

REVOLUTION

THE FIGHTING PAPER FOR WORKING CLASS YOUTH

CANING, CURFEWS, TAGGING CHILDREN, EXCLUSIONS . . .

SICK TORY MORALITY

SUDDENLY, EVERYONE is blaming young people for the problems in our society.

The millionaire press have launched a campaign for "moral values". After the killing of head teacher Phillip Lawrence they have decided that young people can't tell right from wrong. They will bring in lessons in "citizenship" to help us understand how to be decent people.

All the political parties followed suit. Desperate for votes, they are whipping up a campaign against young people, playing on the fears of the elderly and the smart middle classes. Education Minsiter Gillian Shepherd wants to bring back caning. Labour has promised to bring in "fast-track sentencing" to get young people sent down quicker through the courts. A terrible witch-hunt has begun against children with disturbed behaviour, blaming them for being a nuisance rather than providing them with a special education. And even more sinister ideas are being brought forward. Labour's Jack Straw wants a curfew to stop young people going out at night. There will be new laws to stop young peo-

ple drinking in the street. And now the Tories are even proposing to put electronic tags on children as young as 10 if they commit an offence!

Where will it end?

REVOLUTION is a paper that speaks out for young people. It is one of the only papers in the country written by young people, for young people. And we will not let this campaign of lying and slanders go unanswered.

The whole campaign against young people is designed to cover up what is really happening in Britain today. We are being made into scapegoats for the failure of the Tories and their system. And Labour is playing the 'Tories' game. If they were really bothered about the problems facing young people today, then instead of wanting to beat us, jail us, tag us, expel us, and lock us indoors then they would:

- restore our benefits. The Tories have driven young people to desperation and crime by axing all dole money and benefits for 16 and 17 year olds.
- bring in a minimum wage of £6 an hour.

This would get families out of poverty, and end the disgusting situation where over 3 million kids are living below the poverty line

- stop cutting education. Special schools and resources for children with special needs.
- Reduce class sizes to 25.
- Give us rights. They say we're irresponsible but give us no responsibility. We want votes at 16 and democratic involvement of school students in running our schools, along with teachers and parents.
- Tax the rich to spend billions on new jobs building hospitals and schools, and to throw open the clubs, sports centres and stadiums to free access for the poorest youth.

The official politicians, fawning to the rich, up to their eyeballs in corruption, are lecturing us about "morals" while they starve, batter and rob the poorest children and youth. It's not us who are sick. It's them! We'll give them a lesson a morality - by building a movement of working class youth prepared to take action to bring down their whole disgusting system. ■

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2 NEWS

By Andy: South London

JSA: UNITE AND FIGHT!

THE NEW Jobseeker's Allowance is an attack on the whole working class, especially youth. As our education options are cut, jobs become worse and pay goes down, the dole is for many of us a last refuge from having to work for £3 an hour at Macdonald's. The JSA cuts it still further. Worse still, the JSA is just a first step. The Tories are seriously thinking about forcing the unemployed to work a full week for their dole money: a week's work for £45!

New Labour under Tony Blair has pledged to keep the JSA in place if they're elected, and even supports work-for-your-dole schemes. We need to start the fight-back ourselves.

To break the JSA we need to focus on the two groups of workers that are at the heart of it, the unemployed claimants and the workers in the dole offices who process their claims.

People in a work-place see each other every day, work side by side, chat on breaks or in the pub, and often unite in protecting their jobs and wages in a union branch. Claimants usually don't know the rest of the people signing-on. So it's difficult to organise claimants (not that the bureaucrats who

run our trade unions have ever tried). In the present, we can leaflet claimants coming out of dole offices or talk to friends, to build an unemployed workers movement: this will then have to fight for backing from the trade unions, getting workers to vote to support and fund it and make it part of the union movement.

But to stop the JSA we will have to make it unworkable. That means getting dole workers on our side refusing to implement the JSA. Many are already doing so as individuals, not hassling us the way their supposed to under the JSA. But they are under huge pressure.

Management has been cutting jobs and conditions in the Benefits Agency for years. Casuals from private employment agencies are increasingly being used to undercut permanent staff. Those permanent staff remaining are being given new 'job descriptions', forcing them to do more work, while massive cuts in the future of up to 30,000 jobs are quietly ticking away. Management are using this threat to bully these workers, keeping them from fighting back, and pressuring them to put the JSA into effect.

