

Northern

resistance anarchist bulletin

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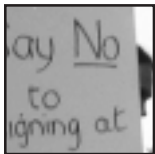
Inside this issue



"The message was clear: we have to find alternative, renewable and

clean fuel sources now, but the nuclear option is not acceptable."

'Drax, lies and videotape', page 2



"In Glasgow a meeting of 200 hundred established UNITY: Scottish

Asylum Seekers Union. It already has an advice shop opposite the Glasgow Home Office!"

'Asylum seeker voices must be heard', page 2



"Just over a decade ago, the Conservative Party very nearly gave us

ID cards... Tony Blair now says that ID cards will be a "major plank" of Labour's next election manifesto."

'Stealing our freedom and identity', page 3



"No one really believes this demonstration will change anything, do

they? It's going to take more than this, but it'll be worth it. We have a world of freedom, equality and mutual aid to win! So lets get started..."

'Round-up', page 4



We have more in common than in conflict: **The Middle East**

While the situation between Israel, Lebanon and Palestine escalates, the superpowers do nothing but half-heartedly condemn all nations involved. As anarchists, we refuse to see this as a war between nations. The real oppressors here are the ruling classes, the ones in command of the armies, the ones with the weapons, the ones with the mass propaganda machines that generate enormous popular support from angry and displaced peoples, regardless of the cause.

States and their stooges

The Israeli government and Israeli Defence Force, nothing more but a long arm of the capitalist ruling classes of the West, coupled with the Iranian ruling class and the Hezbollah as their proxy army, do nothing but bring death and oppression to the working class people of the region. While the illusion main-

tained is that of Olmert and the IDF bravely standing up for the freedom of Israeli citizens, or the Iranian-controlled Hezbollah defending the helpless Lebanese civilians from the ever-mightier invader, the reality is that neither of these "noble" organisations help working class people beyond what is necessary, beyond what they need for maintained support.

Mutual aid in the war zone

While the IDF destroys whole Palestinian villages with Caterpillar bulldozers bought from Western companies, and the Hezbollah fires Iranian-made rockets into Israeli residential areas, the organisations who really strive to make a difference are the grassroots ones, ones without leaders, run by the people who need them and for the people who need them. There is the Sanayeh Relief Centre in Beirut, which operates out

of schools and is run by volunteers, giving refugees from Southern Lebanon shelter, food, and medical and psychological support. There is al Badil al Chououii al Taharruri, or Libertarian Anarchist Alternative, whose analysis of the situation is an important and valid one. In Palestine and Israel there are the Anarchists Against the Wall, a group of Israeli, Palestinian and international anarchists who work directly with Palestinian communities threatened by the apartheid wall, using methods of direct action and protest to dismantle fences that separate villages from their crops. These organisations and more like them deserve and need our support.

Sanayeh Relief Centre:
www.sanayehreliefcenter.blogspot.com

Al-Badil: flag.blackened.net/revolt/inter/albadil.html

Anarchists Against the Wall:
www.squat.net/antiwall

Drax, lies and videotape

Late August saw the establishment of a Climate Camp in the Yorkshire countryside. The Camp consisted of workshops for people involved in environmental issues and culminated in the blockading of the coal-fired power station, Drax, and a nuclear power station in Hartlepool. The message was clear: we have to find alternative, renewable and clean fuel sources now, but the nuclear option is not acceptable. A wide-variety of different types of people attended, from those who wanted to share ideas to angry activists eager to make a stand against big business and government wrecking both the planet and people's lives.

Bolting for cover!

The Camp received a fair amount of media attention, including a smear campaign on the part of the news agency Reuters. The agency circulated a photograph of a violent looking 'protester' being arrested.

Continued on page 4



This farmer over-reacted slightly by trying to run protesters over with a tractor

Parents, students and teachers fighting privitisation

The Labour Party aims to produce a sausage factory out of education. Their aims are totally confused. They want to privatise, cheapen and both decrease and increase racial divisions! Anarchists want a completely different way of learning. We should be able to choose when and how we learn and with who. In the meantime, however, we have to fight their lunatic schemes.

