COUNTER INFORMATION

Grass-roots resistance in Scotland

no.58 Winter 2003/2004 FREE

DO THE RIGHT THING

GLASGOW City Council is evicting refugees who have been refused asylum by the UK state. But people are standing up against the government's disgusting "divide and rule" campaign against refugees, by demonstrating at the City Chambers, George Square, 5pm Mon 10 Nov., followed by a public meeting. We need to stop these evictions and deportations, and fight for a decent life for all.

MAST MADNESS

OPPOSITION is building to the new TETRA police radio masts. Studies suggest that radio waves around their frequency could trigger damage to the nervous and immune systems. 30 masts are due for Fife, and 700 for Scotland as part of a £2.5bn UK scheme.

www.mastsanity.org or call the Fife campaign on 01337 810 413

KEEP ULLA FREE

KIRKCALDY15 Oct..An arrest warrant was issued for anti war activist Ulla Roder, charged with disarming a military Tornado jet at Leuchars in March 2003. http://www.free-ulla.org

DEPLETED URANIUM

PLANS are afoot to set-up a national network of communities resisting the military in Scotland. From the military bases and firing ranges at Cape Wrath to the Depleted Uranium dumps of the Solway Firth, low-flying, ground and water contamination, leukemia clusters - all are part and parcel of the military presence.

During the 1991 Gulf war over 3000 tonnes of weapons containing Depleted Uranium were dropped over Iraq: over 96,000 DU shells were shot around Basra. Since then childhood cancer and leukaemia rates have risen by over 400% and DU has been heavily implicated in causing Gulf war Syndrome amongst US and UK troops.

Now there's moves to fight-back, with a website, newsletter and meetings in the coming months.
Contact Indymedia Scotland.

BILSTON GLEN

SINCE June 2002 Bilston Glen, by Edinburgh, has been occupied and fortified by an ever expanding group of activists.

Bilston Glen - a Site of Special Scientific Interest - faces having a bypass ripped through it. The road is funded by multinationals and biotech companies (Sainsburys, Ikea, Costco, Kwiksave and vivisection GM giants PPL Therapeutics)
info@bilstonglen-abs.org.uk
www.bilstonglen-abs.org.uk

INDYMEDIA

"Everybody is a witness, everyone is a journalist"

SCOTLAND has its own Indymedia now! Indymedia is an alternative, independent media outlet, run by and for grassroot activists. The news is published via interactive websites, and in multimedia, print, photography, video and audio.

Reporting and publishing on the website is open to anyone, following the main principle of accessability, openness and accountability of the editors towards the users in order to abolish hierarchies as far as possible.

See and publish at:

www.scotland.indymedia.org.uk

PFI

PRETTY eFing Ironic. You spend years fighting Tory Government plans for privatisation, then along comes Labour and privatises more than the Iron Lady could ever dream of. That's the judgment of Edinburgh people, staff and patients who've experienced the new Edinburgh Royal Infirmary (ERI). Remember the "NHS Safe in Our Hands" bullshit of the Labour Party propaganda? Now exposed as a tissue of lies.

During the long hot summer a combination of poor design, bad ventilation and "a ban on opening windows" has left staff and patients roasting in temperatures of 35C and higher. The situation got so bad that there have been staff walk-outs when the temperature went out of control.

And all this in a "purpose-built" modern building?

The Consort Health Care consortium behind the project includes Balfour Beatty, Morrison Construction and the Royal Bank of Scotland. They've invested £184 million on the project, but are going to cash in to the tune of £1.26 billion in 2061. Of all the pigs in the trough, Morrison Construction seem to have done best, they've managed to scoop up all the (now vacant) hospital sites for around £10 million - based on mid-90s prices. The whole thing is a stich-up put together behind closed-doors.

The only doctors who seem to be keen on the project are Labour's Doctors of Spin. As the flagship of Labour's Scottish privatisation programme, the dreadful publicity of their biggest project yet must be haunting the spivs, spooks, vandals and thieves who lead the Scottish Labour Party.

