a call for the forced banishment of those in the North who presently consider themselves to be British subjects. "On the contrary, we need them because a peaceful, just and united society in Ireland must include them and because the Protestant working class are our brothers and sisters. We do not set out to exclude them."

Bearing in mind just how little say the majority of the Protestant population really have in the way their lives are run, this approach may well have a strange ring of truth about it. It is something that calls for more discussion among all those who want to see an end to the war in Ireland.

HILLSBOROUGH

There is much of interest in this book including some very telling comments about politics, freedom and democracy. In addition, the chapter on the 1985 Hillsborough Treaty in which Adams details the thirteen Articles and counters the arguments of its supporters, is particularly informative.

Available from New Era Books,

Hunger Strike Commemorations

Twenty six and six are one.

The ten Irish hunger-strikers were remembered at events in both Birmingham and London this year, on May 12th. In Birmingham, 300 marched before a rally and in London, a rally was held with a video-showing. Both marches were marked by international solidarity between oppressed peoples and divided nations. The London rally was addressed by speakers from Korea and a Basque organisation as well as a Sinn Fein councillor. The Birmingham rally heard Birmingham rally solidarity messages read from the Tigray People's Liberation Front and from a Basque and liberation Quebec liberation organisation. In Birmingham, the rally was addressed by another Sinn Fein councillor another Sim as representatives from the Irish in Britain Group, Justice Representation Group, Justice for Mineworkers Campaign, brother of hunger-striker, Kevin Lynch and from Irish POWs in English jails.

Birmingham

Sinn Fein councillor, Brendan O'Cooilin paid tribute to the way the hunger strikers gave their lives for the struggle for freedom. At the time, Thatcher claimed that the IRA was playing its last card. The truth is the opposite. The struggle has continued to develop and nearly a decade later, is stronger than ever. Sinn Fein now has 59 councillors, representing 40% of the nationalist vote. Gerry Adams had won two successive parliamentary elections as MP for West Belfast. This is in spite of massive oppression and media censorship.

Britain's crisis in the six counties is deepening. There can be peace in Ireland. But this has to be peace based on justice, which will only come when national freedom is won. British "justice" has been clearly exposed through the cases of the Winchester Three, the Guildford Four and the Birmingham Six. British "justice" means trial by the media. Being Irish means you are guilty.

Echoing the theme of the other speakers, Brendan O'Cooilin pointed out that the British

state cannot win. The Irish people will be victorious.

London

The London 'James Connolly-Bobby Sands Commemoration' was organised by the Wolfe Tone Society. Speakers included: Rev. Kiyul Chung of Young Koreans Unite; Texema Montero, a member of the European Parliament representing the Henri Batasuna Basque National Liberation Movement and Sinn Fein councillor, Dodie McGuinness. Their common theme was of national liberation and re-unification.

As MEP Montero pointed out:
"Europe cannot be built
without the smaller nations."
Confident of victory, he
expressed the importance of
solidarity from friends.

The Basque MEP ended his speech with a humorous explanation of modern Irish arithmetic: "Twenty six and six are one.", a sentiment echoed in Rev.Chung's cry of 'Ireland is One!' Korea is One!'

Dodie McGuinness spoke of the unsung heroes of the liberation struggle: the prisoners' families. The sacrifices they have made in the pursuit of the struggle has sustained it. With dedication and commitment, they have paid the price of being Republicans.

She went on to describe British attempts to isolate and separate the Republican Movement from the community that supports it: "We have outlasted many Secretaries of State - we'll outlast Britain's will to stay in Ireland. Nobody wants peace more than us. But we won't accept peace at any price."

Dodie McGuinness spoke for the Republican Movement in saying

that a partitionist solution would never be accepted: "The price has been too high. We are not going away. We are not the problem.

"The real problem is not the IRA's war, the prison struggle, but the British involvement - everything else is a symptom. They will



Speakers at the Commemoration Rally in London

continue until Britain declares she is leaving Ireland."

The Sinn Fein councillor made clear that theirs is "a movement prepared to do anything necessary to bring the struggle to a successful end." The struggle has given rise to a generation of politically active people that will endure.

Dodie McGuinness stressed the demand for national determination, explaining Sinn Fein's commitment to a broad strategy that seeks to build alliances with all those who are opposed to British rule:

"Nation building is what we are about.... We are no longer a culture of resistance. Now we are involved in a culture of liberation.

