



YER NAME'S NOT DOWN. YOU'RE NOT COMIN' IN

SchNEWS

Printed and Published in Brighton by Justice?



Friday 21st July 2000

<http://www.schnews.org.uk/> Issue 267 Free/Donation

"IS IT 'COS I IS BLACK?"

Last saturday, the CAGE anti-prison kick-it-off massive hit the mean streets of Staines. They went to give a big up and say 'nuff respect to the people in the Harmondsworth Detention Centre, only a couple of miles down the road. There, the foreign refugee massive is locked up in prison until someone decides what's to happen to them. We have heard that the UK immigration service says they is not being racist, even though the refugees are hardly any of them white boys and many are from Kurdistan and countries like that that no-one's even heard of.

These refugees have had the cheek to try and seek a better life in this country - apparently they are not just trying to get banged up without doing anything, so they can get a real hard reputation and bit of cred.

The detention centre is conveniently placed right outside Heathrow Airport, and can hold up to 95 detainees. It seems the police don't even need to plant a stash on any of this lot, as the inmates can't leave, don't have none of the normal rights of detained suspects and, surrounded by barbed wire, they are guilty until proven innocent.

well fit inmates

The Harmondsworth hardcore picket crew had been in the Staines area anyway, occupying the site of a proposed women's prison in the heart of the notorious rural Spellthorpe district. They was hangin' there all weekend as part of a real campaign against to the government's prison-building programme, and apparently not because they'd heard the inmates were going to be all well fit.

Last Friday was the anniversary of Bastille Day, when all the way back in 1789, people in France stormed into a prison to release the prisoners. All of the people knew they better had not mess with those revolutionaries, who ruled the streets for a whole period called the Terror. Since 1993 the UK prison population has shot up from 45,000 to a record breakin' 65,000, boosting our image as the number one gangsta territory.

pretty useless

Indra was one of those present at the Harmondsworth picket. She told us what happened: "Some of the 100 demonstrators climbed onto the top of the fence surrounding the centre and made contact with

the refugees. They ignored pleas by the police to come down and stop damaging the fence! It felt pretty useless just standing around the fence, so I climbed it too. I had to see the refugees' faces. But what the hell are you 'sposed to say to them? 'How's the food, oh and sorry our country treats you like shit!'

"Next day, 12 of us armed with phone cards, propaganda and cherries entered Harmondsworth with the names of people we had managed to get to speak to. I wanted to meet those inside, though the idea scared me. The security had a little freak-out, confiscating our literature and cherries. But they had to let us meet the inmates. We encountered people from Algeria, Kosova, Albania, and other war-torn beneficiaries of the British arms industry. They welcomed us warmly.

"One refugee, Salim Rambo, had been caught up in the civil war in Zaire and now fears for his life if he returns home. Salim had been living in London for nine months waiting for his case to be heard. He told us that he had been taken to Hermondsworth by policemen who jumped him, after he responded to an invitation to tell his story to a solicitor. He still has not seen a solicitor or had his case listened to.

"Salim told us that inmates who come to understand too much about what rights they have, are moved elsewhere so as not to stir up the other detainees. We learned that he was due to be deported on Tuesday to Germany. Germany had already refused his asylum application, so from there he would be deported straight back to Zaire and possible death. I will never forget the look of confusion and terror in his face. We could only get him a solicitor."

a bit o' human beat-box

Early on Tuesday morning 11 people from CAGE leafleted other passengers about to board the same flight as Salim was on. One passenger was arrested after standing up and refusing to let the flight depart. The flight was delayed for two hours, until eventually Salim was removed at the demand of the pilot. Immigration officials threatened him with a beating, but he is now back in detention in London.

Salim's new solicitor believes his deportation order was illegal as he did not have proper legal representation. By deporting him in this way, without access to legal rep-

resentation, the Home Secretary may have been in breach of international law. This is being taken up in court.

Similar actions in Belgium have led to commercial airlines refusing to deport asylum seekers. A spokesperson from CAGE said: "It is unbelievable that BA and its shareholders are profiting from the forced removal of people from the UK. This is the ultimate in putting profit before life, and it is nice to see that people here are standing up to it...literally!"

The passenger who got nicked has now been released on bail.

