

RESISTANCE

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We are not for sale!

Late last year, over 200 carers and clients held an angry protest outside Edinburgh City Chambers which started a successful campaign against a controversial care and support tender that favoured the lowest bidder. Their anger was directed at savage cuts and a privatisation process that would have seen service users separated from carers that they have built relationships with over time.

Pressure applied by the Edinburgh Support Workers Action Network (SWAN) and the Learning Disability Alliance caused the Council to drop the heavily criticised tender process that would have seen the transfer of vital services for 800 vulnerable adults to the new, cheaper provider. While the collapse of the tender was reason enough for campaign groups to celebrate, the Council still intended to use Direct Payments based on the flawed tender process to reduce funding to the services. With the fight not yet over, campaign groups delivered on their promise of continued protests and legal challenges.

On Thursday 11th February, Edinburgh Council voted to formally scrap the tendering of care and support services and to drop the controversial £15.04 Direct Payment rate derived from it. Instead,



a full dialogue will be set up with those affected. The administration have now been forced to express their regret at the distress caused and to agree not to award any contracts for care and support.

Groups like SWAN, which is a network of care and support workers set up to fight the budget cuts and competitive tendering which threatened their jobs and the service-users' quality of care, now await the comprehensive review of the development and handling of the failed process, to include the roles of all

involved. Hopefully this review will shed some light on the role of the unelected Council officials who have come in for criticism for overseeing the process and making recommendations that have now been completely discredited. SWAN have called for these council fat-cats to resign, and similar calls have also come from the Council Worker Solidarity Group, who have been showing solidarity with the Edinburgh Council manual workers who have been on a work-to-rule for over half a year now.

Inside: Uni occupied, Mainshill campaign, workplace struggles

Sussex University Occupied



On the 8th and the 9th of November 106 student occupied a conference centre at the University of Sussex as part of an ongoing and increasingly militant campaign against cuts.

University management refuses to budge on compulsory redundancies or course cuts and so the campaign has stepped up its efforts.

As the statement issued by the occupying students makes clear, attacks on education workers are also attacks on students. This occupation is just the latest piece of practical solidarity action taken by students across this country and Europe in the last year. It is also unlikely to be the last as the campaign at Sussex goes from strength to strength.

The students themselves understand the situation perfectly:

‘Profitability means nothing against the livelihoods destroyed, lost homes, austerity measures, green or otherwise. We just heard we’ve increased ‘operational costs’ – they’d set out the building for a meeting and now they’ll have to do it again.

We’ll show them “operational costs.”

Occupy again and again and again.’

This fight is far from over.

You have to evacuate, there’s a fire. Really? No, we just want to light flares.

Firefighters in mainland Europe have been demonstrating in a spectacularly militant fashion this month. In La Coruna, Spain, their 500 strong presence was joined by emergency service workers in protesting outside a local government building in response to privatisation plans. Riot police attacked after their warning to the workers to stop throwing nails and fireworks went unheeded. They fired rubber balls and lashed out with batons.

In the The Hague, Netherlands, 100 firefighters evacuated the Association of Dutch Municipalities, a local government office, on the pretence that there was a fire inside. Once everyone had exited the building, flares were lit outside. Firefighters from the surrounding Den Haag, Rotterdam,

Utrecht and Limburg areas are unhappy over a number of issues including pensions.



Brutality and Bravery at Yarl's Wood

Since 4th February, at least 70 women being held at Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre have been on hunger strike in protest against their detention and the treatment they have received, including being separated from their children and having limited access to healthcare facilities. They have also demanded better legal representation in their asylum cases, as a report conducted by Legal Action for Women in 2006 found that 57% of women detained at Yarl's Wood had no one representing them. While officials have claimed that detention is only used as a short-term measure, one of the women on hunger strike has been held for over two years. The response of the Serco staff to the hunger strike has been extremely heavy-handed. Many injuries have been reported and some of the women involved have been transferred to police stations. The women, many of whom are survivors of rape and torture, have reported racist abuse and beatings at the hands of guards, as well as being kept in isolation in a windowless corridor for eight hours without access to water or toilet facilities. Many of the detainees need medication which they have been denied during the



protest. Several solidarity actions have been organized, including phone blockades of Yarl's Wood as well as the offices of Serco, the company which runs the detention centre. On 12th February around 50 people gathered outside one of Serco's offices in

London in support of the hunger strikers. The women are determined to secure a future for themselves and their children, away from the war and torture they have fled and free from the repressive clutches of the UK Border Agency.

