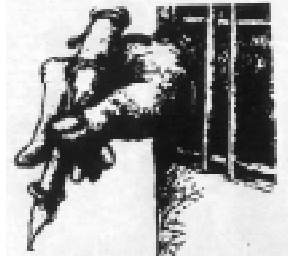




WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER NO HOLDS BARRED

SchNEWS

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“We are currently seeing the growing exploitation of prisoners’ labour by private companies and by the state... compulsory work is nothing less than slavery.” - Prisoners Mark Barnsley and John Bowden.

Last Friday saw the first action against forced prison labour in Britain, when supporters of wrongfully jailed anarchist Mark Barnsley invaded and shut down Hepworth Building Products in Edlington, South Yorkshire. Hepworth uses prisoners at Wakefield Prison to carry out tedious work packaging their products. In return the prisoners receive a whopping £8 a week, which for a 25 hour week works out at a pocket bulging 32p an hour. Wakefield has no educational programme and the prison labour is compulsory. Mark has refused to do the work and as a result he’s now being held in the notorious isolation block.

About 30 supporters invaded the site - locking the main gates and disrupting the lunchtime shift-change - quickly knocking up some leaflets on Hepworth’s copier to distribute to workers with details of the company’s exploits. The action disrupted the warehouse and offices for about 2 hours. The fire brigade were called to cut through the locks on the gates but turned around and departed to cheers after it was explained to them what the protest was about.

One of those involved told SchNEWS “It was only a small action, but considering it was relatively spontaneous it was a great success. There were no arrests, the workers were mostly pretty supportive (including one who actually knew Mark Barnsley from being involved in anarchist politics back in 1980s!) and seemed to know nothing of their company’s involvement in prison labour.” A delighted Mark Barnsley said “This is brilliant! I really hope actions against companies like this carry on; they are so easy to target on the outside and it is so inspiring to those on the inside. Prisons themselves can stand up to pressure, but the companies that profit from them can’t. This is what I call real solidarity.”

But it’s not just Hepworth who are involved in prison labour. Companies like Virgin, who get prisoners in Lewes to untangle headphones for use in its planes; Joe Bloggs who get Strangeways inmates to stitch its clothes and Age Concern who have their donation bags printed and folded.

JAILHOUSE STOCK

“We are talking about the creation of a Prison-Industrial Complex, wherein the government and corporations change the entire focus of prisons from mere punishment to profits, where private industry exploits prison labour, and where a prison corporate support industry makes millions of dollars to provide security products like gun towers, fences, motion detectors, guns, and so on. In addition to all this, the economy of the government is distorted from social spending to create jobs, housing or community development to that of prison building alone. The poor are thus incarcerated, but not employed in decent jobs, while the state creates concentration camps for social control and to make a dollar” - Lorenzo Komboa Ervin, former Black Panther and ex-political prisoner

In America – the country that leads the world in jailing its population - half a million prisoners are involved in forced labour. One person from the Anarchist Black Cross told SchNEWS that it should be compared with “human rights abuses” in China. Still, it’s not hard to see why companies are climbing on board the gravy train.

In 1995, Lockhart Technologies Inc. laid off 150 workers in Austin and transferred the jobs to a prison. Their former president boasted that the company enjoys having “a captive work force.” “They’re here every day, their cars don’t break down, they’re rarely ill, and they don’t have family problems.... They’re delightful to work with.”

In search of lower wages, San Francisco-based Data Processing Accounting Services moved U.S. assembly jobs to a maquiladora in Tecate, Mexico. But increased competition sent the company back to the United States in 1992—to San Quentin State Prison. “Some of the work went to China and some of the work we sent to San Quentin,” The company left San Quentin in 1996 because of high prisoner turnover, but it’s looking for an alternative site, ideally at another prison.

In 1986 prisoners were used during a flight-attendant strike at TWA. The company made its check in staff become flight attendants and then used prisoners to work on the phone paying them \$5 an hour as opposed to the usual union rate of \$18.

* Mark Barnsley was sentenced to 12 years in prison back in 1994 after being convicted of GBH for defending himself against a gang of drunken students. Mark has been systematically victimised by the

CRAPARREST OF THE WEEK

For emptying ashes on a road! 10 people were nicked in the US after pouring ashes on the driveway of Lockheed Martin on the anniversary of those killed in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They’ve been charged with criminal trespass. Lockheed is the world’s largest arms dealer, now branching out into private prisons and welfare.

Prison Service for his anarchist beliefs and for continuing to maintain his innocence. For the full story read ‘Beaten up, Fitted Up, Locked Up’ £2 from Justice for Mark Barnsley, Cheques/Postal Orders payable to ‘Justice for Mark Barnsley’, PO Box 381, Huddersfield HD1 3XX. Tel: 07944 522001 www.freemarkbarnsley.com

CHAIN LETTER

Mark and another prisoner John Bowden have issued a statement calling for UK prisoners to show solidarity action with Turkish Hunger strikers. The Turkish prisoners are continuing their protest against the new isolation cells. So far nearly 60 have died including 28 prisoners either shot or burnt alive by the authorities while on hunger strike.

