

REVOLUTION

socialist youth movement

30P / DONATION

ISSUE 75

FRANCE IN REBELLION!



Youth deal blow to
French bosses

This movement can
build a new society!

EYEWITNESS REPORTS INSIDE - PLUS: HOW THE U.S.A. WAS
DEFEATED IN VIETNAM - KISSING UNDER THE COSH - WHY
WE NEED A NEW WORKERS PARTY - UK STRIKE ACTION

EDITORIAL

Weeks of protests, strikes, occupations and blockades by millions of workers, school and university students and immigrants in France have beaten the government's First Employment Contract (CPE). The CPE was a massive attack on the employment rights of young people. It allowed French Companies to sack young workers for no reasons within the first two years of employment.

The motives behind the attempted imposition of the CPE aren't confined to the interests of French businesses. All across the European Union we see attacks on the employment rights, pension, education and many other gains that the working class won after the Second World War. It is these same

attacks that lead to the strike defending pensions by over a million workers on March 28th in Britain.

From the privatisation of universities in Italy to the €1 per hour jobs in Germany, supposedly aimed at reducing unemployment, the bosses and their governments across Europe are trying to squeeze more and more out of working people.

The struggles of the French youth and working class are inspiring to all those struggling for a better world. It shows that even in the 5th richest country that great movements of resistance can be built. If they are willing to take bold and militant action that throws the whole society into crisis, as in France, then we can win.

The victory against the CPE won't be the end of the attacks of in France or in the rest of Europe. The working class, youth and student movements that have gained such a fantastic victory must now organize to take the resistance struggles forward and turn them into an offensive against capitalism and imperialism.

These are exciting times when millions of people begin to realize the true nature of the world in which we live. Out of these great struggles we must build new political parties fighting for revolution against global capitalism and for the working class to take hold of society and run it on the basis of need not greed.

by Josh

LABOUR: WHERE IS THE LOVE?

Lots of things have changed since I got involved in politics: I spend more time traveling, have met lots of new people and I read 100 year old non-fiction books... voluntarily. Most of these differences I could've seen coming a mile off. On one level it's perfectly reasonable that I should be getting up at 6pm to take 6-hour coach journey to grimy London only to get stuck behind a samba band and have the repetitive clanging of cow bells drilled into my head because I'm against the government's latest imperialist schemes. But one thing I never thought I'd do is write an article in a socialist youth magazine about... kissing.

Me doing this could be taken as a bad sign for myself or of Revo. Although I and we have more important things to fight and write against the message to take away from this article is not that the author or the group are sexually frustrated but that Blair's attacks on young people have reached new, more surreal levels.

A Draft Guideline for Wales which states that in school plays scenes that involve kissing should be changed to a hug or a peck on the cheek. This is because the government says young people are not



BAN THIS SICK FILTH!

mature enough to make the decision on whether we feel comfortable kissing in a play and that there is a risk that we may be "forced" into it.

There was also a report in January that says adolescents "passionately" kissing could cause the spread of meningitis. If you kiss a number of people, which is basically saying even kissing someone when your young could make you seriously ill!

The ban on kissing manages to simultaneously treat young people like idiots and butcher art. Efficiency for Labour is extending beyond scrapping pensions and healthcare and into whole new spheres.

Although the Victorian-style prudishness is annoying, you do have to hand it to them on their ingenuity

The government are living up perfectly to the image that politicians are stony-hearted robots. Expect new, sanitized versions of plays, books and films to be winging their way to schools and colleges soon. Pacifist Fight Club without violence starring Tom Hanks and Robin Williams. A meat-free Animal Farm and Doctor Faustus without the sinning that could lead the nation's youth astray. The Orange Wednesday adverts are being turned from a spoof to the contents of the curriculum: 'don't have sex, send texts', '3G not VD' and 'free any-network minutes for abstinence'.

This may not be the worst of Labour's attacks on youth - ASBOs, low pay, stop and search, city academies, etc - but it's indicative of the patronizing way we are treated. We need to organize to build the fight-back against all these things and to urn a bit of respect. Not the respect that Blair bangs on about but the kind earned through militant angry class struggle against the system!

By Elle, Leeds

Why you should... PROTEST ON MAY DAY

May 1st is an international day of protest and demonstration by working people. It was a day that the workers took from the bosses and defended in countries across the globe since 1886. In those days, the big fight with the bosses was over the 8 hour working day.

Although we may have won this right in Britain (on paper anyways), for the majority of the world this is still the number one issue. Think of the workers that slave away in the sweatshops of Nike and Gap all over the world that are forced to work 16 hour days.

This is just one of the issues that workers are fighting for when they protest on May Day. They are fighting for better working conditions, security in their jobs and better pay. They are fighting for a better life. Not just for themselves, but for workers across the globe.

This year in London the Trade Union Council have organised a demonstration on the right to organise in trade unions and to take strike action in solidarity with other workers. This is such an important issue because it's about gaining the freedom to fight effectively against the dictates of the bosses. Last year Gate Gourmet



workers were brutally locked out of their workplace by the bosses after taking unofficial action in the face of victimisation and bullying that went as far as locking several hundred workers in the canteen.

Revo will be organising a young workers and school student contingent that will bring a splash of colour and a bit of life to the trade union demo!

Join us TIME? Assemble 12pm PLACE? Clerkenwell Green, WC1, London DATE? Monday May 1st

Why you should... COME TO THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORUM

This year huge youth and workers demonstrations have erupted in France against employment law for young people that would give the bosses the right to sack workers for no reason for the first two years of their employment. In Germany there has been an indefinite public sector strike while an indefinite metal workers strike begins this week while in Greece there has been a general strike against government plans for privatisation. Even in Britain a million workers have taken action in defence of pensions.