Some of these workers do have a bad atti-

tude; management has seen to that, offering bonuses for getting people off dole-lists and into jobs, and playing up employees' fears of increased violence from desperate claimants. Those workers who don't play ball, especially if they talk to anti-JSA leafletters, are publicly told off and threatened (guess who will get laid off first at the next round of sackings in the ES?). This way workers are divided from each other and from us.

Leafletting workers is a start; ultimately, as the campaign builds, we should link up with militants in the CPSA union (the main union in the ES) so we can support any action, such as strikes, they take to defend themselves from management. More importantly, we can find out which firms are using the JSA, getting us in as cheap labour to undercut their own workers. Then we can do what unemployed workers did in the 1930's, leafletting a workplace and cooperating with the workers inside it to occupy it.

Organise the unemployed and link up with workers in the unions, to build a joint fight: that way we'll crack the JSA.■

RECLAIMING THE DOCKS

REVO WAS up in Liverpool 4 weeks back to support the Liverpool dockers on the one year anniversary of their strike. They came together with a group that organises against traffic and motorways, Reclaim the Streets, for a demo on the Saturday and an "action" on the Monday, September 30th.

The demonstration was good and loud, lots of drumming and shouting. Turkish and Kurdish trade unionists provided a lot of support. Speakers from REVOLUTION, the Dockers and Reclaim the Streets were all well received.

RTS had opened up a squat for the weekend for everyone to stay in till the Monday, so while the police watched in cars from the outside everyone partied on the inside- a good mix of fun and talking politics. A lot of youth are around RTS, and they are especially radical, hating the system and committed to fighting back against the bosses and police. Many of them had had shit off the police in the past or been nicked, so many had no illusions in 'reform'. There was a constant lively exchange of views between REVOLUTION and RTS supporters

When Monday came everyone was ready and serious. We woke up early to beat the

police to the picketline. 2 teams from RTS had already got into the docks and occupied a gantry and the roof of one of the buildings, with cops and managers clustered beneath, unable to get them down and very unamused.

Everyone went to the picket and into action. The dockers were there in force, as they have been every day for a year, and it was really good seeing them and all these youth, who have had little experience of the labour movement and vice versa, mixing and having a laugh together, getting to know each other before the actions began. All day we rattled the police's cage, jumping gates to get into the docks, cutting through fences, taking over the road to stop trucks from entering the docks, constantly shouting 'scabs out! dockers in!'

In the end, though the cops were well exercised by us, they evened it up, nicking over 40 of us, and beating the shit out of a couple of activists that they'd targetted, running a lighter under their bare arms while they were handcuffed in the vans, also known as torture. They just pulled up alongside us as we were walking home, waded into the crowd, who just sort of looked on, and nicked them.

REVOLUTION supporters were able to take a full part in the action and speak and contribute in the mass meetings that discussed and planned the weekend's action. Some RTS supporters had been opposed to supporting the dockers, but they were thankfully a minority. There will be loads more strikes in the years to come, and they will need support from many more young people.

Stunts and occupations are a good way of raising publicity. But at the end of the day, as REVOLUTION supporters pointed out, the key to winning this dispute is closing the docks and winning solidarity strike action. The police were extremely violent, which means that in future we will need organised self-defence so we can resist the police and give as good as we get. When one REVOLUTION supporter proposed this at a meeting last month in London, Jimmy Nolan, one of the dockers' leaders, backed us up. It is an idea whose time has come.

It was a fucking awesome picket, and with the dockers and their families waving us goodbye we bussed it back to our home towns smiling like mad and well happy. Join us on the next one! Monday November 25th. The struggle continues.■

FREE EDUCATION

By Adam Warwick Uni.

THERE WAS a time when student life was just ... toast, lectures, beer, more toast, and more beer. But times have changed, and not for the better! Nowadays, pressures on students are getting worse by the day, and not just because of course deadlines.

Even though education should be an automatic right, it has turned into another way of making money. This means that services are cut down to the minimum and that students are having to pay more and more. Unfortunately, we are also being given less and less.

