

REVOLUTION

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THE FIGHTING PAPER FOR WORKING CLASS YOUTH

RACIST POLICE

RACIST STATE



WE FIGHT BACK!

The police are racist. We have known this for a long time, but now even Paul Condon, Jack Straw and Tony Blair have had to admit it.

The inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence, headed by retired High

Court judge Sir William Macpherson, labelled the police as "institutionally racist".

You only have to look at the facts to see that this is true:

The two police officers at the scene didn't offer any first aid to Stephen. They even stopped a medically trained passer by from helping him. As Stephen's mother, Doreen, said: "They didn't want to dirty their hands with a black man's blood."

Duwayne Brooks, one of Stephen's friends witnessed the murder. At the scene of the crime his description of the five suspects was ignored. PC Bethel's excuse was that

"He seemed to hate my guts". Duwayne was later arrested at an anti-racist demonstration in Welling by the same police force who had failed to arrest the five suspects.

The police claimed to have 'lost' important pieces of evidence and all police notes taken at the time. Evidence handed in by Doreen Lawrence was screwed up in front of her. There were a number of key witnesses who named the killers - the police refused to follow them up.

Revo demands that all those responsible are sacked and brought to justice now!

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FIGHT

BACK!



Reactionary Unionist Cops

In Northern Ireland the Unionists are saying that Sinn Fein is sabotaging the "peace process" because the IRA is refusing decommissioning (hand in their weapons). David Trimble, leader of the main Unionist Party the UUP has refused to allow the new assembly to go ahead. Blair has refused to challenge this, even though the peace agreement doesn't demand the IRA decommissions until May 2000! And he's backtracking on reform of the RUC, the 90% Protestant police force which works hand-in-glove with the 20,000 British troops and the loyalist death squads.

Two facts about the RUC

One: On 27 April 1997, Robert Hamill was kicked to death by a loyalist mob as he walked home from a Catholic social club in Portadown. His only crime was that he was Catholic. As he was being beaten, RUC officers just looked on from their Land Rover, only twenty yards off. 'He just lay there. They kicked and kicked. The four officers sat and watched. They did not get out. People banged on the side of the Land Rover and screamed at them to do

Stephen Lawrence

(continued from front page)

The Stephen Lawrence case is not the only one in which the police have been shown to be racist. Wayne Douglas, Ibrahima Sey, Shije Lapite, Brian Douglas and Joy Gardener have all died at the hands of the police. When Michael Menson was set alight by racists, the police said his death was a suicide. Ricky Reel was murdered by racists, but the police claimed his death was an accident. The media and politicians saw Stephen Lawrence as different. He came from a "respectable" family. He had aspirations to study and become an architect. Even the racist Daily Mail claimed him as "one of us" (though they now say Macpherson has "gone too far" and accuses him of "racial McCarthyism!")

New Labour want to introduce reforms aimed at diffusing the widespread anger amongst many black and Asians. But at the same time as saying that racism cannot be tolerated in the police, Jack Straw is pushing the racist Asylum and Immigration Bill through parliament. This will forcibly disperse refugees to hostels around the country, strip them of benefits and take away their right to appeal. The introduction of this bill has already encouraged a vicious hate campaign in the media against bogus

something', said one witness.

An ambulance finally arrived and the police got out of their armoured vehicle but no arrests were made and no crime was declared. When 6 men were later arrested, 5 were released because no I.D. parade had been held by the RUC, despite the existence of an eye-witness. As we go to press, we hear, the Hammill's fearless lawyer, Rosemary Nelson has been blown up by loyalist thugs. Is the UUP going to give up its places on the Executive Council now? We don't think so! Two: The RUC (along with the army) supplied loyalist gangs with "secret" information every day so they could target nationalists for them. John Philpott, of the Ulster Defence Association, said "I was getting that many documents I didn't know where to put them." The result is in 5 years loyalists killed 27 members of the IRA, Sinn Fein or their families (along with 105 Catholics, to terrorise the anti-unionist community into submission). The deputy leader of the UUP (Trimble's party) admitted "the loyalist paramilitaries achieved something which perhaps the security forces would never have achieved."

