

# REVOLUTION

THE FIGHTING PAPER FOR WORKING CLASS YOUTH

## Blair's policies mean more poverty for young people



# DON'T TRUST THIS MAN!

**M**ILLIONS OF working class people and youth are hoping that Tony Blair and the Labour party will put an end to the misery of the last 17 years of Tory government. But over the last few weeks Blair has been kicking his supporters in the teeth.

Labour have just announced that they are going to scrap guaranteed Child Benefit for 16 and 17 year olds. Child poverty groups are up in arms against it - they know the terrible suffering it will cause working class families. But it will allow Labour to save

millions and cut taxes for the rich. If this pushes hundreds of thousands of families in desperation or even crime, Blair has the answer: harsher punishments for young "criminals" and a curfew to keep young kids indoors where no one can see the suffering he has caused.

Blair has refused to scrap the new Jobseekers' Allowance which has cut the dole by £10 a week for under 25's. He has also refused to restore benefits for 16 and 17 year olds - the single step that would do

the most to reduce homelessness and crime. But it is not just young people who are in Blair's firing line. He has refused to set a figure for a national minimum wage to get millions out of poverty. All this to satisfy a handful of millionaires in the City.

But more and more Labour supporters are growing wary. The TUC represents nearly 7 million people who have joined trade unions to protect their jobs, their pay and their conditions at work. It has called for a minimum wage **continued on pg 2**

# 2 RACISM

# FREE THE KINGS CROSS 2

**I**MAGINE being arrested, charged and locked away for a crime you did not commit.

This is what happened to Badrul Miah and Showkat Akbar, two Asian youth from Kings Cross. Known as the Kings Cross Two, they are both now serving time for murder of a white youth, Richard Everitt.

Race should not be an issue here; but it WAS for the police and it IS for fascist groups in London who are using it to provoke a racist backlash against the Asian community in Kings Cross.

## Innocent

After the death of Richard Everitt at the end of 1994 the police automatically claimed there was a possible "racial motivation" for the murder. The following day this statement was retracted. The police still believed this was the prime motive in the killing. In practice for this meant that "Every Asian in Camden was under suspicion", as a recent campaign leaflet put it. Even Asians who had suffered racist attacks and were reporting them to the police were treated as suspects and ONLY questioned

about Richard's death.

The trial of Badrul and Showkat was just as outrageous. There was no evidence at all that showed that the two had anything to do with the killing but they were both charged. Showkat was sentenced for three years and Badrul is serving a life sentence, charged with 'joint enterprise'. This charge is a vicious law which means that people can be locked away with no firm evidence of their guilt, just for being around the area of the crime - just for being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

## Campaign for justice

This is why a campaign has been set up: fighting for Badrul's and Showkat's freedom. A large demonstration was held on the 31st of August to demand the release and the dropping of the charges against the Kings Cross two. REVOLUTION was on there alongside the hundreds of Asian Youth who are fighting for the release of the Kings Cross 2. We will continue to fight against oppression caused by the capitalist system. The Kings Cross Two must be released immediately, leaving ANY future investigations to true representatives from

the community not the police and the system.

## Fascists organise backlash

As ever, the fascists are using the murder of a white man to fuel racist lies. With no jobs and poor services, created by the corrupt system of capitalism, some whites take out their anger on black and Asian communities, blaming them for the government's inability to provide for everyone. Fascists demonstrated at the same time as the campaign did, attempting to whip up more hatred against any non-whites and smash any resistance to fascist organisation. Because the fascists, in and out of the police, will always try to violently get rid of non-whites from "their" areas it must be a right for all blacks, Asians and anti-fascists to organise self-defence groups with the power to smash the fascists.

REVOLUTION will continue to fight for the release of the Kings Cross Two, against any other racist frame-up and against the mobilisation of the fascists.

continued from pg 1..

of £4.26 an hour, and for better protection for workers against unfair dismissal. Blair arrogantly refused to meet their demands. Worse still, he has brought forward the idea of bringing in even stricter laws against trade unions and strikes. His underling Stephen Byers let the cat out of the bag when he admitted that Blair wants Labour to cut its links with the trade unions altogether.

