

REVOLUTION

THE FIGHTING PAPER FOR WORKING CLASS YOUTH

HOMELESS, HUNGRY... & NOT TO BLAME



In an interview with The Big Issue recently, Labour leader Tony Blair made clear his attitude to the young and homeless of London. "Yes it is right to be intolerant of people homeless on the streets" he said. Zero-Tolerance policies in which every minor law break is clamped down on hard by police, was Blair's solution to poverty and homelessness. He refused to grant the right of the homeless to vote. And he proceeded to whinge about how King's Cross is "actually quite a frightening place".

His disgusting comments were widely publicised by the media, but what most papers failed to admit was that the level of homelessness and youth poverty in Britain is an absolute disgrace. While politicians and the media talk about "cleaning up the streets", more than 600,000 18-24 year olds are starving and freezing on the streets of Britain. For a supposedly rich country, this is astounding. ☞page 2

Homelessness continued from pg 1

Homelessness is clearly linked to the poverty and oppression that youth are experiencing in what has become "the most unequal country in the Western world" (according to UN statistics). 76% of all homeless first left home before the age of 18 and a large proportion of this is due to family abuse.

Working class and unemployed youth face some of the most brutal forms of oppression. We have no control over our own lives, whether it's in the family, or in society. We have no access to a decent income, nowhere to go if we leave home, laws that deny us the right to vote or to have sex until we're 16 (18 if we're gay). Even if we can get a job, 4 out of 5 jobs for under 16 year olds pay less than £2 per hour. Children who are sent to council homes to escape physical and verbal abuse within the family, often face more of the same outside (see the recent news headlines about the government investigation into child abuse within council homes).

Why? Because when capitalism needs to cut back spending on the welfare state, on wages and on support organisations for the young and/or homeless, youth are easy targets.

Youth today are not granted the rights that adults have. We are treated as second class citizens. We are forced to bear the brunt of a system which sucks money from those that most need it, into the hands of those that control it. While workers throughout the world are being forced to work longer and

longer hours, for less money and higher taxes, the bosses of big business sit on their lazy arses making more and more money off the backs of these workers (and pay less and less tax at the same time). This is a system that maintains the oppression of women and youth by restricting access to any form of income outside the family unit. If we dare to challenge the repression and discrimination we face at home as children, we are told that we're just trouble-makers and that our parents really know best.

When wages drop and unemployment goes up, youth are the first to be hit. And inside our family homes, the frustration of parents who are trying to pay the bills is taken out on those that can least defend themselves: women and children. The family is not the happy ideal that you see in Neighbours - it's more like a nightmare version of Eastenders.

The crazy thing is that most of these "problems" are very easy to solve. They may be "problems" for the rich bastards who can't even spare a penny of their super profits they have drained from our labour. But for us, it's clear what's needed. To escape from poverty and to escape abuse at home you need to be able to get a decent income. And organisations that provide housing and support for young people need to be properly funded and run by youth, women and the previously homeless themselves.

BRITAIN - THE MOST UNEQUAL COUNTRY IN THE WESTERN WORLD

- One third of young homeless were once in council care (Centerpoint)
- Three quarters of under 24 year olds earn less than the European decency threshold
- One in seven 16-17 year olds are living without any means of support (Youthaid)
- 12% of London households have an income of less than £80 per week. 21% of London households have an income of greater than £650 per week (The Economist-1996)
- One third of the population lives in poverty

We need:

- Immediate introduction of a minimum wage of £6 per hour for all: employed, unemployed, young and old
- Free access to housing for all. Youth hostels to be run by youth for youth, with access for any young person who needs to leave home, at any age
- The right to vote for all from the age of 16
- Refuges for youth and women who have experienced physical or sexual abuse, with free access to counselling and financial support - to be run by youth and women
- Abolish all age of consent laws - they are not used to protect the young, but used to control the sex lives of consenting people
- Free education for all - at primary, secondary and tertiary levels
- Free school lunches for all
- Restore benefits for 16-17 year olds

But we, as youth, cannot do it ourselves. We need to demand that workers take up these demands and fight alongside us in the struggle against poverty, homelessness and youth oppression. For workers hold the real power in society. The ability to force the bosses to listen, by going on strike, stopping production and cutting off the profits that the bosses make. It is here that our future lies. We don't need a ruling class to manage factories, steal all the profits and hand out a few pennies here and there to keep us quiet. No! We want a system where there is no unemployment, no poverty, guaranteed housing for all and no need for repression inside the family. A system where the majority of this country, the working class, finally runs society the way we want it run. A fair and just system where people won't have to beg in the streets and there won't be any Major's or Blair's attacking us for it.

