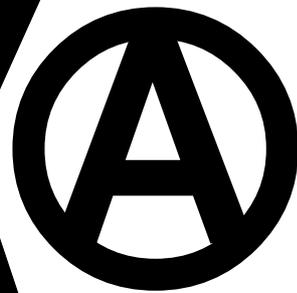


resistance

anarchist bulletin

Issue 10
Ireland
Free/Donation



FORTRESS IRELAND

THE NEAR DEATHS OF 28 ASYLUM SEEKERS in a blaze at a B-category prison in Yarl's Wood, Bedfordshire last month (see British **resistance** #35) was just the latest in a long line of disasters presided over by the Tony Blair administration in dealing with what it sees as its 'refugee crisis'.

Refugees, treated as criminals but charged with no crime, continue to fill sex-segregated detention centres across Britain, policed by the hired thugs of Group 4 (the largest privately owned security company in the world), made to survive on a pittance that makes the dole a luxury in comparison, and force-fed a steady diet of English language (linguistic colonialism) in order to communicate with people they never meet. Meanwhile, the 'lucky' ones are dispersed into government sponsored slums, into a society driven into frenzy by a racist media that scapegoats them for failed government policies, and which caters to the growth of the far right –the hired thugs of governments past and present. This is the face of Britain as seen through the eyes of refugees who can no longer dream of 'asylum' here.

So what of Ireland –the land of a 1000 welcomes? In 1992, there were 39 reported cases of asylum seekers here. Last year, the number was 11,000. Victims of the neo-liberal project that has wrought devastation on the developing world, escapees from dictatorship, war and civil unrest, these new immigrants are not very unlike the wave of Irish emigrants that sought economic survival in the US etc. from the middle of the last century onwards. So how have the likes of Minister of Justice, John O'Donaghue, and his cronies in power treated them?

In 1999, laws were passed to scrap benefits for asylum seekers, replacing them by a minuscule IR15 to meet all their daily needs. The right to work and education was denied. Those refugees granted asylum now racism), forced into dreary hostels

that are attacked by racists and picketed by local communities. Recently, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern announced a new policy which will award £9m to Nigeria to ask it to speed up its deportations (!) –similar deals with Poland, Romania and Bulgaria are planned for the near future.



Meanwhile, John O'Donaghue wants to force airlines and ferry companies to be more pro-active in the hunt for 'illegal' refugees by fining them up to 3000 euros for every immigrant found stowed away on their vehicles (more revenue for Tanaiste's Mary Harney's helicopter flights across country, no doubt). This will not only serve to drive refugees into the hands of human smugglers (the kind of scum that leave people to die in air-tight containers) but will subcontract the right and responsibility (of life and death in some cases) to deal with immigrants to the inexperienced staff of transport companies. All in all, the government are trying to buy their way out of the problem, or pass the buck to someone else. In the meantime, the strategy seems to be to make life so unbearable (some asylum seekers have gone on hunger strike in protest against their treatment) that refugees are driven to such despair that even a request to return home to certain death is preferable to the prolongment of life under such conditions.

As mentioned above, the rise in hate crime is a natural by-product of the perceived media image of foreigners flooding into the streets of our once-proud nation etc. The recent murder of a Chinese national Zhao Liu Tao and the attack on Paul Abayami, a 16 year old Nigerian last year are just some examples of the growing rise in racist attacks by the far right. As anarchists, we need to counter the vile propaganda they and the media offer to the working class as reasons for the miserable conditions in which it ekes out its daily existence. We need to shatter the myth that claims that 'our' bosses are better than 'their' bosses. We need to build up a culture of solidarity with is based on class and not phony nationalisms. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder with asylum seekers of our own class, network with them in our communities, and defend them when they come under attack.

For more info on anti-racism contact: AFA –Anti-Fascist Action Ireland, PO Box 3355, Dublin 7. ★

NO VOTE VICTORY

WELL, IT WAS CLOSE, but the result of the referendum on the rights of suicidal women here to have an abortion was guaranteed and marked a resounding success for all those involved in the No Vote campaign. However, it was just one battle in a war that is likely to continue, referendum after referendum, until the government get their way. As anarchists, we must be prepared to continue the struggle in support of the X case ruling, but not only this. We must fight for the rights of ALL women to decide how they wish to treat their own bodies. Free abortion, available to all, including those working class women, who unlike their middle class, well-off counterparts, can't afford the boat trip to English abortion clinics.

For more info about anarchism in Ireland, check out: rebelweb@cjb.net



THE 'LAND WARS' of 1879-82, and the battles against 'landlordism' were a highly creative and inspiring period of resistance (many of the modern tactics of Direct Action were widely used). In fact the way in which the tenants approached the campaign bears very close resemblance to the anti-poll tax campaign in the UK over a century later.

