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FIGHTING TO WIN

*a guide to
revolutionary politics
and direct action for
students*



**workers
power**

30p

Introduction

Students now face a sustained attack on their grants, courses and right to study.

To defend ourselves we need to replace the present NUS leadership and turn NUS into a fighting democratic union at every level.

If we learn the political lessons of the past we can beat Thatcher.

This pamphlet explains how. It is aimed at further education and technical college, polytechnic and university students. Don't just read it. Use it. Use the arguments and information to write leaflets, motions and speeches. Stand for NUS and NOLS elections on the basis of this programme. Set up a Workers Power society in your college to fight for the politics outlined.

Workers Power is a revolutionary communist, i.e. Trotskyist, organisation. It is the British section of the Movement for a Revolutionary Communist International, which has sections in France, Germany, Austria and Ireland. It also produces Spanish language literature.

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Fighting to Win

Introduction

In the past year students around the world have taken to the streets and occupied their colleges, not only in defence of educational rights, but in some cases taking on governments over political issues. The most notable instances of this must be South Korea where students have taken on the vicious riot police and, of course, South Africa where students and school students as young as eight years old continue to struggle against apartheid.

In France and Spain last year students forced the government to back down over limiting access to higher education. In the late 60s and early 70s students were synonymous with radical demonstrations and confrontations with the police. Then as now they were able to make governments make 'U' turns. For students today who want to do something about Thatcher's education cuts, attacks on grants and the right to claim benefit, it is important to look at what power students have and what is necessary for students to beat Thatcher now . . . yes it is possible if we learn the lessons of these past struggles.

Students and the working class

A closer look at France '86, shows us that a crucial factor for victory was that the students won the support of the working class. The right wing government of Jaques Chirac announced far reaching changes in the education system. The new 'Devaquet' bill, was aimed at introducing greater selectivity, privatisation, and increasing fees. Students held mass meetings and elected strike committees, establishing a national co-ordinating committee which set the date for a demonstration. The demonstrators

were viciously attacked by the CRS riot police. One demonstrator lost half of his face when hit by a tear gas grenade. The students called more demonstrations and crucially began to occupy colleges. At first there was only a tiny minority calling for occupation, but as events unfolded they won the majority to their arguments.

At the next demonstration the PVM (riot police on motorbikes) beat a young black student to death. This only served to strengthen the students resolve. They called upon trade unionists to take strike action against the Devequet bill and police violence. This evoked powerful images of the 1968 uprising when ten million workers shook Europe to its foundations in the biggest general strike ever seen. Chirac appeared on television to announce the withdrawal of the bill.

The victory of the students created a mood of confidence and large sections of public sector workers went on the offensive against the Chirac austerity drive. Since then events in Spain have followed a similar pattern. And in South Korea the concessions and promises wrung from the government, by a predominantly student movement for democracy, have awakened an enormous workers' movement which, in a few weeks, has smashed the company-run trade unions that existed for decades.

It should by no means be thought that the French students were originally more political or left wing than British students are now. In fact they made a great deal of the first demonstration being 'non-political', refusing to take political leaflets. By their last demonstration they literally queued up to take leaflets, hungry for political ideas and explanations of the events that had happened. Before the struggles had

taken place the French media had written off the present generation of French youth as the most individualistic and the least interested in politics for decades.

These defensive struggles have held off governments every bit as right wing as Thatcher's. These governments are already trying to claw back the gains made.

Faced with a third term of Thatcherite attacks, how can students fight back? How can we transform our struggles so that every new generation of students doesn't have to fight the same losing battle against cuts in grants, benefits and the quality and availability of higher education?

The state of higher education after two terms of Thatcher

The capitalist crisis

The attack on higher education Thatcher has unleashed is not at all the product of personal vindictiveness, or her narrow-minded shop-keeper's background. It is the logical response of a capitalist politician in a period of economic crisis and recession. It is the chosen strategy of the whole ruling class.

