

# **Liberation!**

20p • issue seven • for an international, socialist, youth movement • autumn 1995

## **Schools**

Tory cuts  
breed misery

## **Students**

We need free  
education

## **Racism**

Racist cops,  
Racist laws,  
Racist Britain

## **Riots**

What's next?

## **Europe**

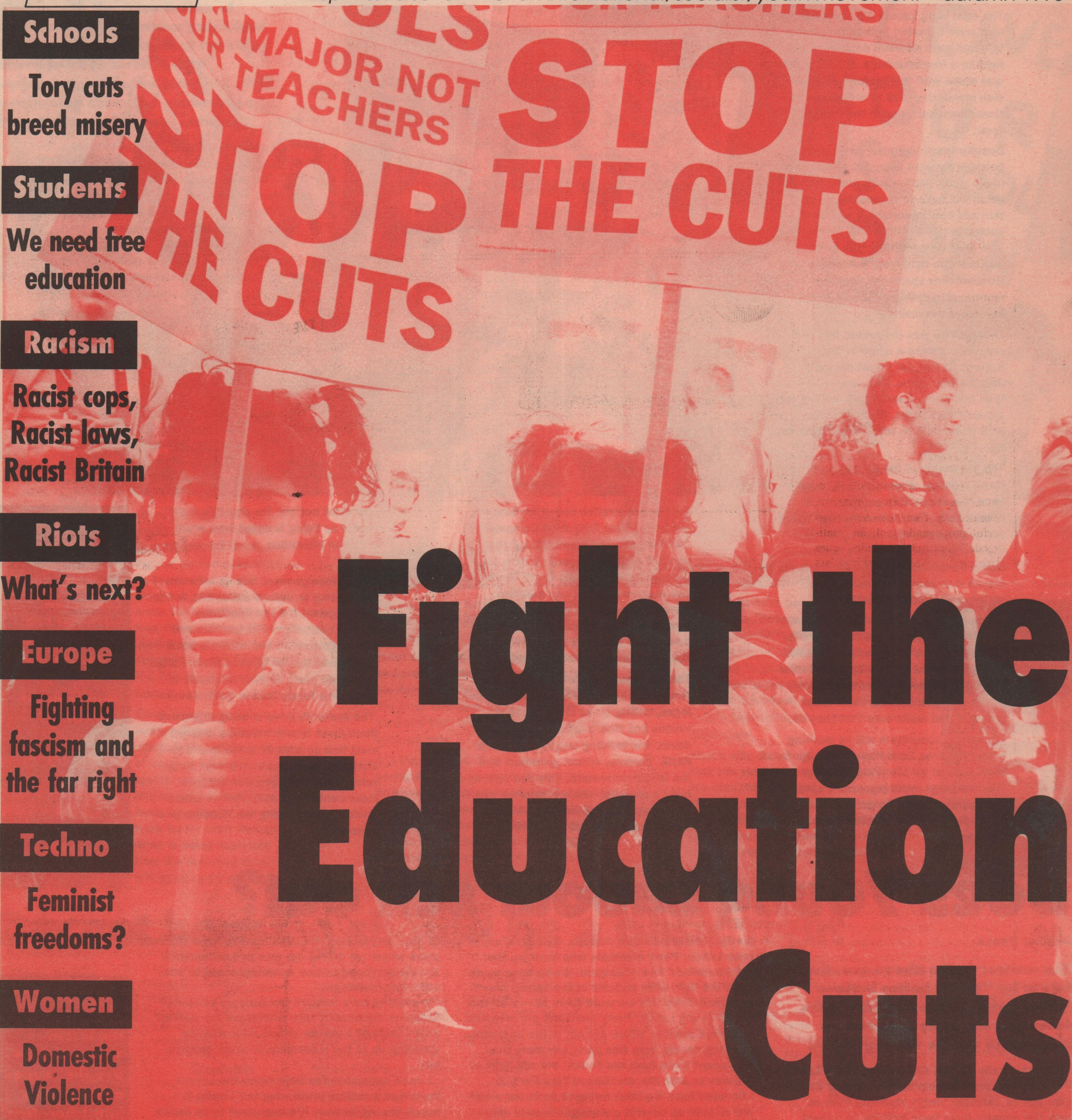
Fighting  
fascism and  
the far right

## **Techno**

Feminist  
freedoms?

## **Women**

Domestic  
Violence



# **Fight the Education Cuts**

**Join the FACE Demo: Sat 30 September**



# What now for the Free Education Campaign?

► Anthony Brain

**The Free Education Campaign made important gains at the NUS Special Conference earlier this year.**

The right wing Labour Students leadership were defeated in their proposals to scrap even a formal defence of the right to a free education. A further gain was made with the conference decision mandating NUS to organise a national demonstration in the Autumn term.

Despite these victories, however, the battle is far from over. Jim Murphy has made public statements about how the union will have to reconsider its position and how important it was that such a large minority voted for the Labour Students position. It is quite obvious that the right wing leadership of NUS will now spend the next few months attempting to sabotage the conference decisions.

Though NUS was instructed by conference to organise a demo in the Autumn, it has not as yet named a date for that demo. This is why the Free Education Campaign is calling for a September demo, we must force NUS leadership to support and build for this.

The leadership of the Labour Party faced a defeat when the 1994 conference reasserted its commitment to Clause Four. The leadership then spent the next six months working against the decisions of conference and organised a Special Conference at which the clause was abolished - using completely undemocratic methods.

The leadership of Labour Students, aping the leadership of the Labour Party, will prove extremely reluctant to abide by the decisions of NUS Special Conference. It is important that we organise within colleges to keep them under pressure and make sure that they do.

Liberation supporters will be working within the Free Education Campaign to build support for the national demo.

The campaign must organise a summering tour of colleges to get as many people on the demo as possible from all colleges.



The British Government is the main ally of the Indonesian regime

This demonstration called for September by the Free Education Campaign has the potential for mobilising thousands if built for properly. Why is this demonstration so important? There are two main reasons: It can mobilise masses of people in support of their own interests; and can give them the confidence that they can resist what the government are attempting to do.

