

THE FARGATE SPEAKER

New Look!

Local bulletin of the Anarchist Federation in Sheffield. Issue #11, Dec/Jan 2009/10 FREE/DONATION



In This Issue: Sheffield stands against deportations, surviving a Credit Crunch Christmas, Fargate Calling - a look at Sheffield's radical past, Sports, News and other views.

Victory Against Station Closure

The BNP - a working class party?

The British National Party has been getting a lot of attention lately, from politicians, the media, and most importantly from sizeable sections of the working class who feel that the BNP represent their interests. Housing, work, pay and welfare are all issues which the BNP have supposedly taken up whilst claiming to represent the "British working class". The BNP comes from a tradition of fighting against our class, from collaborating with rich business owners to calling for the ending of, and actively working against workers' struggles, such as strikes. Despite this, the BNP are still attempting to tap into the working class, especially in former pit towns and run-down industrial areas. They're trying to increase their support by blaming asylum seekers, migrant workers, women and LGBTQ people for the problems which the bosses, along with the past and current Tory and Labour governments, have created.

Fascism, as a political ideology only came about as a reaction to the growing workers' movement in Europe in the late 1800s. It was, and still is the ideology of the bosses, who upon seeing a growing working class movement that threatened their own economic and political power sought to find their own 'extreme'. This extreme saw it's fulfilment in fascism, an ideology which has traditionally attacked the working class first, whilst blaming the problems of society on ethnic minorities, and other sections of society rather than themselves (the bosses).

During the great miners' strike, the BNP actively worked against these working class heroes. Not only did the BNP not support the strikes, but they actively called for the miners to return to work and called on the Army to be used to break up pickets. The Lady Jane



A member of Residents Against Station Closure protests against the barriers while a couple struggle to take a pram along the alternative footbridge.

People across Sheffield had cause for celebration in late November as the Planning Board unanimously rejected East Midlands Train's (EMT) proposal to install barriers at Sheffield station. The campaign group Residents Against Station Closure had been campaigning for some time against EMT's decision to install barriers. The station's footbridge links communities and organisations on both sides of the station. It is one of the few truly integrated transport networks in the area uniting the tram stop, the station and the Sheffield Interchange. The bridge is particularly important for wheel chair and push chair users as the only alternative bridge is completely inaccessible. Corporations like EMT are keen to crack down on our freedom of movement and access to public space, especially if there's a chance they'll make a bit of money out of it.

In reaction to the decision a spokesman from

the group stated, "Thank you everyone who has played a part in this campaign. Together we have won a victory for common sense and ordinary Sheffields over the money grabbing corporate interests of EMT who want to privatise our public space.

We have won this battle, but the war may not be over. EMT are threatening to continue with the "human barriers". RASC will not stop campaigning until EMT stop preventing people from crossing the bridge."

RASC is living proof that community solidarity can get the goods and that even corporations like EMT can fold when pressured. The Fargate Speaker extends to them our congratulations and continuing support for their campaign.

For the official campaign against station closures, see: rasc2008@live.com
<http://rasc-sheffield.com/>



Birdwood, a former BNP parliamentary candidate in Yorkshire and their candidate in Dewsbury in the 1990s, ran "Self-Help", a right wing pressure group dedicated to smashing unions and funded scabs during the strike. She, among many others such as the late John Tyndall who remained in the party up until his death only a few years ago, saw the miners' strike as a "Communist plot" to destroy Britain and even saw Thatcher as being too weak towards the miners. Jane Birdwood found support from ... guess who ... mine owners, who actively worked with her and her pressure group to undermine the strike.

The memory of the miners' strike is still burning brightly, to those who

fought against pit closures in order to secure a decent life for themselves, their family and friends, the BNP's attempt to gain their support must seem like a sick joke. Fascists are opposed to unions and working class struggles as they are organised on class lines. We realise that, despite what Nick Griffin tells us, our enemy is the boss class and their politician lackeys, not other working class people who happen to have a different skin colour. But then it's no surprise that he should come out with this rubbish, as he is from a rich, traditionally Tory family (his father had been a member of the Conservative party and Griffin himself attended Cambridge university at a time when attending Cambridge was even more of a privilege than it is now), so he can safely say these things whilst sitting in his comfortable farm mansion.