With the end of the post-war boom period in 1971-73, the bosses and bankers began their search for a politician who would make the working class pay for the capitalist crisis. In the Callaghan Labour government of 1976-79 they found a willing tool but only with the full blown monetarism of Thatcher did they really find the answer. Cutting public spending on the NHS, local government, social services and education was one element of the strategy. Another was 're-structuring the workforce'—destroying the power of the unions to defend wages and conditions, lowering the aspirations of a new generation of workers through prolonged bouts of unemployment, breeding servility and ignorance by replacing education with a narrow 'training' for all but the privileged few. A third element has been to divide workers, fostering divisions between skilled and unskilled, whipping up racism and anti-gay bigotry, driving women back into the family home. And finally we have seen the strengthening of the state: the

police, the courts, the army have had to cast off the 'impartial' guise they cultivated in the post-war period, becoming ever more openly and viciously the sharp end of Thatcher's attack on the working class.

Students in further and higher education have felt the weight of every one of these attacks in the past eight years. Now Thatcher and Kenneth Baker have targetted 'education' for a welter of attacks. Victorian values, so dear to Thatcher in the sphere of family life, are now on the agenda in every sphere of education.

Cuts in education

The Tory government has successfully hacked away at higher and further education. Since it got into office in 1979 there has been a 20% cut in real terms in the government's grant to the universities. In human terms this means that since 1979, 25,000 potential university students have been excluded from university because of the cuts. The polytechnics, colleges of higher education and teacher training colleges were less privileged than the universities to start with. They have born more of the burden of cuts. NUS calculates that the amount of money spent on each student in this sector each year has fallen by £550 in real terms.

The government has also shifted funding from social sciences and arts into technology and the natural sciences.

Cuts in grants

Between 1979 and their re-election in 1987 the Tories have cut the value of grants by 21% in real terms. At the same time the parental contribution to grants has risen by a staggering 207% in real terms. NUS estimates that the vast majority of students who are supposed to be in receipt of parental contribution receive only part or none of it. Even students who do receive a full grant are estimated to be living below the official poverty line. Students in further education receive no mandatory grant at all.

Cuts in benefit

Thatcher has been gradually undermining the right of students to claim benefits. Full time students on advanced courses are no longer entitled to claim social security benefit in the

short vacations or claim housing benefit in halls of residence. From 1 April 1988 students will be denied rebate on the first 20% of local authority rates. With the government's new availability for work tests, it seems likely that the next step will be to deny students the right to claim benefit in the summer vacation as well.

Racism and sexism

One of Thatcher's first achievements was to decimate the overseas student population by massive discriminatory fee increases. By progressively limiting the access of the poorest sections of society to higher education Thatcher has kept black people to a tiny quota. Meanwhile the police and the courts have spared no expense to guarantee the rights of racists to speak out and work on campuses.

Women too have suffered massively from the Tory cuts. Concentrated in the arts and social sciences, where they make up 60-70% of students their courses have been hit hardest. In many colleges nurseries have been cut, while access to abortion is still difficult and continually under attack. All of this combines to drive women out of higher and further education into the home as unpaid carers, or into the workplace as low paid, part time labour.

Attacks on the rights of students to organise

Many of the rights which today we take for granted have not existed for ever. Strong student unions with both involvement in the running of our college and adequate facilities are the product of the great student struggles of the 1960s. Today however student autonomy is under attack.

Under the Tories the *ultra vires* rule has surfaced as an important obstacle to students taking independent political action.

Ultra vires actions are those which judges deem not to be in the interest of the student body, and since the judges are unelected, unaccountable, rich, upper class Tories it isn't surprising their view of student interest often differs from what the students think their interests are.

Ultra vires has been used to prevent a number of different actions. From money being donated to the miners' strike fund and strikers

using union facilities in 1984-85, to preventing donations being sent to the starving in Ethiopia.

Where students have organised militant opposition to the cuts they have experienced the full might of the bosses' courts. At Sussex University last year students occupied the college administration block against a proposed round of cuts. The occupation was broken up by the police and the union fined a massive sum by the courts.

Eventually the union itself was disbanded and replaced by a toothless 'association'. All political societies were banned. A sinister aspect of the Tories' and college authorities' attack was revealed when students in occupation discovered secret files held by the authorities on student activists. After police broke up a demo at Manchester University they harassed and beat up some of the leaders of that action. Rest assured that student militancy will get similar treatment in the months to come.

What does Thatcher's third term mean for students?

Clearly we can expect yet more cuts in education. The Tories also plan to privatise catering and cleaning in the polytechnics, colleges of higher education and teacher training colleges. They even have plans to sell off some colleges to the private sector altogether. All this will mean job loses to campus workers. It is clear that the needs of students and campus workers to fight the cuts are linked.

