



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER SHUT UP SHOP

SchNEWS

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CASUAL KILLERS

"Some employers seem to treat their workers like machinery. They're not. They have families and friends who are torn apart when things like this happen to them." Anne Jones, Simon's mother

Tuesday 1st. Some people have climbed the 80 foot floodlights and unfurled banners which say 'Simon Jones RIP' and 'Casualisation Kills'.

On the ground thirty people who have gathered at the docks to commemorate the death of their friend place a wreath. A banner reading "murderers" hangs from the dock gates, which have also been d-locked to stop trucks going in and out. Leaflets explaining what is happening are handed to mainly sympathetic workers. Simon would have been celebrating his 25th birthday today. Eventually the company are forced to close the docks down for the day. Workers are sent home on full pay, probably the first time Euromin have coughed up holiday pay.

Thursday 3rd. People occupy the offices of Personnel Selection, the temp agency that sent Simon to the docks when he was clearly unsuitable to do such a skilled job. The "murderers" banner is hung from the window, while outside his friends leaflet passers-by. The leaflet asks "Why should agencies such as Personnel Selection take half your wages when you're doing the work?"

Eventually Personnel Selection are also forced to shut down for the day, again sending the workers home on full pay with a notice in the window saying this is out of respect for Simon.

SO WHAT HAPPENED?

Four months ago Simon was sent by Personal Selection to work at Euromin as a stevedore. But as Emma Aynsley, his girlfriend at the time pointed out "Simon had no experience of working inside a ship and should never have been allowed to work there. He was doing one of the most dangerous jobs in the country for about £5 per hour, with no training whatsoever. It was like asking someone without a driving licence to drive an articulated lorry."

Simon had only been working on the ship for about an hour unloading stone when his head was crushed by the grab of a crane. He died instantly.

The death of Simon is tragic, but was no accident. Infact it was a direct result of the

low paid 'flexible' market workplace which is now endemic throughout the country.

Along the waterfront casualisation has returned to all British docks since the abolition of the National dock scheme in 1989. No holiday or sick pay, no job security, more injuries and deaths. Within four years the accident rate at British docks had leapt by a third. However, the advantages to the companies involved were enormous - a 41% saving in wages caused by 5,000 redundancies and cheaper labour with fewer rights.

Joining Simon's friends on Tuesday was Bob Ritchie, one of the 500 sacked Liverpool dockers, who told SchNEWS "We went on strike for over two years to prevent deaths like this, which are inevitable with an untrained, casual workforce. Before casualisation, this sort of thing would never have happened. If these companies are allowed to get away with employing casual staff to do skilled jobs the death toll will just keep rising."

Which it has. There were 302 deaths from accidents at work last year, 17% more than the year before. Meanwhile the record of Health and Safety Executive is appalling. Out of 50,000 major injuries at work last year 48,000 weren't even investigated by the

"But some things I wouldn't do. I remember being asked to clean up two bags of rubble stones that still had Simon's blood and other remains on them, so they could be sent out to customers. I wouldn't do that so I was sent home without any pay"

Executive. Despite New Labour talking about being 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime' when it comes to companies like Euromin it goes decidedly soft.

Simon had gone to the agency after hassle from the dole. Under the JobSeekers Allowance unemployed people are forced to take any jobs, however unsuitable or unsafe, under threat of losing benefits. Employment agencies boom in this environment - there are six pages of them in the Brighton Yellow Pages alone. Bharti Patel of the Low Pay Unit believes Simon's situation was not unusual. "The sanction of benefit withdrawal can mean that people will take any job at any price". The situation is set to get even worse with the introduction of the New Deal".

The Liverpool dockers' strike, which

CRAP JOB OF THE WEEK
Ask Euromin and Personnel Selection. We're sure they've got fuckloads more.

continued for longer than the miners' strike of 1985-86, received little media coverage, being viewed by many as a last ditch defence of dinosaur ways that were now a thing of the past. The New Britain of the late 1990's has little time for such 'labour market inflexibility'. During the dockers dispute Tony Blair was already voicing his support for the Tories' creation of "a more restricted trade union legislative framework than any other country in the western world."

Simon wrote for SchNews, and was a supporter of the direct action movement's decision to join the dockers in a mass picket on their first year anniversary. Whereas some people couldn't see what we had in common, Simon thought the connection was obvious - the dockers were fighting the crap-jobs-for-crap-pay system that affects just about everyone. In the end it was a connection that became all too real for him.

"But some things I wouldn't do. I remember being asked to clean up two bags of rubble stones that still had Simon's blood and other remains on them, so they could be sent out to customers. I wouldn't do that so I was sent home without any pay"
Sean Currey Dockworker

As Emma told SchNEWS "Simon was killed by the bosses he hated. I suppose there was a time when you had unions that went on strike over things like this, but not anymore. You've got to rely on yourselves, on each other, because there's no big organisations out there anymore that are going to make things right. If we want to make things better, it's up to us."