The Labour Party was set up by the trade unions. The unions pay huge sums of money to get Labour to speak out for them in parliament. Now Blair wants to be free from their influence. The reason: he wants nothing to get in the way of his attacks on the working class once he becomes Prime Minister.

## Fightback

People are angry: they want change. The high hopes people have had in Blair will quickly turn to bitter disappointment. REVOLUTION calls for a massive campaign of young people, the unemployed, workers and trade unions need to demand:

- A minimum wage of £6 an hour
  - Full benefits for all at the level of the minimum wage
  - An end to all anti-trade union laws
- Anyone in the Labour Party who is useless should stand up and be counted

now - they should fight to kick out the traitor Blair who wants to sell our movement to the capitalists. Unions should be fighting to force Labour to meet their demands. But the most important thing of all will be for workers and youth to start organising an alternative to Blair's New Labour: a party that will fight for what the working class needs, without any regard for the interests of the handful of capitalists who have ripped us all off for so long.

## Socialist Labour Party

For a small but growing number of workers and trade unionists, the new Socialist Labour Party seems like it might be that alternative. Its leader, Arthur Scargill, led the miners in their heroic struggle against pit closures - he is a figure known to millions.

The Socialist Labour Party is campaigning for a minimum wage and a shorter working week. REVOLUTION agrees with these demands. But the new party believes that it will be able to get rid of the capitalists by passing laws in parliament. We, as our name suggests, believe that to achieve our aim of a socialist society based on equality and freedom, we will need a revolution.

The SLP has appealed to all socialists to join it. It is holding a National Youth Conference on 9 November. REVOLU-

TION has written to the Youth Secretary of the SLP applying to affiliate to the party's youth organisation, so that we can unite in struggle with other socialist youth and discuss our ideas with them in a democratic way.

We do not yet know if our request will be accepted by the youth wing. But the party leaders are determined not to allow it. They would demand that we stop producing this paper and dissolve as a revolutionary youth group.

That is something we are determined not to do - because our revolutionary message is the only alternative to Blair that can really defeat this system and win us a future worth fighting for.

Join  
**REVOLUTION!**

Phone:  
**0171 357 0388**

Write:  
**BCM Box 7750**  
**London WCIN 3XX**

# JSA? NO WAY!

**THE HATED** Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) will come into effect on October 7th; cuts in housing benefits for people under 25 are being brought in at the same time. While these attacks on our benefits will hit all of us hard, they are intentionally targeting young workers and students, who are already among the worst off. We are already trapped in boring dead-end jobs with the lowest pay and worst conditions - if we have a job at all.

But we will be the guinea pigs for the Tories' schemes because they know there are no political drawbacks for them - young people are less likely to vote, and when we do vote, less likely to vote Tory. So it's a safe bet for them: attack us first, try out their "pilot schemes" before imposing them on the rest of the working class.

## Homelessness

For example, here's just one of the contradictions at the heart of capitalist Britain. A hostel in central London provides emergency accommodation for the homeless, and 40% of people staying there are under 18. Meanwhile, 600,000 people don't claim the Housing Benefit that they are entitled to. You'd probably say, well, the rational thing to do is give the unclaimed benefits to the homeless.

The Tories are doing exactly the opposite. Letting everyone know about unclaimed benefits? No, they've axed the only national help line for claimants, put up hoardings, instead, asking people to rat on their neighbours if they think they're "cheating," and now they've got the cheek to restrict housing benefits for everyone between 16-24 years old. We won't receive benefits any larger than the average rent for shared accommodation in the area where we live. Basically this means being forced to stay in a crap bedsit somewhere, and mass evictions for the rest of us who've managed to find a decent place to stay.

