

resistance anarchist bulletin



Issue 85

June 2006

Free/Donation

That's the way to do it!

IT LOOKS AS though 2006 is going to turn out to be highly significant for European workers.

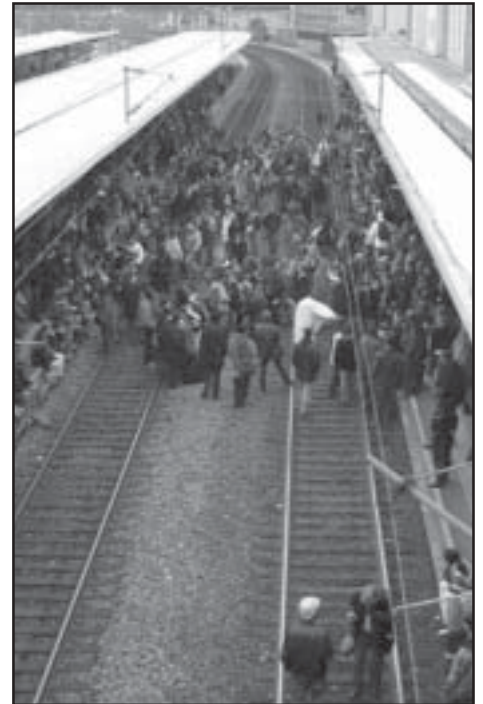
Here in Britain, the government, whose members are in line for whopping great retirement pensions, are working out ways of cutting the pensions of ordinary working people, while making them work until they drop. Make no bones about it, this is a major attack.

And what are the unions doing about it? One day strikes here, and one day strikes there. Given the low key response to the pensions crisis the government is hardly quaking in its boots. Rivals Blair and Brown are supposed to have come to a deal on this issue, so between them we can expect to be screwed.

Contrast this softly, softly approach to what the French workers and students achieved in March and April of this year. The French government brought in a measure which meant that young workers under 26 within a two year trial period could be sacked by their bosses without explanation.

And what was the response of the French working class? Well, millions of them including young workers, students, older workers, families and pensioners took to the streets. Not content with peaceful passive protests, they turned to more dramatic, and effective, methods of persuasion. There were riots, street clashes, many blockades of rail tracks and motorways. France erupted into anger.

And the outcome? The law was scrapped



Station blockaded in France

and the humiliated government has been forced to pay massive subsidies (£104 million per year) to encourage firms to take on young unqualified staff.

That's the way to do it!

DATABASE DANGER

Now the Identity Cards Act has been passed, the building of 69 'in-person' registration centres for gathering biometric data and vetting passport applications is supposed to go ahead later this year. In the next couple of years the centres will also manage compulsory entry on the National Identity Register for passport applications, and Labour have made it clear that their final goal is compulsory ID for everyone. Maperley, the private offshore company that already owns buildings for HM Revenue and Customs (but avoids paying tax!) has been given the Home Office contract to run the new centres. In the meantime, No2ID is asking that if you need a passport, it would show the level of opposition to ID if everyone renewed or applied now, even if your passport is not due for renewal yet (www.renewforfreedom.org).

Labour's ID scheme is rife with private 'enterprise', which is not surprising since the huge funds needed to set up and run one of the biggest top-down Information

Technology projects in the world seems to be an almost bottomless pit of cash (the other British project vying for the title is digitisation of NHS records). The size of the ID scheme is not just about billions of pounds though. The Criminal Records Bureau have a computerised system to do criminal record checks on job applicants, known as "disclosures", and say that 25,000 people were prevented from being recruited last year. But in May, the CRB were found to have wrongly labelled 2,700 people as 'criminal' due to their personal details being similar to someone on their database - an error of 0.03% in 9 million disclosures. Not only that, but there is evidence of massive abuse of the database from employers making illegal checks on potential employees for jobs involving "no risk to children or vulnerable adults", and excessive requests for "enhanced disclosures" which impart additional information the police may have about an individual, not just known convictions.

The ID cards system is much, much bigger. With around 4 in 5 of us being over 16 years of age that means about 50 million people will go in the National Identity Register. The possibility for errors seems endless, whether it's in entering the 49 pieces of information per person in the first place, or looking up your identity hundreds or thousands of times a year (not just for the occasional job application). Never mind the myriad of ways that knowledge of many 'correct' identities will be deliberately abused by the police or anyone else that has access to the database. Children's databases and plans for police logging of all car travel in Britain using digital cameras are also underway, to make us even safer we are told. It's clear that the more invasive the State and its corporate partners become through their huge IT projects, the more the potential for abuse will carry on growing.