So workers are fighting back internationally. This May in Athens the fourth European Social Forum will take place bringing together thousands of youth and workers who want to right back. It has the opportunity to organise a militant co-ordinated fightback of working people across all of Europe.

It will be held for three days with seminars organised on a wide range of issues from war, to privatisation, racism, women's oppression and much more besides. It will all take place in Athens on the site used for the Olympic games! There will be free accommodation so long as you don't mind sharing a stadium floor with thousands of other activists! Sound good? Come with us and take part in the some of the seminars and events we're organising at the forum that include a radical youth assembly.

DATE: 4th to the 7th May 2006 PLACE: Athens, Greece



Why you should... PROTEST FOR PALESTINE

Sharon the former leader of Israel may never recover from his stroke he suffered last year but his legacy of brutal occupation and an un-ending way against the people of Palestine is being upheld by his successors. The Israeli government is redrawing the boundaries of the occupied territories to bring large parts of them permanently into Israel behind the huge apartheid wall while it will turn the rest of the territories into a giant prison for millions of Palestinian people.

Like those heroically resisting occupation and imperialism in Iraq the Palestinians also need our support and

solidarity. That's why Revolution will be building the Palestine demonstration calling for active solidarity with the resistance movement, for a single Palestinian state for Jews and Arabs and for socialist revolution against imperialism across the Middle East.

TIME? Assemble 12pm PLACE? Central London DATE? 20th May



**TO JOIN REVOLUTION ON
ANY OF THESE EVENTS
CONTACT:**

**info@worldrevolution.org.uk
www.worldrevolution.org.uk
www.revolutionboard.org.uk**

Solidarity holiday

in France

REVOLUTION
socialist youth movement

Eight Revolution members visited France between the 1st and 5th of April. This was the second team who went to France to stand in solidarity with the French youth and workers fighting back against the Contrat Premiere Embauche (CPE) - a law attacking the rights of young workers (more reports on page 5 & 6)



Solidarity tourists

We arrived in Lille for the national student co-ordination around 3:00pm on Saturday afternoon after a coach trip for London. Although we'd posted our intention to come to the student co-ordination on CPE message-board, and had been given directions to the campus, we were still unsure how to get there. We approached a railway worker at Gare de Flandres and told her we were here from the UK to support the strikes and protests and before you could say 'all out now!' she got us our tickets and showed us exactly where to go.

At the entrance to the occupied university we were met by a student security team. We explained whom we were and that we had travelled from the UK to be part of the struggle. They were amazed we'd come to France to join in!

Inside there were banners everywhere with slogans against the CPE, as well as "nous sommes tous casseurs" (we are all wreckers). There were around 450 delegates from the universities and colleges of France at the meeting.

We were told that we would be given a slot to speak at the beginning of the meeting and give a message of international solidarity to the students. As we entered the meeting room to make our intervention, the chair was struggling to stop loud, spontaneous chants of 'Tous Ensemble, Tous Ensemble, Greve General!' and 'Greve General, International!' ('all together, general strike!' and 'international general strike!') as a trade union dele-

gate announced that the unions would heed the call for a strike and demonstration on April 4th.

As our comrade got up to speak students stood, fists in the air, and began to sing the Internationale, putting slightly panicked looks on the faces of some of UNEF (university students unions) socialist party bureaucrats, and

putting wide grins on ours!

In our intervention we said that the whole of Europe was watching France. That struggles in France were part of the same fight back against neo-liberalism across Europe. When Sham, our speaker, said: "every ruler in Europe was afraid that the workers of youth of Europe would learn to fight like you do in France because if we did, we would bring down their neo-liberal system with a general strike across Europe" - he brought the house down. The statement was met with a bellowing standing ovation, and many handshakes and backslaps as we left the room.

Afterwards many students came to speak to us and take our literature and a leaflet we had prepared for the demonstration was well received. We were even reported on in the local paper the next day, with parts of our message, attributed to the "students from the Banlieues of London"!

We were the only left group present from outside France, and our presence was an important reminder of the international significance of the events in France.

On Sunday we made our way to Paris, hoping to find an occupied university to sleep in and make more contacts. Unfortunately it turned out that all the ones in central Paris were actually blockaded not occupied.

So, we ended up sleeping in a dirt cheap hotel we found late that night. On Monday morning we split into two teams, one going to prepare and photocopy our leaflets for Tuesday's demonstration and the other returning to the University of Paris campus, at Tolbiac, to find accommodation and contacts.

We met a group of Students who took us to a meeting with local 'Sans Papiers' (immigrants without papers) living in the area. They said we could stay with them in their centre, which was a squatted building that was once an Immigration Department office.

Around two hundred people were living in the centre, which was being run off donations. The centre was covered in pictures from the 'Sans Papiers et Etudiants' (students and immigrants) bloc on the different demonstrations. We were told that on the Tuesday demonstration the students for



Delivering our message of solidarity

University of Paris would march to Republique (the start of this next demonstration) with the Sans Papiers.

We sat up talking with our hosts late into the night and heard many similar stories to those told by immigrants suffering at the hands of the state in the UK. What was most positive about this was seeing a large student co-ordination branching out from simply being against the CPE to challenging the

racism of the French government and fighting for the rights of immigrants.

The next day we got ready for the massive demonstration and strike. We'd stocked up on food plus goggles and scarves to avoid the tear gas!