The Tories have been reducing government spending on ordinary people, preferring to give the rich tax bonuses or to fund new arms deals, and leave us with the minimum benefits possible. Students no longer have the right to any benefits, and any grants we do get are so low they don't even cover the rent. They are being cut year by year, by 30% in the last 3 years. This means that we are forced, through no choice of our own, into getting out Student Loans. From the age of 18 we can now be into long-lasting debt, at least £5000 by the time we leave university.

Making profit is also done by bringing in more students. This means that we are crammed, in our hundreds, into tiny classrooms for lessons which don't have time for questions - let alone getting to know lecturers properly (or them remembering your name). On top of this, all other services, like libraries, are left unchanged, suitable for universities with a third the number of students, with definitely no extra textbooks.

With Higher Education in a state like this you would expect our union, the NUS, to fight for a decent level of education for all. This is not the case! Instead, it is following its political buddies in the Labour Party and saying that "we should accept some student contribution".

Students should not have to pay a penny for the right to education - it should not be left to the privileged who can pay "top-up" fees with parents getting fat-cat pay deals. If the rich were taxed properly there would be enough money for all the services that people use, from university books to public toilets and a decent minimum wage.

We want a properly funded, free education system, alongside a fighting NUS, to make sure that students are not left in debt for the rest of their lives, but fight in the struggle for a better future. This is why we will be supporting and joining the strike by university staff on the 19th November and calling for all student unions to go on the demonstration for Free Education on the 20th.

We can show this and all future governments, as well as any university management, that we will continue fighting for free education, uniting to show our strength. ■

CRISIS IN THE SCHOOLS

THERE IS a crisis in our schools, everyone agrees. But what is the reason?

The Tories say it is because of a breakdown of discipline. Mrs Lawrence, widow of the murdered head teacher, agrees. We need classes in citizenship, caning, smarter uniforms. Teachers have been blamed for being no good, or even for being too scruffy!

Of course there is a crisis. The reason is that the Tories have been spending less and less money on the schools. Discipline has collapsed in some classes because special schools have been closed and children with serious problems and disturbed behaviour no longer have the resources needed to help them get an education. Classes are harder to teach not because some teachers have ear-rings (what a pathetic idea!), but because some have as many as 40 students in them!

The Tories' answer to all of this is to ignore the real issues, in case everyone starts demanding more money for education, which would mean taxing the rich. And the Tories are the party of the rich. Instead they blame the youth and the teachers. Even parents are now to be punished for the bad behaviour of their children. The only people who never get punished are the Tories themselves.

At the same time as calling for less violence on TV in case it makes young people more violent (as if we can't tell the difference between fact and fiction), the Tories propose . . . beating children with long wooden sticks. The very fact that in 1996 the Tories want to take us back to the brutality of schools in the past shows how they have no answers to the problems of the present.

Older people might go on sometimes about how discipline's not what it used to be, but ask your grandparents what schools were like before the war and you will hear a grim tale of violence and inhumanity. Young people today are not going to put up with being taught by people who dress and act like Victorian Dad out of Viz. That's not immorality. It's intelligence.

It is just not fair to blame students, even very disruptive ones, like 10 year old Matthew Wilson. A moment's honest investigation reveals why he is disruptive. It is not because he is evil. It is because three close members of his family all died, including his father, and his mother is suffering from cancer. He needs more help, not less. Instead of exclusions, we want more money

for special schools. But teachers cannot be expected to cope with this without more money, more resources, and that means taxing the rich.

A TALE OF TWO MRS LAWRENCE.

There are two Mrs Lawrences. Both have suffered a terrible loss. Both have started a campaign about it. But that is where the similarity ends.

One Mrs Lawrence is white and middle class. Her husband was killed by members of a young gang. The police quickly found the killers. There was nationwide sympathy and a memorial service for her husband. She issued a manifesto calling for more respect for the police and greater discipline. Every major politician agreed. Everyone knows who she is.

The other Mrs Lawrence is black and working class. Her son was killed by a gang of white racists. The police knew who the killers were but never brought them to trial. She issued statements attacking the police and the criminal justice system for not caring about the fate of black people. No major politician agreed. Everyone is busy trying to forget that she ever existed.

JOIN REVOLUTION!