Defending Anonymity, the AF's anti-ID pamphlet, is available for free (send us a SAE) or online at www.afed.org.uk

ON THE FRONTLINE

Our regular roundup of what's happening in the workplace

The big news this month was the return of the mass wildcat to a British car factory for the first time in many years. A thousand workers at the General Motors Vauxhall Ellesmere Port plant downed tools and walked out when they got wind of comments by the GM Europe President that job cuts were in the pipeline, word quickly got around and the nightshift then failed to turn up for work as well. The union quickly got the workers back inside the factory though, all the better to 'negotiate' their jobs away - 1000 job losses were agreed within a few days.

There was also a large wildcat in the West Midlands mail centre, when around a 100 workers walked out after a racist incident. Further trouble is on the way in the Post Office where a national strike is looking very likely following management's unilateral imposition of a 2.9% wage rise - something that the workers are very unhappy with - it's been suggested that in line with the PO manager's long term plans this is an attempt to further demoralise post workers so that they leave, cutting the wages bill, and making the company appear a better bet for investors with further privatisation lined up over the coming years.

The nationwide lecturers boycott of exams continues and is now really starting to bite with exams being called off around the country. The union is still refusing to endorse a strike though, despite the clear need for decisive measures to be taken immediately: and is only arguing for a slight escalation via management boycotts and other partial steps.

Bus drivers in Wiltshire and Dorset are going to be holding a number of 24 and 48 hour strikes next month over a derisory pay off. The surprising news is that for once the company involved isn't First.

Some bad news now - a CBI report has found that absenteeism is now at its lowest point for 10 years, and that only 17% of days lost are believed to be fraudulent. With the World Cup fast approaching surely with a bit of effort we can improve on the 160 million days lost last year - pull your fingers out!

We bet the CBI didn't bother to publicise another report that was published last month, which discovered that leading company bosses enjoyed an average pay package of £3.3 million a year - meanwhile, the average pay is £22,900. The class war is over is it Tony?

HIGHER EDUCATION DISPUTE

FOR SOME TIME the university academic staff unions, the AUT and NATFHE, have been instructing their teaching members' not to set exams or mark their students' work, to pressure employers in the current pay dispute. Already some university vice chancellors are threatening to deduct wages.

Lecturers and research staff were promised higher wages as a result of the new tuition fees which will be charged from September, a promise that the universities had no intention of keeping. Wages have dropped in value by 40% compared with other public sector increases since the 1980s, whilst those of vice chancellors have risen by an average 25%.

Due to the action many students will end the academic year without having gained enough marks to progress, and if they are in their final year they will not graduate properly. So is this action justified? Many staff as well as students don't think so, and see it as dividing their essentially common interests.

University academic staff are taking the most traditionally effective form of action - the withdrawal of labour. But why strike when other forms of action are open? Students suffering is just a side-issue to trades unions, because students are not their members.

Other forms of industrial action should be taken, something that unites staff and students and expresses both of our interests whilst hitting the universities in the pocket.

Both students and lecturers have also been let down by the naive careerists of the National Union of

Students. These fashionably supported lecturers' action at first, but then withdrew it when things got controversial. These issues are not games. We need to work out where we stand, and remain firm. The NUS strives for nothing beyond the status quo.

In the current situation students can only be expected to identify with lecturers' interests to a certain extent. We need to work hard to unite lecturers and students in challenging both the employers and the power of single-interest unions, which fail to represent us.



POLICE BRUTALITY IN MEXICO

THE CONFLICT BEGAN on May 3, when flower vendors from San Salvador Atenco attempted to sell flowers in the nearby community of Texcoco at the site of a planned Walmart megamall. Police evicted the vendors, beating many people in the process.

The Atenco-based Peoples Front in Defense of Land (FPDT) mobilized protests, which were brutally repressed by police. News reports indicate police killed at least two residents, and at least 50 or more are injured, some of them critically. Eleven police were detained by Atenco residents who demanded an end to the repression and the release of prisoners in exchange for the release of the detained police. Instead of negotiating an exchange, the Federal Preventative Police (anti-riot squad) entered Atenco during the early morning hours of Thursday, May 4, declared a state of siege, and began a house to house search for the detained police, severely beating and arresting residents.

The results of the police terror on May 4 were 275 people held in custody. Many of the leaders of the FPDT were arrested when police searched their homes without

warrants, directed by a masked informant. Townspeople recognized the informant's voice as he directed police. Three of the top leaders of the FPDT are in a maximum security prison, charged with kidnapping.

Now, 144 people are charged with a lesser offence for which they can bail out if they can come up with approximately 24 thousand pesos (around \$2,000 dollars). Charges against another 17 were completely dismissed. However, 28 remain in prison charged with kidnapping for the detention of police on May 3, including 3 FPDT leaders.