* There are plans to close down Harmondsworth and replace it with a new complex which will be able to hold up to 500 refugees, including children. Close Down Harmondsworth Campaign, 10 Endsleigh Road, Southall, UB2 5QJ Tel: 07931 198501

* Defend Asylum Seekers Rally, Haslar Detention Centre Clayhall Road, Gosport, Hants Saturday 29th July 3-30pm. 023 92828149

* Contact CAGE, PO Box '68, Oxford, OX3 1RH Tel 07931 401962 www.veggies.org.uk/ cage (they also have excellent leaflets on the various private companies taking over the prison service)

* National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, 110 Hamstead Road, Birmingham B20 2QS Phone: 0121-554-6947 www.ncadc.demon.co.uk/

* Fight Racism in British Prisons! Public Meeting with Biba Sarkaria campaigner for Asian prisoners' rights, on the day after her release from Cookhamwood Prison Thursday 27 July, 7.00pm Conway Hall Red Lion Square, London WC1 nearest tube, Holborn. Organised by Asian Women Prisoners Support Group c/o Instrument House 207-215 Kings Cross Road WC1X 9DB Tel: 0207- 713-7907

*The Nation Civil Rights Movement and the Campaign Against Racism and Fascism are proposing to set up a Civil Rights Caravan to spread the word about asylum seekers. It is planning to travel around the UK for a month in September, linking up with other events including the Barbed Wire Conference in Oxford on 15-17th September. They really need more people to get involved, so if you're interested contact CARF 0207 837 1450 www.carf.demon.co.uk

*NoBorders, the group that emerged from the Mayday Conference is holding a public meeting with Reclaim the Streets in London on August 7th at the Cock Tavern, Phoenix Road, 7.30pm. Contact Enoborder@aol.com. The aim of the meeting is to discuss various de-centralised actions in London to coincide with the IMF/World Bank's September meeting in Prague. Since the agenda for the Prague conference is labour and border controls, actions which target the asylum seeker system are especially welcome.

Cape Bites the Dust

"When I was a kid, the company kindly delivered a heap of fine asbestos dust for our school grounds. It was soft, nice for us to play long jump and high jump. I would be surprised if any of my classmates are still alive today." Schalk Lube

Campaigners were celebrating a historic victory in the High Court yesterday when the Law Lords gave the green light for former South African asbestos miners to sue Cape plc for compensation in the UK. Action for Southern Africa commented "This is a landmark judgement that strengthens the case against multinational companies operating double standards on health and safety of their workers or protection of the environment."

Cape had insisted that any court case for compensation must be heard in South Africa, but with the country's legal-aid system in a state of collapse the case wouldn't have been heard for years. The miners' lawyers point out "The decision to expose their staff to fatal illnesses was made in Britain. The resulting profits flowed to Britain. Yet the company is saying the trial should be heard in a country where it has no assets which can be seized if the judge finds against it." Despite international sanctions and the known dangers of asbestos dust, Cape Plc mined and milled asbestos in apartheid South Africa up until 1979. As a consequence, 1000s of people who lived or worked in these areas have contracted asbestosis or mesothelioma. Among the 3,000 claimants, all of whom are very poor, there are also more than 300 dependants of those who have died. Then there is the matter of the compensation itself - which is likely to be higher in the UK. But whereas in Britain the first asbestos regulations came into force in 1931, and in the 1960s, the asbestos exported by Cape from South Africa even carried warning stickers. But, S. African miners weren't even issued with protective clothing.

As Audrey van Schalkwyk, a 54-year-old senior nurse pointed out "I was born in Koegas in 1946 and I grew up there. Many of us children worked because our parents on the mine did not have anyone to look after us, so they took us along. My father would go into the mine in a locomotive with headlights. They would bring the asbestos rock out in coco pans and we, the mothers and children, would break it up with our hands and with hammers, getting the fibres out and sorting the different grades. From there, it would be taken to the mill."

In comparison, Cape is estimated to have spent £30m on out-of-court settlements for its workers at British factories. Still, none of this stopped the Cape's lawyers arguing that the levels of fibre found naturally in asbestos-rich areas of South Africa could have caused illness and there is no way of proving that mining operations contributed to people's sickness! ACTSA, 28 Penton St., London, N1 9SA Tel 0207 833 3133 email actsa@geo2.poptel.org.uk

Positive SchNEWS

Happy Birthday The Centre for Alternative Technology who are celebrating their 25th anniversary. In the 70's a group of young idealists occupied a derelict slate quarry to practice sustainable community living and hey presto! Today the Centre is recognised as Europe's foremost Eco-centres. It's 7 acres are open to the public with working displays of wind, water and solar power, low energy building, organic growing and natural sewage systems. For a copy of 'Crazy Idealist - the history of CAT' or a full list of publications and courses contact them at Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9AZ, Tel: 01654 703743 www.cat.org.uk

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SchNEWS in brief

Party on at a SchNEWS benefit at the Enigma, Ship St, on Weds. 2nd August 9-2 am with techno from **Ground Zero**. Free but make donations to a skint and still free SchNEWS ** Airline services in remote areas of **Indonesia's Papua province** have been severely disrupted with most flights grounded. The reason for this? Children and pigs wandering on the runways! "The local population continue to wander onto and off the runway, let their pigs roam free and children play there." Said an official from Wamena airport. ** Activists were arrested and held in custody over the weekend, near the site of the carnival against the **GM field trial** in Aberdeenshire. In the last two weeks about 20 percent of the crop has been destroyed by nocturnal visits! Meanwhile two more GM sites got stomped last week. The first one in Over Compton, Dorset involved activists dressing up in grim reaper outfits and destroying 1 of the 48 farm scale trials of GM maize. People did get nicked but Dorset's finest wouldn't let on how many. The second happened under cover of darkness nr Wivenhoe, Essex. 11 were arrested for criminal damage. www.gm-info.org.uk

Ten Years Too Long

"How long can the civilian population be exposed to such punishment for something they have never done?" Hans von Sponeck, former UN Humanitarian Coordinator.

