

resistance

anarchist bulletin

Free/Donation
Issue 68 Dec 2004



Age old fight

LAST MONTH THE government presented its report on what has become known as "the pensions crisis".

The report was widely touted as being a balanced look at what is wrong with the pensions system and how it should be "fixed", despite the report's author, Adair Turner, being the ex-head of the bosses union - the CBI. The report was the latest in a steady campaign intended to soften us up to accept attacks on our wages through increases in mandatory payments. We can hardly open the paper or watch the news these days without more pundits telling us to get ready to tighten our belts.

Are they right? Is the only viable option a cut in living standards?

They are at least right about one thing: all societies have a duty to support those who can't work- whether they be too old, too young or too ill. Unfortunately, we are also forced to support another set of people who live off our labour - the boss class and all their servants. This is as true in pensions as in any other sphere of life. A recent TUC investigation found that although average contributions from bosses into schemes for workers was only 6%, the amount they paid into schemes for Directors averaged at 20%! Only 44% of FTSE 100 companies have final salary schemes for staff, but this leaps to 76% for directors. BT chief executive John Condon, who closed his company final salary scheme to new employees, has added two and a half years to his own pension, netting him £146,000 per year plus a lump sum of £439,000.



We are told there are only four options:

- Accept pensioner poverty (*i.e. workers end up poor*)
- Raise retirement age (*i.e. workers get made to work longer*)
- Increase national insurance (*i.e. workers all get less pay*)
- Force us to take out private pensions (*i.e. workers all get less pay*)

We at **resistance** prefer a fifth option: that those who should pay are the very same people who live off our work: the bosses. There is easily enough wealth in society to keep everyone comfortable if it was distributed on the basis of need. For example, company tax avoidance alone costs an estimated £80 billion a year and this is before we even talk about higher taxes for the rich. This whole "crisis" has its roots in capitalist greed - from companies stopping contributions during state-encouraged "pensions holidays" in the 80s, through to the state overlooking bosses plundering their workers' pension funds to prop up share values. Since the Tories removed the link between pensions and average earnings, successive governments have tried to make the state pension system so unworkable that we'd all

be forced into private pension schemes - its currently worth only 15% of average wages. This has happened over the same period that productivity per worker has doubled, and company profits have soared.

There has been some resistance to moves to attack private pensions - workers at two plants owned by steel company Caparo threatened strikes and an overtime ban in June to protect their pension scheme, and a poll of Amicus members showed overwhelming support for strike action to save their pensions. The only people putting up any sort of real fight over state pensions at the minute are the pensioners themselves. Pensioners deserve respect and a decent standard of life. They can't fight alone, as fighting alone they will eventually lose. This affects all workers - we all get old and we all need to eat. The bosses and their media will continue to try and convince us to roll over and accept this. We must ignore them, stick together and fight as one. ★

ANARCHISTS ORGANISING



A NEW ANARCHIST group has been formed in Sheffield. Anyone interested in reigniting the anarchist presence in the steel city should send

an Email to: sheffield_anarchists@yahoo.com

Also a class struggle anarchist/libertarian communist group is forming in Romford and the surrounding area.

Anyone interested in getting involved should Email: romfordanarchists@hotmail.com or phone 07774 641 587 and leave a message. ★

WE'RE GOING TO start on different note this month and take a look at a few disputes overseas that really do bring home what being *On the Frontline* means.

We'll start with the joint boss and state massacre of 14 strikers (including two children aged two and five) in the Philippines. 5,000 sugar industry workers have been on strike for two weeks after hundreds of them were illegally sacked. At a meeting of the strikers and supporters in Hacienda Luisita on November 16 police and army units indiscriminately fired countless canisters of teargas and live rounds into the crowd – resulting in 14 deaths and hundreds of injuries from gunshot wounds and suffocation – there is even a report of a victim being strangled after being shot and his dead body hanged on the factory's gate. Worryingly, hundreds are also missing – probably injured but afraid to get treatment in case of further attacks.

In a similar vein, a worker has been assassinated in El Salvador in punishment for starting a new project documenting violations of the rights of Central American port workers and drivers – Gilberto Soto was shot by two "unknown" gunmen in Usulután after receiving warnings to cease his work.

In China a striker has been sentenced to three years jail for simply taking part in a strike – in a clear warning to others taking part in the escalating industrial unrest spreading through the country.

