

DISABLED PEOPLE AGAINST THE CUTS

Disabled people Against the Cuts are a group who seek real and systemic change to ensure rights and justice for all disabled people. We oppose the ongoing injustices that we and others face. We intend to keep taking our fight into parliament and onto the streets.

We see on a daily basis how corporate greed and corruption negatively impacts our lives. Our blood is literally being spilled to make profits for rich shareholders.

We are forced, as a community, to endure the ongoing abuse of disabled people by Work Capability Assessments carried out by Maximus; subjected to unfair and unjust treatment by disreputable work providers like A4e, Ingeus and Maximus; left to wait months to be assessed by providers like Capita and ATOS for essential disability benefits.

Also, council services on which disabled people rely are being slashed and farmed out to private sector corporations whose aim is to make a profit

rather than to provide essential services.

Imagine not knowing whether, at your next annual care assessment, you may lose the right to leave your house when you want; lose any right to choose what you do and when; and lose the most basic right to use the toilet when you need to. With the closure of the Independent Living Fund this is what disabled people with care and support needs now face with several councils giving out incontinence pads to continent disabled people supposedly to reduce their 'dependence' on human support to use the toilet.

Neither of the main parties agreed to scrap the barbaric sanctions which leave disabled people, pregnant women, families and others without money for even food. In the 7th richest nation in the world this, plus the massive increase of foodbanks and malnutrition, is a disgrace. When we are forced through

poverty to choose between heating and eating every politician should resign in shame.

MORE INFO

www.dpac.uk.net or @dis_ppl_protest



MIGRANTS WELCOME

While Downing Street has been reluctant to help the thousands of refugees coming to Europe from Syria, Eritrea and Afghanistan, others are showing sympathy. Football fans have been raising 'Refugees welcome' signs at matches, hundreds are driving to Calais with donations of clothes and food, and tens of thousands have marched on Whitehall in solidarity.

But why does this sympathy with refugees fail to extend to other newcomers in Britain? Some MPs and parts of the media are making a distinction between 'genuine refugees', who they say are leaving their countries because they have to, and 'migrants', who they say just come to Europe because they want to.

Without question, we must show solidarity with the unprecedented numbers of people fleeing war and state violence. But it is wrong to imagine that only those escaping war deserve to settle here. Every year, the UK imprisons and departs thousands of asylum seekers fleeing persecution because of their race, gender, sexuality or religion. Every year economic migrants come here, not because they are greedy but because poverty, just like war, kills people.

The truth is Britain has always had a migrant crisis, caused by the way migrants are treated by the state. Let's not forget Joy Gardner, brutally suffocated by police because she had overstayed her visa. Or Jimmy Mubenga, killed when he was forced on a flight back to Uganda. Or the people currently locked up in UK detention centres because the state has decided they might not have the right to be here.

It is right to pressure our government to accept refugees. But we must do more than show solidarity with those we have decided have a right to be here. If we continue to say that some people don't deserve to live in Britain, we carry on giving the state the power to attack people for the crime of being born in the wrong place.

All new migrants, refugees and otherwise, should be welcome here. As for the immigration officials who enforce the UK's racist policy of raiding businesses, locking up migrants and deporting people with the help of violent thugs, let's show them a different kind of welcome in Haringey: the kind of welcome they deserve.

COUNCIL CUTS AND COMMUNITY ACTIVISM

It turns out five years of heavy public service cuts were just the beginning. As austerity continues, Haringey council will continue to cut services and some of the most vulnerable people across the borough will be affected.

Given this situation and the potential for worse to come, what realistically can community activists do? Of course we should be organising in our communities to resist every cut. Inspiring campaigns like the 'Save Marcus Garvey Library' being organised by local residents show that we can still pressure the council to protect our services.

But where local services have already been slashed, can we as a community step in to support each other and self-manage programmes we rely on? For example, activists are starting to plan a Tottenham Supper Club, which will provide regular fresh and healthy meals for anyone who wants and needs them.

