



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER BUSH BASHING

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'These boots are made for walkin'
- Nancy Sinatra

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AMERICAN WET DREAM

On Tuesday the UN Security Council unanimously voted to overhaul the economic sanctions against Iraq – a move so radical it was immediately condemned by the sanctions-busting group Voices in the Wilderness, four of whom are currently in Iraq distributing medical supplies. They called the resolution “a deadly fraud that will do little to alleviate the ongoing humanitarian crisis.”

Forget the cruel tyrant Saddam Hussein (once supported by the West when he towed their line), what about the ordinary people of Iraq? Who, thanks to these economic sanctions imposed on them by the West for nearly 12 years have seen 500,000 of their children die. Denis Halliday and Hans Von Sponeck, who were both at one time responsible for the UN's humanitarian programme in Iraq, both resigned in protest at what the sanctions were doing. Last year they wrote, “The death of 5-6,000 children a month is mostly due to contaminated water, lack of medicines and malnutrition.”

And it will be the ordinary Iraqi people who will again be suffering if President Bush and his cronies use their so-called war on terrorism to start bombing a country, that has already been bombed back to the dark ages. The Pentagon's ‘medium case scenario’ is that a war on Iraq could condemn to death more than 10,000 civilians. But this could be even worse if, as journalist John Pilger puts it, the Americans “implement their current strategy of ‘total war’ and target Iraq's electricity and water.”

Not that we should forget that American and British aircraft have, in a largely forgotten war, been bombing Iraq week-in week-out, for more than four years. The Wall Street Journal reported that the US and Britain faced a “dilemma” because “few targets remain.” “We're down to the last outhouse” bemoaned a Pentagon official.

Still, the US insists that action is necessary because Iraq has been defying United Nations resolutions and represents an imminent threat to the world, and to the U.S. in particular. Excuse us, but defying UN resolutions and ignoring international treaties is what the Bush administration does best, with Bush making it clear that he will not honour any treaty if he reckons it might harm U.S. interests. In fact just last week Bush pulled out of the International Criminal Court – you know that radical idea to create the world's first permanent tribunal to prosecute people for war crimes, genocide, and other crimes against humanity (see SchNEWS 326).

Bush and his militaristic government argue that they have to bomb Iraq because Saddam won't comply with United Nations weapons inspectors. So best forget that the Bush administration denied international inspectors access to U.S. chemical and biological weapons-related facilities because it might violate “commercial interests”.

Still the truth slipped out earlier this month when US Secretary of State Colin Powell said “regardless of what the inspectors do, the people of Iraq and the people of the region would be better off with a different regime in Baghdad.” Not that SchNEWS could disagree with that – a lot of countries would be better off without dictators and corrupt governments - it's just the US wants another Saddam Hussein, but this time one who'll do what they say.

Meanwhile Cuba is now being added to the US hit list, because hey the US right has always hated Cuba. In a speech entitled ‘Beyond the Axis of Evil’, Under Secretary of State John Bolton pointed the finger at Cuba because of the country's advanced biomedical industry. Forget that Cuba's advance biomedics has more to do with their better-than-the-US Health Service and their policy of sending doctors to help third world countries (so hey, let's add them to the list). Plus Castro's visits last year to three “rogue states” accused by the US state department of sponsoring terrorism: Iraq, Syria and Libya. “States that renounce terror and abandon WMD [weapons of mass destruction] can become part of our effort,” Mr Bolton said. “But those that do not can expect to become our targets.”

So it's back to that old “you are either with us or against us” mantra. Each new stage of the war against terrorism makes it clearer that the real aim has little to do with what happened on September 11th and more to do with what the American military describes as “full spectrum dominance”. A document from the US Space Command spells it out “The United States will remain a global power and exert global leadership... Widespread communications will highlight disparities in resources and quality of life – contributing to unrest in developing countries...” So while everyone else must abandon those weapons of mass destruction the US this week got the green light from Russia this week to go ahead with its plan for the National Missile Defence Project or Star Wars II to keep us all in check (SchNEWS 307).

Rotten Apple Pie

When it comes to Israel of course then it's a different tune. Israel has been defying U.N. resolutions for more than 30 years. No action has been taken against their bloody and illegal rampage through Palestine. Hey, they were after terrorists. They face no sanctions for blocking a United Nations fact-finding mission into military action at the Jenin refugee camp. In fact their two fingers to the world earned them a serious reprimand in the US Senate who er... voted for an increase in military aid to Israel.

Is this because the Palestinian civilians, just like the Iraqis and the five thousand Afghani civilians killed in the last holy war against terror, are what John Pilger calls the Unpeople. “The killing of Iraqi infants, like the killing of Chechens, like the killing of Afghan civilians, is rated less morally abhorrent than the killing of Americans.”

America's war on terrorism is just another word for imperialism – and Iraq is currently head of its wish list of countries where a new head of state needs to be put in place, one that will be a lot more open to Uncle Sam's way of doing things.