Privatisation and academies

Hundreds of schools are falling down. Built cheaply in the 60s and 70s they are not fit places to teach or learn. The state claims it cannot afford to rebuild them all (though it can afford more nuclear submarines and warplanes!). They want business to build the schools and then for Local Authorities to rent them back. This amounts to us all taking out mortgages on the new schools. The builders make a fortune from our council tax bills.

Their other scheme is to introduce "Academies". The name sounds great. The reality is loads of state money poured in (from our taxes) and schools then run by private businesses. A load of the current ones are run by religious fundamentalists (of the Christian sort) who deny evolution and teach kids that everything was created by god exactly as it is today. These schools sound marvellous, but the reality for teachers and other staff are longer hours, smaller rooms, no staff rooms and worsened wages and holidays.

Faith Schools

It's bad enough that Christian schools exist. They separate out kids by religion. In towns like Oldham white parents send their children to the two Church of England Schools. There they meet no Muslims at all. This fosters racism. Labour's solution is to encourage Muslim parents to set up their own faith schools. This will deepen the divide and worsen the existing racism. All faith schools should be closed.

Cheaper Education

Labour has tried two tacks here. Firstly bringing in unqualified staff – Teaching Assistants (TAs) to teach kids. This has made many "expensive" teachers find it impossible to get work. Next they've tried to cut wages – changing the extra allowances teachers get. This has led to widespread resistance and strikes across the country. So far the state is losing this battle.

All these plans divide education workers against each other. Teachers against TAs, academy against state. It aims to break down the national pay scales. As education workers we need to fight back together to ensure everyone is on a decent wage and that the young people we look after are treated fairly. We are trying to build a national network of all who are involved in education, whether working or studying – teachers, students, office staff, TAs, cooks, cleaners.

If you want to know more, contact: education@afed.org.uk

Asylum-Seeker voices must be heard

The situation faced by Asylum-Seekers (AS) in the UK alone is enough to make you realise we live in an insane, inhuman society. Many face further harassment under new Home Office strategies, some of which apparently make no sense. For example, AS in Oxford now have to travel to report in London!!! In the East Midlands, a centralised HO reporting centre has been set up in the small town of Loughbrough, almost twenty miles from the towns of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, where most AS are placed. The new centre is like Fort Knox. Its barred windows and security checkpoints make it clear that if they don't want you to get out, you won't. AS from Nottingham have been told to attend but little information has been given about how to get to Loughbrough, when the switch would be made, whether travel expenses would be paid, or how to get further information. One

of the first people to be transferred to the new office was told to sign on the fifth of every month! What if it's a weekend? Who would invent such a system except an idiot; or a sadist trying to prevent someone having any identity except one of degrading dependency on the system.

Fighting back

But AS and their supporters are not taking this lying down. In Glasgow a meeting of 200 hundred established UNITY: Scottish Asylum Seekers Union. It already has an advice shop opposite the Glasgow Home Office! Campaigning is being done there on issues such as a right to employment. They are being supported in this by anarchists and other activists on the non-authoritarian left. On Merseyside another self-initiative 'Voice of Asylum Seekers' (Liverpool), has been formed. They recently

organised a series of demonstrations, leaflets and a workshop in conjunction with the Student Action for Refugees. The initial response in Nottingham to the Loughborough problem was the understandable suggestion to refuse to report to the new centre. But such defiance is difficult if you are entirely dependent on the state for what little you have, which they will take away from you if you don't report. An effective response is still being sought, but in the short-term media coverage has been effective, and a street protest meeting took place on September 9th, where asylum seekers were supported by the host community.

Don't let houses rot....

