In March figures published in the capital’s press noted that 180 people “nearly died” in police custody in London last year.

The “near misses” were revealed as a report by the Independent Police Complaints Commission called for cells to be made “safer” (sic). Reasons for “near misses” were given as “attempted suicide, self-harm, drug abuse, medical conditions and excess alcohol”. It fails to mention those injured during ‘control and restraint’ interventions, or indeed, those brutalised and abused in the process of intimidation, bullying and sadistic pleasure (To say nothing of those “unlawfully killed” as a result of such!).

The Forum for Preventing Deaths in Custody also released figures that reveal almost 600 die each year in custody. This includes police cells, prisons and other units such as secure psychiatric and Local Authority facilities, which deal mainly with children and adolescents. The report states that two-thirds of these deaths are by natural causes, the remainder being from “killings” (perpetrator not mentioned), “accidents” and “self-inflicted”. A quick calculation reveals that around 200 people a year die in custody by means other than natural causes.

Further statistical data available from Inquest (www.inquest.org.uk), an organisation which monitors deaths in police custody and prison, reveals that 13 people died in the ‘safe hands’ of the Metropolitan Police, and 33 with other Forces across the UK in 2007. The data is broken down into four categories; Custody, Pursuit, Road Traffic Accidents, and Shootings. Data is further broken down into three categories; ethnic minority, women and youth deaths.

To some such statistics may be quite shocking. However, as anarchist-communists we are under no illusions as to the heinous, vicious and repressive nature of the State and all its institutions, of which, along with capitalism, we seek to abolish.

Teachers Strike

Teachers are going on strike on 24th April. They are protesting against the governments recent 3 year pay deal which sees them falling behind inflation yet again. They are the first group of public sector workers to take strike action, we predict they will not be the last.

This is the first national strike by teachers in over 21 years. Resistance welcomes this strike and is sure that thousands of school kids will too!

We are equally sure that on its own this strike is unlikely to achieve its objectives. Education workers are split between at least six unions. This strike is being organised by only one of them, the National Union of Teachers (NUT). It is only NUT teachers who are striking. This weakens and divides them.

Even if the NUT are successful, the strike will do nothing to benefit the thousands of teaching assistants, clerical workers, cleaners and cooks who keep schools running.

If public sector workers are to succeed in fighting pay cuts to pay for the credit “crunch”, they need to be united. That means all the workers taking action at the same time. It means uniting across union barriers and linking up demands, striking together at the same time.

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is a small but growing organisation of workers who aim to do just that. They are holding a meeting on May 17th in Manchester to discuss plans to build a genuine movement of all education workers. They can be contacted at education@iww-manchester.org.uk.

Crunch, what crunch?

Barclays investment banking supreme Bob Diamond, head of Barclays Capital, was paid £36 million last year, despite a £1.6 billion loss in the credit crunch and seeing their shares almost halved in the same period. (Incidentally, they still managed a £7 billion profit!). Just for the record; frontline workers at Barclays earn between £11,900 and £19,975 for an Assistant Manager per annum. Oh the joys of capitalism, don’t you just love it……

Make hay while the sun shines - you’re on borrowed time!
A bad time to be a fascist

Fascists seen off in Glasgow

Buchanan Street in Glasgow has long been a place where political groups of various flavours set up stalls and sell newspapers and political propaganda. Walking down the street on a Saturday afternoon you will find groups such as Glasgow Anarchists and various leftists all distributing political material. The usual place to find these groups is at the junction of Buchanan Street and Gordon Street. Saturday April 5th, however saw a different political group attempting to hawk their particular message. This group however were not welcome on Buchanan street, or any street for that matter. It was the British National Party, the BNP.

Three of these racist scumbags had decided that they were going to sell the “Voice of Freedom”, the vile hate rag of their party. Word quickly went around the different stalls and a group of ten assorted leftists moved down to surround them and stop them from selling their filth.

The three who were selling papers quickly departed to a slow hand clap from the people of Glasgow. However one particular goon who was talking to them and shaking hands decided to hang around, talking into his mobile phone as if calling for back up, after about ten minutes of arguing people decided to ignore the scum and get on with the day. Not long after the gruesome threesome departed news arrived that the three BNP paper sellers had started selling their rags at the junction of Buchanan Street and St. Vincent Street. This time an even larger group of assorted anti-fascists marched up Buchanan Street and surrounded them.