Community campaign continues at Mainshill



The morning of 25th January saw the beginning of the eviction of Mainshill Solidarity Camp. The camp was set up seven months ago to prevent Scottish Coal from building an open cast mine in Mainshill Wood. The local community in the nearby village of Douglas have been opposing the construction of the mine for nearly a decade, with the noise, pollution and health problems associated with yet another mine in the area being of particular concern. The campers, who had been occupying trees and tunnels, were finally evicted after five days and a total of 45 arrests were made. But the eviction of the camp is not the end of the campaign. Communities in the surrounding area as well as those involved in the camp have vowed to continue opposing the creation of the mine at Mainshill, and campaigners hope that this is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of community-led environmental direct action.

For more info see: <http://mainshill.noflag.org.uk/>

On The Frontline: Workplace round-up

Healthy victory for hospital workers

Hospital cleaners and other support workers have won a clear victory in Devon. A two-day strike by 200 cleaners, porters and cooks at North Devon hospital won them a lump sum of up to £3,600. They will also receive a salary increase dated from 1 January 2010 and sick pay. They celebrated their victory with a rally in Barnstaple on the 16th of January. Mark Harper, chair of the Unison branch at the hospital, said “The campaign was intense and relentless. We launched a rank and file campaign group that lobbied every meeting the board of directors had. We put up four huge 20-foot banners on the road to the hospital and stuck posters and stickers everywhere. The Trust bosses would pull them down overnight but the next morning they’d be up again... We’d told the bosses that we’d escalate to indefinite, all-out strikes if they didn’t meet our demands. They capitulated, which surprised us. Sometimes if you stand up and put up a challenge you never know how far it’ll take you. The power of a union is immense when it decides to fight. But it’s not about it being the branch’s fight or the union’s fight—it’s about the members.”

Building workers make a scene

Hundreds of workers walked off a building site in response to what they saw as a serious health and safety breach. Up to 500 employees at Staythorpe power station near Newark, Nottinghamshire staged a demonstration and blocked nearby roads after taking the action on February 16th. The workers called for an immediate inspection to be held on the site after claiming that some scaffolding had been interfered with.

Strikes, suspensions and struggle in Somerset

More than 100 postal workers in Somerset staged a wildcat walkout on February 14th in a row over the suspension of two colleagues and threatened cuts. Employees at the Bridgwater Delivery Office, one of the biggest in the West, took to the picket line in a bid to force a rethink on the



issue by Royal Mail. The row centres on allegations facing two members of delivery staff – one has been accused of intimidation by a colleague and the other is subject to a customer complaint. But workers are also fearful of plans to cut 240 hours of work from the Bridgwater team, leaving many out of pocket or working part-time.

Phil Greenslade, who represents the Communication Workers Union for the Bridgwater branch, said the workforce was not comfortable with the way the individuals had been treated. He added that morale over yet more possible cuts to services was extremely low. He said: “People are not happy with the

way these investigations are being carried out and we feel Royal Mail is taking a very heavy-handed approach... These allegations have not been proven, we do not agree with what they have been accused of and this could all have been dealt with internally before the option of suspending the two postmen on full pay was taken.”

The protest was over almost as soon as it had begun, with staff returning to work after an hour-and-a-half, but the union will now seek a ballot for strike action.



International workplace round-up

Mass strikes paralyse Greece

A 24 hour public sector general strike, accompanied by a wave of private sector strikes, brought Greece to a standstill on the 10th of February, with no aeroplanes flying in or out the country.

The 24 hour strike of the public sector union, ADEDY, saw a complete shutdown in these areas: all civil servants, including tax offices, social security, municipal and county workers; all doctors and nurses (except emergency personnel); all teachers at all school grades and all university teaching staff and personnel; all archaeological sites; all air traffic control (meaning no flights in or out of the country). Also, in the public transport sector, rolling stoppages of work took place in the national railway system and the suburban railway system of Athens.

The impact of the public sector strike was increased by simultaneous strikes in the private sector. PAME, the Communist Party umbrella union, called a 24 hour strike affecting large sections of the private sector, while at the same time several autonomous unions, such as the Athens print union and the workers of Wind Telecom, called their own strikes. The PAME strike affected too many businesses to list here, including supermarket workers, elevator maintenance workers and builders. All hydrofoil transport from the ports of Peiraeus and Igoumenitsa to the islands was frozen due to the strike.

The strikes on the 10th were followed by many others throughout the month, including ones by customs officials, lorry drivers, taxi drivers and pharmacists.

Total Refinery in Dunkerque occupied

Striking workers occupied Total's refinery in Dunkerque after management refused to meet an ultimatum over negotiations.

