



A load of old ballots!

THE RECENT ELECTIONS pointed to a growing distaste for New Labour. This was translated into a vote for the nationalists in Scotland and Wales and an increased vote for the Tories. Beyond all this, though, was an increased disdain for the whole electoral process. One hundred thousand ballot slips were defaced in Scotland, and whilst some of these might well be due to error, many may well have been a rejection of the voting process.

We don't believe that any political party, no matter how sincere their motives, can bring any lasting benefits for a free and equal society. Anyway, we know that most of the candidates who run in elections are part and parcel of the whole rotten circus of domination and exploitation, or they soon will be. History shows us that no person, however sincere, can use power without being corrupted, incorporated and co-opted into the system of governing and dominating, and without being alienated from their base.

Everyone would decide!

What we as anarchists propose is a system of free federalism based on the social and economic equality of everyone. Everyone would take part in the running of society and if we mandated anyone we would not delegate our own power away, but would give a clear mandate for ideas and decisions discussed and debated together. Our mandates would be revocable at any moment, not like the present, where our so-called representatives would do what they liked for a minimum of four to five years.



Our criticisms of democracy don't mean that we have no interest in public affairs. We believe that it is the street and in the work place that we can win the things we want and need, not through the ballot boxes.

What we want is an economic and social revolution, with a wholesale change, and where our shared and our individual needs would be paramount. But that doesn't mean we should sit around waiting for some big event that will change everything. We have to fight now to defend any social gains that have been won by us and by our parents and grandparents. But it's not just a matter of defence. Our defensive struggles can give us the confidence to realize our real strength and the power of mass action. It can give us the strength and confidence to start to really challenge this system based on domination, exploitation, boredom and the destruction of the planet. ★

266 WAYS TO REPRESS



THERE ARE NO less than 266 powers under which State officials can enter someone's home.

These include the right of Revenue and Customs to enter homes without a writ to seize suspected smuggled goods up to the power of entry that officials of the Environment Department can invoke under the Bees Act of 1980!

Most of these powers have been created by parliament **in the last 20 years**. In the last seven years alone 25 new statutory entry powers have been enacted, including some which can be carried out without a warrant.

Other rights of entry includes conventional powers, such as police authority to enter a house to search for a missing child or to arrest someone suspected of driving under the influence of drink or drugs.

But the list also includes a series of more surprising powers of entry, such as: "fact-finding missions" under an international landmines convention; to allow intelligence services access "for purposes of national security"; to inspect a knacker's yard; to seize equipment used in illegal broadcasting or evidence of related offences; to search for non-qualified provision of immigration advice or related services.

People's homes could also be searched if suspected of growing "virulent weeds", hiding materials for making "horror comics" or hacking into satellite television without paying.

Laws now going through Parliament will give bailiffs additional powers to enter homes in pursuit of traffic penalty debts. ★

Our regular column on work place struggles this month looks at a strike in Ireland outside of union control:

WILDCAT STRIKE IN DUBLIN- Polish and Irish workers unite

On 27th of April a spontaneous wildcat strike broke out in Musgrave warehouses in Dublin.

The whole crew, around 80 people, both immigrant and natives - in solidarity stopped their work after successive acts of discrimination by the management.

Musgrave is a big Irish corporation, which owns Cetra and Supervalu in the Republic of Ireland, Londis and Budgens in Great Britain and other networks in Spain. In their warehouse in Dublin, where the strike started, immigrants make up around 50% of the staff, officially employed by work agencies and hired by (or rather rented to) Musgrave.

Many of them are Polish. Agency workers are continuously discriminated against by managers, their working conditions are definitively worse, they're paid less and haven't got any rights. Their situation was getting worse week after week. On the day of the strike, one of the managers gave out a new work schedule for the agency workers. Workers' breaks were cut short and they were expected to work for four hours in a row, in temperatures of around 4 degrees Celsius!

At the same time, contract workers kept their right to a break every hour. The same day, one of the agency workers was fired on flimsy grounds. This discrimination was too much for the workers to take. At around 7pm the agency workers stopped working and moved to the canteen. After a few minutes the Irish workers joined them, loudly showing their support for the strike.

