



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER TOO KEVLAR BY HALF...

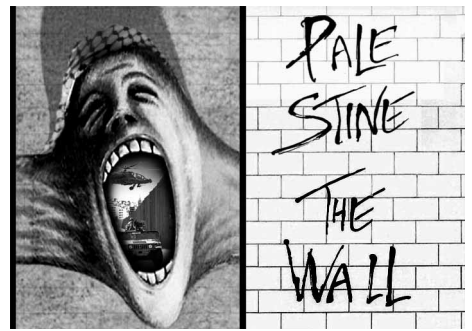
SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

Friday 20th April 2007

Free/Donation

Issue 584



RUBBER STAMPED

A SHOT IN THE ARM FOR BRIGHTON PALESTINE DELEGATION

Last Friday, one of the seventeen strong Brighton delegation to Palestine was shot by the Israeli Defence Force. Tom was hit with a rubber bullet (a rubber bullet in IDF terminology is a steel bullet coated in rubber). Fortunately the shot, ricocheting off his arm, was not lethal.

The Brightonians were part of an international presence at the ongoing community-led demonstrations against the Apartheid Wall being built through the West Bank town of Bil'in (see SchNEWS 566, 544). This demo was during Palestinian Prisoner's week, to highlight the plight of thousands of Palestinians held under 'administrative detention', with some activists walking inside a mock cage. As the demo was 200 metres from the wall it was met with a hail of tear-gas followed up with rubber bullets. Although the combination of Palestinian villagers, Israeli anarchists and Cowley Club regulars tried to force the demo through, they were driven back by Israeli army jeeps, who entered the village. In all sixteen protesters were shot and injured by the IDF. A medic from the Palestinian Red Crescent was shot in the stomach, and another local man was shot in the groin. A French activist was shot by a tear gas canister at close range and sustained severe burns.

Tom, after being treated by the Red Crescent ambulance, told SchNEWS. "This violent attack by the Israeli Army on peaceful unarmed demonstrators is unbelievable. The people of this village have had their land stolen, their olive trees uprooted, and their livelihoods devastated. By daring to protest against this injustice they are met with aggression and violence. This has made me more determined than ever to support them, and other people in Palestine, in their struggle for their land, their country, and their freedom."

In the same week fourteen other protesters had been injured by the IDF whilst demonstrating for children's rights. The Israeli army lost no time in showing where their concern for children lays by shooting seven of them. In Bethlehem, a further 10 people were injured in anti wall protests.

KEEPIN' IT ISRAEL

Despite this repression activists still disrupted Israeli plans for settlement expansion and the continued walling in of Palestinian lives. In the face of IDF violence, in Bethlehem protesters succeeded in destroying foundations to the wall and a watchtower and in Bil'in a group of activists succeeded in cutting down 20 metres of an Israeli settlement fence. A video of the action is available at the Anarchists Against the Wall website (www.awalls.org).

The Tubas region of the Jordan Valley is almost all entirely controlled by Israel. The region spreads from Tubas town, in the northern hills of the Israeli occupied West Bank, over to the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley. Most of the Tubas locals were farmers, travelling from the town to their land in the Valley, but to get there they need to get past an Army checkpoint which requires Jordan Valley residents' ID - which they don't have - effectively putting a chokehold on their livelihoods. 95% of the land and 98% of the water there has been taken from the Palestinians since 1967 who often have no choice but to work in the Israeli settlements.

In Palestinian villages the people have lost nearly all their land and many have had their houses demolished. With Israeli-imposed restrictions there is very little health care, education is limited, there are no phone lines or public transport, often there is no electricity, and much of the water supply is contaminated by waste from Israeli settlements. All aspects of Palestinian economic life and independence are ruthlessly strangled.

In the Jordan Valley, a major fruit producing region, there are areas where Palestinians are not even allowed new buildings in their villages. In the village of Fayasal the Israelis kicked up a stink amongst the locals when they

put a demolition order on the village's toilets.

The Brighton delegation is looking into building a tent school (the village has been barred from building one out of bricks and mortar). The nearby village of Al Jifric already has a tent school thanks to local tenacity and the support of internationals, and partly as a result of this Al Jifric has now obtained permission to build a more permanent school.