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4 DEAD MEN WITH BEARDS

LENIN

This issue of *REVOLUTION* continues our series on thinkers and fighters of the past whose ideas helped shape the revolutionary movement and the world we live in today. The last *REVOLUTION* dealt with the life and ideas of Karl Marx. This time we print the first of two articles looking at the life and ideas of Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, better known as Lenin.

By Richard: South London.

LENIN WAS born in 1870 in what was then the Russian Empire. His family background was not poor: his father came from the lower ranks of the nobility. But there is no doubt that many of his closest relatives hated the government and the system. Lenin's brother Alexander was a member of a terrorist group that tried to assassinate the Tsar - the sole ruler of Russia. They failed and in 1887 Alexander was hanged.

Though Lenin never mentioned this incident in public, it must have played an important role in shaping his future life. That year he began to study the ideas of past Russian revolutionaries and started to make contact with underground movements. From them he learned the techniques of organising in secret: how to write in invisible ink, how to distribute illegal literature, how to maintain contact when in prison, how to evade informers and police. But while Lenin greatly admired the courage and commitment of the conspirators in the underground, he was determined to avoid their mistakes and failures. He turned instead to the new communist theories of Marx and Engels that were already winning mass support abroad, especially in Germany.

Russia was a very backward country. The overwhelming majority of the Russian people were peasants, eking out a desperate living on the land. Millions had no land of their own, and had to slave away for the rich landlords.

But alongside this medieval system, new industries were spreading like wildfire. A modern working class, concentrated in massive foreign-owned factories, was beginning to organise in the cities.

Russian Social-Democrats

Lenin joined the Social-Democratic movement. This was made up of a

small group of writers living abroad, and circles of Marxist students and intellectuals working in secret in Russia. Unlike the other radical movements in Russia, the Marxist Social Democrats turned their attention to the new industrial working class. They set up illegal circles to teach modern ideas and socialist theories to workers, many of whom had only just arrived from the countryside and could scarcely read or write. Then they went on to agitate among the workers for action against the terrible conditions in the factories, against the laws that the factory owners used to keep the workers down, and against the dictatorship of the Tsar.

A wave of strikes in the 1890s brought thousands more workers into political life and into contact with the Marxists. From these circles of workers a new political party came into being: the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, or RSDLP.

Lenin emerged as a young leader in close contact with the movement in Russia. But after being arrested, jailed and exiled, he escaped and spent most of the rest of his life abroad. There he was able to keep in touch with the Marxist movement in other countries. This enabled him to take a broad, international view of the working class movement and its tasks, and never to fall prey to narrow nationalism. As we shall see, this was crucial to Lenin's later political development and to the scale of his achievement.

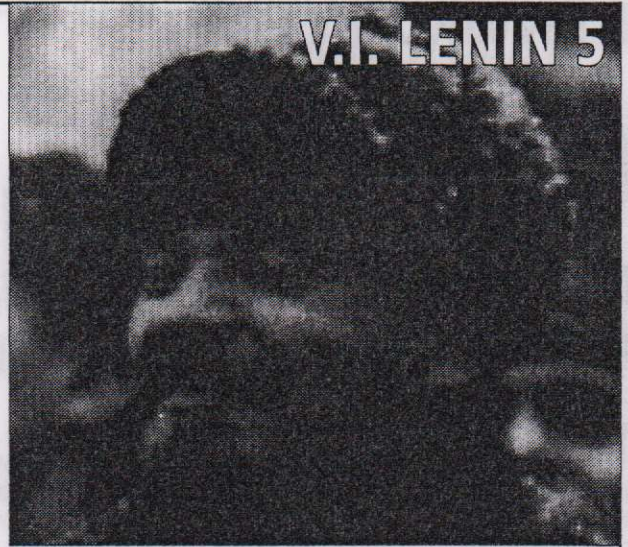
Revolutionary party

In his early years Lenin fought hard against all trends and ideas which he thought would weaken the struggle of the working class. Through the newspaper *Iskra* ("the Spark"), he argued against the strategy of assassinating officials and politicians - individual terrorism - and instead insisted that it would take a mass revolution, not just the bullets and bombs of a brave hand-

ful, to overthrow the Tsarist system. Under Lenin's influence *Iskra* campaigned against the ideas of the "Economists" within the RSDLP, who believed that the party should limit itself to encouraging strikes for better pay and conditions. Instead Lenin argued that the party should champion the rights of all the oppressed and exploited peoples of the world. Instead of trailing behind the spontaneous ideas of the workers, *Iskra* wanted the new party to raise their courageous struggles to higher, political goals: the overthrow of the Tsar and the fight for socialism.

