



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER ONE WAY TICKET...

# SchNEWS

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THE ROUGH GUIDE TO

## Asylum In Britain

# SNATCH-22

## SchNEWS REIDS BETWEEN THE LIES ABOUT REFUGEES

Neo Labour's shift to the right has been frantically accelerating over the past few weeks, with the Home Office in disarray after civil servants misplaced more than a 1,000 (definitely guilty) prisoners who should have been considered for a timely booting out of the country.

Then there's those bloody asylum seekers to think of - that's enough to send any politician into a racist diatribe about how whitey is under threat from a flood of people about to steal our crap jobs from underneath our noses or how we better watch out because these people are rapists, murderers, kiddie fiddlers and terrorists anyway.

From the foul mouthpiece of the Murdoch Empire, the *Sun*, to the *Daily Hate Mail* and *Torygraph*, editors have felt obliged to show little interest in the fact that the real story is that the vast majority of migrants have come to the UK to escape repression and the grinding poverty which has been forced upon them by economic policies of UK plc and its G8 cronies.

Take Pastor Daly and his family. He fled Angola in 2001, after refusing to give information about members of his congregation to a government which was well known for its torturing, 'disappearing' and killing of political opponents. The family were visiting the Brand Street immigration office in Glasgow to sign on and were promptly abducted by a Home Office 'removal team' and shipped off to the Yarl's Wood Removal Centre.

Benefit claimants are now caught in a Catch-22 situation every time they walk in the centre for fear of deportation. The Daly family has been active in the local community for some time and locals chipped in by raising the £4,000 bail money which ensured their release. Last Wednesday, the Home Office backed down after being challenged with a judicial review of their decision to deport Daly, but the threat of deportation still hangs over the entire family.

Recent news that a Zimbabwean refugee was asked for sex by a UK immigration official in return for help on her case may have shocked many in the chattering classes, but for the refugee it was part of the same process that had seen her fleeing sexual violence in the first place. The gender bias which is present in decisions meant that Home Office failed to take sufficiently into account the issue of domestic violence that led Farhat Khan to flee a violent husband in Pakistan. Despite threats from her husband's family

to kill Farhat and her children if they return to the country, she still faces deportation. "The Home Office and the immigration courts accepted that we had been subjected to violence but refused to grant asylum" Farhat told campaign group Refugee Women, "The issue of my daughters being forced into child marriage was not given serious consideration. I love Pakistan and wish that I could believe that my children and I would be safe there. But I cannot return and put my children in danger."

### FIGHT OR FLIGHT

There are 2,600 such people in eleven detention centres across the UK (See SchNEWS 538). Most of them are asylum seekers from war torn and dictatorial places like Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan, that the UK has been busy destabilising and plundering for some time. And the government is filling the centres up so fast, they're having to build more so 4,000 more unlucky people can be banged up ahead of a flight back to poverty, destitution, torture and possible death. Those flights, by the way, are courtesy of British Airways, which announced a record leap in profits last week.

In addition to purpose-built detention centres, asylum seekers can find themselves in places like Strangeways too. Last month more than 300 people marched past the prison in Manchester, as part of international protests against immigration detention, passing by a BA Office and on to China Town for a remembrance service for the 18 cackle pickers who died at Morecambe Bay back in February 2004.

### UPCOMING DEMOS

\* **Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism! and Unity** - the Scottish Union of Asylum-Seekers are holding a protest in Glasgow city centre, calling for the right to work for all and for an end to dawn-raid style arrests. Sat May 27th, 1-3pm, at the Donald Dewar statue - top of Buchanan Street, Glasgow. For more info call 07779 785 529.

\* **Close Campsfield:** Demonstration at Campsfield Detention Centre also this Saturday, 12pm-2pm, Langford Lane, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, to give support to detainees. Bring instruments or saucepans to make some noise. This regular event happens on the last Saturday of every month. For more see [www.closecampsfield.org.uk](http://www.closecampsfield.org.uk)

\* **Also in Glasgow** there will be a protest on Sat June 17th against deportations and the Dungavel Detention Centre at Brand Street, Ibrox, at 11am till 1.30pm. For more see [www.openborders.org.uk](http://www.openborders.org.uk)

### CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For using a megaphone

Police cautioned one person and arrested another for the subversive act of using a megaphone at the Palestine Solidarity march in London during the week. Seemingly cops took exception to anyone but the march's organizers voicing their opinion.