DUNGAVEL - *NO-ONE IS ILLEGAL*

REMEMBER when Sheena Wellington sang *A Man's a Man for a That* at the opening of the Scottish Parliament? There wasn't a dry eye in the house, the media loved it and every couthy wee Scottish socialist warmed their conscience with the notion that here was a different political culture marked by some peculiarly Caledonian egalitarianism.

What a heap of shit. As Labour Party members sit back and watch children jailed the pure stinking hypocrisy of the Lib-Lab Executive is exposed. Dungavel is a prison whose inmates have committed the crime of fleeing persecution. Now, in an amazing development, Jack McConnell has the cheek to plea for people to come from abroad to fill our skill-shortages?

The barbarity of the system that has deported the Ay family and treated Fatima Jailiana Muse (docked her weekly food allowance for feeding her children at the wrong time) has shocked ordinary people across Scotland. Over 1,000 demonstrators beseiged Dungavel's razor-wire fences on 6 September.

Friends of Refugees Ayrshire meet at Woodlands Centre, Irvine, 2nd Mon. each month,7.30.<info@frea.org> See http://peaceandjustice.co.uk & www.noborder.org Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees <glascamref@hotmail.com> *National anti racist demo Glasgow 29 Nov. Assemble 10.30am Blythswood Sq.

Mercy Ikolo and baby Bessie after campaigners won their release from Dungavel

NURSERY NURSES STRIKE

IN any civilised society, Nursery Nurses, as trained workers who help pre-school children develop and gather the building blocks of learning concepts, would be given a key status. In ours they can earn as little as 22 quid a day. Like nurses, firefighters and other public workers they're treated shabbily.

Councils like Edinburgh employ 386 full and part-time nursery nurses, and many more in private nurseries. Cosla's Technical Working Group came up with a derisory package that included a 32.5 hour week being raised to 35 hours and a loss of holidays. The proposal would leave a few specialists better-off, but the vast majority capped at a maximum of £15,000 after two years training and ten years experience. Nursery nurses currently earn between £10,000 and £13,000. The number of nursery places rose by 4% while the number of staff fell 13%. ***More strikes and unofficial action is expected.***

UPRISING!

AN insurrection by the poor of Bolivia has forced the president to flee the country.

Sparked by plans to sell Bolivia's natural gas to the USA, widespread blockades of roads in September escalated into fierce street clashes and a general strike in October. Workers, peasants and indigenous Aymara people joined forces and defied murderous attacks by state forces which killed up to 140 people and wounded hundreds. Reports speak of a situation of "dual power" in some areas, as people formed neighbourhood committees, and self defence militias against state violence.

On 16/17 October 250,000 people surrounded the Presidential palace in La Paz. Men, women, elders and children yelled and brandished thousands of wooden sticks, chanting "civil war now, civil war now". That day President Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada resigned and fled to Miami.

This is a victory for the poorest people in South America against multinational capitalism. The regime was backed by the USA, who flew in military supplies to bolster the government. Multi-nationals in the consortium standing to benefit from the gas rip-off are British Gas, British Petroleum and Repsol/YPF.

The people have won a battle, but are ready to continue the class war. The popular assembly of the COB, the Bolivian workers organisation, has declared that unless new President Carlos Mesa (a millionaire!) stops the export of gas, and recovers it for the Bolivians, "a popular Assembly, called by and consisting of workers, unions and popular representatives will assume the task of taking the gas and oil away from transnational hands." Info www.indymedia.org.uk

AUTONOMY!

AUGUST 2003 saw 5,000 gather in Oventik, Chiapas to inaugurate the Zapatistas' 5 new "Councils of Good Government".

Asserting the "right to govern ourselves", Comandante Esther declared "Now is the time to put the autonomy of the indigenous peoples into practice and to act on it throughout the entire country of Mexico. No one needs to ask permission to form their autonomous municipalities."

"In the same way, we are inviting all indigenous Mexican women to organize themselves so that, together, we can exercise autonomy and practise our rights which we deserve as women." http://chiapas.indymedia.org

TELL US LIES ABOUT IRAQ

AS Blair's Secret State has been exposed as a lying machine, it's safe to say "We're all anarchists now". What else could you conclude from the fantastic case of Dr David Kelly but that the State is a disgusting farce, which has at its heart death, deception and dishonesty, to borrow the alliteration so beloved of political spin men.