* John Pilger's new book *The New Rulers of the World* will be published by Verso soon. Read more of his articles at www.johnpilger.com

* The sanction busters will be giving a report on their visit next Friday (24) at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London (nearest tube Holborn) 7.30pm. Contact: Voices in the Wilderness 08454560282 www.viwuk.freeserve.co.uk

* Bypass the corporate media: www.znet.org www.alternet.org

TAKING THE PEACE

Israeli Human rights organisation B'Tselem has just published a report showing that Israel has illegally taken over 42% of the West Bank since they first occupied the area in 1967. Although built-up Jewish settlements occupy only 1.7% of the land, various excuses, including seizure for ‘military needs’, for being ‘Abandoned assets’ and even an obscure 19th century Law about ‘state Land’ - has been used to take over the rest. Although the Land Grabbing is a violation of international law and of the Palestinians' human rights it is upheld by the Israeli high court. The settlers are not only more privileged than the Palestinians, they are treated better than other Israelis. In 2000, settlement councils received 165% more land than councils in other territories.

PALESTINE

March for Palestine this Saturday Assemblable 12 noon Speakers' Corner (Marble Arch tube) Why not join the Anti Capitalist Bloc, not hard to spot, look for the only part of the march surrounded by Cops.

More than 1000 activists from around the world have been in Israel on solidarity actions since the army began its latest series of attacks against Palestinians. There'll be another group of peace observers going from the UK this summer and there'll be training weekends in Manchester, London and possibly Scotland and Newcastle for people intending to go, or planning to be part of support teams organising actions in this country or doing press work. The weekends will include non-violent direct action training, information on the area and opportunities to talk with former volunteers. Marcia Tubbs, a British citizen recently in Palestine said "In the prison we were in, 3 Palestinian medical workers were also detained. You could hear people screaming as they were beaten. We can make such a difference by just being there as international observers, doing what the UN and governments are unwilling to do, protecting the basic human rights of the Palestinian people." More info: uksolidarity@yahoo.co.uk, or write to ISM, box 29, 22a Beswick Street, Manchester M4 7HR. www.palsolidarity.org

* On Monday, about 15 activists did a solidarity action against the Israeli embassy in London. They were beaten back by Israeli military police using golf umbrellas! On the same day another group did an action against the Israeli Tourism Information office and the office of El-Al, the Israeli airline which has been deporting international activists.

* "Dispatches: State of Terror" is being repeated on Channel 4, Sunday 19th 2.45am Dispatches reporter Deborah Davies was one of the first journalists to enter the Jenin refugee camp after the Israeli Army's brutal offensive. The programme looks at the real victims of this 'anti terrorist action.'

* Yigal Rosenberg and Yair Hilu, who signed an open letter along with more than 120 other high school seniors and refused to do military service in the Occupied Territories, are back in prison. Each of them have been imprisoned four times, 21 other objectors are currently in prison. They are asking for people to write to them and show support. c/o The Forum in Support of Conscientious Objectors, POB 41199, Jaffa 61411, Israel. matzpoon@yahoo.com www.indymedia.org.il/imc/israel/

PINK CASTLE

The Pink Castle occupied on the site of a proposed GM maize crop near Weymouth was surrounded by 30 cops on Thursday morning. The farmer brought some tractors in and some protestors managed to lock themselves onto them (four were arrested for aggravated trespass), however it seems that the farmer had borrowed some more as he had six tractors and managed to plant the crop. Last week the local TV crew had been down looking for Swampy (of road protest fame). Despite the castle denying he had been there the TV said that protestors had refused to confirm or deny if he had been there! More people are urgently needed and occupiers of the castle say they intend to decontaminate the field. More info: 07773 640159 www.sayhi.to/thecastle

* Earth Crimes - a newspaper giving the low-down on the biotech baddies produced for April's Convention on Biological Diversity (See SchNEWS 346) is available now, send SAE to GEN 1 Archway Resource Centre, 1a Waterlow Road, Archway London N19. 020 7272 1586.

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SchNEWS in brief

Park Nook Protest Camp is back. After a campaign to give the woodland in central Liverpool 'town green' status was lost, trees are now being cut and the camp needs people, tat, rope etc. Picnics on Sun 19th & 26th May. 0780 3609271. ** **London action resource centre** have an open evening with protest singer David Rovics, table-tennis and refreshments. 18th May, 4.30-10pm. LARC, 62 Fieldgate St. 020-7377-9088 www.londonarc.org ** **Debate The Problems of Anarchy** tonight (17th) at the London Anarchist Forum, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn 8pm ** **Not this Time- The Story of the Simon Jones Campaign.** The revamped film has its premier showing introduced by Mark Thomas, Tues 21st 7pm Ritzy Cinema, Brixton. £5/£3. If you are interested in organising a showing of the film email action@simonjones.org.uk ** **A protester against the Newchurch Guinea Pig Farm** in Staffordshire had to go to hospital after being punched by a neighbour of one of the farm's workers. The police, despite knowing who was responsible for the attack, have made no arrests. Now there's a surprise! www.guineapigs.org.uk