We're not sure which law this comes under but is obviously part of Neo Labour's new 'Shut-up-and-do-as-we-tell-you' Bill. One to watch out for.

UK plc, of course, has privatised the profit opportunity that is the imprisonment of migrants. Harmondsworth Detention Centre is run by United Kingdom Detention Services, a subsidiary of Sodexho, the French hotels-to-schools-to-prisons multinational (see SchNEWS 382). Their regime of abuse and beatings of detainees caused Harmondsworth to riot in July 2004, even as local coppers referred to the inmates only as "local residents".

The latest removal centre is Colnbrook, adjacent to Harmondsworth, but this time run by Premier Detention Services, a division of the Serco Corporation which refers to itself as an "international service company which combines commercial know-how with a deep public service ethos." This ethos extends to electronically tagging migrants under the euphemistically entitled "community monitoring programme" and ensuring that detainees are treated the same way as prisoners, despite the fact that they haven't actually committed a crime. Lucky Serco investors have seen pre-tax profits rise by 21% between 2004 and 2005, but are still too mean-spirited to put doors on toilets, so inmates can't even go to the loo in private.

With Bliar on his last political legs, expect new Home Secretary, John Reid, to try and save his skin with a series of announcemets showpiecing new initiatives to lock up more people. Responding to pressure from the *Daily Mail* crowd, Blair accused judges of an "abuse of common sense," in response to their decision not to deport nine Afghan men who hijacked a plane in Kabul and forced it to land at Stansted airport. Now Neo Labour promises another attack on civil liberties as it reviews the Human Rights Act, announcing that it would be much better if all these worries about human rights could be shelved so that ministers can get on with deporting all the criminals.

The plan is to make human rights abusers such as Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan, promise not to torture people who are deported from the UK. We can, of course, trust the word of a government that has waged war against its Kurdish minority. We

continued overleaf...

## Snatch-22 continued...

can believe in the sincerity of the Pakistani military dictatorship and have absolute confidence in an Afghan state that barely controls a third of the country. If only Bliar could have been bothered to read the court ruling which clearly stated that his government had acted beyond the law by failing to listen to its own immigration appeal panel. It seems that their ruling about the real dangers the Afghan men faced if returned to their former country was too liberal for the Tories that rule Neo Labour.

The 120 detainees at Colnbrook who had been refusing food since the 8th April, were joined a week later by 125 Detainees at Haslar detention centre in Gosport. Ten days after the original protests more than 300 detainees in Harmondsworth detention centre went on a mass one-day food refusal, in protest at the length of their detention and in solidarity with the protests in Colnbrook and Haslar. There are ongoing actions against the imprisonment of people who have committed no crime.

\* Check [www.barbedwirebritain.org.uk](http://www.barbedwirebritain.org.uk) for more info on conditions at the centres, the times you can visit to show solidarity with the inmates and a list of latest actions.

\* To read about individual detainees see **Glasgow NoBorder Network** [www.openborders.org.uk](http://www.openborders.org.uk)

\* See also **National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaign** at [www.ncadc.org.uk](http://www.ncadc.org.uk)

\* For info on sexism in the asylum system see [www.refugeewomen.com](http://www.refugeewomen.com)

## SOYA GRAPES

Last Monday, activists dumped four tonnes of soya at the entrance of the European Headquarters of commodities giant Cargill. They also chained themselves to a gate across the only access road, forcing the office to close. An investigation by Greenpeace has highlighted how farmers supplying Cargill illegally clear Amazon rainforest land to grow soya, often using slave labour. Following last week's protest which shut Cargill's main Amazon export terminal, they've now been hit them closer to home at the company's Cobham HQ on the outskirts of London. As campaigner Pat Venditti put it, "The Amazon is one of the most biodiverse areas on Earth and we need it to stabilise the planet's climate, but this company is trashing it for chicken wraps and nugget dips."