The Iraq Survey Group, a 2,000 strong force which has at its disposal the most sophisticated intelligence gathering hardware ever known (the satellites, spy equipment etc which litter the Earth's atmosphere), as well as the advantage of an occupying force have found NOTHING. This group has spent £300 million searching for WMDs that are a figment of some spooks imagination.

Here's four big Blair-Bush lies that have been exposed:

1. Blair promised that neither the US nor the UK would touch Iraqi oil. Now Resolution 1483 of the UN Security Council grants the coalition of two, complete control over the oil fields.

2. Blair claimed he had "nothing to do with" the decision to leak Dr David Kelly's name to the press. Now the Hutton Inquiry discloses three meetings which Blair chaired, where the decision was made.

3. Labour make great play of the fact that they "allowed" a vote in parliament on the decision to go to war. Now, Robin Cookadmits that Blair made a pact with Bush the year before to go in to Iraq.

4. The war on Iraq would result in a "Road Map for Peace in the Middle East". Now Israel has bombed Syria and is erecting a new Berlin Wall through the occupied territories.

STOP BUSH DEMOS
Edinburgh :19 Nov. 2pm Bristo Sq. and 6pm Charlotte Sq., marching to US Consulate.
London : 20 November.

School students blockade Edinburgh city centre against the Iraq war. Anti war direct action swept the globe. One Edinburgh highlight was the storming of Edinburgh Castle on 17th March.

"Destroy the meters and enjoy the water"

Anti Privatisation Forum activist, South Africa

PEOPLE in poor black Soweto, South Africa are resisting the imposition of pre-paid water meters. "The prepaid meter means that ....if you have no money you will not have water."

Demanding "Free basic services for all", Soweto residents are taking direct action to stop the Johannesburg Water Company digging pre-paid pipe trenches. In September 13 resisters were arrested and 7 jailed. International solidarity is needed.

Mass resistance overthrew apartheid - now the poor are fighting the new boss. The ANC government is privatising basic services, and has overseen 10 million water and electricity cut-offs, and many evictions.

But community resistance grows. Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee's Operation Khanyisa - meaning to light up - has dozens of teams of struggle-trained technicians reconnecting the power supply to households suffering cut-offs. Women play a prominent role in this movement which calls for a boycott of electricity payments, demands free electricity, and is so strong that the Eskom electricity company had to write off 1.4 billion rand of arrears in May 2003.

www.southafrica.indymedia.org Anti Privatisation Forum www.apf.org.za

AS Israeli state repression grows, many people are travelling to Palestine to be human rights observers with the International Solidarity Movement. ISM people sleep in homes threatened with demolition, accompany ambulances, and help Palestinians try and get through checkpoints and the massive new "apartheid wall".

Despite the reactionary suicide bombings, such is the power and viciousness of the US-backed Israeli military that 6 Palestinians die for every Israeli killed. ***ISM www.palsolidarity.org***

WAR RESISTERS

THE authorities have managed to suppress news that there has been widespread internal opposition to the war from their own troops. But what happens when UK soldiers refuse to fight? They get locked up, harassed and lied to.

In a Colchester barracks,two British soldiers, sent home on the eve of invasion into Iraq for refusing to fight, wait every day for the phonecall from the MOD that will tell them their fate. It is now more than two months since the private and technician from 16 Air Assault Brigade told their commanding officer they could not justify battling in an illegal war involving the death of innocent civilians.

Military resisting the war machine from within can contact AT EASE who provide independent advice on being a conscientious objector. Ring 0207 247 5164 suns only 5-7pm,or atease@advisory.freeserve.co.uk

• A group of 27 active reserve duty pilots and retired pilots have sent a letter to Israeli Air Force Chief, Major General Dan Halutz, declaring that they refuse to participate in operations against Palestinians in the territories.

COUNTER INFORMATION

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DEFY-ID!

