

CLASS STRUGGLE

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30P

BIRMINGHAM SIX CELEBRATE

FREE AT LAST



*Women's struggle
learning from
our history*

INSIDE

haiti

*the people's
priest*

poll tax

abolished

ethiopia

victory near?

SIXTEEN YEAR COVER-UP

BRITISH 'JUSTICE' IN THE DOCK

PAGE 3

CLASS STRUGGLE

For people in Britain and the USA, the Gulf War is over. Our attention is now drawn to speculation about the next general election; the changes in the poll tax; the effects of the Budget on our weekly wage; the carryings-on of certain royal husbands and the date of the victory parade.

For people in Iraq, Kuwait and Palestine among others, the war is far from over. Within Iraq, the outcome of the struggle to overthrow Saddam Hussein is not clear and will probably depend on whether an effective alliance can be built between the different peoples in opposition to him.

But the effects of the attack by the West on the peoples of Iraq are already known. A UN delegation reported in March on the desperate situation of many people. Food is short and there is the threat of starvation and epidemics. The infrastructure of the country was destroyed by Western bombing and the result is immense suffering for ordinary people.

While some things may not yet be clear, we can already draw some conclusions:

1. The Gulf War marked a turning point in the world balance of power in the sense that Western imperialism was able to launch an attack on a Third World country, without even formal opposition from the Soviet Union and with the tacit support of China. Not since the Korean War, has the West, led by the US, been able to utilise the United Nations in this way.

2. The US, with Britain as its major junior partner, committed great war crimes in Iraq, particularly the bombardment of the country and the massacre of thousands of conscript soldiers who were already in retreat.

3. Iraq was defeated because it tried to fight the most powerful, high-tech army in the world on its own terms. The lessons of Vietnam and people's war still stand. Iraq could only defeat the US by adopting a different strategy of guerrilla tactics and protracted warfare. Such a strategy was in fact impossible for an unpopular, repressive leader.

4. In the long term, in spite of the outward appearance of the strength of the USA in the Middle East, internally it has deep problems. It may have won the war in military terms. It will not be able to control events indefinitely, as is clear already from the people's struggles in Iraq.

POLITICAL PAPER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST LEAGUE

contents

Birmingham 6.....	3
Poll Tax.....	4
Mandy's Diary.....	5
Women's Work.....	6
Book Review.....	7
Women.....	8 & 9
Kurds.....	10
Vietnam & Gulf.....	11
Haiti.....	12
Ethiopia.....	13
Ireland.....	14 & 15

We apologise to readers of 'Class Struggle' for the missing March issue. We intend to resume publishing the paper as before from this issue.

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FREE AT LAST

After serving sixteen years in jail for a crime they did not commit, the Birmingham Six are free. Their only crime was to be Irish. They had no connection with the IRA. They were innocent victims of British occupation of Ireland.

It is a tribute to the six men and their families that they fought such a long struggle against injustice and won. They took on the might of the police and lawlords, and won. They defeated a massive conspiracy by the British state under both Labour and Tory governments.

Clearly those police involved in falsifying evidence should now be charged. Prison warders involved in beating up the six men should be prosecuted. The law lords and judges involved in the trial and unsuccessful appeals should be sacked.

Liberation Struggle

Back in 1973-4, the Republican Movement had intensified the national liberation struggle. This included extending the military campaign to mainland Britain. They attacked legitimate military and prestigious targets plus symbols of the state apparatus. Warnings were given and civilian casualties were few. The Old Bailey, Scotland Yard, The Stock Exchange, Westminster Hall at the Houses of Parliament, Harrows, Liberty's in Regent Street, Madame Tussauds, the Earls Court Boat Show and Ripon army barracks were all attacked.

In February 1974, a coach was bombed on the M62, killing eight soldiers. Despite the IRA claiming responsibility Judith Ward was framed by the state and received a 30-year jail sentence. The IRA stated she was not a member. In October and November of that year bombs went off in pubs used by soldiers in Guildford and Woolwich. Four men to become known as the Guildford Four were framed and jailed for this. At a later trial, an IRA active service unit claimed responsibility.



Joanne Walker, daughter of Johnnie Walker, outside Wormwood Scrubs, the evening before his release.

It was against this background that the Birmingham pub bombings occurred on 21st November 1974. Six innocent men, the Birmingham Six, were beaten up and framed. The IRA's campaign was having an effect; the British state had to be seen to be fighting back. Any arrests would be seen to boost public opinion.

The bombings gave the then Labour government the excuse to rush through the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) on 29th November, 1974. No MP opposed it. It was obviously already drafted. It had no effect on the IRA's campaign. Its main aim was to intimidate and terrorise the Irish community in Britain. Obviously, that community was seen as a significant support for the liberation struggle in Ireland. It has played a role for the British state to prevent that support to this day.

All the parliamentary parties see their role as supporting the ongoing oppression of the Irish nation. It is that oppression that is the underlying crime and what led to the framing of the Birmingham Six.

Whoever was responsible for the Birmingham pub bombings, it is clear that the ultimate blame must be laid at the door of British imperialism. It is the occupation and partitioning of Ireland by Britain that is the root cause of all deaths and injuries that occur.



Above: Ann, Martine, Maggie, Siobhan, Kate and Theresa McIlkenney, at home, before the Birmingham Six were freed. In the last few years, many big names have given their support to the campaign to free the Six. It is often forgotten that since the original convictions there has been a campaign to free the Six. It was family members and other Irish people who were at the centre of this campaign and who can take the credit for this victory.

ANTI POLL TAX VICTORY ?

Over the last few weeks, local councils spent a lot of time working out their budgets for the coming year. In most cases, the financial packages that were finally agreed, including many reductions in services.

Liverpool set a poll tax level of £474 but its 419 million pound budget incorporated sacking almost four hundred of its council workforce, winding up an anti-drug agency, closing libraries early and privatising nursery schools.

In Derbyshire, the county council said that 1,000 out of 11,000 education jobs might have to go in order to meet its 16 million pound budget reduction.

London

In Haringey, a poll tax of £560 was announced in a proposed budget that also called for the axing of 1,000 jobs including 30 secondary school teachers. Over the last three years, it has already reduced its workforce by over three hundred. The highest figure was set south of the river by Lambeth at £590 in a budget that will still involve cuts of 20 million pounds including 600 job losses and reduction in what were described as less essential services!

Next door to Lambeth, the so-called model borough of Wandsworth set the lowest rate in the whole country, £136. Partly to achieve this figure the council has engaged in cost-cutting exercises which among other things, include doing away with 69 jobs in the social services, imposing a £2 a week charge for home helps and some cuts in nursery school services. This however did not explain the main reason why Wandsworth's poll tax was set so low. That had more to do with blatant government manipulation of central finance.

Where Does the Money Come

From?

According to some figures from the Department of the Environment quoted recently in 'The Guardian', in the financial year just ended, only 29% of local authority total spending comes from the poll tax; 32% came from the business rate and 39% was in the shape of government grants. However in the case of Wandsworth, its £260 million budget was made up of £25 million (9½%) from the poll tax; £70 million (27%) from the business rate and

£165 million (63½%) from central government.

In other words, Wandsworth was getting much more revenue from the government, who then proceeded to call it a model for other councils to follow, because its poll tax could be set so low. If all the other London boroughs had been given the same level of money from Whitehall they would probably all have been able to halve their poll tax levels.

However all this has now been made somewhat academic. For on Tuesday 19th March, twelve days before the new financial year was due to begin, Norman Lamont announced that poll tax levels were to be reduced by £140 for the coming year.

This was to be paid for by an extra 2½% on VAT.

As we go to print, Michael Heseltine is talking about the new tax to pay for local services. There is no guarantee that when it is finally sorted out and implemented it will be any less unpopular than the poll tax.