This demonstration will be most effectively built by the campaign visiting colleges, calling on as many Student Unions and NUS bodies to back the demo, and building support for it from FACE, parents, school governors and the labour movement. This can help to build a powerful alliance between students, working people, the trade unions and the social movements.

We must not see the struggle over grants as being isolated from wider attacks on education, or on the welfare state.

The campaign must link up with others fighting to defend education, in the Fight Against Cuts in Education (FACE) campaign, with parents and school governors, and with the trade unions and the left in the Labour Party. Finally we must develop demands to place on a future Labour government.

The austerity drive is being organised throughout Western Europe, and we must link up with all those forces resisting it. In particular we need to develop links with European student movements such as in France where students are fighting the Balladur government.

### Get Active!

To find out more about the Free Education Campaign, write to: FEC, c/o Charlotte Wade, Students Union, University of Central England, Birmingham.

## Does Young Labour sell out?

► Mike Banks

**The answer to the above question has to be "you'd better believe Young Labour sells out" if it's the faces you see at its national conference you're talking about.**

It's practically all that the leaders of the Labour Party's youth membership nationally ever do. I'll give you an example: angry students from all over the country have been battling to defend free education and there's still a hell of a way to go. But what has Labour Students been doing about it? Well, in the form of the NUS leadership it has been collapsing towards the government's position on tuition fees and loads, it's led no sort of fight and it reckons Blair's graduate tax is a

pretty good idea. At my college, though, it's been Labour Party members who have led the fight to defend free education. We've done so despite the right-wing policies of the Labour student leadership and we want them to realise that not all young Labour Party members are prepared to accept policies which are not in the interests of young people from this party any more than we accept them from the Tories. We will fight all the way to stop the creation of Tory Party 2.

So what have we been trying to do in our area? We've built up several campaigns around different issues (free education, nuclear testing and McLibel) and turned them outwards to youth who are not currently party members. This way, we can build up a group of youth who really will fight hard against the party leadership - they have not been groomed to think that we must shut up un-

til after an election. We also want to have discussions where we devise our own policy demands to take to Young Labour conference and to constituency meetings.

We aim to take forward the success at Labour Students conference last year where we pushed policy through in favour of free education by standing up to the leadership at every opportunity.

I don't remember the days when the Labour Party had a radical youth wing but I know it needs one again now. It's important to be inside Young Labour groups if they are open to ideas from the left and they want to be active.

The youth will be crucial to the courage and the new ideas that's needed to stand up to Blair's leadership and his constant erosion of every commitment the party ever had.

### Get Active!

Join up with the left in Young Labour. Use the coupon on page 5 to join Liberation! or write to Liberation!, PO Box 1109, London, N4 2UU.



# Defend education - support FACE demo on Saturday September 30!

> Kathryn Marshall

Last month the Association of Teachers and Lecturers published findings of a survey that revealed there to have been 4,600 redundancies in the teaching profession since the government's latest round of vicious cutbacks.

A total of around 10,000 is likely to be closer to the mark once more schools have been forced to set their ludicrously low budgets. Despite the fact that many heads and governors have held out against the proposed cuts and have attempted to set "needs budgets", pressure on them is increasing all the time to weaken and to capitulate to the government's plans.

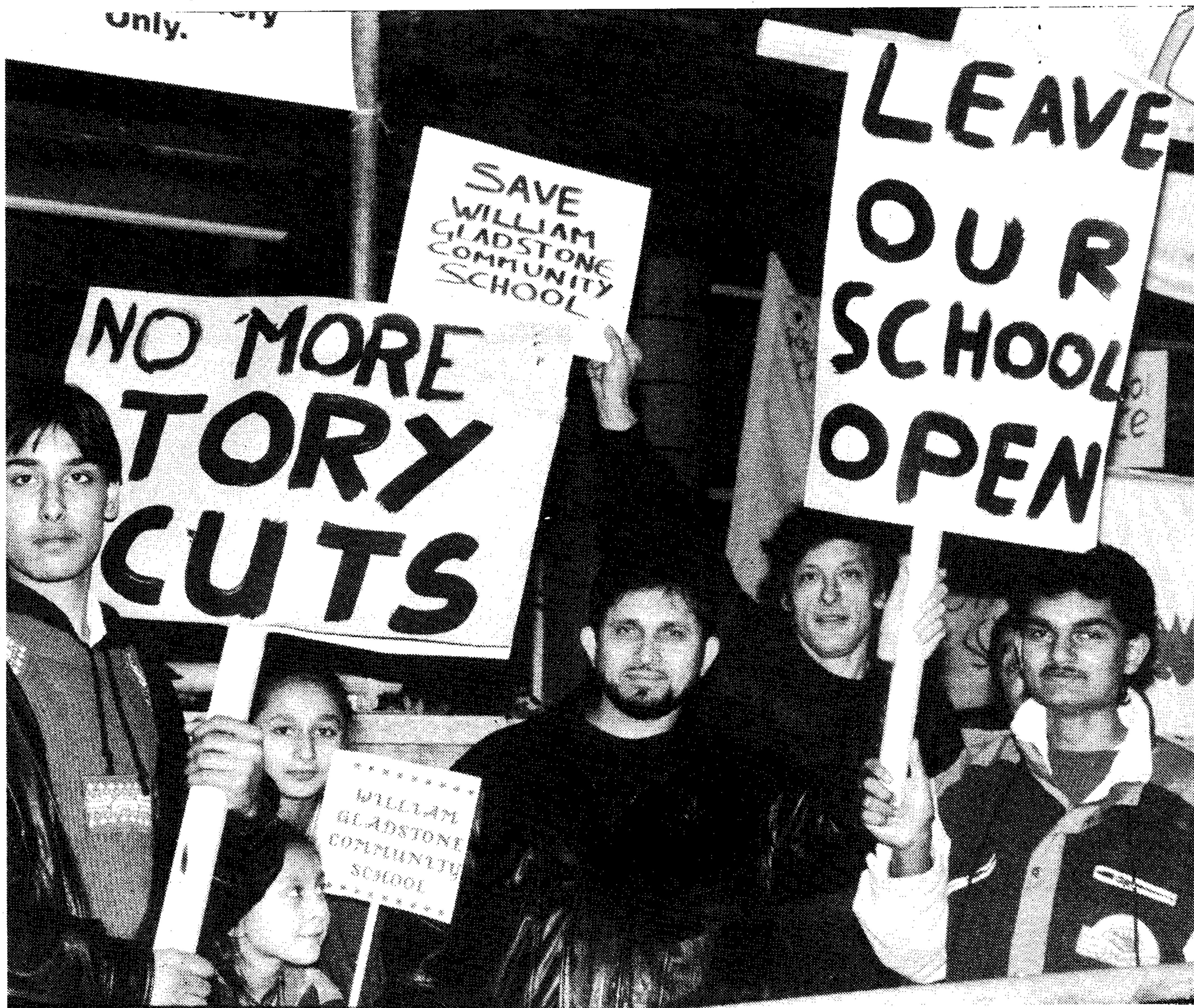
The government now seeks to cloud the issue by dangling a carrot in front of the thousands of parents, governors and students from the organisation FACE who have taken to the streets about these cuts. This week's carrot that has already gone brown and squidgy is in the form of 'funding' for sports and physical education.