THE UK government's consultation on the introduction of ID cards will report in winter 2003. The Home Secretary is blatantly disregarding the fact that 70% of people oppose the scheme, which has angered everyone from libertarians defending privacy to liberals concerned about discrimination.

The cards will be linked to a national database containing information on individuals about working, banking, the health system, voting, buying a house, driving, travelling and benefits. Added to this will be any movements recorded by the police or other services who ask to see and scan your card. The ID cards will contain biometric information such as iris scans and finger prints to determine identity.

The UK already has more CCTV cameras than any other country in the world, your emails can be read and the history of your websurfing analysed, without a court order, by six government agencies and the police. Your landline phone can be tapped. Your mobile is a tracking device. Vehicles can be tracked across the country through number plate recognition software. The police now have power to access your NHS records, without having to establish that a criminal act may have taken place.

Activists are beginning to organise against the next step in implementing a Big Brother state in the UK. Defy-ID is a new ad-hoc network of groups and individuals prepared to actively resist the introduction of the card and is promoting the creation of networks of resistance and tactics of non-cooperation and sabotage.

In Britain the wartime system of carrying ID cards was brought crashing down when a single citizen refused to carry the card. Clarence Willcock won a High Court case in 1951, when the judge ruled ID cards an annoyance which "tended to turn law-abiding subjects into law breakers".

In 1987 in Australia, an attempt to introduce such a scheme resulted in massive opposition including civil disobedience. Australians understood that the introduction of such a scheme would reduce freedoms and increase the powers of authorities. Indeed "freedom" comes to mean the freedoms granted by carrying the card.

Join the DEFY ID Network http://www.defy-id.org.uk/

Solidarity Success

CONTRACTORS working at the Swan Hunter shipyard on Tyneside have won a claim for equal wages after hundreds of fellow workers walked out in their support.

Swan Hunter boasts a common pay agreement but then completely reneges on this by employing contractors who can hire and fire at will and set their own wage levels. 98 dockers working for sub-contractors were sacked on 8 September after they mounted an unofficial strike for a £1.95/hour pay rise to bring them in line with the permanent workers at the docks.

This move by the bosses was an attempt to introduce a new level of casualisation - the sub-contractors are not new, unqualified workers but are all time-served tradesmen. Their argument was that they should be paid the same as other tradesmen. Their sackings led to 800 Swan Hunter workers staging a lightning strike in their support. They were later joined by 1,000 offshore construction workers from a nearby Amec yard.

Such massive support forced the managers to the negotiating table where they capitulated completely. Not only have the sacked contractors won equal pay but also compensation payments and an extension of the agreement to a third yard in the area.

Demonstrators occupy a tank at the DSEi arms fair

AS the lackeys of the global arms industry gathered at the DSEi conference in London from 6 - 12 September, hundreds of activists gathered outside the Death fair.

Demonstrators blockaded the entrances, disrupted the Docklands Light Railway for much of one day, blocked roads and even launched boat actions against the death dealers.

The London Metropolitan Police arrested 144 people, using Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 to try and drive away protestors. The policing costs amounted to over £1m. Liberty asks anyone who witnessed people being arrested, stopped or searched by police to contact them to assist them in their legal efforts against the Metropolitan Police.

BLOCKADING THE GHOST FLEET

IN October environmental campaigners temporarily succeeded in blocking the departure of 9 ships from a toxic "ghost fleet" from sailing from the US to Hartlepool in the UK where they are to be decommissioned. The vessels are up to 50 years old and contaminated with chemicals like asbestos and heavy diesel and are unsafe to make the 4,000 miles journey.

RESISTANCE

McDONALDS Workers Resistance have launched a pay campaign demanding £6 per hour, as a starting point in the fightback against the exploiting multinational. The independent workers' network have loads of stickers and leaflets to give away - send £1.20 to MWR, c/o ACE, 17 W Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA
See http://mwr.org.uk

..INSIDE INFO...SOLIDARITY THROUGH THE BARS...INSIDE INFO.

