



What use a Bill of Rights? Educate, Agitate, Organise!

The Human Rights Consortium have splashed out a lot of money to tell us that a Bill of Rights is a necessity for our new Northern Ireland. Its what we all want after-all.

In the meantime HM Government don't want all the stuff that concerned groups have demanded, nay suggested (albeit *quite* strongly), should be in a new Bill of Rights for our wee Pravince. We are encouraged to *Read it, Sign it, Send it*. It being a wee note FOA the great and the good letting them know that, by golly, we want a Bill of Rights!

It must be conceded that many who are campaigning for a Bill of Rights come from the extremely understandable position of wanting to ensure we cannot return to the civil rights abuses that NICRA and others, including anarchists, campaigned to end before the start of and during the troubles. Others are simply pursuing political self-interest dressed up as equality and parity of esteem. Anarchists have no time at all for enshrining and protecting the rights of 'cultural' groups who seek to promote narrow nationalistic visions and preserve and build dangerous 'ethnic' myths.

But even the well-intentioned human rights campaigners have

got it wrong. Demands for a Bill of Rights fosters the illusion that the state can take care of us all. This is a dangerous illusion to be fostering—it is one that panders to the 'ability' of the politicians to sort things out on our behalf while ignoring the fact that they always look after the rich and powerful. Worse it encourages the sort of apathy and inaction that would leave us defenceless as our standards of living, our livelihoods, our ability to adequately feed our selves and our families, are all under attack.

This is exactly what the current recession is about. No Bill of Rights, can protect BA, Aer Lingus, local council, health, education, Visteon, Nortel, Fujitsu, Arntz, civil service or any other workers facing pay freezes, cuts, attacks on conditions and redundancies. It will not protect us against increased rates, taxes, water charges. It will not protect us against the environmental havoc being wreaked across the planet by capitalism.

What we need is determination, organisation and the will to organise and co-ordinate our own struggles. We do not need to read it, sign it, send it. We need to educate, agitate, organise!

Save Our Libraries



20th March: Kids and parents demonstrating to keep open public libraries across Belfast

In a bid to cut £55-£60k from their budget the Northern Ireland Board of Libraries is threatening to close half the library provision in the greater Belfast area. The cuts resulting from the closures in Belfast represents only a small proportion of the £600k of "efficiencies" that were to be found in 2010/11. And this figure has doubled since the recent budget proposals.

A total of 15 libraries are set to close and all are located in working class areas already suffering the effects of the recession on top of the 'normal' levels of neglect and underinvestment they have come to expect over the years.

Andersonstown, Ballyhackamore, Ballymacarrett, Belvoir Park, Braniel, Cloughfern, Colin Glen, Dunmurry, Gilnahirk, Ligoniel, Oldpark, Sandy Row, Suffolk,

Tullycarnet, Whitewell and Woodstock libraries all face closure. Leaving only 16 libraries across Greater Belfast.

Libraries NI have carried out a range of public consultation meetings. The resounding message from library users and the general public at those meetings is that they want their local community libraries to remain open – providing a local service to local communities.

The civil service union NIPSA have been involved, along with people from the communities effected, in a campaign to save the libraries. As they said in the March issue of *NIPSA Reports*:

Libraries provide a vital service for those who need it most in society – the young, the elderly, the unemployed, the migrant population and the socially deprived.

IMPACT Re-ballot Aer Lingus Cabin Crews

After rejecting an Aer Lingus 'survival plan' IMPACT's 1,000 cabin crew members are being re-balloted under threat of 230 compulsory redundancies.

Aer Lingus have insisted throughout the dispute that 'Project Greenfield', the name they have given to their €97m cuts package, is not up for renegotiation. While the dispute at BA goes ahead it appears that the IMPACT leadership has caved in. If the cabin crew vote in favour of the cuts they had previously rejected the 230 redundancies in their grade will become 230 voluntary redundancies.

Across the company the package means 600 job losses, pay cuts of up to 10pc, and a three-year pay freeze. Instead of organising and fighting back against these cuts IMPACT are recommending that cabin crew vote in favour of the package the second time around.

Air Lingus had threatened to impose 230 compulsory redundancies and planned to terminate the employment of all 1,000 cabin crew and rehire them on lower pay and conditions.