

resistance

the anarchist bulletin

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News, views,
ideas, action,
yet more on
Prague and
more...

DERAILED BY PROFIT

The Hatfield rail disaster (4 dead), following soon after Paddington (31 dead) coupled with high fares, over-crowding and unreliable trains shows that Britain's privatised railways are a dangerous mess. So is the rest of the transport system which has been rigged in favour of cars and lorries by governments and the road lobby for the last 40 years.

TRAFFIC

We are saddled with a traffic system which is run by people who are only concerned with movement for profit: people must be moved as quickly as possible to work/buy products, and the goods they make must be rushed off for sale. This system itself generates profits for the road lobby (oil companies, car manufacturers, road builders, government departments especially the Department of Transport and the Treasury), rail companies and airlines.

The road lobby is extremely powerful and has sabotaged all other forms of transport - trams, busses and trains (which are more social, effective and less profitable). In Britain, the Labour government implemented the majority of the Beeching cuts between 1965-'67 axing 5000 route miles of railway and 2363 out of 7000 stations. The 'justification' was that increased use of cars made these railways unprofitable.

This was a self fulfilling prophecy. Most of these lines had never been profitable, and the remainder weren't made profitable as a result. Rail passengers had increased despite greater car ownership (30% of households). Massive investments in road building, accompanied by under-funding and cuts in bus and train funding resulted in lower government subsidies, higher fares and declining public transport leading to greater car use. For PM Margaret Thatcher "nothing can stop the great car economy". Buses were privatised and deregulated: free-market economics were ap-

plied to public transport which had to stand on it's own two feet (although bus and rail privatisation were tax subsidised). The governments large scale road-building programme continued. The railways were allowed to deteriorate through decreased public funding, in order to make privatisation more attractive. Their privatisation in 1996 deliberately fragmented the network to make re-nationalisation difficult. The railways were vertically split so that the 25 companies running them were different to the company owning the track (Railtrack). This has had disastrous safety consequences with a confusion of contracts and safety cases, train operating companies and track authorities, rail regulators and government officials. The justification was that the train operators would then compete on routes using track owned by a neutral partner. The Treasury was delighted, seeing monopolies as bad for business and therefore tax revenues. Competition would also reduce the need for government subsidy.

RAIL SAFETY

There is an inbuilt conflict between profit and safety. Although rail is safer than road (10 people killed per day on British roads), Britain has the worst safety record in Europe (and Japan, operating more trains has not had a death since 1964). There were disasters before privatisation (e.g. Clapham 1988, 35 deaths), but there has been an increase since 1996. In 1998-'99 there were 1164 accidents, including 19 derailments.

Weaknesses were identified in the accident section of the Hatfield track 10 months ago. Railtrack could not persuade the train operators to reduce the number of trains, and it would not close down sections of the track for fear of losing money though legal fines. The number of track inspections has declined, broken rails increased by 42% between 1994-

'99. Railtrack also complained that 82% of the faults on the East coast main line which could cause derailment had not been rectified. Over 2000 miles of Britain's railways are poor/very poor and don't reach safety standards. There are currently over 100 new trains sitting unused in railsheds throughout Britain because they have missed their delivery dates from the manufacturers/been withdrawn with teething problems/are awaiting their long overdue Railtrack safety certificates.

THE FUTURE

Capitalists will only improve the rail network if they see it as being in their interests to do so. As we have said, the profit system relies on railways so re-nationalisation or increased government funding may suit some sections of the ruling class. Neither method will bring about a transport system which is run for peoples needs rather than for profit. Only workers control with input from passengers can bring about a safe, efficient railway.

As well as this towns and cities should be designed to minimise the distances people and goods have to travel daily. A transport system based on forms of transport such as buses, trams and trains and the waterways which promote the shared use of public space, which are energy efficient, minimally polluting and accessible to all parts of the community (children, elderly, people with disabilities, etc). These would form part of a free and cultural public transport system which would minimise the use of cars and lorries. ★

NEW AF PAMPHLET

- **Against Parliament - For Anarchism**
- **Arm yourself in time for the next election with revolutionary anarchist ideas.**
- **Only £1.50, from the London address**
- **(see back page).**

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CELEBRITY GRETIN OF THE MONTH

"I don't believe in anti-capitalism. Democracy is built on inequality and I'd rather be in a democracy than a fat cat communist regime."
Jason Donovan