A Victory

Nevertheless the fact that Thatcher's poll tax is to be replaced is a great victory. It is one that many can share in for there were millions who helped contribute to its downfall. Either they refused to pay it. Or they paid late, causing the councils to turn

to the banks for heavy loans. They went to court to protest. They marched and gave out leaflets, organised meetings and set up bailiff buster squads in order to challenge the government at every turn.

In some areas there were well-organised campaigns. In others, many people wanted nothing to do with either their local anti-poll tax group or with paying the poll tax. For example, in the November issue of 'Class Struggle', we quoted one active anti-poll tax worker who told us that in her area there was mass opposition to the poll tax. But that did not mean to say that there was a campaign of mass opposition.

The Only Way?

Another significant aspect of the government's decision to deal with the poll tax in this way is that it is egg on the face of those Labour Party members who have been going around saying that the only way to get rid of it was to elect a Labour government. They used to say the same thing about Maggie Thatcher.

Well, she has gone. And the poll tax is going, and both have happened without the election of a Labour government. The fact that the poll tax is not staying is because the people began to take effective action, and did not wait for the saviours on high to do it for them.

We reprint below a letter sent to their council by a reader:

Yesterday it was announced that the Poll Tax would be scrapped, and that is why I am paying it today.

The battle to abolish the Poll Tax was won by those of us who did not pay it. If everyone had paid, it would not be scrapped. It was a disaster from the start, as much for you administrators as it was for us, payers.

The government has at last seen the error of its ways, and is now trying to pretend it never wanted the Poll Tax in the first place. I know the truth of what I and people like me have suffered this last year.

My Poll Tax bill is nearly three times what my rates bill was last year. The services I receive are being cut all the time. I work part-time. I have two small children, and half my income goes in nursery fees. (By the way, childcare for working mothers is one of those services which is now practically non-existent!)

It has taken me all year to save this money. I put in for a rebate and have not had a reply. I expect to be disqualified from a rebate because of your sexist method of calculating a couple's income. If we are assessed jointly, we should pay jointly. In households with non-working wives, the husband pays double! I find this absolutely appalling, and was prepared to fight it all the way if it had been necessary. I am very glad that it was not necessary.

I am paying this Poll Tax because the victory has been won, and there is no longer any reason to withhold my payment. Others are not paying because they simply cannot afford to. It is for their sakes, as well as my own, that I did what I did.

The fight to abolish the Poll Tax was won by me and people like me.

Mandy's Diary

February 7th: Government departments and other public bodies are failing to ensure that at least 3% of their workforce consists of registered disabled people. Only 2 out of 29 departments - the Employment Group and Land Registry - met the target. All eight nationalised industries failed.

Not a single regional health authority, Scottish health board, English or Welsh county council, Scottish regional or island council, achieved the 3% quota.

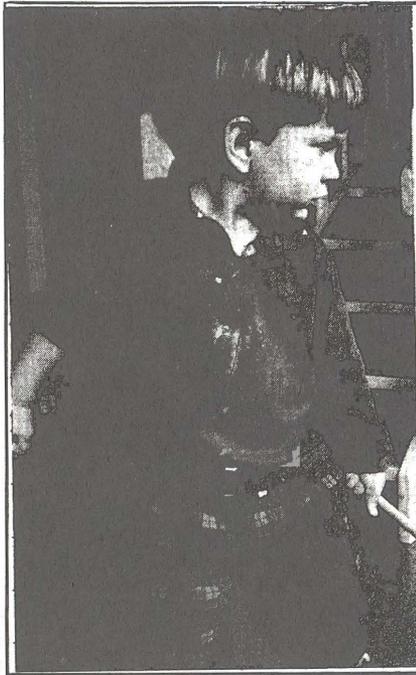
February 9th: Less than one in ten junior school children are allowed to go to school on their own, compared with eight in ten, 20 years ago, according to a study of children's independence by the Policy Studies Institute, an independent research organisation. Parents feel they have to restrict their children's freedom to make their own way to school because of fear of traffic accidents or molestation.

I know this is true in my case. When I was five, I went to school on my own on the bus. I would never allow my seven year-old to go out alone, whether by bus or on foot.

In other respects too, children's freedom is curtailed because of dangers to them. Most children aged 11 to 15 own bicycles but hardly any of them are allowed to cycle on public roads. Only 2% of children aged between seven and eleven, and 25% of children aged eleven to fifteen, are allowed out alone after dark. The report says: "This generation's children are being denied a whole range of opportunities for autonomy, for social development and for recreational activity that their parents and grandparents enjoyed."

This means that parents spend an increasing amount of time escorting and supervising their children. Parents of junior school children make on average 23 journeys a week to escort their children, mainly to and from school. In the past twenty years, child deaths on the roads have nearly halved. The reason for this is not that the roads are safer but that children have been removed from the danger.

February 21st: I have a friend who works for



Birmingham City Council. She sent me a copy of a circular which has been going round the Department of Recreation and Community Services. It is entitled 'Honeymoon Miralda Project 1986-92' and it says:

"Five centuries have passed since Columbus first reached the shores of the American continent, opening the doors to the greatest exchange of peoples, goods and ideas in history. 'Miralda's Honeymoon Project' marks this event with a series of public ceremonies, exhibitions, installations and parades taking place across the world, based upon the theme of the symbolic courtship and marriage between New York's Statue of Liberty and Barcelona's Columbus Monument."

Yes, they really are serious! It goes on:

"The ancient ritual of marriage has united not only families but also nations"....."All components of the Honeymoon Project incorporate community participation and explore the many socio-economic signifiers, both sophisticated and popular, involved in marriage".

Different aspects of the 'wedding' - bedspread, bridal dress, wedding cake, ring, etc. - will be made in different cities on both sides of the Atlantic. Well, there certainly is money in the hands of the rich, who seem to have nothing better to do than to celebrate the oppression of Third World nations and the

oppression of women in one fell swoop!

Are they seriously suggesting that the coming of European settlers to the USA was such a wonderful thing even for the native Americans at the time, let alone for the rest of the world ever since? And if they want some 'socio-economic signifiers involved in marriage', I could give them a few, like: Why is it that men earn more than women? Men have top jobs? Women do most of the housework? etc. etc.

They are right about one thing, though. European settlers did open the doors to the greatest exchange of peoples in history: the Slave Trade.

February 27th: There was a fascinating film on the telly this week. It was called 'Vinh Linh, Steel Rampart' (1971). It was the story of how the people of one Vietnamese village protected themselves against three years of continual bombing raids by the Americans. They dug an underground village: houses and tunnels. They kept animals underground. Babies were born underground and never saw the light of day for three years. They had to come up to the surface to grow food. They managed to feed themselves and their animals, and the army, on the crops that they grew. We saw women with rifles and machine guns. The narrator of the film was a woman. It was in Vietnamese with English subtitles.

The government wanted to ban this film and I can see why. Because of the war in the Gulf, they didn't want people to see that it is possible for a Third World country to resist American bombardment.

March 14th: I can't remember the last time the news on the telly was good. It's been bad for so long! The end of the Gulf War perhaps? But that was claimed as a victory for the West. And before that, the disposal of Mrs Thatcher?

But today the news was good three times over. Firstly, there was the release of the Birmingham Six. Then there was the official announcement that the Poll Tax was scrapped. And finally the man who raped his wife lost his appeal against his prison sentence. Spring really is on its way!

EARNING EQUALITY?

*Congratulations - it's
a part-timer!*



More and more women are going out to work in Britain today. Every year women make up a greater proportion of the workforce. Some analysts say that by the end of the century, women will make up more than half of the working population.

Between 1971 and 1987, the number of women in paid employment in Britain increased from 8.2 to 9.6 million. As a proportion of the workforce, the numbers have already gone over 49% and are expected to reach 50% this year.

If we compare Britain with other similar countries in Europe, these figures are very high. Only the Scandinavian countries have a higher proportion of women going out to work.