Join us in that fight. Call REVOLUTION now and get involved!

EUROPEAN MARCH!

against cuts, unemployment and racism
for jobs, welfare and a working class fightback

AMSTERDAM

Saturday 14 June 1997

This march is supported by trade union and unemployed groups all over Europe. Join the youth contingent organised by REVOLUTION, the fighting paper for working class youth.

March together with thousands of workers, unemployed and youth from Germany, France, Austria, Ireland, Sweden...

Transport and accommodation available.
Ring 0171 357 0388 for details.

Revolution & the...

THE GREAT General Election Hype has begun. For the next weeks and months Britain is going to be dominated by party political broadcasts, press conferences, and manifestos. Slick politicians of every stripe will pollute the airwaves with worthless promises and cynical lies.

It will be very easy to get sick of the whole show and turn off.

But what attitude should young people take to the general election? Should young people bother to vote? Can elections change anything? Who should we vote for? Why?

Sean, East London, gives some answers

Lets be clear about one thing first. Parliamentary Democracy in Britain is a sham, an illusion.

Certainly we have many important democratic rights. Every one of them - including the right to vote - was only won after years of struggle by working people. But at the end of the day we only get to vote once every 5 years. Worse still, once they're elected, MPs can break their promises at will. We have no control over what they do and we can't sack them until the next election comes around 5 years later.

Real power lies outside the parliamentary talking shop. The major decisions about the economy, jobs, even war and peace are all made in the board rooms of large corporations, in the corridors of Whitehall by unelected civil servants and in the select drinking clubs of the ruling classes. Parliament just implements these decisions and then ensures that the police, judges and civil servants have the power to enforce them. It covers the reality of capitalist dictatorship with a veneer of "democratic" consent.

At the end of the day real lasting social change cannot come through parliament. Any attempt to use even a strong parliamentary majority for the left to remove the property, power and privileges of the rich would meet with sustained resistance from the real state outside parliament: the army, big business and the police.

But does this mean that a revolutionary party committed to the overthrow of capitalism would never run for parliament? No. The aim of revolutionaries who run and get elected to parliament is to expose parliament, the privileges of politicians, the lack of democracy, and the inability of parliament to deliver lasting change and real

reforms that will make peoples lives better forever. Revolutionary members of parliament would get elected on a working class programme. They would only accept the average industrial wage for their pay. They would never join capitalist governments, but would use their position to attack the system and call on workers to rise up against it in the workplaces and on the streets.

The problem is that no such party exists at the moment. REVOLUTION is doing all it can to help bring it into existence.

