

# resistance

anarchist bulletin

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## Sick of the boss?

*THE CURRENT ATTACK on sick pay by bosses should be seen for what it is: a direct attack on the working class as a whole.*

There are very few benefits workers have gained which didn't involve long and hard fights. The eight-hour day, pensions, health and safety rules and union representation were all gained by mass direct action (or the threat of). One of these benefits which was long fought for, and until very recently was seen as an almost natural right, is that of sick pay. However this is now under attack from the boss class, who as always, are after ways to increase both their profits and their control over their workers.

Bosses are somewhat ridiculously trying to claim that cutting sick pay is necessary for a 'modern' and 'dynamic' work force (read 'quiet and easily exploitable'), and will cut down skiving. What a crap argument! Cutting sick pay will just force most of us who don't have the luxury of being able to afford taking days of with no pay, to come to work ill. What a great idea that is! Being forced into wage slavery is enough without having to face catching illnesses due to the greed of our employers. As for those of us who work in a workplace with heavy machinery, the thought of having to work with someone who can't concentrate due to illness makes us positively overwhelmed with joy! Perhaps if our workplaces were not such stressful, unhealthy, tiring places people would feel less need to take time off from work.

Currently three of the largest employers in the country are leading the charge against sick pay. The company at the vanguard of this sick offensive is Tesco. Tesco is one of the largest employers in the UK, employing over 250,000 staff. Bosses have introduced trials which would see sick pay cut for the first 3 days staff are sick. Tesco already make profits of £1.7 billion a year



with £1 in every £8 spent in shops in the UK being spent in Tesco. It seems that even this obscenely large amount of money isn't enough for Tesco bosses and they want to squeeze even more out of their workers. The trade union USDAW (aren't they meant to be on our side?) have meekly gone along with this scheme (see Resistance 62 for more information)

After seeing the 'financial rewards' Tesco are set to gain from further exploiting their workers, Sainsburys have also announced an almost identical scheme. British Airways has also jumped on the bandwagon. One of the key factors over the recent upsurge of militancy among rank and file BA workers has been BA bosses announcing they intend to cut sick pay. The union, living up to their reputation as the bosses' middle men, have called off strike action and agreed to BA's disgusting demands.

It is important that we all combat this direct assault on us. If these huge firms manage to implement sick pay cuts we

will all suffer. A bandwagon effect would be implemented with bosses of smaller firms noticing the increased profit margins of these large firms and introducing their policies into their companies. It is a hell of a lot easier to stop the erosion of sick pay now, before it has been destroyed, than fighting to have it reinstated!

Unity and direct action are the only things which will give us victory. If you are threatened with the cancellation of your sick pay get together with workmates and organise against your bosses. Actions such as mass sickies, go-slows and wildcat strikes can all dent the bosses pocket and make them think again. BA workers have adopted these tactics and even after having being sold out by their union are having a damaging effect on BA bosses. Shoppers, don't buy from companies like Tescos and let 'em know why. A quick word of warning. Workers, don't trust your union! As the above cases have clearly shown union bureaucrats are more interested in dinners with the bosses and their own fat paychecks than their members' interests.

For more information about anarchist campaigns against casualisation and attacks on sick pay in your region contact the AF at the address on the back page. ★

### LIKE WHAT YOU READ?

WE'RE HAPPY TO keep giving out resistance free but doing so costs us. If you like what you read and you want to

support our efforts to get anarchist ideas across to people, how about sending us some money? Cheques to AF, address on back page. No amount to small, no amount too large. ★



## ON THE FRONTLINE

WELL FOLKS, it seems that the day of the glorious revolution has moved a few steps nearer...ok maybe not, but last month delivered an extremely encouraging result on the industrial front – the stunning success of the South Yorkshire drivers in completely humiliating the First Buses management. (on this page).

Other workers have taken the initiative of the back of this – as suggested here last month Eurostar workers are to stage a 24-hour strike on August 28 over differing pay rates in different workplaces – Waterloo workers receive nearly 25% more than their colleagues in Kent.

This refusal to allow management to get away with such tricks is a welcome sign of a growing militancy amongst transport workers – one that should be built on by establishing links to Train, Tube and bus drivers, airport workers etc – all of whom are currently involved in various disputes.

A network of these workers would be extremely powerful, and could avoid the sort of 'negotiations' (read sell out) that the combined unions reached with BA this week that not only accepted a nearly unchanged pay offer (the original offer had been roundly rejected), but agreed to tie the rise to attendance levels – which was precisely management's real target all along!

The unions were essentially helping to implement a long-planned bosses attack on the very concept of sick-leave – USDAW did something similar earlier in the year. A network that will not let the union bosses get away with this sort of behaviour, that is composed directly of the workers and their actions is what is currently needed given that these types of 'partnership' deals are on the increase.

