

RESISTANCE

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“If You Exploit Us, We Will Shut You Down!”

Resistance to Workfare Continues!

Edinburgh

Protestors blockaded and occupied both British Heart Foundation and Superdrug in Edinburgh on 8th December 2012, in opposition to their participation in the government’s workfare schemes.

A huge banner declaring “If You Exploit Us We Will Shut You Down” blocked the entrance to the BHF furniture store in Leith’s Kirkgate centre as demonstrators occupied the shop. Impromptu speeches were given inside and out, explaining that although BHF had claimed to be “moving away” from workfare, they were still taking on new compulsory placements.

After half an hour inside BHF, protestors moved round the corner to blockade Superdrug. Many stopped to listen to spokespeople for the protest who gave speeches through a megaphone, stressing that this action was part of the wider resistance to the attacks by the rich on the poor. Hundreds took leaflets denouncing workfare and in particular the new imposition of workfare on the sick and disabled. Many people came up to the stall outside the occupied stores and joined ECAP’s solidarity network for mutual support against the authorities.

Demonstrators then moved inside Superdrug, where a protestor gave a speech explaining

that this action was against workfare and in solidarity with Superdrug workers whose wages and conditions were being undermined by the company’s use of workfare. In Brighton Superdrug are not taking on Xmas staff but are using workfare conscripts instead. Although the police and the Kirkgate’s security guards were present they did not attempt to stop the occupations.

The demo, part of Boycott Workfare’s Britain-wide week of action, was organised by Edinburgh Coalition Against Poverty and supported by Greater Leith Against the Cuts.

The protest, around 40-strong, was considered a real success by participants. Hopefully British Heart Foundation will now realise that they must withdraw completely from workfare or suffer continued disruption, and the anti-workfare movement will grow and spread to effectively challenge all users of forced unpaid labour.

See page 2 for a report from Glasgow



Bristol Starbucks Action

On December 8th, 2012, members of the Anarchist Federation in Bristol, together with other anarchists, feminists, socialists and miscellaneous angry rebels shut down the central Broadmead branch of Starbucks for the whole afternoon, before regrouping and doing the same thing in Park Street. The response we got from passersby was overwhelmingly positive, with many people joining in (40 at the peak of the two hour demo).

Starbucks were targeted due to their tax evasion and their refusal to pay staff a decent wage or treat them with respect. Both of these things are symptoms of the class struggle. The rich corporations hoard their money whilst workers and the poor have to deal with lower wages, slashed benefits and

cut services.

We strive to live in a world free of states as well as capitalist organisations such as Starbucks. However we recognise that until we all collectively control our own communities and workplaces together we need to struggle to meet our needs as part of the working class. This at times includes fighting to keep state-run services operating when it is in our collective interests. The working class and anarchists don't benefit from having wealth taken away from essential services to be hoarded by capitalists!

We hope these fights will strengthen our sense of solidarity with each other and increase our antagonism towards the state and capital.

<http://bristolaf.wordpress.com/>

Glasgow (Continued from Page 1)

On Saturday 8th December 2012 Clyde-side IWW, the Crutch Collective, Glasgow Anarchist Federation, Glasgow Solidarity Federation, the Right To Work Campaign and other individuals leafleted a branch of Superdrug in one of the city centre's busiest streets. The one thousand leaflets given out highlighted Superdrug taking on even more people on the Government's 'Work Experience' workfare scheme for the Christmas period. Apparently someone also left placards saying 'Superdrug + Unpaid Work = Superdrugery' outside their other city centre branch.

The extra people on workfare means less holiday pay for the regular staff. There was a lot of police about and Superdrug had hired extra security for the day. However the combination of the picket, the leaflet saying, 'Don't Shop At Superdrug' and the added security costs meant we succeeded in our objective of costing Superdrug money for using Workfare.

The Superdrug distortions – 'Work Experience' is not voluntary in practice. Job Centre Plus and third party workfare profiteers like A4E bully benefit claimants on to the scheme. Benefit claimants can have their benefits cut if they do not continue to 'volunteer' to stay on the scheme, after they have been on the scheme for a week. Only a tiny number of people on workfare get jobs afterwards.

Coming Up...

London-wide Week of Action to "Defend London's NHS" 9th-16th February. Press Event: 11th February.

16th February: Save Our Hospitals Hammersmith and Fulham campaign's Day of Action; 19th February: Decision meeting by NW London NHS on the proposed closures of all four A&Es at Charing Cross, Hammersmith, Ealing and Central Middlesex (afternoon); Candle lit vigils outside Charing Cross and Hammersmith hospitals will continue every Sunday at 5-6pm into mid-February. There will be a National Demo to stop the A&E closures in England and Wales followed by on-going protests and events.

The above are being organised by local residents and grassroots campaigns. All welcome.

London AF are starting an "in-house presence" at our office on 1st floor of Freedom Bookshop on the second Tuesday of each month between 5-7pm to offer an opportunity to meet up and talk with us.

Schedule:

Tuesday February 12th

Tuesday March 12th

Tuesday April 9th

At Freedom Bookshop, Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High St, London E1

Freedom Bookshop Survives Firebomb Attack

Freedom Bookshop, home of Freedom Press and a cornerstone of the anarchist movement for over 125 years, was firebombed in the early hours of Friday 2nd February. Nobody was hurt in the fire which partially gutted the ground floor and damaged the building's electrics.