Disband the RUC

At a time when the so-called peace process is in crisis over the decommissioning of IRA weapons, *Revolution* asks why they should give up their arms when faced with murderous loyalist gangs and the armed repression of the British state? Peace cannot be achieved while it is imposed by the Unionists and their British masters. The RUC must be disbanded and British troops withdrawn. The IRA should keep their weapons, right now that's the only thing defending nationalist communities from loyalist attacks, as the murder of Robert Hamill clearly demonstrates.

Racist Police Racist State

asylum seekers. This in turn has contributed to a rise in anti-Albanian and anti-Romany racism on the streets. New Labour are not anti-racists, just hypocrites

Can the police be made anti-racist?

The job of the police is to maintain law and order and protect the state. This means defending the rule of the rich and powerful. When the exploited and oppressed inevitably fight back they come into conflict with the police. And because Black and Asian people live in some of the most deprived areas with the worst-funded schools, have less chance of getting a decent job and generally make up some of the poorest sections of the community - they will continue to be bashed up by the cops.

REVOLUTION welcomes any reforms which weaken the police in this ongoing battle but we warn that they can never be turned into an anti-racist force or made accountable to the people as a whole. The entire capitalist system is racist, as well as sexist, homophobic and anti-working class. The capitalist state - the police, the army, the education system, and so on - has to reinforce these values. That's its job. The only way to truly get rid of racism is to get rid of the system which created it and breeds it, capitalism.

Free Mumia!

Former Black Panther and radical black journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal faces the death penalty in the USA on the trumped up charge of killing a policeman, a crime which he did not commit. Friends and supporters say "he was the target of a frame-up because of his political beliefs and outspoken opposition to racism and police brutality." His trial was a farce. It disregarded the forensic evidence, and relied on phoney and perjured testimony from intimidated witnesses.

The outcry in the US has led to a huge "Millions for Mumia" campaign being launched and in Britain the "Mumia Must Live" coalition is holding a rally on 25th April. Planning meetings are being held fortnightly at 7.30pm on Thursday's from March 11th at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. (Holborn tube)



Smash Section 28!

Back in 1988 tens of thousands of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and their supporters marched in the streets of London against Section 28 of the local government act. 11 years later Section 28 is still alive and kicking even though most people have long since forgotten what it is.

The government chose to announce it was not going to repeal Section 28 in this parliamentary session (even though it previously had a commitment to do so) in the same week a schoolboy Darren Steele, 15 committed suicide due to homophobic bullying.

Section 28 bans local governments from 'promoting homosexuality' and portraying same sex relations as 'pretended families'. This has led to the vast majority of teachers being scared to discuss gay issues in the classroom, to provide relevant sex education or to tackle homophobic bullying. In some cases it provides a justification for homophobic teachers to ignore the needs of gay students or in the worst cases be the perpetrators of homophobic bullying themselves. Section 28 prevents many gay teachers from coming out and has led to gay books being removed from libraries and funding being withdrawn from gay projects.

With Section 28 in place it is difficult to challenge intolerance in schools and in society in general, as well as challenging the self-hate and isolation that many gays face when they first come out.

The recent suicide of Darren Steele was extremely sad but not an uncommon example of the effects of Sec 28. Research carried out at Luton University showed that 80% of lesbians, gays and bisexuals are bullied at school. According to a Stonewall

a half times the national average.

Gay cabinet ministers on £100,000 a year have got their liberation and with the 'I'm all right jack' attitude that prevails amongst careerists it seems that they have forgotten what it was like to feel isolated and vulnerable. We have launched a campaign to remind the Labour government of their commitment to repeal Section 28 and to put it back in the centre of the gay fight for equality. We urge you to support us in our campaign to scrap Section 28.

