

INSIDE THE STUDENT MOVEMENT

Student socialists plan for new term

BY SOFIE BUCKLAND, NATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS EXECUTIVE (PC)

It is, unfortunately, a cliched way to begin an article about left-wing youth, but students and young people in and around the AWL will be very busy this term.

Our comrades will be intervening in freshers' fairs and organising meetings at universities and colleges around the country. We want to be a pole of attraction for students attracted to revolutionary socialism but put off by the classless "anti-imperialism" of the SWP, say, or the bland opportunism of the Socialist Party.

What marks out Workers' Liberty meetings, like our publications, is our commitment to serious discussion and debate. You may disagree with us, but you won't be bored. If you'd like to organise a meeting with a Workers' Liberty speaker or materials on your campus, get in touch.

In addition, we will be contributing to a number of initiatives which we'd urge students and young people interested in socialism to get involved with.

Firstly, we are supporting the second Feminist Fightback conference, which takes place at the University of East London on 20 October. Workers' Liberty women, mainly students, helped launch the first Feminist Fightback last October, and have been actively involved this time too. That reflects a year of frenzied socialist feminist activity, including participation in the Fightback abortion rights demonstration in March, a dayschool on women's liberation in April, the creation of a monthly discussion group in London and the launch of our publication Women's Fightback.

Every indication is that Feminist Fightback will be a brilliant event - come along.

We will also be continuing our work within Education Not for Sale, which since its launch in September 2005, has provided a principled and, for its size, effective opposition to the right-wing leadership of NUS.

Not content with refusing to organise a serious fight against top-up fees and slashing the

national union's democratic structures, the NUS leadership are now preparing a new set of attacks on student democracy, probably including abolition of the "Block of 12" section of the national executive — the only body through which grassroots representatives and the left can exercise any day-to-day control over the top bureaucrats and committees. Just as Gordon Brown is seeking to destroy what remains of Labour Party democracy, his acolytes in the student movement are seeking to hack up the few avenues through which rank-and-file students can be actively involved in their union.

As well as seeking to be central to the fight back on NUS democracy, ENS will be continuing its campaigning over issues like fees, grants and the minimum wage. If NUS won't fight on these issues, then activists need to get organised to do so.

As part of this, following its successful activist gatherings in September 2005 and May 2006, ENS will be holding another conference at the UEL on 21 October (the day after Feminist Fightback). The focus will be on education for liberation, on ideas about what's wrong with our education system and how we can win an education, and society, that are truly democratic, participatory, egalitarian and sustainable.

At the next Workers' Liberty student and youth fraction meeting, on 25 November, we hope to further develop plans for our involvement in anti-sweatshop and workers' rights campaigning, including next year's Student Anti-Sweatshop Week of Action and the idea of a tour with an activist from the "Supersize My Pay" campaign in New Zealand.

So there's a lot to do. If you'd like to help us with it all, or find out more about ideas, get in touch!

• For more about AWL youth and students, email Sofie at volsunga@gmail.com

• **Education Not for Sale:**

www.free-education.org.uk

• **ENS's briefing on NUS democracy:**

www.free-education.org.uk/?p=385

• **Feminist Fightback:**

www.feministfightback.org.uk

NO BORDERS

Deportations to Iraq continue

The International Federation of Iraqi Refugees has issued the following appeal.

THE UK government is currently arresting and detaining Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers. The UK Government has forcibly deported 89 Iraqi Kurdish asylum seekers on four different occasions over the last three years. The first three forcible deportations were carried out by military aircraft from Brize Norton, a military airbase near Oxford. The last deportation was by a so-called humanitarian plane from London on 5 September 2007. The International Federation of Iraqi Refugees fears more deportations are planned back to Iraqi Kurdistan, given the increasing numbers of Iraqi Kurds being arrested and held in detention centers all over the UK.

The International Federation of Iraqi Refugees believes that the deportations could not be happening at a worse time with the recent cholera outbreak affecting Sulaimaniya, Arbil and Kirkuk, in which more than 2000 people have been infected so far. The International Federation of Refugees continues to contest the idea that Northern Kurdistan is a safe place to return Iraqi asylum seekers.