Do you ever pause to think how it is that all the arseholes in the entire world end up on British TV screens? However it is, has the human race ever been made to look so insultingly dumb, moronically infantile, politically vacant or downright empty-headed as it is caricatured by these pathetic specimens of the so-called entertainment world who infest the idiot-box right around the clock? Do we really need obnoxious turds like Jason Donovan and all those other narcissistic no-accounts telling us what's good for us? ★

Hackney Fightback

Hackney declared itself bankrupt last month. All spending was immediately frozen while councilors decide which essential services will be privatised or scrapped entirely. The consequence for council workers and residents alike are bleak. Libraries face closure, meal on wheels services cut, funding for community groups abolished, nurseries closed. All agency staff face the sack - supply teachers, care workers - in fact anyone involved in services for people who need it the most. Since the 20th October parents have been in occupation of two nurseries in the borough, Fern and Atherden Rd nurseries. Market sweepers are also out on strike. Council workers are balloting on strike action at the time of going to press. The council are meeting on the 6th November to finalise the level of cuts and decide which provisions face cuts. The Hackney Fightback campaign have called for a shutdown across the borough on the same day, including road closures and walk-outs. Surprised at the speed of the response to the proposed cuts it is thought the council may introduce the cuts in two waves - immediate 'savings' following the 6th November, with the remainder to come in April next year. More details in the next **resistance**. Ring the hotline for details of how to get involved 07979 823597. ★

reflections on MAYDAY

A selection of articles and discussions on the MayDay 2000 conference and the Reclaim The Streets action.

For copies send a A4 SAE and £1 to AF, 84B Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

Solidarity Needed

A member of North East London Solidarity Federation (revolutionary unionists) is facing the sack along with 2 other shop stewards at his workplace. The charges relate to their work as stewards in a privatised company, CSL, currently cocking-up the housing benefits system in Newham. The Company is trying to gag them from speaking out about malpractices and deteriorating conditions in the workplace.

On Friday 20th October 20 of their colleagues staged a walk-out in support of them. The disciplinary hearing is on Friday 3rd November. The company, CSL, and it's parent Company, Deloitte Touche, are very sensitive to bad publicity. The role of the "union", UNISON has predictably been to cut off any contact with the stewards, but to meet with the company within days of the suspensions.

So an independent support group has been set up to composed of workers and supporters.

For up to date information the support group can be contacted at hbsupgrp@egroups.com or you can contact NELSF directly via 020 8374 5027

Following this letter is the text of a leaflet produced by the workers and also a list of CSL and Deloitte Touche offices nationally, which we are asking any groups up and down the country to protest outside

We are also asking for all groups to publicise this where-ever possible, and circulate this message on any egroups or email list they are on.

What follows is the text of a leaflet sent by the Solidarity Federation:

On 25th September 4 UNISON Housing benefit workers (and shop stewards) were suspended by CSL - a wholly owned subsidiary of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu - Newham's privatised housing benefits company, based in Stratford, London E15. The charge is 'causing grave embarrassment'. You are urged to read this leaflet and make up your own mind about what has happened, and take action to protect jobs and services.

THE BACKGROUND

London Borough of Newham contracted out most of its Housing Benefit service to CSL in June 1999. Housing Benefit is paid to the poorest and most vulnerable in our community to help with housing costs. It is a complex benefit to administer and the council publicly admitted 'teething troubles' with the company. The combination of performance targets, cost-cutting, a backlog of work and 'private sector management methods' have had an impact on service delivery. In a recent radio interview about the problems the company was having in its numerous HB contracts, CSL spokesperson Ian Scotter admitted "we were naive in estimating the work involved (in administering housing benefits)".

THE VICTIMISATION

In essence the staff have dared to speak out in defence of a service and the welfare of workers at CSL, and have been suspended as

a result. Such is the working atmosphere, and the treatment that they are receiving, that staff are leaving on an almost daily basis. They are not being replaced, which increases the workload for those left. The elected staff representatives have been suspended for taking up these issues, on behalf of the staff, with CSL.

EMBARRASSMENT

The staff have repeatedly attempted to highlight the problems. CSL have done little but ignore the issues. These include benefit claims that haven't been dealt with, staff victimisation, harassment, bullying, lack of resources and a competent strategy to run an effective service. Other local authorities have admitted that "outsourcing" housing benefits has not worked. Newham and CSL seem fearful of public scrutiny of the service.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

It's quite likely that this is first you will have heard of CSL. The implications of what has happened are wide ranging. If this continues people applying for benefit will receive a worse service.