In Swansea, binmen and road sweepers wildcatted in support of striking 100 IT workers, and other council workers are expected to take action to oppose plans to privatise their department.

'Ethical' employers Body Shop faces a strike in Glasgow where workers for the company have voted to walk out over a 3% pay offer, Where's those human rights and dignity now eh?

Another piece of good news this month was the sacking of ASLEF General Secretary and ultra-blairite moderniser Shaun Brady for gross misconduct – including the little matter of using an ASLEF credit card to obtain a cash advance from the HSBC bank of £6,288.13. Just goes to show that those arguments that getting a foot on the ladder of union bureaucracy doesn't change people into mirrors of the company bosses were right all along...doesn't it? ★

## EVERY DEATH A MURDER

ON 9 AUGUST 2004 14-year-old Adam Rickwood placed a noose around his neck and became the youngest ever child to die in custody. He joined the list of 26 other children who have taken their own lives in custody since 1990. On 18 April Louise Davies did the same thing in New Hall Prison, and became the 14th woman to do so this year. This month saw the 55th male prison suicide this year and if current levels are kept up last years figure of 97 deaths will be easily overtaken.

Prison overcrowding is the key factor behind the rise in suicides – the number in Juvenile custody has risen 100% over the last decade, the general prison population had doubled over the last 25 years to 76 146 – one in every 143 people. The governments own figures show that 83 out of the 138 prisons in the country are overcrowded – and that the top 10 prisons for suicides are also the most overcrowded. In many jails, prisoners are locked up for 23 hours a day, two to a cell that was designed for one, facing assaults from prison guards who know the

government will pay off any charges they may face. For example the recent 122 cases of assault logged at Wormwood Scrubs against 27 officers, and the pay-off of a male rape claim.

It is any wonder that in these inhumane conditions that the suicide rate is 6 times higher than that outside and that cases of self-harm are running at record levels – 12,073 cases of self-harm in 2003 compared to 4,187 between 1993 and 1994.

These shocking figures not only represent a real tragedy for the suicides families and loved ones but reveal the real tragedy for the suicides' families and loved ones but reveal the real physical mark that this society leaves upon the working class – it's chewing up and spitting out of real life human beings. Most of these people have been convicted of crimes against property – if the old anarchist adage of every death in prison being a murder is true, then these people have been murdered by capital, to uphold its own laws. ★



## CUTS OR COMMON SENSE?

ELDERLY HOMEOWNERS WITH spare rooms and young unemployed people are being encouraged to live together say the government, in new proposals. The unemployed will, allegedly, live rent free in return only for companionship of vulnerable elderly residents.

On the surface, the proposals seem like common sense – if there's a spare room available it should be inhabited by somebody who can't afford a place of their own. But government doesn't think like that, it only thinks in terms of *it* will gain from it. Could it be that if jobseekers are being housed only in return for care and companionship then the government won't need to pay out Housing Benefit – potentially saving them millions of pounds? And could it also be the case that these proposals have been made because they need to make cuts in benefits in the wake of a £billion plus over spend (and rising) on the Iraq war?

Anarchists have long argued that wars like these not only hurt the people directly involved, but also the citizens of the war-waging countries that are not directly involved. They have argued that if money is being spent in one area – defence (i.e. terrorising and killing) – then it can't be spent on supporting the homeless and jobless. Whenever

anarchists make such statements, they are usually pushed aside, condemned and called naive. Indeed, the government themselves would be fiercely critical of these views. Clearly, a year and a half



after the Iraq war began, we can see it *is* having an affect on us, the little people.

It would be ignorant of us to assume that is only the Labour Party that makes public such lies. In reality we know that whether the party be Conservative, Liberal Democrat or even British National, they all act in their own interests.

Perhaps it's our time to show that we can do a lot better for ourselves – without them? ★

## STUFF WILCO - WE WON'T GO

*HIGH STREET CHAINSTORE* *Wilkinsons use compulsory prison labour to help with the making of their goods. However this despicable abuse of prisoners is not going unnoticed*

Campaign Against Prison Slavery (CAPS) activists in Cwmbran, Wales, have been busy highlighting the role of prison slavers Wilkinsons in the light of the new Wilko's superstore which has just opened in the town.

In the run up to the opening Wilkinsons set up a recruitment stall in the town. Local CAPS activists

turned up with leaflets exposing the real nature of this greedy slave-labour company and lots of anti-Wilkinson's stickers also started to appear around Cwmbran.