Sandy Timewell

Secretary, Sexual Revolution Student Society

More Papal Bull(shit)

The Pope has requested the release of the brutal ex-Chilean dictator General Pinochet who is awaiting the outcome of extradition hearings in the Law Lords. Pinochet is wanted by the Spanish authorities who want to try him for "crimes against humanity".

Surprised? You shouldn't be! Cardinal Jorge Arturo Medina Estévez, one of the Pope's most important advisors is an old buddy of the dictator. The Pope himself visited Pinochet, an impassioned Catholic, various times during his dictatorship and since then has had an excellent relationship with the Chilean government.

The Vatican's justification for supporting a man responsible for the murder of thousands is, as one spokesman put it, "to prevent a crisis in Chile and respect for Chilean sovereignty". What about respect for the thousands who disappeared!

The Catholic Church in Chile certainly knows a thing or two about "sovereignty". Their reactionary front, The Society for the Defence of Tradition, Family and Property (catchy name, innit?) played an important role in destabilising and bringing down President Allende's democratically elected government.

Time for the Pope and his cronies to "disappear", we think.

By Max, Croymen

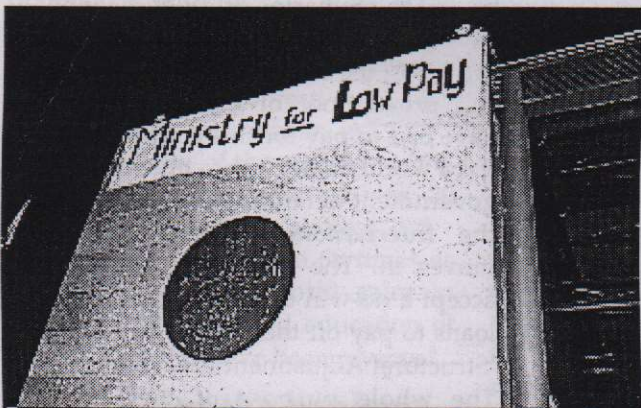
Send the gay-baiters off!

The media has been full of the Robbie Fowler and Graeme Le Saux 'incident'. We say, 'Good on ya Graeme!' No-one should have to put up with abuse because they are gay, even if they are a 'Guardian' reader. Fowler may have supported the Liverpool dockers but his homophobic gestures and comments are unacceptable: a smack in the mouth was what he deserved. Now, the old farts at the F.A. are going to discipline Le Saux for violent conduct just because he wouldn't tolerate Robbie's fowl-play. Guess that means we should allow gay-bashing, support the

rights of racists and treat women like shit. Not likely, we're with you Graeme!



Robbie Fowler looks for his brain



London Revo ousts Peter Mandelson!

Well we didn't really, but we did climb on top of his office in November. He's responsible for discriminating against young workers, with a lower minimum wage for everyone under 22. That's New Labour's way of giving the bosses a dirt-cheap labour force in return for their support.

So Revo decided to give him a hand, help him get the word out to his business buddies that he's doing a good job. What better way than to give the DTI a new name closer to their heart - while we held a noisy picket outside to mark the occasion. Oddly enough no Peter turned up, and the cops were displeased that someone had climbed the DTI building without asking them first. That should just be the start - we've got to continue organising young workers into the unions and taking action to demand a living wage.

Come on the April 10 demo to pressure Labour into delivering a higher minimum wage. Young workers get the worst deal at work, so let's make sure our voice gets heard, loud and clear: **No lower minimum wage for youth!**

Demonstrate Saturday 10 April Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Assemble Gateshead Civic Centre 11:30 AM Phone 0181 981 0602 for details of transport

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CANCEL THE

At the Brit Awards, Muhammed Ali and Bono joined forces with Jubilee 2000 in calling for the cancellation of 'Third World Debt'. Even the Tory-loving Adam Smith institute says that the debts must be shelved. On June 18th the internationally organised 'Imagine' campaign will stop the financial centres of the world, giving us the opportunity to unite around the issue of debt cancellation. This is REVO's guide to 'Third World Debt'...

