



Two parallel developments are in the process of transforming our continent. 1992 and the creation of a single market will give a quite new momentum to the evolution of the European Community. At the same time Gorbachev's determination to bury the postwar international settlement and with it the old cold-war division of Europe could exercise an equally profound impact on the shape of Europe as we know it.

Britain has never worn its European hat with much enthusiasm. And the Left has been no exception. But there is now a dawning recognition that the old insularity will no longer do. Unless we change, we will be cast in the role of spectators rather than actors in a process of extraordinary historic importance which will be one of the great themes of the 90s.

This issue is devoted in its entirety to Europe. It takes the broad view not the narrow view. It deals with 1992 and Brussels, but it also discusses the relationship between Western and Eastern Europe. It takes the long-term view as well as the short-term view. It is about the future of Europe. Finally, it is not simply about the Europe of the politician, but about tv, food, fashion and identity: the Europe of the people.

If there is any message it is this. The old insularity will no longer do. The old defence of national sovereignty is burnt out. The European Community is here to stay and we are a part of it. Unless we engage with it, we will have precious little influence over its future shape, and a declining influence over the destiny of our island. •