This changing pattern of employment is caused by the increase in the number of women with children, often married women, going out to work.

But this numbers game is far from representing equality, even in the narrow sense of equality at work. As well as having the greatest numbers of women going out to work in Europe, Britain has almost the worst record in childcare and the biggest gap between men and women's earnings.

The increase in numbers going out to work has consistently been made up from women going into part-time work. Rather than providing childcare to enable women to play an equal part in the labour market, the system has adapted working hours so that women continue to bear the main responsibility for childcare and their paid work is adapted

to take account, for example of school hours.

Between 1971 and 1987, for example, the number of women in full-time work remained constant: 5.5 million in 1971 and 5.4 million in 1987. The number of women in part-time employment, however, changed from 2.8 million to 4.2 in the same period.

Part-time work inevitably implies lower hourly earnings; no bonuses; no overtime and fewer prospects for promotion.

It is no surprise then that for the last ten years or more, women's earnings have remained at about three quarters of men's if we compare basic rates and only two thirds if we look at actual earnings. This record is, again, one of the worst in Europe.

There are other reasons for this continued inequality at work. Far from increasing opportunities for women at work, there has been a consolidation of two patterns which restrict women at work. Firstly, many women work in a small number of traditionally low-paying industries such as clothing or in the service sector, where their outside employment also reflects skills "learnt in the home" - cooking, caring, etc. Secondly, within particular industries or professions, women, even where they make up a majority of the workforce, occupy the lower grades.

All the figures above are drawn from official statistics or surveys. We should remember that such figures always understate the degree of inequality and the extent of women's paid employment. Many part-time jobs, for example,

cleaning or working in a bar, never show up in the figures. Another massive area of paid work that is invisible is homework, rarely officially recorded, yet widespread.

Improvements have of course been won over the years. Since the last century, women have fought for their right to work in the first place and then for equal pay. Recent legislation has also been used by women to improve their terms of employment. But the long-term view shows us more how the system has been able to make concessions and in some cases formal equal rights, while at the same time adapting to new patterns which further consolidate inequality.

Lessons from History

It is useful to compare the situation today with that in the early part of the century when in many European countries and the USA, there was a great movement to organise women, both in unions and round the issue of the vote.

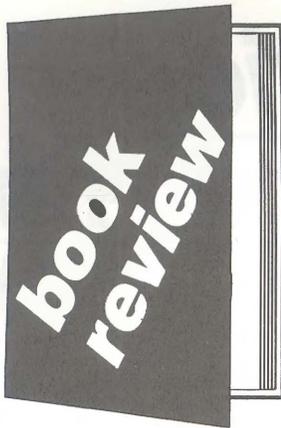
In the early part of this century, women had their own separate organisations. The vision of many women was not restricted to equal rights but the movement for equality for women was linked with the struggle for socialism.

Looking back now, we can see that what was probably neglected was the importance of the unpaid work that women do in the home, childcare and other work connected with looking after the family.

This is still a crucial factor in any discussion of women's work, as the patterns of employment today show. Most women still do a double day, of paid and unpaid work.

Some people argue that the emphasis on women's right to work has therefore been misplaced and simply resulted in women carrying a double burden. For us however, women's paid employment is still an important area. Women gain economic independence through their paid work and a life independent of their family.

We should not fall into the trap of thinking that women's liberation will come about through a gradual increase in equal rights at work. Women's liberation is much more than this. Nevertheless this is still a key aspect of women's lives and one where every step forward is important.



society. Through the analysis of pornography developed by writers such as Andrea Dworkin, Stoltenberg shows how "pornography reveals in the sexuality of the men for whom it is made an addiction to force and coercion for arousal, eroticized racial hatred, a despisal of the female, a fetishizing of erection and a devotion to penetration, an obsession with interpersonal power differentials, an eroticized commitment to violence - and through it all an ugly striving to assert masculinity over and against women Pornography tells lies about

about us and if we don't make serious progress in the direction of what we're going to do about it, then we've just gone over to the wrong side of the fight - the morally wrong, historically wrong side of a struggle that is a ground swell, a grass-roots people's movement against sexual injustice."

Stoltenberg then looks at how the radical feminist movement is challenging pornography in the US through legal means, by developing strategies around a civil rights approach, which will be more effective than using vague, out-dated obscenity laws.

Refusing to be a man

'Refusing to be a man' is written by John Stoltenberg, who is described by his publisher as "the most influential radical feminist male writer in the US."

The book is a powerful and thought provoking polemic which unveils and challenges the sexual injustice in society, and the main foundation on which it is built - the socially constructed ideas of masculinity and male identity. It not only provides analysis, but also practical ways of challenging the way men are.

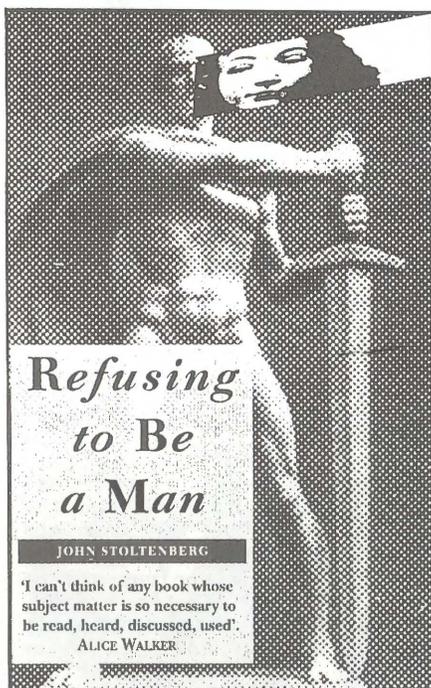
MALE SEXUAL IDENTITY

The book divides roughly into three sections. The first deals with how male sexual identity is socially and culturally constructed. Male sexual identity, Stoltenberg argues, is based on the fiction that there are two distinct and fixed sexes - male and female. He states:

"The notion that ... anatomical traits comprise a sex - a discrete class, separate and distinct, metaphysically divisible from some other sex, the other sex - is simply that: a notion, an idea. The penises exist; the male sex does not. The male sex is socially constructed. It is a political entity that flourishes only through acts of force and sexual terrorism. Apart from the global inferiorization and subordination of those who are defined as 'nonmale', the idea of personal membership in the male sex class would have no recognizable meaning."

PORNOGRAPHY AND MALE POWER

The second part of the book looks at how pornography is used to prop up and perpetuate the sex class division of



women. But pornography tells the truth about men."

FIGHTING PORNOGRAPHY

What flows from this is that men have a responsibility to do something about pornography. We must not and cannot ignore it, we must do more than simply not buy pornography - we must actively fight pornography:

"If we sit around and don't do anything, then we become the ones who are keeping things the way that they are. If we sit around and all we do is intellectual and emotional dithering, then we stay in the ranks of those who are the passive enforcers of male supremacy. If we don't take seriously the fact that pornography is a radical political issue and an issue

CREATING GENUINE CHANGE

The final section of the book looks at how men who commit themselves to building a sexually just, sexually classless society must commit themselves not only intellectually, but also in practical action. As he states:

"In my view, the discipline of focusing on antisexist activism is really the only way that one can keep choosing to keep one's moral identity alive and awake. I don't believe one's moral identity can survive in an actionless vacuum. It can't just exist in one's mind or in one's statement of principles. It must be expressed in action."

'Refusing to be a man' is a complex and challenging book which needs to be read by all men who believe they are, or should be, fighting for genuine sexual equality and justice. It builds on the work of radical feminists such as Andrea Dworkin, Shulamith Firestone and Kate Millet, and it is a strong addition to radical feminist thought.

If a genuine transformation in the world is going to take place, radical men have to listen to, digest and act upon the ideas that are highlighted by this book and other radical feminist work. Until there is a commitment, expressed in action, by men to genuine sexual justice, until this commitment is integrated into our pursuit of class struggle and the liberation of the oppressed, we will not be able to effect fundamental change.