Imagine a Rolls-Royce pulling up to the curb next to a mother and child. The chauffeur pops round to open the door and a fat multi-millionaire gets out, rips the woman's purse out of her hand, turns the kid over for any spare change and drives off. People would be outraged! The press would go mad. But that happens on a global scale everyday on this planet, which is why there is a debt crisis in the third world.

A third of the world's children go to bed hungry. There are 1.3 billion people - two-thirds of them women - living in poverty. Every day 30,000 children die from preventable diseases. Yet since 1980 the third world has paid trillions of pounds to the big banks and governments of the west. This includes the poorest countries in the world, like Sudan where the population is literally starving to death. For a billion people in the third world, rising standards of living and economic development were thrown into reverse by the debt crisis. In Latin America the destruction to the economy was so great that they call the 1980s "the lost decade".

And they're still nowhere near paying it off.

Many countries have taken out new loans simply

to pay off the interest on their old loans, and are actually deeper in debt than they were 20 years ago! How could such an exploitative, inhuman, and barmy situation come about?

Multinational Corporations and Arms Dealers

After the destruction of World War II, capitalism had its biggest boom ever. The boom came to an end in the '70s, as profits fell and production stagnated. To keep the profits rolling in, private banks lent to third world governments like never before. In 1970 third

Don't believe the hype The truth about aid...

- Live Aid: raised £200 million - Equals only one week of African debt repayment
- Comic Relief: raised £26 million in 1997 - Equals just one day of Africa's debt payments
- Western aid: for every £1 the West gives in aid to developing countries, £9 comes back as debt service.

world debt totalled \$75 billion. By 1986 it was \$900 billion and debt payments tripled to \$121 billion a year.

Most of the loans weren't used to develop these countries at all. Of the debts owed to Britain today, 96% are "export credits" - loans given on the condition that the third world governments buy the goods of their multinationals.

One fifth of all loans are for weapons. The economic crisis of the '70s intersected with a growing wave of third world struggles against imperialism, like the Vietnam War (which the Americans and their British backers lost).

Rulers like Pinochet in Chile, Suharto in Indonesia, and

Mobutu in Zaïre protected the exploitation of the third world, and had to be propped up. Between 1960 and 1987 the Western countries lent these and other puppets \$400 billion to buy arms. In 1993, 50% of the export credits given to third world countries by the UK government were to buy arms from British companies!

Governments like Britain gave loans to help see the multinationals through the crisis - helping to sell their goods and protecting their property in the third world.

But who pays?

It's not the Suhartos or Mobutus who pay. Since the debt crisis hit in the early '80s, the working class, peasants, and urban poor of the third world have had to pay for this crisis. When a third world country goes bust and the government defaults on its payments, the International Monetary Fund moves in. The IMF forces them to accept a no-win deal: in exchange for loans to pay off the debt, it imposes a 'Structural Adjustment Programme'. The whole purpose of these programmes is to reshape the third world country's economy into a machine to make and save money. Wages are cut and state industry is sold off to raise money, while spending on welfare is slashed. The economy is geared to producing exports to sell to the West, instead of necessities for the local population. The idea is make them work harder, pay them less, charge them more. Then third world governments have to use their budget surplus to pay off their

Cheers old boy!

To him.....From him



DEBT NOW!

debt to the banks. For example, Honduras paid \$600 million in debt payments in 1998 while half its population lived on less than \$1 a day. Tanzania spends nine times more on debt payments than on basic health care.

Robbing the poor to pay the rich

So, the debts and aid are nothing to do with development. In 1995, the 48 least developed countries in the world got just 0.5% of global investment. 80% of it went to just 12 (super-rich) countries. When Hurricane Mitch devastated Central America, killing 10,000 and leaving 1.9 million homeless, the USA and Britain gave \$100 million in aid. But when the finance house LTCM came close to collapse, a \$3.5 billion donation was found! And the results of third world debt is a huge transfer of wealth from the poorest on this planet to the richest: in 1960 the income of the wealthiest 20% of the world's population was 30 times greater than the poorest 20% - and now it's doubled, to 60 times as much! All the third world gains in wages, health care, and education of the '60s and '70s have been reversed.