No one is saying that we should be doing the government's job for them and take over the running of the welfare state. What we can do though is work out how we can collectively manage certain services to meet our needs, show that community engagement is essential and begin to provide models for how communities can support each other when the state abandons us.

If we want to continue to support our children or older people when the council have closed down our centres, we need to be having this discussion. Anti-cuts activists should be continuing to campaign to protect council budgets, but start to think about opportunities to get practical too. Otherwise our rights to these services will be collectively forgotten and bringing them back will take even longer.

To get involved in the Tottenham Supper Club, please email uzak@hotmail.co.uk

THE WORKERS ARE REVOLTING

You won't see it on the news but workers are saying "enough is enough". Many are fed up being treated like dirt and have decided to fight back for their dignity and rights.

Tube workers have rightly been striking against forced changes to their employment conditions. Ok, some of us are inconvenienced a bit but it's nothing compared to what's happening to the workers. It looks like the bosses are beginning to give in.

Meanwhile workers at Sotheby's auction house are demanding an end to victimisation. The "Sotheby's 4" were locked out of work after a protest over sick pay. Along with their union and other groups, the workers are now also fighting for their reinstatement. The support they are getting is amazing.

At the University of London cleaners fought for improved conditions, and won. They campaigned and went on strike until their wages were raised. Their trade union, Unison, became more of a hindrance than a help - but rather than give up, the cleaners formed their own union, the Independent

Workers of Great Britain (IWGB). They kept striking and won sick pay, holiday pay and pension rights.

At Morgan Stanley a union rep, Graeme Boxall, was dismissed for helping electricians he represents. Supporters picketed the building where Graeme is employed and blocked the site entrance. The management, private security and police stood around scratching their heads wondering what to do. Within a few hours management gave in and Graeme was re-employed.

In Camden, 300 dinner ladies finally got the London Living wage after months of protest. It means a pay rise of £2.55 per hour. With the general election imminent their employers and the council agreed to the demands. So the dinner ladies deliver the first lesson of the academic year: crap pay can be fought.

There are loads more we don't have space to report on. But it shows if you take on the bosses and stay strong you can win. Contact us with similar stories and we will print them.

THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS

The Tories are hell-bent on punishing those receiving benefits, especially the unemployed. Their latest vindictive scheme is the Community Work Placements (CWP) where those of us claiming job seekers allowance are forced to work for no pay.

Thousands of jobseekers are made to work 30 hours a week for six months for nothing more than their benefit in charity shops and other organisations. This displaces volunteers and, in some, cases, paid workers. Groups up and down the country have campaigned against this exploitation and we, Haringey Solidarity Group, forged links with those forced to work in charity shops locally.

We targeted North London Hospice (NLH) who, with 18 shops across north London, were the biggest local provider of placements. After almost a year of picketing their shops, distributing thousands of leaflets, meeting and talking with their senior executives and, most recently, occupying and closing their shops, NLH announced that they were pulling out of the scheme and offering no further placements.

We welcome the charity's decision to end their participation and join over 600 charities nationally who rely only on willing volunteers to



continue their valuable work in our communities.

But we are not done yet. Other local charities are still at it and we are after them. Unlike paid workers, the unemployed cannot organise in the workplace - they need the support of the local community to not be made scapegoats for the failings of capitalism when the blame lies with greedy, rich bastards who take, take, take.

We want to see the back of the CWP scheme and ensure that no-one is forced to work for nothing in Haringey. We are setting our sights on a fresh

target on whom we will heap the pressure and embarrassment they deserve.

The Tories think they can get away with this and we need to tell them to stick it where the sun don't shine. If you know anyone on the scheme, we are here to offer support. If you know of a charity or organisation participating in the scheme, let us know.