San Salvador Atenco is an autonomous (self-governing) community a little to the east of Mexico City. The community is highly organized and is famous for its militant protesters who participate in popular mobilizations across central Mexico, including those opposing a Walmart store near the archaeological site of Teotihuacán (close to Atenco). It appears that the police were just waiting for the right excuse and the okay from above to smash San Salvador Atenco, in particular the FPDT. Organise actions against Walmart and put pressure on the Mexican government in support of Atenco.

THE BNP IN BARKING AND DAGENHAM

A POLITICAL TIME bomb has exploded in East London. The racist British National Party won at least 11, and possibly 12 seats on the local Council., making it the official opposition to Labour. The BNP has effectively, for the first time in its history, gained a mass base in a community.

How has this situation come about? Firstly, it should be noted that until a couple of years ago, the borough of Barking and Dagenham was almost totally white working class. In this population the Labour Party has had effectively one party rule for decades. The local Party is corrupt, arrogant and a career base for the ambitious.

Much of the population was poor and neglected. They lived in the biggest council estate in Europe. It is vast but the families in the community knew that council housing was secure for them.

Then came Thatcherism, council houses were sold off, many being bought by whites who bought to rent, becoming landlords (leeches), and depleting the housing stock for their children. New rules about the right to council accommodation also made getting a council house much more difficult.

Within the last few years, local people, in the town of Barking in particular, became aware that large numbers of Kosovan refugees were being housed in their area. Some housing staff actively promoted the idea that Kosovans were responsible for the shortage of housing, fueling resentment.

Council houses in the borough became increasingly scarce after the right to buy was introduced. Still, a few years ago they could be bought for £60,000. Now a 3-bedroomed ex-council house costs over £180,000, well beyond the reach of local people.

About 2 years ago, the ethnic character of the borough changed rapidly. Large numbers of black people moved in and bought many of the ex-council housing. Some, it appears, were given grants to help purchase their properties by housing associations in inner London eager on moving them to make way for new applicants. This fuelled resentment. The blacks, Kosovans and other outsiders were blamed for the housing crisis.

The widespread poverty in the borough not only impacted on housing. Schools and social services could not cope, adding further resentment.

Who is responsible for this rapid and widespread growth of racism? Blame firmly rests with Labour. The local Party was complacent and corrupt. But it was under Blair that mass racism in the borough was cre-



Fascism doesn't begin with the gas chambers, but that's where it ends.

ated. Blair and co. have done nothing about the widespread and chronic housing crisis in Britain.

The only hope in the short term for the poor of all races, is more social housing. Labour continues to oversee the sale of council houses.

The BNP success is now starting to take effect. Working class whites who voted for them are becoming more vocal, more confidently racist in the changed political climate.

What are the prospects? The BNP are noted for their incompetence in local government. Maybe they will make fools of themselves and be voted out next time. More worrying, if the BNP uses its public platform to criticise the lack of progress under Labour and no improvements take place, especially with housing, they could capture the whole borough.

There are no easy solutions. More affordable social housing and decent free local health facilities should be available to all, this will only be achieved through the poor of all races arguing out their differences, and uniting against their common enemy, landlords, bosses and government (local and national, of whatever party).

Organise! magazine #66 (Spring/Summer 2006) now in print, with articles on ID cards Act, Spanish revolution 70th anniversary & artist Ramón Acín Aquilué, Environmental struggles in West Ireland & USA, Venezuelan interview, Anarchists and Media, Prisoner Support. Available online at www.afed.org.uk or from the address on the back page.



TIME
BOMB



The Spanish Revolution 1936

On July 19th 1936, forces within the Spanish Army, backed by the right wing in the Catholic Church and among industrialists and big landowners, as well as among the fascists of the Falange and the monarchists, made an attempt to overthrow the young Republic.

Rumours and preparations for the attempted army coup had been obvious to all but the government, which, afraid of the workers more than of the army, refused the demands that arms should be distributed to the people. All the attempts by the Army in the main industrial centres were defeated, with the exception of Cadiz, Seville, Cordoba and Grenada.

Half a million workers were organised within the mass anarchosindicalist union, the Confederation Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), and many other workers were in the socialist union the Union General de Trabajadores (UGT). In Madrid armed UGT militants smashed the Army revolt. In Barcelona, it was the CNT and the Federacion Anarquista Iberica (FAI) which captured the barracks and thwarted the generals.

So began the Spanish Revolution.

In Catalonia and Aragon, the regions with the highest concentration of anarchists and those influenced by them, distribution of food, the maintenance of public services, the opening of collective restaurants and the organisation of armed militias was undertaken by revolutionary committees outside the control of government.

Collectivisation of industry and the seizing of the land were set in motion by CNT members, and to a lesser extent UGT members. Often, anarchist militias such as the Durruti Column, would actively promote and defend collectivisations as they traveled to the frontline. Possibly 3 million people were involved in collectives in 1936-37.