Lenin insisted that without overcoming amateurism, and establishing a disciplined, professional party, it would be impossible to overthrow the Tsarist state, with its trained army and secret police. He stressed that a single newspaper for the whole of Russia would enable the party to link struggles together, exert influence and direct the efforts of the working class towards a common goal. The party would need the most widespread democracy within its ranks: without this it would be impossible to check the ideas and the actions of its leaders, and to ensure that the party really reflected the ideas and experiences of the masses. At the same time, once decisions had been made, all party members should carry them out: the party should strike like a fist, with the maximum effectiveness. This principle - democracy in discussion, unity in practice - later became known as democratic centralism. It was one of Lenin's most important contributions to the techniques of organising for revolution.

In 1903, the RSDLP split into two factions: the Bolsheviks ('majority') led by Lenin, and the Mensheviks ('minority'), led by Martov and other older leaders of Russian Marxism. By 1912 these two factions had developed into completely separate parties. The differ-



ence between the two groups must have appeared very narrow at first: the split began when the Mensheviks refused to accept the democratic decision of the party conference to remove some of their leaders from the editorial board of *Iskra*. But behind this lay a far more substantial difference.

The Mensheviks believed that the working class should rely on the liberal wing of the capitalists to overthrow the Tsar and establish democracy. The Bolsheviks by contrast believed that the working class should stay independent at all times, and should aim to play the leading role itself in the revolution, the better to defeat the capitalists in the years to come.

Soviets

In 1905 the storm broke. A peaceful march to the Tsar's palace was drowned in blood as the army opened fire on the workers, killing men, women and children. All hell broke loose. The Russian workers launched the biggest General Strike in history: their calls for bread quickly broadened into demands for free speech, a parliament and a republic. Most important of all, the workers set up a new form of organisation: the Soviets. These democratic councils brought workers together from every industry and area. The workers' delegates were directly elected, and could be recalled at any time. They organised the struggle and showed the way in which the working class could organise society itself. They were the seeds of a future working class state.

In many areas the soviets limited themselves to strike action and defending themselves from the police. But in Moscow the Bolsheviks had real influence. Lenin argued for an armed uprising against the Tsar.

He wrote to Bolshevik activists:

"... contingents may be of any strength, beginning with two or three people. They must arm themselves as best they can (rifles, revolvers, bombs, knives, knuckle dusters, sticks, rags soaked in kerosene for starting fires, ropes or rope ladders, shovels for building barricades, pyroxylin cartridges, barbed wire, nails against cavalry etc".

The Soviet rose and fought courageously, but by December 17 they had been defeated. The Menshevik leaders drew from this the conclusion that the masses should never have taken to arms. Lenin disagreed:

"On the contrary, they should have taken to arms more resolutely, energetically and aggressively; we should have explained to the masses that it was impossible to confine things to a peaceful strike and that a fearless and relentless armed fight was necessary."

The years following the defeat of the 1905 revolution were hard ones for Marxists. Every reverse for the working class movement inevitably finds its reflection in a decline of revolutionary ideas. During the following years of repression, Lenin fought against two trends in the RSDLP which would have prevented the revolution from succeeding if they had been allowed to grow unchecked.

The first of these was a right-wing trend. A grouping of the most extreme Mensheviks - the "Liquidators" - decided that the RSDLP's secret underground organisation should be dissolved. In its place they wanted to concentrate on building a legal party alone. Lenin opposed this fiercely, convincing the party as a whole to reject this as an attempt to abandon the job of revolution and fight only for peaceful reforms.

The second trend that Lenin fought against was an ultra-left current within the Bolshevik faction. They argued the opposite of the Liquidators: that the RSDLP should concentrate only on underground work, and refuse to take advantage of any legal opportunities. In particular they opposed the participation of the RSDLP in elections to the Duma, Russia's parliament.