This is typical of the tactics we'll see in operation between now and the calling of the next general election. The government will stitch together some attractive soundbites (I understand

that references to improving our 'national heritage' as has been said this week are attractive to some folk!) in the hope that concessions will be seen to be made to our demands for a decent and at the very least adequately funded education system.

Every 'concession' they make will carry the usual stings in its tail; in terms of the new plans for sports, the paltry sum of 4 million pounds has been offered for schools and more work for no extra money at all is being expected from the teaching staff. Will good sport suddenly

Students at schools, colleges and in higher education need to unite



develop with a funding proposal full of hot air and hardly any funding? Of course not.

What will be very good sport indeed, however, is giving the Tories another electoral pasting like they received in the local elections back in May because of their insistence upon these iniquitous cuts.

It's the job of all of us who have supported FACE to keep this issue at the forefront of people's minds until and beyond the election. Since its conference in June, FACE has received a steady stream of new affiliations including that from a group in Scotland. The organisation has grown way beyond just

those who have been affected by the cuts so far. But as further cuts of around four to five per cent are likely to hit councils in 1996-7 there is still a long way to go before the huge well of anger and support from the public, the student movement and the teaching union is translated into a government climbdown.

That's why despite the lull in activity that the summer break brings with it, it's vital that the next FACE demonstration called for September 30 is built for with great enthusiasm. As FACE's own paper says: "To make sure of its success we must all start organising now."

Get Active!

Transport from all over the country will be coming to the FACE demo in central London on Saturday 30 September. Phone FACE on (01589) 789104 for details.

Get Active!

To affiliate to FACE or to find out more about the organisation's second national demo in defence of education, write to: FACE, St. Giles Middle School, Hayes Lane, Exhall, Coventry, CV7 9NS.

## Decent housing should be a basic right

> Steve Revins

For young people in Britain, finding adequate housing is a big problem.

You may be stuck in the family home facing all kinds of difficulties, unable to move out because of the lack of decent-paying jobs, benefit restrictions or meagre grants.

You may have been forced out of the "family

home" for any number of reasons, or not have a family home at all and be living in either insecure, sub-standard private accommodation or have no place to live at all.

### Students

Perhaps you're a student facing grant and benefit cuts, forced into the cheapest and probably grottiest private rented housing there is.

If you live in a household

with a mortgage, there's a fair chance "negative equity" is suffered - the house is worth less than the mortgage which, combined with increased job insecurity makes the threat of losing your home a very real one.

The Thatcherite "Boom" of the '80s lead many people to buy their own homes at extremely inflated prices.

Schemes were created

whereby people could buy the council housing they lived in, though now many are left with houses that they can't sell and with mortgages that are more expensive than their previous rent.

Council housing is virtually impossible to obtain, waiting lists have never been longer.

### Sell-off

Legislation has meant that councils have been

forced to sell of their housing stock yet they are prevented from using the money they receive for such sales to build more homes.

Despite the obvious failures of the "Thatcherite miracle", Labour leader Tony Blair is now embracing Thatcherism as a model upon which to build his "New Labour".

The right to a decent, safe and secure home

should be a basic right affordable to all.

There is no shortage of unemployed workers to build new homes, nor is there a shortage of empty housing that could be made habitable. Yet there is an acute housing crisis.

### Market

This is because of the market system which we are told is essential to create a healthy vibrant, society.

The media and the government have been insisting that the market creates a vibrant economy for over a century now, only all the evidence flies in the face of this argument.

How the "modernisers" of the Labour Party aim to meet the needs of society with a system that has been tried and failed remains a mystery.



## Racism, Labour and the Unions

► Mark Jasen

The organised labour movement, in Britain the trade unions and the Labour Party, has always been crucial for socialists in that it represents, in however a distorted form, working class people organising independently of the ruling class.

The struggle for socialism can only be achieved through the unity and independence of the working class and the oppressed, and as such socialists must work within the existing organisations in which workers and the oppressed are organised.

Though new organisations will be needed for carrying out the task of world socialism, if such organisations are to be built they will be built through working people learning the inadequacies of existing organisations and the need to develop new ones.

None of this means however, that the labour movement is naturally progressive, especially since the Labour movement leadership has been almost invariably pro-capitalist. It has a number of times has actively campaigned for the exclusion of women, and has campaigned at certain points to exclude black people from the workforce.

The early labour movement in Britain campaigned for immigration controls and for a white Australia, for example. Socialists should view the labour movement as a terrain of struggle for socialist ideas, in which we fight to win working people from their misleaders.