Working people began to cast off centuries of mental servitude. People spoke to each other as equals. New groups involving themselves in artistic, musical and cultural activities emerged in a surge of creativity unleashed by the possibilities the revolution offered.

This far reaching revolution was attacked by the forces of Franco, and sabotaged from within by the Communist Party and the liberal Republicans. But that's another story...



Finnish anarchist jailed for refusing military service

FINNISH ANARCHIST MC Henrik "Iso H" Rosenberg began his 195 day prison sentence for total objecting (refusing military service and alternative state work) 20th of March. Iso H is not the first Finnish anarchist MC to go down for total objecting - both Jus Aname representing Järvenpää and Tapani Ganja representing Turku did their prison sentences in 2002. But differently from Jus Aname and Tapani Ganja who are strictly underground, Iso H is a commercially successful hip hop artist with a celebrity status. 11th of November 2005 Iso H was performing in a successful joint benefit concert for Union of Conscientious Objectors and Anarchist Black Cross, over stage there was a big banner in support of American anarchist political prisoner Jeffrey "Free" Luers. Paid audience was more than 500.

Total objecting is getting more and more mainstream, and currently vast majority of objectors come from outside activist circles. For example of 25 people doing time 1st of march for "alternative service crime" according to state statistics, vast majority of whom are political, only six had contacted Union of Conscientious Objectors in order to get to their prisoner list. You may subscribe a War Resisters International petition for Iso H at:

<http://wri-irg.org/co/alerts/20060325a.html>



US Anti-fascist jailed

An American woman, Lasandra Burwell, has been sentenced to 5 years imprisonment for 2nd Degree Felony Assault, 1st Degree Felony Assault, and Fourth Degree Aggravated Riot for throwing bricks at police cars and police officers during the anti-fascist riot in Toledo, OH last October. She welcomes books and letters of support. Her address is:

Lasandra Burwell W063658, Ohio Reformatory for Women, 1479 Collins Ave. Marysville, OH 43040, USA

Information from:
www.brightonabc.org.uk

SUBVERT!

When going on demonstrations stay sober, don't talk to the police and if you're arrested give only your name and address then say 'no comment' to any other questions. For more info visit: www.ldmg.org.uk

JUNE

3-11: Stop the Arms Trade Week – An opportunity for co-ordinated local campaigning. Contact Campaign Against Arms Trade on 020 7281 0297 to order a free campaign pack or to find out what is happening in your area, or visit www.calltheshots.org for more

4: International day of Child Victims of Aggression - Bring the family to Beith munitions depot in Ayreshire, Scotland - where a very large number of bombs used in the Iraq conflict and conflict elsewhere are made, tested and stored. Meet 1pm for picnic outside the gates. For transport from Edinburgh and Glasgow tel: 07876 698 736 or email: info@act4peace.org

10: 2006 Road Block national conference. Anti-roads campaigners take note. The location is central Birmingham. Workshops and guest speakers. Get more information and download booking forms here:

www.roadblock.org.uk

10: Norwich Anarchist Bookfair - Stalls,

meetings, food, bar & music. Blackfriar's Hall, Norwich, 10am-6pm. Free entry. Beards optional. www.norwichanarchists.org

11 - July 1: Art Not Oil, London. An exhibition and campaign committed to showing powerful political/ecological art, to seeing an end to oil sponsorship of the arts, and to helping build movements for climate justice both here and throughout the world. For more info: email info@artnotoil.org.uk tel: 07708 794 665 visit: www.artnotoil.org.uk

www.nationalpetroleumgallery.org.uk

Art Not Oil is a project of London Rising Tide: www.londonrisingtide.org.uk

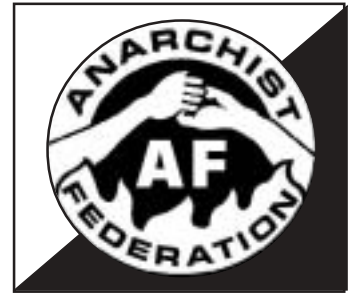


PROJECTILE

PROJECTILE: A festival of anarchist film and culture 16-18 June Newcastle 16-18 June, Star & Shadow Cinema, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 2BB www.projectile.org.uk

ADMISSION & ACCOMODATION

Weekend pass: £25 waged or £5 waged
Individual films: suggested donation of £3.50, free for asylum seekers
Discussions: Free
For more information, contact info@projectile.org.uk



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 interesting in joining contact us at:

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

Subscriptions to **resistance** costs £4 from the address above for 12 issues. A two issue subscription to our magazine, **Organise! for revolutionary anarchism**, is also £4.

You can subscribe to **resistance** by email for free via the website above.