Just because the media seem to have been taking a break from reporting on Palestine does not mean that either Palestinians have stopped resisting or that people have stopped taking action there. In fact, in the absence of major Palestinian armed attacks, the place of non-violent resistance is stronger than ever and, as the above examples show, are capable of achieving real results.

There is currently (18-20 April) a conference in Bil'in on non-violence organised by the International Solidarity Movement building on grass roots and global non-violent direct action against Israeli aggression.

* See www.palsolidarity.org for details.

* For more on the Brighton-Tubas delegation see the excellent blog www.brightonpalestine.org

* The ISM are continuing their campaign with 'Freedom Summer 2007: confronting apartheid', from June 21st to August 15th. June marks the 40th anniversary of the military Occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem. For more see www.palsolidarity.org/main/2007/04/17/freedom-summer-2007

DERAIL THE GATWICK EXPRESS

Certain they're just not locking up enough foreign migrants, the Home Office - soon to be split into the far more sinister sounding Justice and Security departments - are planning to build yet another detention centre, this time handily located away from prying eyes, actually inside Gatwick airport's fenced boundaries (See SchNEWS 538).

It's all necessary to keep up the government's racist migration policy of locking up everybody and then dealing with each case once they are safely in detention. So much easier to then stick 'em on a one-way plane outta here, you see.

The whole immigration system is orientated to the removal of migrants, whether they seek asylum or not. Of the 2,966 places currently available in the Immigration Detention Estate, 2,065 are in 'Removal Centres' (privately-run prisons in all but name) with a further 588 places in Removal Prisons (managed by the Prison Service). This means seven out of the current ten immigration detention centres are run by private companies - good reliable firms like the notorious Group4 - a sweet little earner, if you can keep costs to a minimum, of course.

Decent conditions and humane treatment are the first things to suffer in the corporate economy drives - various reports have described the utterly racist regime in place in the detention centres.

Detainees are routinely abused and beaten up. Those who dare to complain or protest are quickly transferred to other detention centres or deported. This has even forced inmates into hunger strikes and full-scale rebellions in some of these Gulags, such as last December's riot at Harmondsworth (SchNEWS 571).

The new centre, recently given approval from Crawley City Council, will have places for over 400 more migrants.

CREEPY-CRAWLEYS

No Borders is organising a national day of action this Saturday (21 April) in Crawley to protest against the new detention centre and say 'no to all detention centres!' Meet at Jubilee Field in Three Bridges, 12 noon. Come out of Three Bridges station and turn left into East Ave. After 2 minutes walk, the park is on the right. For more info email ionatgatwick@riseup.net. For transport from London call 07983 274568. People travelling from Brighton are meeting outside Brighton Station at 10.30am. Groups of 4 people can get special discount tickets for £17.80 return (let us do the maths, people: that is £4.45 each!) Email brightonnoborders@riseup.net or phone 07880 523231 for more info.

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

Copyleft
Published in Brighton since 1994

IT'S ALL ACADEMIC

Protesters have scored a major victory against Labour school privatisation policies in Brent. The backer of a proposed new City Academy, Andrew Rosenfield, withdrew his bid to sponsor a proposed new Academy on community sports grounds near London's newest over-budget white (city) vanity elephant, Wembley stadium.

In late March, residents, parents and teachers took matters into their own hands by camping out and occupying the site of the proposed academy - Wembley Park Sports Ground, Brent.

With little more than tents and their presence as weapons, they pledged to continue their occupation until the plans for the academy were withdrawn. And just one week after their camp began, the main sponsor withdrew his bid. The social benefactor in question, Andrew Rosenfield, who by sheer coincidence has also bankrolled the Labour Party to the tune of a cool million quid, lives as a tax exile in Geneva and has presumably decided to turn his capital towards somewhat easier profits.

Brent Council have now roped in ARK, a group of hedge fund speculators, to try and salvage the academy proposal. ARK includes the Lib Dems' largest financial contributor, Peter Marshall.