Around two hundred and fifty of us left the Sans Papiers centre at 12.30pm marching to the metro station at Place D'Italie. As we marched we chanted 'Etudiants, San Papiers, Solidarity!' and several people had drums that they were banging. After lots of chanting at the entrance to the metro station, the station workers opened up the ticket gates and let all 250 of us on for free. If only it was like this every day.



The squatted centre we stayed in

The demonstration was huge. Around 750,000 people marched to Paris that day alone with over three million marching through out France. At least 500,000 of the demonstration were the youth and students of Paris. There were contingents from all the high schools and colleges of Paris with huge numbers of Black, Arab and immigrant youth. The demonstration was much more colourful than anything we have in Britain. There were big contingents with their own trucks carrying a sound system for chanting or playing music. In France they don't just chant, the sing and have clever rhymes about the government and the CPE. Even the unions, which marched at the back of the demo were big, loud and colourful. A big change from the funeral march of most union contingents on demos in the UK.

We managed to give out 2000 leaflets in the first 30 minutes and sold lots of papers. People wanted to know what socialists from Britain thought of their struggle and what to do next.

The demonstration took about six hours to wind its way through the streets. At the end there were some scuffles with police but on the whole the CRS (riot police) kept their distance and didn't attack sections of the crowd like they did the week before. They only pepper sprayed us once this week and only shot off two tear gas canisters. Pretty tame by French standards.

We made it back to our accommodation and discussed well into the night where the struggle would go next as we drank cheap red wine with the French students and Sans Papiers we met. The next day, we said good-bye and had to dash for the coach back to London. We were all looking forward to coming back to France really soon.

Racism in France



Students and immigrants march against the CPE

LAST NOVEMBER THE UNREST IN THE suburbs of Paris exposed to the world the racism of France and French government. Nicolas Sarkozy, the interior minister, referred to the black and Asian youth involved in the events as 'hooligans' and 'scum'. Public statements such as this are merely the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the current racist climate in France.

In actual fact the 'scum' to which Sarkozy referred are the most neglected and oppressed section of French society and they are starting to fight back. Referred to as the 'Casseurs' (wreckers) by the media, the government is attempting to divide this radicalised section from the rest of the mass protest movement that has swept France in recent months.

In April last year, even Amnesty International singled out the French police for their racism and violence towards the non-white people of the Paris suburbs. Combine this with the emergency powers awarded to the police from November to January allowing them to impose curfews and to search people without warrant and, with the introduction of the CRS (French riot police) into the Paris suburbs, you have a recipe for viciously terrorising immigrant communities.

Such policies have bred a hatred for the police and the government as racist laws and rhetoric have come to mean batons, pepper spray and teargas for the non-white youth. With the CPE aimed at young people, and those from the suburbs suffering the worst of France's high unemployment problems, the Revolution delegation noted how, despite lacking the organisation of other groups they brought real anger and determination to the mass protests against the law. What was particularly heartening was that despite attempts to divide them from the movement through the attack on the 'casseurs' in the media, when we went to a national student conference in Lille at an occupied university there was a huge banner on the wall reading 'Nous

Sommes Tous Casseurs' - 'We are all Wreckers'.

However it's not just the youth from the suburbs who fall victim to racism in France. The Revolution delegation also stayed for a few nights in an occupied government immigration centre, a centre that was used as a weapon against refugees who fled to France from hardship abroad. The centre has now been occupied by the 'Sans Papiers', (immigrants 'without papers') in collaboration with anti-racist students. Speaking to one of the refugees, we were told of the hypocrisy of a government that criticises immigrants for being out of work, whilst at the same time banning immigrants without documents from working.

We were told of travelling to flee oppression and poverty in Africa, spending years in each country attempting to find work permits, failing and moving to the next country only to repeat the same process. Many had partners and children back at home who were unable to understand why they were not receiving any financial help from their family members working in France. But, like the suburban youth, we were told that the Sans Papiers had had enough. Worry and despair was turning to anger and militancy and we were told that the centre we were staying at was to be used as a base for coordinating similar occupations across Paris.

On 4th April, the Sans Papiers joined the mass protests against the CPE in a large block, supported by students from a nearby university. The attacks on workers, youth are related to a government and a system which will use race and age to divide people wherever possible. Such a diverse, but yet so unified movement shows the solidarity between so many French people against the tide of neo-liberalism and an oppressive state. We left France eager to spread word to those refugees in Britain threatened with deportation about the action that is being taken in France, and to explain that in unity we can fight racism all across Europe and the world.

Students and workers defeat the

{how the CPE was defeated}

Resistance to the CPE and the casualisation of the workforce began as students occupied the universities again. Universities across the country were occupied or shut down by their students and demands placed on the government not to put the law in place.

France has a vibrant history of struggle going back as far as the French Revolution in 1792, or the Paris Commune in 1871. In 1968 students occupied their university in Sorbonne which then led on to a 9 day general strike involving millions of workers.

In 2006 the students also reached out to the workers building links with the trade unions and calling on the unions to strike in solidarity with the students. This they did on five separate occasions and it brought millions of workers onto the streets of France in a massive display of solidarity and strength. It was the unity of the workers with students that really scared the Government. As the movement got bigger the call for a general strike to

shut the whole country down until the law was repealed became louder. This is what the French Government was afraid of.

The students did not simply occupy the universities and shut them down. They used them as organising centres and reached out into the wider community drawing wider layers into the struggle through local 'coordinations'.

There were also national coordinations where delegates elected from the occupied universities and schools debated the CPE and other laws and how they would fight them, planning actions and protests. They also discussed how the movement could be taken forward and how to strengthen the links between the students, youth, workers and unemployed.