Charity...for the bankers

The banks have suffered very little from third world debt, because we've paid it off for them. The banks write the debts off as losses, which they then deduct from their tax bill.

Workers, therefore, have to pay more taxes, which are used to subsidise the IMF. Then the IMF loans more money to the third world countries to cover future debt payments to the banks!

So after 20 years of subsidy, only 10% of the debt is owed to private banks - 50% is owned to western govern-

ments and 40% to institutions like the IMF and World Bank. The west control the IMF, with the USA having an automatic veto over anything it decides.

The US has a huge foreign debt owed mostly to Japan, but there are no austerity programmes imposed on it. Britain owes the US \$14.3 billion; an old debt that it has never been asked to pay. Yet the hypocritical bastards squeeze the poorest countries for

"The collapse of the global market place would be a traumatic event with unimaginable consequences. Yet I find it easier to imagine than the continuation of the present regime." (George Soros,

Financial Guru and speculator)

Imagine the world's financial centres forced to halt due to international resistance movement led by youth. **Imagine** the complete collapse of the global market for at least a day. **Imagine** the streets of London filled with liberated bank workers joining with youth and the unemployed to end the madness of the market. **Imagine** is a coalition of all sorts of movements, from the Mexican Zapatistas to the Liverpool Dockers, from Earthfirst to Revolution!

Imagine how big this is going to be - June 18th is the date set for the beginning of the revolution!

every drop of the \$14 billion they owe Britain.

Reactionary debt relief...

Under the pressure of third world revolt and public anger in the west, there has been pressure on the international bankers to grant some debt relief. But the plan is not to eradicate debt, rather to ensure debtors sink deeper and deeper into the hole.

In 1996 the IMF/World Bank announced a new initiative for the poorest countries with the biggest debts. If they underwent savage austerity programs for 6 years they would qualify for some debt write-off. In practice this is like saying if you chop off your right foot we'll give you back a toe. Only Uganda has received any relief yet under this program, but this should rise to a whopping three countries by the millennium. At that rate they won't relieve third world debt by the year 3000.

Now a coalition of church groups and charities has organised a campaign called **Jubilee 2000**. However, their aims are modest. They don't want to

cancel all the third world debt, just those of the 52 poorest countries. And for these, they don't want to cancel all their debt (\$371 billion) they want to cancel less than half! They think these countries should be allowed to recover economically, so they can then pay off the rest of what they owe under a "fair" repayment system.

This isn't radical. Even a section of the bosses and their politicians and economists are beginning to change their mind on debt. They realise that if they're going to restore the profits of their multinationals and banks, they must get the third world working for them again. Super-exploitation of the third world will once more rebuild the profit margins of Western capitalism. So the call has gone out: cancel the unpayable debt. The poorest countries simply can't pay, so the bankers aren't really losing money anyway.

..versus revolutionary debt relief

We say cancel all of it. We shouldn't pay - the bankers should. The workers and peasants of the third world must throw off the shackles of debt by repudiating all of it. They should nationalise all the property of the Western multinationals and banks and run them for their own benefit. And we should do the same here - an international socialist system would reverse the global flows of wealth that occur under imperialism. A plan controlled by workers of all countries is needed to develop the third world, and equalise living standards across the world.

The G7 bosses wouldn't take a threat like that lying down, they'd try to smash any country that tried it - like they did with Chile in 1973, backing Pinochet's coup to stop the workers and peasants seizing the power and the multinationals' property. It'll take a revolution to smash the G7 armies and their cronies, the Suhartos and Pinochets of this world.

WE WANT A SEXU

this page was written by Kirstie, Joy, Chantal and Francesca & is dedicated to our sisters, past and present

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On 8th March, every year, working women of the world unite and FIGHT, PROTEST, DEMONSTRATE, MARCH, RIOT, and ROAR.

