

**WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!**

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# **★ COMMUNIST ★ STUDENTS**

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**WE STILL HAVE A WORLD TO WIN!**

Being a student... Even the most naïve fresher knows that game: relentless alcohol consumption, dodgy indie music and lecture-skipping. At the end, you scrape a 2.2 in spite of the above and shuffle off into a white-collar clone job.

Right? Well, there's always more to it than that. In the 1960s and 70s, for instance, students in their hundred of thousands found themselves literally swept up in history. But the days when a dispute over the expulsion of a few radicals from Nanterre could snowball into a wildcat general strike topping 10 million workers – two thirds of the French workforce – appear to be over, for now.

The big problem with this trend is that it is really in inverse proportion to the need for students to fight. You hardly need to be told about student loans and fees – you're paying for the damn things. That nice, boring white collar job isn't as guaranteed as it once was – graduate unemployment is growing. Even if you're one of the lucky ones, £20,000 of debt will cut into the best of pay-cheques. We say that all fees and grants should be abolished immediately and replaced by a living grant set at a level based on need (this would amount to at least £300 per week).

The imperialist adventures, which spurred our predecessors into their courageous struggles, have gone nowhere, either. The jungles of Indochina may have become the deserts of the Middle East, and napalm may have evolved into the daisy-cutter, and the "red threat" may have been temporarily usurped by the scandalous spying on "Asian-looking" students on campuses, but nothing much else has changed. Of course, we call for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, Iraq and the rest of the world. We also

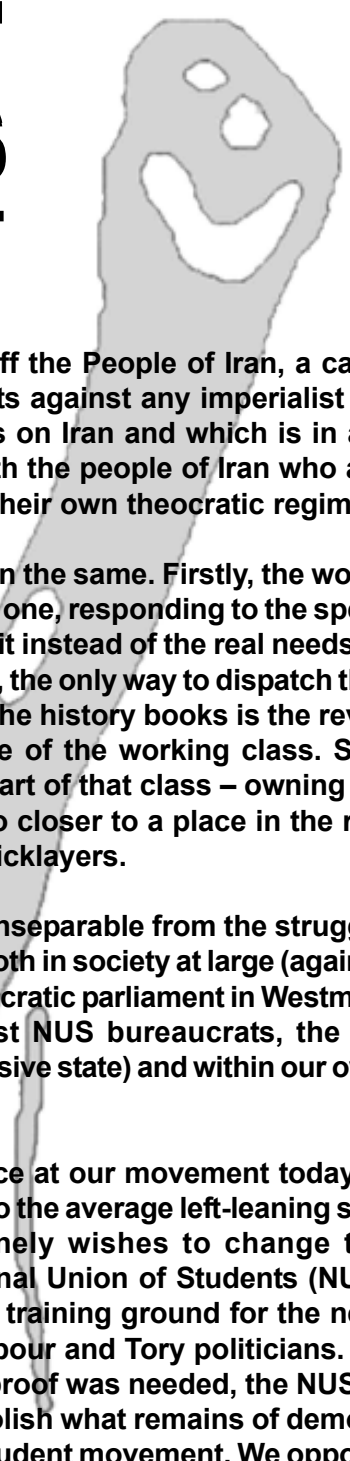
support Hands off the People of Iran, a campaign which fights against any imperialist attack or sanctions on Iran and which is in active solidarity with the people of Iran who are fighting against their own theocratic regime.

Two things remain the same. Firstly, the world is still a capitalist one, responding to the spectral needs of profit instead of the real needs of people. Secondly, the only way to dispatch this awful system to the history books is the revolutionary struggle of the working class. Students are a key part of that class – owning no capital, we are no closer to a place in the ruling class than bricklayers.

This struggle is inseparable from the struggle for democracy: both in society at large (against the pseudo-democratic parliament in Westminster, the careerist NUS bureaucrats, the increasingly repressive state) and within our own movement.

But a quick glance at our movement today is hardly inspiring to the average left-leaning student that genuinely wishes to change the world. The National Union of Students (NUS) is a bureaucratic training ground for the next generation of Labour and Tory politicians. As if any any more proof was needed, the NUS is now trying to abolish what remains of democracy within the student movement. We oppose the NUS Governance Review because it will lead to more control by consultants, the abolition of conference and the further depoliticisation of the NUS.

It is not, however, sufficient to just say 'No' to the proposals. We need a thorough democratisation of our existing structures from top to bottom – for example, by abolishing the powerful position of NUS president and making all executive members accountable to and in-



stantly recallable by students. We favour a unified national election day to elect both local sabbatical positions and NUS conference delegates as a step towards overcoming depoliticisation and apathy. Salaried officials and employees of the executive should receive no more than a skilled worker's wage. We are for full transparency in all matters, especially dealings with government ministers and commercial concerns.

But how to fight for these demands? Student groups are not the democratic, lively and combative groups that one may expect them to be, but smaller mirror-images of the left 'parties' that tightly control their decisions and activity. This anti-democratic, dull and uninspiring approach to young people re-create the bureaucratic machines of the Socialist Workers Party or the Communist Party, but it does not create rounded revolutionaries that are equipped with the theory and the practice to change the world.

Unlike most other left stu-

dent groups, we emphasise the political and organisational autonomy of our work. Although founded by members of the Communist Party of Great Britain, we have a democratic culture, programme and constitution of our own. We encourage ideological struggle within our ranks – not because we like disagreement for disagreement's sake, but because differences are natural. Forcing people to agree with everything before they can work in a group is not the road towards the re-establishment of principled working class politics, but the long road to Monty Python's Judea, with its numerous Peoples' Fronts. Enforcing ideological conformity will result only in a split-prone, irrelevant sect. From Trotskyists to Bakhuninists, council communists to Autonomists - all are welcome; none are sacred. Only through honest argument will we transcend the pettiness that divides the left.

We encourage all students to join us who are committed to the destruction of the moribund capitalist system, and to building a future free of its poisonous grip. Today more than ever, we have nothing to lose but our chains.



## Join Communist Students!

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