This unity between students, youth and workers is a large part of what made the movement against the CPE so effective and achieve victory.



{this movement can build another world}

The cities of France have been centres of militant struggle over the past weeks as youth, students and workers demonstrated against the introduction of the Contrat Première Embauche (First Employment Contract). The CPE would have allowed employers to hire new workers under 26 on a two-year 'trial period' during which time they could be sacked without explanation. It became law on 2 April but due to strikes, demonstrations and university occupations it was withdrawn 8 days later on April 10.

Some people believe (as the French government would want them to) that the law would have helped lower unemployment and get people into work. But a similar law in Spain sim-

ply results in large companies taking on students as 'becarios' for two years, in a full time job, on a low wage and then refusing to give them a permanent contract. Instead they take on another 'becarios'.

The fact that the CPE has been dropped is a definite victory for the movement in France but it shouldn't be viewed as the end of the struggle. President Chirac declared that Article 8 (the law introducing the CPE) would not just be removed, but replaced "by other measures to tackle youth unemployment". In other words - he's going to have a think about how much he will have to soften the law before it can be introduced without people protesting against it!

President de Villepin confirmed that he had suggested the swap, claiming "only a better balance between more flexibility for the companies and more safety for the employees will enable us to break with unemployment in our country". This is a bit of a contradiction in terms - when capitalists and governments talk about making the workforce 'flexible' they mean making them easier to sack. De Villepin neglected to reveal how he will make jobs safer for employees at the same time as attacking workers' rights.

The current attack on young workers in France is part of a general neo-liberal offensive on workers' rights across Europe. The USA dominates the world market and to have any

French government

hope of competing with them the bosses in France, Germany and the rest of the movers and shakers in the EU require a much more 'flexible' workforce than they have now. The European Constitution was an attempt at moving towards this, and when it was put to the French in a referendum the answer was a resounding 'Non!'

The Banlieue youth

The youth from the Banlieue, who are mostly Black or Asian immigrants and suffer oppression from the racist state and police force every day of their lives, are also afflicted with mass unemployment. Over 40 per cent of people under 25 Banlieue are unemployed compared to the national average of 22 per cent.

The unity between workers, students and immigrants seen in the struggle against the CPE points to the way forward in integrating different sections of the movement against neo-liberalism. The willingness of these different sections to take up each other's fights is also inspiring and something that needs to continue.

Keeping Guard

The massive struggles seen in recent weeks have meant a victory for the French working class. The success of the struggle against the CPE shouldn't mean that the message taken away from it now is to back down. Those who took part in the struggle against the CPE need to keep their guard at future attacks.

A student day of action in celebration of the victory against the CPE and the continuation of occupations at some universities show that although the government has given in on the CPE it hasn't managed to buy off the movement. The movement needs to use the contacts made and contacts set up in the struggle as a springboard to making potential future successes. Further meetings and conferences of the people who took part in the movement can keep the ball rolling and widen the struggle out.

Another World is Possible

What the fight against the CPE proved without a shadow of a doubt is that the idea that mass working class action can't achieve anything is a myth, and a myth designed to keep us passive at that. If the student and trade unions had taken up the calls to be 'reasonable' and sit round the negotiating table with Chirac and de Villepan the CPE would have been made law. The mass movement of the working class and youth forced the trade union leaders to stick to their guns and made the government back down.

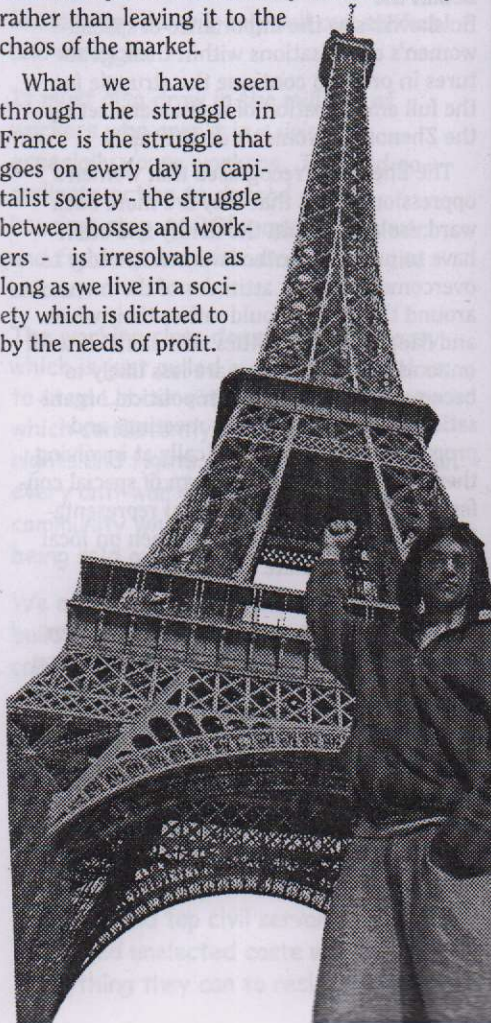
But the struggle also had potential to achieve far more than beating the CPE. The action and organisation of the working class in France in recent weeks showed that we can create a new society and gave a glimpse as to how.

But in order to get from here to there the



fight must be transformed from one against a single law to one against the system of exploitation that creates that law. The co-ordinations must decide how to fight the bosses on a longer term. The movement must go from one that will fight the state when they do something particularly bad to one that seeks to smash and replace the state with a workers' state that plans the economy democratically rather than leaving it to the chaos of the market.

What we have seen through the struggle in France is the struggle that goes on every day in capitalist society - the struggle between bosses and workers - is irresolvable as long as we live in a society which is dictated to by the needs of profit.



