

A socialist study group on the history of the British working class, run by Workers' Liberty North East London.

We'll be looking at the four great upsurges of working-class struggle in British history so far, discussing why they didn't end in socialist victory, and drawing the lessons for today and for the next time round. All welcome.

We're encouraging people to do the reading, but if you can't please feel free to come along, listen and take part in the discussion.

1. 10 November: When workers fought for the vote (1832-48)

We will look at the Chartists, Britain's first mass working-class movement, whose campaign for everyone to have the vote created a social crisis
Reading: GDH Cole and Raymond Postgate's book *The Common People*,* chapters 22-25, 30-32 (6 and 11 also relevant)

2. 17 November: "Waking from forty years sleep" (1881-1918)

Looking at the revival of socialist ideas, the development of working-class political representation and, from the late 1880s, the huge struggles which created the "new unionism" organising precarious and unskilled workers. Chapters 34, 35, 37, 38

3. 24 November: Britain on the brink of revolution? (1919-26)

In 1919 and especially in 1926, in the General Strike, Britain was shaken by revolutionary crises. We will be looking at how different socialists inspired by the Russian Revolution united to create the Communist Party, at the workers' movements the Communists helped build, and at why the General Strike ended in defeat. Chapters 42-44

5. 2nd December: Depression and retreat (the 1930s)

Looking at the 1931 split in the Labour Party, the domination of 1930s politics by the right and the Stalinisation of the Communist Party, which wrecked revolutionary politics in Britain. Chapters 45-46

6. 9th December: The golden age of capitalism (1945-1968)

Looking at the 1945 Labour government, which built the NHS and welfare state but also maintained capitalism, the post-war Labour-Tory consensus and the slow growth in working-class confidence and struggle.

7. 16th December: "The fire last time" (1968-late 1980s)

Looking at the huge wave of strikes and struggles throughout the 70s, particularly those which defeated and brought down the Tory government in 1972-4; the Wilson-Callaghan Labour government of 1974-9; the Labour Party upheavals of 1979-82; the miners' strike of 1984-5, and the aftermath of the miners' defeat.

The basic reading for the study group will be *The Common People*, by G D H Cole and Raymond Postgate.

This book tells the story, readably, and as an exciting story, for most of the periods we'll be talking about. It has no rival as a compact and comprehensive history in one volume. It is also cheaply and easily available second-hand, so we can let people have copies for £1 each or lend them out. Get in touch if you'd like a copy.



**ALLIANCE FOR WORKERS' LIBERTY NORTH EAST
LONDON:**

150 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

**A discussion series on British working-class
history**

**7:30pm every Tuesday from November 3 @ 124
Canonbury Road (nr. Highbury & Islington station)**

If it's true that "those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat it", anyone serious about changing today's world of exploitation, racism and war needs to look at the history of previous movements to do the same. Join us as we look back at some of the most inspiring episodes from the history of British working-class struggle; what worked, what didn't work, and what can learn for our own struggles today? All welcome; no prior political experience necessary, just a healthy contempt for the rich. For more info, email office@workersliberty.org or ring 07817595626



WORKERS' LIBERTY LONDON FORUM

"What's wrong with schools, and how do we change them?" A discussion on fighting privatisation and the testing culture in modern education.

**THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER, 7:30PM @
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(NR. KING'S CROSS STATION)**

IDEAS FOR FREEDOM WINTER 2009

A weekend of political education, discussion and debate for workers, young people and activists, hosted by Workers' Liberty.

**SATURDAY 28 AND SUNDAY 29
NOVEMBER, BIRKBECK COLLEGE,
MALET STREET WC1 (NR. EUSTON
STATION)**

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