



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER SPARKLIN'

SchNEWS

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Free/Donation

ON THE IRAQ!!

"Whatever its political effectiveness, the success or failure of which is for others to judge, the sanctions regime has clearly had serious onsequences for the ordinary Iraqi population, forcing many into poverty, destroying human dignity and taking lives." 1998 World Disasters Report.

How best to celebrate a birthday? With a spot of hypocrisy and a wee sip of genocide UN stylee. SchNEWS congratulates the UN on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Human Rights of the Child, the most signed-up-to piece of international law in history, designed to ensure that "there is a place at the table for all the world's children" (Clinton). (Only 2 states never signed it.... Somalia and the US). But the UN has broken its promise to Iraqi children, and SchNEWS has iced the words "Imperialist Scum" on the UN's birthday cake. According to UNICEF, up to six thousand children die each month as a direct result of the UN imposed sanctions and 32% of children under 5 are chronically malnourished.

WHOSE WAR IS IT ANYWAY?

"Sanctions are amongst the most powerful and lethal weapons in our armoury." Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State

Even worse than conventional warfare, economic sanctions hit the people harder than governments, and in Iraq they have created a humanitarian disaster. Yet in May 98 the foreign office attempted to contradict hard facts, arguing that *"The government has every sympathy for the people of Iraq. Sanctions are aimed at the Iraqi regime and not at them"*. But UNICEF estimate that if the blockade continues 1.5 million more children will suffer malnutrition and unchecked illnesses. *"It is clear that children are bearing the brunt of current economic hardship...they must be protected from the impact of sanctions. Otherwise they will continue to suffer, and that we cannot accept."* Heffinck, UNICEF rep. Baghdad.

The sanctions imposed on Iraq are the most draconian ones ever imposed by the UN. The UN sanctions committee (based in New York) has the power to veto any materials from going to Iraq, and can include anything not deemed "essential". The list of banned items reads as both tragic and ridiculous: syringes, chlorine for treating water, isotopes that can diagnose and treat cancers (particularly in demand since depleted uranium was used against Iraq in the Gulf War, raising cancers by 10 fold and causing babies to be born without eyes, limbs, genitalia, and with their organs on the outside of their bodies), ambulances, cassettes and CDs, toys (a necessary component of all nuclear arsenals), wheel-barrow (the most malicious of weapons), shoes and polish, ash trays, beads, Vaseline, saucers, mirrors, ink, swimming costumes, rulers, soap, hearing aids, children's clothes, balls, hair pins...

Before the sanctions Iraq had the best national health service in Arab Middle East, 93% of the

population had access to a hospital. Now children are suffering and dying from preventable and curable diseases due to a massive lack of medical supplies. \$360m. of drugs were imported annually before 1990, in 1996 a mere \$13m. were imported. A visiting child psychologist reported that some children no longer play games, because they reminded them of the dead friends they used to play with.

The UN imposed the punitive sanctions in 1990, initially to get Iraq out of Kuwait, whilst they are now linked to the inspection and monitoring of Iraq's weapons. Last Dec. the US and Britain launched Operation Desert Fox to punish Iraq's repeated non-compliance with the UN arms inspection, and the almost daily bombing has not ended, despite more than 10,000 death toll. Amongst the devastation water and sanitation systems were destroyed, the sanctions prohibit the import of equipment to repair the damaged infrastructure. Before the embargo 90% Iraqi's had access to safe drinking water, now only 50% have.

And while the UN plays Good West, Bad East it is worth remembering who supplied Iraq its weapons (during the Kurdish massacre that the sanctions were originally about and before the Gulf war). The US, Britain, Germany and France all have blood on their hands, and it was German companies that sold Iraq materials for nuclear and chemical weapons.

Smell a rat? It seems that the real issue cannot be disarmament. According to former arms inspector, Ritter, *"what has been disarmed is a very high percentage-over 90%"* In 1997 Albright stated that the sanctions would stay until Saddam goes.