RAISE THE FIST

20 year old Sherman Austin is the first anarchist webmaster to be jailed, for one year, due to a link on his site raisethefist.com. An article which Sherman did not author, was published on the site, containing amateurish instructions about explosives. Sherman took a plea bargain, as he feared in the current political atmosphere anti-terrorist laws would be applied to him, as the federal prosecutors and the judge flagrantly politicised the trial. http://www.infoshop.org/shermanaustin.html

NO BORDERS

ON 27 July over 100 activists from the no border camp in Frassanito/Puglia in Italy peacefully invaded the "First Hospitality Centre" immigrant detention centre in Bari Palese and some migrants managed to escape. This was preceded by a first demo on 24 July, and by a 1000 strong demo on 26 July. On July 28, 22 migrants escaped a detention centre in Turin after a demo that day.

FITTED-UP black activist Mumia Abu Jamal is ill in jail in the USA and needs our help. http://freemumia.org

THE Thessaloniki 7, arrested at the anti EU summit demos in June, have gone on hunger strike. Kastro has been on hunger strike since September 21st 2003 and Simon, Carlos, Fernando, Spiros plus two Greek juveniles all followed on 5 October. A successful action in London meant the video proving Simon Chapman's innocence was shown to millions on London TV. Make your feelings known to the Greek embassy :1A Holland Park London W11 3TP Tel: 020 7229 3850, Fax: 020 7229 7221 political@greekembassy.org.uk, pressoffice@greekembassy.org.uk. Info http://www.enrager.net/simon/

SABCAT'S PRACTICAL INFO No.1

Shapeshifting

From cat to bird 'n' back again

DIRECT ACTION GETS THE GOODS. **That's the sabcat's motto.** Stuff petitions and politicians. And the law? Well, the law's a double-edged sword. For instance…From October 2003 the legal minimum wage is £4.50p/h for workers aged 22 and over, £3.80 for 18 to 21s. Crap though it is many employers still pay *less*. What do you do if you're being ripped off? Strike and get sacked? Picket until prosecuted? No. Just tell the taxman. Since 1999 the Inland Revenue has recovered over £13 million in unpaid wages. This is handed directly to the underpaid workers, and the bosses fined. Biggest offenders were Scottish employers who last year alone were forced to stump up over £1 million. **Contact the Minimum Wage Hotline 0845 6000 678.**

Edinburgh IWW has found another use for the tax office.

LIARS AND CHEATS

Keen as mustard young Sandi worked every hour of overtime that came her way. When it reached 50 hours she asked to be paid. 'You're a liar,' she was told. 'You didn't work that at all.' Her plea to the Unison TU fell on deaf ears so she contacted the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) the famously militant grassroots union. We were happy to help. But how? A leaflet, picket and press release? No need. An IWW member e-mailed Sandi's line manager and told her, 'Not only are you ripping off a young worker, you're defrauding the Inland Revenue of her income tax - and that's a criminal offence.' They swiftly stumped up every hour of overtime due - and extended Sandi's contract! We checked her new contract. No mention of paid annual leave. The contract was illegal.

TAKE A BREAK

Under the **European Working Time Regulations 1998, Council Directive 93/104/EC**, all workers whether under contract or not, full-time, part-time, agency or casual are entitled to a minimum of 4 weeks *paid* annual leave per year (pro rata if you're part-time.) The bosses detest this law and try to ignore or fight it. Last year an IWW member got casual workers in an Edinburgh college a lump sum payment in lieu of annual leave. Though this is also illegal (the Directive is health and safety law under which bosses MUST give paid annual leave) the casuals were content, and management forced to recognise the law - unlike their besuited counterparts at MPB Structures Ltd where a worker took them to an industrial tribunal to get paid annual leave, and won. The bosses appealed. In April 2003 the Scottish Court of Session upheld the tribunal's decision **(<www.scotcourts.gov.uk>** then click on **opinions).** It's the law. In Scotland. Use it. In England check out Greater Manchester Low Pay Unit's site at (www.gmlpu.org.uk).

Scots contact the Scottish Low Pay Unit (**0141 552 5922 and soon at <www.scotlpu.org.uk>**) or the IWW for advice (see Contacts column). We advised Sandi to join Unison despite their disgusting reply to her plea. We see the TUs as divisive and conservative but like the law they have their uses. We also advised her not to give any of her union dues to Blair's New Labour nazis. How?