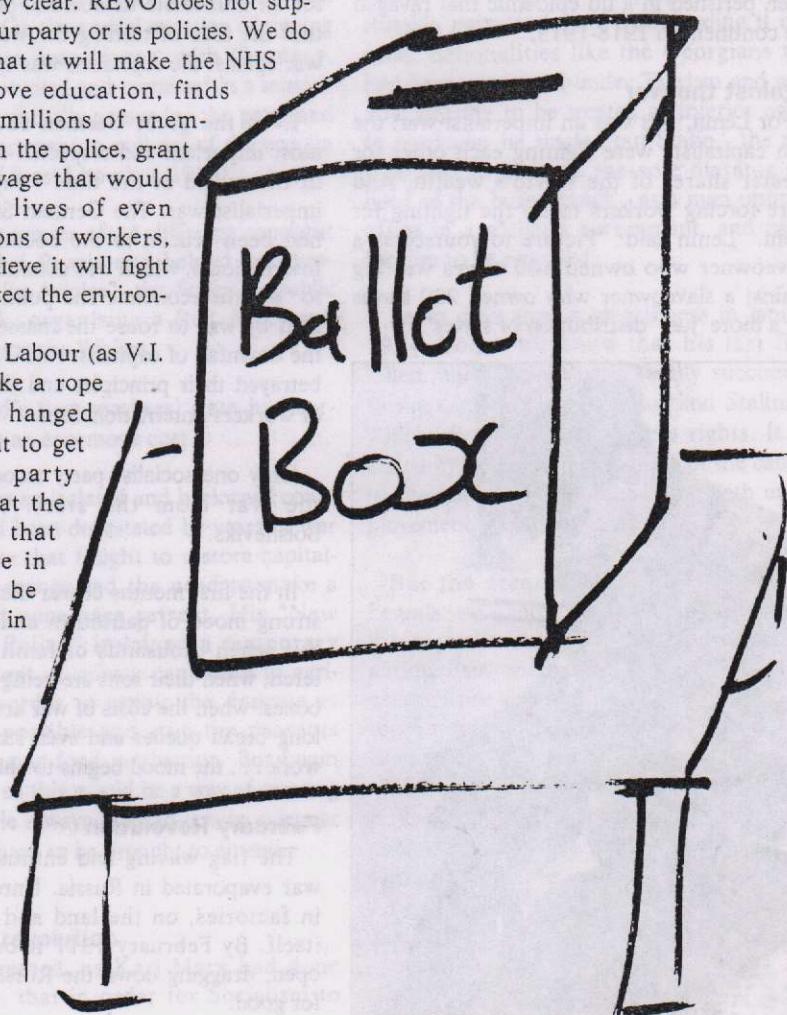
Does this mean we should not vote for anyone because none of the political parties is offering us any real change? No it does not. We should vote for the party that the majority of workers and youth in Britain see as their party, the party that they believe will make their lives better after 17 years of Tory cutbacks and attacks. The Labour party.

Let's be very clear. REVO does not support the Labour party or its policies. We do not believe that it will make the NHS better, improve education, find jobs for the millions of unemployed, reform the police, grant a minimum wage that would improve the lives of even greater millions of workers, nor do we believe it will fight racism or protect the environment.

We support Labour (as V.I. Lenin said) like a rope supports a hanged man. We fight to get the Labour party elected so that the expectations that millions have in Labour can be put to the test in practice.

To do this it will not be enough to leave Labour to hang themselves. We need to raise clear demands on Blair and New Labour to meet the needs of millions. We have to fight for these demands in our schools, workplaces and where we live. REVO believes we should fight for:

- Tax the rich to pay for jobs, homes, hospitals and schools.
- Minimum wage of £6, which is the European Unions' poverty threshold.
- Restore social security benefits to 16 & 17 year-olds.
- Free education for all and grants for students at the level of the minimum wage.
- No curfews for youth.
- Right to vote when you turn 16.
- Scrap all immigration controls.
- No funding for the racist police and security services.
- Troops out of Ireland now.



DEAD MEN WITH BEARDS? PART 3

LENIN

From war to revolution: 1914-24

In the last issue of REVOLUTION we continued our series of articles on influential socialists of the past by looking at the early life and work of V.I. Lenin. This issue we see his opposition to the First World War, and the key role he played in the first successful working class revolution.

THE FIRST World War of 1914 to 1918 transformed Europe into a blood-soaked hell.

Four years of gruelling trench warfare in France and a scramble for colonies in the Middle East and Africa left at least 8 million soldiers dead. Hundreds of thousands of teenage conscripts from Germany, Russia, Austria, France, Italy, Britain and its colonies were cut down by machine guns, blasted by shells, choked with poison gas or sliced to ribbons on barbed wire and trodden into the mud of no-man's land.

Civilians suffered horribly too. 5 million died of hunger and disease. Another 6 million, weakened by 4 years of hardship and grief, perished in a flu epidemic that ravaged the continent in 1918-1919.

Against the war

For Lenin, this was an imperialist war: the rich capitalists were fighting each other for greater shares of the world's wealth. And were forcing workers to do the fighting for them. Lenin said: "Picture to yourselves a slaveowner who owned 100 slaves warring against a slaveowner who owned 200 slaves for a more 'just' distribution of slaves".



The workers of Britain, France, Russia and Germany should not take sides with their "own" capitalists, but should unite against the imperialist war. They should turn it from a capitalist war for profit, into a war of all the workers against the capitalists. Lenin raised his famous slogans:

"The main enemy is at home!"