International Women's Day is a historically significant day of action and fight back, empowering women collectively to take on the capitalist system.

March 8 was chosen to commemorate a strike by women garment workers in New York in 1857 who came out to protest against inhumane working conditions, a 12 hour day and low wages. In 1908, women in New York staged a march for similar reasons (better pay, shorter hours) but with the additional demand of the right to vote. They adopted the slogan: "Bread and roses"; the bread symbolising economic security and roses a better quality of life.

In 1910 the Second International's Socialist Women's Movement declared this day International Women's Day and the following year over

a million women and men throughout Europe demonstrated for universal suffrage (the right to vote) and for an end to sex discrimination in employment and education.

The Russian February Revolution of 1917 was sparked off by demonstrations on Working Women's Day (23 February, Russian calendar). In Vyborg, seamstresses took to the streets in thousands; and marched to nearby factories shouting for the workers to join them. The flying pickets were effective: by 10 am, ten factories were shut with 27,000 out on strike; by noon, there were 21 plants closed and 50,000 strikers. Their slogans: "Down with the autocracy! Down with the war! Give us bread! Our children are starving!" By the 10th March, women were invading the soldiers ranks and seizing their guns. Within a few days the Tsar, Nicholas II had abdicated.

Since then, International

women's day has been a focus for women's struggle against oppression. Today in Britain, unlike our sisters a century ago and many millions in the Third world, we have 'formal' equality.

However capitalism still forces millions of working class women to live a life of misery and exploitation. Capitalism relies on the woman's role in the family to provide and nurture future generations of workers. Without this unpaid labour, the bosses would have to clothe, care for and feed the working class out of their own profits. At the same time they use sexist ideas and laws to keep women in their 'place' and ensure that the working class remains divided rather than united.

Only a struggle against the profit system that thrives on the oppression of women can achieve women's emancipation. That is what REVOLUTION sets out to do.....

VIOLENCE against WOMEN

A recent report from the Government Women's Unit reveals that domestic and sexual violence affects more than one in four women at some point in their lives. For millions of women, life at home means being constantly put down, being told you are useless or that you nag, as well as being slapped, kicked, punched, burned, raped, or strangled.

However only 32,500 sexual offences were recorded by the police in 1997.

How can we explain why so few men are convicted of violence and rape against women?

In the case of rape, many women are discouraged from supporting a criminal prosecution for fear of being placed on trial themselves: first by the sexist police, prone to smirk

and joke about their ordeal, then by unsympathetic courts and the crude challenges of the defence lawyers.

Take the example of a recent High Court ruling in Italy: the judge argued that the rape victim's jeans were



too tight for the rapist to take them off without her help. This means that women who wear jeans can't be raped!

Is Britain any better? We don't think so.

According to Common Law practice:

"...a man accused of rape is able to put evidence before the jury of previous consenting sexual relations between himself and the victim, on the grounds that such evidence makes it more likely that the victim consented on the occasion in question." (Sexual Offences Act 1956).

As long as women are treated as second class citizens and sexual objects, men will see women as legitimate targets for their frustration and violence.

Systematic violence against women is a plague affecting not only victims of attacks, but also the majority of women and is ultimately destructive for our society. Violence limits women's ability to fully participate in society. For example, one in two women

TV dinners

I sit home waiting for him to return.
Anxiously, waiting
His dinner laid on the table on the table waiting
He's 10 minutes late
The worst 10 minutes of my life
Hoping he wouldn't return,
thinking of life without him
My fantasy is interrupted by a deafening knock at the door
I open the door, it's him
My husband
"Where's my dinner?", he demands
I point in the direction of the TV
He sits down and ungratefully eats
I wait, anticipating the reaction
He stands like a haunted demon
and spits in my face
"It's cold," he says as he throws the plate against the wall
It smashes into a thousand pieces
Like my nerves
This is the highlight of my evening
This is my life, don't let it be yours.

self-defence: not a sport, a necessity.



feel unsafe when walking home at night and as a consequence, many will not go out alone.