Freedom Press is Britain's longest running anarchist publisher and traces its history back to the original Freedom paper started by Charlotte Wilson and Peter Kropotkin in 1886.

The bookshop has since re-opened, using the upper floors as the "Rainbow Bookshop" until the downstairs area has been repaired.

Numerous support & fundraising events have taken place across the country since the attack in a fantastic show of solidarity with the iconic publisher.

Further information on the attack and announcements of upcoming support events can be found on the Freedom Press website:

<http://www.freedompress.org.uk/>

Assault on Villa Amalia

Report from an Afed member visiting Greece, 20th December 2012

The squatter's movement arrived in Greece during the early and mid-nineties, and has since established itself as a popular form of peaceful, all-inclusive form of activism bringing together anarchists and autonomists from all over the world. Based on the principle of repatriating public and private space to the hands of local community use, squatting spaces aim to replace commercial and state functions with an environment of direct democracy, mutual labour and an oasis for alternative socio-political and cultural expression.

Located in the centre of Athens, the Villa Amalia squat is one of the oldest of its kind in the city – boasting twenty-two years of existence. Like many other forms of occupation, it has had a traditionally strenuous rela-

tionship with authorities, which have attempted to infiltrate, sabotage and literally starve it of supplies and access from its first days. It's not the first time we've heard about it on the news, but a surprise police raid on the premises at approximately 07:00 am has sent events spiralling into action. Eight squatters, six Greek and two of possible German nationality, were arrested on sight and remain detained in the police headquarters nearby, as activists from several anarchist, autonomist and squatting groups gathered across the street where the raid was being carried out in solidarity of the detained. In their announcement, comrades stated that they will remain in the vicinity and are increasing in number.

The police intervention, hailed on statist, right wing and Golden Dawn-sympathetic blogs as a heroic purge of what they interpret to be brothels of chaos and disorder, continued

throughout the day as they conducted a search of the premises. Police forces were accompanied by a comrade who witnessed the procedures.

Squats, in contrast to their portrayal as centres of terrorism, drug abuse and alcoholism, play an active community role in protecting the neighbourhoods from fascists, human trafficking and the illegal sex and drug trade. There are many voices in society who, despite not identifying with left-libertarian principles, have risen to defend their right of existence based on the premise that they have given local communities the power to determine the face and running of their daily lives. Squats in Athens have also begun to shoulder a new role as centres of anti-fascist organisation in the face of the state-facilitated rise of the Golden Dawn.

Solidarity with the squatters of Villa Amalia!

Belarusian ABC Infotour

Despite the welcome release of Pavel Syramolatau in September 2012, 5 anarchists supported by the Anarchist Black Cross are still in Belarusian jails facing years of incarceration since being convicted of a range of crimes in 2011.

The criminal damage for which these comrades were sentenced amounts to only a few hundred dollars in each case. They are being in especially harsh conditions, reflective of their noncompliance.

These convictions form part of an ideologically driven repression of anarchists in Belarus. They follow the revitalisation of Belarusian anarchism in the past few years.

The Belarusian ABC has campaigned consistently for them to be released and, in the immediate term, for them to be allowed visits, medication, letters and literature, and raises money for solicitors' fees and to buy the comrades' food.

Supported by the International of Anarchist Federations (IFA-IAF) they are undertaking a tour of France, Italy, Germany, Spain and UK, to raise awareness and spark further solidarity. The latter have a good chance of success because Belarus' President Alexander Lukashenko has expressed a desire for the country to be allowed to join the E.U. There are rumours that this may be considered if human rights in the country are addressed.

A speaker will be coming from Belarus in February-March to discuss the situation for activists in the country and to build solidarity for the prisoners.

Speaking events are on the following dates. Please see www.afed.org.uk for up to date listings.

London (1) Fri 15th Feb, 7pm [Venue may change due to fire damage] Freedom Bookshop, Angel Alley, 84b Whitechapel High Street, London
Brighton Sun 17th Feb, 6pm, Cowley Club, London Road, Brighton

London (2) Tue 19th Feb, 8pm, Room 116, Main Building, SOAS, Thornhaugh St, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG.

Egham Thu 21st Feb, Royal Holloway University, Egham Hill, Egham TW20 0EX. Room & start time TBC.

Leeds Sun 24th Feb, Wharf Chambers, 23 Wharf St, Leeds LS2 7EQ. Start time TBC.

Manchester Tue 26th Feb, The Kings Arms, 11 Bloom St, Salford M3 6AN. Time TBC.

Glasgow Thu 28th Feb, 7pm, Kinning Park Complex, 40 Cornwall St, Glasgow G41 1BA

Edinburgh Sat 2nd March (unconfirmed)

Nottingham Tue 5th March, 7.30pm, The Sumac Centre, 245 Gladstone St, Nottingham, NG7 6HX

Oxford Wed 6th March, Albion Beatnik Bookshop, 34 Walton Street, Oxford OX2 6AA. Time TBC.

Bristol Thu 7th March, 6.30pm. Kebele Community Co-operative, 14 Robertson Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 6JY.

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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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