No to deportations



South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group (SYMAAG) who campaign for the rights of those seeking asylum and migrant workers held a demonstration in the city centre on Saturday 28th November. The group, which campaigns to unite refugees, asylum and migrant organisations with campaign groups, trade unions, charities and political parties, were demanding an end to the forced deportations of asylum seekers. In many cases, the government accuse asylum seekers of making false applications, claiming that countries such as

Iraq, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe are in fact safe to live! This has resulted in asylum seekers being forcibly sent back to countries they have fled, to face abuse, torture and in some cases death. Whether Labour or the Tories win the next election, they both look likely to increase racist policies against asylum seekers, making it ever more important for all workers of all kinds, regardless of national origin to continue standing in solidarity with people attempting to escape war and persecution.

Credit Crunch Christmas?

Are you feeling the pinch this holiday season? Sick of greedy bankers getting all the breaks? The Fargate Speaker outlines its top tips for surviving a credit crunch Christmas:

1. Steal your presents: an obvious one I know, but according to a recent report by the BBC



Britain has now become the shoplifting capital of Europe. Can you afford to miss out on this hot new craze? Bonus points will be awarded for "five-finger discounts" obtained while in full Santa costume.

2. Get a local business to sponsor your Xmas decorations: Of course if Sheffield Children's Hospital is anything to go by you might end up with advertisements bigger than the decorations themselves...

3. Or, alternatively, would your local shopping centre *really* miss one of those giant, light-up snowflakes?

4. Drink heavily: The "nuclear option". Never mind that your house is being repossessed and the kids didn't even get coal in their stockings. A few bottles of Frosty Jacks and a case of Special Brew will transform your holiday into a beautiful red and white blur. Roll on the New Year!

SPORT

Steelers return triumphant from Europe

Despite a shaky start to the season and a number of player injuries, the Steelers, Sheffield's ice hockey club, won their semi final group for the Continental Cup beating the favourites and host club Bolzano 4-3 with Jeff Hubbauer scoring the winning penalty shot. The team has qualified for the super-final in Grenoble, France and is only the third British club to make the finals in the history of the competition.



FARGATE CALLING! SHEFFIELD'S RADICAL HISTORY

"When they come to attack our people, we will stand our ground and fight!" (pt. 1)

Continuing the Fargate Speaker's exploration of neglected parts of Sheffield history, here's another look at some of Sheffield's long tradition of radicalism. One notable form this took in around the 18th Century was in the growth of rebellious religious traditions, with Upper Chapel on Norfolk Street being built as the first non-conformist chapel in Sheffield in 1700, with several other Unitarian, Methodist and Quaker congregations joining it shortly after. The state viewed these dissident religious traditions with intense suspicion - Timothy Jollie, the first minister of Upper Chapel, was asked to swear an oath never to resist the king or attempt to alter the government of Church or State, and given six months' imprisonment in York Castle when he refused. The laws that were passed persecuting these religious dissenters helped to radicalise them further, so that by 1758 the Upper Chapel appointed as Minister the Reverend Joseph Evans, a remarkable man who developed strong revolutionary convictions. After Evans died in 1803, his adopted son described him by saying that "his opinions were extreme on the side of 'Freedom'... He was a hearty well-wisher to the French in their Revolution. He gloried in the destruction of the Bastille and he certainly did not turn with much abhorrence from the acts of cruelty perpetrated on the French (royal) family and court... Corresponding with this, he had the most cordial hatred of the Ministry of Mr Pitt. This dislike was extended to the Crown and he would gladly have seen a Revolution at home. Nothing was too violent, no expression of sedition however seditious which he would not repeat. In these political sentiments he was by no means peculiar."

Inevitably, Sheffield people were unwilling to limit their disobedience to just religious matters, so that throughout the 19th Century it found expression in a more material form: rioting. In 1812, an increase in the price of potatoes sparked off a large riot against potato dealers, with several of the offending dealers having their stock seized, while "a barrel of red herrings [was] broken, and the fish thrown amongst the spectators." Two hours into the riot, some of the crowd took up the cry "All in a mind for the Volunteer arms!" - hardly the catchiest of slogans, but it seems to have worked, as the crowd stormed the headquarters of the local militia. Failing to find any ammunition, they just destroyed militia equipment until cavalry from the barracks dispersed them. (continued in next issue)

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