This is why REVOLUTION campaigns to challenge sexism and violence wherever it happens. We demand a woman's right to self defence; this should be provided in the form of self defence classes, free of charge. When women fight back against male violence, they should not be put on trial. Women also need immediate access to safe accommodation, so that they can leave violent relationships without fear of financial destitution.

"If somebody calls me a Paki, I go to them and kick them in the teeth. I don't often get called names, but when I do I get really angry and hit them. There are some English people in our country and we don't go round calling them names." Ayesha Ahmad, aged 14.

Our Bodies

Under capitalism, we are denied real control over our bodies. One of the most important issues affecting women is the right to contraception and abortion. Having free access to safe contraception allows us to choose if we want a kid or not. If we do get pregnant, then it should be our decision alone about whether we should go ahead with the pregnancy or have an abortion.

But in Britain this isn't the case. Many young women can't go to the family doctor for fear of their family finding out. Sex education in schools is generally a joke and young people have to pay for some of contraceptives, eg condoms.

Despite the fact that abortion is legal, a woman still needs the permission of two doctors before she can be granted an abortion,

and because of long waiting lists, many women have to pay for abortions in private clinics. On top of all these barriers, we live in a society that uses religious bigotry and reactionary morals to make women feel guilty

cinemas. Whether it's the washing powder advert of the housewife telling us 'how to get whites even whiter' or the pornographic images of women as fucking machines and little else, these sexist

useful phone numbers

Rape Crisis centre - 0171 837 1600
 British Pregnancy Advisory Service (BPAS) - 0171 328 2484
 Brooks Advisory Service (an information centre on all issues relating to sex for young people)- 0800 0185023
 0171 617 8000 (24 hour info)
 Sexwise - 0800 282 930
 Contraceptive Education Service - 0171 837 4044
 Womens Aid - help and support for women suffering domestic violence
 0171 392 2092

for making such a decision.

While the state interferes with our right to control what we do with our bodies, the bosses media machine ensures that sexist

representations of women play a fundamental role in shaping how women are viewed in society. We are seen as being naturally dependent, caring, emotional and maternal or if we show any interest in sex, as slags sluts, tarts and whores.

Its time we took control over how we are represented in society. We should campaign for positive images of women and demand an end to degrading pictures, like the Sun's page three. But relying on the state to censor the media, is like

asking Paul Condon to reform the police. Only women's action and workers control over the media will ensure that we have a real say in how our bodies should be seen.



WHAT DOES THIS SAY ABOUT US?



10 Million see this every day



fighters not babes

images of women fill the pages of newspapers and the screens of TVs and



Righteous Babe: Ani DiFranco

'The war against drugs is a disguised war against poor people. Taking drugs is like going on a cheap holiday: if you are poor, you can't afford to go to Tahiti'.

On Sunday 20 February, at the Shepherd's Bush Empire, Ani DiFranco came out onto the dimly lit stage, with the energy, anger and determination of a woman who is refusing to sell out.

"I mourn the commodification and homogenisation of music by the music industry and I fear the manufacture of consent by the corporate controlled media. Last thing I want to do is feed the machine".

Throughout the concert Ani DiFranco's humanity, life experiences, and disillusionments tore through the thin veil that separates the artist from the public. Her open mind and her concept of race and sex created a feeling of unity amongst the audience: "Sometimes the line I walk turns out to be straight. Other days the line tends to

deviate. I've got no criteria for sex or race".

Ani DiFranco started performing at the age of nine.

Fifteen years later, eleven albums to her name and her own record company (Righteous Babe Records) in an industry dominated by multinationals, Ani still focuses on many womens' issues drawn from her own life experiences. Ani's piece about her traumatic abortion is breathtaking and enlightening at the same time:

"Mine was an easy tragedy. On this sterile battlefield. Banging their fists on reality, hoping it will break, is there one of them that has never made a mistake..."