To help prevent this from happening.

YOU CAN:

Support the workers who are facing disciplinary action - discuss this issue in your workplace and alert your union - offer support, suggestions, tell us about your experiences. Contact us - we feel that this is a national issue, and joint action is needed for change. We aim to raise the profile of this scandal, and we need your help to do this.

Defend local services - this is not an isolated incident. We are getting reports of similar issues across the country. Question your local privatised council services - see if the same or similar is happening in your area.

Write to any of the following and register your concern:

Kim Mason, Contract Manager, CSL Group Limited, Broadway Chambers, 2 The Broadway, Stratford E15 4QS	Brian Reece, CSL Chief Executive, 1st Flr Ashton House Silbury Boulevard, Milton Keynes MK9 2HG tel 01908 830 900, fax 01908 848 110
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John Connolly Chief Executive, Deloitte & Touche, Stonecutter Court, 1 Stonecutter Street, London EC4A 4TR, tel 0207 9936 3000 fax 0207 583 1198	Newham Council Leader (or your own councillor) Sir Robin Wales Members' Post Room, East Ham Town Hall London E6
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The support group hbsupgrp at:
PO Box 1681, London, N8 7LE
housingbenefit@hotmail.com

JOBS AND SERVICES IN NEWHAM WILL SUFFER - WHY NOT DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT NOW

Prague Update

Extracts from a report by our Prague correspondent:

[Following on from the anti-capitalist demonstrations in the city on September 26th doubts were raised if the organisers, INPEG, would support those arrested.] In case anyone's wondering, this LSG [Prague Legal Support Group] is a kosher outfit. They are small, made up of mostly foreigners with little experience, so their work is difficult, but they seem to be doing a good job. Also, whatever people are saying about splits between INPEG and anarchists, INPEG, the OPH [the legal monitoring group], Indymedia, the Legal Support Group and comrades from Solidarita [a Czech anarchist group] are all working together to support S26 prisoners, whatever their charges or politics. According to what I was told yesterday:

1 ...The info which LSG posted on the net referred to 20 people confirmed in jail. As of the beginning of our meeting yesterday there were 15 of these still being held. The German comrade and one of the Hungarians had been released without charge. The rest of the Hungarians (6) were due to be released within the next few days. Cases against them are to proceed. As we were talking we got news that all 5 Hungarian men had been released into the custody of the Hungarian ambassador (and whisked away with little opportunity to talk to LSG people except to confirm ill-treatment while in prison). 2 Hungarian women remained in custody but were expected to be released imminently.

2 ...Most of the 15-ish people known to LSG have legal representation. Some have their own lawyers, some have state-appointed lawyers. The LSG has contact with all of these prisoners.

email: praguelegalsupport@purpleturtle.com
3 ...Money is not needed urgently. The court cases are not imminent. Money will be needed for lawyers in the future, however. [It's] estimated 2000kc (40 quid) for the first consultation and 5000kc (100 quid) to retain a lawyer throughout a trial. Per person. I think if you have money, then send it now - it can sit in Solidarita's bank a/c in the meantime, and won't come to any harm there [IPB Blansko, Rozmitalova 6, 67801 Blansko INBACZPP164035592/5100]. Or they can pass it on to the LSG/OPH, whatever. Other support - demos, letters to officials, are all still important.

4 ...Others. LSG know of 1 Briton and 1 Czech still in custody for whom there is no info on their whereabouts or with what they have been charged. The situ is confused with possibly people having left the country without contacting OPH, etc. More new info - there are at least 4 Czechs and 2 foreigners not on previous lists who are not in custody but who have been charged and will have to face trial. So, the "disappeared"... People here are of the opinion that there are a number of comrades who are incarcerated but of whom the police are releasing no info. These possibly include some Kurds, a Ukrainian and a US

comrade. This hypothesis is based on word-of-mouth accounts of people who were arrested seeing others in the police stations/prisons who have since not been accounted for. The exact number is anybody's guess. The conclusion can be drawn that if this is the case, the cops could be keeping these people under wraps because of their injuries.

5 ...The morning after. - Police provocateurs. The Interior Minister has threatened to prosecute anyone making claims that plainclothes pigs acted as provocateurs. You may also already know that journalists from Lidove Noviny, a respected broadsheet newspaper, have said they saw them in action, and that OPH have some of them on video throwing stones at police lines. Ha ha ha. 2 court cases are currently pending against the cops.

