



NO ROOM AT THE INN

The theme of abuse runs through the whole bill

Statewatch

As the Kosovan refugee crisis continues, New Labour's draconian plans for asylum seekers are finally out in the open.

Kosovans arriving on our shores can rightly expect decent treatment after the nightmares they have had to endure. They won't have to go through years of asylum-seeking hell to prove they are genuine victims of persecution or locked up in detention centres on arrival because they haven't got the right papers (always an easy one to get the right papers when you're fleeing a conflict or escaping political persecution). They'll get full Income Support payments, be able to take jobs and be free to travel and live wherever they choose in the country. Which is only fair surely.

But woe betide any asylum seeker who arrives in the UK from an obscure country trying to escape an unheard of war or dodgy dictatorship once the Immigration and Asylum Bill becomes law.

Hope Hanlon, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:

"It is one of the worst Bills ever brought before the House of Commons" (that's saying something!)

Forget Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (*"Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy asylum"*) Measures outlined in the 138 clauses of the bill include:

* The abolition of welfare benefits for asylum seekers is to be replaced with a voucher system, plus a 'cor blimey what shall I do with a whole' £1 a day cash for adults and 50p per child. This will put asylum seekers 30% below the official poverty line. Maybe the Home Office have conveniently forgotten evidence from the Refugee Council about the effect of withdrawing cash benefits. Of 200 asylum-seekers recently surveyed, three quarters were utterly penniless and had to walk everywhere, and 60% did not have enough to eat on a daily basis.

* They will have no say in where they can live and instead be dispersed all over the country to "reception zones", away from relatives, community networks and specialist services.

* Immigration officers will be given powers of arrest without warrant, of breaking into premises, of searching arrested persons both on the street and (including strip-search) in custody, and powers to seize material.

* Lorry drivers who carry illegal entrants will be fined £2,000 per person - including babies.

When it was pointed out that many lorries are sealed and impossible to open from the inside, and that many asylum-seekers had died from suffocation, one minister dismissed the accounts as "tedious"

* Children of asylum-seekers will be exempt from the provisions of the Children Act.

* Airline liaison officers to examine and refuse passengers as they board.

The government reckon they can get away with all this because by 2001 all new asylum cases will be dealt with in six months.

So what about this - the Immigration and Nationality Department that deals with refugees, already have a backlog of 80,000 cases at its headquarters in Croydon and its computers essential for tracking files are in a state of near collapse. Their web-site asks people not to call and claims are currently taking 17 months to process. The staff who are leaving in droves will, if the bill is made law, be asked to deal with the administration of the new voucher system as well. A new computer system, due to be delivered next month, is unlikely to be ready in time. Doesn't exactly inspire confidence now does it.

So SchNEWS asks why is such a draconian bill going through parliament?

This bill will cut costs and make life so unpleasant that others will be deterred from coming. But surely wanting to live in the UK is not a crime? Fleeing repression and war certainly isn't. Yet Britain has adopted the Fortress Europe mentality where every asylum seeker is seen as a bogus criminal. Where refugees are a visible and unwelcome reminder of the precarious balance of the new world order and of the human consequences of International Monetary Fund structural adjustment programmes, of arm sales to repressive regimes and of corrupt aid deals. The politicians pandering to the right wing press reckon that cracking down is seen as a vote winner.

Yet the positive reception that the Kosovar refugees have received from the people of this

CRAP TRIAL OF THE WEEK

Last summer Gill Emerson had the cheek to sit on a wall while Prince Charles visited Gravesend, Kent. Before the Prince arrived, police swooped on her saying she held anti-monarchist views. During the arrest, 43 year old Gill sustained facial injuries including a broken nose and was later sprayed in her cell with CS Gas - then strip-searched on the grounds of maybe "concealing a weapon" None was found. Hours later she was charged with criminal damage to a police video camera. Gill is up in Gravesend Magistrates Court, Old Town Hall, High St. next Monday (19th) 9.45 am. SchNEWS would like to point out that the fact Gill Emerson successfully sued Kent Police a few years back, is a member of the Kent Socialist Alliance and local organiser of the Anti Nazi League has nothing to do with the case. Tel 01474 566701

country shows that when people can see others suffering on our screens rather than the hysterical shoutings of the tabloid press they can extend a warm welcome.

THE REALITY

A total of 34,775 persons were kicked out of the UK in 1998 - 668 persons per week - 4 persons per hour.

A 25 year old Kosovan student arrived at Heathrow en route for Canada in February. She was pregnant with her first child and still traumatised by seeing the Serbs destroy her home. Although she was with her husband, she had been forced to leave the rest of her family behind and had no idea whether they were alive. However, the couple had made the mistake of becoming Kosovan refugees before the war with Serbia had made them politically fashionable.

When they were caught at Heathrow using false Greek passports, they said they wished to claim asylum, but instead were arrested for using false documents in transit, separated and sent to prison. She has just been released from Holloway, where the insanitary conditions made her ill and the isolation made her depressed. Her husband was sent to Wormwood Scrubs where he remains, although he may be released with an electronic tag this month.