## Conformity

The same thing goes for the JSA:

- Anyone who leaves their job or is sacked but refuses to take a job at any level of pay and conditions will have all their benefits taken away for 6 months. You could be forced into scab work in places where the workers are on strike.

- Working people aged 18-24 will see a 20% cut in the benefit they can get, down to £37.90. Part-time students (16 hours or more of "guided learning" a week) won't be able to claim.
- Most humiliating of all, if they think your clothes, hair-style, or even your "attitude" need to be changed, they can demand you change them or take away your benefits!

We all know the Tories aren't doing this because they're naive or misguided - they want the JSA because they're the bosses' party, and the bosses want the JSA. The bosses want to pay less, and for us to pay more.

## 17 years of attacks

Flipping back through the last 17 years of Tory government, you see tax cut after tax cut for the rich, and a steady march of tax hikes for the rest of us. Our National Insurance payments have risen by over 50% since 1979, while the NHS and other services that are our right, along with all benefits, have been drastically cut.

In the same period, VAT has also risen by over 50%, so the state gets a larger cut from us on all those things we need to live a full and meaningful life, from music and cigarettes down to the most basic necessities, like gas, electricity, and clothes.

What do we get in return for all this money we're forced to shovel out of our pay-cheques and into the Tory government? Yet more cuts on our welfare state! Add in a decade and a half of battering the unions and attacking everyone's wages and conditions, so we've got fewer pounds in our pocket to begin with; and the big picture is a full-scale assault on the working class, where we get less and less, and the ruling class get more and more.

Now they're gunning to get a bigger cut, and they're not going to back down until we hit rock bottom poverty. That's why Revo says:

- Defend the welfare state and our public services!
- Tax the rich!
- For a living wage, which rises as prices do!
- Jobs for all, with work or benefits at full pay!

In addition, youth have to be able to participate in the fight for these on equal



terms. So:

- Open the unions to unemployed!
- Full benefits for all at 16!
- Full legal and voting rights to all at 16!

We have to fight back, because the bosses have a plan for us. Workers lucky enough to have full-time jobs with contracts are being forced to accept pay cuts or even getting sacked, like the Liverpool dockers or Hillingdon Hospital workers in London, to make way for low-paid, casual labour. At the other end of the scale over a million and a half of us can't even find work. But we all face the same enemy.

Some of us start out a little higher than the rest, in pay, in conditions, etc., but we are all slowly but surely being lowered deeper into an abyss of poverty, 'til we bottom out at the point where we spend nearly our whole life working for a pittance, and spend the remaining few hours scrambling to find the cheapest way to get by on the handful of money they've given us.

## One solution!

The JSA is one more big step along that road, and that's why we need to fight it. But we need to do more than that. If we're to get back what's ours, not just a full NHS or low taxes but all the value of the work that we do, and win back control over our own society and our own destiny from the capitalist class, we need to get these people off our backs. And for that we need a revolution.

# 4 IDEAS

## DEAD MEN WITH BEARDS?

# KARL MARX

**“OLD FASHIONED . . . VIOLENT . . .** complicated . . . boring . . . nice in theory . . . nightmare in practice . . . waste of time . . . long words . . . mechanical . . . years in the library . . . abstract . . . Russia . . . failure . . . not that simple . . . time for something new . . . dead . . . beard.”

Well, that just about sums up all you need to know about Karl Marx. Now turn to page 6.

Still with us? Then you have something in common with Karl Marx when he was a young student in Germany 150 years ago. You don't always do as you're told, for a start. And if the powers-that-be tell you their official version of things, (and the list above is about all they'll tell you about Karl Marx), you try to hear the other side of the story.

Karl Marx's ideas can be understood by anyone who takes the trouble to study them. They are not mechanical or needlessly abstract, but contain important truths about history and human society. They are not old fashioned or a failure, because they explain the world today. They are not boring or grey, because they are about the red hot business of revolution.

The society Karl Marx grew up in had no basic democratic freedoms. In Prussia, power was in the hands of the Kaiser, his army and bureaucracy, and the rich landowners that they defended.