After less than an hour, representatives of the three agencies which supply workers to Musgrave came. Using threats and pleading they tried to convince the workers to go back to work, but they got hissed. Both Irish and immigrant workers agreed that it is a common fight to maintain the achievements of the union movement and their high standards of work. Not long ago Musgrave tried to cut most of the privileges of their workers.

The strike ended half an hour after midnight. ★

MAY DAY IS a day to celebrate workers' struggles for freedom and justice. In many countries, this day has been taken over by those seeking to change the meaning of the day for their own authoritarian ends. In Russia and the countries of Eastern Europe, May Day used to bring to mind triumphal parades of state 'socialism' and in the West, May Day is dominated by marches of union bureaucrats and reformist politicians. It is important that anarchists reclaim this day, reminding both ourselves and others, that it is a day to celebrate anarchism and remember all of those anarchists who have given their lives to the struggle for a transformation of society.

The origin of May Day as a 'Workers' Day' dates back to 1886 when on May 1st 340,000 workers struck all over the US, calling for an eight hour day. In Chicago, 80,000 workers came out. The following Monday, the police fired on strikers at the McCormick Harvester factory and six workers were killed. The next day a protest meeting was broken up by the police. In the ensuing melee, a bomb was thrown at the police, killing one outright and fatally wounding seven others. The authorities immediately accused the anarchists, who were active members of the 8 hour day movement in Chicago. After a farcical trial, with a jury made up of businessmen, their clerks and a relative of a dead policeman, 8 anarchists were found guilty. Four were hanged, three spent many years in prison, and one committed suicide before sentence could be passed. Evidence later came to light that the bomb had actually been thrown by a police agent, but it was obvious from the start that the aim was to demonise anarchists as a way of undermining the 8 hour day movement. Bosses continued to use this incident to victimise working class militants.

There was international outcry and May 1st became established as an international day of solidarity and action by the American Federation of Labour, and this was supported by workers' movements, mainly in Europe. One hundred and twenty years later, this history has been conveniently forgotten. In the US, the State moved the date to September, and renamed it 'Labour Day', now known more for family BBQs on a long weekend than for any political association. In western Europe, it became the property of reformist political leaders and union bureaucrats and transformed into a meaningless ritual. Recently, some governments have



May day in London this year

made moves to follow the US example and turn May Day into a day to celebrate work. In the Soviet Union, China, North Korea and other so-called 'communist countries, May Day was turned into a display of the military might of the State.

Why should we bother trying to reclaim May Day? Though we know that our struggle is not confined to one day a year, it is nevertheless important to have moments when we unite with other anarchists around the world and consciously remember that we are part of a long tradition that offers the only challenge to authoritarians of every variety. We alone argue for a society of equals based on the association of free individuals. It is anarchists who have realised that any government, whatever ideology it professes, is inherently oppressive. Anarchists have ceaselessly fought against all governments and have shown in theory and in practice that it is possible for people to organise themselves without giving up their power to an institution that then seeks to control and dominate.

And, by remembering the Chicago anarchists and their involvement in the 8 hour day struggle, we also remind ourselves that, though we want nothing less than the total abolition of capitalism and all governments, anarchists, as workers, also want to improve their living and working conditions in the here and now. We know that it is only out of these day-to-day struggles that we can build an anarchist society.

By making May Day an International Day of Action, we are connecting with our history and other anarchists, thereby strengthening our resolve and giving us inspiration for the struggles we wage during the rest of the year.

Text agreed on by the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF) of which AF is a member. ★

ID CARDS TO DIVIDE AND RULE IN BAGHDAD

OVER THE LAST couple of weeks *The Independent* newspaper has been reporting the grim new development of 'walled neighbourhoods' being created in Baghdad.

The building of these walls is being led by the United States. This shows very clearly how identity card technologies can easily be used to divide up cities and make them into little more than prisons. According to journalist Robert Fisk writing on April 12th, "Faced with an ever-more ruthless insurgency in Baghdad - despite President George Bush's "surge" in troops - US forces in the city are now planning a massive and highly controversial counter-insurgency operation that will seal off vast areas of the city, enclosing whole neighbourhoods with barricades and allowing only Iraqis with newly issued ID cards to enter."

