

RESISTANCE

Anarchist Paper

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Free/Donation

The Green Shoots of Revolt

Spring finally came at the end of April. But the same month saw a raft of new attacks on living conditions being pushed out by the State. Especially nasty have been cuts to welfare that many people - in work or unemployed - depend on because of low-pay, lack of work or inability to do paid work.

One of the high profile changes is the so-called 'Bedroom Tax' which means many council house and housing association tenants are facing bills or housing benefit cuts for having spare rooms. As well as the bills, people are feeling under pressure to move to smaller places that may not even be available. Many people need spare rooms for a variety of reasons - and why shouldn't we have space for friends or family anyway?

Quite rightly the Bedroom Tax has caused an anger which has seen people taking to the streets in many towns to say 'Can't pay, Won't pay!'

Often this has involved pressuring local councils not to

evict anyone who gets behind.

Like in the anti-Poll Tax campaign that brought down Thatcher, local groups of campaigners are starting to get together to oppose the new tax. This is a very positive development, but as with the Poll Tax, it is vital that the campaigning is controlled by the people themselves. Otherwise it will be taken over by politicians and celebrities who will make

their parties or themselves look good, but do little to strengthen our collective fight back.

Anarchists are well aware of the need for maximum participation and 'direct democracy' in campaigns. When the current economic crisis got started, an anti-cuts movement arose, with inspiring self-organisation by students.

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They did not trust the self-interested leaders of the National Union of Students who were making deals with the government. Networks involving universities and colleges operated with people treating each other as equals. This was a very good start. But overall, since then, anti-cuts campaigning has suffered in many

towns from the agendas of this or that political party.

That is why it is encouraging that a regional Bedroom Tax campaign in Scotland has taken off with self-organising principles. A recent get together in Edinburgh and West Lothian agreed that decision-making power should be in the hands of local groups and that the co-ordina-

tion between them should be done through recallable delegates. This kind of 'anarchy in action' is vital to keep the struggle in the hands of the people rather than political parties. Anarchist Federation members are involved with this process and are hoping this way of working will extend to the whole of Scotland, and who knows, the whole of Britain.

Pro-Choice Campaigning in Ireland

Amongst the issues that anarchists in the AF join broader campaigns on, is the right for women to decide whether or not to give birth. Pro-Choice activists push to extend and defend abortion provision within the NHS. Despite what many people think, terminations on the NHS are not an automatic right, and attacks on free provision affect working class women disproportionately.

This situation is worse in the North of Ireland, where abortion is prohibited under the Offences Against the Persons Act (1861), with very few exceptions. Forty women a week leave to obtain abortions in mainland UK. Those who cannot afford to travel sometimes fall victim to internet scams when trying to buy an abortion pill, or end up in debt to loan sharks. As such, their position is more like those of women in the

Republic of Ireland, where Savita Hallapanavar recently died because the life of a foetus was put before hers by medical staff.

The recently opened Marie Stopes clinic in Belfast provides abortions for women up to nine weeks, but it costs between £400 - £2000, and this provision has been attacked by the right wing, male-dominated Stormont Assembly. Getting advice abortions elsewhere is difficult. The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that prohibiting women from receiving such information was a breach of fundamental rights in the European Convention, but Lord Justice Girvan claimed in 2009 that giving such advice was 'arguably unlawful'.

Lord Girvan also put forward a proposed amendment in February



of this year which would further restrict the legality of abortion in the North. Edwin Poots, the Health Minister, commented 'If this is the backwoods, I'm glad we're in it'.

Anarchists in Derry and elsewhere continue to campaign for Choice. The Anarchist Federation is making a film on the issue as it affects Irish women. Watch this space! (Information c/o Derry Anarchists blog 12/4/2013)

Inspiring Solidarity after Benefits Interview

Last month in Nottingham a campaign was mounted at short notice to demand the freedom of a man who had been arrested after an Employment Support Allowance interview. Steve Topley, who was on Job Seeker's Allowance, had been recommended to have the interview because of illness. The Department of Work and Pensions private contractor ATOS called the police after a comment that was interpreted as a 'death threat'. This turned out to be about a third party not even present and made in response to a direct prompt by the interviewer! Angry words must be spoken every day when ATOS are subjecting people to degrading fit-for-work tests which may mean them losing vital support.

Steve pleaded guilty and continued

to be held in prison. But thanks to the efforts of his family and supporters which included a website, an independent press campaign by Nottingham Indymedia and a demonstration outside the Nottingham Crown Court, he was finally out on bail on Friday 26th April 2013, at the third application. His ordeal is not over as he had to appear back at the Court this month for sentencing but the support campaign was still able to say, "Steve is back with his family tonight and is in good spirits".

The rapid building of support in this case was inspiring. This kind of solidarity is made possible by the experience of local activists and the use of Indymedia. More collective effort will be needed as further Welfare Reforms begin to bite.

Bristol Anarchist Bookfair

April 20th saw Bristol's 5th Anarchist Bookfair, with well over 850 people through the gate throughout the day and the sun shining on the the new outdoor space, organisers say it was their favorite bookfair yet. "We had 65 tables and 38 workshops across two venues" said Casey, one of the organisers. "It was great to have a decent outdoor space".