Communist politicians

Lenin regarded this as a dangerous mistake. The party should use elections to gather support and spread its message. It's MPs, however, should be completely different from the usual breed of privileged politicians. They should be working class, and go to the Duma dressed in their ordinary clothes, treating all the ceremony and show of parliament with contempt. They were to use their position as a platform for exposing the Tsar and calling on the workers outside parliament to rise up in struggle.

Lenin's stress on the need to combine legal and illegal work was extremely successful. When the workers' movement began to recover with a wave of mass strikes in 1912, the Bolshevik faction was far more representative of workers' groups on the ground than the Mensheviks or the Liquidators. The Bolsheviks finally established themselves as a completely separate party.

Everything seemed set for a final confrontation with Tsarism. But then, in 1914, the whole of Europe plunged into the chaos and mass murder of World War One. Of all the Social-Democratic and working class parties of Europe, only one stood firm against nationalism and war: the Bolsheviks. ■

In part 2:

Lenin 1914-24: From war to revolution!

6 ENVIRONMENT

CARS

CAN'T LIVE WITH THEM, CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT THEM?

THE EIGHTIES saw steady media coverage of the seriousness of environmental destruction throughout the world. Growing evidence of the increasing Greenhouse Effect showed how the rich industrialised countries and the big corporations were responsible for terrible destruction of the global environment. At the heart of the problem is the burning of fossil fuels, as well as slashing and burning of rainforests; other causes are the increasing dependence on the car in "first world" countries and the involvement of the World Bank in clearing Amazonian rainforests for the benefit of foreign investment. In other words, everything that is key to producing profits for the owners of the huge multinational companies.

Many predicted that these environmental campaigns were to be just another passing phase. A few years and everyone will forget car pollution, nuclear waste and the depleting ozone layer, they claimed. How wrong they were. Continuing campaigns around "green" and related issues has meant that even mainstream politicians have to pay lip service to environmental protection.

It's no wonder. People can't ignore environmental degradation. We live amidst it every day. Traffic jams in all major cities. Road accidents killing tens of thousands. Asthma steadily increasing. One third of all Australians will get some form of skin cancer in their lifetime because of ozone layer depletion.

Here in the UK there has been a steady increase in anti-roads campaigns. Not sur-

prising really. No-one can ignore the damage caused by cars; smog, noise, lead poisoning, lung disease and the list goes on.

So what is the answer? Some see the car, in and of itself, as the problem, or even the main cause of all these problems. But this is quite simply, a limited view. The heart of the problem lies with city planning and the fact that capitalist profit is easier to draw from the selling and use of privately owned cars, than from the development and use of public transport. And the government is so keen on protecting the interests of the car and petroleum industries, that it continues to spend more taxpayers' money on building roads and subsidising car related services, than it does on public transport.

A good invention?

But we must remember that cars are still a great invention. Who can honestly say they don't enjoy the freedom of owning or driving a car. Anyone who's had to endure isolation and drudgery in small towns or the sprawling suburbs of big cities, will understand the huge desire to escape, to travel; even if it's just for a night of clubbing or a trip to the coast or countryside. Cars have been a great advance for human society, allowing us to travel faster and cover further distances. Along with communication technology, transportation has enabled us to become an increasingly global society (for those that get access to this technology).

And cars could continue to be a benefit to society, even in crowded cities. Hydrogen cars, for example, have already been developed by several companies and can be equipped with sensors to monitor the

road and surrounding vehicles. A single lane of an automated highway could carry at least 6,000 vehicles per hour (three times more than a conventional highway), while 'drivers' simply sit back and read a book. Accidents would be reduced by at least a half. (New Internationalist, No 269, July 1995). Also, car pooling systems and fast track lanes for cars with four or more passengers would be easier to extend. This is in stark contrast to the image we now have of clogged highways, fumes, noise, smog and future climatic disaster.

But such advances in transportation are unlikely to ever be introduced under the profit driven system we are forced to live our lives under. Especially when the car and petroleum companies actually "own" this sort of technology.

One solution!

Ultimately, there is only one way to protect the environment from destruction and the results of multinational competition for profit Human society - the cities, towns and communities, the distribution and production of goods - must be run collectively and democratically by the workers of the world.