France and neo-liberalism

Neo-liberalism is a word that's often banded about on the television and in the left but lots of people don't know what it means. The struggle against the CPE, and the situation in France more generally, provide a picture of what neo-liberalism means and also how we can fight against it.

Neo-liberal policies take on many forms: attempts to lift the retirement age in Britain, the expansion of the EU into Eastern Europe to gain access to cheap labour, the selling off of public services.

Neo-liberal policies come in all shapes and sizes but they all share a common aim: restructuring the economy internationally to give greater freedom for bosses to make profits. By reducing social welfare they reduce their tax burden. By increasing the length of our working lives they increase the amount we produce from them. And as was the case with the CPE in France, by taking away job security they hinder the ability of workers to organise to fight for better pay and conditions.

The French working class and youth have had their fair share of run-ins with neo-liberal practices. In December 1995 a wave of strikes in defence of pensions, which started amongst railway workers, quickly spread to huge sections of the working class. *Le Monde* (a mainstream French newspaper) said at the time: "for the first time in a rich country we are witnessing today what is in reality a strike against 'globalisation', a massive and collective response against financial globalisation and its consequences".

Although the French workers won in 1995 the neo-liberals came back with more attacks. They've been slowly trying to privatise key elements of the state sector.

French president Chirac hope of getting the neo-liberal EU constitution passed in 2005, which would have enshrined neo-liberalism as the economic policy of the EU in law, was defeated. The campaign by the left in France which defeated the constitution meant it was put back on the shelf across Europe.

So, through mass action and strikes the French working class have beaten attempts at neo-liberal reforms. Pensions in 1995, the EU constitution in 2005 and the CPE in 2006. But none of these individual victories has been able to stop neo-liberalism in its tracks. Every time the French bosses are knocked back they get up again and find a new way to attack the working class.

To prevent these attacks from coming again and again, workers and youth across Europe will have to take on the capitalist system as a whole.

The struggle of the French working class is the same struggle of the working class across Europe. To win this fight we need to organise the most politically conscious people involved in those struggles into an international revolutionary party that can fight for socialism.

The struggle for women's liberation in the early 20th century

Clara Zetkin, Alexandra Kollontai and Sylvia Pankhurst were activists in the mass Socialist parties of the early 20th century who actively sought to organise women as part of the working class movement. This was a time of tremendous social oppression against women that did not stop at the doors of the Socialist parties but instead sexism was often reproduced within its ranks and had to be actively fought against.

Clara Zetkin

The Second International was unofficially led by the Social Democratic Party (SPD) of Germany. Clara Zetkin was the leader of the social democratic women's movement and was, along with Rosa Luxemburg, to the left of the leadership



of the SPD that was increasingly developing as reformist conservative caste.

When the SPD formed the laws in Germany did not allow women membership of political organisations. This led Zetkin and others to organise a network of women with a semi-legal structure parallel to that of the SPD. This allowed women to play a full and active political role and struggle for their demands using the organisational structure and mass influence of the SPD to draw more women into politics.

When the laws relaxed and women were allowed membership of political parties, Zetkin recognised the need to retain and expand the special forms of organisation and propaganda already in place to further women's struggles against oppression. This did not mean that this organisation was politically and organisationally separate from the SPD, but that the backwardness, passivity and low level of culture imposed on women by capitalist oppression meant the women's struggle benefited from special forms of organisation.

Zetkin, along with many other female members found themselves increasingly to the left of the bureaucratic leadership of the party and trade unions in the years before the First World War. Zetkin was one of the few members in the SPD to openly agree with Luxemburg's criticisms of the leadership's increasing reformism that would eventually lead to them supporting the First World War.

Zetkin found that the leadership was increasingly indifferent to the struggle for the emancipation of women and yet she still recognised the importance of women remaining full members of the SPD and later the

communist parties. This was so that they could access the widest working class audience for their politics. The rightward swing of the SPD made it even more important that women in the organisation held special meetings and controlled their own press.

Zetkin's example was followed by socialist organisations in other countries, such as by the united attempts of the Bolshevik and Menshevik women to build a movement of women workers in Russia in 1905-7. These attempts were encouraged by the International Women's Bureau which was led by left Social Democrats such as Zetkin. This Bureau played an important role in rallying opposition to the chauvinist betrayal of the leaders of the Second International.

Alexandra Kollontai

Alexandra Kollontai played an increasingly important role in the struggle for women's emancipation both in Russia and worldwide following the revolution. Still following the example of Clara Zetkin the Bolsheviks saw the importance of special women's organisations within their structures in order to continue the struggle for the full emancipation of women and set up the Zhenotdel (women's department).



The Zhenotdel recognised that women's oppression means that they are more backward, isolated within the family and often have to unite with other women in order to overcome the sexist attitudes of the men around them who would rather their wives and daughters left politics well alone. It went on to assess that women are less likely to become actively involved in political organisation and so require their meetings and propaganda directed specifically at involving them. This work took the form of special conferences for women and special representatives of factory and peasant women on local committees and state organisations.

The outcome of these activities was the development of the participation of women within the Bolshevik Party, and the adoption of resolutions specifically dealing with the interests of women that were then taken up by the Soviet Leadership. At all times, the women's movements were fully integrated into the Party and worked within that structure for the furthering of women's emancipation. As Lenin argued, "this is not bourgeois 'feminism'; it is practical revolutionary expediency."