\* For more see [www.greenpeace.org.uk](http://www.greenpeace.org.uk)

## Positive SchNEWS

The RampArt Community Creative Centre and Social Space is a "squatted school from which the gospel of grassroots DIY culture, creativity and participation is taught, practised and promoted." The centre is two years old this week and are having a big party to celebrate and you're invited...

**This weekend - May 27-28** from 4 pm: **Street Party** with live action painting, shanties and singalongs with Jan Maat, anti-folk/ folk, spoken word, vegan food and drink. Several live bands plus DJs. Entry by donation.

**Monday May 29th**, 8pm: Talk by John Zerzan, the primitivist philosopher (shurley shome mishtake) and author of *Elements of Refusal*, amongst others. Don't ask questions as language is merely the moment when hierarchy tightened its relentless grip on the human soul.

**RampART:** 15-17 RampART Street, London, E1 2LA. See also [www.rampart.co.nr](http://www.rampart.co.nr)

## INSIDE SchNEWS

**Katherine Jashinski** is serving 120 days imprisonment as a Conscientious Objector in the US Army for refusing to serve in Afghanistan. Her current address is Harris County Jail, PO BOX 286, Hamilton, GA 31811, USA, but she may be moved soon. See also **Iraq Veterans Against The War** - [www.ivaw.net](http://www.ivaw.net)

## PARTY & PROTEST

The deadline for enrolling in the **Earth Activist Training** course - to be held July 15-29 at Ragman's Lane Farm, Gloucestershire - is next Weds, 31st May. A permaculture design course and more for community activists who want to learn all about transforming a piece of land, a community and even our political and economic systems. Those attending get a certificate from the Permaculture Association. Cost - £100-£500. Contact: C/o 3 Yew Tree Cottages, Pitt Court, North Nibley, Glos, G111 6EB, [eat2006@riseup.net](mailto:eat2006@riseup.net). [www.earthactivisttraining.org](http://www.earthactivisttraining.org) \*\* 27th May sees **Anti-fur Protest**s in Central London. 11am til late afternoon. For more details, email [arevents@lists.rbgi.net](mailto:arevents@lists.rbgi.net), or call 07950 669333

\*\* **The Battle of the Beanfield** 21st anniversary reunion, Thursday June 1st, Assembly Rooms, Glastonbury, 12 noon to 12 midnight. Admission free, donations welcome. \*\* June 1st is Amp's benefit for the **ArtMusicPolitik Co-op**. Indie and urban music, stalls, art, plus screening of films like "SchNEWS at Ten". Nambucca, 596 Holloway Rd, London. 6:00 pm - 1:00 am. £4. [www.artmusicpolitik.com](http://www.artmusicpolitik.com) Tel: 07868 738315 \*\* June 3rd is the **Strawberry Fair** - SchNEWS will have free info-stall and be screening SchMovies at our favourite one day free festival in Cambridge. For more see [www.strawberry-fair.org.uk](http://www.strawberry-fair.org.uk) \*\* 4th June **'On the agenda? Military action against Iran'**. Debate organised by Reading Peace Group. With Bruce Kent (CND), Tahrir Swift (Arab Media Watch), and Emily Johns (Justice Not Vengeance). 2.30 - 5.00 pm, Friends Meeting House, Church Street (off London Street), Reading. Admission free. Call 0118 958 8281 \*\* **The Faslane Peace Camp Birthday Party** will be on 10 - 11th June. Celebrating 24 years in defiance of the Naval base. Music, bands, dj's, food, bar, poi etc. Some accommodation available, but bring yer own just in case. Free/donation. Call 01436 820901 for more.