"Turn the imperialist war into a civil war!"

But the French socialists, the British Labour Party, the Russian Mensheviks, all backed the war in the name of loyalty to "their own Fatherland". Even amongst the tiny number of anti-war Socialists, few supported Lenin's slogans. At best they called for an immediate democratic peace thinking that the idea of turning the war into a civil war against the capitalists was extreme.

Even the great German socialists - the most important and respected socialist party in the world at the time - supported this imperialist war. The German Socialist Party had been crucial to the Socialist (Second) International, which was committed on paper to "use the economic and political crisis created by war to rouse the masses and hasten the downfall of capitalist rule". But now they betrayed their principles and the whole idea of workers' internationalism.

Only one socialist party stood out against the war from the start: the Russian Bolsheviks.

In the first months of war there is always a strong mood of patriotism and nationalism. But when thousands of families are shattered, when their sons are being sent home in boxes, when the costs of war are being felt in long bread queues and even longer hours of work . . . the mood begins to change.

February Revolution

The flag waving and enthusiasm for the war evaporated in Russia. Unrest simmered in factories, on the land and in the army itself. By February 1917 it burst into the open, dragging down the Russian monarchy for good.

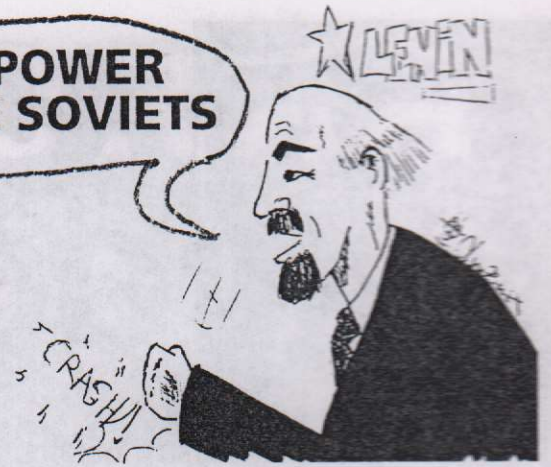
The February Revolution began with thousands of women workers in the textile factories walking out on strike, demanding bread. They sent flying pickets to the massive metal factories, calling their brothers out in support. The call for bread was soon drowned out by the cry for an end to the war. The army raised their guns against the crowds, but many soldiers wavered under the pressure of the masses. Unable to depend on the army to protect him, the Tsar resigned.

A new Provisional Government was set up, composed of capitalist ministers who were joined by representatives of the moderate socialists (the Mensheviks). But this was not the only power in the land. The workers set up soviets: councils of delegates from the factories and the barracks. These bodies were more democratic than any parliament. The workers' and soldiers' delegates could be recalled at any time, and so closely reflected the needs of the mass of people.

Lenin rushed back to Russia from Switzerland. A delegation of moderate socialists met him at the railway station, expecting him to back the new government. He brushed them aside with contempt. To their astonishment he made a fiery speech declaring that the revolution was not over, denouncing the government, demanding that they end the war immediately, and calling for the workers' soviets to take power themselves.

Even longstanding Bolsheviks thought Lenin had finally gone mad. But he convinced the party to adopt his point of view. For it was clear: workers and soldiers were losing confidence in the Provisional Government - it refused to hand the land to the peasants, the factories to the workers, and refused to pull Russia out of the war. The workers of one factory proclaimed that "the only power in the country must be the soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasant deputies, which we will defend with our lives."

ALL POWER
TO THE SOVIETS



All power to the soviets

By June the Bolshevik slogan "All Power to the Soviets" was eagerly taken up by tens of thousands of demonstrating workers. But the majority still trusted the Government. A failed uprising took place in July against the advice of Lenin and Bolshevik leaders, who warned that the masses were not yet ready to support the soviets taking power. The Bolsheviks were once again driven underground.

The royalists were not happy either. An extreme right wing plot emerged from within the army, who marched under General Kornilov in an attempt to overthrow the Provisional Government and put the tsar back on the throne. The government panicked and hesitated, because the capitalists were far from hostile to the idea of a military coup.