'Refusing to be a man' is published by Fontana Collins and costs £3.99p.

"We Strike For Justice For All Women"

International Women's Day dates back to March 8th, 1908 and 1909. In 1908 socialists active on New York's East Side organised a mass demonstration in support of universal suffrage. In 1909, some 20,000 women dressmakers demonstrated on the streets of New York in the biggest women's strike in history. They demanded an end to filthy, unsafe working conditions, an end to child labour, an eight-hour day and the right to vote. Eighty

years on, the areas of struggle for women have changed very little, with the important exception of the right to vote.

In 1909, women were fighting on fronts which, as at present, were inter-related and yet at times divisive. The strike was firstly about wages and conditions of work and the right to organise in unions. Despite the victories of those years, the clothing industry today remains extremely exploitative for

women workers, both as homeworkers and throughout the world in sweatshops. Secondly, the strike was related to the women's demand for the vote, a demand making headline news in Britain at the time. And thirdly, black women, then as now, experienced invisibility or rejection by much of the American women's movement. The relations and dynamics between these three strands of struggle, in the USA, England and Germany in the early 1900's are of direct relevance to women today. Today, feminists and socialists are still unsure how to forge links. Once again, too, we are again faced with war.

Clara Zetkin



A focal figure in all this is Clara Zetkin, a German socialist who lived from 1857-1933. She was a revolutionary rooted in the working class women of her day and fought throughout her long and difficult life for their interests. It is a reflection of the low priority given to women within the socialist and Marxist-Leninist movement that little of her writings and speeches are translated and published in English. She was by all accounts a powerful and inspiring speaker - yet another piece of women's history denied to us. As a leading anti-revisionist in the German Social-Democratic Party, she organised regular international women's conferences to coincide with the Congresses of the Second International, the first was in Stuttgart in 1907 and the second in Copenhagen in 1910. It was here that she proposed

the resolution that March 8th be established as International Women's Day, a resolution which was not only adopted but one that has been acted on annually in many countries for eighty years.

The burning issue at these two international women's conferences was the battle for women's suffrage (right to vote) and whether it was correct to fight for women's rights to equal those of men (only two thirds of whom had voting rights) or whether the fight should be for complete adult suffrage. In choosing March 8th, the anniversary of the New York women's strike, Clara Zetkin was making it clear that her solidarity was firmly with working class women and their demands for labour and voting rights. It must be acknowledged that within the German Social-Democratic Party, Clara Zetkin waged a constant battle for women's equality and liberation, as well as immersing herself in the day to day struggles of working class women. However, looking back over the history of the struggle for the vote in this country, it would seem that she held very dogmatic views on the relationship between socialism and feminism.

In Clara Zetkin's three essays on the 'Movements for the Emancipation of Women' written in 1928 and in her speeches and resolutions at the International Women's Conferences, she totally opposes any feminist struggle which does not take the form of the struggle for the

establishment of socialism or communism as the first step. Her resolution in Stuttgart noted that: "Socialist parties of all countries have a duty to struggle energetically for the introduction of universal suffrage for women" (something English suffragists would wholeheartedly agree with, but found totally lacking) and that "Socialist women must not ally themselves with the bourgeois feminists, but lead the battle side by side with the socialist men."

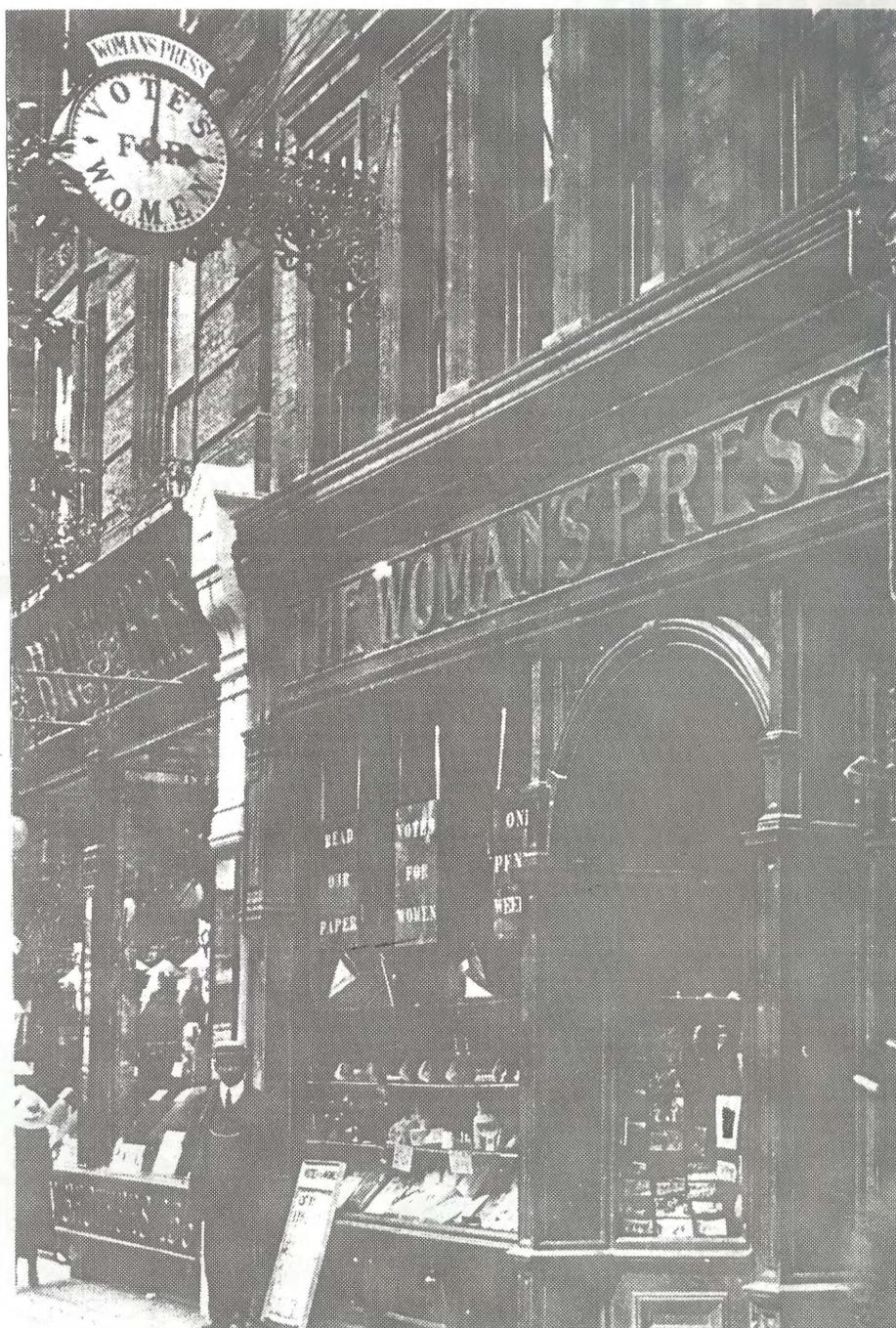


VOTES FOR WOMEN

By 1910, the women's campaign for the vote in Britain had a history and experience of many years, and was at a critical stage. In the USA, women had been active for even longer. The history of this struggle, involving tens of thousands of women in a huge variety of most extraordinary protests has been suppressed until feminists have researched the struggle in recent times.

The struggle was protracted and difficult. In 1832, the Great Reform Act gave the vote to middle class men in addition to landowners, but for the first time specifically excluded women by using the term "male person". In 1884, the Third Reform Act entitled about two thirds of the male population to vote, including large numbers of working men. But votes to all women were refused. Campaigning for votes for women thus began in the 1860's but had made no progress by 1900. None of the political parties supported it. The Conservatives wished to maintain the status quo. The Liberals were split and did not take a risk. The new Labour Party was dominated by trade union voters who wanted all men to get the vote before any women. Women who demanded the vote came from all classes, and they managed to build a very broad movement.