### Hegel

As a student in Berlin, Marx encountered the ideas of the philosopher Hegel, who stressed that everything in society and in nature was in a process of constant change and development. A group of young "Left Hegelians" tried to use Hegel's ideas to draw radical political conclusions. When several radical thinkers were barred from university by the authorities, Marx gave up the idea of an academic career, and set off on a path of political activity that would last for the rest of his life.

He began to write and edit radical newspapers that called for democracy and an end to the suffering of the poor. By 1843 he was in Paris, writing a paper that was so revolutionary it had to be smuggled back into Germany. In it Marx spoke of the need for "merciless criticism of everything exist-

ing" - by which he meant not only criticism in discussion and in pamphlets, but also "criticism by weapon". Who was to carry this "criticism" out? Not a small group of terrorists, but the masses, and in particular, the "proletariat" or working class.

### Utopian

At this time there were numerous small, socialist groupings in Europe. Almost all of them were utopians of one sort or another. Thinkers like Fourier in France or Robert Owen in Britain pointed out how the new system of capitalism, which was growing everywhere, allowed the factory owners and bankers to become extraordinarily rich while the workers in the factories and on the land suffered terrible poverty. The utopian socialists came up with schemes and systems for setting up a fairer society, and tried to build new communities based on common ownership and an equal share of wealth.

Throughout the early 1840s Marx began to criticise these ideas and make discoveries of his own. Instead of opting out of society or designing blueprints for a perfect world, he studied how the real world works.

### Class struggle

Strange as it may seem, Hegel had believed that the real world was just a reflection of the mind. Marx had a more sensible view: our ideas are reflections of a real world that exists outside our minds. So whilst Hegel saw history as a series of conflicts between different sets of ideas, Marx looked for something in the real world that caused these conflicts. He found it in the idea of class struggle. Throughout history the haves and the have-nots have fought against each other for control of food, shelter, money and therefore for political power.

The capitalist factory owners and bankers had grown fabulously rich by exploiting a new class of industrial workers: the proletariat. The working class had no finished product to sell, no property from which to make a profit. Their only means of making a living was to work for wages.

Marx predicted that as time went by the working class would grow in numbers and would organise itself. Without them nothing in society could work. Here then was

the force that could overthrow capitalism - a real, practical alternative to the dreams of the utopians.

### Communism

The conclusion Marx drew was that practice and real action - not just ideas - were the key to the future. "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways", he wrote, "the point, however, is to change it." So together with his friend and co-thinker Frederick Engels, Marx joined a small organisation called the League of the Just, which soon changed its name to the Communist League. At their request the two men wrote the Communist Manifesto.

Despite being written nearly 150 years ago, the Communist Manifesto is still a cracking read. Its two young authors (Marx was 29, Engels 27) were obviously fired up with the freshness of the discoveries they had made. The book is brimming over with anger, sarcasm and flashes of brilliant wit. It demolishes arguments that are still being raised against communism today. It daringly called for the liberation of women from the slavery of housework. Against nationalists who accused the communists of being traitors, the Manifesto replied that the workers of all countries have more in common with each other than they have with their "national" capitalist rulers.

It established communism as the aim of the working class movement. This would be a classless society in which people no longer had to compete with each other and fight for their share.

But this communist society could not be established overnight. First the working class would have to "make itself the ruling class" through revolution, using force to stop the capitalists holding on to their property. Gradually the workers would redistribute wealth in the interests of the whole people, abolishing classes and armed authority altogether.

The Manifesto ended with a declaration that has entered into the language and the consciousness of the whole world to this day:

"Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

## PART ONE:

# MARX

Workers of all countries unite!"

