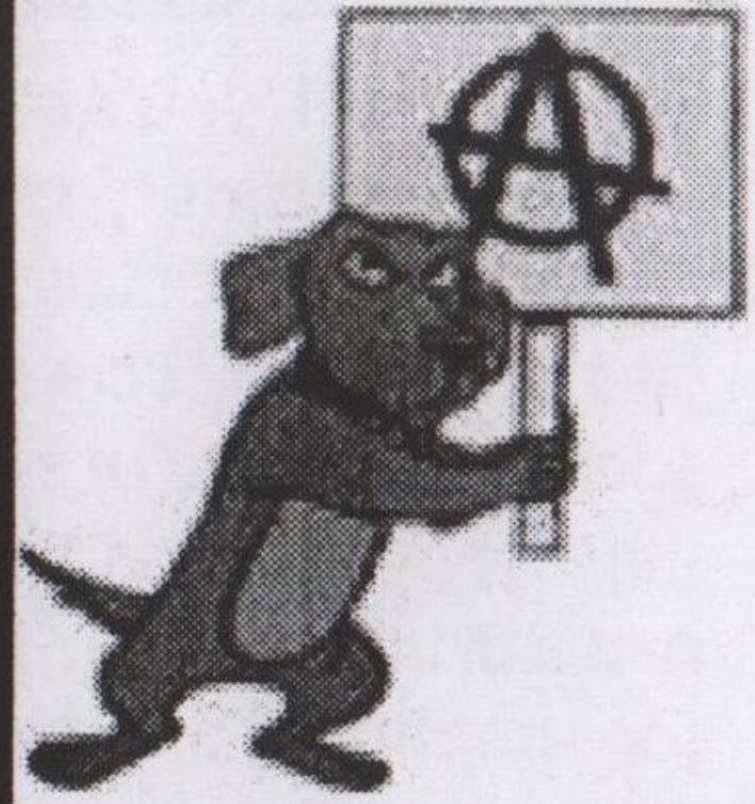


THE

UNDERDOG



Walthamstow's rabble rousing rebel rag

Issue 12 - November 2005

Free/Donation

Carry on up the Arcade

What a cock-up at the old Arcade site! Six years after the council decided to knock down the Arcade in 1999, tens of thousands of pounds blown on consultancy fees and lost revenue (£15,000 a year at least) and they still haven't decided what will replace it. It looks increasingly unlikely to be the leisure centre, new library, arts centre or the social housing that Walthamstow so badly needs and that was promised with such fanfare.

More likely it'll either be a either a ridiculously over-sized, over-priced multiplex cinema, cafés, bars, shops or some posh flats -things what Walthamstow already has or doesn't need!? Have they completely forgotten that the EMD Cinema is virtually next door, waiting to be re-opened? The flats could be a money-spinner for the developers and the council though. Funny that.

So what are the Council up to?

The Council's strategy for the development of Walthamstow Town Centre increasingly looks pear shaped, driven by the whims of their friends in big business who are looking to make a fast buck. What 'Regeneration' really means in the long-term is *gentrification*, where a combination of commercial developments and cuts in

public services mean working class people are priced out of the area or are denied essential services. Regeneration projects always have a thin veneer of funding for



the odd community group or arts project along the way, but its all about making money for the big companies - consultants, developers or chain stores that move in when it's all finished.

Look at neighbouring Hackney with some of the worst services in London but some of the fastest rising rents and house prices. The privatising of services and selling off land to city developers is happening everywhere. Do we want to see Walthamstow end up like this?

We want public services that are genuinely useful and meet the needs of Walthamstow residents, not cash-cows for the council's developer cronies. How many issues of the glossy Waltham Forest magazine will it take to whitewash the broken promises? We need to hold them to account, and get organised to set our own agenda

The UCKG: Down and out in Walthamstow

The EMD cinema has now had over 2 years of neglect following its purchase by a multi-million dollar Christian cult, the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG). For many Walthamstow residents, if the council don't sabotage it with their latest crazy multiplex plan, the prospect of a return back to life for the cinema would make the resurrection of Jesus Christ look like a tired old Paul Daniels trick!