The introduction of loans will be a crucial step in the Tories plan to restructure further and higher education to the needs of capitalism. It is estimated that students who are not so privileged that their parents can afford to pay for their education entirely, will have to borrow some thing like £16,000 pounds to take a degree. This would include paying for their maintenance as well as paying course fees. It seems that the Tories will not be content till they have driven the majority of students from a working class background out of higher education and subjected the remainder to the discipline of years of debt as they start work. Even if they do not cut places, (which given their past record it is virtually certain they will do) it is obvious that the numbers in higher education will fall dra-

matically. It is crucial that the loans proposals are defeated and the right to a grant which we can live on, won. We need a clear strategy that can win.

We can expect more attacks on the rights of students to organise, just as we can expect more attacks on the rights of trade unionists. Thatcher needs to be sure that she can push through her plans with the least opposition possible. The Tories have already announced that, in the name of 'free speech', they will make it illegal for students to 'no platform' known fascists. The new Public Order Act will undoubtedly be used against student demonstrators.

And, at the very centre of the Tory plans, we can expect a sustained onslaught on *what* we learn. Already we have seen Russian language and politics courses decimated. We have seen sociology graduates prevented from becoming primary teachers. This trickle of Tory ideology will become a torrent in their third term of office.

So how can we stop it?

The state of the student movement ... a crisis of leadership

NUS

Over the past few years NUS has developed a set response to government attacks. It is an ineffectual one. Campaigns have stressed the centrality of winning 'public opinion' to students' demands—and have sacrificed any effective action in order to achieve this end. Crucially necessary actions such as occupations, rent strikes, and even militant demonstrations are seen as alienating public support.

Thus, year in year, out we are expected to write letters to our MPs, canvass our parents, let off multi-coloured balloons in city centres and (occasionally) march quietly through the closed business areas of London on a Saturday morning. It has become increasingly obvious to student activists that none of this is likely to force the government to back down.

As the events in France have shown, the real way to gain massive popular support for our demands is to take decisive and militant action ourselves, and to call on the *organised working*

class to take action in our support, linking up our struggles with the ongoing struggles of workers wherever possible. NUS has refused to draw these lessons. The bureaucrats in the leadership of the union ensured that the majority of the student body remained unaware of the French events. And with good reason. For if such events were to happen here they would involve our leadership in a direct conflict with the state. And this they will not consider.

NOLS

The National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) has controlled the NUS executive since 1984. NOLS in turn is controlled by the horribly mis-named Democratic Left (DL). Neither left wing nor democratic, the DL has the backing of Neil Kinnock and the leadership of the Labour Party and has used a variety of tactics to maintain its control of NOLS. These have included rigging conference votes, ruling legitimate delegates out of order, closing down conferences altogether and, some claim, even forging membership cards.

Although on some issues the DL is indeed to the left of the Labour leadership, notably on Ireland, its politics are in the main those of the leadership.

For this reason NOLS has increasingly opposed all direct action by students in favour of relying on a future Labour government to solve all our problems for us. Even leaving aside the stubborn fact that Labour governments are few and far between these days, NOLS' strategy is deeply flawed. There is no guarantee that Labour in power would even reverse all the Tory cuts, let alone embark on a programme to expand higher education. We should take note that the last Labour government embarked on a massive programme of cuts in public spending. The world economy is due, in the next year or so, to enter yet another crisis. Labour is committed to managing the capitalist system. In other words, like the Tories it will act in the interests of profit. If it is returned to power again it will undoubtedly attack the education system again.

When students have taken direct action the attitude of the NOLS leadership has been appalling.

dents would argue that they are mistaken to think that they can simply take over NOLS and thereby NUS, and that their 'socialist policies' will then solve the problems students are now facing.

Firstly the bureaucratic stranglehold that the DL has on NOLS, backed up as it is by the Labour leadership, means that they will have to make some kind of principled break with the Labour leadership if they are to take NOLS over. This was illustrated by the 1984 conference when the left had the chance to take control of the conference. The right wing had to ship in loads of delegates overnight in order to ensure that they did not lose the election for NUS executive delegates.

In the confusion that followed neither *Militant* nor SSiN put forward a course of open defiance of the Labour bureaucracy. Why? Because for all their verbal radicalism what terrifies them both is the idea of being kicked out of the Labour Party or its student organisation. Both want to win only within the framework of 'peaceful' electioneering. Unfortunately the right will not play the game by the rules.