* 'Crimes of arrival: immigrants and asylum-seekers in the new Europe' by Frances Webber Essential reading on the European wide criminalisation of asylum seekers. Available from Statewatch, PO Box 1516, London N16 0EW Tel 0181 802 1882 www.statewatch.org

* National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, 101 Villa Rd., Birmingham, B19 1NH Tel 0121 554 6947 www.ncadc.demon.co.uk/

SchNews
Book Launch
HEADMIX COLLECTIVE
GROUND ZERO
Wednesday 19th May
Bar Centro, Ship St
7 - 11pm £2

Raffle, Wine, MegaMash & FAF Decor, Cheap beer

SMARTIE-ARSES

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) criticised Nestlé on Wednesday for their irresponsible promotion of their milk products in the developing world. The ASA upheld a complaint brought by Baby Milk Action, about a newspaper advert in which Nestlé claimed that it had marketed it's infant formula "ethically and responsibly" both before and since the introduction of the international code of the marketing of breast milk substitutes in 1981. After two years of consideration, the ASA ruled that Nestlé's claims "went too far", the ruling cannot be published as Nestlé has lodged an appeal.

The World Health Organisation estimates that more than a million babies die every year from diarrhoea picked up through unhygienic bottle feeding.

For years now, Nestlé have promoted their product in underdeveloped countries, relying heavily on the misconception that 'West is best' to convince mothers that their babies will grow bigger and stronger if they feed them with a western product rather than their own breast milk. Of course, after a short period of bottle feeding a mother's breast milk dries up and another consumer is born. Reversing the decline in breastfeeding could save the lives of 1.5 million infants every year according to United Nations Children's Fund. UNICEF states that in areas with unsafe water, a bottle-fed baby is 25 times more likely to die from diarrhoea than a breastfed one.

Baby milks are over-diluted to make them last longer, while breastmilk is free, safe and best for all babies - but Nestlé know that if they don't get babies hooked on the bottle, they don't do business. One of their dodgier promotional practices was the use of free supplies which had a significant effect in convincing health workers and mothers to favour artificial milk over breastmilk.

**Nestlé provides information to mothers which promotes bottle feeding and discourages breastfeeding.

**Donates free samples and supplies to health facilities to encourage bottle feeding

**Gives inducements to health workers for promoting its products

**Does not provide clear warnings on labels of the benefits of breastfeeding and dangers of artificial feeding. In some cases the labels are in a language that mothers are unlikely to understand. Nestlé, makes a profit while others count the cost

The Baby Milk Action (BMA) group is a small organisation waging a big battle against a powerful multinational - they need your support. For a start, stop consuming Nestlé products and that includes Nescafé. The BMA have information to help and advise you how to protest effectively against these unscrupulous bastards. After dropping sales their worst nightmare is public opinion turning against them so your voice is important and your cash even more - don't buy their products.

Contact the BMA Tel: 01223 464420 Fax: 01223 464417 E-mail: babymilkacti@gn.apc.org Nestlé UK Ltd., St George's House, Croydon, Surrey. CR9 1NR.

*When Marketing Week magazine asked Marjorie Thompson of Saatchi & Saatchi how Nestlé should respond to the bad publicity surrounding its baby food marketing activities. "She suggests the way to counteract the bad publicity is to go on the offensive by using advertising showing the benefits of Nestlé financial contributions to charities."

DON'T FORGET NATIONAL BREAST-FEEDING WEEK SUN 17TH-21ST MAY. Freephone: 0800 555 777

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SchNEWS in brief

June 18th benefits: Tues 18th May @ the Cuba 9 -2, funky techno from Cristian Vogel, Counterattack, Da Void, direct action films £2/1 Thurs 20th May @ the Volks Tavern 9 - 2, Mr.Night & Mr .Day, Blatantly, Touchpaper, DJ tha Funky Ghecko, £2 / £5 tickets for both gigs + SchNews book launch from the Peace Centre.

The A Spire social centre, is a squatted church left empty for over 4 years by Leeds university, now turned into an autonomous zone www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Parliament/3344 **Could any of the original Weymouth Road Protesters contact Chris on 01270 526 244 asap.** Stammer Organics Open Day Sat 22 May 10am-4pm Bring a picnic.Tel: (01273) 388673** Moulsecomb Forest Garden & Wildlife Project Open Day Sun 23rd May 12 noon 'till 4pm. Visit the weird and wonderful forest garden.The whole site is organic and may soon be designated a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. Tel: Kate (01273) 628535** Anyone lose a small blue, pink and yellow rucksack on the circle line tube, containing skates and a jumper during the reclaim the streets tube party? It's at the Angel Station lost property. ** This Sunday (16) there's an open day for the Native American Educational Trust at Evolution Arts Centre, Silwood Terrace, Brighton 12 noon **