Although it may seem strange for residents and educators to be protesting against the building of a new school, they are not without their reasons. The proposed school will be one of Neo-Labour's flagship academy schools. These new institutions are, in reality, a form of stealth privatisation. Corporate sponsors agree to pay 'up to' £2 million towards the cost of constructing a new school (in reality very little of this money is ever actually paid) in return for seats on the educational board, promises of knighthoods and the agreement of the government to pay for all of the running costs.

A local teacher, Jean Roberts, said "As far as we know this is the first occupation opposing an academy. We've been amazed by the tremendous level of support coming from the local people. We oppose the idea of academies because they are schools being run by a private individual using tax payers' money."

These City Academies (of which the government plan to build more than 400 across the country) are undemocratic institutions. Corporate sponsors (including such child development specialists as Dixons Stores) have the majority on governing boards and can make decisions concerning the schools' 'visions'. This has important implications for the future of British schooling. It's no coincidence that over half of the academies count 'business and enterprise' as their speciality. Less commercially useful subjects like philosophy or history presumably will be pushed to the back of the class.

It won't come as a great surprise that a major reason for politicians' love of academies is the chance to mutually grease a few more oily palms. They can and do sit on the boards of companies that manage them: former education minister Lord Filkin is a director of Serco, which manages schools, and former education secretary Charles Clarke is a non-executive director of LJ Group - now heavily involved in the government's Building Schools for the Future programme.

The Brent protesters have shown that the power of community organisation can upset the corporatisation of the education apple cart. Academies are equally unpopular amongst teachers and parents alike and by working *together* they can learn the government proper.

* More off-curriculum reading at the **Anti Academies Alliance** website: www.antiacademies.org.uk

RETURN OF THE MUMIA

Mumia Abu Jamal is a black American activist who has been on death row since 1982 for the alleged murder of Philadelphia Police Officer Daniel Faulkner. Despite getting a mention in SchNEWS as far back as issue 27 (see also SchNEWS 34, 228), in the years since, numerous appeals to present forensic and ballistic evidence and eyewitness testimonies to his innocence have all been blocked by the courts and he remains in jail, with stays of execution forced partly by mass public protests and support.

The (former) Black Panther was earning a few quid taxi driving, when he spotted his brother getting beaten by a cop, as was the custom at the time (not that it's changed much since). Abu-Jamal got out to help but was shot in the stomach by another policeman before he reached the scene, and suffered a near-fatal wound. In the melee, the cop beating Abu-Jamal's brother was also fatally shot - but by a man who in no way resembled Abu-Jamal (who's quite distinctive with long flowing dreadlocks), as attested by many of the nearby witnesses.

Having pulled through from his injuries, Mumia was charged with murder, closely related to the fact that, as a journalist, he had been highlighting the state's harassment of the radical black ecological group MOVE. The fit up included police intimidation of witnesses, vital evidence not being examined, and a biased judge, famed for sentencing more men to death than any other in America.

Despite all the evidence proving his innocence, Mumia remains inside and a legal campaign has fought several attempts to execute him. For more see www.mumia.org/freedom now and www.freemumia.org

* A UK rally for Mumia is scheduled for 5 May at University of London Union, Room 3C & D, Malet Street, London WC1. Russell Square or Gooch Street Tube. See www.partisandefense.org

PARTY & PROTEST

APRIL - 26 - Blockade of Faslane to commemorate Chernobyl Day. speakers in the morning and a die-in in the afternoon. Transport from Edinburgh: bus leaving Waterloo Place (east end of Princes Street) at 4am, with the return leaving Faslane at 5pm the same day. To book places (£10/£6 conc. paid on the bus) please contact environmentalists @faslane365.org or call 0131 554 9977. Transport from Glasgow: email andy.meikle@virgin.net For general news and info see www.faslane365.org **

26 - World Day for Animals in Laboratories - Leicestershire Vigil outside the gates of Hillcrest Ltd (formerly Harlan UK) - animal breeders for the vivisection industry at Doggedford Lane, Belton, Leicestershire, which could be described as a 'factory farm for dogs' which are destined to suffer in needless experiments. See full report at: www.buav.org/helpthedogs/home.html Food, and travel from Nottingham with Veggies. For more info call Loughborough Animal Concern 07981 789481 **