## SQUARE BASHING

The long-running government campaign to prevent anti-war campaigner **Brian Haw** from protesting in Parliament Square ratcheted up a notch this week (see SchNEWS 543). Last Tuesday night at 3am fifty armed Police turned up and, with no sense of the evident over-kill, proceeded to remove nearly all of Brian's placards, banners, and assorted evidence of UK war crimes. He was only allowed to retain a display to fit within the three metre space compliant with the conditions set out under the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005. With Brian due at Bow Magistrates Court on May 30th for a hearing about the conditions, he might have assumed the Police would leave it until it had been heard in court - but there was no such consideration made in the pre-emptive strike. No discrimination was made between campaign materials and Brian's own possessions, many of which were also taken. Three of Brian's supporters were arrested into the heavy-handed bargain.

The following night, the police harassment continued - Brian is supposedly allowed up to 20 supporters with him at any one time - but if they aren't all now somehow within the three metre area, it's seems they're fair game for hassle from the cops.

On Wednesday morning, people gathered in solidarity to make their feelings known to those inside the mother of all parliaments but we're left mainly eyeballing a heavy Police and 'Forward Intelligence' presence. One witness described the square as looking like "a model of totalitarian democracy".

Brian needs the continuous support of those willing to join his protest and donations of food and bits'n' bobs confiscated by the bobbies. For more see [www.parliament-square.org.uk](http://www.parliament-square.org.uk) or call 07791 486484.

## PASS THE PIPE

**Anyone fancy a busman's holiday in the west of Ireland?** The Shell-to-Sea campaign are having a first anniversary gathering at their Solidarity Camp outside Rosspport town in County Mayo on 2-5th June. This is a beautiful part of the island, although how long it remains that way is up for debate. If Shell have their wicked way, pipelines will be placed through the countryside, pumping gas from beneath the ocean floor to on-shore refineries (see SchNEWS 537).

Five farmers spent six months in jail last year for refusing to allow their land to be abused by Shell. They were released after huge protests. This is a winnable campaign, with Shell having a limited window of opportunity to continue work on the pipelines due to adverse weather during the winter months.

Last year the Solidarity Camp pitched on supporters land but bang in the middle of the pipeline route, successfully fended off Shell all summer. This year should see a repeat performance. Shell can stick that in their pipe and smoke it. For more visit [www.struggle.ws/rsc](http://www.struggle.ws/rsc) and [www.corribsos.com](http://www.corribsos.com)

## GRAVE CONCERNS

**Three animal rights activists** got sent down for twelve years apiece for their part in a long campaign to close down Newchurch guinea-pig farm in Staffordshire (see SchNEWS 509). This campaign involved all sorts of tactics, including regular demos outside the farm, but one act in particular - the theft of a corpse from its burial place - repulsed many and secured the three a lengthy sentence.

The Establishment of course jumped at the chance to portray activists as lunatics and fanatics and it's all too easy for them to do so if you dig up someone's gran. The three are now serving more time than if they had raped or killed. Newchurch Farm has closed down, but the impact of the alleged crime is certain to bring in fresh and draconian legislation.

\* See [www.shac.net](http://www.shac.net)

## ...and finally...

**A gang of anarchist Robin Hood-style thieves**, who dress as superheroes and steal expensive food from exclusive restaurants and shops to give to the poor, are being hunted by police in the German city of Hamburg.

The Hamburglars (not sponsored by McDonald's) take delight in injecting humour into their raids, which rely on sheer numbers and the confusion caused by their presence. After they plundered beef fillets, champagne and smoked salmon from one gourmet store, they presented the cashier with a bouquet of flowers before making their getaway.

In another recent swoop, the gang emptied a groaning buffet table in a top restaurant into sacks, while one of their number held up a sign saying "The fat years are over" - the title of a hit film currently doing the rounds in Germany.

A police spokesman said: "They get off feeling they are just like Robin Hood. There are about 30 in the group but whatever their motives, they are thieves, plain and simple." In Internet statements, the gang have made a point of saying their booty is distributed to the poorest of Germany's long-term unemployed.

Police say they are concentrating their investigation on a loose collective of anarchists and malcontents called "Hamburg in Vain", to which they believe the superheroes belong.

The gang are also behind black market cinema tickets which they distribute free to the poor, and they have printed leaflets telling passengers how to dodge ticket inspectors on the city's underground and buses.

## Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - our paranoid ravings are finally coming true... Honest.

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