An integral part of the struggle for socialism is the struggle for unity of the class, which can only be achieved through equality within the working class.

This means that socialists must demand that the labour movement must take up struggles against racism, sexism, heterosexism, national oppression or any other forms of inequality between workers, because they are essential struggles in and of themselves, but also because the unity of the class is impossible without them.

The anti-racist movement over the last couple of years has forced the labour movement to shift a little. In March of last year the TUC organised a national anti-racist demo for the first time ever.

The Transport and General Workers Union adopted a resolution that called for the closing down of Campfield detention centre and opposed all immigration detentions.

These are important steps forward, but they in no way mean that the struggle against racism in the labour movement is over.

We must push these and other demands into all other unions and the labour party, but more importantly we must ensure that these are not just paper commitments.

We must ensure that labour movement bodies with anti-racist policies actively promote these policies and mobilise their memberships around them.

## Fighting Fortress Europe



Immigration controls are a vital tool of the racist state

► George Thompson

Western capitalist policies have created crises throughout the world.

Many people fleeing these crises have found the door to the European Union firmly shut. On arrival here asylum seekers are now banged up indefinitely in prisons and detention centres,

treated like criminals. The State rejects over 90 per cent of all applications and deports people back to lands where their lives are at risk.

People who have lived here for years are also subject to dawn raids by cops to be bundled aboard planes. Joy Gardner's tragic death was a result of the Tories' insane deportation policy. The Government allows

the police to constantly harass the black community under the pretext they are searching for illegal immigrants. They also call for ID Cards and restrictions on everyone's civil liberties using this excuse.

The National Day of Actions to demand an end to detentions and deportations on June 24th deserved widespread support. Hundreds pick-

eted prisons and detention centres to protest against our racist State and its immigration laws. *Liberation!* supporters united with migrant and refugees groups and labour movement bodies to show our solidarity with refugees.

State racism is more of a threat to black communities today than fascism. Racial hatred is more likely to be stirred

up by Tory Ministers than the rantings of BNP Führers. Blacks are more likely to die from police assaults than fascist attacks. Yet State racism and fascism feed one another. Some swallowing the government's racist message in the run up to the next General Election could turn to fascists rather than Tories. Serious anti-fascists cannot ignore State racism.

Apart from campaigning to scrap all immigration laws, anti racist groups must turn to fight Tory proposals which make immigrants second class citizens. Government measures are reducing their access to education, jobs and benefits. We must combat Tory lies scapegoating blacks for rising crime and unemployment. We should encourage workers in education and health to take action against Tory plans to make them agents of a snoopers State, grassing on colleagues who may be migrant workers.

We must challenge the racism of the police and judiciary which makes

blacks more likely to go to prison than whites for committing the same offence. Under attack from fascists or cops we must champion the local community's right to organise and defend itself by any means necessary.

Self-organisation is a necessity for oppressed groups fighting for their liberation. Yet there can be no black liberation without socialism and vice versa. The racist institutions can only be destroyed through destroying capitalism. Revolutions develop when strands of anti-capitalist struggle like black liberation combine.

The divisions within the current anti-racist movement have proved an obstacle to building the kind of mass mobilisations necessary to make a real impact on the racist system that we live under. Whilst it is unlikely that in the short term these differences will be overcome, we can make a start by organising united actions open to all sections of the movement. Together we can bring the walls of racism crashing down!

## The struggle against racism and fascism in Belgium

# Here I am, here I'll stay!

► Koen de Clerk

The history of the anti-racist movement in Belgium is very much linked with the electoral breakthrough of the fascist *Vlaams Blok* (Flemish Bloc) in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking north of Belgium where three-fifths of the ten million Belgians live.

The first breakthrough goes back to 1988 when the *Vlaams Blok* achieved 10 per cent of the votes in the town council elections in Antwerp, the largest town of Flanders with half a million inhabitants.

But the most important breakthrough was achieved with the national elections of 1991, when they got 10 per cent of all Flemish votes. This phenomenon was due to the fact that the struggle against austerity in the first half of the 1980s was ended with the Social Democrats going into government in 1987. They betrayed their voters, who as revenge voted for the fascists.

The *Socialistische Jonge Wacht/Jeune Garde Socialiste* (Socialist Youth Guard) was active since 1987 with its campaign "Here I am, here I'll stay! Equal rights and opportunities!"

Together with others we launched a pluralist campaign, "School Without Racism". Petitions were distributed in schools to obtain 60 per cent of the votes of pupils in order to declare their school a "School Without Racism".

The campaign was a real success, but after some time the sectarian policies of the Maoist/Stalinist component caused the movement to cease to exist as an independent organisation before 1991.

Together with others, we organised a pluralist Anti-Racist Youth Committee, and called for a strike of students as a reaction against the electoral rise of fascism exactly a year after the 1991 elections. The strike was a big success, with 20,000 participants and was repeated in 1992 and 1993.



Liberation! joined Antwerp anti-racist demonstration led by AOKAR youth committee

These Youth Committees acted in solidarity with the large movement Hand in Hand, who organised massive demonstrations in Brussels (100,000 and 60,000 participants).

Of course all this protest against fascism didn't solve the problem which is a social, economic and political one. But it helped in isolating the fascists politically - that's why we even participate in small actions against fascist meetings - and making it difficult for them to gain even more ground.

It was also a learning process in which people learned to distinguish between anti-racists who want to stay within the framework of neo-liberalism and those who take a clear position in favour of working-class people. Hopes in the traditional political parties were proved wrong.

At the moment the situation is far from easy. The mass movement based on the shock of 1991 is over its peak. Neither on the issue of equal rights, nor on that of an alternative socio-economic policy, are successes at hand.

However the anti-racist movement remains an important forum where those questions are posed. And it forms an important militant framework for political and social change, equality and solidarity being its fundamental values.

That's why we are involved in building the Anti-Racist Youth Committees as a pluralist organisation against racism that is willing to isolate the fascists and take up the issues of unemployment and neo-liberal policies in order to oppose capitalist logic.