TARRED TO THE MAX

The construction firm Tarmac has been breaking such different sorts of records-Roy Castle would be proud. They recently scooped four of the government and construction industry's 1999 'Quality in Construction' major awards, including that in the environment category. Which may raise hollow laughs from people in the Bestwood area of Nottinghamshire, if not as hollow as the yawning quarry Tarmac intends to inflict on the forest there. The judges displayed an even more finely honed sense of irony in awarding a Tarmac subsidiary the Safety award, lauding their 'degree of absolute commitment [which] is fantastic', and reflecting the 10(!) awards Tarmac companies have this week received from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. Now, this ain't going to raise even a hollow laugh (or much else) from any of the 13 Tarmac employees killed at work over the last decade. And that's not just a rogue statistic; to place it in context, note that Tarmac was convicted in that time of more Health and Safety offences than any other UK firm, almost twice as many as the next worst offender. (Let's take a quick glance at the cost benefit analysis: the company received fines of, on average, just over 3 grand for a seriously injured employee, just over 11 grand for a death; while such skimping on H&S considerations may have contributed to their truly fantastic average annual profits of £184 million). That is a serious record. Perhaps just as well they didn't employ Roy Castle, who died before Tarmac could get their hands on him.

GIVEN A GOOD SEEING TOO

At last eight test sites growing genetically modified oil seed rape got a good kicking last Friday. The action could well have set the commercialisation of genetic oil rape back 12 months. The Genetic Engineering Network (GEN) learned of this unprecedented removal from a group calling themselves "Ambridge Against Genetix". According to GEN this takes the number of sites that have been decontaminated this year to 14. And as the Ambridge crew point out "this is only the start of the summer"

* A total of 37 genetic sites were destroyed in 1998 according to GEN, PO Box 9656, London, N4 Tel 0181 374 9516 email genetics@gn.apc.org

Inside SchNEWS

U.S. class struggle anarchist prisoner Harold Thompson is having a rough time at the moment. Due to a corrupt prison librarian official working hand in glove with White Aryan Brotherhood scum, Harold has been brutally assaulted, robbed and placed in segregation for his 'own safety'. Because of his work as prison house lawyer, officials seem to be colluding with white supremacists to halt his good work.If you can please write protesting (civilly) to : Warden Jack Morgan, Turney Centre Industrial Prison, Route 1, Only, Tennessee 37140-9709, USA, in order that Harold might get a transfer avoiding further White Aryan Brotherhood victimisation. You can write to Harold at the same address. Harold H Thompson #93992.

BACK WITH A VENGEANCE

The Ministry of Defence have completed the new Trident Submarine at a cost of a mere £1,000 million to the taxpayer and in keeping with their general sensitivity they have named their latest toy - VENGEANCE. What kind of minds are at work here? Despite overwhelming opposition-80% of Scots say 'NO' to Trident - all nuclear submarines are kept at Faslane in Scotland.

Meanwhile, as SchNEWS went to press 3 Swedish activists, arrested inside the Marconi Marine shipyard in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria in September last year were awaiting the outcome of their trial. They were carrying rope ladders, crowbars and hammers emblazoned with the slogans, "All life is sacred", "Violence ends where love begins" and "For global justice". Their intention - to prevent a serious crime against humanity. For this they were locked up until late January when they were unexpectedly released. After a brief period of freedom they returned to the Barrow shipyard with 20 other activists to ask the workers and security to help continue the disarmament of the Trident. They were nicked again.

Vengeance was moved to Coulport missile depot on April 30th and them last week it went to the Isle of Bute. Seems the MOD are keeping their weapon out of harm's way!

Contact: Trident Ploughshares 2000, 42-46 Bethel St, Norwich, NR2 1NR, Britain.

* Faslane Peace Camp 01436 820901

* Time to abolish war - a citizens' assembly Sat 22nd May 11 am Central Hall, Westminster Tickets from Hague Appeal for Peace, 11 Venetia Rd., London, N4 1EJ www.haguepeace.org

TRAINING DAY-SchNEWS needs some more hands on deck, so why not come along to our next training day: Wednesday 26th May 12 noon. Limited spaces, so book yer place now.

...and finally...

Radioactive boy-scouts may soon be roaming the countryside! The Scout Association, being seriously strapped for cash have accepted a £30,000 sponsorship from British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL). BNFL have invested in this dodgy bit of P.R in an attempt to enhance their image by connecting themselves to the wholesome Kumbya crew. The BNFL logo will be proudly worn by scouts on their proficiency badges. SchNEWS wonders if the badge is for proficiency in nuclear-bomb making? At least this could serve as a method for identifying which scouts have been exposed to the questionable benefits of access to BNFL's laboratories at Sellafield in Cumbria. Alternatively you could just watch to see which of them start to glow in the dark!

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers not to be the wrong colour, come from the wrong country and have the gall to want to make the UK your home. Look just cos this country invaded half the world, colonised, stole resources, and generally didn't act very nice, doesn't mean that just cos you and your family have been tortured you can come here. Bloody check. Whatever next?