### 1848 Revolution

The ink was scarcely dry on the pages of the Manifesto when Europe exploded in revolution. The year 1848 saw the overthrow of King Louis-Phillippe and the proclamation of a republic in France, and a mass uprising by the working class in Vienna. In Germany, Marx's predictions came swiftly true. A revolution began uniting the new capitalist class, the peasants and the workers in struggle against the landowners and their regime. But the capitalists quickly did a deal with the Kaiser, won some concessions for themselves, and left the working class without political rights.

In a famous address to the Communist League, Marx explained how the "democratic" capitalists would only fight for those changes which made life comfortable for them. The working class needed its own party, to march together with the democrats against the monarchy and the landowners, but to oppose them whenever they tried to set about exploiting the workers. Marx called for the independent workers' party to oppose the capitalist government, to fight for the arming of the working class in a "proletarian guard", and for the workers to set up their own rival governments in the form of "revolutionary community councils" or local workers' committees. The aim here was not to accept half-way measures, but to "make the revolution permanent" by pushing on to the overthrow of the capitalists and the establishment of a working class government.

### Capital

The defeat of the revolutionary wave of 1848 opened long years of reaction in Europe, when the tide of the class struggle was at a low ebb. Marx devoted his time to writing a detailed analysis of the workings of capitalism, *Das Kapital*. This weighty scientific volume is a cornerstone of the revolutionary movement. It cannot be quickly skimmed through - like all works of science, it has to be studied: the best way is to read and discuss it in groups. In it Marx showed how the exploitation of workers is not just a result of the sharp practices of individual employers, but is part and parcel of the cap-

italist system itself. He showed how the system would cause the working class to grow, and how competition between capitalists would create ever larger monopolies. What is more, he showed how the system has a built-in tendency to go into deep crises, which cause dramatic economic collapses and revolutionary opportunities for the working class.

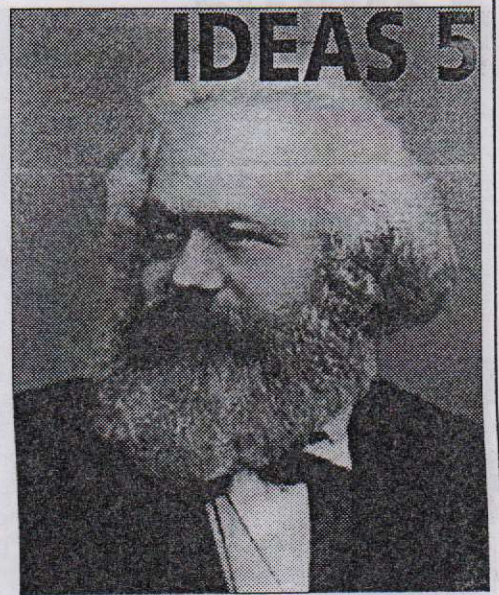
But Marx did not just retire to the library. In 1864 he played the foremost role in setting up the International Workingmen's Association - the First International. This brought together socialist, revolutionary and trade union groups from around the world in the first working class organisation to span national boundaries. Within the International Marx campaigned long and hard against the anti-revolutionary approach of the English union leaders, and the tendency of anarchists like Mikhail Bakunin to look to forces other than the mass of the working class to carry out the revolution.

### Paris Commune

By 1871 the revolutionary storm broke out once again. In a mass uprising in Paris, the first ever working class government, the Paris Commune, was formed. Marx threw himself into support for this historic step forward. From the defeat of the Commune he drew a vital lesson: that for the working class to set about introducing real socialist measures, it will not be possible to use the capitalists' state apparatus, their parliaments and armed forces. These institutions must be penetrated by revolutionaries in order to undermine them, but "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes." Instead the military and bureaucratic state machine of the capitalists would have to be smashed and replaced by a far more democratic system of working class councils or communes, and a militia based on the arming of the whole working class.

Marx died in London in March 1883. His ideas have shaped the century that we live in. But, as the century draws to a close, more people than ever believe that Marx and Marxism are somehow a thing of the past.

They could not be more wrong. The col-



lapse of the Soviet Union was not proof that "socialism does not work", but that without full working class democracy, and without revolution in several advanced countries, the transformation of society along socialist lines is impossible. This too was predicted by Marx.