Following the Famine, food prices rose rapidly; Irish farmers prospered, and landlords raised rents. However, after 1876, the food-bubble burst, but high rents remained. Mass evictions followed, leaving thousands homeless. This and poverty combined to stir up the farmers anger, as did the fact that the majority of Landlords were (absentee) English gentry.

Spreading from Co Mayo, rural communities banded together against the hated landlords. A popular tactic was the use of the boycott, i.e. social and commercial ostracism. Another was the refusal to buy farms that had been newly evicted, and the shunning of those who did buy them. The aim was to ensure that the landlords received no rents, but it also helped to build up solidarity between those struggling, and this solidarity was then used for further activities such as forcible reinstatement of evicted tenants. This basic social commitment to each other was the glue that bound the movement together, much as during the poll tax protests, whole estates turned out to resist bailiffs and court orders.

More confrontational tactics were also used - killing the landlords' cattle, ruining pasture land by digging it up, tearing down fences on enclosed land - all tried and tested methods of applying pressure. The movement was now threatening to expand beyond its original aims and the bosses began to look for someone to defuse the situation, and up stepped 'great' (sic) Parnell, by now the President of the Land league, who signed the Kilmainham treaty' (1882) agreeing to limit the movement as a parliamentary opposition only.

The original aims had by now been largely met however, so his influences served mainly to dampen down any revolutionary fires that the previous years may have ignited.

So what lessons can we, as anarchists, draw from this episode? Firstly, basic working class solidarity is essential - it must be second nature to us; secondly, not to allow ourselves to be sidetracked by politicians - we must rely on our own collective strength; thirdly, there is no **one** practical course of action, a variety of approaches is more likely to get the desired result, and further bolster the depth of our movement.

MOX POX

13 PEOPLE DIE OF CANCER every month in Co. Louth as a result of the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant across the Irish sea in Cumbria. The cancer rate there is 15% above the national average.

These figures are set to rise even further given the setting up of a separate mox (mixed oxide) plant in 1996 at a cost of £470m. BNFL -British Nuclear Fuels, who run the plant (which mixes plutonium and uranium using material recovered from old, exhausted fuel rods) have resisted the impact of a widespread campaign to close the plant down in spite of the fact that they know it's more expensive to produce mixed oxide, and given they have only secured 10% worth of contracts for the fuel they have already reprocessed.



TRAFFIC SIGN: CO LOUTH

The history of the Sellafield plant has been one of controversy ever since it opened in 1957. Then, under the name of Windscale, it was held widely responsible for the rise in Down Syndrome cases in the surrounding area due to radioactive fallout from a fire. There have been a long history of fires and leaks ever since. In the last 10 years alone there have been 10 breaches of health and safety regulations (in one incident 2 workers sustained slight burns, and a firefighter inhaled toxic fumes after exposure to 60 gallons of nitric acid) which have cost BNFL, in total, £75,000. Since BNFL control 12% of the world's nuclear market earning millions in profit each year, this is by their standards, an easily affordable risk.

But there is more to the Sellafield problem that the fatal effects it has on the people of Co. Louth and Cumbria. In this time of heightened 'terrorist' tension, fears are that somehow the nuclear fuel produced by Sellafield will fall into the wrong hands. It takes only 4g of plutonium to manufacture a nuclear bomb, and even less to make a 'dirty' bomb - a conventional explosive device added to plutonium to cause widespread contamination in detonation. Since mox, for example, is transported in planes (which have been known to crash) and on ships capable of repelling only a 'lightly armed attack' (Janes, Arms and Naval Au-

thority) travelling at a not very impressive 13 knots, the full danger of this is apparent for all to see.

And then there is the other danger: a terrorist attack on Sellafield would cause devastation equivalent to 44 Chernobyls. A couple of iodine tablets and hiding under the staircase (Irish governmental policy) ain't going to do much good.

As anarchists, the AFI believe in a society where people live in harmony with nature based on alternative sources of energy (solar, wind and wave power etc.). While we recognize the right of working class to work, we also understand that in extreme cases, like Sellafield, where the workers' work has such a fatal effect on not only the worker, but the surrounding residents of the area, then that work environment must be closed down, especially given the fact that cheaper, eco-friendlier options are available. In April, our members will be leafleting Dundalk and Drogheda doing our bit for the anti-Sellafield campaign. Come and join us. ★

Join the resistance

The **Anarchist Federation Ireland (AFI)** 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. Contact:

Anarchist Federation Ireland
PO Box 505
Belfast BT12 6BQ
Phone 07951 079719
www.afed.org.uk
e-mail: ireaf@yahoo.ie