By closing down Euromin and Personnel Selection for the day we showed that if we work together then we can make a difference. Simon would have been proud.

The Simon Jones Memorial Campaign can be contacted on 01273 685913.

Spanish Stitchup

The Basque nationalist newspaper Egin got its premises raided and closed down on July 15th. (We're rather late, we know, but the English Press didn't hardly mention it at all).

Egin has been appearing for 21 years and, as it has always been engaged in the Basque struggle for freedom, was used to harassment by the Spanish government. Still this dictatorship-like move came as a surprise:

300 armed cops, led by an anti-terrorist judge, invaded the building before dawn and searched it for five hours, systematically dismantling equipment and leaving 200 workers unemployed. 11 members of Egin's board of directors had been arrested a few hours before and kept in custody for five days.

The Spanish authorities accuse them -and the paper- of helping the Basque separatist organisation ETA. Egin published excerpts of ETA communiqués (also published by Spanish papers) and interviews with ETA-members. It provided a forum to debate freely social, cultural and political issues, as it was "born in response to a very real social demand" as one of its former journalists puts it.

The clamp down on Egin is just another sad event in the current Spanish crusade against Basque independence organisations: Last December, the entire leadership of the Basque party Herri Batasuna was sentenced to a total of 161 years in jail, a series of raids then followed on small companies, charging them with helping ETA's finances.

The days following the raid on Egin saw massive campaigns of solidarity, including a 70,000 strong demo calling for a democratic solution for the Basque Country and the re-opening of Egin. Meanwhile the Egin workers set up a makeshift publication under the name of Euskadi Informacion.

"They call it suicide-we call it murder!"

On 5th March this year Italian Police arrested three anarchist activists, charging them with "subversive association for the purpose of constituting an armed gang". The matter behind these charges were sabotage actions against the construction of a high speed railway in the Val di Susa in Piemonte (SchNEWS reported).

Now only one of the three remains alive. Edoardo "Balleno" Massari died in his prison cell in Turin end of March; the authorities say he hung himself with a bed sheet. His friend Maria Soledad Rosas, 22 years old and from Argentina, hanged herself on July 11th. At that time she was under house arrest, forced to stay in a residential home near Turin. She wasn't even in Italy when the sabotage actions happened. It's nothing new that the authorities are eager to carry out raids and the arrests of innocents to learn about structures and connections of activists.

Yet these tragic incidents show once more what might happen if they fuck around with people's lives. As the Turin Anarchist Federation, in which Eduardo was involved, wrote: "Suicide in prison is murder, a murder for which responsibility cannot be avoided by those who, like the magistrate, decided that Edoardo should stay in a cell and in isolation."

On July 28th the 'Social Consent Arsonists' burnt 2 cars at the Italian Embassy in Athens and eight more cars at Fiat and Alfa Romeo agencies and declared that the attacks were "a demonstration of international solidarity for the murdered anarchists Edoardo Massari and Maria Soledad Rosas in a context of persecution and terror that the Italian State has recently (re-)launched against anarchists."

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SCHNEWS IN BRIEF

Big respect to the Exodus crew for putting on a free festie (without permission - naughty!) over the August Bank Holiday weekend (lasting till Wednesday). SchNEWS reckons it was just like the old days before road blocks and the Criminal Justice Act. Now if they can do it in Luton what's stopping the rest of us...? *** Steve Booth and friends will be talking about The Gandalf Trials, Green Anarchist and the aftermath at London Anarchist Forum on Sep 11th - 8pm Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square. *** Leicester commuters will get the opportunity to travel to work for just one penny, thanks to a bus travel offer. 'Turning the Tide' is an initiative by East Midlands businesses to encourage people to leave their car at home. "Don't get pissed off in a jam, spend a penny on a bus". *** Peace Conference in Manchester Town Hall, Fri Sep 18th, 9am-6pm. Admission free. Speakers from Northern Ireland and Nigeria with practical ideas how to abolish war. *** GenetiX Snowball Public Meetings - Brighton: Speakers, Video, Plans for further actions: Tues Sep. 15th, upstairs at the Springfield Hotel, Springfield Rd (nr London Rd Station) - Glastonbury Town Hall: Sep 22nd at 7.30pm. Speakers include Patrick Holden from the Soil Association and Dr Mae Wan-To.***

Almost 400 people went to Tunbridge Wells during last month's First Natty Gathering. There were three-day Permaculture Design courses, lessons in breadmaking, samba, feltmaking and collecting wild food, and much more knowledge sharing and discussions besides. Trustees are negotiating with the landowner to buy the land, and have presented their plans so well, he's dropped the asking price. There will be further courses and projects on the land for the rest of the year. Natty Trust, Brickhurst Farm, Pembury, Nr Tunbridge Wells, Kent - 01273 234035.

