



wake up! WAKE up! I t's yer stirred not shaken

SchNEWS

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"With friends like these who needs enemies."

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FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

"We have certainly come to see the scourge of terrorism in Chechnya with different eyes." - Lord Robertson, NATO secretary general.

"Why are we terrorists? What would you do if Russia came and destroyed your villages and killed your children?" - Chechen rebel.

With Russian part of the international "war against terrorism", the plight of ordinary Chechens caught up in Russia's very own "war against terrorism" is still falling on deaf ears. Now the West merely 'disagrees' with Russia's bombing of the country back into the dark ages and has better things to do than worry about the endless accounts of torture, killings, rape and disappearances of the civilian population.

The recent conflict started after a number of bomb attacks in Moscow, which were blamed on Chechen rebels. Russia used this excuse to re-invade Chechnya in September 1999 to destroy the 'terrorists'. Russian troops captured the capital Grozny - already a pile of rubble after the last war with Russia five years earlier - and in the process killed up to 40,000 civilians. Although the main conventional war between Russian and Chechen forces has largely ceased, human rights organisations have reported a rise in the disappearance, torture and summary executions of detainees. Chechnya has been called the 'Wild West' of Russia and Human Rights Watch says it is in transition from an internal armed conflict to a classic dirty war. The United Nations have condemned Russia for "excessive and indiscriminate" use of force by its troops, but because Russia is still a military superpower - and one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - it knows it can get away with it.

TORTURE

In Grozny most of the population is female, all with tales of mass round-ups of males between the ages of 16 and 50. Isa is one of these men. He was taken to the Khottuni camp and was kept in a pit measuring 3m by 3m half filled with water with five other men. While being 'interrogated' he had cigarettes stubbed out on his body, his fingernails pulled out, his feet beaten with clubs and was then gang raped. Isa was only released after a ransom was paid, but the five others, along with thousands more, were tortured and then killed. Round ups of all men from villages take place under the guise of looking for terrorists and rebel leaders, but in reality the reasons for detention are arbitrary. In one case, following a

bomb explosion that killed five Russian soldiers, tanks and troops invaded the village of Sernovodsk. Most males were rounded up and taken into a field outside the village. Among them was Khamaz Yusupov, who described to Human Rights Watch beatings and electroshock torture to his ears, teeth, and arms. Another woman was detained when soldiers found a picture in her house of her in traditional dress standing next to a man with a beard. For that 'crime' she was taken to a military base where she was tied to a pole, beaten for several days then dumped half unconscious at the side of a road. Men have now shaved off beards and destroyed all photos of themselves with beards or in military uniform for fear of being branded a Chechen rebel. In February this year 51 bodies were found in the abandoned village of Dachny, less than a kilometre from the main Russian military base in Chechnya, sixteen of those found were last seen in the custody of Russian troops. Many of the bodies showed evidence of torture with broken limbs, flayed body parts, severed fingertips, and knife and gunshot wounds. Rozita, a grandmother, was detained in January and held in a death camp outside the village of Khottuni. She was thrown into a 4-foot deep pit with heavy logs as a roof so she couldn't stand up and kept there for 12 days. She was then taken out to be interrogated and tortured with electrodes attached to her body and the current turned on. "Yes I screamed something terrible. It hurt a lot when they turned on the current. The FSB (Russian secret police) people said, 'You aren't dancing well enough. Let's add some more voltage.'"

In the 19th Century Russia conquered Chechnya after a war that lasted over half a century. After World War II, Stalin deported the whole population to Serbia for "re-education" but the Chechens eventually returned to their homeland. With the break up of the Soviet Union Chechens unsurprisingly wanted independence. In 1991 pro-independence Jokhar Dudayev won 90% of the vote, so Russia sent in troops, Dudayev imposed martial law and Russia pulled out. In 1994 civil war broke out between Chechen government forces and the Russian sponsored Chechen Council, providing Russia with the perfect excuse to again invade sending in 40,000 troops and destroying the capital Grozny. By the time a peace deal was negotiated, giving Chechnya autonomy within Russia, 60,000-100,000 people had been killed.