Why do *Militant* and *SO* condemn themselves to permanent opposition? Because both of them can only see a revolution in Britain starting from a left wing Labour government. In their schema a left Labour government will come to power, try to implement 'socialist' policies and then face a state backlash . . . at which point our revolutionaries will reveal to the astounded masses that workers' councils (soviets) and a workers' militia are necessary.

In Workers Power we don't believe that 'history' has laid down a pre-ordained scenario for how to get to socialist revolution and that winning control of the Labour Party is it. Certainly Labourism dominates the working class today and therefore revolutionary socialists need to work seriously and consistently with sincere Labour supporters—combining united struggle against the bosses and the Tories on day to day issues with warning and exposure of the reformist leaders. We approach every battle from the point of view of how to win it and how it can link up with other struggles. Ultimately this method can link very big and broad class

struggles to the very issue of who rules in our society. When such battles occur we raise as questions of the day the need for basic organisations of working class power: workers' councils, workers' militias and revolutionary party, irrespective of the fortunes of Labour, and irrespective of whether we have got any 'Marxist' Labour councillors or MPs.

SWSS

The main revolutionary organisation outside NOLS is the Socialist Workers Student Society (SWSS). But again, in SWSS we see student militants paying the price for the political mistakes of its parent organisation.

Despite its calls for workers' power and revolution, there are two major errors in SWSS' politics. First its economism. Starting from the very revolutionary-sounding proposition that workers' struggles 'automatically' become political once they reach a certain level (e.g. mass strike situations), the SWP ignores the task of transforming these struggles into the struggle for power. This sounded fine in the 60s and 70s when workers were often on the offensive. For the SWP revolutionary politics meant that where workers demanded 15% wage rises they demanded 20%. Where workers mounted mass pickets the SWP demanded *bigger* pickets. But in the current period of retreat tailing the existing consciousness of workers means drawing the conclusion that nothing is possible. And this is exactly the tune sung by the SWP and SWSS today.

'Because there is a "downturn" in the class struggle we will never be able to link up student struggles to the workers' they say. Hence SWSS turns the very important task of educating students in revolutionary ideas into the be-all and end-all of its activity.

Secondly, because SWSS' politics in practice are not far removed from that of NOLS and its hangers-on, SWSS has a mortal fear of engaging NOLS and the Labour Party through revolutionary tactics—it fears it might 'catch reformism' from such close contact.

So instead of demanding united action from NOLS, instead of claiming the right to be in NOLS fighting for their ideas, SWSS can only say to NOLS and the rank and file of the Labour

clubs: 'leave what you are doing and join SWSS'. This is OK for recruiting 'twos and threes' to their supposedly revolutionary organisation but it is useless when faced with fighting back now.

For this reason Workers Power students don't make a fetish of being in NOLS, or outside of it.

Our starting point is our revolutionary action programme, our aim is to build organisations of struggle amongst students. For this reason it is the action committee, the occupation committee etc, that is important. Unless we build organisations of *struggle* all places captured on the NUS executive, all the sabbatical officers

posts, all the fine resolutions put through Labour clubs, will count for nothing.

We work inside NOLS as a revolutionary tendency. Where we are chosen as NOLS candidates for local or national election we make it clear that we will only stand on the basis of *our* revolutionary politics. Unlike SWSS we are not so uncertain of our politics as to believe that they will wither if exposed to the atmosphere of the Labour Party. But if necessary we will stand and vote against NOLS, and risk expulsion by the Labour bureaucrats, because—unlike SSiN and *Militant*—we think revolutionaries do not perish outside the cozy world of Kinnock's party.

How to get delegated to NOLS conference

Firstly ensure that:

- 1 You are a member of NUS
 - 2 You are a member of NOLS
 - 3 You are a member of the Labour Party.
- Recruit as many people as possible to the labour club. The more people you have in the Labour club the more delegates you are allowed to send.
- 4 Photo copy their membership cards and send their registration by registered post to avoid Walworth Road claiming that they did not receive them.
 - 5 Photocopy the form you receive from NOLS for registering delegates. This is because it will have dates on it telling you when it has to be returned. In the past, the right have sent out two different forms. The real form which has an earlier date on is only sent to clubs which they do not

suspect of being under the control of the left. If they have sent you the wrong date at least you will have proof.

