



WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER BORDERLINE...

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SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?

IMMIGRATION INJUSTICES OF BARBED-WIRE BRITAIN

Harmondsworth detention centre stands as a monument to UK Plc's attitude to human rights. At any one time 550 people are incarcerated behind razor wire awaiting deportation. Handily situated right next to Heathrow, it serves as a prison for those awaiting deportation. Run by Sodexho, it is part of a network of privatised prisons dedicated to reinforcing the borders of Fortress Europe. Together with the other detention centres, Harmondsworth is the last stop for those who have failed to make successful asylum claims a key tool in the British and EU government's attempts to 'manage migration'. The British government locks up 25,000 immigrants a year.

Of the UK's 10 such detention centres (called "immigration reception and removal centres" by the government) seven are run by private companies. They hold failed asylum seekers and "illegal" immigrants due for deportation, as well as new asylum seekers whom the authorities believe may disappear from the system. Up to 2,600 people can now be held in the centres, and the Home Office announced last week that it plans to add another 480 places by building a second centre at Gatwick.

The proposed site is actually within the airport boundaries, making it nice and easy to bundle people on to airplanes with one-way tickets, conveniently far from public view. As Home Office Minister Tony McNulty explained, "Removing those who have no right to remain in the UK is an integral part of our balanced approach to asylum and immigration, helping us to cut abuse of the system and ensure an efficient end-to-end process." - A process which may be 'efficient' but can be a despairing and indeed deadly experience. Twelve people have so far killed themselves while incarcerated and, according to the Home Office itself, in the last ten months of 2005, 185 persons attempted self-harm, requiring medical treatment with another 1,467 considered a danger to themselves and put on self-harm watch. Annually, the UK government detains more than 2,000 children, including babies, in these pleasant surroundings. Well, as long as no one 'illegal' is allowed to slip through...

Much of the debate around migration to the UK focuses on the legitimacy of asylum claims. In fact, right across the mainstream political spectrum the debate over immigration has become a debate over the nature of 'refugee status'. In order for campaigns aiming to prevent the deportation of specific individuals (see SchNEWS 523 for example) to stand any chance of victory, they have to focus on that person's legitimate claim to 'refugee' status. Campaigns like this can be effective for securing a future for individuals and families and raising public questions about the draconian nature of immigration policy. However they run the risk of suggesting that everyone who migrates to this country 'outside' the rules is invariably fleeing persecution, effectively conceding the point that 'economic' migration is something undesirable. Challenging the tabloid hysteria over 'bogus' asylum seekers with counter claims of genuine persecution is worthwhile but runs the risk of undermining the rights of those who simply want to come here for a better life.

GATES OF THE WEST

What motivates someone to leave the security of their homeland and language and attempt to break through the borders of Fortress Europe? International economic migrancy is the inevitable flip side of globalisation and neo-liberal economics. Migrant workers are the shadow of the wealth looted from the global south to feather the western nest. While western corporations are free to move capital and infrastructure around globally with little restriction, the population of the Third World is forced to remain behind barbed wire. Beyond Europe, many countries have been forced to open their markets to European capital and to low-wage, European-owned factories.

Corporations want to use the EU as a common front to force these harsh neo-liberal policies on the third world. Yet the people of these countries face fences and walls if they try to come here. Many are forced to make desperate journeys around these barriers. Faced by economic collapse and political instability, usually caused by IMF restructuring and protectionist measures such as the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, people are literally dying in the hope of getting into our protected enclaves. Latin Americans are being shot on the US Mexican border, Sub-Saharan Africans are drowning in the Mediterranean, Chinese

...continued overleaf...

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK For Being Too Saucy...

An anti-war protester staged a demo last week in front of an Army recruitment stall in Perth, Scotland. Covering himself in ketchup, he laid down in front of the stall and held a one-man die-in protest. He was subsequently arrested for Breach of the Peace and, bizarrely, Criminal Damage, and police took him down the nick, with relish.

MASS DEFIANCE NAMING THE DEAD

This Sunday (2nd) will see a mass defiance of the law with an illegal gathering in Parliament Square at 12pm to commemorate those killed in the assault on Fallujah. Gatherings within 1km of Parliament are illegal under the Serious Organised Crime Act. The names of thousands of people killed, since the current occupation, will be read out, and placards will bear their images on this, the second anniversary of the US assault on Fallujah. Jo Wilding - who was in Fallujah at the time will be there - read her account of this on her weblog at <http://tinyurl.com/3fygm>. Organized by **Voices in the Wilderness**. Phone 0207 837 0561

THE CARD CHEAT

In a blow to all those relying on the aristocracy in the House of Frauds to safeguard our fundamental liberties, the government has won the right to make ID cards compulsory. Yesterday, under cover of yet another meaningless 'concession', it managed to pass the Identity Cards Bill. If the Home Office has its way, you will be forced to register on its Big Brother database when you renew your passport, or any other official document that the Government chooses to 'designate' (your driving license, a police CRB check certificate, a student loan form...). You can 'opt out' of having the actual card until 2010 - but the Government will charge you a penalty for doing this, and put all your details on the Register anyway.