But the Bolsheviks didn't hesitate. They came out of hiding and fought Kornilov arms in hand, calling on the workers and their soviets to boycott all Kornilov's troop movements and stop him using the railways and the telegraphs. The coup plot collapsed.

The Bolsheviks' whole approach to the right-wing coup had been a brilliant success. The Bolsheviks hated the Provisional Government but they fought alongside the workers and peasants who still supported the Provisional Government, to stop General Kornilov from overthrowing it. This policy - the united front - was crucial to the Bolsheviks' eventual victory, and was a fundamental part of Lenin's politics. They fought hand in hand with the government supporters, in order to gain the trust of the mass of workers and peasants, and lead them to a new revolution that would overthrow the capitalists altogether.

Red October

Finally, the majority of Soviet delegates across Russia were convinced of the need to take power themselves. On 24 and 25 October, under the leadership of Bolsheviks like Leon Trotsky, armed workers loyal to the soviets took over railway stations, food stores, telephone exchanges, post offices and power stations. The insurrection was swift and decisive with surprisingly little bloodshed. At a Congress of Russian soviets the

next day the revolution was greeted with wild enthusiasm. Lenin took the platform and declared simply: "We shall now proceed to construct the socialist order."

The new Soviet Government gave land to the peasants, brought in workers' control of the factories, took away the private property of the rich and brought in new laws to help free women, lesbians and gays and oppressed nationalities. It was run entirely as a working class democracy - nothing like the bureaucratic dictatorships that disgrace the name of socialism in countries like China, Serbia and North Korea today. The Bolsheviks did not set up a one-party state but governed jointly at first with another party (the "Left SR's"). Other parties were banned only when they took up arms against the workers revolution.

Nor was Lenin a dictator, whose every word was obeyed. On the crucial question of signing an immediate peace treaty with Germany, Lenin was outvoted and remained in a minority until he eventually persuaded the party and Russian government to pull out of the war (in the Treaty of Brest Litovsk in 1918).

When the armies of 14 different capitalist states invaded Russia and helped arm pro-Tsarist "White Armies", the Soviet Republic fought back, organising a Red Army and finally crushing the Whites.

The world's first workers' state had survived, but at an enormous cost.

Russia was an isolated and backward country, that had been devastated by years of war against those that fought to restore capitalism. Lenin recognised the need to make a painful but necessary retreat. His "New Economic Policy" involved a temporary encouragement of private capitalism in agriculture, in order to repair the damage as quickly as possible and stop the peasants from sabotaging food production. But Lenin never believed this would be a way of creating socialism. He always realised it was a retreat that would have to be brought to an end.

For world revolution

Lenin stressed, as Karl Marx had done before him, that in order for Socialism to

succeed, capitalists would need to be overthrown in several advanced countries too. He took the lead in organising a new world revolutionary party the Communist (Third) International in 1919, after the betrayal of the Socialist (Second) International. The Third International bound revolutionary parties from all over the world, in a common fight to repeat the success of October 1917 and open the road to world socialism.

Lenin in his last years, despite being crippled by strokes and barely able to work, also took up the fight against the slide of Soviet Russia into bureaucratic dictatorship. With greater foresight than anyone else, Lenin warned of the dangerous growth of an undemocratic bureaucracy in the party and the Soviet state. He described Soviet Russia as a workers' state "with bureaucratic deformations" and fought a campaign to stop the Russian party and state from lording it over other nationalities like the Georgians that had been oppressed under Tsarism and were now starting to be treated as inferior again. In particular he singled out Stalin - the man who was to become the sole dictator and head of the bureaucracy - as a man unfit for office in a socialist government, and called for him to be removed.

Lenin died after a long illness in January 1924. Today we know that his last fight failed, and Soviet Russia finally succumbed to the cancer of bureaucracy and Stalinism, which eliminated all workers rights. It has ended by bringing the madness of the capitalist market back to Russia, along with unemployment, poverty and crime.

But the great Russian Revolution and Lenin's work show revolutionary youth today that capitalism can be overthrown, that internationalism and building a world socialist party is not impossible. With a disciplined revolutionary party like the Bolsheviks at its head the working class can conquer all obstacles. In the future struggles that the 21st century will bring, a new generation of communists must learn the lessons of Lenin's life. We must study his writings, and struggle for new October Revolutions, matching and exceeding the scale of 1917.