- 6 Return the form with your delegates' names on by registered post so that they cannot deny receiving it or claim that it arrived on the wrong day etc.

- 7 Even if you follow this procedure you may still be ruled out of order when you get there so ensure that you have all your 'proof' with you, e.g. photocopies, proof they received letters that you sent and don't forget your NUS, NOLS and Labour Party membership cards. Also ensure that you have either plenty of cash or a cheque card and cheque book with you because they have been known to resurrect debts as much as six years old in order to rule clubs out of order.

An action programme for students

Defend grants

We should fight against the introduction of loans and argue that the present system of grants should be extended. We should be against parental contributions and for a grant equal to the average industrial wage.

Defend benefits

We should link up with unemployed workers' unions and centres to fight against benefit cuts. All benefits, like a national minimum wage, should be set at the level of the average industrial wage and linked to inflation.

For fair rents and decent housing

Hall fees should be set at a level students can afford, not one that makes a profit. Student committees should take over running the halls, setting a real fair rent. In the private sector students are a massive proportion of tenants. Make this power felt with co-ordinated rent strikes against rack-renting landlords and sub-standard accommodation.

Stop the cuts

Every cut should be resisted with direct action. We should demand the college authorities 'open the books' to the inspection of student committees when they say there is no money available. We should demand they cancel debts and interest payments to the banks.

Workers' and students' control of education: how to make the gains permanent

If students do force the government to back down over loans and the cuts they must expect that it won't be long before the government is on the offensive again. We should look at the problem of how to make the gains permanent. The key to doing this lies in the method that we use to stop Thatcher in the first place. If students

and workers were to stop the government's plans on a national scale, it would take mass action, strikes, occupations etc. The democratic rank and file organisations that are necessary to control these actions can and must be turned into bodies for controlling the education system.

We must argue that once we have control of our colleges we should not meekly hand them back to college management who cannot be trusted not to implement the cuts. If we gain control of colleges we should be trying to put into practice what students and workers need. For example:

- A massive expansion of the education system.
- We decide what is to be studied, the funding necessary.
- We must ensure the most open access to education and an end to all discrimination in education against women, black people, lesbians and gay men.
- Free further and higher education for all who want it.

Demonstrations

Demonstrations are obviously important. However, they should not be passive carnival affairs as they are now. Students must get the support of all unions involved in education and get them to support student demands; after all they stand to lose their jobs as more college places are lost. We should be arguing for demonstrations during the week and for students and college workers to take joint strike action to join the demonstration. If the college workers do not vote for strike action, then students should still organise a boycott of lectures and argue for as many students as possible to be on the demonstration. Each college should organise a rank and file committee of students and workers to mobilise for the demo.

Defence

One of the sure lessons of France, Spain and the struggles of miners and printworkers in Britain is that if students really do fight against the cuts they will at some point come up against the organised might of the state. Police violence against demonstrators and pickets is a fact of life. The demo mobilising committees should organise defence for demonstrations and appoint stewards. These stewards should not act as the official NUS stewards do now, pointing out 'trouble makers' to the police and encouraging passivity. They should be prepared to lead the demo into being as militant as possible, organising chanting, blocking roads, etc.

Rent strikes

Rent strikes have an importance in putting pressure on college authorities over rises in the cost and standard of accommodation in halls of residence. They should also be looked upon as a tactic to pressurise college authorities over cuts, redundancies etc. However, a rent strike cannot work if it is left to individual students to take on the college authorities. They need to be organised and controlled by rank and file committees of students. Where possible it should be spread to private accommodation, with committees set up to defend students against bailiffs and the landlords' thugs.

Occupations

Occupations are a very important weapon for students. We should argue for indefinite occupation of administration blocks for the maximum disruption of the running of a college, against the cuts, and loans. Like all of our struggles we should argue that they should be controlled by the rank and file and defended by organised defence squads.

Link up with workers

We should argue for meetings of rank and file members of the students' union and campus workers. These meetings should discuss joint action between students and workers. We should be arguing that workers take strike action in support of student demands and that students occupy colleges against redundancies. It is essential that we get the support of workers

if we are to win our fight against the Tories plans.

Link up with school students

The attack on further and higher education is just part of Thatcher's overall plan to restructure education to meet capitalist need. Also on the receiving end are school students. In the past years school students have organised strikes and demos against YTS and in support of striking teachers. Instead of ignoring school students, NUS should be supporting school student unions, placing resources and money at their disposal

The example of France shows the power of unity between school and college students. We should build joint action committees—unofficial if necessary—with school student organisations.