Should New Labour win the next election, Charles Clarke says the ID scheme will be compulsory for everyone. Official control of your personal information with enforced charges. An Identity Tax wrapped up in a License to Live. See www.no2id.net

The SchMOVIES DVD 2005 Collection is finally out. No, really. Sorry for the delay but it's been a saga.

It's only £6 (including P&P) and is a motley collection of thirteen short films covering the G8 protests in Scotland, the DSEI arms fair and the Smash EDO campaign in Brighton plus loads more.

Buy this and help keep SchNEWS free. For more info click on www.schnews.org.uk/schmovies

DAY OF ACTION AT HARMONDSWORTH DETENTION CENTRE

April 8th 11am. To get there: 2 miles off Junction 4A off the M4 near Heathrow. ** Coaches from London £6 call 07944135617 or email noborderslondon@riseup.net ** Transport from Brighton call 01273 540717

choking to death in lorries. Africans attempting to cross the razor wire fences into Spain's North African outposts Mellilla and Ceuta in October last year were gunned down by riot police, and yet the squatter camps outside the borders grow larger.

The few who do make it through this formidable obstacle course are subjected to a brutal bureaucracy of application for asylum, forced to live below the poverty line on humiliating 'food voucher' schemes, denied the right to work (while being slammed as 'scroungers' by the right wing tabloids) and are the most marginalised and victimised people in our societies. For those deemed by immigration officials to have arrived for economic reasons there is a stark choice between disappearing into the twilight world of black market labour or imprisonment in a detention centre. In the years since the incarceration of 'illegal' economic migrants became policy, the UK's detention centres have seen riots, suicides, hunger strikes and endless evidence of maltreatment by security guards.

Currently, one out of every 35 persons worldwide is an international migrant. According to UN estimates, some 175 million people are now living permanently or temporarily outside their country of origin. This vast number includes migrant workers and their families, refugees, and permanent immigrants.

The bitter irony is that beyond the populist anti-immigrant stances of politicians, both the US and the EU depend on migrant labour to maintain our class-stratified economies. The NHS for example is virtually propped up by immigrant labour. This two-faced approach is encapsulated in the phrase 'managed migration'. Give us your best and brightest, your educated and skilled - and receive little in return. 'Managed migration' is yet another way of expropriating Third World wealth. So those who possess the skills can, at a price, join the global elites, whereas undocumented migrant workers play the vital role of an underclass willing to do dangerous and monotonous work for a pittance. Immigration policy works to keep such workers de-unionised and unrepresented. When your very existence is illegal how can you fight for employment rights? This two-tier system of labour is highly advantageous to Western business.

This attitude to migration is quite new, the Victorians didn't even have passports and until 1962 there were no controls over immigration into the UK. The argument that unregulated immigration would affect the western culture rings hollow when you consider that it is our cultural values and economic imperatives which have been used to ruthlessly reshape the world in which the majority of the planet's population is forced to live. The construction of private prisons for economic migrants has passed through without a great deal of public debate. The current controversy over asylum is caused because all other doors for legitimate migration became impossible.

However movements in the first world are beginning to fight on behalf of all migrants. A recent attempt by the US government to further intensify its already harsh system of control on the Mexican border saw nearly a million demonstrate on the streets in California. As the EU prepares to totally integrate its immigration policy in order to more effectively clamp down on economic migration, grassroots networks such as No Borders have begun to demand total global freedom of movement. It is time to recognise that the global system of population control creates and maintains injustice and inequality.

* More info at... www.noborder.org
www.barbedwirebritain.org.uk
www.ncadc.org.uk

WASHINGTON BULLETS

In the Land of Litigation, court action is always the solution. Next month, in Washington or New York, papers will be served naming Libya, and specifically one Col. Gaddafi, as liable for damages to US and UK survivors and families of those killed by IRA acts of violence. Under the 1996 Sovereignty Immunity Act, Americans are the only nationals permitted to file lawsuits against another country - the British are only able to lodge their claims under the lesser and more specific Torture Victims Protection Act 1991, naming specific perpetrators. Libya has been accused of majorly arming the IRA, over at least 3 decades, and is therefore seen as a more tangible culprit than the IRA itself. But the questions remain: where does the buck stop? Why stop at Libya? Indeed, why start with Libya? For willing givers to the IRA cause, the Yanks need look no further than under their very own noses. For many years, millions of dollars were raised for the IRA by large Irish-American groups, wholly and actively supportive of the republican struggle and tactics. And all this was blithely sanctioned by consecutive US governments - the process only had the dampers put on it post 9/11, after which anything to do with the word 'terrorism' was as popular as 'communism' in the 1950s.