The UCKG (thank Christ!) have finally given up in the face of the tenacity and determination of the residents of Waltham Forest who have fought tooth and nail the cult's plans to turn the beautiful and historic building into a so called place of worship and alleged help centre. As we have repeatedly stated, the UCKG is to help what George W Bush is to peace and reconciliation. The UCKG are in fact a billion dollar multinational conglomerate solely interested in the accumulation of wealth at any cost - including the damaged lives of those unfortunate individuals ensnared in their web of deceit and exploitation (see previous issues of The Underdog).

The building is now on the market, with a number of buyers interested in returning it to the usage desired by so many people in Walthamstow - that of a cinema. There is no excuse for them not to sell up without delay.

Despite their shattered reputation in Walthamstow, the UCKG are still looking to open a so-called help centre in the area, which a spokesperson claimed will provide 'spiritual and practical support for the local community in line with its Christian principles'. If their performance in neighbouring Haringey is anything to go by this will include yet more profiteering by brainwashing the naive, emotionally blackmailing the weak and physically abusing the young. The UCKG can rest assured that the Underdog will not cease to expose the truth about their cultist activities and their destructive effects on the well being of working class people.

ID Cards - Paying for our own Oppression

You may feel 'you've nothing to lose if you've nothing to hide', but do you really want Government officials, bureaucrats and bosses to be able to access your personal details such as who you previously lived with, what illnesses you've had in the past, whether you had a drink problem 10 years ago, your arrest for shoplifting or drugs as a teenager etc.?

Central to the Government's plans for ID cards are plans to create a National Identity Register, containing your name, date and place of birth, all addresses ever lived at, physical characteristics which could be used to identify you (including biometric identifiers like iris scans and fingerprints), nationality and immigration status. This will be linked to a new NHS records database, currently being set up and run by British Telecom (*No, honestly, we're not making this up!*).

If you renew or apply for a Driving Licence or Passport after 2007, you will have to be entered on the Register, pay extra for this, and get a biometric fingerprint and iris scan. The Police, Inland Revenue, Customs & Excise, Security Services, Immigration Service and Dept for Work Pensions will all have the right to access your file. And the government will have the right to cross check with any records held by your bank, insurance companies and credit checking agencies.

Prison if you don't cooperate

Massive fines of £2500 will be doled out for fail, for instance, to attend a biometric scan. And you can be made to attend a biometric scan for any change to your entry on the register, for example if you get married, or simply want to correct an error on your record. And if you don't pay the fine, you go to prison. It's easy to see how these ridiculous fines would make the national speed camera rip-off look like a dress-rehearsal. The direct cost to individuals (of a combined passport and ID card package) is currently quoted as

£93, but like most government scams, you can't guarantee the cost will continue to go up and up.

Will it stop terrorism?

And it won't stop terrorists from bombing innocent people. Most of the September 11th hijackers were travelling under their own names and didn't have criminal records, so ID cards would have made no difference. The British "home grown" bombers of 7/7 deliberately carried Credit cards so that they *COULD* be identified, so it wouldn't have stopped them either.

Another claim is that it will save money by preventing illegal immigration and benefit fraud. But only £50m of benefits are lost a year through identity fraud (city fraud is far bigger but rarely targeted) so spending at least £3.1bn to set up the ID cards scheme is hardly saving money, even in their own terms. Preventing illegal immigration is a red herring (see Underdog 11) as it's no threat to working class people. Look at the people of Walthamstow. People from all over the world, largely getting on, working and living together, some legal some not. **Where's the problem?** The only problem is the way politicians and media use the issue to divert from the real issue of profit-fuelled cuts in services, low wages and job-insecurity. The fact remains that denying anyone access to services like healthcare in this country - especially for want of a stupid ID card - is inhuman.

Dodgy technology

Iris scanning technology is largely untested and unreliable, so large numbers of mis-identifications and errors can be expected. Fingerprinting is also nowhere near as reliable as is often claimed. A minor cock-up could deny you access to essential public services such as health care, with no comeback. If you've ever had your credit score wrongly

calculated, and tried to put it right, you can imagine what a total dog's dinner they'll make of dealing with a complaint. But this time it will be our ability to actually go about our daily business that will be put at risk. I.D. cards will become a "licence to live" which can be withdrawn at any time. This is not scaremongering: It's the reality of the Government's proposals.

If we're serious about stopping this, it's going to be a big fight. And our biggest weapon is simply to refuse to cooperate on masse. This will need organising, but it's not impossible. Look at how we stopped the Poll Tax by mass non-cooperation. There are local groups of people that are popping up all over, starting to organise to spread opposition.