We should fight to extend worker/student control of education into the secondary and primary school.

Transform the union

In any struggle, local or national, the NUS bureaucracy will act as a conservative force, talking radical one minute, selling-out the next. We strive to replace union leaders who won't fight cuts with those who will, but in the end it is the bureaucratic union structures themselves that must be swept away.

All student union officials should be elected and recallable to union general meetings. They should receive no more than the full grant of the students they represent.

The more student unions come into conflict with the state, the more the contradiction between their role as social and welfare organisations and fighting organisations will be exposed. Unions must fight for complete financial independence from college authorities, and for a 'NUS closed shop' in every establishment.

College union meetings should be the sovereign body and be held weekly, and the anti-democratic remnants of Oxbridge union style organisation replaced with complete direct democracy, time off lectures for meetings and full creche facilities. Women, black people, lesbians and gay men should have full rights to

caucus in the union.

At every opportunity students need to create new fighting organisations corresponding to the actual struggles in hand: occupation and rent strike committees, joint student/trade union committees etc.

Women

Worker and student control of education, its content and access, is essential for the ending of discrimination against women in further and higher education. Whilst we support all moves for positive discrimination and equal opportunities we realise these can often be token gestures, or the equal opportunity to share in declining resources. Immediately we fight to force colleges to provide:

- Free 24 hour creche facilities open to campus workers and students.
- Free and secure transport to and from college at all times.
- Adequate lighting on campuses and at halls of residence.
- Free access to cervical and breast cancer screening facilities.

NUS should take up campaigning for:

- Free and full access to contraception.
- Free abortion on demand.
- End all legal discrimination against women

We must open the union to women at all levels. There should be a women's officer in every union.

Lesbian and gay rights

Gay male students in particular face police harassment and the risk of prosecutions because any expression of their sexuality is illegal. Lesbian students too suffer all the inequalities and discrimination society metes out. We need to transform student unions into organisations that take seriously the struggle for lesbian and gay rights. There should be a lesbian and gay society in every union, advice and legal backing for lesbians and gay men. There should be a lesbian and gay officer in every union.

We must fight to make NOLS and NUS take up the campaign to:

- Abolish the age of consent laws. They do not protect children from abuse. They do allow gay men under 21 and straight people under

16 to be prosecuted for their sexuality.

- For the right of lesbian mothers to custody of their children.
- Abolish all legal discrimination against lesbians and gays.
- For no compulsory testing for AIDS.
- For a massive expansion of AIDS care and research facilities.

Against racism and fascism

We should fight immediately for a return to total equality between overseas students fees and those of British students. The fight for student/workers' control in further and higher education will mean we can force colleges and government to abolish fees for overseas students, opening up the education system to those whose countries Britain has plundered.

We must fight every deportation of overseas students, linking the individual cases to those of the black community outside the colleges. We should:

- Force NOLS and NUS to fight for an end to all immigration controls. They are all racist. We should build support for all campaigns against police harassment and racism. Student unions should open up their facilities to black people in struggle, such as in Broadwater Farm, Brixton etc, where legal, medical and organisational help is needed.

To ensure that black students have a voice in the union we should fight for a black students' officer in every union to deal with the particular problems of racism and black oppression. We must also fight for the right of black sections to exist in every Labour club

We should defy the Education Bill which aims to prevent students from 'no platforming' racists and fascists. But we need to be clear what is meant by 'no platform' and who it applies to.

Against racists like Ray Honeyford and Enoch Powell we should fight to prevent union societies or unions inviting them to speak. We should picket and heckle their meetings, demanding the democratic right of reply to their racist poison.

But 'no platform' means physically preventing fascists from speaking, marching, selling literature. This is the time honoured method of the working class for dealing with fascism. It is

a clear, honest and open exception to our otherwise general defence of free speech. We make this exception, not because its ideas are obnoxious, but because fascist propaganda on the streets and in colleges are fascism's method of directly preparing racial attacks, attacks on picket lines and ultimately pogroms and the destruction of students' and workers' union organisations. Fascism is not just racist. It is direct terror aimed at workers and minorities. It is the final option for the bosses when all else fails, when the workers' movement can only be smashed by mobilising millions of 'little people', shop-keepers, de-classed youth and unemployed, ex-soldiers etc. We are, or should be, 'at war' with fascists wherever they appear.