This was based on two main organisations: the National Union of Women Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) and the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Although some of the best known suffragettes were from the middle and upper classes and would have voted for the capitalist order if given the vote, there were also very prominent women who came from the working class, such as Selina Cooper and Hannah Mitchell. These women organised and were supported by tens of thousands of working women, especially in the northern mill towns. The biography of Selina Cooper makes it clear that while of course she favoured full adult suffrage, she found that in practice adult suffrage was



The Women's Social and Political Union was so successful that in 1910 the Women's Press opened a new shop at 156 Charing Cross Road, London.

something that the Labour Party brought out for support only as an alternative to women's equality and that it was never a demand which was really fought for. She and other amazing women activists of that time never compromised her ideals in the long term, but only as a short-term tactic in order to make progress and unite with all positive forces. Unfortunately, it seems that Selina Cooper never had the opportunity to debate her point with Clara Zetkin. It would have been an illuminating meeting!

Bitter Disappointment with the Labour Party

The reality of the women's struggle for the vote (and in the same period for contraception) even for the limited demand for equal voting rights with men, is of one sell-out after another by all the parties within our parliamentary "democratic" system. Many of the working class women experienced a lifetime of bitter disappointment in the Labour Party: another reason for women recovering their own history before making the same mistakes again!

Part Two of this special feature appears next month

An opportunity for the Kurds?

There are around 25 million Kurds in the Middle East. If they had an independent state embracing all the areas where they live, it would be one of the largest states in the region. Instead, they live as oppressed minorities within other states. Today, many of them hope that this will change before very long.

In Turkey, in spite of the Kurdish regions being placed under martial law and having a heavy Turkish army presence, the National Revolutionary Army of Kurdistan (ERNK), led by the Workers' Party of

divisions committed to the war in the south were destroyed, as was most of the air force. In the Kurdish areas, as well as the Shi'ite regions of the south, the people seized the chance to rise up against Saddam Hussein's regime. (Even in the centre of the country, where Saddam Hussein's position is strongest, there have been upheavals.)

Wherever revolts took place, the popular forces hunted down known secret policemen, torturers and Baath Party officials, and killed them,

Halabja and other towns in the last year of the Iran-Iraq war. However, they believed that they had to fight on and take advantage of the regime's weakness, before it has the chance to rebuild its power.

Co-operation

The Kurdish liberation forces have been fragmented in the past. But they have been able to co-operate well during the current crisis. Not only have the major internal organisations in Iraq such as the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and Kurdistan Democratic Party fought side



Kurds at a mountain camp in Northern Iraq

Kurdistan (PKK), has been able to build a solid base for its fight for independence.

The Turkish government calls the PKK's forces "terrorists". But faced with an army which does not hesitate to torture and assassinate anyone who it suspects might back the PKK, the population has given the PKK increasing support.

In both Iran and Syria, the independent Kurdish organisations are at present in a weak position. But in Iraq, it is a different story.

When Iraq was defeated in the Gulf War, it lost most of its armed forces: 41 out of 42

exacting vengeance for the suffering they have inflicted upon the people over the last twenty years.

In the north, Kurdish forces rapidly gained control of the whole of the countryside, as well as major cities such as Irbil and Sulaymanieh. As they closed in on Kirkuk, at the heart of the northern oil producing area, the Iraqi regime took 5,000 Kurds in the city hostage, threatening to kill them if the rebel forces did not lay down their guns.

The Kurds know that Saddam Hussein is perfectly capable of doing that, following his use of nerve gas against

by side, but fighters from Iranian Kurdistan and Turkish Kurdistan have crossed the present international frontiers to support them. Now the various Kurdish groups in the region are working to establish a united front body which will represent all Kurds. Differences still need to be debated. While the PKK calls for an independent Kurdistan, in both Iraq and Iran, the major groups demand autonomy. In Iraq, the slogan they put forward is 'Democracy for Iraq! Autonomy for Kurdistan', and this has formed the basis of a succession of attempts to establish an anti-Saddam

regime united front with Iraqi Arab opposition groups.

In spite of recent successes, the Kurds still face formidable obstacles in winning their goals in Iraq. Saddam Hussein's regime still has armed forces at its disposal which were hardly touched by the Gulf war. It holds the centre of the country and, to date, has proved more than a match for the ill-organised rebel forces in the south. Saddam Hussein's strategy has been to concentrate on crushing the weaker rebellion, while carrying on a holding operation in the north, and then to switch his whole military machine to fight against the Kurds.

'Lesser Evil'

During the Gulf War, George Bush called upon Iraqis to rise against Saddam Hussein. But today, when Iraqi Arabs and Kurds are doing just that, the USA and the states which co-operated with it during the war seem less keen on overturning the Baathist regime, even if they would like to see the back of Saddam Hussein himself.

The USA and the Saudis do not want the Shi'ite revolt in the south of Iraq to succeed, in case it results in the creation of a radical Islamic state. (In fact the establishment of a broad alliance of the great majority of anti-Saddam forces makes such an outcome unlikely.)

None of the Arab states support movements which seek the secession of a minority nationality from any individual Arab state, or even substantial autonomy within one, so they all oppose the Kurdish struggle in Iraq and the fight of the non-Arab south Sudanese. Although Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria have their conflicts, none want the Kurds living within rival states to establish their independence or to rule themselves within the larger states, as that would only encourage the Kurds within their own borders to assert themselves. For the sake of their relations with the existing states, the USA, Britain, Soviet Union and other powers prefer that the Kurds continue to be deprived of self-determination.

Nevertheless, the key factor is what happens on the ground, and the Kurds want to make the most of the opportunities they now have. If they can win their demands in Iraq, it will create much more favourable conditions for the Kurds of the neighbouring lands and then they might undo the divisions imposed upon them in the past.

Vietnam & the Gulf

At the end of the Gulf War, George Bush declared that America had put the 'Vietnam syndrome' behind it. Earlier, he had been at pains to stress to Americans that this war would not be another Vietnam.

Right-wingers in the USA like to claim that US forces were defeated there because the press put over a negative image of what they were doing in Vietnam, and that this undermined public support for the war.

This is a lie and a re-writing of history. The US army was ground down in Vietnam by a people's army which was absolutely convinced of the justice of its cause. The casualties suffered by the USA were far lower than those of the Vietnamese. But more and more soldiers did not see why they should risk dying in a war in which they did not believe. No imagination is required to calculate what might have happened in Vietnam if the press had been muzzled. For there was another recent war in which a government saw that the press only gave the people back home "good news", and that was the Soviet war in Afghanistan.

The Soviet army in Afghanistan became sick of its losses and hardships. The truth of what was going on filtered back to the people at home with every soldier who went back, alive or dead. Maybe the USA has put Vietnam behind it. If so, it is bad news for the Third World, as US presidents will now feel more free to send their forces to intervene against any country which dares to challenge it. That said, it is important to stress that the Vietnam of the '60s and '70s was very different from Saddam's Iraq.

Vietnam was partitioned in the 1950's in spite of the wish of the people that they should have a united, independent state. The liberation war began as a revolutionary struggle based among the people of the South, and set out to serve their social, as well as national interests. In contrast, while the Arab peoples regard themselves as belonging to one nation, most do not want their states to be forcibly absorbed by their neighbours. Certainly, there was absolutely no support in Kuwait for incorporation into Iraq.

Saddam - Incompetent

Nor can the Iraqi leadership be compared with that in North Vietnam. The Baathist Party

in Iraq seized power through a military coup, and then Saddam Hussein ruthlessly eliminated his rivals within the party and placed his own supporters - largely people from his home town - in all the key positions in society.