For information about campaigns against ID cards go to www.defyid.co.uk. If you are interested in doing something about ID cards locally, contact WAG.

Stop Waltham Forest's parking fine rip-off

Waltham Forest's traffic wardens are out of control. Common sense has gone out of the window and they are becoming more and more predatory.

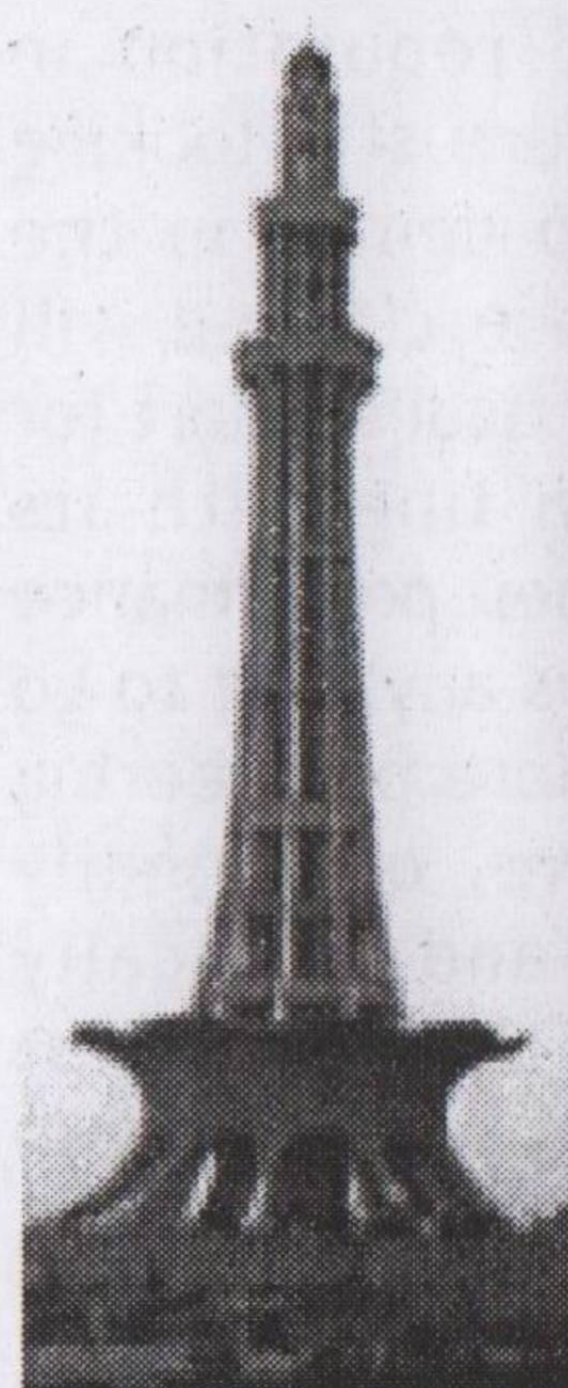
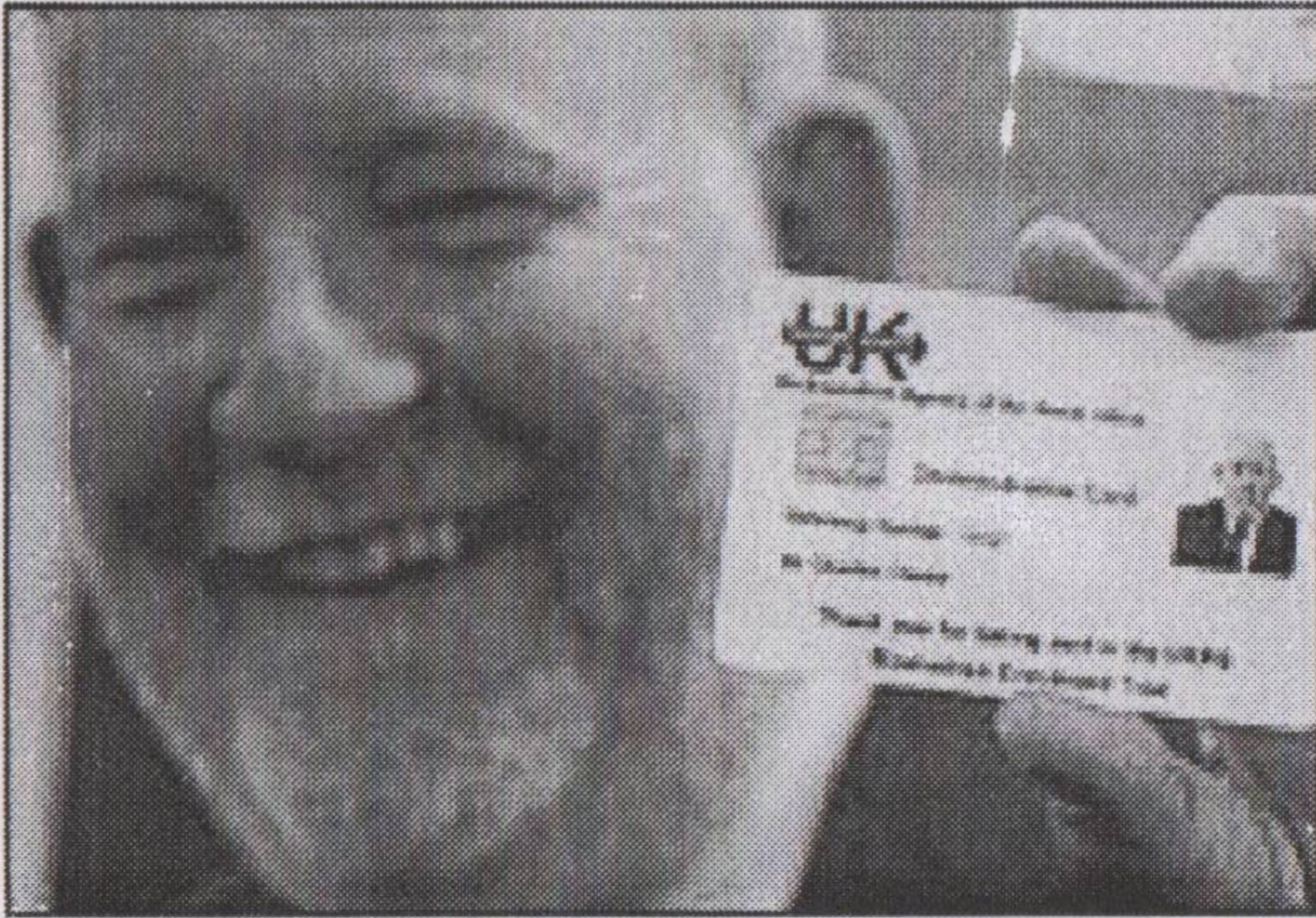
So what's going on?