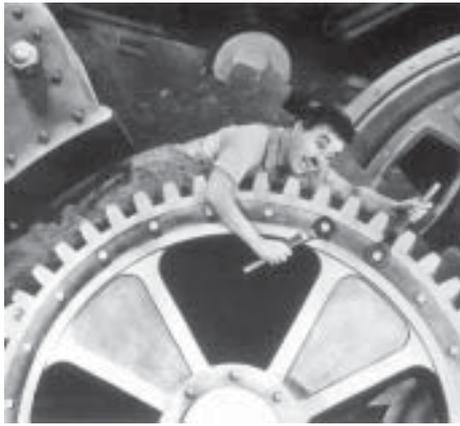
This is how the state reacts when it's interests are challenged, in the Phillipines and *here* – a quick look at our own history shows us that the veneer of democracy is paper thin – make no mistake, the British bosses are no strangers to these tactics – in fact *they taught them to the rest of the world*.

Back here, workers at Boddingtons brewery in Manchester have been on strike, and plan to step up their action over the coming weeks in protest at the action of the Interbrew bosses in closing breweries and cutting jobs and conditions.

Drivers at Lynx Parcel Delivery have also been out this month, and have two more 48-hour stoppages planned for the next few weeks in a dispute over pay levels.

The strikers are in a particularly good position with Christmas coming up, and the highly centralised internal structure of the company being wide open to blockages – not to mention the company possibly being taken to court for illegally trying to bring in scabs via recruitment agencies. ★

WHAT DO ANARCHISTS THINK ABOUT WORK?



*Don't be a cog in the machine,
be a spanner in the works.*

DAMNED IF YOU do, damned if you don't. Some of the poorest people in our society are those who do not work and have to survive on benefits.

But there are also millions who do work who have to survive on poverty wages. They tend to be the weakest and most disadvantaged who struggle along on the minimum wage, or less. In order to survive the only solution is massive amounts of overtime.

Millions of others do manage to live "reasonable" lives on the money they

earn. But you can bet your boss is not doing you any favours.

They only employ people so long as they can make more money from exploiting their workforce. When you become too expensive, in other words if your boss's profits start to wobble, you are shown the door. And, no doubt, there is a queue of poorer people lining up to work for peanuts.

And what about the experience of work? It is a mixture of boredom, stress, irritation and of being bullied. As soon as you enter the workplace, freedom, and independence are left behind at the doorstep. Work is the place where countless little Shitlers push you around and in turn are pushed around themselves. Despite all of this, many workers are so conditioned and brainwashed that they **need** work. Work becomes the point of their empty lives.

Freeing ourselves from work is a vital step to a better world. Organise in the workplace against exploitation and bullying. Take tomorrow off and have some fun! Remember there are plenty of rich people who are rich because of your stress, who will not be working today, or indeed any day. ★

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Venezuelan anarchists

VENEZUELAN ANARCHISTS OPENED a Libertarian Social Studies Centre and social library on November 14. They are extending the print run and distribution of their bi-monthly newspaper "El Libertario", increasing the production and diffusion of audio-visual and printed libertarian material and organizing various events linked to "the promotion of the anarchist ideal." They desperately need finances to keep funding their activity.

"This is why we are making an urgent appeal for financial solidarity. The contributions of any amount that are received over the next few days, weeks and months will be essential for the project to get off the ground and establish itself." You can donate by Emailing: centrosociallibertario@yahoo.com

Website:
www.centrosocial.contrapoder.org.ve
Postal address: Fundacion Centro de Estudios Sociales Libertarios, Apartado Postal N° 49110, Caracas, Venezuela.

Support action in East Asia!

"We are happy to announce that as of August 20, 2004, Gaizao.org – Radical Voice of East Asia – is serving the international community with news, forums and issue-specific information aimed at



unifying East Asian activists and fostering solidarity with anarchists, anti-imperialists, and anti-authoritarian collectives and organizations world-wide.

The site hosts a forum and a news service in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Japanese; along with a library, and an action calendar for the entire region.

Email: caillech@gaizao.org
Website: www.gaizao.org

Anarchists organise in Greece

A new "Federation of Anarchists of Western Greece" (OADE) has been formed. Website: <http://homepages.pathfinder.gr/anarchywest>

If you want a contact with OADE or any other information about it in English, there is the address PO BOX 2120, Lygon Street North, East Brunswick, Victoria 3057, Australia

Emails:
outtheos@yahoo.com.au
anthropia@hotmail.com ★

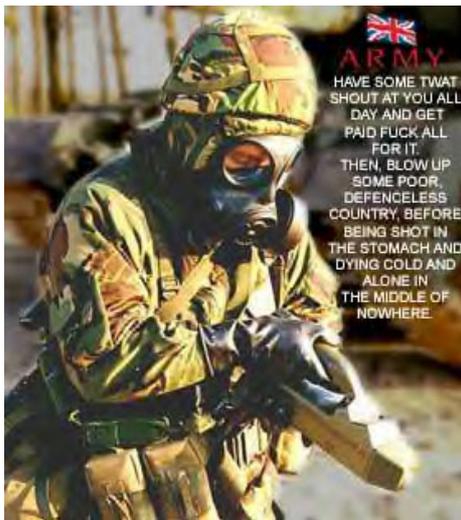
A WORKER AT EITHER END OF THE BAYONET

AUGUST MARKED THE death toll of US troops reaching the 1,000 mark. In the meantime many more have died. The number of deaths among British troops has increased rapidly, especially after Poodle Blair decided to help his ol' buddy Bush by sending the Black Watch to the danger zone around Fallujah. This is not to mention the number of Iraqi civilians dead or injured estimated as 100,000 plus and rising.

