

SMASH RACISM!

AFI - Anarchist Federation Ireland



Fortress Ireland

THE NEAR-DEATHS OF 28 asylum seekers in a blaze at a B-category prison in Yarl's Wood, Bedfordshire last month (see British resistance #35) was just the latest in a long line of disasters presided over by the Tony Blair administration in dealing with what it sees as its 'refugee crisis'.

Refugees, treated as criminals but charged with no crime, continue to fill sex-segregated detention centres across Britain, policed by the hired thugs of Group 4 (the largest privately owned security company in the world), made to survive on a pittance that makes the dole a luxury in comparison, and force-fed a steady diet of English language (linguistic colonialism) in order to communicate with people they never meet. Meanwhile, the 'lucky' ones are dispersed into government sponsored slums, into a society driven into frenzy by a racist media that scapegoats them for failed government policies, and which caters to the growth of the far right – the hired thugs of governments past and present. This is the face of Britain as seen through the eyes of refugees who can no longer dream of 'asylum' there.

So what of Ireland – the land of a 1000 welcomes? In 1992, there were 39 reported cases of asylum seekers here. Last year, the number was 11,000. Victims of the neo-liberal project that has wrought devastation on the developing world, escapees from dictatorship, war and civil unrest, these new immigrants are not very unlike the wave of Irish emigrants that sought economic survival in the US etc. from the middle of the last century onwards. So how have the likes of Minister of Justice, John O'Donoghue, and his cronies in power treated them?

In 1999, laws were passed to scrap benefits for asylum seekers, replacing them by a minuscule IR15 to meet all their daily needs. The right to work and education was denied. Those refugees granted asylum (now just 15%) have been transplanted into rural areas (usually without the foreknowledge of local councils which leads to even greater racism), forced into dreary hostels that are at-

tacked by racists and picketed by local communities. Recently, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern announced a new policy which will award £9m to Nigeria to ask it to speed up its deportations (!) – similar deals with Poland, Romania and Bulgaria are planned for the near future.

Meanwhile, John O'Donoghue wants to force airlines and ferry companies to be more pro-active in the hunt for 'illegal' refugees by fining them up to 3000 euros for every immigrant found stowed away on their vehicles (more revenue for Tanaiste's Mary Harney's helicopter flights across country, no doubt) will not only serve to drive refugees into the hands of human smugglers (the kind of scum that leave people to die in air-tight containers) but will subcontract the right and

national Zhao Liu Tao and the attack on Paul Abayami, a 16 year old Nigerian last year are just some examples of the growing rise in racist attacks by the far right. As anarchists, we need to counter the vile propaganda they and the media offer to the working class as reasons for the miserable conditions in which it ekes out its daily existence. We need to shatter the myth that claims that 'our' bosses are better than 'their' bosses. We need to build up a culture of solidarity with is based on class and not phony nationalisms. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder with asylum seekers of our own class, network with them in our communities, and defend them when they come under attack. For more info on anti-fascism contact AFA at afa@ireland.com



responsibility (of life and death in some cases) to deal with immigrants to the inexperienced staff of transport companies. All in all, the government are trying to buy their way out of the problem, or pass the buck to someone else. In the meantime, the strategy seems to be to make life so unbearable (some asylum seekers have gone on hunger strike in protest against their treatment) that refugees are driven to such despair that even a request to return home to certain death is preferable to the prolongment of life under such conditions.

As mentioned above, the rise in hate crime is a natural by-product of the perceived media image of foreigners flooding into the streets of our once-proud nation etc. The recent murder of a Chinese

Join the resistance

The **Anarchist Federation Ireland (AFI)** 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:

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