Better still why not join us for some street action and mutual support - you know it makes sense. Contact us at info@haringey.org.uk

YAZIDI WOMEN TAKE THE OFFENSIVE

Last year 10,000 Yazidis fled to the Shengal mountains where many, especially children, died of hunger, thirst and exhaustion. Many more were killed or kidnapped by Islamic State (IS) fighters. We all saw the pictures on TV and reports in the papers. What the media never reported was that one year on, the Yazidis went back to the same mountains. This time in a protest to vow that nothing will ever be the same again.

Last year Yazidi women were shown as helpless victims of Islamic State. But now the press has ignored them when the same women decided to arm themselves and mobilize socially, politically and militarily. In January this year the Yazidis from the mountains and refugee camps formed the Shengal Founding Council.

They have formed committees for education, culture, health, defence, women, youth, and economy and organize around everyday issues. The council is based on something called democratic autonomy, where the power lies with people at the grass roots.

They have also formed the YBŞ (Shengal Resistance Units) and the all-women's army the YPJ-Shengal to defend themselves. Neither the Iraqi peshmerga or international coalition forces have helped them with arms even though they are fighting the same enemy.

In July, women of all ages set up the autonomous Shengal Women's Council, promising that "the organization of Yazidi women will be the revenge for all massacres." The women decided that families must not intervene when girls want to participate in any part of the struggle. They do not want

PEOPLE HAVE THE POWER WHEN WILL THEY USE IT?

It is clear for all to see, that western democracies are not functioning effectively. Since the dawn of the modern democratic era in the late 19th century, democracy has expressed itself through nation-states and national parliaments. People elect representatives who pull the levers of national power for a fixed period. But this arrangement is in evident decline, as we saw in the last General Election, the turnout of voters was just 66%, which meant 34% did not vote, whereas the government got only 24%. This shows that the current system does not represent the majority of the people.

Many 'democratic' states have slid towards autocracy, absolute power, maintaining the outward appearance of democracy through elections, but without the rights and institutions that are equally important aspects of a 'functioning' democratic system.

Is there any real alternative to this disaster?

We favour a diverse political participation, where the problems of local people are decided by them, to replace state and capitalism with a decentralized, participatory democracy anchored entirely in public town meetings. The goal of this direct democracy is life according to the principle "To each according to their needs" - a society in which competition, the market economy and money have been replaced by harmony between people and nature.

to "buy back" their kidnapped sisters, but liberate them.

"For the first time in our history we take up arms, because with the last massacre we understood that nobody will protect us; we must do it ourselves," - words from a young YPJ-Shengal fighter. She explained how girls like herself never dared to have dreams and only sat at home until they got married. But like her, hundreds have now joined the struggle, and joined the resistance.

Many people think this a utopian dream, but as Abdullah Ocalan leader of PKK argued in his pamphlet "Democratic Confederalism" whereas direct democracies use direct elections and the state uses coercion, democratic confederalism is flexible, multi-cultural, anti-monopolistic and consensus-oriented. Ecology and feminism are central pillars.

In the frame of this kind of self-administration, an alternative economy will become necessary, which increases the resources of the society instead of exploiting them and thus does justice to the needs of the society.

We see this concept is working well in the social revolution of Kobane and Rojava in Kurdistan where they formed the Tev-Dam (the movement of the democratic Society) to bring everyone together.

Therefore we need to cultivate these seeds in our political spheres, the public spaces where the private life shades into public life, where the personal becomes, to one degree or another, the communal. Communities are the germ of this political realm, in our urban environment instead of shutting people off from one another; we need to encourage them to encounter and to interact with each other more often, because together we can create a movement to transform society.

One year ago, the world watched the genocide of the Yazidis. Today, the same Kurds who - while everyone else ran away - rescued the Yazidis, are now being bombed by the IS-supporting Turkish state, with the approval of NATO. When the states that contributed to the rise of IS promise to defeat it and destroy the social fabric of the Middle East along the way, the only survival option is to establish autonomous self-defence and grassroots democracy.