Applying this tactic to all racists not only blurs the difference between rascism and fascism. If it were applied consistently it would mean no platforming the racist Conservative Party, and some racist Liberals and SDPers and, yes, the fascist Labour Party, which has perpetrated racist laws and police harassment in every period of office.

International Issues

Hold the union to supporting all the struggles of all students fighting against their governments' plans to introduce cuts. Demand that students unions sent delegations of elected delegates over to countries in struggles like France, Spain and South Korea so that these students can come back and give reports to student meetings about events in these countries.

We should hold our student unions and NUS to giving real support to those who are fighting oppression in South Africa. We should organise meetings of workers and students to see how South African goods can be removed from the college, e.g. South African produce in our canteens. We should reject arguments that we can rely on consumer boycotts in these cases and be clearly for a worker's boycott. We should also make sure that our colleges do not have investments in South Africa. If they do we should follow the example of the LSE and argue for indefinite occupations until the authorities agree to divest. We should build direct links with South African student and trade unions.

We must pay special attention to people who

are struggling against imperialism, for example in Ireland and Palestine. As students in Britain, the oldest imperialist power, we should give active support to its oldest victims, the Irish people, especially the nationalist population held against their wishes in the artificial six county statelet. We should give unconditional support to all those struggling for a united Ireland including the major force the IRA and Sinn Fein. Whatever the criticisms we may have of their limited goals and their military and political tactics we must stand for an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of British troops, recognising the right of the whole population of Ireland to determine the future of the six counties.

- For the IRA, against the British army.
- Troops out now.
- Self-determination for the Irish people as a whole.

Likewise we must give full support to the Palestinian peoples' right to return and live in their own homeland in a state which gives no privileges to the Zionist settlers. Whilst it is legitimate to criticise the PLO's programmatic objectives (a still capitalist secular democratic state) and to criticise their strategy and tactics this must be within the context of unconditional support in their struggle against the Zionist state, imperialism and against reactionary Arab regimes that act as agents for imperialism.

Students must be clear in differentiating between the actions of capitalist nations like America and Britain and countries like the USSR where capitalism has been overturned. We must defend the rights of these countries to defend themselves against world imperialism. At the same time, we should support the struggles of workers in the USSR and Eastern Europe against the bureaucracy. We defend their right to form independent trade unions and fight for working class political revolution against the bureaucracy.

War and peace

War is an integral part of the crisis ridden capitalist system. Wars between imperialist countries over the division of the world market (World Wars One and Two), wars to subjugate colonies and ensure imperialist domination

over semi-colonial countries (Britain's war against Argentina, its military occupation of Northern Ireland), and hanging over all this the threat of nuclear war between imperialism and the degenerate workers' states.

In such a world pacifism, the call for disarmament, is useless.

The class nature of wars means we sometimes have to take sides. We are clear. We support any colonial or semi-colonial country against imperialist aggression; Iran against the USA, Nicaragua against the Contras, the Irish national struggle against the British army. And we defend the degenerate workers' states against imperialist attack despite their bureaucratic and dictatorial regimes.

As long as capitalism exists peace and disarmament are utopias. Taken up as a radical demand in the early 80s, by the 1987 election unilateral nuclear disarmament had become Kinnock's way of saying 'we need a bigger navy'.

We should certainly demand that Labour implements unilateral nuclear disarmament, and defend it against the attacks of the right wing. But this demand alone, even if implemented, will not stop war.

Only when the workers disarm the bosses by *force of arms* will there be an end to imperialism's wars of plunder which have destroyed the lives of millions.

Working class power

Every occupation, every rent strike every clash between students and the police and courts sharply poses the question: who runs education?

Students cannot hope to defend education, for themselves, for their brothers and sisters, for their own children in future, whilst capitalist crises continually ravage the education system. Within the conditions imposed by capitalism in crisis it is impossible to think about really extending facilities, access to education etc.

That is why the fight for a better grant, for better living conditions, against cuts and against racism and sexism must be linked to the fight against capitalism itself.

Only on the basis of expropriating the capitalists, the banks etc, running industry and serv-

ices under workers' control, massively expanding production and planning to meet human need, not profit, can education be freed from the shackles placed on it by capitalism.