Some tell us that the working class is declining, because of the shutting down of many old industries in Britain. But this is just a change in the form of the working class - the number of people who can earn a living only by selling their ability to work has never been greater. The working class today constitutes over a billion people world wide: a hundred million of them work in heavy industry. In India, the Far East and Latin America the working class is growing at an extraordinary pace.

### Still relevant

Well over a hundred years after Marx's death, capitalism cannot guarantee democracy to many millions in backward countries, is tearing apart the lives of workers in the former USSR as it brings back mass unemployment, crime and inflation, and is unable to offer the working class in an advanced country like Britain even a guaranteed job or a decent minimum wage. Instead the capitalists tell us there is less to go round - fewer hospital beds, school books and homes for us - ever greater profit and privilege for them.

All over the world, the struggle of the working class goes on. Deep within the trade unions and working class parties, in the factories, the schools, the mines and the offices, new forces are slowly assembling and readying themselves for battle. Marx's ideas hold out the hope of a totally different, exciting future and explain how to make it a reality. The Dead Man with the Beard is more relevant, more modern, more of our age than a thousand clean shaven, slick, cynical career politicians. We are confident that the coming century will be his and ours.

# 6 NEWS

## ABORTION: FOR A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE!

**EVERY YEAR** thousands of young women find themselves with an unplanned pregnancy; the result of a night of drinking, lack of contraception, rape, or for some their first sexual activity becomes their worst nightmare.

The choice about what to do is seemingly very simple:

Have the child or have an abortion. Easy decision!?

As with every other major decision we make, the choice will depend on your family, your economic independence, where you live, who you know and in the case of abortion, what your doctors' personal beliefs are.

### Whose decision?

For most young women the decision is made for them by their family. 'No abortion you're having the child... you have to take responsibility for what you've done.... that's what you get for being a tart..we raised you better than that;' add a healthy dose of religion and you've got an all too familiar story. The result is many young women have to drop out of school maybe to return after a year, with most having almost no likelihood

of ever going on to further education. Ahead is a life of struggle, low paid work and all too often poverty.

If you're older, have 'understanding, progressive' parents or you're relatively independent abortion may be an option. Again the decision is not yours to make.

Under the Abortion Act (passed in 1967) you are allowed to have an abortion up to 24 weeks but the Act requires that two doctors believe that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risks to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman, or any existing children that would exceed the damage if the pregnancy was terminated . . . Account may be taken of the pregnant woman's actual or foreseeable environment.

The Act denies women the basic right to choose. Access to abortion remains restricted to those women who can find doctors willing to agree to an abortion, and then made more traumatic by waiting lists for NHS abortions or having to raise the money for a private abortion.

The decision to continue or to terminate a pregnancy, for whatever reasons - social,

economic, physical or mental - should be the woman's alone. It is her body and her life that is involved. It should be her choice, free of compulsion from any outside agency.

Abortion should be free and women should have access to abortion when they want it, with no waiting time, and with adequate state funded facilities. Contraception and information on contraception should be freely available to all regardless of age.

Britain already has one of the most restrictive abortion laws in western Europe, yet MPs like Alton, Peacock and Winterton are making use of the current abortion scare stories to build support for bringing yet another anti-abortion bill to the autumn Parliament. Should this happen, Revo will campaign not only against any such bill, but for:

- Free abortion on demand, on the NHS
- A woman's right to choose
- Free contraception on demand regardless of age.



## CLINTON: BOMBING HIS WAY BACK TO THE WHITE HOUSE

**WHY DO** you think that Bill Clinton attacked Iraq at the beginning of September?

Maybe it was because he didn't like the fact that Saddam Hussein, with his 300 tanks, aided the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) to take over the city of Arbil, which was held by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), a rival to the KDP. Was Clinton trying to defend the Kurds against Saddam Hussein? Or was he trying to boost his ratings before the US elections in November? Clearly this was an important factor- Clinton doesn't care if Iraqi forces and KDP soldiers execute members of the PUK.