At least 150 workers stormed the buildings on February 16th, forcing their way past security guards and at one point using ladders to gain entry to the offices on the higher levels of the buildings. Workers took the action after union demands for a mediator in negotiations and for the removal of security guards from the site were ignored.

Workers at the site have been on strike since

January 12th. The site has been closed since September due to "a structural and durable fall in the consumption of petroleum products". Fearing that Total would try to close the site altogether workers launched the strike and later the occupation.

Belgian rail workers blockade depots

Belgian rail-workers have organised strikes across the country after the fatal crash on February 15th which left 18 people, including the train driver, dead.

Machinists and technical workers have blockaded depots across the country with services most affected in Wallonia. Train drivers and signal workers are also observing the strike. So far the depots at Braine-le-Comte, Mons, Liège, Ath, Saint-Ghislain, La Louvière, Charleroi, Namur, Ottignies, Tournai and Louvain are reported as having been entirely blockaded by strikers and the Belgian Rail Company (SNCB) admits that 85% of its depots were affected by the strike. The strike has seen very high observance and has led to the cancellation of the flagship international services Thalys and Eurostar. Across Wallonia there have been mass cancellations of trains as rail workers join the strikes.

Workers are protesting against attacks on their

working conditions, as well as the company's refusal to install automatic braking equipment on all trains.

Worldwide support for Free Workers' Union

In the previous issue of Resistance, we reported on how the Berlin Free Workers' Union (FAU), a militant union run on anarcho-syndicalist principles, was fighting back against attempts to ban it. This attack on workers' rights provoked outrage across the globe, and on the 29th and 30th of January there were protests in at least 56 cities in 20 countries against a court verdict that prohibits workers in Berlin from affiliating themselves with the union of their choice. Supporters of the union demonstrated in over 20 cities throughout Germany, as well as in Japan, Greece, Spain, Switzerland, Slovakia, Bangladesh, Ireland, Italy, Sweden, Ukraine, Denmark, France, Norway, America, Austria, New Zealand and the UK. The dispute continued throughout the prestigious Berlinale film festival, causing serious embarrassment for the Cinema Babylon, the employer at the heart of the dispute. Members of the FAU could now face fines or jail time just for saying the word "union", but have vowed to fight on.

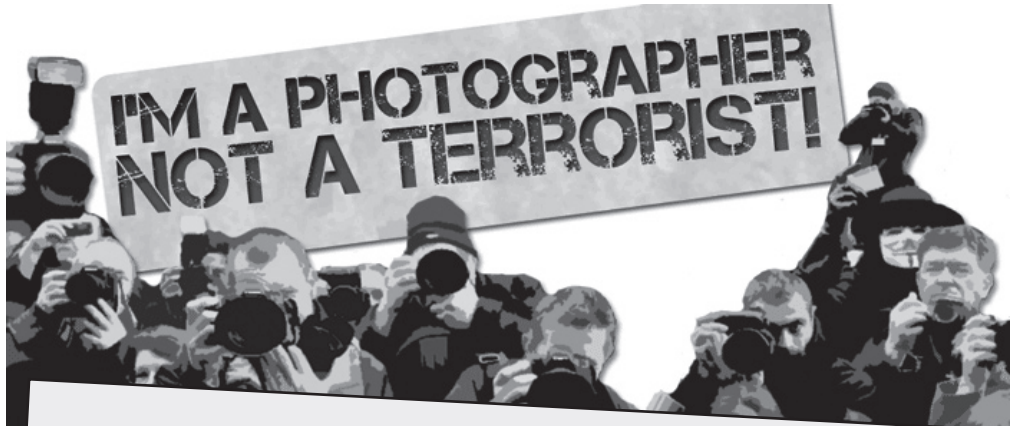


I'm A Photographer... Not A Terrorist!

Over 2,000 amateur and professional photographers staged a "shoot-in" at Trafalgar Square on January 22nd in protest against the increasing use of stop and search powers by the police. The protest was organised by the group I'm A Photographer Not A Terrorist! and many carried placards with this slogan. Last April, two Austrian tourists were forced to delete their pictures after being stopped by police in Walthamstow, and Alex Turner, an amateur photographer, was arrested under section 44 after snapping a fish and chip shop in Kent! Jeff Overs, a BBC photographer, was stopped under suspicion of terrorism reconnaissance while photographing St Paul's Cathedral, and another amateur photographer was also stopped by two police community support officers for photographing Christmas lights in Brighton. In December Guardian reporter Paul Lewis was stopped and searched while taking pictures of the Gherkin building in London and Grant Smith, an architecture photographer, was stopped while photographing Sir Christopher Wren's Christ Church.