28 - Jubilee Debt Campaign Annual Conference: Debt & Power - breaking the chains of economic slavery. A day of discussion, debate and workshops. 11am-5.30pm at South Camden Community School. Booking essential at: www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/book ** **MAY - 1 - Space Hijackers May Day protest:** Suited and Booted. Advance warning of a party right in the heart of the Corporate Financial Centres of London. Bring instruments and radios, hidden in briefcases/suitcases, and drinks, cakes and smiles to share. More details coming soon, but for now, spread the word and get an outfit sorted (a city worker disguise). For details see: www.spacehijackers.org ** 1 - Or for a more conservative **London May Day Demonstration**, assemble Clerkenwell Green, EC1 at 12 noon, moving off at 1pm to Trafalgar Square for the rally.

* For full listings updated weekly see www.schnews.org.uk/pap

WON'T BOW DOWN

"For having stood up to and resisted unlawful and inhuman treatment in prison, and retained some basic human integrity and humanity in the process, I probably shall now remain imprisoned far beyond what even a reactionary judge deemed an appropriate period of time all those years ago. Hell will freeze over, however, before I surrender that part of myself that had the courage and integrity to fight back and resist when resistance often seemed futile."

- from **Tear Down The Walls** by John Bowden (available from Leeds ABC, PO Box 53, Leeds LS8 4WP. Email: LeedsABC@riseup.net Web: www.myspace.com/leedsabc)

John Bowden is an anarchist and former member of the Angry Brigade who famously brought explosive direct action to the streets of Britain in the late 1960s / early 70s. A long-term prison resister, he has spent most of his life behind bars, including 25 years of a 'Life' sentence. During that time he has written extensively and eloquently about his own experiences and the conditions of others - including an article about racism in prisons published in SchNEWS 528.

After being moved to 'open' conditions last year, and being let out for fortnightly home-leaves, the indications were that John might be released on licence this June. But it appears that a right-wing parole office, Matt Stillman, has been attempting to block John's release. His March 12th report highlighted visits to John by the prisoner support group the Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), which he attempts to smear with the terrorism brush as being made up "primarily of eco-terrorists or paramilitary members involved in what they see as battles against political systems and principles."

With John's parole hearing due in the next two weeks, letters to Matt Stillman (Fax: 01382 360510, The Parole board of England & Wales, Grenadier House, 99-105 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2DD) and its chairman (duncan.nichol@paroleboard.gov.uk) are needed to help pressure them into a non-reactory decision. Write to John Bowden, 6729, HM Prison Castle Huntly, Longforgan, Dundee DD2 5HL, Scotland (enclosing a few stamps if possible).

* See www.brightonabc.org.uk

...and finally...

Bush has been made to look a bit of a dick this week (although it was admittedly probably below gun control issues on the agenda), as it was revealed that his big spending PR campaign to convince young people to abstain from sex has been, er, a massive flop. While he lamely talks of spending a few million here and there to ask people not to own guns illegally or shoot each other up with them, he has been aroused enough to pump a throbbing \$1 billion of federal money into posters, adverts and edutainment films promoting 'abstinence'.

Research has now been uncovered showing that the stiff talking to has made bugger all difference. In surveys carried out for (presumably non-sexual) Congress and the health department, both the control groups of teens and the abstinence-educated groups displayed exactly the same behaviour. Rampantly ignoring the government's attempts to 'cool' celibacy (perhaps Bush confused it with celebrity), around 45% of the groups admitted having sex in the past year, a quarter having three partners or more in that time and on average they were all losing their virginity at 14.9 years. It seems young Americans are happy screwing each other as their president screws the world, whilst the voters just continue to suffer from electile dysfunction...

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - duck the bullets, but not the issues. Honest!

Subscribe! Get SchNEWS free every week by email in pdf or text file - visit our site, or send us stamps and we'll post it to you. Copy and distribute! Keep SchNEWS free with donations (via website or cheques payable to Justice?). Posted free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o Community Base, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton, BN1 3XG. Tel +44 (0)1273 685913 Email schnews@brighton.co.uk Web www.schnews.org.uk