* To find out more on Chechnya see <http://tchetchenieparis.free.fr>

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For shuffling! A man was arrested under the trade union law of 'besetting' after he didn't show enough haste in leaving Euromin docks in Shoreham. Four other people were also nicked as 30 campaigners for the Simon Jones Memorial Campaign shut down the docks for a few hours after last weeks court ruling (see SchNEWS 333) which gave bosses up and down the country the green light to kill their workers and get away with a slapped wrist. www.simonjones.org.uk

Rozita was only released when her relatives and fellow villagers paid a ransom.

Anna Politkovskaya, a respected Moscow journalist, also fell foul of the secret police when she visited to Chechnya to find out about the human rights abuses. After she had seen the pits for herself she was arrested and tortured, all the while her captors reminding her that FSB take their orders direct from President Putin himself.

As one human rights observer commented "The war is not a response to Chechen terrorism. It is an attempt to divert attention away from the social and economic crisis in Russia. Its goals are to restore the standing of the military in Russian society, and to secure Russian control of the oil and gas pipelines running through Chechnya. But unlike Kosova or Kuwait, the world has just sat back and watched Russia's scorched earth policy." With Russia now part of the united front against terrorism SchNEWS has to ask yet again - who are the real terrorists?

CONVOY

In January this year a food aid convoy went from France to Chechnya. Taking over a month their journey was littered with problems. For 11 days they were held up by customs and harassed into paying over 17,000 Roubles in various fines. But the food reached its destination and given to refugees who had received no food aid for three months. Xavier Rousselin, one of the organizers of the Trade Union Convoy for Chechnya told SchNEWS, "The state of health of the refugees - physical as well as mental - was terrible. There was an epidemic of hepatitis and another of tuberculosis... The approach of a new winter without adequate heating and without correct food could be catastrophic. Without care, some people will soon die." Another convoy is on its way this week to help rebuild a school in Gronzy and one in the refugee camp of Bart. More information: cst@ras.eu.org

Anti-Anti-Terrorism

With the Anti-Terrorism, Civil Liberties are for Wet Liberals, We Need More State Security Bill (see SchNEWS 331) rushing its way through parliament here's a few details of events against the Bill.

* On International Human Rights Day (Monday 10th) there's a candle lit vigil 'last chance to say no to detention without trial'. Parliament Sq., London (Westminster tube) 6pm - 8pm. More info from: 020-7417-6375 or Asad.Rehman@amnesty.org.uk

* Charter for Basic Democratic Rights. Discussion on why Labour's anti-terror laws threaten us all. 6.30pm, Dec. 11th, Friends House, Euston Road, London. More info: 07753-658875 charter@socialistfuture.org.uk

* For the latest Terror bill news see: www.blagged.freeseerve.co.uk/ta2000/

* The electrohippie collective have an online lobbying/direct-action in December, against the Anti-terrorism bill. Important days for participation 6th, 10th 11th, 12th, and the days following the passing of the new law. www.fraw.org.uk/ehippies/

* For the latest info about next weeks Brussels protests including your rights at the Belgium border check out www.uk.indymedia.org/

POSITIVE SchNEWS

It's official - the residents of Garstang, a small town in Lancashire, are some of the most ethical consumers around. It's the first town in the world to be recognised as a fair trade town by the Fair Trade Foundation. Their produce is marked with a guarantee that people receive a better price for their work. In 1992 there were only 5 places in Garstang that sold fairtrade stuff, but after years of campaigning another 8 have also started selling it too. Now seven out of ten local people say they choose to buy it over the usual more exploitative stuff and many only buy local produce (they also have a local produce directory).

To become a fair trade town or city you've got to get the local council to pass a resolution which supports and promotes it, put a sign up declaring it and promise to serve tea and coffee that hasn't ripped people off at yer meetings. Fairtrade products have to be readily available in at least 10 shops (more if you're a city). Find out more at www.garstangoxfamgroup.fsnet.co.uk.