# Riot against racism?

> Simon Deville

**Recently, Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Paul Condon, backed up by Home Secretary Michael Howard claimed that black people were responsible for 80 per cent of muggings in the country's capital.**

This manipulation of statistics covers over the fact that black people form a major part of the most oppressed sections of the working class.

No mention has ever been made by Condon of the levels of poverty faced by those who feel driven to such desperate measures, nor is it made of the ethnic make up of the victims of muggings. Moreover, no mention has been made of statistics that show white people to be responsible for the majority of muggings in, say, Glasgow. The fact that Condon attempts to use a dodgy statistic to reinforce the racist stereotype that "all black people are muggers" is not insignificant.

This clearly shows the right wing's attempt to whip up racism as we approach the next General Election in order to win racist votes, but it also is preparing the way for an offensive on the inner-city working class.

Over the last few weeks riots have broken out in Bradford, Luton and

Leeds. Right wing politicians have struggled to provide explanations - the Bradford riots were blamed on Islamic fundamentalism and on the asian youth "caught between two cultures", though this explanation couldn't apply to riots involving a number of white youth. In Leeds organised crime was found to be responsible and in Luton it was the fault of lawless youth.

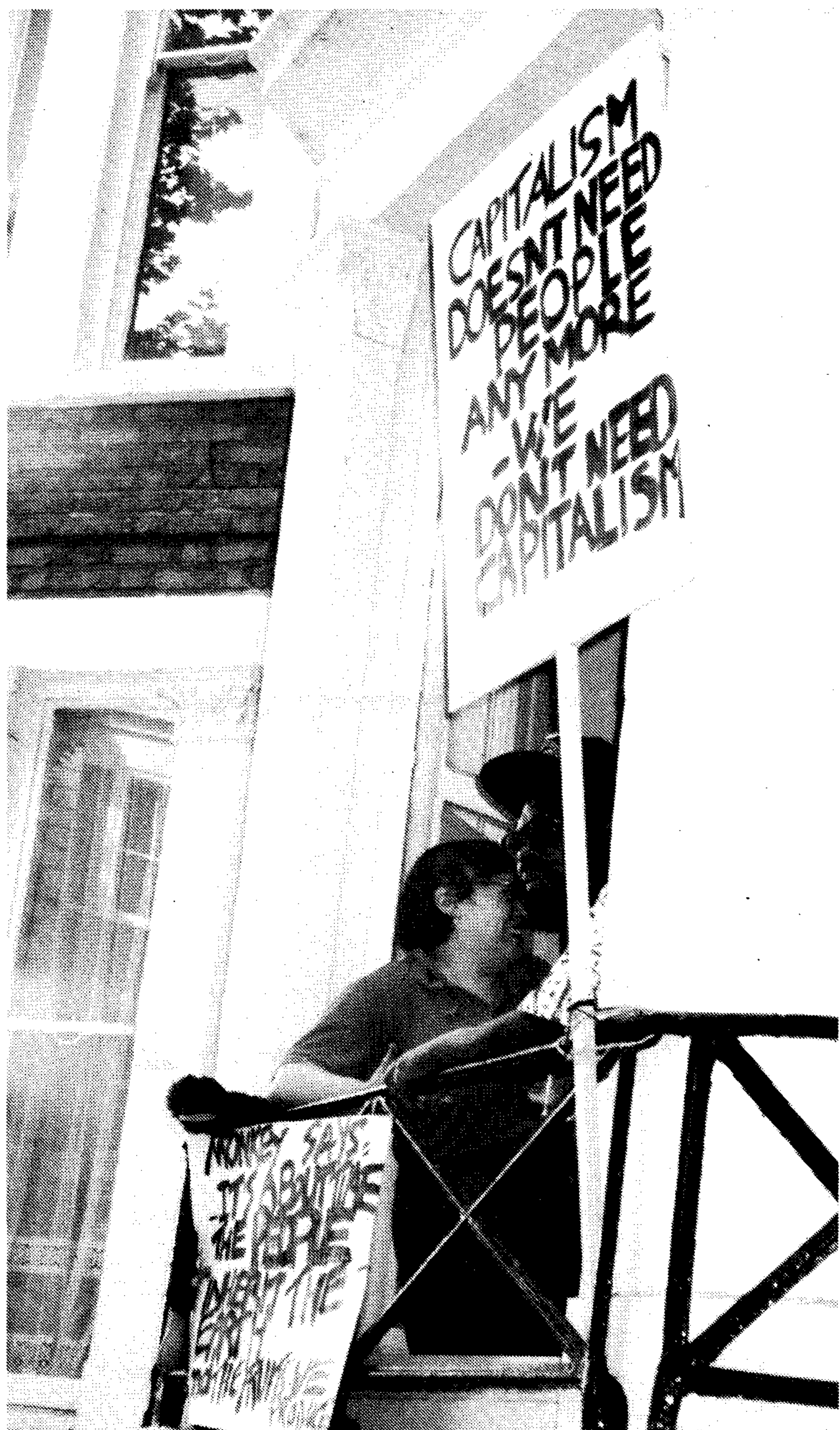
A common thread running through all of these though, was that they all took place in deprived inner cities that have faced heavy-handed, paramilitary style policing, though the right-wing seem to have overlooked this blatantly obvious fact.

Condon's remarks seem to be aimed towards an even greater level of "saturation" policing which will almost certainly provoke a number of other riots.

Riots may be a laugh for some people or a chance to have a go at the police who have been harassing our communities, but whilst they remain sporadic, disorganised outbursts of anger, they generally achieve very little. They may also serve to rally the right around racism and "law and order".

To make a real impact we need to organise working class people around clear social demands that we can take throughout the labour movement. This would provide a real alternative to the present that would challenge both the Tories and also the Labour leadership's "tough on crime" stance and their pro-rich social policies.