On the 20th August, Cwmbran Shopping, owned by Prudental, were pleased to present the grand opening of the new Wilkinsons hardware store in their ever so private shopping centre, until 5 anarchists with an anti-prison slave labour banner and a pile of leaflets arrived. Despite being confronted by security guards, community Police, Wilkinsons

managers, Prudental Shopping Centre Managers and finally proper Police the protesters managed to put up a large anti-prison slavery banner and hand out many leaflets. There was lots of interest from shoppers in Wilkinsons compulsory use of prison labour to pack their products at a rate of £1.20 a day maximum (a slave work force makes for a higher rate of exploitation and profits - and we thought wage slavery was bad enough!).

Protests against Wilkinsons disgusting use of prison labour have

already occurred in many towns and cities including Brighton, London, and Birmingham. The campaign will carry on in Cwmbran and throughout the country until Wilkinsons withdraw from abusing prisoners. To get in touch with the group e-mail [gwentanarchists@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gwentanarchists@yahoo.co.uk) or write to them at the following address: Gwent Anarchists, PO Box 7, Newport, NP20 5XX. Get in touch with the Campaign Against Prison Slavery at: [www.againstprisonslavery.org](http://www.againstprisonslavery.org) or PO Box 74, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 4ZQ. ★



## RECENT STRIKE SUCCESS!

*UK WORKERS HAVE again shown how far a bit of direct action and solidarity can take you!*

### South Yorkshire Bus Strike

Workers with First Buses in South Yorkshire turned down a derisory 1.5% pay rise and went out on strike on 21<sup>st</sup> July. The strike was rock solid and the company's feeble attempts to use scab labour failed. No one threatened to cross picket lines and there was great support from other workers and the public in general. The strike continued for 3 full weeks and ended on 9<sup>th</sup> August with better pay and a cut in hours. This strike was the longest continuous bus strike in the UK for 30 years. As a result of this victory, busworkers in Bristol, who had

been raising money for the South Yorkshire strikers, discovered that their own pay demands were suddenly met, with extra money being magically found by the company after a similar pay deal was rejected. Unity and solidarity show that strike action can pay off!!

### Wembley Wildcat

Just as we were about to go to press we received news of an exciting wildcat strike. Over 200 builders working on the new Wembley Stadium in London have bypassed their union and started a wildcat strike. This is in response to the cancellation of their contracts by Hollandia/Fast Track. This is not the first direct action these steelworkers have taken. When their original employees Cleveland Bridge jettisoned the project (and workers) the new bosses at Hollandia/Fast Track tried to cut working conditions, meaning many of the men who are from the North East of England would be unable to visit their families. They responded with direct action. We will bring further news on these developments in the next issue of Resistance. In the meantime we urge all people in the area to go out and lend them a hand! ★



TIME  
BOMB



### Anarchism in North China

IN THE VILLAGE where I was born there is a monument in a square erected by the trades unions where fifteen Anarchists were executed as common criminals engaged in a conspiracy against the Empress in her last terror-stricken days. They were buried in a common grave which became a place of honour to the common people, who preserved it carefully. Our May Day marches used to culminate in this spot, where we sang, "Those who fought against injustice our victory will honour!"

I was banished from the village by the police and later I had to change my identity and could not return. I came back after an absence of thirty-five years on a visit. As it was May the First, the first place I visited was "our square" - both for sentimental reasons and because I knew if any of our old friends were alive that is where they would be. Some old people still put flowers on the monument. But of all our friends I met only one old lady, who had been the beautiful girl who ran the "Anarchist Newspaper of the North" from 1910 to 1930. Despite all her many cares, she was still with us, but, she told me "all the comrades are dead". These are words one often hears in Northern China, from the lips of old people.

If victory has not honoured, defeat has not forgotten. Remember that. For in the countryside around, there are dozens of townships where once free communes were set up, where a handful of Anarchist militants leading fugitive lives had come to the town square and called for an insurrection, and where the whole population had rallied round and refused to pay taxes or rents, and had lived independent and free while the national armies fought each other and were unable to impose the tribute of the State. The Peking bureaucrats do not forget. Neither do the people.

Later, in the capital of our province, "Where once we had a hundred groups, we have now ten individuals", said my local contact sadly. But he knew nothing of those in the villages. Another comrade was however more optimistic. "Don't mistake what we are with what we could be. If you had now come from the city to tell us - as they used to in the old days - that the army was in retreat and the government powerless I would need only to run up a pair of black knickers on a pole and shout 'Long Live Anarchy' and ten, twenty, thirty thousand men and women would rally and many would bring their rifles with them."