Gene Camp

Believe it or not - a protest camp has been granted PLANNING PERMISSION! Highland Council in Scotland gave the Munloch Vigil permission for two caravans, a yurt and a toilet to remain next to the site of a GM crop their protesting against until the trial ends next summer. Contact: The Munloch Vigil, The Layby, By Roskill Farm, Munloch, Ross-shire IV8 8PA.

* The biotech industry have out of the goodness of their wallets produced a magazine entitled "Your World" to distribute in Scottish schools, and would you believe it the magazine presents a totally distorted view of the issues surrounding GM. A campaign has started to try and stop the booklet being distributed and a guide has been produced entitled "Your World or their World" www.scottishgenetixaction.org

* Flowering GM oilseed rape plants have been discovered in a field in Lincolnshire. The site was used earlier in the year for farmscale trials and the plants should have been destroyed to prevent them flowering and cross pollinating with other plants. Friends of the Earth are now trying to get Aventis, who were responsible for the trial, prosecuted.

Subscribe!

Keep SchNEWS FREE! Send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 10 for next 9 issues) or donations (payable to Justice?) Ask for "Originals" if you can make copies. Post free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o on-the-fiddle, P.O. Box 2600, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 0EF.

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SchNEWS in brief

Tonight (Friday) 7.30pm talk about **Plan Colombia** and it's effects at the Phoenix Community Centre (next to Freebutt Pub) Brighton. ** Keep your wrists busy this weekend at the **24hr letter writing vigil**, organised by Amnesty at the Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton, 9am Sat 8th - 9am Sun 9th. ** The **Spitalfields Market Under Threat** campaign lost the first part of their battle to save the market. Planning permission has been given to an office block despite there being no environmental impact assessment. This is being challenged in a bid to stall the work www.smut.org.uk ** **The Sheffield Digger** a radical publication dealing with environmental, social and political stories in the Sheffield area has been re-born. Help with printing costs, distribution and volunteers wanted: The Sheffield Digger, c/o Brambles Resource Centre, 82 Andover St, Sheffield, S3 9EH. email: jimthackery@yahoo.co.uk ** Benefit Gig for the **Campaign Against Depleted Uranium**. 11th Dec. 8pm-late. Night and Day Café, Oldham Street, Manchester. £3.50/£4.50, with Scapa Flow, Polythene, Desolation Angels and more. ** "**Stanleys exploits, or Civilising Africa**" a new pamphlet by anarchist writer David Nicoll, from the Kate Sharpley library. Their Winter 2001 catalogue is out for Christmas http://flag.blackend.net/ksl/sharpely.htm ** Three **Trident Ploughshares** activists are today to be awarded the "Alternative Nobel Peace Prize" by the Swiss Parliament for "a model of principled, transparent and non-violent direct action dedicated to rid the world of nuclear weapons." Info: 08454-588366 www.tridentploughshares.org ** This Sat (8th) **SLAG** (South London Action Group) have their first shindig at 31 Morecombe Street, SE17 www.slagfest.org.uk/ ** Over 15,000 workers took part in a march demanding more pay in Bucharest, **Romania**, at the end of the march striking workers urinated on the Ministry of Labour building to show their anger! ** 30 people occupied the offices of the **Scotts Company** last week as part of an ongoing campaign against peat extraction at Hatfield Moor, Doncaster, one of the last remaining raised peat bogs left in England. Leeds EF! 0113-2629365 leedsef@leedsef.org.uk ** 6 activists calling themselves **Sodexo Screws Refugees For Money** (catchy eh?) occupied the Sodexo European Management centre and disrupted their work for the day before being nicked, taken to Croydon copshop and charged under section 4 of the Public Order Act 1986 - threatening words/behaviour (!) for their trouble.