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COLUMBIA

The oil company British Petroleum (BP) have been polluting the environment, using force to stop workers from starting a trade union, murdering and torturing people in the Casanare region of Columbia just to get their hands on the oil in the region. REVOLUTION organised a picket of the BP headquarters last December against the things they were doing in Columbia.

Below REVOLUTION talks to some Colombian activists who came along to the picket.

What did you think of the picket in December?

We think that it was a success because the English people were interested in the situation in Columbia and the situation with the multinational oil companies.

Could you explain what has happened, and is happening in Columbia with BP.

BP is a multinational company which has recently, five years ago, arrived in Columbia. To protect its explorations it has hired security companies to train paramilitary groups in our country, at the moment they are paying for about 600 men from the Colombian army to protect its installations and at the same time they are advising paramilitary groups to murder community leaders in Casanare.

It is important to remember that BP, even though it is a recent company, is the company with the most power in the country because it owns the largest oil fields. This is power which other companies such as: Shell and Total don't have, this is because the British and Colombian governments have signed agreements that are outside the national constitution to aid the intervention of BP in the country.

This is the first time that a company such as BP literally has a section of the Colombian army at its command as a private army which it pays £6 million for. This money was to aid this private army to organise death squads, with soldiers from the army and with civilians who work with them, who do the dirty work which they can't do directly with their uniforms on. This is a recent thing, now other petroleum companies have converted, for the first time, to having the army work for them, directly paid and with barracks around the plant.

Could you explain the situation with the people who work for BP and their trade union?

Since the arrival of BP to the Casanare region the peasants started to protest against the widespread destruction of the environment. At the same time the murders and disappearances of the peasant leaders who protested against the destruction of the environment started. It is known that since 1991 BP has donated £2 million to the Colombian military. BP says this money is for clothing and food so the soldiers can have good living conditions.

BP has filmed meetings with the peasants, workers and the local community which were then given to the army who used them to find out who were the enemies of BP and the Colombian state. These are the people who have disappeared or been murdered.

What can be done now to stop this?

One of the principal causes of the human rights violations in Columbia and in Casanare has been the death squads funded by BP's 'war tax' which helps the disappearances. I think that one of the principal things the British government should do is expose BP and stop sending arms to the Colombian government.

People should visit the Casanare region so that they get a first hand view of the situation and also to pressurise the government to accelerate the human rights violation investigations.

We know that this is very costly but in this situation these types of political visits get the interest of the Colombian government, but the problem is not only in Casanare it is in the entire region of the oil deposits.

Revo is continuing the campaign against BP. The people in Britain who can really put the pressure on are the workers in British BP plants who unload, process, and transport the oil from Casanare.

We're for building a solidarity campaign within these workplaces based on refusing to touch Casanare oil, and that's what we'll be arguing for, starting off with a speaking tour by one of the oil workers from Casanare whose union has seen 30 workers killed by BP's death squads.

We'll keep readers informed in future issues on how this is going and other stuff we've got going. Get in touch if you want to give us a hand! (0171 357 0388).

In the meantime, you can do a lot to help. Any schools, exhibitions, or other events sponsored by BP in your area? Get some mates together, get a busy day (or an opening, better still) and go in there and make a ruckus to let people know where the money's coming from. Let's turn BP's attempt at public relations into a disaster! Same for petrol stations.

BP's merging with Mobil at the moment and have some nice signs up to advertise it - it'd be a shame if someone accidentally got spray paint on them . . .

Join
REVOLUTION!

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SOUTH KOREA ERUPTS



TWO KOREAS exist on our planet. There's North Korea, which calls itself a "Socialist utopia" and is run by a dictator (who inherited the throne from his dad) with his police state; it is slipping into economic chaos and famine.

And there's South Korea, which is something entirely different. The papers here call it a "democracy", but it is also a police state and is run by a president with dictator-like powers. Just to show this, it has one of the highest numbers of political prisoners in the world.

On December 26th the ruling party had a session of parliament without telling the other parties about it. It passed a bill that clawed back everything the workers had won in the last ten years.