Ani DiFranco's songs about abuse, sexuality, relationships, drugs, and social perceptions of femininity are sung with intensity and courageously express the obstacles presented to her, not as a "celebrity" but as a woman.

I saw him, across the class; he smiled,
 he winked, I returned the look.
 I'd been admiring him for weeks
 He made me all weak at the knees
 But if I did, it would make me a "slag"
 People would just see me as a dirty
 rag
 Jumping from one man to the next
 It was ages since Tommy, in retrospect
 It's Okay for him it would make him a
 jock
 Even the Goths would think he rocked
 "And all the Goths would think he's
 pretty fly for a skate guy"
 Why is it so casual for men to just to
 have sex?
 Jumping from one girl to the next
 Just once would kill my "reputation"
 With gossip queens' manipulation
 This is my body, my life
 And I'm nobody's puppet wife
 These are the attitudes I expect from
 the nineteen-fifties
 Not in the nineties.

STUDENTS:

REVOLUTION

OCCUPY TO WIN!

Everyone should remember the lessons of 1999 - that the way to win a fight against the tuition fees and the abolition of the grant is to take direct action. Two London colleges - Goldsmith's and the University of East London (UEL) - went into occupation last month and won significant victories for all students.

The Goldsmith's occupation, like UEL's, was completely successful. Sparked off by the expulsion of eight non-fee paying students, the action was immediate and effective. Over 400

showed their solidarity with the Goldsmith's Eight on Thursday 4th March. Management caved in to all the demands, after only seven days of occupation, despite trying to say it wasn't a student victory! *This is what the cowardly leadership of the student unions DO NOT want to hear.*

We spoke to Sophie, the press officer for the occupation.

"Everyone's very, very pleased at the outcome of the occupation. At seven and a half days it's the

longest occupation yet over the tuition fees. We achieved what we wanted and we came out with our heads held high. "Ben Pimlott, the warden, completely turned around and gave in to everything we were demanding. He wanted to exclude students and implied they were able to pay, but were just unwilling. Now it's on paper and signed: Ben Pimlott has said that no student will be excluded due to an inability to pay fees - that's a quote!"

Where do we go from here? "We need different tactics. We got a lot of coverage from the major dailies-but we need to turn to the student media now - that's the most

sympathetic - and build it in the grass roots.

"We must network with universities all over Britain and organise a national day of action. This is just the beginning - we've won the battle, now we have to win the war. We need to start a campaign of action."

"We're holding an emergency general meeting of the student union to pass a resolution demanding no victimisations or we'll occupy again... If they expel anyone there'll be an uprising... I don't think they will. We've shown the management that we can get them a huge amount of bad press and the college doesn't want that."

Revolution has always said that non payment and direct action - occupations and demonstrations - can bring universities to a stand-still. This forces the media to take up the issue again, and can even force an otherwise passive NUS leadership to back the fight for free education.



A nation-wide wave of occupations and non-payment would force the government to find another solution to the funding crisis - one that doesn't charge students themselves. The solution exists:

Tax the rich, abolish the fees and give all students a living grant!

As well as taking action ourselves and leading from below, we must ensure that we control the activity. We need immediately recallable and elected action committees to carry out the day-to-day tasks and responsibilities of the campaign - instead of bureaucratic union hacks. This was one of the keys to the successful Goldsmith's occupation.

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DON'T PAY THE FEES -
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All activists should organise from below inside the NUS and not rely on the leadership - most of whom care more about their own careers than the students they represent.

But we must not ignore the NUS. We must force it to support our campaigns with the full weight and backing of the union apparatus.

We should force the union to recognise the validity and power of the non-payment tactic. Last year they endorsed a policy that said 'demonstrations and occupations are no way to carry out a campaign.' Let's make them eat their words!

Goldsmith's have put forward a motion that will tie the union to a campaign that encourages mass non-payment, backed with direct action and occupations. Revo calls on all students to fight for this motion inside the NUS.