A few years ago, the Government changed the rules so that local councils could auction off parking contracts to the highest bidder - basically whoever could promise to rip off the councils' residents in the most effective way got the contract. This has now become a disaster - and it's part of a national picture. Now we have a situation that sets traffic wardens against the Borough's drivers in sometimes violent confrontations on a daily basis.

Money money money

National Car Parks (NCP) won the council contract. They are supposed to have two parking priorities: keeping traffic flowing

Continued on Page 3

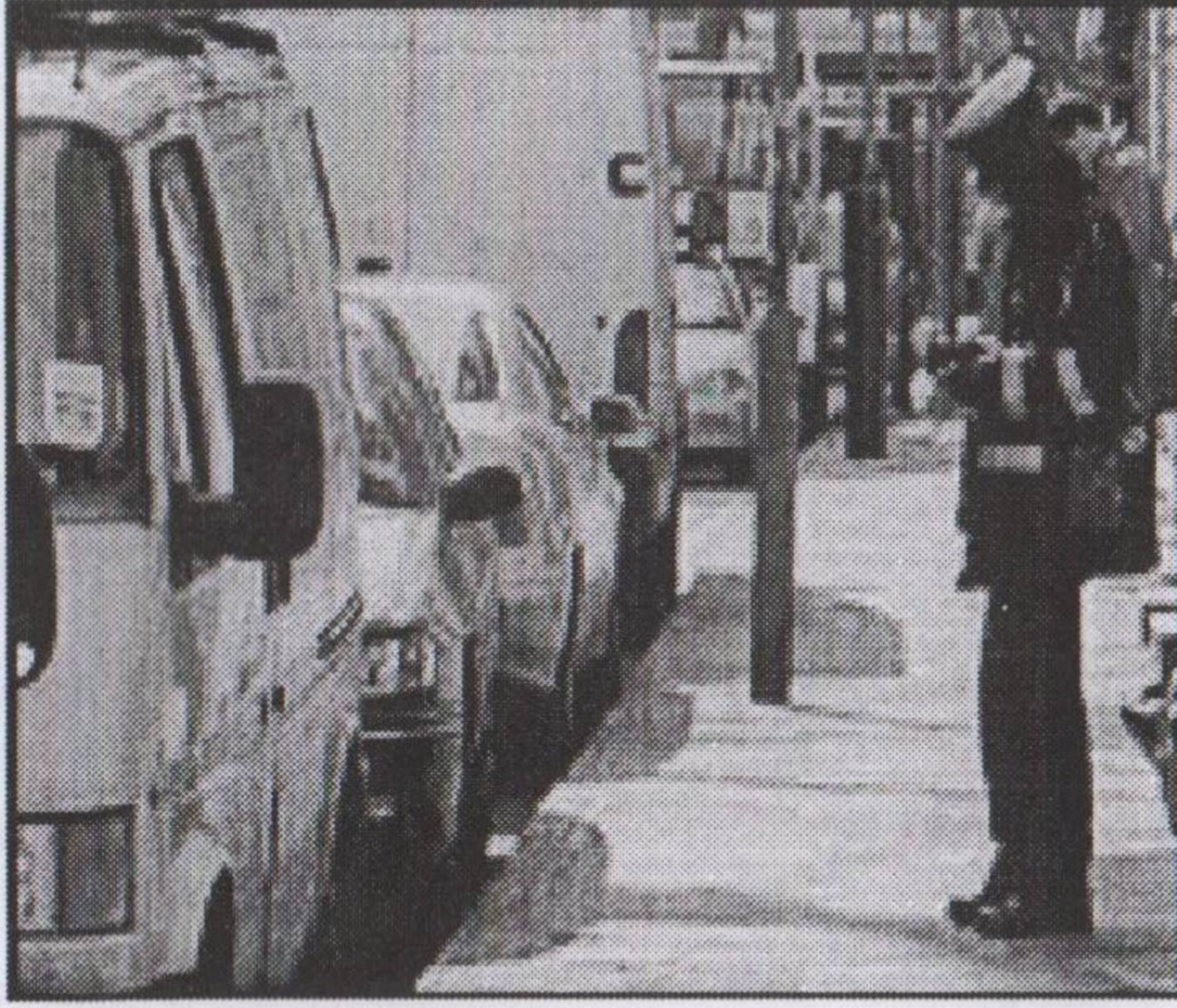


Lahoree Zaika
Taste of Lahore
Restaurant, Take Away
& Banquet Hall
29-31 High Street
Walthamstow
020 8520 5335

Exclusive Thai Cuisine
PLOYTHAI
322 Lea Bridge Road
Leyton, E10 7LD
Fully Licensed and air-conditioned
OPEN: Tue-Sat 6.00 - 11.00 p.m.
Sun 6.00 - 10.30 p.m.
Closed on Monday
020 8558 4973

Continued from Page 2

as freely as possible, and maintaining the safety of pedestrians. But as we all know, the reality couldn't be more different. They pay wardens £6.75 an hour but also offer a £50 bonus for a monthly average of two tickets per hour, and £215 for three per hour! Also, NCP itself is awarded a bonus for handing out more tickets. All of this creates a system that's no good to anyone. Except, of course, the NCP and the Council who are quite happy to rake in all the cash.



NCP rip-off

And where does the money go? The proceeds are supposed to be ringfenced for public transport. But evidence of what Waltham Forest spends its parking money on is hard to find. But what is certain is a lot of the money is going into the coffers of National Car Parks (NCP), a massive, profit-making company, with profits of £42 million a year (2002). What a rip-off!

It's about time we started fighting back. But however infuriating traffic wardens can sometimes be, the answer isn't to have a go at them - they're stuck in this mess just like us: And they didn't ask to be put on commission. It's the NCP and the Council that are setting us all up to be ripped off. The first step is for both the wardens and local residents to fight **together** to get rid of the commission and bonus systems that cause so many problems. And then to get rid of the profit element.

And the next step is to start fighting to reclaim our streets where we don't have to be dependent on cars. Then there's more chance that we can walk or cycle with our kids without taking our lives in our own hands every time we try to cross the road. And we won't have to spend our lives fighting for somewhere to park up our cars!