"The enemy is Britain - it is not the Protestant people of Ireland. There is room in a thirty-two county Ireland for everyone... A new Ireland of civil and religious liberty for all is the just society that we strive for."

* * * * *

A video showing of 'The Irish Question' produced by TV Choice made clear that censorship is not only the banned programmes you hear about but also those you never hear about.

The broadcasting ban imposed by the government means that words of Republican speakers cannot be heard. They can be shown only in subtitles, or spoken by others. The ban has been applied retrospectively. Thus, the TV series, 'The Troubles', first broadcast in 1981, when re-shown recently had subtitles for the few

contributions by Republican sympathisers.

The broadcasting ban is about news management in the propaganda war. It is designed to make more difficult the attempt to raise, let alone discuss, the issue of the war in Ireland.

Programmes you will not be seeing on your television include:

The Channel Four commissioned,
'Mother Ireland', an
historical documentary which

examines how Ireland is represented by the image of a woman, and how Irish women are represented. It includes contributions by Mairead Farrell, murdered in Gibraltar.

'Sixteen Dead' contained no material banned under the law but has relatives describing the killing of their loved ones by plastic bullets. Channel Four dropped the programme to avoid confrontation with the government.

'Behind the Mask' explores the world of the IRA by focusing on one-time volunteer, Brendan Hughes. It contains Sinn Fein President, Gerry Adams, calling for dialogue with the British government and asking for unity for the ordinary people of the island, unity to build a new society in Ireland. "You cannot bomb and shoot people into an Irish Republic."

The Irish Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee (Birmingham) can be contacted at: P.O.Box 540, Sparkhill, Birmingham Bll 4AU.

WHERE WE STAND

The increasing destruction of the world's environment is of extreme importance. By its very nature, the problem can only be solved by taking a world view. In doing this two things are exposed.

Firstly, that to take a world view we must take the view of the people of the Third World. In doing this, we are shown the destruction which our privileged position normally shelters us from: the effect of nuclear testing in the Pacific; of industrial disasters such as Bhopal in India; the clearance of land for cashcropping, logging and beef-raising. As well as the obvious pollution and destruction in the Third World, poverty itself is a major cause of environmental degradation. The debt crisis forces Third World countries to exploit their resource base dangerously.

Secondly, that investigation of all these examples leads us to the conclusion that they are all products of capitalism and imperialism. The root cause is capitalism's pursuit of profit above all human interest.

It is also necessary to take a historical view. Before capitalism, society had many problems and was full of inequalities and oppression but the social systems which existed lived in balance with the land which sustained them. From the beginning, imperialism has been built on the genocide of whole peoples and a destruction of societies which did not produce enough profit. Here in the West we have only recently woken up to environmental dangers but in most colonial countries the thoughtless destruction and slaughter has gone on for generations. It is in the Third World especially, where they have not benefited from the increased productive forces of imperialism, that an understanding remains of the necessity of building a society which can live in harmony with nature.

Within these countries it is women, providers and carers, who are totally dependent upon the renewability of natural systems to provide for their basic needs of food, water and shelter. The environment is not just a backdrop to their activities, but impinges on all aspects of their lives. In many areas of the world, especially Africa, women are the main environmental managers. Women are therefore not only victims of the environmental crisis but are the major agents of rehabilitation, a role stunted by many aspects of their oppression and by Western "aid".

Green movement in Europe has been a positive force in highlighting the importance of environmental issues. Many individuals within it are aware of the global aspect of the problem and the role of imperialism. The Green movement encompasses many different types of organisations some of which have seen through the bourgeois lies of parliamentary democracy

and have learnt to rely on their own strengths. Women have been important in these groups fostering a co-operative and open style of

However the organised Green movement has not taken anti-imperialism as its basic principle. Present day capitalism is to some extent limiting environmental damage at home by exporting the problem to the developing countries. Without a firm commitment to antiimperialism and the class struggle, Greens in the West will sell out the interests of the oppressed people and do nothing to save the planet.

This does not mean that all problems will end with socialism. But socialism will provide the opportunity for a society planned for the majority rather than for profit. Our experiences of ecological disaster under imperialism and the accumulated knowledge of traditional societies and recent advances must provide us with the wherewithal to build a society in tune with the land and nature.

Agitation, mass work, study and international solidarity on environmental issues are of importance to all of us. But from the RCL's point of view the principle basis for the ecological movement must be anti-imperialism.

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