The anti-racist movement needs to give clear answers to social problems



**Get Active!**

**Get the CARF (Campaign Against Racism & Fascism) Newsletter from BM Box 8784, London WC1N 3XX.**

## Liberation's Dutch sister group: Rebel Fight together for equality

> Ron Blom

**In the Netherlands, as in the rest of Europe, the welfare state is being demolished and people from Third World countries are trying to escape poverty.**

People lose the jobs, housing and living conditions deteriorate, people are waiting years to get a house. These are the consequences of the government policies of the last 12 years, that stood for the interests of the rich.

But appearances can be misleading. Many people get confused and blame immigrants and refugees. But those people are in an even worse situation!

**Racists**

Racist organisations like the *Centrumdemokraten* (2 members of parliament and together with other racist and fascist organisations also represented in the local councils of many cities) struggle together for a "Netherlands for the Dutch". But of course this exclusively white, Dutch Holland won't be a better place for the ordinary Dutch people.

In Parliament the leader Janmaat almost always votes for the further dismantling of the welfare state! The different far-right parties are in favour of the same policies as the Dutch government, composed of Social Democrats and 2 Liberal groupings (PVDA, VVD and D66). Their main difference is that according to them, immigrants and refugees should be treated tougher.

Although for years now, immigrants without a Dutch passport have the right to vote and to get elected at local level, even the new government (for the first time in almost 100 years without the Christian Democrats) could make the next step expanding this to national level.

Instead of that, the asylum policies were tightened, the law on affirmative action for immigrant people is passed without any sanctioning on trespassing by employers. After that the racist parties showed the electoral potential of racist politics, the ordinary right wing (but also social democracy) political parties

more and more talk about the "refugee problem", about "more duties instead of rights for immigrants". Especially the leader of the "liberals", Bolkestein, whose party is in the government coalition, but who as leader of the parliamentary group of the "liberals" is developing himself more and more towards a kind Berlusconi-like right wing opposition.

**Solidarity**

For the Dutch section of the FI Socialist Workers Party (SAP) and the youth organisation, *Rebel*, it's clear that we have to struggle together with the immigrants and refugees for the improvement of their conditions. That's why we are involved in the creation of local and national anti-racist and anti-fascist committees.

We are involved in the broad, more moderate movement "*Nederlands Bekent Kleur*" ("Netherlands shows colour, takes sides"), but also in the campaign "Scholars (pupils) against racism" and in the more direct action organisation, Anti-Fascist Action, that is famous for effectively breaking up

fascist meetings.

The building of a powerful anti-fascist movement is connected with the struggle for more jobs, better wages and social security and the defence of the welfare state.

We have to fight for the defence and expansion of democratic rights, like immigrants' right to vote, the right of appeal for refugees who are not recognised as such by the Dutch state.

Solidarity also means the cancellation of the Third World debt, and forcing our government to stop supporting dictatorships. Because without poverty and repression nobody has to flee.

**Get Active!**

**To find out more about Rebel write to: Rebel, Sint Jacobsstraat 10-20, 1012 NC Amsterdam, Netherlands or phone (00 31) 20 6259272**

If wars, starvation, environmental devastation, exploitation and injustice make you angry...

If you reject the idea that they are somehow "inevitable" or permanent features of human society...

Then, like us, you've probably thought a lot about how to change the world. Simply wishing things would get better is not enough.

Working alone you can change some things a little, for a while; working together with others, you can change the world.



# Don't just get Angry

**Liberation!** is a newspaper produced by and for young people working together against poverty and injustice. If you want to join your local **Liberation!** group, want extra copies of our newspaper or want more information, send in this coupon.

- Send me my **Liberation!** supporters' card. Here is a cheque/postal order payable to 'Liberation Publishing Association' for £5 (£1 school students & unwaged).
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# Toxic Texaco beaten by Ecuadorean greens

► Bala Kumar

**ECOLOGICAL activists have won a battle with oil giant Texaco over its destruction of eastern Ecuador.**

The US-based company promised in May to repair the damage done to the indigenous communities who have suffered. As part of its activities it felled two million acres of rainforest, spilled more oil than in the Exxon Valdez disaster, dispossessed indigenous peoples from their lands, polluted the water they bathe, cook and drink from, and poisoned the air.

And that's just for starters! At the beginning Texaco was taking 93 per cent of the profits with the paltry remainder for Ecuador. The Ecuadorean government, which relies heavily on the sale abroad of petroleum to keep its ruling elite well looked after, was pressurized into taking action by the Amazon for Life campaign within the country and by an international boycott of Texaco. Indigenous peoples and small farmers

want money spent on reforestation; removing abandoned equipment, cleaning abandoned oil wells; new schools and hospitals; and sewerage and drainage facilities for the towns.

However other oil companies including British ones are now involved in oil exploitation and they have found new areas to pillage. Indigenous communities have vowed to protect their land and people from "ecological violence and cultural terrorism" and have called for a 15 year suspension of all mining.

Now that this partial victory has been won, the longer struggle is to challenge the export dependency of Ecuador on one non-renewable and harmful mineral as well as the power that western transnationals wield in Third World countries.

That means changing the economy to serve the poor and powerless, not the rich and powerful. It also means looking for allies with the potential and in whose interest it is to change society. And that's the working class.

Texaco promises to make good in Ecuador



## Campaigning against Blair

► Jonathan Joseph

**British society is in the grip of a social and economic crisis.**

The traditional basis for the British economy - mass production and consumption of goods, has been eroded.

The welfare state is in chaos. As a result, the consensus politics by which all the main political parties agreed with the basics, is no more.

The Conservative Party

is most obviously in crisis. It is split on a whole range of issues, most notably Europe. But the Labour Party is undergoing changes too. If Blair gets his way,

Labour will no longer be the party of the working class and the trade unions. It will become the party of Europe and big business, a bosses alternative to the Tories.

When Blair announced his intention to scrap Clause Four - Labour's

commitment to common ownership, the Socialist Policies for a Labour Government campaign was launched. This is necessary since Blair's attacks will continue. His next step is to reduce the role that the trade unions and constituency parties play in deciding policy.