The secret session abolished the right of a 44 hour week that the workers had fought hard for, made it possible to dismiss workers for no reason, without any redundancy pay, and to hire scabs to replace strikers. This dramatically weakens the trade unions - the

workers self-defence organisations.

From the other side, the bill gives new powers to the secret police to help attack trade unions and activists.

And our press call that democracy!!!

This was a full frontal attack on the workers, but they knew how to fight back. In 1987 massive demos forced the ruling class to concede to elections, and now a decade on South Korea is seeing its biggest strike wave ever.

The students and workers who began the demos and strikes have kept the momentum going. When the government said they were going to arrest strike leaders, the militants answered with a big demo in Seoul pitching street battles with the police. By the following day no leaders had been arrested and the

strike is still hitting the bosses where it hurts: their pockets - one month of strikes have cost them £2 billion.

The government were afraid to arrest the leaders of the strike because of what they might start - a real revolt. The bosses told them that they had to take the cuts or jobs would be lost to even more brutal countries, like Indonesia or the Philippines. Sounds like something the Tories would say, doesn't it.

That's how it works everywhere.

The South Korean workers have won one victory by defending their leaders, but the fight to reinstall their basic rights still continues. If they refuse to back down and don't compromise then they can win.

SERBIA

FOR THE last two months, our TV screens have been filled with images of the mass demonstrations in Serbia.

On New Year's Eve 300,000 took to the streets of Belgrade, the capital, and a demo a week later was even bigger, despite constant police harassment and even beatings.

The protesters ranged from democratic students to rich people showing up with their chauffeurs, but a key section of the population was missing: the workers. What's the reason?

Serbia is a Stalinist state. Capitalism was abolished there after the Second World War, but power lies not in the hands of the workers themselves but with a privileged layer of bureaucrats and officials. Like all Stalinist dictators, the Serbian President Milosevic has massive undemocratic controls over the courts, media, police and other areas of state power. Milosevic used the courts to throw out the results of the recent local government elections, which opposition parties had won in important areas. This sparked off the demonstrations.

The opposition parties, while justifiably calling for Milosevic to completely restore the election results, are also calling for the restoration of capitalism. So they refuse to

back the demands of the workers for better wages and conditions. Already half of Serbia's factories are closed and half of all workers have been thrown out of work. Those in work haven't been paid for months, while prices for food are rising all the time. The opposition parties won't back the workers' demands for change, but actually want more privatisation of state industry and more power for "the market", a remedy that the Serbian working class knows will only bring more hardship and misery.

That is why the workers aren't on the demos. Students are increasingly refusing to fight alongside the opposition parties too. After two months of protests Milosevic still hasn't been forced to climb down by the opposition because only the Serbian working class, through a mass general strike which would paralyse Serbia, has the power to beat Milosevic.

The only solution if for the workers, not the pro-capitalist opposition, to overthrow Milosevic and the rest of corrupt Stalinist bureaucrats themselves. Stalinism will never survive. The only alternatives are counter-revolution and capitalism, or workers' revolution and real socialism.

THE LAST ACT OF DYING STALINISM: RESTORING THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM

In the former Stalinist countries of Eastern Europe all industry was owned by the state and was managed and controlled by the Stalinist bureaucracy in those countries. The industries were grossly inefficient and were not able to meet the basic needs of the people.

In the early 1990's massive protests movements demanding democratic reforms through the Stalinists out of power in the majority of Eastern Europe. Across Eastern Europe newly elected governments set about the process of restoring capitalism to these former Stalinist states. The immediate result of this for the majority of people in eastern Europe was mass sackings and unemployment, starvation, dramatic drops in wages and social security payments and hyper-inflation which destroyed the meagre savings of the people. In many of the cases the new governments were made up of the old Stalinists.

In Serbia the the Stalinists promised reforms and were able to hang on to power. The Serbian Stalinists have not attempted to quickly restore capitalism and 80% of enterprises are still state-owned and run by the Stalinists. Nevertheless they are slowly privatising industries and allowing the introduction of market forces in to Serbia.

REVOLUTION

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STUDENTS... FIGHT FOR FREE EDUCATION

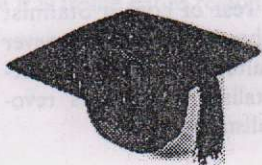
MOST STUDENTS are now coming out of a well earned break. We now only have one term (or half a semester) to sort out our students' union and make sure that we have decent representatives and positions to go to the National Union of Students' annual conference and the Women's' conference.