There are plenty of other ways activists are supporting A-Ss. In several towns, for example, the squatting scene involves anarchists and other good activists in the host

Stealing our freedom and identity

Just over a decade ago, the Conservative Party very nearly gave us ID cards when Michael Howard was Home Secretary under John Major's government. But they ran out of time and Labour won the 1997 election. Tony Blair now says that ID cards will be a "major plank" of Labour's next election manifesto and this will apparently be opposed by the Tories as well as the LibDems. It's clear that both main parties have a history of repression when in power, whatever they say in opposition. This makes it all the more annoying that No2ID, the so-called 'non-partisan' campaign against ID cards, seem to want to convince us that the Tories have changed and will scrap it if they win the next election. Don't believe a word of it – anything we hear from now on will be electioneering rubbish. Conserva-

tive MP Anne Widdecome voted in favour of Labour's identity scheme on many occasions. On the other hand Labour politicians like Frank Field strongly supported ID even when the Tories were in power, when we were led to believe New Labour policy was against. This is the same Merseyside MP who stamped on the unemployed by supporting Tory work-for-dole schemes which carried over into the Job Seeker's Allowance, and is now very vocal about keeping migrant workers out of Britain.

Also, if we go back to 1995 we see that the reasons why the Conservatives wanted ID cards then - crime, fraud, illegal immigration - are all part of Labour's justifications for ID except they have now added terrorism & security. As the human rights organisation Liberty said at the time, "They

are not backed up by research or evidence from other countries, but are myths masquerading as arguments." This is exactly what anarchists are saying now about the 'terror threat' whereas Liberty, now a supporter of No2ID, have moved their arguments to saying ID cards 'won't work', which is not at all the same as saying these justifications are a complete sham.

There are some other differences from eleven years ago. Labour is most keen on using an ID system to help 'modernise' the welfare state. So they are prepared to spend billions of pounds on tracking our every move, whereas Tories are traditionally more into direct cuts. Cash handouts to private companies and consultants all add to the overall cost, as do the biometrics (fingerprinting and eye-scanning) equipment they intend to use. Britain has led the call for high-tech passport and identity schemes across Europe. The Home Office admits it spent £46 million on its ID project between May 2003 and May 2006, most of it before the ID Cards Bill was passed in March! As well as using databases to help control spending on public services, Labour no doubt sees contracts for British telecoms and security industries as a boost to the economy, one that we will all pay for of course, both in our pockets and by our loss of freedom.

The second edition of the AF's free pamphlet, *Defending Anonymity*, is available online at www.afed.org.uk, and from our usual address (please send Stamped Addressed Envelope).



community working alongside people to whom the state has refused asylum and therefore housing. Together they share a common need – a roof over their heads – and mutual aid is the result. This sort of solidarity helps undermine the hold that Christian do-gooders and political parties have over support organisations. Vulnerable people should not be offered help in implicit exchange for ideological compliance and good conduct. The Revolutionary Communist Group in particular has been guilty of supporting AS rather than others according to who will lend them legitimacy, from Viraj Mendis in the 1980s onwards. What power do A-Ss, individually or collectively, really have in this sort of set up?

...and don't let civil servants dish it out.

Given the few avenues for resistance that

asylum seekers have, civil servants administering this degrading system should not be exempt from criticism by AS and activists supporting them. Workers may not devise the strategies above, but they needn't implement them with the relish they sometimes do. OK, so people have to have a job, and most jobs compromise our integrity. But particularly cruel attacks on people's dignity need to be challenged. Responses to attacks on AS should be the initiative of the people affected working together, as the above actions have been, calling on activists for support and advice about local situation but not falling under their control. Together we can demonstrate that AS have support within the host community, not just within politically or morally manipulative sections of it, in order for the state to see our united activity as a force to be reckoned with.



Northern Resistance Round-up

It isn't hard to see that democracy is a sham when we look at the sorts of issues raised in this issue of Northern Resistance. It is a political system established to con us that we have a say in how society is run. The Labour Party came to power because most of the ever-decreasing number of people who see any point in voting, voted for it. But they didn't vote for war and indifference to human suffering, privatisation, nuclear power, ID data bases etc. Labour just decided that these things were best for us. It has taken our power and told us not to worry, because Tony knows what is best. Does this authoritarian approach make our 'democracy' any better than those of more obviously corrupt regimes where leaders swindle their way to power more openly? But the root causes of most of the struggles going on today are not just down to this government but to the activity of past government, for example in colonialism, support for rampant capitalism, in legislation that restricts our right to protest, the relationship with the US government and with Zionist Israel. We might say that these things are just past abuses of democracy, and that democracy shouldn't make these mistakes again. But when you think about it, was there EVER a golden age when democracy DID bring freedom and equality? Is there a country now where they exist? So, do we really think regime change in the UK will bring us closer to a better world? Can we win a better world by voting someone else into power? No, we can only win it through struggling for something beyond the crumbs democracy throws us.