Only under a fully democratic and planned economy, can we finally benefit from our technological advances, instead of living as slaves to them. The real enemy is not technology itself - not the car, not the factory, not the computer, not the nuclear power plant - the real enemies are those that own and control the technology and technological research: the capitalists. The force that can defend our environment and make the world a place fit for human beings is those that have the collective power to hit the capitalists where it really hurts - by withdrawing their labour that produces profit in the first place.

That is why *Revolution* welcomes the involvement of "Reclaim the Streets" and other environmental campaigners in supporting the struggle of the Liverpool Dockers and Underground workers. While we do not share their blanket opposition to all cars and roads, their turn to the working class movement is a massive step forward for anyone who wants to stop the profiteers wrecking our planet and our future. ■



PALESTINE

YOUTH RISE AGAIN

INTERNATIONAL 7

By Tom: South London.

ON THE 23rd of September Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, opened a tunnel which runs under the Muslim al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. This was the last straw for Palestinian youth who have faced months of provocation from Israel. They took to the streets of Ramallah two days later hurtling stones and petrol bombs at the Israeli army, who used plastic bullets and tear gas against them. Then Palestinian police came under fire from the Israeli soldiers, and fired back, but they did this to defend themselves, not the youth. Although the Palestinian police have become notorious for attacking radical Palestinian youths, this was just too much. They fired back.

The fighting spread on the 26th, with Israeli soldiers exchanging fire with armed Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip. The Israeli government sent in tanks for the first time since 1967. The West Bank and Gaza were closed off after the fighting, preventing thousands of Palestinian workers from going to work in Israel and so leaving them and their families to starve. This is a deliberate punishment by the Israeli state, meant to demoralize a large section of Palestinians and force them to end the uprising.

Netanyahu blames the Palestinian youth for the trouble, saying that they provoked the Israeli soldiers. This is rubbish: the greatest provocation of all is the presence of thousands of Israeli troops on Palestinian territory.

The recent peace deal commits the Palestinians to accepting Israel, but only in return for a completely toothless Palestine National Authority (PNA), which has less power than the average town council and leaves control in Israel's hands.

As if this were not bad enough, the Israeli government is using the flare-up to extract yet more concessions. Before the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Arab town of Hebron, Netanyahu is demanding more troops to 'protect' the 450 armed Jewish fundamentalists who are occupying the centre of the Arab city of Hebron, which has 94,000 Arab inhabitants.

He wants the Israeli army to be allowed to enter PNA controlled areas whenever they want. And, most hypocritical of all, he is demanding that the PNA police who fired

back at the Israeli soldiers be identified and punished.

Netanyahu is the leader of the right-wing, racist Likud party which won the elections in May 1996. One of his first acts in office was bulldozing Arab homes and building houses for Jewish people in Jerusalem. As one of Netanyahu's officials said "Every time the Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat says Jerusalem is his, we will respond by building thousands of homes for Jews."

No wonder Palestinian youth are so angry. The peace deal agreed by their leaders in the PLO has brought them nothing. Israel continues to occupy land that it drove 750,000 Palestinians out of in 1948-9. It was in that year that Israel was set up, based on the fact that the previous minority of Jewish people in the country became a majority when Arabs were expelled, terrorised and literally driven from their farms, villages and homes.

Since then things have got worse. Israel seized ever more Arab land. It grabbed east Jerusalem, the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights. It has invaded neighbouring Lebanon time and again, organising terrible massacres of refugees. It is building more and more Jewish settlements on the occupied West bank to try and make its conquest irreversible.

Young Palestinians are totally fed up with the PLO leaders, whose policy of compromise offers nothing but humiliation. That's why many of them are turning to the Islamic movement Hamas, which speaks of a totally uncompromising fight against Israel. But Hamas is not the answer. Instead of just opposing the Israeli state and the Jewish nationalists ('Zionists'), it preaches a crude anti-Jewish message which can be just as racist as the the Israeli government's propaganda against Arabs. It wants to build an Islamic state, in which women would be forced to wear the veil, other religions would not be tolerated, and democratic rights would not exist at all.