But two weeks later, 2000 residents of a "Sunni enclave" marched through the streets with banners against the 3 mile "sectarian barrier" which is turning their district into "big prison", saying that "Children in al-Adhamiyah want a Baghdad without walls." Politicians are in disarray with the Iraqi Prime Minister now seeing the local opposition and calling for the wall-building to be stopped,



whilst the Iraqi military is arguing for it to be continued to "prevent terrorists from moving between areas." Residents are rightly worried that the walled areas will just become sectarian fortresses that will end up being ruled by one military faction or another, depending on who ultimately gets control if and when the US military start pulling some of their troops out.

All over the world governments and their armed forces are attempting to control people by creating more artificial borders and by using biometric ID technologies. The Israeli wall is the most well-known example but the USA government is also building one across the border with Mexico. Walls, new border controls and ID cards are a very serious threat to freedom of movement and must be opposed. ★

BLOODY HELL!

THE NATIONAL BLOOD service (NBS) performs a vital role in collecting blood from donations from hundreds of sites daily, testing the blood for, HIV, malaria and syphilis and filtering the blood and separating it into components.

Staff have been in industrial dispute with the NBS management for about a year, over unworkable reconfiguration plans which will see local processing and testing sites condensed into just three 'supercentres'.

This would mean that blood collections will have to be driven hundreds of miles around the country, putting even more reliance on an already overloaded and often clogged up roads network. It will mean the loss of 600 jobs nationally.

All donors should support the work of the NBS staff by continuing to give blood AND by supporting their claims by writing to the NBS Chief Executive:

Martin Gorham, Chief Executive, National Blood Service, Oak House, Read's Crescent, Watford, Herts. WD24 4PH
Or email: martin.gorham@nbs.nhs.uk ★

Social change not climate change!

The effects of climate change are already being felt worldwide- rising temperature causing death (in France 15,00 deaths in 2003); drought and desertification; floods, and storms. Millions are effected and things will get much worse without drastic action.

But haven't governments and big companies acknowledged there is a problem, offsetting carbon emission, encouraging 'green' cars, bio-fuels and wind farms, re-cycling and energy conservation? This action is far too little and is contradicted by 'business as usual', such as the UK's large airport and road-building programmes. Only we, the vast majority of the population, can make the necessary changes through mass action.

Come to the Anarchist Federation public meeting on May 24th in London to discuss what can be done. (See Events listings on the back page)

TIME
BOMB



THIS MONTH MARKS the 70th anniversary of May 1937, when fierce gunfights broke out in the streets of Barcelona between workers militias and Communist Party and governmental forces, in one of the bleakest episodes of the Spanish civil war.

The war had started less than a year earlier, in July 1936, when fascist and right wing elements of the military rose against the government. This coup was defeated in many places by the resistance of the working class, who armed themselves and successfully fought off the military. Often, in such places, a revolutionary committee was instituted by members of the unions, who started organizing every day life. One such place was Barcelona, where the anarcho-syndicalist union, the CNT, was dominant.

At the start of the war the Communist Party was tiny. But it soon grew in numbers and influence, firstly because, paradoxically, it opposed the revolutionary process, which made it sympathetic to the middle classes, and secondly because it controlled the supply of weapons coming from Russia. They believed that all the political power should go to their hands, even if they had no interest in the revolution, and that any other political group should be banned. They intended to run a dictatorship modelled on the Stalinist one in Russia.

When they felt strong enough they decided to attack the other groups which were fighting in the war alongside them. They seized the industries controlled by unions other than their own, namely the telephone exchange who was in the hand of CNT affiliated workers, and attacked their offices and meeting places. The other groups were faced with a difficult decision, because unlike the Stalinists, their troops were fighting in the front and calling them back would mean exposing it to a fascist attack and defeat. Therefore the Communists were able to gain the upper hand.

A horrible repression followed and many true revolutionaries were killed by the secret police or simply vanished in their torture centres. George Orwell gave us an excellent account of these events in his book *Homage to Catalonia*.

The days of May 1937 showed the true face of Stalinism and authoritarian Marxism. It proved to the world that far from being a revolutionary party they were only interested in the seizure of power, and proved that the anarchist point of view was right: that the so called dictatorship of the proletariat is only a repressive regime and that without freedom there can not be any true revolution. ★

OTHER NEWS

Manchester Social Centre needs you!