STUNNED

The owner of the Dutch Experience Café in Stockport, Colin Davies, is still on remand after police raided the café and his home and found large quantities of cannabis. The Café opened in September to try and provide low cost marijuana to medical users. Despite newspaper claims to the contrary, the café is still open. On the 24th there was a mass smoke-up at Stockport police station and twelve people were arrested. Around 70 people turned up to a further protest on December 1st. Contact The Dutch Experience, Stockport Village, Hooper St, Stockport, GTR Manchester, 0161-480-5902 www.dutchexperience.org/

Limited Edition Mark Thomas Bootleg Video, Live in Brighton.

See 2 hours of Mark in fine form the day after Balfour Beatty pulled out of the Ilisu Dam. Get it from SchNEWS for £8 + 80p SAE. Buy this and help fund the next SchNEWS book.

Inside SchNEWS

Prisoners always appreciate a bit of mail at this time of year, so why not send some Christmas cards. Here's a few prisoners who'd appreciate a line or two from you - for others check out the Anarchist Black Cross website www.brightonabc.org.uk

* **Mark Barnsley**, WA2897, HMP Whitemoor, Longhill Road, March, Cambs PE15 0PR. Serving 12 years after being attacked by a dozen drunken students.

* **Inaki Garcia Koch**, Carcel de Pamplona, C/san Rogue, Apdo 250, 31080 Irunez, Pamplona, Navarra, Spain. Serving 5 years for cutting cables on the construction site of the Itoiz dam.

* **Harold Thompson**, #93992, NWCC, Site 1, Route 1, Box 660, Tiptonville, Tennessee 38079, USA. Long-term anarchist prisoner

* **Paul Robinson**, KVA Karlskoga, Box 7, 69121 Karlskoga, Sweden. In prison for his part in the Gothenburg anti-EU demonstrations

* **Neil Bartlett** FW7083 HMP Lewes Brighton Rd. East Sussex BN7 1EA England. On remand on suspicion of making hoax telephone calls to animal abusers.

* **The SHAC 3** each serving a year for 'Conspiracy to cause a public nuisance' for encouraging readers in their newsletter to phone and fax Huntingdon Life Sciences - **Heather Avery** (TE1951) and **Natasha Dellamaigne** (TE1952) both at HMP and YO1 Hightpoint, Stradis Hall, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 9YG and **Greg Avery** (SS9142) HMP Belmarsh, Weston Way, Thamesmead, London SE28 0EB.

* **Jeffrey Luers (aka Free)** sentenced to 22 years 8 months in prison for setting fire to several sports utility vehicles because of the environmental damage these gas-guzzling vehicles cause. Letters c/o the legal defence committee FCDLC PO box 50263, Eugene OR 97404 USA

* **Jeffrey Archer**... Unfortunately SchNEWS couldn't track down his address.

...and finally...

SchNEWS just couldn't make it up, last Sunday was the first annual walk for capitalism. Three dozen capitalists, (or two as the police saw it), walked through Westlake Park in Seattle waving signs such as "Help a starving child in Africa. Give him capitalism." "Make Money Not Class War." and "Capitalism is more important than democracy." - OK, these were held by anti-capitalist protestors, who infiltrated the march.

Tym Parsons, the Seattle coordinator of WalkForCapitalism complained "We knew they had something in the works. Their aim was to infiltrate our organization and discredit it by way of parody."

Er, SchNEWS reckons you did a good enough job of that yourself, with one passer by commenting "I find it all very amusing. I don't think I've ever seen a protest for capitalism before. Don't these people already have what they're fighting for?"

The question is why did they choose to celebrate D2 (they've even nicked the names) with something as inefficient, ecologically sustainable and downright un-capitalistic as walking? SchNEWS reckons they would have also got more people onboard if someone had promised to bung each person who turned up £25 and a packed lunch (well that's the only reason us rent-a-mob lot ever bother turning up to demonstrations.)

Have a laugh, look at their website: www.walkforcapitalism.org/

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers this week's grim story is no fairy tale.