The sanctions serve to contain Iraq not only militarily, but also economically. The crux of the matter is that the UN, acting as proxy for the US and its allies, wants to control potential revenue from Iraqi oil sales, impoverish Iraq and force a dependency on foreign imports. The UN's Special Commission (UNSCOM), set up in 1991 to monitor Iraq's disclosure and disarmament of its weapons of mass destruction, turned out to be a cover for US and British spies. It has been expelled from the UN, so sanctions continue with Iraq uninspected and thus the incident sheds light on the West's real concerns. From the horse's mouth indeed, Ritter (one of UNSCOM's key arms inspectors) resigned *"when it became clear that the US and Butler, Director of UNSCOM, were manipulating inspections as a vehicle for maintaining economic sanctions, instead of disarmament. I could not be part of that."*

In 1996 UNSCOM destroyed a veterinary medicines factory, claiming it was producing

SchNEWS 5th BIRTHDAY PARTY

Thursday 18th November 8-2am

Live entertainment, DJ's and videos

@ New Madeira Hotel, Marine Parade, Brighton £34

Ring office for ticket details

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For dishing out free food! People from Food Not Bombs keep getting arrested for handing out free food and drink to the low-income and homeless. 2 were nicked for giving out bagels and juice at UN Plaza in San Francisco. At least 50 heavily armed cops arrived as they tucked in and violently arrested many munchers, confiscating the remaining food. Since the US Dept. of Agriculture reckon that nearly 25 million Americans are so poor they don't get enough food, it's crazy that Food Not Bombs have had over 1000 arrests for sharing hundreds of thousands of veggie meals since 1988. SF Food Not Bombs, P.O. Box 40485 San Francisco, CA 94140 USA www.foodnotbombs.org

chemical weapons, that was supplying vaccines cheaply or free to the rest of the Middle East, and so undercutting the multinationals.....It's a stinking rat indeed. Dennis Halliday, former UN Humanitarian co-ordinator for Iraq, also resigned in disillusionment saying *"we are in the process of destroying an entire society...it is illegal and immoral."*

Everything's Albright?

Albright, as US ambassador to the UN in 1996, was asked *"half a million children are said to have died, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. Is the price worth it?"* She replied *"I think this is a very hard choice, but the price-we think the price is worth it."* Would it be worth it if our own kids were starved and bombed because the UN wanted to overthrow New Labour?

*Voices in the Wilderness, an anti-sanctions activist group, state *"we can no longer remain party to this slaughter"*, and challenge the sanctions by delivering medical supplies and text books to Iraq. Set up in the US in 1996 and the UK in 1998 they break the embargo by delivering goods without applying for export licences despite the risk of prosecution

More info.* 'Sanctions on Iraq: background, consequences and strategies' conference 13-14 Nov. in Cambridge, contact Campaign Against Sanctions on Iraq c/o Seb Wills, Clare College, Cambridge, CB2 1TL (to book send £20/£10 conc. <http://welcome.to/casi> *Voices in the Wilderness www.nonviolence.org.vitw email: voices@viwuk.freemove.co.uk tel.0181444 1605, 12 Trinity Rd, London, N2 8JJ. www.peaceaction.org . They will be talking in Brighton on 11th November 7.30pm The Exhibition Room, Brighton College of Technology, Pelham St.

* September's issue of New Internationalist was all about Iraq. Copies from Tower House, Larkhill St., Market Harborough, LE16 9EF www.newint.org/ *'The Scourging of Iraq, Sanctions, Law and Natural Justice' by Geoff Simons (Macmillan 1998) *'Sanctioning Saddam: The Politics of Intervention' Sarah Graham-Brown (IB Tauris 1999)

On The Job

You've probably heard all the fuss about the changes to Invalidity Benefit in the Welfare Reform Bill, but here's a few other juicy titbits the buzzword addicts at the DSS want to lay on you:

'Employment Zones': a designation for areas like Brighton with high unemployment where claimants will be 'farmed out' to private sector companies like Reed or Manpower, who'll reap profits from hassling claimants into crap jobs.

'Personal Capability Assessment': an even stricter 'All Work Test'. Intended to save £780m from Incapacity Benefit and severe disablement allowance by making the tests more rigorous and putting pressure on people too ill to work to find jobs.

'Trailblazers': seems the New Deal hasn't been too efficient 'cos most bosses saw many Dealers as 'unemployables'. Hence 'Trailblazers'- four weeks of intensive training to improve those sloppy 'behavioural skills'.