Troops in the States and here in Britain join the Armed Forces mainly because of lack of other employment where they live. The Black Watch, who have sustained casualties recently in fairly high numbers, both dead and maimed, are mostly recruited from areas of Scotland like Fife where unemployment is high. Poverty and unemployment act as good recruiting sergeants. Old-fashioned conscription is replaced by economic conscription.

There is anger among some troops, both US and British, at what they are being made to do. This has to be turned into active resistance – disobeying orders, refusing to go to the war zones. Disobedience and mutiny in the armed forces has to be coupled with a broad anti-war movement both here and throughout the world, an anti-war movement not manipulated by political parties, whether they be social democratic, Leninist or Islamist, a movement ready to use mass civil disobedience, blockades of military bases and any other form of direct action and general antimilitarist agitation.

In other countries anger and disgust at being involved in the war in Iraq is growing and some countries have already withdrawn or are withdrawing their troops. Hungary said it would pull its 300 troops out of Iraq by March 2005. The Czech Republic said that its 100 police officers would be withdrawn in February. Poland, with its 2,400 soldiers, will start reducing its presence next January and completely withdraw by the end of 2005. Other countries' soldiers are either with-



drawn or withdrawing: New Zealand: 60 troops returned home 15 September. Thailand: 423 troops returned home 9 September. Philippines: 51 withdrawn on 19 July Norway: 10 currently in Iraq, 140 withdrawn on 30 June Honduras: 370 withdrawn on 12 May. Dominican Republic: 302 withdrawn on 4 May. Spain: 1,300 withdrawn on 4 May. Singapore: 160 withdrawn on 4 April. Nicaragua: 115 withdrawn on 4 February.

The same must happen in Britain. It's happening elsewhere, it CAN happen here.

Meanwhile in Iraq

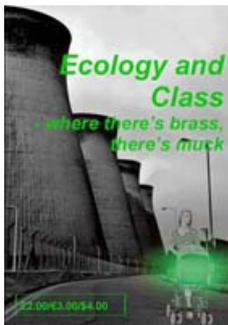
Iraqi railway workers have boycotted supplies intended for US troops and forces belonging to the US-appointed Allawi government.

Employees of the National Iraqi Railways Company also declared that they would agree to carry food supplies only to the Iraqi people, and threatened a national strike if forced to do otherwise. The Allawi government reacted by accusing the railway workers of carrying out civil disobedience. Apparently killing 100,000 civilians is fine, but refusing to help this slaughter is a crime! ★

NEW ANARCHIST PUBLICATIONS!



The latest issue of *Organise!*, the magazine of the Anarchist Federation has now out. It has articles on: nanotechnology, the anarchist movements in Argentina and Ireland, resistance in



p a m p h l e t
Ecology and class – where there's brass, there's muck has just been published. Available for £2.

The latest issue of Irish anarchist bulletin *Working Class Resistance*, will be out shortly.

Subscribe online by Emailing:

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TIME
BOMB



The Battle of Cable Street

THE BATTLE OF Cable Street took place on October 4 1936. The British Union of Fascists led by Sir Oswald Mosley had been building support in the East End of London and one of their main focuses was in drumming up hatred against the local working class Jewish community. Mosley's blackshirted fascists had been conducting propaganda against the Jews in the East End for several years and there had been a number of physical attacks. In September Mosley called for a Blackshirt march through the heart of the Jewish East End.

A lot of the national press (especially the Daily Mail) gave outright support to the fascists. It had widespread sympathy in the upper classes, including among the Royals. The Labour Party and the trade unions paid lip-service to anti-fascism but they argued against any physical confrontation with fascism. They called on people to rely on the police to protect them from the fascists.

Many Jews, especially among the young, thought that the proper way to fight the fascists was to physically stop them in the streets.

The thousands strong Blackshirt march was to begin in Royal Mint Street, pass along through Gardiners Corner and on to four separate street meetings. It never even got going! As many as a quarter of a million people stopped it happening. Tramdrivers abandoned their vehicles in the middle of the roads as blockades. The Jewish community, Irish and some Somali dockers and members of different political groups built barricades. Six thousand police, there to protect the fascists, repeatedly baton-charged the barricades.