The answer is neither the useless compromises of Arafat and the PNA, nor the backward-looking right-wing policies of Hamas. The Palestinian workers and youth need a party of their own to fight for the overthrow of the Zionist state and a socialist republic in Palestine, in which the discrimination against Arabs is abolished and Arab and Jew can at last live together in peace. ■



Palestinian police forced into action by the uprising

...CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE

Much of the cash BP has used to fund its terror campaign came from cuts in its North Sea operations, which have lessened safety on the oil rigs and have left hundreds dead. We have to point out the links in this issue: between the environmental destruction, the military regime, the attacks on the working class movement and the whole world system that serves the interests of murdering multi-nationals instead of the people.

We won't let BP off the hook until this disgusting mass murder and destruction for profit is ended.

Watch this space for details of our mass demonstration against BP, being organised with the oil workers' union OILC, Colombian activists and Reclaim the Streets. We are going to make sure that whenever BP's is mentioned people think of blood, torture and murder. ■

Ring the BP Action Line at
REVOLUTION's office: 0171 357 0388

REVOLUTION

THE FIGHTING PAPER FOR WORKING CLASS YOUTH

BP HAS BLOOD ON ITS HANDS

By Dave: North London.

THE GIANT oil firm British Petroleum (BP) has been caught red-handed. They have not only caused terrible pollution in the South American country of Colombia: they have been working closely with the Colombian military to murder, torture and harass anyone who dares to stand against them.

BP controls oilfields in the Casnare region of Colombia. The oil there is worth around £23 billion at today's prices. That is a lot of money to be made and BP will stop at nothing to make sure they get it.

They don't care if it means polluting the area. Local people have reported:

- Fish floating dead in polluted rivers.
- Livestock blinded from grazing on poisoned fields.

BP's own officials have admitted that there are weekly oil spills, illegal work sites, water contamination and chemical overflows.

These officials also admit BP is involved in the invasion of protected forest as the company searches for more oil.

But this is not the worst of it. The Casnare people have organised against BP. They have demanded that some of the huge wealth being made from the oil is used to improve their lives, for better housing and schools. Inside BP operations the workers have tried to organise a trade union to make sure they get better wages and can work in reasonable conditions.

A human rights commission set up with officials from the Colombian government found out BP has been taking videos and photos of protestors and then handing these over to the 16th Brigade of the Colombian Army. This is a notorious death squad. It has been accused of massacring civilians, execution without trial, kidnap, torture and rape. Colombia has the highest murder rate in the world but this is not due to the cocaine drug barons as the press suggests. 52% of these murders were by the army and another 20% were carried out by right-wing death squads.



12 members of the Judicial enquiry shot dead while investigating killings and disappearances attributed to paramilitary groups and army personnel.

Many of those photographed by BP have since been murdered or have "disappeared".

The army has also been used to attack striking BP workers, breaking up pickets and firing on demonstrations. After one strike an organiser was dragged from his bed, beaten and left for dead. Attempts at organising a trade union shows just how brave these Colombian workers are. Their union Sindical Obrero has seen 30 of its members assassinated and another 200 have had to go into exile. The whole union now has to function in secret but they refuse to give in to the terror of the company and the military.

Meanwhile BP pays a \$1-a-barrel "war" tax to the Colombian government which goes to the army but in addition BP paid \$11.6 million as part of a voluntary "agreement of collaboration". Now BP has said it wants to donate even more money - £39 million - to the army to set up a squad of 650 elite troops to work with the 16th Brigade.

The human rights report has had to be secretly leaked so that the world can know what is going on. Both BP and the Colombian

government have conspired to stop it from being published. But Richard Howitt, a Labour member of the European Parliament, has taken it up. The Colombian environment minister's reaction to the evidence of pollution and the handing over of photos by BP was to say "... I say to you don't read, don't listen to the protesters. They are guerrillas." This is a desperate attempt to justify the murderous behaviour of the Army. BP have given a sweeping denial of the allegations, but can't answer the specific charges.

10 November marks the anniversary of the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa from the Ogoni people in Nigeria. He was murdered for leading the protest against Shell exploiting the natural wealth of the area, destroying the environment while none of the huge amounts of money being made was used to improve the lives of ordinary local people.

BP is doing the same thing. They have to be stopped. It is the responsibility of young people in Britain and around the world to expose what they are doing and keep BP in the spotlight.

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