Sylvia Pankhurst

Sylvia Pankhurst was a member of the famous Pankhurst family who founded the WSPU (Women's Political and Social Union). The WSPU was a feminist organisation, whose demands included the right to vote and the right to own



property on the same terms as men. The family started out as members of the Independent Labour Party but Sylvia was the only one not to see the fight for socialism and the fight for women's liberation as mutually exclusive and so left the WSPU. She founded the East London Federation of Suffragettes and later played a role in founding the Communist Party of Great Britain after the Russian Revolution.

This marked a shift in Pankhurst's politics from liberal feminism towards Communism. She became the most prominent female British communist of her time and attended meetings of the Third International in Russia and Amsterdam. A militant forthright and assertive leader Pankhurst was an inspiration to working class women. However, she could also be a political loose cannon. For example she clashed with Lenin on party building as she was in favour of loose federal organisation and was expelled from the CPGB for refusing to give the party editorial control of a paper she published.

For all her angry, radical revolutionary spirit her views on party building showed she had not fully broken with her liberal background - favouring a loose individual freedom over the democratic collective organisation that had shown its effectiveness with the victory of working people in Russia in 1917.

What is important about both Pankhurst, Kollontai and Zetkin is that they showed women can rise to the top of the workers movement as leading Marxists. They recognised that women's oppression was rooted in capitalism and that the fight against this oppression could be only achieved through the overthrow of the capitalist system side by side with their male comrades.

Crucially they all championed the need for a working class women's movement. Today women are becoming organised again in the struggle against social injustice. At the World Social Forum's thousands of women have met as part of the world march of women campaign and organised protests and demonstrations internationally. We need to inject the Marxism and class spirit of these three great women leaders into these movements today if they are to win and build world free of women's oppression.

new Labour

~~new~~ Britain

Fat Cat

BY JO IN LEEDS



A scandal recently erupted surrounding huge loans totalling millions of pounds given to the Labour Party prior to the last election. Unlike donations loans don't have to be declared publicly according to election rules. However, none of these businessmen expected to get their money back! If only Natwest gave out loans like that we'd all be rich!

This shows that fundamentally Labour is a party that pretends to govern for working people and the trade union movement but in fact governs for Britain's fat cat millionaires.

Over the last nine years Labour have consistently attacked the rights of workers from pensions to pay; the rights of young people with the Respect agenda; the rights of millions of Iraqis to run their own country and the right of black and Asian people to be free from police harassment and repressive measures such as the shoot to kill policy.

It is impossible to "reclaim" this racist war-mongering party. It is not a party of the working class: two of the most militant unions the FBU and the RMT are now outside of the Labour Party after clashes with its bureaucracy.

We need a new party of the working class which can represent the rights and interests of the workers and youth, Labour can't do this. And now there is an initiative to create a new mass party of the working class.

In January 350 workers attended a conference (and over 100 were turned away) hosted by the railworkers' union the RMT to discuss the crisis of political representation for the working class.

In March a launching conference of the Campaign for a New Workers Party was held attracting 400 people coming together to fight against Labour's agenda and to take steps forward in

organising the thousands put into struggle against its pro-boss anti-worker policies.

The conference took place the day after tens of thousands took to the streets against the occupation of Iraq and a week before over a million workers took strike action to defend pensions.

So, what do we want this new party to look like?

A new workers party needs to fight to repeal anti-union laws and provide an alternative to the bureaucratic leadership who will only sell out strikes and struggle.

It must also draw in the millions of workers who aren't in a union - especially young workers. It could co-ordinate action to defend council housing, stop ASBO's, oppose the war and fight racism with struggles in the unions.

The working class doesn't need a party which is just pulled out around elections to steal Labour votes. We need a party which consistently struggles for our rights and fights on every picket line, on every anti-war demo and in every community where public services are being sold off the private ownership.

We need to unite all people who want to build a new workers party into a common campaign. But in doing so we need to be absolutely clear what type of party we need. It's the capitalist system that consistently brings misery to workers and poor people. A new party will need to fight the system and for a socialist alternative, That means taking on the power of the state - the police, army, judiciary and top civil servants. This privileged unelected caste will do everything they can to resist movements

for radical change. That's why we will need a revolution to take power out of their hands and into the hands of working people.

A new workers' party isn't a political issue separate from young people, the involvement of the radicalised layer of young people involved in fights against poverty, racism and war will benefit any future new workers' party as well as the party aiding the struggles of those same young people. We come from a generation of people who don't haven't lived through and been demoralised by the defeats of the workers' movement dealt out by Thatcher and we certainly don't see Labour as our party,

The fight for a new workers' party is our fight. We must make sure that it is successful not only in bringing together the radicalised layers of workers', youth and oppressed groups but of taking on an organisational and political form that can kill the vile manifestations of capitalism at their root.

The Vietnam War and US imperialism

In 1975 the US Army was militarily defeated in Vietnam. Today, they face an increasing insurrection against their occupation of Iraq. Even though there are many years and many miles between the two conflicts they were both had in common that waged by an aggressive US imperialism.

However, the origins of the Vietnam War lie in the Vietnamese liberation struggle against the old French colonial power. Stalinist Viet Minh guerrillas, tired of colonialism under the French and feudalism under an oppressive system of landlords, rose up in 1947. A peasant war ensued culminating in 1953 when the French attempted to lure the Viet Minh into a set piece battle at Dien Bien Phu. With colossal transport networks and artillery from the communist states in China and Russia the guerrillas managed to hold their own. At this point the Americans developed a plan called "operation vulture" in which they would launch three small nuclear attacks against the Vietnamese line.

It was never implemented but was used as a constant threat throughout the war. How hypocritical it is today that Bush led the US to war on the manufactured grounds that Iraq could launch nuclear attack in 45 minutes!