The full article can be found at <http://www.solwest.org.uk/china.html> ★

# INSIDE INFORMATION

**Missouri Prison Activist Harrassed**  
DOUG OERLY, A PRISONER involved in the Missouri Prison Labor Union (set up to resist forced labour in prisons, which is exploiting prisoners and driving down pay and conditions for workers on the outside...) has been put in punishment isolation, often known as "The Hole". This occurred after a prison wide hunger strike, which Doug was unable to participate in due to health reasons. Protest letters can be sent to: Governor Bob Holden State, Capital Building 201, West Capital Avenue, Jefferson City, MO 65 101. Please send letters of support to Doug at: Douglas Oerly No. 38532, South Central Correctional Center, 255 West Highway 32, Licking, MO 65542-9069.

**Leonard Peltier**

Leonard was an American Indian Movement (AIM) activist framed by an FBI operation for the murder of two FBI agents in 1975 and is serving two consecutive life sentences. He's gravely ill at the moment and is being denied a

transfer to the medical facility. His support group can be contacted: LPDC, PO Box 583, Lawrence, KS 66044, USA, email: lpdcomite@aol.com

**Harold Thompson**

Harold has been in prison since 1979, serving a life sentence plus about 90 years. He is a passionate anarchist and jailhouse lawyer who never gives up. He has also recently been busy challenging prison policies on receiving anarchist and other political literature. For more on Harold check out: <http://membres.tripod.fr/HHTHOMPSON/welcome.html> or write to him at #93992, NWCC, 960 State Route 212, Tiptonville, Tennessee 38079, USA.

**Matthew Lamont**

An American anti-fascist prisoner set-up by the State. Write to him at #T90251 / D3-140, 44750 W. 60th Street, Lancaster, California 93536, USA.

**J18 Prisoner**

James Borek is currently serving a four and a half years sentence for injuring a cop during the June 18th 1999 "Carnival against Capital" riot in London's financial district.

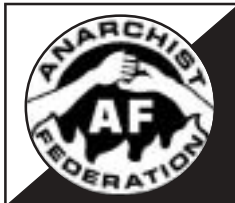
Write to him at LL6803, HMP

Blundeston, D-108, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 5BG

**Solidarity Demo for Imprisoned Italian Anarchists.**

In late July, the homes of six anarchists were raided in Rovereto, Italy. They were arrested and charged with aggravated assault relating to a clash between anarchists and fascists on October 4, 2002.

Anarchists held a solidarity demonstration for their imprisoned comrades. About 50 people attended, marching to the jail where the anarchists are being held, carrying banners, playing loud music, and spray-painting slogans on walls (such as "the war is here also" and "freedom for the arrested, fire to the jails") and painting over the lens of a journalist's camera, despite the heavy police presence. On the same day, the imprisoned anarchists gave a statement to their lawyer indicating that they had begun a "shower and exercise time" strike, that they are refusing to leave their cells to pressure for an end to their isolation and their immediate release. Anarchists in Rovereto are planning for further solidarity activities. ★



## 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.

**SEPTEMBER: 2 Where Now for the anti-advertising campaign?** Open discussion organised by Haringey Solidarity Group 7.30pm at 42 Falmer Rd., London N15 020 8374 5027 [hsg@globalinternet.co.uk](mailto:hsg@globalinternet.co.uk)

**4 East Anglian Social Forum.** 11am - 6pm United Reform Church, Princes Street, Norwich Free 07901 566731 [norwichanarchists@hotmail.com](mailto:norwichanarchists@hotmail.com) [www.easf.org.uk](http://www.easf.org.uk)

**16-19 Dissent! Meeting,** Bilston Woods/Edinburgh. The G8 (Group of Eight most industrialised nations) Summit is coming to Britain in the Summer of 2005. Meeting to prepare a warm welcome! [www.dissent.org.uk](http://www.dissent.org.uk)

**25 Switch Off Star Wars - National demo against the start of the US Star Wars system.** Noon - 4pm Fylingdales Star Wars base, North Yorkshire, near Whitby 01274 730795 [info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk](mailto:info@yorkshirecnd.org.uk) [www.yorkshirecnd.org.uk](http://www.yorkshirecnd.org.uk)

**OCTOBER: 2 National Campaign Against Deportation Meeting.** 12 till 5 ARC, 60 Dovecote Street, Stockton on Tees 01642 679298 [ncadc-northeast@ncadc.org.uk](mailto:ncadc-northeast@ncadc.org.uk)

**15-17 European Social Forum,** London. Libertarians will be organising alternative events outside of the corrupt, overpriced lefty event.

**Every Thursday:** Manchester Social Forum, 7.30, Friends Meeting House, Mancs.

## 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](http://www.afed.org.uk) Email: [info@afed.org.uk](mailto:info@afed.org.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.....

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