American presidents have always pretended to show sympathy for the Kurds when they need to bring Iraq back into line, but when the Kurds no longer have a purpose, they look the other way while the Kurds are butchered.

The U.S. and Britain say they want Saddam Hussein out because he is a dictator who oppresses his own people. But when he was their ally they didn't say anything. Since the Gulf War they have refused to end their embargo on Iraq that has killed hundreds of thousand ordinary Iraqis, who starved or died for lack of medicine.

Clinton said that he was protecting the U.S. pilots patrolling the "No Fly Zones" when he attacked Iraq a second time. John Major gave full Britain's full support. These Zones are only patrolled to defend the profits of their big oil companies in the region. Like all imperialists, they will do whatever it takes to defend the profitability of its interests abroad. Along with Japan and other European countries, they will fight to defend their world-wide exploitation, and their own profit above the needs of the masses.

Saddam oppresses the Kurds and the Iraqi people, so he also fights for power above human need. However, there is a BIG difference between Iraq and imperialist countries like the U.S. and Britain- Iraq is ultimately too weak to throw off the control of these more powerful, countries.

Because of this we have to support the Iraqis against attacks from imperialist countries. We demand the removal of the U.S., and all other imperialist military forces from Iraq and the Gulf, who are clearly not protecting the Kurdish people from attack. We call for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops and tanks from the Kurdish areas and to stop the KDP and Iraqi soldiers killing members of the PUK. We call for support for the Kurds in their struggle for the right to decide whether or not they want to be an independent state, without interference from either Iraq or the US.

# STRIKES 7

Delivery Centre

Visitors report to dockkeeper  
Staff passes to be worn

Royal Mail  
London  
Headquarters

Staff entrance



## THEIR FIGHT IS OUR FIGHT

OVER THE last few years young people have been at the forefront of campaigns against the injustices and abuses of the government and the rich. In movements against racism and fascism, resistance to police violence and repressive laws, the youth have been the most energetic and determined force.

But there has been one major weakness - in almost every case these campaigns have had little or no real support from the most important mass organisations in Britain - the trade unions. This is one of the main reasons why, despite the hard work and commitment of the people involved, so many struggles have ended in defeat.

Despite large campaigns, motorway building continues unchecked while the Tories cut back on public transport. The Criminal Justice Act is now law. The racist Immigration and Asylum Act is being implemented right now. The racist police who killed Brian Douglas, Shiji Lapite and Wayne Douglas have not been brought to justice. The police launched Operation 'Eagle Eye' in London, publicly admitting that it targets 'young black men'.

The basic problem is the downtrodden in our society - blacks, women, the unemployed, the low paid, lesbians and gays, youth - are divided. Our campaigns are cut off from one another. This isolation leaves us weak and less effective than we could be.

We all need to unite with our strongest weapon, the workers in the trade unions.

These are our best allies. They are involved day-to-day in the frontline fight against exploitation. Most importantly, they are organised on the large scale necessary to give themselves the power to confront the power of the employers. Unison, the biggest union in Britain, alone has over a million and a half workers. Unions in industry can shut down production and so hit the bosses

where it hurts, their profits; public sector workers can stop laws like the Immigration and Asylum Act from working, by refusing to screen applicants by nationality, and threatening strike action if any dole or housing employee is victimised for doing so. This is the base of our power as a class.

The problem is that a lot of young people today do not instinctively turn to the labour movement as their natural allies.

Some are discontented with establishment 'politics', including the trade unions, which they see as part of the problem. Until a few months ago there had been very few strikes over the last years. There was therefore very little to inspire young people to look to the union movement. Hundreds of thousands of young people are in small workplaces and temporary jobs which are not unionised. Worst of all, the unions' public face, the middle-aged men in suits in the leadership, seem not to be bothered about many of the problems which affect youth in Britain today.