The situation in Kurdistan may be relatively stable compared to other parts of Iraq, but Iraqi Kurdistan is not an independent state and

continues to be subject to the outcomes of the policies of the US and occupying forces whilst the Iraq war continues. The two ruling parties in Kurdistan, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) are authoritarian and undemocratic. Many people are unemployed in Kurdistan and public services are very poor. The Kurdish authorities continue to persecute human rights campaigners and journalists. Terrorist groups and Islamic parties are intimidating Kurdish people on a daily basis.

Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and US State Departments reports all indicate violations of human rights in Iraqi Kurdistan. The KDP and PUK are not able to protect Kurdish people and provide public services and utilities. All of the factors above lead to the continuing flow of refugees leaving Iraqi Kurdistan.

The International Federation of Iraqi Refugees asks all human rights and refugee rights organizations and trade union branches to send letters to the Home Office condemning the UK's Government's continuing policy of deporting Iraqi refugees back to Kurdistan. Please send a copy of all letters sent to International Federation of Iraqi Refugees.

• Home office fax: 02070354745

Feminists Against Borders

Feminists Against Borders will hold their first meeting, "Moving gender", as part of the Gatwick No Borders Camp, Friday 21 September, 10am-1pm, Ruskin House, 23 Coombe Road, Croydon.

The meeting will be an open discussion on the relationship between national borders, gender and sexuality. From their statement:

"Every day of our lives we are confronted with rigid ideas of gender and sexuality and thus our 'appropriate' roles in society. Anyone who does not conform is seen as 'other' or 'strange' or even 'dangerous'. In a society that always attempts to mark someone as 'other' (by race/sexuality/gender or any other means) we refuse to accept this present condition of nations and borders, the containment of people behind false divides that serves only to profit those in power.

"Many Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Trans and queer people find themselves crossing varying kinds of borders constantly.... Rigid gender roles and enforced norms mean many queers spend their lives migrating in one way or another.

"In similar and at the same time different

ways, women are constantly moving. In and out of paid work, inside and outside of male dominated spaces, and across borders. Migration, so the media, politicians, mainstream feminists and leftists, and commentators tell us is a dangerous activity. Yet, women move and do so for the same reasons as everyone else. They/we move to make money, to survive and to realise their projects, dreams, and relationships.

Some ideas for discussion:

• What alternative political practices and discourses can we create that would actually support the struggles of migrant women, trans and queer people, whether they are employed in the sex industry, in domestic work, or in any other industry?

• What can we do to create alliances with other struggles (and their existing networks) across Europe?

• What kind of alliances do we need to create in order to shift the terms of this debate, in particular in feminist politics and in the left, and in order to fight the stigmatisation we experience in the wider society?"

AWL LONDON FORUM: 60 YEARS SINCE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

**Speakers: Workers' Liberty,
South Asia Solidarity Group**

20 September 2007 - 7:30pm

**Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Road,
near Kings Cross**

More : workersliberty.org/node/9077

1857/2007: IMPERIALISM, 'RACE', RESISTANCE

**An international conference on the
150th anniversary of the 1857
uprisings. 6 October 2007**

**Organised by South Asia Solidarity
Group, 1857 Committee and SOAS
Centre for South Asian Studies**

**To register or for more info email
sasg@southasiasolidarity.org**

WHERE WE STAND

TODAY one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production. Society is shaped by the capitalists' relentless drive to increase their wealth. Capitalism causes poverty, unemployment, the blighting of lives by overwork, imperialism, the destruction of the environment and much else.

Against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, the working class has one weapon: solidarity.

The **Alliance for Workers' Liberty** aims to build solidarity through struggle so that the working class can overthrow capitalism. We want socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for the labour movement to break with "social

partnership" and assert working-class interests militantly against the bosses.

Our priority is to work in the workplaces and trade unions, supporting workers' struggles, producing workplace bulletins, helping organise rank-and-file groups.

We are also active among students and in many campaigns and alliances.

WE STAND FOR:

• Independent working-class representation in politics.

• A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement.

• A workers' charter of trade union rights — to organise, to strike, to picket effectively, and to take solidarity action.

• Taxation of the rich to fund decent public services, homes, education and jobs for all.

• A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression. Full equality for women and social provision to free women from the burden of housework. Free abortion on request. Full equality for lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Black and white workers' unity against racism.

• Open borders.

• Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers.

• Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation.

• Working-class solidarity in international politics: equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small.

• Maximum left unity in action, and openness in debate.

If you agree with us, please take some copies of *Solidarity* to sell — and join us!