- 900 arrests. After claiming that 400 mostly foreign people were arrested, the cops then said 900 mostly Czech people had been. The opinion of comrades here is that this is bullshit. The cops have one eye on the next Interior Ministry budget allocation, and are agitating for, among other things, rubber bullets. They realised that if they said all the problems were caused by foreigners, then they would have lost their case for new toys once all the foreigners had gone home.

- Political pressure here has been very intense in order to fit people up, after the Prime Minister went on record as denying that any cops had been naughty and that all the bother was caused by bloodthirsty nihilist hooligans. Hence the roundups after S26 and hence a lot of charges being dropped for lack of evidence in the period since then. I believe the Indymedia internet pages have details about this. [www.indymedia.org]

- Reaction of Czech people. Czech anarchists said that they were worried about the future of their organising activities, with the hysterical media reaction to the events. But Solidarita reports that the reaction of working class people when they set up their info tables hasn't been so bad.

One thing that has helped has been the language of the government, which has closely paralleled that of the government in the wake of the '68 demonstrations. ★

SUPPORT PRISONERS

After years of mis-diagnosis and incorrect treatment US prisoner Karen Horning was told she has Lyme's disease. Yet she is still denied the specialist medical treatment she desperately needs. Write demanding she is seen immediately by a Lyme disease specialist and what their plans are if they cannot find one to: 1. Warden JB Bogan, 2. Assoc. Warden Gordon, 3. Hospital Administrator Chastain, all at: FMC Carswell, PO Box 27137, Ft. Worth, TX 76127, USA. Karen can be contacted at: Karen Horning #00644-049 CC5, FMC Carswell, PO Box 27137, Ft. Worth, TX 76127, USA

NEWS OF THE WORLD

ECUADOR: The International Monetary Fund's strategy for Ecuador's non-elite population is in keeping with the organisation's policy worldwide and their sense of fair play and decency (they haven't got any!). A report entitled "Ecuador - Interim Country Assessment Strategy" states that by Nov 2000 the government must raise the price of cooking gas by 80 per cent. It must transfer ownership of its biggest water system to foreign operators. Also a BP must be granted the right to build and own an oil pipeline over the Andes.

A further 26,000 jobs must be eliminated (that is on top of the 120,000 lost under a previous IMF "assistance" plan) and workers wages must be cut by 50% in four stages in months specified by the IMF! In all there are 167 loan conditions which favour multi-national companies and institutions. The plight of poor Ecuadorians has worsened with life expectancy falling.

BRUSSELS: During October 50 000 women marched in Brussels against violence, poverty and inequality, protesting that 80% of Europe's poor are women and children. Meanwhile, the media debate in this country continues to focus on the irrelevance of whether the pound should be ditched in favour of the euro. Who gives a toss! How many working class people are ever going to have enough of it to hang on to it long enough or to drool over whoever's royal mugshot is or isn't mocking us?

GLASGOW: The Carbeth Estate in Glasgow is a community with a vibrant radical past. In the 1930s the homely wooden huts where 150 working class, mostly pensioner residents, live now was used as a training camp by socialists and anarchists preparing to join the International Brigade fighting Franco's fascists in Spain. Then, during the war-time 1940s the tranquil estate became home to hundreds of families forced to flee the Clydeside blitz. Now, through the greedy ambitions of owner Allan Barns-Graham, who wants to develop the area with luxury tourist chalets and demolish the huts, their simple, but idyllic homes are in serious jeopardy in a vicious land dispute. Barns-Graham has to date served over 80 eviction notices, 17 of which have gone to court and been decided, surprise, surprise, in the tyrant landlords favour. Residents are refusing to pay huge ground-rent increases plus additional hefty surplus premiums he's seeking to get away with. Those who have already lost the court fight have been denied permission to meet Barns-Graham's legal costs by instalments. Suspiciously, last summer four of the huts were burnt down. Fire brigade investigators found that petrol had been used to spark the inferno, but cops have to date still to make any arrests. If there had been dodgy torchings on this scale at Balmoral there might have been a different approach..... It's not over yet but it's not looking good for the little community as they struggle against the odds to hold onto their unique and rich traditions of Glasgow working-class history. ★

What's Going On ?

Send us details of your event for inclusion in **resistance**
For the latest news visit our website: www.afed.org.uk

Take precautions' when going on demonstrations and don't take cameras

NOVEMBER: 4th - **Smash the Beaufort hunt.** Disrupt the royal hunt. Meet 9.30am, Central Malmesbury, Wilts or thereabouts. More info 07715779843 on the day or before. More info from: Movement against the Monarchy, PO Box 14672, London, E9 5UQ, pager 01523160145.