The major struggle in the National Conference at Easter will be around who pays for Higher Education. Basically, there are two positions: 1) for a graduate tax for all students to pay once they finish their degrees - around £20,000; 2) free education for all - exactly £0. The first position is being fought for by almost all universities, all the main parties, the major trade unions, and the heads of the NUS. Funnily enough, university workers and students throughout the country are arguing and fighting for the second position. This has led to the Campaign for Free Education (CFE) being set up, with its 4000 strong demo last November. This was the day after workers brought universities to a standstill with a national strike for decent wages and work conditions.

The Tory government has decreased spending on students by about 30% over the last 6 years, introducing new measures - especially student loans - to make us pay for our education. This led to 32,000 students dropping out in 1995/6

and a £800 million debt to the Student Loans Company. On top of this, classes are getting bigger, resources are running low, and there is less and less staff. The three main parties realise that education is important for their election manifestos and are all trying to give solutions - all of which go against the working masses and all (present and future) students.

Because of this, along with the NUS executive continuing to fight against the wishes of the people they are supposed to be representing, it is time that we get rid of them and throw out their policies. It is important that all student unions join the CFE and send resolutions (and fighting, accountable representatives) to the National Conference on the 24-28th March to demand **FREE EDUCATION FOR ALL**. This must be for full grants, the abolition of all loans, full rights to benefits, and a clear fighting rejection of any graduate taxes and top-up fees (like the London School of Economics has already introduced). The money for all this can easily come from taxing the rich, not attacking any other service, but fighting for a better future for us all.



ONE SOLUTION: REVOLUTION!

We live in a world full of injustice, oppression and poverty. While millions starve, food is destroyed in order to keep its price up. The latest technology in health care cannot be used in many countries because of the payment of foreign debt. Even the most basic provisions of a good water supply and decent sanitation are denied to people all around the world. Meanwhile ever greater ecological disasters loom on the horizon.

REVOLUTION does not believe there is anything 'natural' about the terrible state of the world. We believe that what is happening is because of the world wide system of capitalism.

It is a system that runs with the sole intention of making money for a tiny handful of capitalists who own and control industry and the land.

We believe that it is possible to create a new and better world system, a socialist system. It would be an international system which means the fight to achieve it must be international. Workers Power (Britain) is part of the League for a Revolutionary Communist International that includes revolutionaries from all over the world.

Because we are internationalists we support all struggles by people oppressed by imperialism - including the struggle to get British troops out of Ireland.

Because we are internationalists we oppose imperialist militarism; we say not a penny or a person for the defence of this system.

A socialist system would be based on common ownership of the land, the factories, offices, transport and communication systems. It would organise society to provide the necessities and luxuries of life for all according to a democratically worked out plan.

This means instead of having people homeless because the privately owned land and building companies only build houses when they can make money, we will all own the land, collectively and we will plan that to use the bricks that lie unused and the building workers who are unemployed to build the homes needed.

To get this, industry and land will have to be taken out of the hands of the few. But this group of people, the ruling class, will never allow us to do this without a fight. The government is prepared to mobilise thousands of police to attack raves, demonstrations and picket lines. Just imagine what they would be prepared to do to protect their whole system of wealth and power. That is why we believe we need a workers' revolution.

But we cannot wait until then, we have to fight against exploitation and oppression now. We support all workers' struggles. We support the struggles against women's oppression, racism and homophobia.

Whether it is workers on strike, women fighting for abortion rights or black people fighting against racism it is often young people who are leading these struggles.

We fight for action that will win and in such a way that the struggles of today can prepare us for the revolution of tomorrow. We try to turn today's struggles into a struggle for power, by fighting for workers control, workers self-defence etc.

REVOLUTION stands in the tradition of over 150 years of revolutionary socialism. Our movement is based on the ideas of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky, applied to today's conditions.

REVOLUTION aims to build a revolutionary youth movement, to win thousands and thousands of youth to supporting and building a revolutionary party that can lead the working class to power.

So don't just sit there sell REVOLUTION and become a REVOLUTION supporter!