Right: the leaflet that Anarchist Federation member distributed at the protest



CONTROLLING IMAGES, CONTROLLING DISSENT...

While ending harassment of photographers is a laudable aim, it cannot be seen as an end in itself. The aggravation we experience from the police, and their proxies in the growing number of private security guards in shopping malls and areas such as Canary Wharf, is not just a question of attitude - it's a symptom of a state that actively suspects us.

This is more than an issue of civil liberties - it's one of a state that fears what the free flow of images and information can do to its ability to maintain control. Regardless of which party wins the election, we'll still have a state that distrusts its subjects and fears activists who wish to challenge its authority.

The ongoing economic and fiscal crisis will trigger a growing wave of protest and dissent over the next few years. The authorities will seek to do their utmost in clamping down on dissent and controlling how their actions are portrayed and documented.

Technology enables us to disseminate images of state clampdowns on dissent. We can only do this if we have the freedom to shoot and distribute what we choose without fear. It's in the interest of the powers that be to make life difficult for photographers, restricting the scope of our activity and creating a climate of fear. If photographers are fearful of harassment, arrest or even assault, they'll think twice about recording and documenting how the authorities deal with dissent.

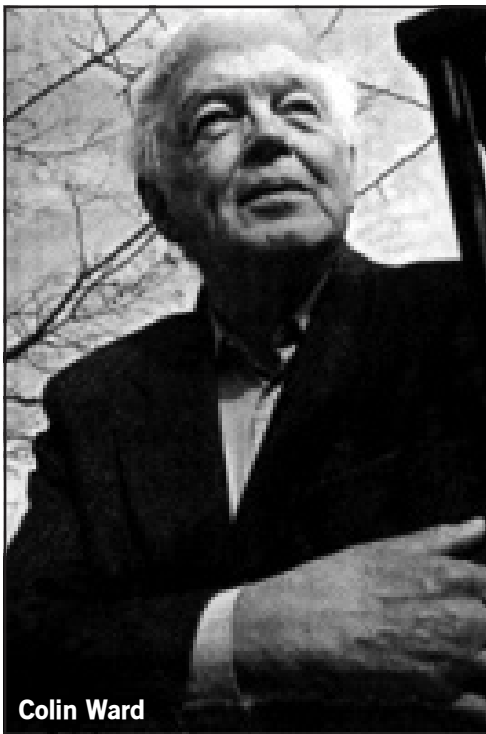
Backing off because we fear the consequences will hand victory to the state who will be emboldened to act with impunity when faced with challenges to their authority. Harassment of photographers is not just a matter of the authorities having the wrong attitude - it's integral to the state being able to maintain control in what will be difficult and turbulent times. While it's right we stand up for our rights in the here and now, asking the state to back off is futile because meeting our demands will undermine their authority - that would be unthinkable for them...

If we are serious about fighting for our freedoms, we have to recognise that the state and its growing apparatus of control is the real problem...

Remembering three working-class heroes

It's always a sad thing to have to write an obituary, an even sadder thing to have to write three. In this issue of Resistance we pay tribute to three thinkers and activists who have inspired us in their contribution to the struggle for a sane society: Colin Ward, John Rety and Howard Zinn.

Colin Ward, best known for his book *Anarchy in Action*, passed away on February the 11th. Colin became an anarchist whilst serving as a soldier in the Second World War and spoke as a witness at the sedition trial of the editors of *War Commentary*, an anarchist anti-war publication of the time. After the war he went on to edit the, still running, anarchist paper *Freedom* between 1947 and 1960. In the 1960s he also founded and edited the monthly journal *Anarchy*.



Colin Ward

Colin was a prolific writer and published 21 books between 1972 and 2004, as well as contributing many articles to journals and papers throughout the decades. One of the main focuses of his writing was the issue of housing in both urban and rural areas, which is unsurprising given his job as a town planner. He proposed anarchist solutions to the problems



John Rety

of homelessness, such as changing planning regulations to allow the poor and homeless to be able to build their own homes on common land.

Colin was 85 when he died and leaves behind a wife, Harriet.

John Rety, another former editor of *Freedom*, passed away on the third of February following a heart attack. An anarchist from a young age, John was a much loved part of the anarchist movement in London, and was editor of *Freedom* between 1963 and '68.