But the capitalist class will never give up power peacefully. Behind the facade of parliament lies the unelected state machine: the police, army, security services, courts and monarchy. Any left wing Labour government which tried to attack the economic power of the capitalists would soon feel the might of their extra-parliamentary *political* power.

On the road to the socialist transformation of society, therefore, we need to smash this state machine.

Students alone, no matter how courageous or numerous, cannot accomplish this. It is the working class, with its power to seize the factories and immobilise society which can smash the power of the exploiters. Not through parliament, but through workers' councils of delegates from the factories and estates, and a workers' militia smashing and replacing the capitalist state: this is the road to socialism.

This is why in every workers' struggle Workers Power argues for transitional demands, planting the embryos of future power in the strike committee, the picket line defence squad, and factory committee control over production.

And this is why we argue that even though the militant struggle of students can reach high levels, during occupations, rent strikes, lecture boycotts etc, at every stage they must be linked to the struggles of the working class.

The student bureaucrats, the future MPs and TV presenters, will sneer at our ideas as utopian. But it is they who are living in a dream world. Peaceful capitalism, benevolent capitalism, capitalism without poverty and oppression—this is a utopia.

In the real world masses of workers, peasants and students are in ferment. From France and Spain to Korea and South Africa the old politics and the old leaderships are proving inadequate.

Workers Power is fighting to build a revolutionary communist party and a new revolutionary international in the tradition of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Such a party is not an optional extra in the fight for working class

power. Every struggle, from a student occupation to a general strike shows the need for organised political leadership. Every revolutionary opportunity since Russia 1917 has

failed because of the absence of a real *revolutionary* communist party.

If you agree with the ideas in this pamphlet join us in the fight to build one!

How to organise an occupation

1 Put a resolution into a union meeting explaining why an occupation is necessary and where it should be and so forth. Call an emergency UGM if necessary.

2 Before the union meeting:

a Publicise the meeting with a leaflet arguing why occupation is necessary and asking people to come to the meeting and support the resolution.

b Get a team of people together who support the occupation to go around the proposed site of the occupation. This should be the administration of the college in order to shut down the working of the college as much as possible. You should be looking at practicalities such as what exits there are, how they can be secured, where the phones are, is there access to water, toilets etc? If necessary produce a plan of the site of the occupation to distribute to people if the vote to occupy is carried, explaining exactly where to go and what to do.

3 If you can get a majority of people to vote for your resolution, argue that you immediately go into occupation from the meeting, to avoid the college authorities taking any action to stop you.

4 When you get to the site of the occupation first secure all exits with barricades. These can be made from filing cabinets, desks or what ever comes to hand.

5 Decide on one exit/entrance which should be guarded at all times. You should ensure that you can see who it is before you let them in.

6 As soon as the occupation is secure, use

the phones to ring up NUS and other colleges and the press telling them about the action you have taken.

7 Hold a meeting as soon as possible to decide how the occupation is to be run. Argue for:

a Democratic meetings at least once a day (preferably more often)

b Elect an occupation committee of recallable delegates to be responsible for emergency decisions .

c Elect people to be responsible for rotas for guarding the exit, food, cleaning the occupation etc.

8 Get in touch with the campus workers' unions rank and file. Argue that they should be supporting the occupation. Get them to pass resolutions in their union branches in support of the occupation, resolving not to co-operate with any attempt by college management to break up the occupation and to send delegates to occupation meetings.

Things you can do once the occupation is established

1 Make a thorough search of the files in the building you have occupied. You should be looking for things like secret files on student activists, investments in South Africa, what money is being spent where in the college, plans of future cuts etc.

2 Sent out delegations of students to talk to rank and file students of other colleges, explaining why you are in occupation and why they should support you.

3 Hold political meetings inside the occupation, for example debates between political tendencies on issues that interest students.

The courts

It is quite likely that the college authorities will try and take the union to court. There is no way that we can expect any justice whatsoever from the bosses courts. However, we would argue that if they take you to court you should fight the case if possible as this will give you more time to get support for the occupation.

When and how to retreat

If you are threatened with the bailiff and the police you have to look at the balance of forces. If the police are going to attempt to batter down the door and you decide to resist this it is important that it is done in a realistic way. That is, with proper physical defence to avoid the police simply beating students up for the sake of it. If such defence cannot be organised properly then it is better to take a united decision to all march out of the occupation together. Of course, the longer the occupation can be preserved the better.