This years event was a joint venture with The core bookfair collective, Kebele Cafe, Bristol Radical History Group and Permaculture Now working together along with a load of volunteers. We really enjoyed ourselves and had involvement with four workshops plus a stall. We have it on good authority that next years event is already booked in for the same venue in mid May 2014. The next anarchist bookfair takes place in Sheffield on May 11th <http://www.sheffieldbookfair.org>

Support Prisoner Jock Palfreeman

Paul 'Jock' Palfreeman is a 26-year-old Australian serving a 20-year sentence in Sofia, Bulgaria. On December 28, 2007 Jock was with some friends in Sofia when he witnessed a large group of football hooligans assault two young Roma men. When Jock attempted to stop the assault, the gang turned on him. In the melee, one of the gang, Andrey Monov, was stabbed and died on the way to hospital. In December 2009 Jock was found guilty of the murder of 20-year-old law student Monov and the attempted murder of 19-year-old Antoan Zahariev. Jock has always

maintained that he acted in self-defence. "When I saw the 15 men attack the two homeless men, I was presented with a choice. Stand back and let the injustice continue or [intervene] in an attempt to save human life". Monov's father is an influential figure in Bulgarian society. Many police officers, judges and politicians attended Monov's funeral. The main flaws in the prosecution case are conflicting eyewitness testimonies, the disappearance of crucial CCTV footage, and numerous procedural irregularities. Jock is one of the prisoners and ex-prisoners who founded the

Bulgarian Prisoners' Rehabilitation Association in July 2012. The BPRA organises for prisoners' rights. More info on BPRA: www.bulgarianprisonersassociation.wordpress.com

Act in solidarity, write to Jock and tell people about his case. For full details about Jock's situation, including TV documentaries and witness statements, visit www.freejock.com

Jock Palfreeman.

Sofia Central Prison.

21 General Stoletov Boulevard.

Sofia 1309.

BULGARIA.

Greek Bosses Fire on Migrant Workers

Migrant workers make up a significant proportion of the labour force in the Greek economy, albeit an unaccountable figure considering that many are not registered labourers. Given the systematic delays and abstentions of the state to get involved in the provision of necessary paperwork and asylum, as well as its recent witch-hunt of migrants and immigrants in collusion with the Golden Dawn, many such workers have been forced onto Greece's notorious fruit and vegetable picking farms. Below is an account of a migrant worker who expressed himself as 'connected and familiar' to recent events in the Peloponnese.

On Wednesday, 17th April 2013,

three strawberry plantation foremen opened fire on migrant workers, injuring twenty-nine, who were protesting against a back-payment that was six months overdue. "Approximately two hundred workers, many Bangladeshi, demonstrated against the farm. Some were owed up to a thousand euros each. Two shotguns and a handgun were used", the migrant worker informed us, and "for the several thousand workers in and around the area (Manolada, Peloponnese), this is a reality of everyday life. Those injured will likely face imprisonment and deportation as they lack papers. I am sure some of the injured avoided the hospital for this reason".



The Peloponnese has had its history stained red with blood and strawberries before, as has been equally the case in the northern agricultural regions of Greece. "This is not something new", he concluded, "and it's not a big secret. People will forget about this by the time you publish your article – that there is a different law where the state turns a blind eye".

Bangladeshi Solidarity

On 24th April, 377 workers were killed when an eight-storey textile factory collapsed in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The factory made clothes for high street chains including Primark, Matalan, Benetton, Bonmarche and Mango. Across the globe, on average two million people die at work each year, three times that who are killed by war.

This May we remember these latest victims of capitalism. Plus the 117 people killed in a factory fire in Dhaka in November 2012 which produced clothes for the high street. We stand in solidarity with the 100,000s of Bangladeshi workers who subse-

quently torched factories, smashed cars, blockaded roads and attacked the bosses who recklessly endanger their lives after the Rana plaza building collapse on 24th April.

Even in the UK, over the past five years the number of major and fatal injuries at work has increased by 2,700 per year. In the same period, the proportion investigated by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) has fallen to 5%, while those prosecuted dropped to just 0.6%. But then, the HSE's budget has been cut from £228 to £199 million in 2011-12, with further cuts planned. Its staff numbers have likewise been reduced from 3,702 to 2,889. If not for government policy, accidents like the

Gleision Colliery disaster and Chevron oil refinery blast in Wales, claiming four lives each, might have been avoided; the 23 Morecambe Bay cockle-pickers need not have died in 2004; plus the many other needless deaths.

As we go to print we are aware of solidarity actions with the Bangladeshi garment workers in Primark's two flagship stores in London and Bristol. Primark has released a statement acknowledging responsibility for the devastating loss of life in April, but this is not enough. Bangladeshi workers are fighting back and we should act in solidarity with them.



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 in agitational journals. You can order or subscribe online at www.afed.org.uk, or get in touch with your local AF group for a copy.

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ANARCHIST FEDERATION

The Anarchist Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists (based in Britain and Ireland, but with many contacts overseas) 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 it's destruction must be complete and world wide. We reject attempts to reform it such as working through parliament and national liberation movements (like the IRA) 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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