Saddam's regime ruled Iraq through terror, whereas Ho Chi Minh and the leadership of Vietnam came to power through the liberation struggle against France and the main foundation of their position was their popular support. Vietnam faced ferocious bombing and a determined effort by the US to isolate and crush the revolutionary forces, and yet it came through and defeated the USA. The Iraqi army collapsed, badly led and demoralised, ordered to fight by a regime to which most Iraqis owe no loyalty and nor was there any desire by the people of Iraq to continue the war.

Following the striking demonstrations which the USA has given of its power in the Gulf, it would be easy to over-estimate its strength. That would be a serious mistake. The USA fought under particularly favourable conditions in the Gulf, against an enemy which was not only much weaker, but which played into its hands militarily.

Nevertheless, the high-tech hardware it used to devastate Iraq and spare itself casualties was extremely expensive and so was the entire operation of deploying and using US forces far from home.

A portion of the bill will be met by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and several other states. But even so, some commentators believe that the USA simply will not be able to afford to mount another operation on this scale during the next decade. It has made inroads into stocks of weapons originally prepared for use in Europe. Rising social problems at home and economic competition from Europe and Japan might prevent it from rebuilding its arsenal. Furthermore, the anger of the majority of the Arab peoples and of large regions of the Third World at what the USA and Britain inflicted upon Iraq will find expression in greater unrest within the states that took a pro-Western position.

The "triumph" of the start of 1991 might well look very different in a year or so's time.

'Capitalism is Mortal Sin'

While the Western media has focussed on the war for control of the Middle East, a battle for fundamental change is going on in Haiti.

Haiti is one of the world's poorest countries, as a result of years of indirect control by the USA, through the notorious rule of the Duvalier family. The seven million Haitians now have a new president, elected with 65% of the popular vote in December 1990 and inaugurated in February of this year. Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide is a radical priest, who in 1988 made a record entitled 'Capitalism is Mortal Sin'. He has already been denounced by the Catholic establishment and is unlikely to find favour in the USA. The hopes of the poor and oppressed of Haiti are pinned on their new president to bring them fundamental change.

This outcome to the election was a victory for the many decades of struggle by the popular masses against the Duvalier dictatorship. This terrorist dictator was foisted upon the oppressed people with the support of US imperialism.

As the election was in progress, the country was subjected to an unprecedented wave of violence by those who wanted to frustrate the people's desire for radical change.

Intimidation

In a direct attempt to intimidate Father Aristide, an orphanage that he had founded for the homeless and the destitute was firebombed. Of the twelve children in the place at the time only five escaped unhurt. Four were killed and three others were seriously wounded.

Few doubt that this crime was the work of the fascist paramilitary gang - the Tonton Macoutes - created by the Duvalier dictatorship.

Until the fire, Father Aristide resided at the orphanage but he was then forced to go into hiding.

The total number of people killed up to and including the election was almost one hundred, including many of the notorious secret police.

Three weeks after the election, remnants of the old Duvalier dictatorship staged a coup. Roger La Fontant declared himself provisional president of Haiti. Following the unsuccessful coup, he and

other conspirators were arrested.

On January 27th, 1991, following rumours of another impending coup, tens of thousands of poor people armed themselves with machetes, sticks, stones, iron bars and other weapons. Barricades were built with burning fires. During this incident a further nineteen people were killed by troops.

The capitalist and the old mulatto class, backed by the US, has demonstrated their hostility to Aristide. A US embassy official criticised Aristide for his failure to condemn the violence of the

years after his return from abroad, he survived eight assassination attempts by the Duvalier dictatorship.

In September 1988, for example, while saying mass at church he was attacked by a gang of fascist Tonton thugs. In the ensuing battle, thirteen people were left dead and Father Aristide was lucky to escape with his life.

The problems faced by the people of Haiti and their new president, however, are not only violence and fascist gangs.

Dependency

The country has an unusual history. It was the first



Jean-Bertrand Aristide

masses who burned down the Roman Catholic church and destroyed other church property including the capital's oldest building, the Cathedral, built in 1771.

Popular Anger

Popular anger has often been directed at the church establishment and its support for the old order.

The church hierarchy expelled Aristide from the Catholic order after his refusal to go into exile in Canada. He was also suspended from the priesthood by the Vatican for preaching "class struggle" and "spreading Bolshevism to his parishioners".

Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide was born in a peasant family in Haiti in 1953. He went on to study with a Catholic order, leaving Haiti to undertake advanced study abroad, first in Israel and Greece, later in Canada.

He returned to Haiti and devoted his life to working with the poor. Within five

independent black republic, where the slaves rose up and, led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, defeated Napoleon's best army declaring itself an independent republic in 1804. Formal independence was not followed by economic development and Haiti subsequently suffered from economic and political dependency on the USA.

For many years mass migration has drained the economy of many of its skilled workers. Economic growth has been zero. The degree of poverty is on a horrendous scale, with the people's living standards being desperately low.

Father Aristide is an advocate of self-reliance to find a way out of these basic problems. He and the Haitian masses will face immense difficulties in the coming period, with political attacks from within and without their country. It is important that progressive people here do what they can to support their heroic struggles.

NO INTERFERENCE!

The ruling regime in Ethiopia, the Dergue, is becoming increasingly isolated and the area of the country that it controls is shrinking rapidly. Over the last months, a popular offensive has taken place throughout the country, including in Eritrea, which is bound to lead to the final collapse of the government. The only thing that can save it, as on previous occasions, will be massive intervention from outside.

In Eritrea, the people's forces, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front now control all but two major cities, Asmara and Assab. Recent reports indicate that attacks are being made closer and closer to the last strongholds. As more territory is liberated, social and political change is introduced, consolidating the people's support for the victories.

A similar offensive has taken place in Tigray and other areas of Ethiopia where the liberation forces have now formed a common front, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Recent reports tell of military victories leading to the liberation of the whole of Gonder and Gojam provinces.

People's Councils

As a recent bulletin from the Ethiopia Solidarity Campaign (ESC) pointed out: "Perhaps the most significant achievement under the EPRDF - has been the establishment of people's councils..... People's councils are the cornerstone of the EPRDF programme since they are the organs in which the people, themselves, decide and administer their day-to-day affairs. All political, social and economic issues are thoroughly discussed and debated and then laws are established which best serve the people's interest.

"It is also through the people's councils that radical and equitable land distribution is carried out, through lengthy consultation with all people concerned. It is often said in the liberated areas that people only fully realise that they are the ones who hold the power when they have seen land distribution take place...."

Growing Unity

Recent months have seen the anniversaries of the two founding members of the EPRDF:

the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), now sixteen years old and the Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) - now ten years old.

In January 1991, the first Congress of the EPRDF was held in the liberated areas. Apart from the TPLF and EPDM, the Oromo People's Democratic Organisation and the Ethiopian Democratic Officers' Revolutionary Movement also participated. Organisations representing people from Benishangul and Gambella were also present.

Ethiopian Solidarity Campaign

Following developments within Ethiopia, a new solidarity campaign has been set up: The Ethiopian Solidarity Campaign (ESC) in Britain.

The new organisation will carry on the work done previously by the Tigray Solidarity Campaign to inform people here of the great changes in people's lives in Tigray following their liberation from the Dergue and to the right of the people in Ethiopia to "determine their own future within a just and democratic political system free from foreign interference".

The solidarity campaign has responded to food shortages and famine with practical help to organisations like REST but, at the same time, pointed to the causes of the famine in the exploitative political system and the way the Dergue has used hunger as a weapon in the war.

"Underdevelopment and savage exploitation of the land by generations of feudal landowners have impoverished the people and degraded the landscape, so that Ethiopia, once one of the most fertile, diverse and productive regions of the world, is now one of the most at risk from drought."

The campaign describes the background to recent developments in widespread denial of democratic and national rights to the people, leading to protracted rebellion and war against the governing regime.