INSIDE SCHNEWS

Schwoops: We apologise for getting Rose Browning's address (and name) wrong in last week's issue. It should be: Rose Browning, ME 3630, DI 66 E-Wing, HMP Eastwood Park, Falfield, Wotton under Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 8DB. She was given six months after being found guilty of 'conspiracy to recklessly endanger life and cause criminal damage' after being accused of pulling up the tracks that transport roadbuilding materials from Whatley Quarry in the Mendip Hills.

Richard Dixon has been transferred to an open prison. His address is now BF 20 HMP, Layhill Open Prison, Wotton under Edge, Gloucestershire, GL12 8BT. He was given 12 months for the same offence.

Ben Thompson, arrested during a demonstration at the Hillgrove cat vivisection farm, has finished his hunger strike after meeting with the prison gov'ner, who has promised to look into a prison diet that is vegan and guaranteed free of genetically modified food.

* The next national demonstration at Hillgrove Farm is on Sunday September 6th at noon on Leys Recreation Ground, Station Lane, Witney. A coach will be leaving from Hove Lagoon 9 am (£8.50 return) Ring 01403 785947.

At Tuesday's meeting at the Hobgoblin, Emma, (Simon's girlfriend), left a CD called 'Anoka- sounds of the Asian underground' behind. It was a present from Simon and had the music that was played at his funeral on it, so whoever found it, you can return it via the office address below, pretty please.

THE CLEANING POWER OF NON

VIOLENT DIRECT ACTION

On 17 July, 6 Israelis calling themselves "Human Rights Watch" arrived in Hebron with the intention of removing anti-Arab graffiti, painted by Zionist settlers, from the city walls. Imagine their surprise to see that a platoon of Israeli soldiers had got there first and were busy whitewashing. Undeterred, they proceeded to clean up the sidestreets that the army had overlooked. All 6 were arrested the following day for entering an off-limits area.

Birmingham North Relief Road

"We're short of people"

The attempts to evict the protestors at the proposed site of Britain's first official privately funded toll-road has been stepped up. The activists (see SchNews174/5) have an appeal against eviction on the grounds of notices being served illegally pending in the High Court. Success would mean an extra 2 months at least, but if it fails the authorities are expected to begin eviction proceedings by 12 September.

They are not only asking (desperately) for more people on site but also donations of car batteries, cement, bicycle d-locks and stash food and water.

Directions to Greenwood Camp: 105/105A bus from Bull Street or Corporation Street, Birmingham City Centre, to Roughley. Get off at last stop (by phone box) directly ahead you will see the crossroads. Left down Weeford Road, straight on till you reach a sliproad up to the A38, follow for 1 and a half miles and you'll see the camp on the left. Birmingham Friends of the Earth 0121 632 6909/ camp mobile 07971 354045

...and finally...

This week's mard-arsed bigot award goes to Ron Noakes, Chairman of Worthing Rotary Club. Last month Friends of the Earth were running the Worthing Eco Festival in the town's park. Harmless and respectable enough, you may think. Not for Noakes, masterminding the Rotary Fair on the same field. Oh no! He couldn't have leftie greens, positively impacting on HIS field. He was going to do something about it. Show them who's boss.

Despite FoE having permission from the Rotary Club Committee to set up there, and paying a fee, 'Rocket Ronnie and his team of Rotarian Rednecks' did all they could to prevent the festival going ahead.

"I work for twenty four hours a day, you lot just claim the dole!" he ranted at volunteers, many of whom have full time jobs. Abandoning the charity spirit and human reason entirely, he told FoE volunteers they couldn't sell their vegetarian food because there was a burger van on site, and attempted to stop Anarchist Teapot from selling food by calling in the Health and Safety - who promptly issued them a certificate to allow them to carry on. The breast beating continued as he accused FoE of stealing wheelie-bins (full-on anarchists that they are) from the Fair - they had been donated by a Council Rotarian. Re-enforcements were sent in to protect the carnival procession from the pinko liberal barbarians and threats made to park carnival trucks on their tents.

What a tossbrain! Everyone managed to enjoy themselves nevertheless.

Not even 'Rocket Ron' could stop freedom fighters from the Goldfish Liberation Front seizing goldfish-in-a-bags from the Rotary Fair to enable them to blow bubbles in a more pondlike environment!

disclaimer

The SchNEWS warns all readers not to attend any illegal gatherings or take part in any criminal activities. Always stay within the law. In fact please just sit in, watch TV and go on endless shopping sprees, filling your house and lives with endless consumer crap. Then you will feel content. Honest.