Presumably these claims are not unrelated to the \$1.7 billion compensation settlement agreed with Libya in 2003, over the Lockerbie bombing. (Ironically, this was made despite a lack of evidence they were actually involved, and was more likely a realpolitik move to get the UN sanctions lifted.) The Libyans are obviously seen as soft targets for dishing out the dosh. They're to be penalised for arming those who killed and maimed - but those who are planning to sue should take a step back from these hypocritical and jingoistic claims and consider their own nation's part in the universal cycle of violence. What about the \$12.5 annual arms sales from the US (5% of its total exports), or the billions-worth of death dealt by the good ol' UK on a yearly basis? Perhaps if the case against Gaddafi gets won, it'll set a precedent for holding entire countries to account and we can all go and become lawyers and file suits against Uncle Sam and Little Miss Blighty, on behalf of the peoples of the world.

KOREA OPPORTUNITIES

Uncle 'locked'n'loaded' Sam has been flexing his muscles in South Korea, again (see the Korean War 1950-53 for more). This time, as part of their ongoing build up of military presence in the area, they want to double the size of one of their bases, engulfing a nearby village called Daechuri. The forced eviction will offer scant compensation to a long settled, close community. Callously, the eviction will be only equated to a small piece of collateral damage in the neo-con Project for a New American Century (See SchNEWS 387). It's also representative of the US ambition to secure military control of the entire planet and squaring up against the 'Axis of Evil' and the other big kid on the block: China.

Unbelievably, the residents of the village didn't quite see the big picture, and as the prospect of one's hometown being swamped by horny no-brained rednecks armed to the teeth is nobody's idea of fun, they decided to act. This village has subsequently been turned into an autonomous zone by villagers and supporters. Wave after wave of riot police and military have been seen off by a determined resistance that involves lock-ins, human shields and huge barricades. An assault by 4,000 police several weeks ago failed to evict the villagers, and as we go to print, the village still stands defiant, despite beatings and arrests. For updates and some cool video footage of digger-diving Korea style, see their site below. Some amazing murals from the village can be seen at www.portland.indymedia.org

* www.saveptfarmers.org

SchNEWS in brief

From Seeds to Fruit: Growing Futures in Southend. Day conference providing a forum for groups and individuals involved in or concerned about promoting community, social inclusion, greener environments, sustainability, life-long learning (for both children and adults), health and well-being. April 1st. www.spiralseed.co.uk/seep ** Also on 1st, **Nonviolent Direct Action Workshop And Legal Briefing**, The Front Studio, Diorama 1, 34 Osnaburgh St, London NW1. 11.30am - 4.30pm (NVDA workshop), 4.30pm - 5.30pm (legal briefing) Run by Seeds for Change (www.seedsforchange.org.uk). ** **Smash EDO Noise Demo** - Weds 5th April 4-6pm at the Edo factory, Brighton. www.smashedo.org.uk

LAST OF THE MOHICANS?

Longstanding SchNEWS-rounder Warren and partner Zoe are the proud parents of a new baby boy. Hearty Congratulations all round! Here's hoping those Daily Mail stories about baby-eating anarchists are untrue after all.

PARIS CALLING

The CPE protests in France continued into this week (see SchNEWS 537) with Tuesday the 28th becoming the focus for widespread strikes across the country as well as massive demonstrations of three million nationally, many of which turned into riots. There have been arrests, particularly in Paris where many are facing fast-tracked trials and heavier than usual punishments. Around France there were blockades of arterial roads, train tracks and stations, and bridges in many major cities led by autonomous groups - including a group of fifty school kids who blocked Paris's main ring road, and operation free toll by students on a toll-motorway near Montpellier. A third of high schools in Paris and three-quarters of uni campuses were also blockaded. The offices of AFP (French Press Agency) in Paris were briefly occupied in a protest about media disinformation which portrayed rioters as unthinking thugs.

Our correspondent in Lille on Tuesday reports that after the 50,000 strong march there, some 500 hardcore 'casseurs' (rioters) fought a running battle with CRS riot police with barricades and fires, after a group of students had initially blocked the road. As well as using tear gas, CRS used paint bombs to target individuals, who were later arrested with undercover snatch squads. 40 were arrested in Lille. (see *And Finally* below for more).

And it isn't over yet. Schools and universities are still being occupied, as well as roads and railways being blockaded. Yesterday (Thursday), 2000 invaded Gare de Lyon train station in Paris and occupied rail lines forcing extensive rail cancellations. In Marseille's Gare St Charles students and teachers blockaded railway tracks and were tear gassed by CRS riot police before moving off to blockade a major city roundabout.

Another national strike has been called for April 4th. Watch this Espace.

* For more see www.libcom.org/blog

...and finally...

One hungry rioter ate his way out of trouble during last week's demonstrations in Lille, France.

After being 'identified as a troublemaker' during the riot and hit with a police paint bomb to be marked out for arrest by undercover snatch-squads, one paint-splattered Flemish anarchist was then arrested with hands cuffed behind his back and pinned with a charge sheet to his chest for 'Rebellion and Throwing Missiles'. However in a move which would have made Houdini proud he managed to get it off his chest with his teeth and then swallow it, forcing the police to release him without charge shortly after!

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers... if you stay there may be trouble, but if you go it may be double... Honest.

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