Chants of “BNP off our streets!” began as various people argued with them and called the BNP out for the scum they are. Having already been moved on once though, they dug their heels in and refused to move, even when the crowd around them swelled with people angered at seeing Nazis on our streets. Eventually they had their papers taken off them, destroyed and distributed into the bins. Having no hate rags to sell they then buggered off to a great cheer from all on the street.

We cannot allow these pedlars of hate and bigotry to organize or spread their disease, they must be confronted wherever they rear their ugly heads.

from Yorkshire anti-fascists
Resistance 100 commented on the fraudulent activities and financial irregularities of Derek Conway MP. So it follows, and comes as no surprise to us, that questions have been raised at the “expense” accounts of other Members of Parliament. In October 2007 the House of Commons announced that MPs ran up expenses of £87.6 million in the previous year - on top of their basic salaries of £59,686. Labour MP Shahid Malik was the costliest at £185,421, while the cheapest was Philip Hollobone of the Conservative Party, claiming a mere £44,551, small change no less.

Management are pressurising staff to accept an abolition of incremental pay, an extension of the working week (which amounts to 3 working weeks per year at no extra pay), downgrading of posts throughout Shelter’s housing advice and support services and changes to redundancy policy involving a massive reduction in salary protection for redeployed staff. Staff are also now being told they must sign to a reduction in their terms and conditions. If they refuse to sign, management are threatening to implement the changes without consent by sacking staff and offering re-employment on new contracts with reduced terms and conditions.

These attacks will directly affect the quality of much needed advice and support given by the charity. It will seriously impact upon Shelter’s policy and campaigning work which is meant to be informed by the experiences of badly housed or homeless people. Front line staff are already increasingly less able to pass on their experiences to staff in campaigning and policy because of top-down pressure to deliver contractual targets.

This is all while senior management earn top-tax bracket salaries and will be materially unaffected by these changes. There appears to be money for the organisation to employ highly paid consultants and a swanky refurbishment of the head office, while the mortgages, bills and rent of Shelter workers are considered expendable.

It’s good to see that sickies are on the increase. From 164 million days in 2005 to 175 million in 2006. The CBI who compiles such data, will not be releasing figures for 2007 until later this year, however, predictions are that this trend will continue to rise. The CBI believes that over 20 million of these days are “suspect” and cost industry around £500 per worker. Such a staggeringly high amount is bound to cripple the capitalist economy. In the words of Tom Hodgkinson, author of How to be Idle, “Throw a sickie and get a life”.

And in the military people have been taking things even further. Figures released in 2007 revealed that there were almost 12,000 cases of military personnel going AWOL since the start of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. However, the Ministry of Defence reports that the majority of these absconders either returned to duty of their own volition or were apprehended by the authorities - although almost 1,000 remain on-the-run. The Ministry of Defence has announced that Army is now carrying out a study to identify the reasons why troops are going AWOL. Durr....
In December last year Citizens Advice Scotland announced that a couple of people are finding it impossible to prove they have paid Poll Tax charges that local councils insist are still due. There was a huge non-payment campaign after the Poll Tax was introduced into Scotland in April 1989, and in England and Wales a year later. By the end of 2006 an impressive £435 million was still outstanding! Unlike England and Wales, where this kind of debt is written off after six years, Scottish councils can still demand payment up to 20 years later.

Nasty council authorities, clearly not content with the demise of the Tories after the anti-Poll Tax struggle, have pursued individuals and even partners of non-payers, using tactics like freezing bank accounts. A couple in their eighties had £100 taken from their bank account for community charge due between 1989-93 and the council warned another £600 would be taken shortly. The couple are adamant they had paid but no longer have any proof such as bank statements or receipts. As well as these 'mistakes' there are clearly thousands of principled non-payers who either can't pay, won't pay, or both.

The CAS, who are taking the issue to the Scottish parliament, said "How many people actually have personal financial records going back to the early 1990s? After almost 20 years, it's time to finally bring the curtain down on the Poll Tax." We couldn't agree more. It's not nice to be hounded by council debt collectors, but fair play to the Scots where one in four CAS clients has an outstanding debt! This just shows how solid the collective non-payment campaign was with people feeling strong enough to resist, knowing that others were doing the same. On the other hand, it seems that the council umbrella group Cosla now considers we are weak enough to pursue us as individuals without reprisals, saying there will be "no amnesty" for those refusing to pay. It also shows up the danger of moving towards a universal identity database that can be used track and link up information about our lives.

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.

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Also visit: www.afed.org.uk and www.iaf-ifa.org

Subscriptions to resistance costs £4 from the address above for 12 issues. A two issue subscription to our magazine, Organise! for revolutionary anarchism, is also £4.

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