August 6th marks ten years since the United Nations imposed economic sanctions upon Iraq, designed to target Saddam Hussein following his invasion of Kuwait and store of nuclear weapons.

Ten years on sees the country in the grip of a humanitarian disaster, virtually all imports of food, medicine and education materials have been denied and the years 1991 to 1998 saw the deaths of over half a million children.

Iraq is a country which is slowly dying, and dying at the hands of a Western foreign policy whose only victims are civilians.

Voices in the Wilderness who campaign for the removal of the sanctions are planning a mass civil disobedience on August 6th to mark the 10 year anniversary. A procession will begin from Trafalgar Square ending with a die-in to mark the thousands of sanctions related deaths.

Voices in the Wilderness, 16b Cherwell Street, Oxford, OX4 1BG 01865 243232

Melpractice

Midland Expressway Ltd., the company behind the first toll-motorway in Britain, are three and a half years behind schedule thanks to site occupations by protestors and the doubling of construction costs. Despite the original construction firm, Kvaerner, pulling out, MEL -bolstered by new banking loans- still plans to build a whopping 3 lane, 27 mile long bypass on greenbelt land just north of Birmingham. As well as devastating the local countryside and communities, it will also do little to ease congestion in the long term and will certainly lead the way for further greenbelt expansion.

Next Friday 27th there's an 11am protest outside the MEL office at Warwick House, 737 Warwick Rd in Solihull, West Midlands. There's a party and picnic in the park on Hednesford Rd. off A5 Watling Street, Brownhills West the next day. Action against the Toll Motorway (ATOM) 07818 687742 or e-mail: actionagainstthetollmotorway@hotmail.com.

Inside SchNEWS

Last October **Lee Lawrence** intervened in a racist attack on a 14 year old Somali boy by 9 white youths, and his action allowed the boy to escape. A few weeks later he voluntarily gave a statement to the police, but was amazingly charged with a racially aggravated assault because he accused the attackers of being racist! The court case has been adjourned until 1st August, with the judge suggesting the prosecution should review its case.

Demo at Camberwell Magistrates Court, Camberwell Green, 1 August 1.00pm.

* An Oxford Woman demonstrating against her landlord, Cherwell Housing Trust, for failing to act against racists in her block was arrested by the police for - inciting racial hatred! She was quickly released, but Cherwell gained an injunction against her to try and stop her demonstrating against them. Luckily she managed to get this ruling overturned and Cherwell have agreed to finally look at the problem of racist tenants.

* This week the three black men convicted of the so called "M25 murders" were released after spending 12 years behind bars.

* People with experience of police harassment or injustice are invited to speak out at a public meeting with the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir John Stevens at Lambeth Town Hall, 25th July 6pm. Contact: Movement for Justice 07957 696939

WANT A RABBIT?

Starting with a site invasion and a raid by the Animal Liberation Front, it took a mere 12 days of campaigning to close down Regal Rabbits who had supplied rabbits to the vivisection industry for 22 years. The owner asked what he could do to stop the protests; 'closed down' came the simple reply - he did - nice one! Animal rights campaigners were elated but a little out of pocket after spending £7000 on campaign literature! Homes are now needed for 1152 rabbits. If you can offer some rabbits a good home phone 07020 936956.

* More good news for animals: a planned monkey farm in Catalonia, Spain, will not go ahead as the state has just passed a law forbidding the breeding of monkeys for vivisection.

* Austria has outlawed pig-wrestling, where near-naked women wrestle pigs in a mud pit at nightclubs. Animal rights groups protested it was degrading to pigs...

...and finally...

Party-goers wanting to find out about last week's Essential festival rang Brighton Tourist Information Centre for some information on where they might stay. They found a recorded message telling them the local tourism enquiries number had been changed to a premium rate. It seems some people resented this, seeing it as a shameless attempt to cash in on the expected influx in enquiries over the festival period. One hacker managed to tap into the enquiries line pin number, and decided to substitute their recorded own message for that of the Tourist Information Centre. And the new message ran?

'Thank-you for calling the Brighton Tourist Information Centre. Please note we have changed our enquiries line to a premium rate number because we'd like to make a great deal of money out of you. That way we can go to the Festival, enhance our own copious narcotics budget and get completely trashed.' Well, something like that..

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all refugees that trying to be high-flyers would be just plane madness. Honest