4th-5th - International Conference Against Depleted Uranium limited places available Contact Campaign Against Depleted Uranium, One World Centre, 6 Mount St., Manchester, M2 5NS O161-834-8301

10th - Actions against Shell on 5th Anniversary of "judicial murder" of Ken Saro Wira and 8 other Ogoni activists. 0208 6789605 mosopgb@aol.com

11th - **Benefit gig in support of Prague prisoners** at the Button Factory, Brixton. Also an action planned. More info phone: 07989 451096 or 020 7793 1468.

11th - 'Community Action: organising for radical change' Speaker Dave Morris from the McLibel campaign. Epicentre, West Street, 8pm. Organised by News from Nowhere Club 020 8555 5248. Admission free, but bring something for the buffet.

12th - **Remembrance Sunday counter demonstration** against the fascist wreath laying. Meet at Green Park, 12 noon. More info: No Platform - Anti-Fascist Network, BM Box 5827, London, WC1N 3XX www.antifa.net/noplatform

13th-14th - Resist the UN Climate Summit at the Hague. Contact Rising Tide c/o CRC, 16 Sholebroke Ave., Leeds, LS7 3HB 0113 262 9365 www.squat.net/climate

15th - Demonstration in London against student loans, neo-liberalism and the poverty of student life. Meet Russell Square 11am.

16th - **Picket in support of Satpal Ram**, jailed for the past 13 years for defending himself against a racist attack 10 Downing Street from 12pm to 4pm. Tel: 07947-595367, freesatpalcampaign@hotmail.com

18th - Conscious Clubbing event at the Scala in support of Satpal Ram jailed for the past 13 years for defending himself against a racist attack Tel: 07947-595367,

24th - Buy Nothing Day - fuck the shop till you drop culture. Contact Enough! 0161 226 6668 www.adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd

25th - Steal Something Day

DECEMBER: 16th - **Mayday 2001 planning conference.** 10am-5pm, Button Factory, Loughborough Junction, London. *In the spirit of Mayday 2000 this is open to all anti-state anti-capitalists.* More info from: mayday2001@hushmail.com or BM Mayday, London, WC1N 3XX.

MUMIA MUST LIVE! Radical American journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal is still on death row and faces imminent execution. **Regular meetings and activities in London and elsewhere.** For more information contact: **Mumia Must Live!**, BM Haven, London, WC1N 3XX or email: mumia@callnetuk.com

And if you like resistance check out these. . .

Organise! for revolutionary anarchism. *Magazine of the Anarchist Federation.* By far the best mag going (us, biased??), giving in depth reporting and analysis from the class struggle. £1.50 an issue/subscriptions £3 from AF c/o 84b, Whitechapel High St, London, E1 7QX.

Black Flag *Legendary anarchist mag.* £1.50 issue/£6 a sub. BM Hurricane, London, WC1N 3XX

Counter Information *Free anarchist news-sheet reporting on struggles from around the world.* Transmission, 28 King St, Glasgow, Scotland, G1 5QP

Direct Action *If revolutionary unionism is your thing read the paper of the Solidarity Federation (Anarcho-Syndicalists).* £1.50 issue/£5 sub. PO Box 29, SW PDO, M15 5HW.

SchNEWS *Weekly direct action news-sheet.* Send stamps to: PO Box 2600, Brighton, BN2 2DX

Class War *Anarchist tabloid - the name says it all..* Subs from PO Box 467, London, E8 3QX

Earth First! Action Update £5 for 12 issue sub. PO Box 1TA, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE99 1TA

Freedom Bookshop: 84b, Whitechapel High St (in Angel Alley), London, E1 7QX

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- I enclose £3 for a years subscription to **Organise!** magazine.
- I am interested in the **Anarchist Federation** and would like more information.
- No, I can't be arsed to get involved but I'll send you a large wad of dosh

Name

Address

.....

.....

.....



Who are we?

We are 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.

Join the resistance

The Anarchist Federation have members up and down Britain fighting for the kind of world outlined above. We take part in everyday struggles which affect us all, such as industrial disputes, strikes and supporting prisoners. We are active in environmental struggles, anti-racism and against government attacks on our community.

For more information on anarchism, the Anarchist Federation and fighting back contact:

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