Underdog short survival guide to challenging parking fines

Q. What to do if you get a parking ticket?

A. Appeal, of course! 34% of tickets get overturned at appeal.

THE UNDERDOG'S Survival Guide

We continue our regular column on surviving the worst effects of capitalism.

Survival guide for young people - Dealing with bullies

Getting to the root of it

Living in a class society means a few people control most of the wealth and resources and make important decisions which affect the lives of ordinary people such as how much your parents get paid in their job or what happens to the environment. As a result this makes a lot of people feel like they do not have much control over their lives. They may feel powerless, struggling on benefits for the basic things others take for granted or competing with others who have jobs and can afford the latest 'new improved' car or washing powder but may not be offered many other ways to be really happy with their lives.

We can spend a lot of time fighting amongst ourselves to appear important in school or in work. This makes it seem ok to try to dominate, control and 'get one over' on other people in the group so that you will have power over others and they will fear and admire you. A bully at school or a bullying manager at work may be the ringleader of a gang. They will get others to join in different ways often by letting them know that 'if you'll be in my gang you'll be ok' in other words they won't be bullied.

Most people will experience or see some kind of bullying at work, in families relationships when they are older as well. It's important to learn how to deal with it. When people come together, discuss things that effect them and stand together then they often realise that things don't have to be like this and boost each others confidence in their ability to change things. They can then challenge bullies more easily.

Practical advice

If you're suffering now you need to act. There are lots of organisations that can help with different types of advice and support. The Organisations below may be useful.

Childline - this will not show up on a home phone bill tel. 0207 650 3200. Lines may be busy but keep trying! Or email help@nscpsc.org.uk.

Kidscape - www.kidscape.org.uk
Also www.stoptextbully.co

And in the meantime, here's a few suggestions as to what you can do straight away:

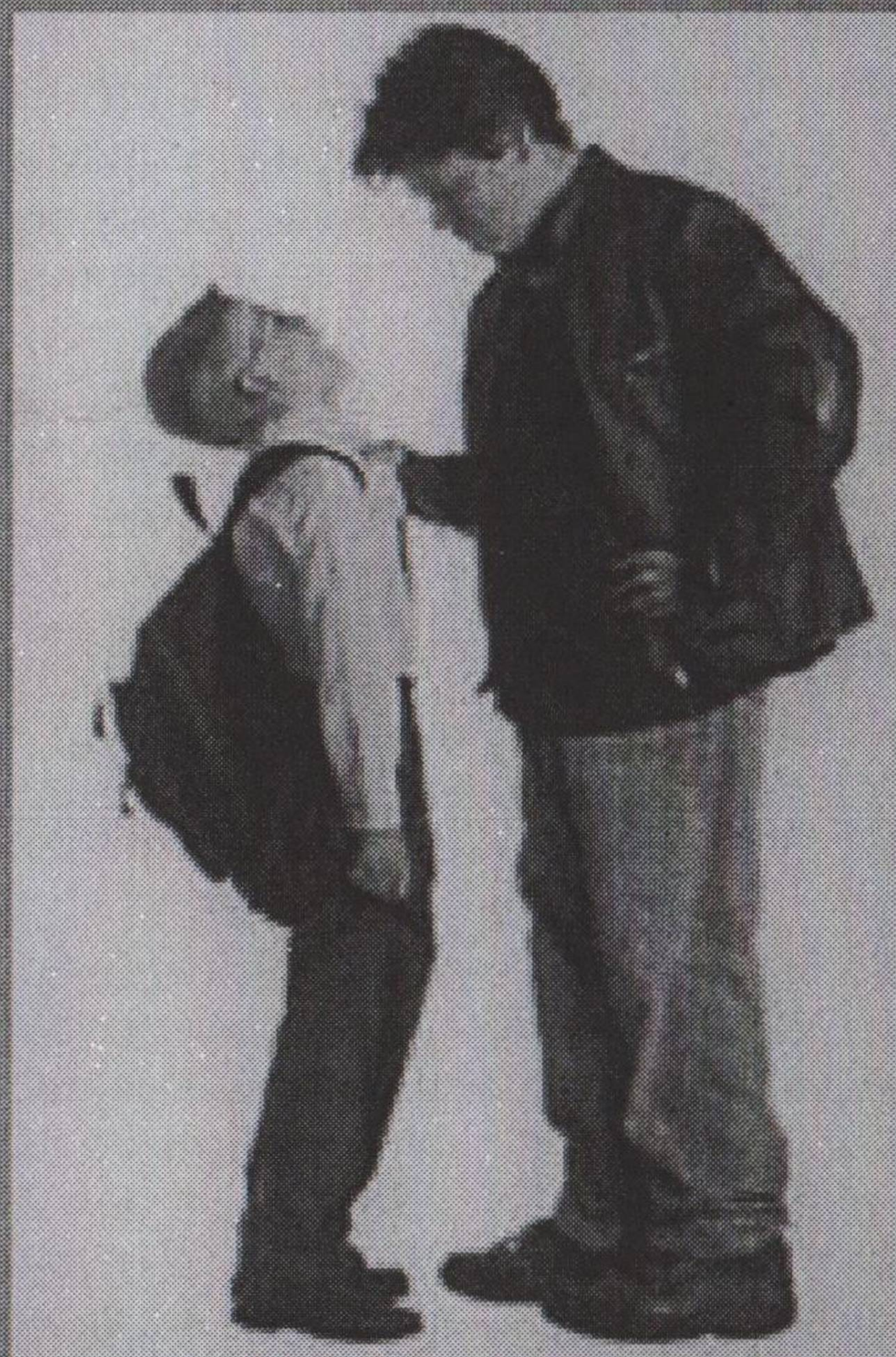
- Most importantly, tell someone you trust - a friend, teacher, parent, carer, Childline worker. Pick someone you think will listen to you, respect if you want it to remain private and not take over and make lots of decisions for you.
- You might find it useful to keep a diary of what is happening, who was involved, when it was and what they did.
- Get together with anyone who may be having the same problem - it helps to talk together about things like this, and you could talk about what to do together to help each other:

Things you could change at school

- All schools have policies that the school must do if there is bullying going on. Often these aren't worth the paper they're written on, but they might help you to force the school to do something about it. But often its kids who are best at sorting out bullying, if they are supported by adults. For instance:
 - A scheme could be set up where older children take responsibility to help and support younger children being bullied. This could be anywhere outside the classroom or on buses.
 - Also, older children could be involved in helping new children settle in by helping run after-school or lunch-time clubs where young children can make friends and feel safe.

If you receive bullying phone calls, emails or text messages:

- Don't reply to them as this opens up a conversation. Save it, and show someone you trust.
- Only answer calls when you recognise the numbers.
- Some telephone networks have departments which deal with nuisance calls/ texts.
- You may want to change your number and make a note to the people you have given it to.



Wot anarchists fink: War and militarism

War is a horrible and brutal waste of human lives. War is fought in the interests of wealthy elites and the governments that serve them, for more territory, control over resources and wealth. We, the ordinary people, are the ones who fight and die in wars, usually against people who are just like us, people with families and communities getting on with life. But the propaganda of war put out relentlessly by the elite owned media uses fear of 'the enemy' - presented as inhuman, cruel, faceless others to be killed - to persuade us to go to war as if it is in our interest. In reality, the military exists to protect the rich and powerful and may be used against their own people - in strikes and civil unrest - as well as in war.

Under 10% of wars today are explicitly between states, but are they are usually fought in the interests of the global elite, hidden away from media attention, with the arms dealers always ready to help out. These wars go on for years and take a heavy toll on civilians. There have been 125 wars worldwide since the Cold War ended in 1989, in which 7 million people have been killed, 75% of them civilians. And once a war has started and people have been killed, the machinery of war and the bitterness and pain endured by each side builds a dreadful momentum that makes it hard to stop. The media propaganda uses accounts of killing to make us fearful and ready for revenge, whipping up religious or nationalistic feelings to justify the continued war.

Rememberance or propaganda?

Many called the First World War the 'war to end all wars', seeing it's disgusting waste of young lives for what is was - the territorial squabbles of European elites. In the case of the Second World War, Britain's ruling elite quite admired fascism and it's business-friendly authoritarianism and discipline. It was only when Hitler's ambitions turned on Britain, that the war became an issue. And just as there were elites in occupied France, ready to join and share in the Nazi rule, there were those in the British ruling classes who felt more at home with Nazism than the democratic stirrings of the people in 30s and 40s Britain.