The Police Commissioner then proposed a diversion through the dock area around Wapping, and along Cable Street. There was a battle fought between the police and the defenders of the anti-fascist barricades constructed of furniture, paving stones and a lorry. Pretending to retreat, the crowd lured the police forwards, and took up positions behind secondary barricades while from the upstairs tenements on either side of the street other people threw bricks, stones, bottles, marbles for horses' hooves, and boiling water down on the bewildered police.

While the outnumbered fascists waited in vain for a path to be cleared for them, the police faced chaos. At 5pm Mosley admitted defeat and cancelled the march. The mass opposition to fascism had given the Blackshirts a heavy blow.

For more on anti-fascism visit: www.antifa.org.uk ★

INSIDE INFORMATION

Cassidy Wheeler Moved

US ANARCHIST PRISONER Cassidy Wheeler has been moved: You can write to him at this address:

Cassidy Wheeler #14282456
E.O.C.I. 2500
Westgate
Pendleton
OR 97801 USA

Return to Sender: Prison Rule Harassment

Bristol Anarchist Black Cross bought and sent a book to Herman Wallace, one of the Angola 3 and former Black Panther. The book was sent back. There is no way they could have known before hand, but the rules specify that the book:

1. Must be accompanied by a receipt.
2. Must be posted by the publisher or a bookshop
3. Cannot contain anything else.

Not only did they return the book, but they charged Herman the postage. Since

then they have sent another copy complying with their rules. This goes to show the low level harassment that the rules impose of prisoners and their ability to connect to the outside world. If you want to know more about Herman see here: www.prisonactivist.org/angola/

Firm that made Iraq's Abu Ghraib wants to run UK prisons!

"The American prison company whose director set up Iraq's infamous Abu Ghraib jail for use by the US military is reportedly bidding to run a number of prisons in Britain. The Utah-based Management and Training Corporation (MTC) has set up a London headquarters and is in advanced negotiations to operate at least one prison in Britain. It is also planning bids to build and manage a number of other jails, including the extension of Belmarsh in south-east London, Britain's maximum security prison, where terrorist suspects are being held without trial..."

Political Threats

In July 2004 it was announced that a series of new charges have been laid

against American eco-activist Billy Cottrell. The new charges all relate to the alleged use of Molotov cocktails to burn some cars. Because of these new charges the prosecution is now threatening Billy with "life imprisonment without the possibility of parole" if convicted on all the charges unless he starts cooperating with the authorities. These new charges are a blatant attempt by the authorities to try and blackmail Billy into cooperating with them. Even if Billy were guilty (which he is not) the threat of "Life imprisonment without the possibility of parole" far exceeds the seriousness of the crimes he is accused of.

Please do everything you can to help. For more info on Billy please contact: Free Billy Defence & Support Network, PO Box 3372, Anaheim, CA 92803-3372, USA. Email: freebillycottrell@yahoo.com or visit the website www.freebillycottrell.org and see: www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk/newsletter.html

Info from Bristol Anarchist Black Cross prisoner support group:

www.geocities.com/bristol_abc ★



Subvert and resist

Take precautions when going on demonstrations and don't take cameras, booze or drugs. If you're nicked give your name and address then say 'no comment' to any other questions.

Meeting at the Anarchist Bookfair (Nov 27, University of London, Mallet Street Tel: 020 7242 8032 Email: mail@anarchistbookfair.org or Visit: www.anarchistbookfair.org)
"The Anarchist International" Meeting Room 3C at 5-6.30pm. Speakers from Eastern Europe, Italy, France, Spain and Germany. Hosted by the Anarchist Federation.

DECEMBER: 12 – Projectile Preview, 7.30pm, Projectile is holding its first public event at the Side Cinema, Newcastle. This will be a preview of some of the films to be shown in February, a chance to socialise with like-minded people and perhaps get involved in the Projectile collective.

Projectile will be a major event taking place in central Newcastle from the 11 - 13 Feb 2005, featuring rare and radical films. The evenings will have music and entertainment, the daytimes will have talks and discussions between the films. For more info visit: www.projectile.org.uk

14 – Manchester Anarchist Group meeting, Friends Meeting House. More info from: anarchist_federation@yahoo.co.uk

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- I enclose £4 for a year's subscription to **Organise!** the magazine of the **AF**.
- I am interested in the **Anarchist Federation** and would like more information.

Name

Address

.....

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Join the resistance

The **Anarchist Federation** 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 us at: **Anarchist Federation**,
84B, Whitechapel High Street,
London, E1 7QX. Tel: 07946 214 590
Visit: www.afed.org.uk
Email: info@afed.org.uk