"The area liberated by the EPRDF is now very extensive and includes 18 million people..... In these areas, the land has been redistributed to the people, people's councils have been formed and health and education programmes



implemented. There is freedom of worship for both Christians and Muslims. The development of a self-reliant agriculture is the first priority...

"The most important benefit for all the peasants, who make up 90% of the population, has been ownership of land and its produce. The people's support has grown rapidly in recognition of the gains they have made from the revolution. Women have been among the greatest beneficiaries of land reform and a woman who was once thought to curse the plough by touching it, can now support herself from her own land, whether she is married or not.

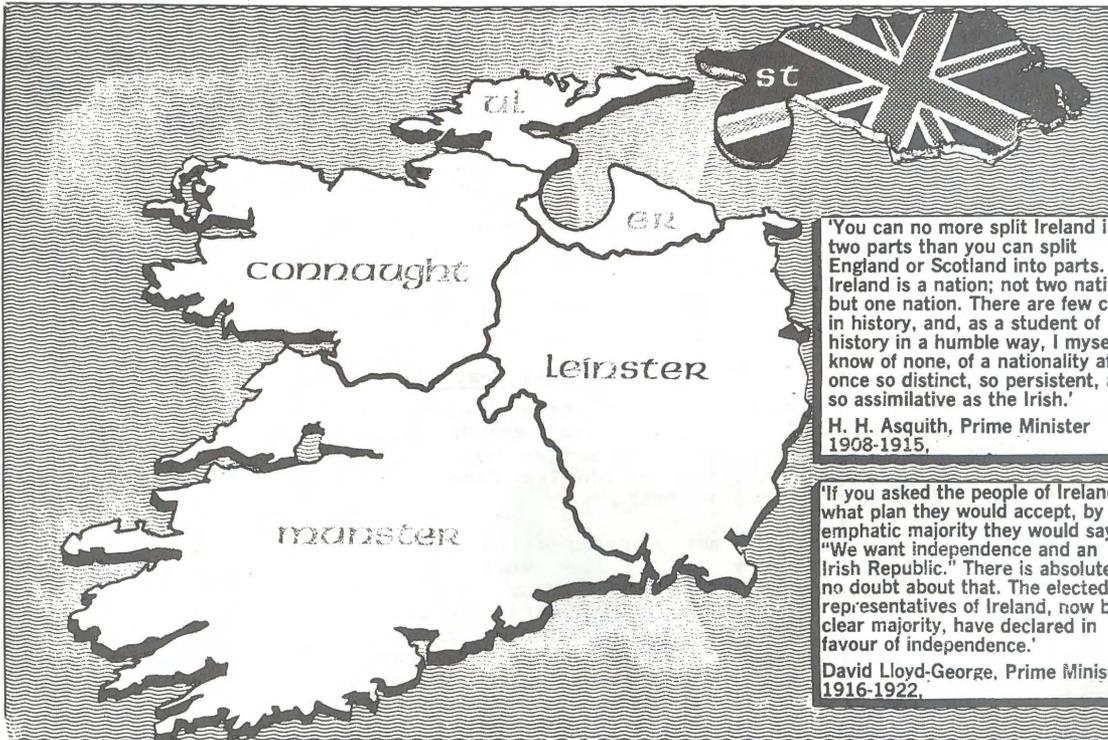
Women's Liberation

"Before the revolution women were the most oppressed sector of society. The average age of marriage was eight or nine years old. Women could not own land, had no rights in law even to their own children, played no part in public affairs and were not even allowed to speak or eat in public without their husband's permission. In fact, the revolution has transformed the life of most women, so that now they are among its strongest supporters....."

If you want to give your support to the people of Ethiopia, contact the Ethiopian Solidarity Campaign at the address below. We must also demand that neither the British government, nor any other foreign government, interferes to halt the total liberation of Ethiopia.

ESC: 211 Clapham Road,
Stockwell, London SW9 0QH.

'Our vision is economic as well as political'



"You can no more split Ireland into two parts than you can split England or Scotland into parts. Ireland is a nation; not two nations, but one nation. There are few cases in history, and, as a student of history in a humble way, I myself know of none, of a nationality at once so distinct, so persistent, and so assimilative as the Irish."

H. H. Asquith, Prime Minister 1908-1915.

"If you asked the people of Ireland what plan they would accept, by an emphatic majority they would say, 'We want independence and an Irish Republic.' There is absolutely no doubt about that. The elected representatives of Ireland, now by a clear majority, have declared in favour of independence."

David Lloyd-George, Prime Minister 1916-1922.

Sinn Fein's 86th Ard Fheis (policy-making congress) took place on the weekend of 1st to 3rd of February.

Delegates met with the background of media speculation about splits and ceasefires. Rumours were rife about a massive picket by the latest self-styled peace group, New Consensus. For the past year, the latest of a long line of British direct rulers, Peter Brooke, Northern Ireland Secretary, had been rushing round trying to put together yet another British-inspired agreement (which would exclude Sinn Fein) to "solve" the "Northern Ireland problem".

In reality, Brooke's initiative has got nowhere, which even he admits. The New Consensus picket was a flop with only 150 to 200 attending.

The Ard Fheis was a success. No splits occurred. No calls to abandon the armed struggles. Existing policies were endorsed and developed through democratic debate.

Sinn Fein has its own peace proposals. It is prepared to sit down and talk with anyone to achieve real peace. Their proposals are based on peace with justice. They strike at

the heart of the problem: Britain's partition of Ireland. The rulers of Britain and Eire do not want their people to know of Sinn Fein's peace proposals. They expose the real issues.



As Gerry Adams told the Ard Fheis: "Sinn Fein will continue to be interested and involved in seeking ways and means to bring peace out of chaos and division created by the British occupation of part of our country. That is one of the central reasons for our existence. It is the foundation upon which this party and our philosophy is based."

Bread and Roses

Gerry Adams went on to outline Sinn Fein's vision of a future united Ireland:

"Our vision rejects forced emigration and unemployment, cultural oppression, sexism and inequality. - Our vision embraces dignity, education, well-being and equality. Our vision embraces democracy. It is economic as well as political.

"Our vision is for the distribution of wealth, for the well-being of the aged, for the advancement of youth, for the liberation of women, for the protection of the environment. Our vision is for a free Ireland and a free people. It is for bread and roses as well as for an end to war. Our vision sees the relationship between Britain and Ireland as resting upon our mutual independence."

It was clear from the Ard Fheis that Sinn Fein remains the only organisation putting forward policies that can bring about a situation that allows the Irish people, as a whole, can decide their own future, free from outside interference. As is their basic democratic right.

British withdrawal and an end to partition are essential first steps to achieve that.

Britain Out of Ireland"

Victory for the Irish People!"

Ireland for the Irish People!"

IRA 'SCUDS' STEAL THE HEADLINES

"The audacity of the attack has shocked Londoners. The IRA has once again almost taken out the British Cabinet." - American ABC correspondent, Barry Dunsmore.

Every night since January 15th, devastation had rained down on the people of Iraq. However 'smart' the machinery of war, untold thousands of civilians perished in an orgy of violence - what the West described as a just war for the "liberation of Kuwait".

On the morning of February 7th, the British war cabinet sat down to discuss its own part in the proceedings. They did not realise that they were about to receive a dose of their own savage medicine. In its most daring operation since the bombing of the Grand Hotel in Brighton during the 1984 Conservative Party conference, the IRA launched three mortar bombs into Downing Street.

Two overshot their target. Fifteen yards short of target, the other struck a tree and exploded with a deafening roar. Blast windows shattered and television cameras later that day showed the doors of Number Ten visibly quaking under the impact of the explosion.

Immediately, scores of police and secret service personnel swarmed around Downing Street and Whitehall. Clearly, none had any idea what had happened. But as the confusion subsided it became

clear that the IRA, in the midst of one of the tightest security clampdowns in British history, had calmly driven into Whitehall and came within feet of wiping out the top tier of the British government. Temporarily eclipsed by the conflict in the Gulf, Britain's war in Ireland was now back in the headlines.