THE BASEMENT SOCIAL Centre in Manchester was badly damaged in the huge fire which started on Dale Street on 7th May. It is now closed for essential repairs but we hope to open again in the near future. Luckily we did not go up in flames; however we have suffered smoke damage and more significantly severe flood damage from our sprinkler system. Many books, leaflets and art works are well beyond repair. Ceiling tiles have come down and we can not yet be sure how badly affected the IT hub and kitchen are.

When we are able to start with the repairs we would be hugely grateful for any help with the clean up. It's going to be a massive task and the more volunteers the better. We will also need financial support because although we do have some insurance it will not cover all our losses. Extensive renovation and restocking will be necessary and we really do need you. We have a new website which includes a place to register offers of practical help and also an online donation facility. Any contributions you can make, physical or financial will be much appreciated.

Please go to:

<http://thebasement.clearerchannel.org/new/>

The Basement Collective



NO BORDERS!

OVER 100 PEOPLE held a lively protest in Crawley, West Sussex, on 21 April, 2007, against a new planned detention centre nearby. The protest, called by the No Borders network in the UK, aimed to show opposition to the new purpose-built Immigration Removal Centre (which is being built at Gatwick Airport). The new prison for asylum seekers will have a capacity of 420 places for male and female detainees and is another step in the Labour government's efforts to meet its target of 4,000 places in detention centres throughout the country.

The demonstration, which was mainly made of two large groups from Brighton and London, marched through Crawley town centre in the high of Saturday's shopping spree. Many leaflets were given out, informing locals about the reasons for the demonstration, whilst pointing out the fact that a new concentration camp for innocent people is about to be built on their doorsteps. Policing was relatively low but the level of surveillance and 'information gathering' was incredibly high and intimidating.

There are No Borders groups in many other places including Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham & Sheffield and Wales. For contact details check out No Borders Network (UK) on the web: www.noborders.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

MAY: 12 -13 - Campaign for Climate Change Climate Conference: Seminars, workshops and guest speakers at LSE, Houghton Street, London WC2. Saturday 9am-6pm followed by drinks/social at the Square Pig Pub. Sunday 10am-5pm. For details visit: www.campaigncc.org

15 - Tell Shell - Hands Off Iraqi Oil! - protest at Shell's Annual General Meeting, who have been steering the agenda for de-facto oil privatization in Iraq. 8.30am-12noon, Novotel London-West Hotel and Convention Centre, 1 Shortlands, London, W6 8DR. For more email handsoffiraqioil@googlemail.com web www.handsoffiraqioil.org

18 - National Day of Action for Refugees - DEMONSTRATION: Show solidarity with asylum seekers, protest against reporting and detention centres. All welcome, open mic, bring your drums and whistles. 1-2pm outside the UK Immigration Service, Communications House, 210 Old Street, London, EC1V 9BR (tube: Old Street). STREET EVENT: all welcome, open mic, street theatre, noisy protest! 1-3pm at Wood Green Library, High Rd,

London, N22 6XD (tube: Wood Green). For more tel: 020 7837 1688 or email: defendasylumseekers@yahoo.co.uk

18-20 - Projectile 2007, Newcastle. For three days in May Projectile will be exploring both contemporary and historical Anarchism in its cultural political and artistic forms. 7pm Friday - 5pm Sunday at the Star and Shadow Cinema, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. Weekend passes £25/£10. For more information www.projectile.org.uk or email info@projectile.org.uk

23 - Haringey Independent Cinema presents : Iron wall, a film about the wall put up by the Israeli State on Palestinian land. West green Learning Centre, Park View Academy, West Green Road, London N15 at 7pm www.haringey.org.uk/hic

24 - Public meeting on Ecology and Anarchism. Marchmont Community Centre, Marchmont Street, London WC1. Nearest tube Russell Square. Convened by Anarchist Federation (London) Free. info@afed.org.uk

26 - Radical Book and Zine Fair - Books you won't find in Borders! From the Cowley Club bookshop and many other stalls. Allotments to anarchy, pirates to punk, sex to sustainability. 10am-5pm, Cowley Club, London Road, Brighton. www.cowleyclub.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.

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.