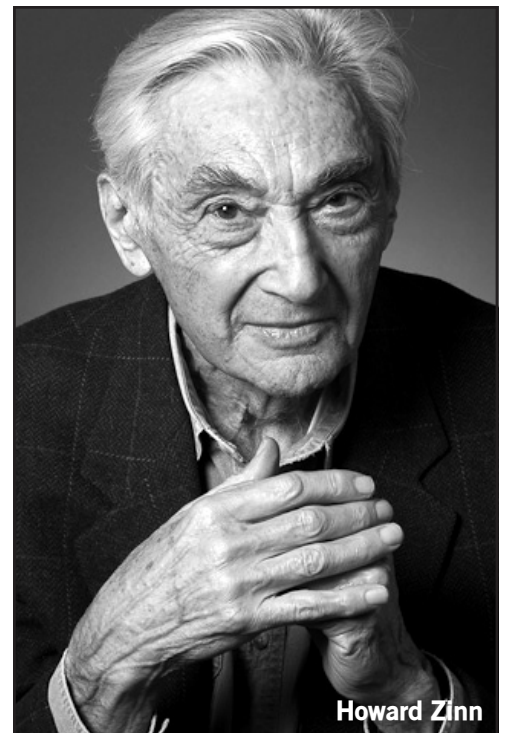
John moved from Budapest, where he was born, to Britain in 1947 where he got involved in local anarchist politics. He was a founder member of *Torriano Poets for Peace* and an accomplished chess player. A full obituary for John will be in the most recent issue of *Freedom* which is available from their website www.freedompress.org.uk He will be missed by all that knew him and his contribution to the movement will always be appreciated.

Howard Zinn died of a heart attack on January 27th at the age of 87. Born in Brooklyn, New York, to immigrant parents, he joined the U.S Air Force to fight fascism during the Second World War. His experiences in the military

helped develop his anti-war stance that saw him become a committed anti-war activist throughout the rest of his life. After the war he studied at Columbia University where he achieved a PhD. in history. He is probably best known for his historical work. His *A People's History of the United States* is a look at American history of the sort not often found on a school curriculum, focusing on people struggling against capitalism and the state from Native Americans through African-American slaves to the union movement, the struggle against patriarchy and the fight for civil rights. Howard himself was active in the civil rights movement and in the resistance to the American wars in Vietnam and Iraq. He was also a founding member of *Jewish Voices of Peace's* Advisory Board and spoke out on behalf of Israeli conscientious objectors who refused to serve in the Palestinian occupied territories.

Howard will be sorely missed and his development of a working class history of the United States will be appreciated long after his death.

He is survived by his daughter Myla Kabat-Zinn, son Jeff Zinn and five grandchildren.



Howard Zinn

Celebrating cultures of resistance



Edinburgh AFed are curating a one-day free film festival on Saturday 20th March at the Banshee Labyrinth on Niddrie Street (formerly Nicholl Edwards). Celebrating “cultures of resistance” across the world, the diverse films share the theme of collective action against political or economic injustice.

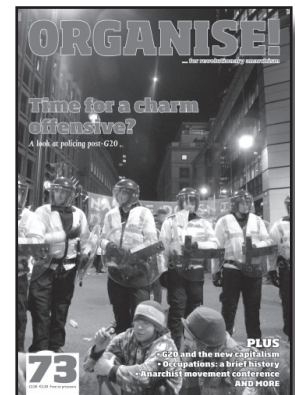
A conscious shift away from the documentary-heavy format of most activist film festivals sees the screening of new and old class-conscious classics.

They include John Sayles’ *Matewan*, featuring the screen debut of indie singer Will Oldham as a teenage preacher in a mining town standing together in the teeth of state and capitalist siege, and last year’s *Army of Crime*, which makes Tarantino’s *Inglourious Basterds* look like a cartoon. The Group Manouchian, refugees and Jews, actively resisted the Nazi occupation of France, a country which despised them as terrorists and “aliens”. In its

uncompromising politics and refusal to gloss over difficult moral choices, this 2009 film could prove to be a 21st century “Battle of Algiers”, and is sure to provoke debate. If Spanish anarchist feminists and Sebian anarcho-syndicalism sound like too much, there will be the opportunity to relax with *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Bagpuss’s* wildcat strike. As well as rock karaoke, beer, books and friendly chat. All welcome.

Liked Resistance? Try Organise!

Organise! is the Anarchist Federation’s theoretical and historical magazine. It is published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to give a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debates on areas not normally covered by agitational journals. The latest issue, #73 covers the aftermath of the G20 protests, the history of workers occupations, class struggle in China and much more besides. You can order or subscribe online at www.afed.org.uk, or get in touch with your local AF group for a copy.



ANARCHIST FEDERATION

The **Anarchist Federation** is a growing organisation of class struggle anarchists which aims 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.

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