Trains and Planes

A few days later, London was at a standstill again when the IRA placed devices at several mainline railway stations. Warnings had been given but British Rail chose to ignore them. When one of them exploded and a member of the public was killed, the media and politicians poured out their usual tired condemnations of "indiscriminate violence".

All the while "Storming" Norman Schwarzkopf's "allied" air forces were busy over Iraq "denying the enemy an infrastructure". This meant bombing bridges, roads, water, fuel and electrical supplies, as well as "denying" transport facilities to emergency services. The results, reported in 'The Washington Post', were amputations performed by candlelight, shortages of blood for transfusions, shortages of anti-biotics and pain-killers, even of water for doctors to scrub up in before operations.

A strike against a bridge in the city of al-Nasiriyah

killed 47 civilians and wounded another 102. One of the wounded was a 13-year old boy, Quaser Said, who had to have his leg amputated.

"Collateral damage" (a term for civilian dead and wounded) is surely an inevitable and horrific consequence of war. It is especially horrific when it involves weapons such as the Rockeye Cluster Bomb used by the "allied" air forces. This comprises 24 bomblets, each an 'anti-personnel' grenade that explodes into 2,000 high velocity, needle-sharp fragments. According to Dr Paul Rogers of Bradford University, Department of Peace Studies, one bomb "wipes out anything that stands or moves over an acre ... it shreds people".

But what is certainly not inevitable is war itself. It was the West who chose war in the Gulf and ordinary people paid the price. So it is with Britain's dealings with Ireland. As long as the British government prosecutes its war in Ireland, ordinary people will suffer the consequences, and the government itself will have to learn to swallow some of its own bitter medicine.

Yet the British government has the solution to the conflict in its hands - to initiate the process of military and political withdrawal and in the process abandon all claim on the six north-eastern counties of Ireland, and recognise the right of that country to self-determination.

DESSIE ELLIS

Once again, British justice has been exposed as no justice for Irish people.

On 14th February, Dessie Ellis appeared at Thames Magistrate's Court to face the charges for which he was extradited from Dublin.

The prosecution had to admit that Dessie had never been in mainland Britain and that he was obviously not a British citizen. This meant that the charges under the 1883 Explosive Substances Act, on which he was extradited, could not apply. The magistrate agreed.

Under extradition law (and this is an internationally accepted principle), you can only face charges on which you were originally extradited. Despite this, the magistrate took the unprecedented decision to change the charges. Dessie was committed for trial to face new charges



under the 1862 Offences Against the Persons Act and the 1971 Criminal Damage Act. The British government has promised the Eire government that it will challenge the magistrate's decision to throw out the original charges in a higher court.

The whole episode also exposes the true nature of Eire's justice system which agreed to Dessie's extradition on the

now discredited, original charges.

Dessie remains in jail, not knowing which, if any, charges he will face.

Dessie should be released. He is innocent. The British state's case has fallen apart, showing it was false in the first place. The campaign to free Dessie and oppose extradition continues.

WHERE WE STAND

In the 1970's, the United Nations estimated that women did two thirds of the world's work, earned less than 5% of the world's income and owned 1% of the assets. In the 1990's, it is unlikely that this has changed.

Women's work often goes unrecognised. "Real work" is seen as 40-hour a week, waged labour in a big factory or mine. Women's work is made invisible, except at times such as in the First or Second World Wars in Britain, when women were encouraged into the factories to replace the men who were sent to the army.

In fact, everywhere in the world, women's work makes a major contribution to the economy and is essential to the well-being of the people. Women work in agriculture, whether in subsistence farming or as waged labourers in the production of cash crops. As well as bearing children, women do most of the work caring for others and raising children, in many countries, spending hours on basic tasks such as fetching water or grinding corn. Working class women in the imperialist countries have always had to combine paid work with family responsibilities, and increasingly in the Third World, women are being drawn into the factories of the transnational corporations.

Although women's position cannot be isolated from that of their class or their nation, they face an extra burden on top of other forms of oppression and exploitation. Women's oppression takes many different forms - economic, political, social and cultural - and the struggle against it has to be fought on many fronts. On the one hand, they face the greatest oppression. On the other, they stand to gain the most from change.

Many progressive people, including Marxist-Leninists, have either ignored the specific oppression of women or found it difficult to handle.

We think it is necessary to analyse concretely the relationship between women's specific oppression and that of class and national oppression, and the League has made this a priority in our current work.

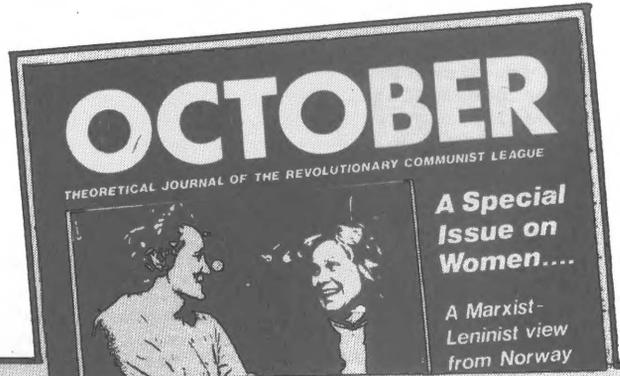
We have adopted some initial positions:

- Women of different classes and nationalities face specific oppression as women under imperialism, although it takes different forms.

- Women's oppression is linked to their role in the family, reproducing and maintaining the labour force. The family, as the economic unit under imperialism, is oppressive to women.

- We support the right of women to organise separately. In particular, we support the right of black women to organise separately.

- We recognise the need for women in the imperialist countries such as Britain to consciously work in solidarity with the vast majority of the world's women, in the oppressed countries of the Third World.



The League recognises that there is a lot of work to do, both in theory and practice, to develop our work on and with women. As part of this work, we have published an edition of our theoretical journal, devoted to the debate round the question of women. This issue of 'October' includes:

- Articles on 'The Left and Feminism', from the Indian sub-continent and the summary of a book written by Norwegian Marxist-Leninist, leader, Kjersti Ericsson.

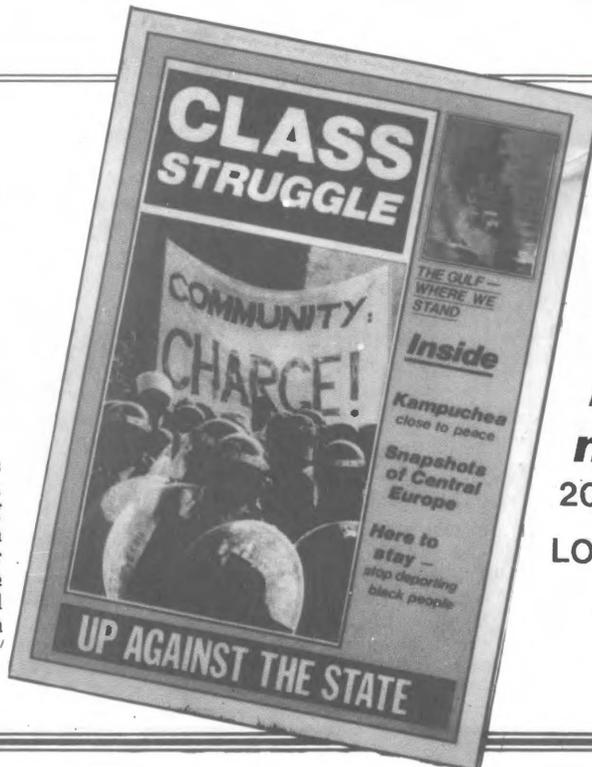
- Articles discussing the importance of the issue of reproductive rights for women's struggle and various positions from Marxist and non-Marxist writers on women.

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

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