'ONE- Single Work Focussed Gateway': the all-new one-stop-shop for benefits. All yer benefits will soon be dealt with in one building! No more traipsing from dole queue to housing office! Trouble is, whatever benefit you're claiming for, the first question will be "Want a £3.60 job in Sainsburys? If not, why not?"

'Leisure Ratio Assessment': a new test to determine the percentage of yer giro you manage to set aside for drugs, drink and having fun. Those with more than 0.5% are earmarked for 'Trailblazers'; those with more than 4% are shot.

NB-only one of the above is a joke.

For full details of the Reform Bill, how it affects you and what you can do about it get issue 7 of Where's My Giro?, From Brighton Against Benefit Cuts, 4 Crestway Parade, Hollingdean, Brighton BN17BL www.muwc.demon.co.uk/

Keep Yer Fur On

A national week of action against the fur trade is scheduled for Nov 13- 20th, coinciding with the 'killing season' in Britain's mink farms. The London Day of Action is on the 13th; meet Trafalgar Sq. 11am. London Animal Action (LAA) Tel. 0171 278 3068. LAA is also keeping up a campaign to close down Zwirn's furriers- one of the few remaining in London. Barry Zwirn took out an injunction against activists who had maintained a solid picket outside his Mayfair shop for weeks. Customers dwindled almost to nothing, while legal costs for Zwirn were over £17,000! 'They have made our lives a misery' wails Barry; perhaps you'd like to phone and tell him what you think of his bloody business, too: 0171 629 2747. Zwirn's solicitors (Kingsley Napley, Knights Quarter, 14 St Johns Lane, London EC1M4AJ) are compelled by law to send a copy of the injunction to anyone who asks for it. Expensive- it's 50 pages long and very heavy!!

*The Ministry of Agriculture has announced plans to force fur farmers to increase security in the wake of Animal Liberation Front mink releases; trouble is, security is so expensive most farms could be forced out of business! The ministry suggests security guards, fence sensors, infra-red and CCTV; installment costs could be as much as £156,000 and yearly running costs up to £260,000.

*Horse & Hound, scummy bible of the hunt set, has a freephone number! You know what to do... 0800 316 5450

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SchNEWS in brief

Support is desperately needed at the ongoing inquest on the death of **Ricky Reel** (see SchNEWS 232). Contact the campaign c/o Southall Monitoring Group, Unity, PO Box 304, Southall, Middlesex, UB2 5YR. Tel.0181 843 2333. ** **Women Speak Out** Weekend gathering for women interested or involved in activism, London 19th-21st Nov. Tel. 01422 844932 or send SAE to 5 Barkers Terrace, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, Hx7 6AQ. ** **Advisory Service for Squatters** need new volunteers urgently. Tel. 0171 359 8814 ** **Benefit for the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign**, Gran Baile de Calaveras (day of the dead party) Music, food and bar. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. Tel. 0171 272 9619. Fri 19th Nov. 7.30 - Midnight. Tax £7/3.50 concs. ** **Fighting Indonesia in the Forest** - a talk by a West Papuan tribesman. Wed 10th Nov. 7.30 pm upstairs at the Hobgoblin Pub, London Road, Brighton. ** **Prisoners Day of Remembrance**, Bobby Sands/James Connolly Annual commemoration. Sun 14th Nov. McNamara Hall, Camden Irish Centre, Murray St./Camden sq., London NW5. 12.30pm, Entry £1 inc. social. (For more info ring the Wolfe Tone Society on 0181 442 8778.) ** **Benefit for Thespionage**, featuring Halo, DJ Cakeboy, Films, Bar, SchNEWS Stall Fri 12th of Nov. 7pm. Upstairs Hobgoblin. £2.50/£2.

Failed Its Test

The Arthur Daleys of this world will be rubbing their hands in glee at this week's announcement that Siemens Business Systems have been named as the preferred bidder to computerise the MOT testing scheme in a bid to stamp out fraud.

Siemens you might remember are the same people who caused chaos in the passport agency earlier this year with their new computer system (see SchNEWS 219). Last month the company got a massive slap on the wrists in a scathing report from the National Audit Office, the taxpayer got a bill of £13 million and the cost of passports may rise to £29 to cover the costs.