Brighton Briefs

The **Harvest Forestry** squat saw off Bailiffs on Monday, and expect eviction soon, keep up to date at the links page of <http://deltatrafic.co.uk/off> ** **Maggie** have their 10th Birthday Bash at Saunders Park, noon-8pm 18th May ** For the **StopEsso** day of action (18th) every Esso station in Brighton will be targeted - start noon - and a mass gathering at Hollingdean Road Esso 3pm. Info on demos nationwide 020 7354 5708, www.stopesso.com ** **Ex-Black Panther Robert King Wilkerson** speaks about the case of the Angola 3 who were framed for organising the local chapter of the Black Panther Party for Self Defence in Angola (Louisiana state penitentiary). Robert talks about 29 years behind bars, and the two men still imprisoned for a crime they did not commit! The Queens Head (opposite Brighton train station), 21st May, 7pm ** **Brighton Animal Rights Campaign** have a demo against Proctor and Gamble outside Sainsbury's on London Road, 1pm 25th May.

CHECHNYA

This week saw one of the most senior Russian officers facing trial for the murder two years ago of Kheda Kungayev, an 18-year-old Chechen girl. This is the first trial of a Russian soldier over any atrocity that has occurred in Chechnya since Russia invaded in 1999. (See Schnews 334) After getting drunk the general and his men seized Kheda Kungayev. She was taken from her home, bound in a blanket, to the colonel's sleeping quarters. What is clear from the initial post mortem is that Kheda was then stripped and beaten, before being raped and finally strangled.

Although the colonel does not deny the killing, he claims that he strangled Kheda in a moment of rage during a night-time interrogation, which is being fully supported by the State's psychiatrists. He is claiming temporary insanity and if the court accepts this then he can walk free.

While large-scale fighting in Chechnya nominally ended in 2000, Russian forces continue to detain hundreds of people without charges. Pressure from the UN and human rights organisations have forced the Russian authorities to introduce some improvements, including the formal opening of investigations of war crimes although they have refused to allow designated UN human rights investigators into Chechnya. Unsurprisingly most abuses remain uninvestigated which could explain why only one soldier has been brought to trial when thousands of civilians have been killed by Russian forces.

For more info see Human Rights Watch www.hrw.org/europe/russia.php

Inside SchNEWS

An international day of action is taking place on 5th June in solidarity with the 41 people who have so far been sent to prison after the protests during last summer's EU Summit in Gothenberg. (see SchNEWS 310). Many of the convictions have been based on very dodgy evidence and sentences are extremely harsh. Organisers of the day of action are calling for people to protest outside Swedish embassies, consulates or to do other similar actions in solidarity with the prisoners, and to call for the halt of the criminalisation of summit protesters. www.manifest.se/upprop

* **Evgeni Novozhilov**, a human rights activist and anarchist sympathiser has been sent to a mental hospital in Krasnodar, on the false charge of practising a "hoax about an act of terror". Two years ago he wrote an article in the local paper about the atrocities the Russian army committed in the 1994 Chechen civil war, since then he has been harassed by the FSB (former KGB). He has been imprisoned since last October, for an indefinite period, after the FSB tapped one of his phonecalls where he made a vague reference to skyscrapers and planes. This repression of free speech is akin to the soviet era where forced treatment in mental hospitals was a notorious anti-dissident tool. Evgeni feels very isolated and desperately wants to make contact with other people. Contact him through his mother, by writing to:

Evgeni Novozhilov, ul. Ignatova 51, kv. 105, 350061 Krasnodar, Russia. Evgeni speaks English, German and Swedish. Read more about the case at www.anarchistblackcross.org

* A release fund has been set up for **Mark Barnsley**, the framed anarchist prisoner from Sheffield. Mark will have served 8 years this summer, and is expected to be released but will be homeless. His case has only just gone before the Criminal Cases Review Commission so he'll need money to continue his case from the outside, travel expenses etc. Send cheques/Postal Orders (made out to "Mark Barnsley Release Fund") /train vouchers (and anything else useful you can think of!) to Mark Barnsley Release Fund, Sumac Centre, Box CC, 73 Beech Avenue, Nottingham, NG7 7LR.

* This weekend **Emma Murphy-Ellis** who was sentenced to four months imprisonment in Portland, Oregon for blocking a road in front of a forest that was being destroyed is celebrating her 19th Birthday. Send letters of support and birthday cards to: Emma Murphy-Ellis Clackamas County Jail 9000 SE McBrod Milwaukie, OR 97222, USA.

* **Haven Distribution** who supply books to prisoners have a new catalogue, available to prisoners for a second class stamp. They are also very skint and need donations. Haven Distribution, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3XX.

...and finally...

Cops doing it doggy style

Because of continued stop and searches by police with sniffer dogs on trains in Australia, activists have come up with a novel way of confounding the canine cops. Jokers (or is that tokers) have been spraying carriages with bong water and making the dogs, who have been trained to sniff out pot, go mental every time they board a train thus leading to commuters being frisked by over zealous cops. The railway companies have denied that the late arrivals have been due to grass on the line. More info: www.nswccl.org.au

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all errorists for iraq's sake we're not beating about the Bush and know our axis from our elbow. Honest.