After the French defeat the Americans saw it as their mission to prevent the overall victory of the Viet Minh. Like the war in Iraq and Afghanistan today there was an overwhelming economic basis behind this. The 'Domino theory' predicted that if Vietnam became a 'communist' regime then neighbouring countries would become communist too. The capitalist states hated the thought of losing Indonesian Rubber and tin, Thai rice, and Ceylon from India and Pakistan.

To 'save' South Vietnam from communism a puppet government was installed. This did not represent the Vietnamese people in any way. In a predominantly

Buddhist country the ardent catholic Ngo Dinh-Diem was not welcomed. The regime under Diem had a secret police that killed 75,000 people and imprisoned 50,000. Land was given to rich landlords, and Buddhism came under attack, causing many monks to set themselves on fire. It is no surprise that the first thing the American military did after 'military victory' in Iraq was to install a puppet government.

The Gulf of Tonkin incident occurred in 1964. The USS Maddox, on a secret mission in North Vietnam, came under torpedo fire.

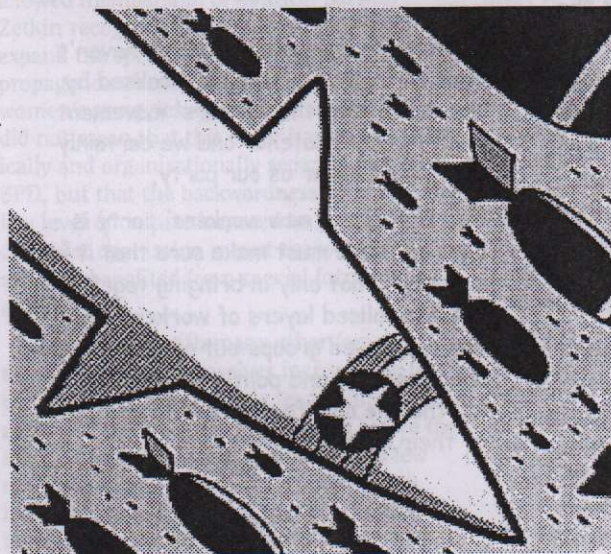
Lyndon Johnson came on the television stating that the USS Maddox had been in international waters and that the attack was part of a 'pattern of naked aggression'. The USS Ticonderoga was sent to launch airstrikes against North Vietnam. Johnson moved towards full scale war on August 7th 1964. The same excuse of "attack them, before they attack us again" was used to justify Bush and Blair's invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq.

The beginning of the end for America came on the 31st January 1968. The NLF and Southern guerrillas joined in a coordinated uprising known as the Tet offensive. The aim was to bring to struggle into the



Flame Throwers: the devastating weapon of choice for US Marines in Vietnam

towns. 80,000 troops across 100 cities led the first wave of attacks. The NLF was defeated but a psychological blow had been scored against the American forces. The Pentagon again threatened to use its nuclear arsenal. Naturally, the American force resorted to the tactic of "destroying them (the towns) in order to save them". This is the same ethos as in Iraq. Fallujah was pounded by machine gun fire and its inhabitants burned alive by white phosphorous in the name of 'salvation'. The Pentagon like the British generals in the American war of independence found it very unsporting that their enemy would not "stand and fight", and could not deal with a guerrilla war without



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the fight against

resorting to atrocities. The American troops burned entire villages to the ground over the course of the war.

The war dragged on for 7 more years. When Nixon was elected as president in November 1968, he attempted to have "peace with honour" and continued the war hoping to subjugate the Vietnamese before a truce. The U.S. did not gain anymore ground than it had in 1969 though another 10,000 American troops died and the Vietnamese death toll

reached more than 250,000. The occupiers in Iraq are ignoring calls to pull out now. They want a similar "peace with honour", and the capitalists want a peace with oil and lucrative reconstruction contracts too.

During Vietnam the American government dropped 72 million litres of chemicals on Vietnam. This included 66 million litres of the infamous Agent Orange. 175 kg of TCCD was dropped on Vietnam only 80g would be needed to kill the population of

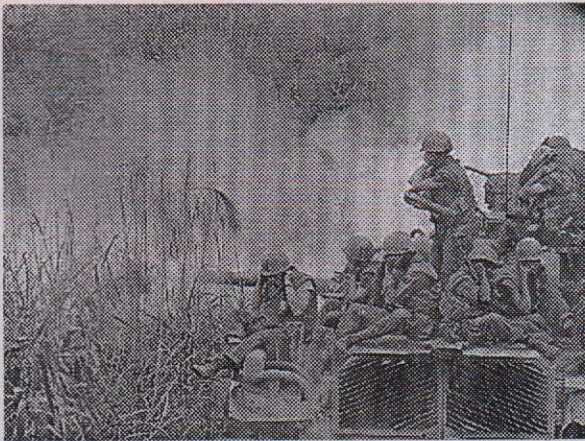
New York. Children have been born with horrifying illnesses, their families forced to beg in the streets for money. This is a war crime, plain and simple. For the U.S. to go to say that Iraq was dangerous because it had W.M.D's is hypocrisy of the highest order. Just like the napalm that the Americans dropped on

the Vietnamese people the white phosphorous used in Fallujah was a demonstration that the American high command cares little for anything else than being able to say that it has subjugated it's enemy.

The War in Vietnam and the current war in Iraq were both test cases for U.S. imperialism. If America could win in either of these wars it would set the precedent that America can act as it likes. When the U.S. left Saigon, it left with the realisation that it cannot destroy the will a people by force of arms. If the people of Iraq can unite and drive out the occupying forces it will be a victory for the entire world.