The solidarity action, which is also being taken by prisoners in France, Greece and by Basque and Kurdish prisoners, is in the form of a hunger protest on the first Saturday of each month. Mark and John then go on to list three demands for British prisoners – a minimum of one hour’s daily exercise in the open air, the right of all prisoners to wear their own clothes and the abolition of compulsory prison work. “There has been a concerted attempt to crush the British prison struggle once and for all. By making this simple act of solidarity we are taking the first step towards renewing the struggle and asserting our humanity and our defiance.”

Write to Mark Barnsley WA2897 HMP Wakefield, 5 Love Lane, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF2 9AG & John Bowden B41173, HMP Bristol, 19 Cambridge Road, Bristol, BS7 8PS

* Next Thursday (16) there’s a solidarity meeting in support of political prisoners. with speakers representing Turkish hunger strikers and the Mark Barnsley Campaign. 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London

* A Prison Abolition Conference is being organised for Saturday 26th January 2002 at Conway Hall, For more info or to help out send SAE to Prison Abolition Conference, c/o BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX.

Copstrop

"A peaceful protest outside the baths was hijacked by a minority of violent youths whose sole intent was to intimidate and injure police officers." - Colin McKerracher, Assistant Chief Constable, Strathclyde Police.

SchNEWS is fed up of hearing this sort of bullshit from the cops, whenever there is 'violence' at a demo it's always blamed on outside agitators, never the fact that people are pissed-off with what's going on in their local communities or that the police can get heavy.

For five months residents in Govanhill have been fighting the closure of their local swimming pool by Glasgow Council who say it isn't economical to run, the council haven't met with locals despite a 12,000 strong petition (SchNEWS 307). On Tuesday they sent in sheriffs backed up by the boys in blue to evict protestors occupying the swimming pool, quickly a crowd gathered and by the evening more than 200 had assembled. When shutters on the pool were put up the police pushed into the crowd and some people, including police got hurt. One local Karen Fisher said, "The decision to put shutters up on this building has inflamed people. The people of this area are very angry." Another local described police behaviour as "disgraceful and shameful". Hardly outside agitators.
<http://crowd.to/saveourpool/>

Cop Shop

Last week people demonstrated against Avon and Somerset Constabulary's recruitment drive for people from ethnic minorities. A bus from outside Easton Job Centre took candidates for a tour around constabulary facilities (Better there than inside a vacuum van handcuffed and with a coppers knee on your back as activists and black people have experienced). While protestors unfurled banners deploring police brutality and racism, the coppers left with just 4 possible recruits.

* Vigil this Monday (13th) in memory of Firsat Yildiz, an asylum seeker stabbed to death in Glasgow. 4 - 6pm at The Home Office, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London. National Assembly Against Racism 020 7247 9907.

* The Red, White and Blue festival is happening this weekend but SchNEWS won't be having a stall. The event is being organised by Nick Griffin's British National Party at Llechwedd-du farm, Welshpool, Powys. Antifascists are gonna try and stop it. Meet either Llanerfyl car park (on A458) or Talerddig (on A470) 9am. Contact No Platform 079670 771571.

* Mike Taylor has an appeal against his conviction for organising a demonstration at Heathrow Airport to stop the deportation flight to Iraq of Amanj Gafor, a mentally-ill Kurdish refugee. He has support of BA pilots and air traffic control workers. Picket Isleworth Crown Court, 9am, 24th August, 36 Ridgeway Road, Isleworth. Bristol Defend Asylum Seekers. 0117-965-1803, bdasc@hotmail.com

* 'Injustice' the film the Police Federation don't want you to see (SchNEWS 316) - London showing Aug 17th, ring 07770-432439 for details. Liverpool showing 6.30pm, Aug. 18th at Masque, 90 Seel St. It's part of a benefit night to start the campaign for justice for Jimmy Ashley who was shot dead in his bed in Hastings by armed cops. Paddy Hill of Miscarriage of Justice Organisation. will be the main speaker.

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SchNEWS in brief

Reclaim the Beach - Your radio is the sound system. Bring a radio and tune into Radio 4A (106.6FM) on Brighton beach this Saturday (11th), near Gemini's 8-10pm, for a live broadcast. Radio 4A is Brighton's premier pirate station and will be on the air all weekend. If you're not in Brighton tune into www.piratetv.net. ** London has a new **Vegan Organic Rawfood Space** at Unit K4 Arena Business Centre, 71 Ashfield Road London N4 1NY. 020-88004849. ** 6 Russian activists from a **Rainbow Keepers** camp in Udmurtia, against the building of a Lockheed Martin rocket fuel factory are on trial for a variety of offences, more info (in Russian) can be found at www.goryachiy.narod.ru. ** The 8th Annual Portsmouth **Smokey Bear's Picnic**, is happening this Sunday (12th), 2pm at Southsea Common. One man ill be giving away £100 worth of munchies, part of the cash he received from the cops after being arrested for taking the mickey out of one of their wigs at last years festie. www.smokeybearspicnic.com

Plane Speaking

On Thursday the offices of British Airports Authority (BAA) were occupied by London Rising Tide, in protest at the way the company profits from climate change. BAA is planning massive expansion of its airports, including a controversial 5th Terminal at Heathrow. Despite the noise and pollution etc, £250 million has already been spent on infrastructure for Terminal 5, while £2.5 billion will be spent on it the next 10 years. If that wasn't enough, in order to provide for the predicted growth of air traffic, the equivalent of 4 new Heathrows will need to be built by 2020. So it's a good job the plan for extending Stansted airport got the go ahead a couple of weeks ago.