A few weeks ago *Liberation!* supporters attended the campaign's conference in Birmingham. It was decided to fight around the issues of full

employment, public spending, public ownership of utilities, benefits, repealing VAT on fuel, trade union rights, a minimum wage, cutting arms expenditure and challenging discrimination.

*Liberation!* supports this campaign. All people who wish to fight Blair should get involved. In particular, it is important to raise these issues in branches of Young Labour and in college Labour groups, and in trade unions.

The list of demands are a good start, but they are not particularly radical or socialist. We believe that a more fundamental reorganisation of society is necessary.

In our opinion, those in the Labour Party should instead be seeking to broaden outwards and look to the trade unions, the campaigns, and the struggles of youth, the oppressed, and the broader working class.

If Blair is to be defeated,

it will not simply be because the left in the Labour Party does a good job. It will be because workers, youth and the oppressed start to fight for their rights. A Labour government will promote great expectations which will soon turn to anger. This anger must be channelled through the Labour Party.

The Labour Party left will not win on its own. It must link up with the struggles of workers, youth and the oppressed.

**Get Active:**

**To find out more contact: Socialist Policies for a Labour Government, c/o NUM, 2 Huddersfield Rd, Barnsley, S702LS.**

## Seven more "miscarriages of justice" in Northern Ireland

► Bob Greene

In the Summer of last year, *Liberation!* reported on the case of the "Ballymurphy 7", seven nationalist youth in Belfast who were fitted up and tortured by the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

We are pleased to say that they have

now all been acquitted and released.

The fact that some have spent up to 4 years in prison, that security forces threatened to hand over the names and addresses of their families to Loyalist death squads, and that they were tortured both physically

and psychologically has shown the lengths that the British establishment is prepared to go to in order to attempt to smash resistance to British rule amongst nationalist youth in Ireland.

In acquitting the remaining three - Hugh McLaughlin, Tony Gar-

land and Michael Beck - in March this year the Judge devoted most of his time emphasising that although there was no real evidence their statements couldn't be trusted anyway.

The reason he had to do this is simple - there have been too

many exposures of the corruption and brutality of the "Justice" meted out by the British state in recent years, in particular to nationalists in the north of Ireland.

Behind the smokescreen of the "peace process" very little has changed.

The British state still rules the six counties through giving a few minor privileges to the Protestant minority in Ireland and through repression and discrimination of nationalists and Catholics.

The courts cannot be seen to admit this because the repressive

apparatus are still needed to maintain this system of inequality and national oppression.

Moreover it would open the way to appeals from the hundreds of other innocent people locked up by the British state.



# Techno - A Home For Female Musical Expression?

► Katherine Sedgeley

Women have clung onto the coat tails of men in loads of walks of life. They have to work harder to get less far and they have to justify themselves for having the audacity to enter many male-dominated careers.

The music business is no exception. When rock and roll was new, women were pushed into what were deemed appropriate 'female' roles, hence the huge number of 'grrl' groups which came on the scene in the USA in the 1960s. They had great voices but they were marketed by male producers.

You can see a natural progression from these groups to Kylie Minogue who owes her pop persona to record company decisions. As the years have gone by, more women have blasted their way to the top of the mainstream, i.e. male-dominated and

constructed, music scene. Singers such as Tina Turner have even shown that you can be a female rock star if you strut your stuff forcibly enough.

This is progress of sorts. Turner's whole life of battling against men and winning, and being stronger now than ever gives her music a great kick to it.

But female performers like that do very little to change and mould for themselves the kind of music we actually hear. In a way, they just speak men's musical language in different kinds of voices. They say different things but all the musical forms stay the same. And so musical forms such as heavy rock thrash on and on and maybe we'll see a few more female vocalists in such bands or the odd token drummer.

At the moment though there are lots of new sounds coming out by women who have got involved with techno music. This mu-

sic is a whole new kind of sound and it is one in which women are currently leading the way.

Take the music of Jane Siberry and Margaret Fiedler for instance. They mix computer-generated samples with acoustic instruments. They create a new musical language. They also mix samples of lyrics or maybe whispered words - none of your verse, chorus, verse, chorus, middle 8, repeat chorus to fade or to death depending which comes first.

Does this create music made up of sounds that do not connect to each other or to human experience? I don't think so. In interviews Siberry often says that she hates the idea of just experimenting with technology for its own sake. It makes her feel "like I do when I hear comedians full of hate and people laughing". She sees techno as the chance to get her feelings expressed via mu-

sic without having to follow any rules. These women see themselves as having their own musical history.

Joni Mitchell has always been an exception to the rule of women having to simply intervene into male musical forms. She has experimented with and blended a huge number of musical forms creating a new one, and that is all that you're doing when you sample. She worked a lot of jazz, blues and even country into her one sound. It was refreshing and she had her own rules.

Kate Bush has also always used technology to create an incredibly complex sound. She could layer all kinds of instruments over the top of each other and break up her own voice and then put it back together differently. These sounds certainly were not developed in order for these women to distance themselves from their experiences. They



Jane Siberry

have been able to make incredibly moving sounds and songs all of their own invention. It is on this base that the new techno-proficient women are building.

Maybe they are not on the brink of creating 'a women's musical language' and it probably wouldn't be a good thing if they did. New restrictions for female artists would

just replace old ones. But techno is providing a way for women to express themselves more freely, and women in turn have noticed this and are leading this musical form.

# Self-Defence is No Offence!

► Elkie Dee

Emma Humphries was recently released from prison, after appealing against a life sentence for killing a man whom she feared would otherwise have killed her.

Campaigners for the rights of women like Emma are hoping that Sara Thornton may also get a more sympathetic hearing.

The Jordache family story line in *Brookside* has drawn more attention to real cases. Helplines for women facing domestic violence reported an increase in calls as a result of the story. In a wonderful twist (for politico soap-addicts) scriptwriters have shown the women of Brookside Close launching a Free the Brookside Two defence campaign, though the story was also used to attack the left with the caricature "rent-a-mob" intent on causing violence who

"caused" the Jordaches to be moved to another prison.