The current War in Iraq poses one question to us all... Will you allow U.S. Imperialism to ride rough-shod over the rest of the world?

No! We need to support the Iraqi resistance. Victory for them can mark the beginning of the end for US imperialism.



UNI LECTURERS TAKE STRIKE ACTION

University lecturers held a one day strike in March and launched an indefinite assessment boycott over pay. This mean lecturers are refusing to mark exams and papers until the union agrees to their demands for a fair pay deal. The government had promised that a third of the profit from top-up fees would be spent on pay increases but as yet has refused to honour this agreement. The salaries of vice-chancellors have increased by 25% in the last 3 years and yet both students and lectures are being neglected by the universities.

The government has consistently argued that the necessity of the extortionate top-up fees is that universities will be able to improve the universities, which includes increasing the wages of the teaching staff. What we've seen since then is continued privatisation of facilities and

even more cuts in courses, and now the universities are refusing to give lecturers the pay increases they have been promised.

So where is all the money going? Well one lecturer being paid a mint is Joseph Stiglitz, who for a series of six lectures at Manchester University is receiving £3,000,000! This is all part of Manchester University's marketing drive to present itself as a 'world class university' in order to attract more business investment for research. But who of us agreed that the money we've paid for our education should go on paying a celebrity to do a series of lectures that most of us will not even see?

How exactly does the university expect to be able to provide students with a good education when it refuses to pay lecturers a fair wage?

The vice-chancellor of Manchester

University is Alan Gilbert, a man flown in here after completing whole-sale privatisation of Melbourne University in Australia. Students in Melbourne found their courses and facilities cut and underfunded, and a new private university set up for those who could afford it. Now the University of Manchester is getting Gilbert to do the same here.

Recently students fought off an attempt to privatise Owens Park Halls, a move that in other universities has meant huge increases in rent.

Students need to work alongside lecturers to fight these attacks on the education system. To fight for a free education and living grant for all and for an end to corporate involvement in our universities.

Mass strike action for our pensions!

On March 28th over one million workers from across the UK from 11 unions representing local government workers took strike action in defence of their pension rights. They are fighting against government plans to increase the retirement age from 60 to 65 years.

The attack on the right to retire at sixty is just another example of the war waged on working people by governments across the world pursuing a ruthless pro-business agenda. The strike on March 28th came on the same day as the huge uprising in France against the youth employment laws (see centre page spread).

It wasn't anywhere near as militant as this in Britain but it was a good start with solid support for the action reported up and down the country and further action is planned by the trade unions.

Revolution always supports and build up solidarity for workers in struggle. But in this case young people have a special interest in supporting the campaign because whether or not we have the right to retire at sixty, or have to work until we drop, will be effected by the success or failure of this campaign.

It won't be easy though as striking workers do face major challenges and obstacles to successful winning this dispute.

The action is overwhelmingly led by the reformist trade union bureaucracy that has close links to the Labour Party and doesn't want the action to get out of control and risk becoming too militant. They are desperate not to rock the boat in the Labour party and upset Labour's election chances in the future. Despite this they have, under pressure from the rank and file, stopped giving the party money for the duration of the dispute that could hit the Labour Party purse

stings. This money shouldn't be going to Labour anyway - the trade unions should put it into campaigning for a new working class party.

The privileged full time officials that sit at the top of trade unions take home big salaries that cut them off from the interests of the workers they represent. They fill a space between the workers and the bosses that means they will do everything they can to sabotage and obstruct action that will threaten the power of the bosses and by implication their position in the bargaining process.

Trade Union bureaucrats from unions representing central government workers last year negotiated a "deal" they claimed was a victory. It protected the pension rights of existing workers while cranking up the age for new workers coming in to the job. That's right - new workers like you! Some deal that sells out a whole section of the working class - young people.

If students and young people build up good solidarity with this dispute in colleges, universities, schools and workplaces then we can gain a hearing for arguing against this kind of "deal" being accepted by the local government workers.

A successful militant fightback by workers will mean taking the organising out of the hands of the bureaucrats and building rank and file cross union committees across the unions. These committees could organise the militant indefinite strike action that will force the hand of the government.

Across the channel students and youth in France are showing that fighting gets results and can bring governments to their knees. Lets spread rebellion from France to Britain!

WHAT WE STAND FOR

The Independent on Sunday got it right in an "expose" of REVOLUTIONs involvement in organising May Day 2001. It said: "REVOLUTION wants to build a revolutionary socialist mass movement and overthrow capitalism." Exactly right. We are opposed to capitalism and the misery, alienation, war and environmental destruction it creates.

We fight all forms of discrimination and oppression, whether on grounds of sex, race, nationality or sexuality.

Capitalism is a global system, so we have to fight it globally. We want to smash the borders and divisions of nations and move forward to a truly global and united humanity, without bigotry, war and class division. We stand shoulder to shoulder with our sisters and brothers in the Third World struggling to break free of the trillion dollar debt, the IMF, WTO and NATO.

We are socialists - we want to abolish capitalism and replace it with a planned economy. But we do not believe that the capitalist elite will allow their wealth and privilege to be voted out of existence. We believe it will take force to take the power and property away from the few and redistribute into the hands of the many - that means a revolution!

REVO wants young people to participate in radical politics and organise themselves. Young people can be very radical and militant, the anti war movement proved that. They should take a lead in the movement that will shape the struggle for the future.

We believe a mass movement must be built based on the support of the majority of the people - the working class. It is the working class that produces all the wealth in this society. The working class has no interest in keeping capitalism going. Only the working class has the power, the size and the traditions of organisation to bring this rotten system crashing down.

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