The struggles highlighted in this Resistance are amongst those in which Anarchists find hope that together we can make a better world. It is in the process of struggle that Anarchism makes most sense. When we struggle outside of the control of political parties, including the authoritarian left, and of state approved or religious organisations, we do so as individuals in voluntary association, with accountability to each other and to our communities, creating a Culture of Resistance. In this Culture of Resistance we can find the seeds of meaningful social change. This society trains us to be in competition with each other socially and economically and to be afraid of each other. The Culture of Resistance means linking up struggles and movements which challenge and undermine the current social order. The struggle against inequalities and the loss of individual freedom lies at the heart of such struggles. Through them we can envisage a future without the need for bosses, politicians, self-appointed community 'leaders' and manipulative self-serving Leftism. We have all come on this demonstration to show the Labour Party that we are sickened by its actions in a number of different areas. On a demo we gain strength from knowing that thousands of other people feel the same. We come to share our ideas and hear the ideas of others engaged in struggle. But no one really believes this demonstration will change anything, do they? It's going to take more than this, but it'll be worth it. We have a world of freedom, equality and mutual aid to win! So lets get started....



'Drax, lies and videotape',
continued from page 2

In fact, it was a farmer who had driven his tractor at a group of activists! In another Reuters story, dozens of people were arrested for carrying concealed and offensive weapons, when in fact these were tools to be used on the actions: bolt croppers are for taking down fences, Reuters, not for attacking people, and the arrests were mostly only for trespass anyway.

Doing it our way

One reason why the camp was considered so threatening, aside from its targeting of the power stations, is perhaps that it demonstrated that 600 people can establish a sustainable living space and organise themselves in effective action on non-hierarchical lines. The camp consisted of 'neighbourhoods' as centres for decision making. Each day issues affecting the whole camp would be discussed (for example, should cops be let on site and under what circumstances, which occupied rather more of the business of the meetings than some would have liked). Two delegates were then chosen by each neighbourhood to take its opinion to a larger meeting of delegates, who would discuss the matter further and decide what to do.

The open nature of the decision making made it easy to feel involved in the camp. Although much advance planning had obviously taken place (the site squatted and made habitable, and the possible focus of demonstrations explored, for example) newcomers were not excluded from contributing. The decision making suited the nature of the camp. Large numbers of people needed to make rapid decisions but over a relatively short period of time. As such it avoided unnecessary bureaucratic inertia. It demonstrates one of the ways forward in organising non-hierarchically in campaigning and in action on other issues relevant to working class people.



The **Anarchist Federation** is an organisation of **class struggle** anarchists aiming to abolish capitalism and all oppression to create a free and equal society. This is **Anarchist Communism**.

We see today's society as being divided into two main opposing classes: the **ruling class** which controls all the power and wealth, and the **working class** which the rulers exploit to maintain this. By racism, sexism and other forms of oppression, as well as war and environmental destruction the rulers weaken and divide us. Only the **direct action** of working class people can defeat these attacks and ultimately overthrow capitalism.

As the capitalist system rules the

whole world, its destruction must be complete and world wide. We reject attempts to reform it, such as working through parliament and national liberation movements, as they fail to challenge capitalism itself. Unions also work as a part of the capitalist system, so although workers struggle within them they will be unable to bring about capitalism's destruction unless they go beyond these limits.

Organisation is vital if we're to beat the bosses, so we work for a united anarchist movement and are affiliated to the International of Anarchist Federations.

The Anarchist Federation has members across Britain and Ireland fighting for the kind of world

outlined above.

If you're interested in joining contact us at:

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BM ANARFED,
London, WC1N 3XX.
Email: info@afed.org.uk
Also visit: www.afed.org.uk
and www.iaf-ifa.org

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