It's important to remember that domestic violence isn't just a problem for a few unfortunate women, Mandy Jordache, Sara Thornton or whoever. Many women still live in fear, others are still in prison for killing in self-defence, whilst men are acquitted on the grounds of



Domestic violence is a fact of everyday life

provocation by "nagging". Even worse, many black women face the additional threat of deportation from Britain if they do leave violent partners.

There are a range of organisations campaigning for changes in the law to make it less biased against women, and doing practical solidarity work to support prisoners who killed because they knew no other way out. Others try to help women and young people affected by domestic violence.

### Get Active!

Contact: The Campaign Against Domestic Violence, Justice For Women, or try your phone directory to contact local groups.

# SPREAD THE WORD!

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# Jobs not J.S.A.!



The JSA is part of the attacks on all of us

► Nigel Danby, CPISA North Humberside ES Branch (personal capacity)

As Treasury Minister, John Major oversaw the withdrawal of benefit rights for 16 and 17

year olds. This has forced thousands of young people onto the streets rather than stay at home and be subjected to physical and emotional abuse.

As Prime Minister, Major has looked on as more and more young people have

lost their entitlement to benefits. Students can no longer sign on during their holidays, even though grants are being cut. Those in full-time education can no longer claim housing benefit. Those doing part-time college courses are often

harassed off the unemployment register. This increasingly makes further and higher education the preserve of a privileged few.

In October 1996, the Tories plan to replace Unemployment Benefit and Income Support

for the unemployed with a single benefit - Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). Again, young people will be especially hard hit. Those aged 18-24 face cuts in their benefit of between 20 and 60 per cent, depending on their circum-

stances.

Many young people lack work experience or aren't sure what kind of job they want — not surprising when there are so few jobs about. Naturally, a lot of them leave their jobs voluntarily. With the best will in the world, sometimes things just don't work out.

JSA will mean that if you leave a job voluntarily or get the sack, you won't get any benefit for the first two weeks of your claim. And if — like most young people — you haven't got children, you won't be able to apply for a hardship payment.

About 70,000 people — most of them under 24 — will have no source of income at all, even though they're signing on. Of course, a lot of them won't bother signing on if they can't get any benefit. So the Tories will be able to say that the unemployment figures have fallen again.

A short article like this can only scratch

the surface of the effects of the JSA. As Job Centre workers, my colleagues and me will be at the sharp end of the Tories' latest attack on ordinary people. That's why I decided to take part in the local Trade Union Council's campaign against Job Seekers' Allowance.

We aim to increase awareness of the effects of JSA for different groups of workers and to play a key role in any campaigning activity in the Yorkshire area. Young or old, in work or not, the Tories' plans for the welfare state are an attack on us all.

#### Get Active!

Contact Nigel Danby, TU side office, Crosskill House, Job Centre, Mill Lane, Beverly, East Yorks, HU17 7NH. Please mark your envelope 'in confidence'.

## Low Pay? No Way!

► Elkie Dee

**Everyone needs money to pay for somewhere to live, to buy food and so on, don't they?**

Labour politicians acknowledge that it's scandalous that so many people, many of them young, lack the money to afford these basic necessities. So why won't the Labour Party make a commitment to introducing a minimum wage for everyone, including young people? What's so scary about the idea that all people who work need a living wage? Quite a lot for Labour.

The leadership of the Labour Party under Tony Blair are less interested in promoting social justice than they are in showing that they can manage capitalism better than the Tories. Ending poverty pay through the introduction of a minimum wage would get in the way of this.

Already Harriet Harman, Labour's spokesperson on employment, speaking to the bosses organisation the CBI has stated that the Labour leadership will fight to exempt young people from the minimum wage so that bosses can exploit them as much as they choose. She suggested that new legislation could exempt employers from paying minimum wages to under 18s altogether and that an extra-low minimum wage could be developed for either under-24 or 21 year olds.

When Labour politicians and trade un-

ion bureaucrats oppose the minimum wage, they claim they are concerned about unemployment, that jobs would disappear. They even have the cheek to suggest this would be bad for young people, women, black people, and others who suffer from high unemployment and would lose their jobs.

Don't be conned by this kind of argument. Because it is a con! These arguments are used to defend the interests of the ruling rich, such as factory owners and those with thousands or millions of pounds invested in the exploitation of capitalism, against those of the working class. These arguments are also used against the interests of young people, black people, women, people with disabilities, all of whom are more likely to be in poverty-pay jobs if they have them. These are the people who most need a minimum wage.

Many young workers in low-paid jobs are forced into them by government policies, for example, the DSS requirement that people who sign on as unemployed must actively seek work and be willing to accept any work offered, even that £50-a-week cleaning job.

The bosses need someone to clean, and they want it done as cheaply as possible, as that leaves them more money to award themselves pay-rises.

Working class people are told by the DSS that they don't have the right to seek to earn enough money to pay for

the roof over their head and some food, even the odd night out. They don't have the right even to earn the pathetic amount they're given in Income Support, Housing Benefit etc.

The Job Seekers Allowance now being introduced by the government is going to make this even worse, as young people are bullied and intimidated further into accepting poverty wages and any other conditions bosses wish to impose on their workers. It may be used to coerce people into scabbing against other workers on strike for better pay.

Commitment to the minimum wage would create problems for a Labour Party who have no intention of reversing years of welfare state cuts under Tory rule.

The Job Seekers' Allowance is aimed at saving money on benefits by making people not eligible for benefit or forcing them into near-slave labour. A minimum wage would make this harder, as it would make this policy designed to save money a lot less effective in achieving its purpose.

This is why campaigners for a minimum wage and against the Job Seekers' Allowance must link together to fight for a Labour commitment to the minimum wage and for Labour and trade union activists to take up these 2 closely connected struggles. These struggles need to include and fully involve everyone affected.

#### Get Active!

To find out more about fighting low pay in your workplace, join a trade union. Look them up in the Yellow Pages.