But the bureaucrats who draw fat salaries from running the unions are very different from the millions of working class people who make up their mass membership. It is these millions that need to be drawn into united struggle against every instance of injustice and oppression.

The best time to form strong links with the labour movement is when the unions are themselves in struggle. That is when ideas begin to change.

An important struggle is going on right now. 500 Liverpool dockers have been out on strike for a whole year. Sacked because they refused to cross a picket line of fellow workers, they are fighting for their union and against casual labour. Meanwhile the official leaders of the Transport and General Workers Union have done as little as possible to back the strike.

The dockers have gone further. To hit their employers hard they have linked up with other dockworkers around the world. Now they have mounted a campaign against massive human rights abuses by the Turkish state against the working class and the whole Kurdish people. Ideas change in struggle - lessons are learned, new and broader struggles are launched.

Now Reclaim the Streets, a campaign against traffic pollution and for decent public transport, has linked up with a union struggle. It has called a joint march and direct action in support of the Liverpool Dockers on 28 September. This is a crucial shift. Once workers take action young people will rally to their support.

The dockers used to strike on behalf of nurses over cuts in the NHS, and refused to unload ships to apartheid South Africa. Now we need to support their fight to maintain the union. Nor should they stop there. They should back the Post Office strikes, where management wants to weaken the union and worsen working conditions.

Working class action is the key to winning lasting change. The workers are the overwhelming majority in this society - they have the power to turn the world upside down.

That is why REVOLUTION argues that every campaign for real improvements and change should make it a priority to win support from trade unionists. In the unions themselves we stand for the creation of a rank and file movement to win back control of the unions for the ordinary members and break the hold of the bureaucrats. Above all we are fighting to build a mass movement of working class youth as part of a new political party, one that can unite our whole class in the fight against all oppression.

# REVOLUTION

THE FIGHTING PAPER FOR WORKING CLASS YOUTH

## RECLAIMING THE STREETS



**THE MARCH** called by Reclaim the Streets in Liverpool on 28 September is a big step forward.

For the first time in many years, a large campaign involving thousands of youth have linked up with an important section of the working class movement: the 500 sacked Liverpool Dockers who have been on strike for 12 months. This action must be the start of a drive to rally young people all over the country to support for the dockers and every other section of workers doing battle with the Tory government and the employers - from London Underground to the Post Office. Strikers can only gain in confidence from the fact that while Blair rushes to distance himself from them, the youth are on their side.

This move towards linking up with the working class has also been seen in the cyclists' movement Critical Mass, who held a mass action over the summer to back a tube strike on the same day.

Movements like Reclaim the Streets can

now use the fact they have given solidarity to workers to get their own demands raised within the trade unions and win support from organised workers.

This means setting out the demands of the campaign in a clearer way. The dangerous and polluting chaos of inner city traffic systems can be made into a thing of the past only if the state is forced to fund a massive improvement of the public transport system. To pay for cheaper trains and tube lines, more buses and improved services, we need to raise the call across the union movement for a huge tax on the super-rich and an integrated transport system. Companies that pollute the atmosphere should be forced to pay to clean up the damage and introduce safer methods of production. Building projects and urban planning should be under the democratic control of committees of workers and residents, not the wreckers in the boardrooms and the corridors of power.

Calling for an end to the use of cars alto-

gether, on the other hand, is pointless. For millions of working class people, driving is the cheapest and quickest way of getting to and from work, doing the shopping, collecting the kids from school. Calling for the abolition of the motor car could never win the support of millions of working class people. Worse still, treating working class drivers as the enemy would be completely wrong. They are not: the enemy is the government and big business. More state funding and more democratic planning could make the traffic system safer and cleaner without abolishing cars.

But to get that we need to take power out of the hands of the corporations and their political backers. Human need has to take priority over private greed. That is why supporters of Reclaim the Streets should now take their backing for the dockers a crucial step further - and join the fight to overthrow the capitalist system and replace it with socialism and working class power.