Iraq - a war for oil

The war on Iraq is just the most recent example. It is now clear that the occupation

of Iraq was all about controlling the world's second largest oil reserves. It had nothing to do with 9/11, and has not ended terrorism but increased terrorist attacks. There was overwhelming opposition to the Iraq war around the world, with 2 million marching in Britain. It took made up stories about Saddam being able to launch weapons within 45 minutes to make us all fearful, and the blackmail of support to hastily committed troops, to pressure people to go along with Blair and Bush's war plans. Many people remain opposed to the war and can see through politicians lies. George Solomou, who resigned from the Royal Army medical Corps said: "Most people in Britain think the war in Iraq is wrong... We know there were no links between Iraq and international terrorism at the time the war started... Soldiers from my regiment tell me that much of their work in southern Iraq involves protecting convoys of oil tankers... I really believe that our foreign policy is being driven by the needs of US power, particularly the need to control the flow of oil"

A decent life for all!

Resources are wasted on military power instead of what society needs. Last May the bill for the war in Iraq was £2,75 Billion - enough for 154,000 new nurses or 280 badly needed schools. Whipps Cross Hospital remains underfunded and understaffed, while the army barracks next door is never short of government support. In a sane society, the nurses, doctors and cleaners at Whipps would have all the resources they need to care for. It's common sense.

We should not fight the wars of the rich but take direct action against war. We can refuse to join up and organize opposition to recruitment, avoid work that is linked to the military and armaments, refuse to transport arms and supplies (just as railway workers in Scotland recently refused to work on trains that were carrying military equipment to Iraq). History is full of people refusing to fight our rulers' wars - from conscientious objectors and organized opposition to war, to refusal to fight and kill when the reality dawns on us, and soldiers siding with the people in revolutionary situations. No to militarism and death! Don't join the army! Oppose their wars, and organise for a better world!

Thinking of joining the army? Don't be their cannon fodder!

Walthamstow Anarchist Group are starting a campaign aimed at exposing the truth behind joining the army and informing the mainly young people who go to the Territorial Army HQ and Cadets groups around the Borough.

Recruitment adverts for the army make it look like a high-tech video game where nobody gets hurt. The reality can be very different:

- The minimum wage for privates in the British army serving in Iraq in February was £13,000.

- The first ever independent assessment of the training of recruits, prompted by the deaths of four young recruits at Deepcut Army barracks in Surrey, found a culture of widespread bullying, sexual harassment and racism, with conditions in some barracks little better than slums.

- Suicide among men under the age of 20 in the army is 1.7 times that of than civilians of the same age.

Get involved with THE UNDERDOG

The Underdog is Walthamstow's only TRULY independent paper. We have no rich backers, and we tell it how it is. We distribute on the street, in community centres, pubs, cafes, shops and by delivering door-to door. If you like what you read, we always welcome help: You may have local news, gossip, or opinions, letters or comments about anything we have written. Or you may be able to help with distribution -perhaps in your street. If you want us to post the next 6 issues to you as soon as it comes out, just send us 6 first class stamps. We also pay for this ourselves so if you want to bung us a few quid towards the next issue, this would be much appreciated.

W@G

The Underdog is produced by Walthamstow Anarchist Group. We are a group of Waltham Forest residents who are sick of the system of capitalism which allows the rich and the bosses to exploit and control the rest of us. We promote working class resistance and self-organisation and through this aim to create a new society where people live together in freedom and as equals. We believe in direct action as a method by which we working class people can begin to take control of our communities and workplaces now and in doing so build a movement strong enough to challenge the entire system.

If you want to get in touch you can e-mail us, phone or text us or drop us a line at, or visit our website. We also meet fortnightly at a local venue and you are welcome to meet up with us for a chat if you are interested in getting involved.

If you need a copy of The Underdog in LARGE TEXT or would like a taped copy, we would be happy to supply either. You can also download *The Underdog* from our website.

Walthamstow Anarchist Group
PO Box 49592
London E17 5WZ
Tel: 07910 393 284

www.walthamstowanarchy.org.uk
info@walthamstowanarchy.org.uk

See our website for more information or contact us to get more involved

To mark the launch of the campaign WAG are holding a protest on Saturday November 12th at 2pm at the Territorial Army Barracks on Lea Bridge Road. The protest will also highlight the situation of the unkempt war memorial at the Territorial Army Barracks on Lea Bridge Road as symbolic of how politicians, despite their lip-service around Rememberance Sunday, don't care about lives that are lost in wars that they start.