

Hunger strikers still held in prison!

Three immigration detainees who were moved to prison as punishment for their role in the Yarl's Wood hunger strike in February have still not been released. The women refused food to demand changes including access to medical care and an end to the forceful removal and degrading system of deportation of detainees.

Many of the women who took part in the hunger strike have been released, but those identified as ringleaders are still in prison. Denise McNeil, one of the three, has sent this message to people who have supported her: "Thank you for your support, it brought a much needed lift to my spirit. I am holding up as best I can in this situation, hoping and praying that one day I will be released very soon by the great mercy of God so I can return to my children. It is very comforting to know I have people like yourself raising awareness of my situation and I thank you for doing so. Please continue to show your support as it is very much appreciated."

You can send messages of support to Denise McNeil, WT4009, HMP Holloway, Parkhurst Road, London, N7 0NU. Email freedenisenow@gmail.com if you would like to help campaign for the hunger strikers.

Who Is Illegal? The partner?

On November 29th spouses or partners, from outside of the European Economic Area, applying to come to Britain will have to pass an English language test before they come to the UK. This was designed under Labour but is being implemented a year early by the coalition government as a sign that it is prepared to be tougher than its predecessor. Theresa May says, "The new English requirement for spouses will help promote integration, remove cultural barriers and protect public services. It is a privilege to come to the UK and that is why I am committed to raising the bar for migrants...this is only the first step." Rubbish, a common sense approach would acknowledge how much easier it is to learn English once in the UK. If the government wanted Migrants to learn English

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2010

Tube axes 400 jobs

London Underground have announced the sacking of another 400 staff and the intention to leave a "similar number" of vacancies unfilled, on top of the 800 station staff already earmarked for the axe. Workers have so far taken two days of strike action, with industrial action between strike days. The London Region of the RMT union which represents most of the workers under threat, along with other unions, called a demonstration in London on 24 October against all the cuts.

The workers believe that the health and safety of both travellers and workers will be seriously threatened. The job cuts are concentrated on ticket office staff and station staff, in those grades with a higher proportion of women staff. This will reduce the overall figure, or at least slow down improvements in the proportion of women who work on the Underground. It may also undermine those improvements in conditions of work that are particularly important to women — such as flexible working.

For more info www.rmtlondoncalling.org.uk

they would stop cutting ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes and reverse the fees that they introduced in 2007. Emily, a woman affected by the new law, says: "My husband and I speak Arabic together, he is learning English and we both think this is very important. However, this law is not about enabling new immigrants to learn English. This new rule discriminates against spouses from parts of the world where English tuition is poor or non-existent, not to mention those who cannot afford to pay for English classes. What's more, it doesn't apply to spouses from within the EU who don't speak English. The rule shows a complete disregard for the right of married couples and families to be together, and effectively punishes people like myself for marrying outside the EU."

feminist fightback **we're still here we're still angry we're still fighting**

Hands off our NHS!

On the 12th of July the new ConDem government published the White Paper 'Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS'. This paper outlines the governments plans for a major overhaul of the structure of the NHS. The glaring theme of their intentions lies in Privatisation. When the NHS was founded in 1948, its core principles were 'That it meet the needs of everyone, That it be free at the point of delivery, That it be based on clinical need, not ability to pay'. The paper states that Primary care trusts will be abolished, which currently undertake the role of commissioning of services, ensuring services are available for those who need them. In their place GP consortia will take on this role. With GP's lacking the skills, knowledge and time to undertake this new 'managerial' role it is feared private consulting companies will be used. Strategic Health Authorities will be abolished, which are currently in charge of Public Health campaigns and the organising of commissioning. This spells disaster for many services women rely on. In the case of Domestic Violence services, unless women disclose to their GP's, these services could disappear. And this goes for all vulnerable groups in our communities, if

you don't shout loud enough, you won't get what you need. The plans involve placing much of the role of Public Health onto midwives, the paper states 'Pregnancy offers a unique opportunity to engage women from all sections of society, with the right support through pregnancy and at the start of life being vital for improving life chances and tackling cycles of disadvantage' The royal College of Midwives are concerned that not only will this put an immense burden on already over stretched Midwives, but that it will compromise the provision of care for Women and Babies. They state 'the RCM is gravely concerned by the findings of the recent National Childbirth Trust (NCT) study of postnatal care, which highlighted a lack of midwives on hospital postnatal wards and considerable variation in the number of postnatal contacts, with some women having no contact appointment or home visit with either a midwife or a maternity support worker.' These attacks are particularly potent as they reveal public spending cuts under a very different guise. Feminist Fightback will be discussing this as part of broader discussion at our event 'Women at the Cutting Edge' at the end of October.

FUTURE EVENTS & INFO

WOMEN at the CUTTING EDGE

11am – 5pm Saturday 30th October
The Arbour 100 Shandy Street, London, E1 4ST
Open to people of all genders

Free creche available: please email feminist.fightback@gmail.com to confirm a place.

Participatory workshops on:

What's going on? Mapping cuts and campaigns

Who do the cuts affect? Why are cuts a feminist issue?

What does it mean? Demystifying the "economics of the crisis"

What do we want? Fighting within and against the state



Feminist Fightback FC is a football team open to all self-defining women of all sporting abilities. Our team members include beginners working through their PE lesson traumas and experienced players who want to improve their skills. We want to challenge women's increasing alienation from our bodies by using the football pitch as a place to gain physical confidence, work as a team, acquire new skills and laugh a lot.

We meet every Sunday in Victoria Park (by the Approach Road Entrance)
11am-12.30pm.

NEXT FF MEETING: 7pm Wednesday 10th November Oxford House, Bethnal Green

www.feministfightback.org.uk - feminist.fightback@gmail.com