Aviation is the world's fastest growing source of CO2 emissions, while the oil industry that supplies the untaxed kerosene is guilty of untold human rights abuses from Alaska to Indonesia.

SchNEWS recommends that the government concretes over everything, that way we'll be able to get around quicker. And while they're at it, why not make the places where we live so fucking horrible we all need to escape for two weeks every year. Then we can destroy all of those places too. Sorted. www.risingtide.org.uk

* SchNEWS is having a whip round for poor old BP who this week announced record profits of 1.3 million an hour.

Sinteltown

Spain's longest strike ended in a good result for 1000 workers of the defunct telecommunications Company, Sintel. They had set up a squatter 'Camp of Hope' on the pavement outside the finance ministry over 6 months ago in the middle of Madrid's icy winter. This was in protest at being laid off by Sintel, which is alleged to have been asset stripped by American investors. Sintel was privatised 5 years ago after being part of the state-owned Telefonica and sold to the Miami based anti-Castro leader Jorge Mas Canosa. The workers used their skills and tools to illegally tap into overhead cables, build home-made cabins with fully equipped kitchen ranges. Running toilets were created by plumbing pipes into local sewers and there were even 3 portable swimming pools. All of this came from donated or scavenged street junk. A deal was struck with the social and finance Ministries to get 11 months back pay and early pensions. 6 former directors of Sintel are being investigated for illegal asset stripping.

* Not the usual suspects for strike action, but Scottish Medical secretaries are on a 3 day strike in protest at the crap money they receive for their present grade, £12,000.

Genoa another venue?

The fallout from the massive protests in Genoa continues unabated (see SchNEWS 314/5). While more than 250 cities across the world mobilised against the actions of the cops and three Italian police chiefs were 're-assigned', the German Interior Minister has suggested setting up a European riot police force of "specially-trained police forces to...help defuse and, if necessary, combat violence with appropriate force". Forget about the issues just kick the protestors heads in. Still, they better be quick because the Italian No-global network have promised to mobilise 30,000 people and invade security zones at next months NATO summit in Naples in revenge for what happened in Genoa. The Mayor of Naples wants the meeting cancelled complaining "It is too risky. The climate in the country is too hot and I don't want to militarise the city." Which probably isn't the best choice of words for a NATO summit that will be discussing amongst other things America's son of star wars plans. Meanwhile Italian President Berlusconi has asked if the United Nations could move the world food summit planned for Rome to Africa.

* Three weeks after Genoa and not only are 48 people still in prison, but even more worryingly 80 are still missing. If you have info email: supportolegaleto@disinfo.net.

* John Lawrie is accused of affray at the MayDay protests and will go to prison if convicted. He urgently needs witness's. John is 55 years of age, 5ft 4" tall and was wearing a light blue fleece top coat over a black fleece with grey lining around the neck, a black woolly hat, a t-shirt, black tracksuit bottoms and a pair of black boots. He also had a 12" black plastic horn which he blew occasionally. He was standing on the roof of a ladies toilet by the entrance to the underground at Oxford Circus. If you saw him call Andrew Katzen at Moss & Co, Tel 020 8986 8336, email: andrew@mosslaw.co.uk

...and finally...

"An angry mob gathered around a train station, passing out photocopied flyers and shouting protests against another dodgy company. Scrappy stickers were slapped on billboards, directing passers-by to a crudely designed website. The company they were railing against was a frequent target of grassroots activism: Nike. And the group running this guerilla-style anti-advertising campaign? None other than Nike itself." What the fuck is going on?

Nike like other corporations are hijacking the techniques of activists. Creating their own subverted billboards by Fans Fighting for Fairer Football (FFFF), but this group of "actorvists" are complaining that wearers of Nike shoes have an unfair advantage. Other corporations have tried to cash in on activist chic, The Gap have dressed their windows in fake black spray paint reading 'Freedom' and 'We the People.' They've even hung anarchist flags alongside their sweatshop-produced jeans. IBM has even taken to spraying stencils of Peace, Love and their Linux Penguin logo on city sidewalks, they've been fined thousands of dollars reinforcing their hip, anti-establishment image!?

But the last laugh goes to activists who took no time to properly subvert the fake subverted billboards, rallies were held outside Nike stores and the Melbourne megastore had to be boarded up and two days after the FFFF website was mentioned in the mainstream news, it was taken down!

www.alternet.org

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers in a sentence to be committed to yer convictions. Honest m'lud.