Then Siemens did the same thing at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, where once again their computer wizardry left the whole place in more of a mess than it was already (some feat).

So surely the last thing you'd expect is Siemens to get another govt contract. Er...apparently not. And once again it's the Private Finance Initiative (privatisation by the back door to you and me) to big business' rescue.

MARK BARNESLEY

On November 15th, Mark Barnesley will have spent 2,000 days in prison for the crime of defending himself against attackers.

While out walking with his baby daughter (then just 6 weeks old) and a family friend, he was attacked by a gang of 15 drunken students. Despite his injuries and the views of every single independent witness, it was Mark who was convicted of wounding the students and given a 12 year prison sentence.

November 15th is a Day of Autonomous Action in support of Mark. For ideas of how you can help send an SAE to Justice for Mark Barnesley, c/o 145-149 Cardigan Rd., Leeds, LS6 1LJ email barnesleycampaign@hotmail.com

Support to Mark Barnesley, WA2897, HMP Full Sutton, York, YO41 1PS (send letters recorded delivery and enclose a few stamps).

SCHNEWS NEEDS SOME HELP

Calling all writers! We need you Weds and Thurs. Wanna put SchNEWS on the web Friday mornings? Cathy Come Home - we'd love yer laser printer (or anyone else's). Got an external modem for a PC - we can swap it for an internal one.

Inside SchNEWS

39 year old Robert Thaxton has been given a 7 year and four months prison sentence after throwing a small rock that hit a copper during rioting in Eugene, on June 18th.

June 18th was an international day of action against capitalism (see SchNEWS 217/8). In Eugene a parade escalated into violence as cops deployed tear gas and arrested people for rioting. Even the local paper described the sentence as "surprisingly stiff" but police and prosecutors said it was a "clear signal that violent social protest won't be tolerated." But as one resident pointed out "The riot in Eugene that day was sparked by police harassment of the poor community and anarchists."

Take the example of the harassment of the parents of a 15-year-old anarchist, suspected of taking part in direct action against Nike. They were held on their floor with guns pointed at the back of their heads for 3 hours while the police searched their house and confiscated materials.

* Robert now plans to appeal. SchNEWS hasn't got an address, so send letters of support/cash to the Defence Fund, PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR, 97440, USA. www.ainfos.ca/org

* Seattle City Council seem to be getting a little nervous over next month's demonstrations against the World Trade Organisation (see SchNEWS 233). Under the Noise Ordinance law which was passed last week, a copper can give you a caution if you make a noise that can be heard 50 feet away. 3 cautions and you face six months in gaol!

Jah Victory!

This week Luton's Exodus Collective were served with an eviction notice to leave Long Meadow Farm, a formerly derelict site that they were granted a tenancy on seven years ago by the then Department of Transport (the owners of the land). Exodus are a grassroots collective working on 'social inclusion programs', doing free dance parties and putting the money back into their community. Police oppression and attempted stitch-ups have dogged their path. Last year Exodus bought the farm, paying a deposit. Since then bureaucratic hassles and misinformation have been used to try and scupper them. This led to the signing of the eviction order. Two of the Collective passed on accurate information to Lord Whitty at the Department of the Environment, Transport, and the Regions. He'd been lied to, and cancelled the eviction order. Sale contracts have now been signed and exchanged. SchNEWS wishes them well for the future. www.squall.co.uk/ www.exodus.sos.freeuk.com/

...and finally...

Eisuke Arai is a Japanese debt collector who has obviously been watching too much Monty Python. The former employee of Nichiere told a man whose company had gone to the wall to sell his kidney and eyeball to help pay off a loan. He allegedly told the failed businessman his kidney was worth around £17,500 and his eyeball a bit less. He added "You have two, don't you? Many of our borrowers have only one kidney... I want you to sell your heart as well but if you do that you'll die. So I'll bear with you if you sell everything up to that". Police are now investigating, while the president of Nichiere said it was a blow to a sector eager to escape it's "loan shark" reputation. How anyone can come to such a conclusion with the average interest rate payment of over 20% is beyond SchNEWS.

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers not to make a career of it. Hard work never hurt us. Honest