GIVE NEW LABOUR NOWT

If you're a TU member chances are you're paying money to Blair from your union dues. It's called the 'political levy' and goes right to Labour Party coffers. While big business now gives New Labour more than the TUs the latter still make the biggest single donations. About 60 unions give money to Blair, often millions. If you don't want to subsidise Blair and his cohorts copy the following and send it to your work's wages section. And send a copy to your TU's local HQ..

Political Fund Exemption Notice. I hereby give notice that I object to contributing to the Political Fund of the union and am in consequence exempt, in the manner provided by Chapter 6 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (consolidation) Act 1992, from contributing to that fund. Sign it, print your name, union membership number, address, union branch and date. Tony's money will then be in *your* pocket.

WAGING WAR ON DEBT

On the subject of not paying, if you're having trouble affording the despised council tax Edinburgh Claimants have produced a brilliant 2-side A3 leaflet called *Debt Worries? You Don't Have to Stand Alone* that explains **Scots** law about debt collection, including; wage arrestment, bank account security, poindings, bankruptcy threats, benefit deductions, what the bailiffs can and cannot take, solidarity actions and generally how to gazump them at every turn. For a bundle phone Edinburgh Claimants at 0131 557 6242

Last week ol' Sabcat got a letter from the sheriffs' officers. Give us your NI number, bank and work details, it growled, or 'further legal action will be taken.' Knowing that if I did they would snatch all my savings and snap at my wages, I filed it under 'CL'. Cat Litter. In Scotland debt's not a crime and they can only add 50 quid to my outstanding arrears if I refuse to supply the info.

So sabcats can be legal eagles too, you see. But it's time to turn these feathers to fur again… craaaawk……..miaoooow.....prrrrrrrrrrrrrprrrrr

Sabcat

CONTACT!

GLASGOW

Through the Glasgow Autonomous Project a group of anarchists, libertarians, autonomists and independent anti-capitalists aim to set up a social centre. Operating on the principles of co-operation, mutual aid and solidarity, the objective is to purchase or rent a building that can be used for social events, meetings, gigs, workshops and as an activist resource centre.
Events info (including coming Scottish Anarchist day school) http://nocog.org/~autonomy/ <autonomy@nocog.org>
***Class War glasgowcw@hotmail.com**
***Freedom/Black Flag Readers Group hereandnowscot@email.com**
***Faslane Peace Camp 01436 820901**

EDINBURGH

ACE - the Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh - is a long-running open campaign space providing resources, info and solidarity for individuals and grass-roots groups. Now ACE has the chance to move into new better premises - your involvement and support is crucial to make this happen. ACE, 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA 0131 557 6242 www.autonomous.org.uk
OPEN Tues 1-4pm (advice and solidarity for claimants and on debt) &Sun 2-6pm C/O ACE - Edin. Claimants, Edinburgh-Chiapas Solidarity Group, Bilston Glen Anti Bypass Camp, Edinburgh CITY, Intercourse, Indymedia Scotland, IWW.
NOTE If ACE moves ACE mail will be forwarded and the phone will give the new no..

FROCK ON!

A strong womens collective has developed in Glasgow over the last year, putting on regular events to empower women in art and politics. Day events include skillsharing in workshops, and evening events feature concerts, giving under-represented female artists rare opportunities to perform to a supportive audience. http://www.frockon.org
Next event Sat 6 December Glasgow

● Industrial Workers of the World Scotland/ N.England : IWW c/o ACE (see above) EdinburghIWW@yahoo.co.uk
Rest of England/Wales : Brighton IWW, PO Box 74, Brighton BN1 4ZQ BrightonIWW@yahoo.co.uk

● **AK Press & Distro Tel 0131 555 5165 www.akuk.com**
More contacts, including in England, on website

COUNTER INFORMATION is produced by an independent collective based in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Our aim is to assist in the struggle to overthrow all oppression and exploitation and create a co-operative world without relationships of domination and submission. Contact us to - get free bundles to distribute - send us news - get involved in producing CI - send donations (cheques to Counter Information) - or just to know more.

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