



BORDERLINE CASE

“War, environmental exploitation, poverty, economic conditions, dictatorships, all of these situations create refugees. The cause of refugees, whether it is economic reasons or war, is capitalism.” – Osaren, The Voice Refugee Forum, Germany.

In a group of actions spanning ten days (19-28 July), people from all over Europe hooked up with migrants without papers to reclaim the city of Strasbourg, on the French/German border for a No Border action camp. The focus was a resistance to Europe’s draconian policy of treating refugees as criminals. Home to the European Parliament and the European Court of Human Rights as well as the Shengen Information System, or SIS, (SchNEWS 312) as well as its very own detention centre, Strasbourg truly represents failed democracy. People were spoilt for choice. Amongst chosen targets was the Accor hotel group who own detention centres in France and supermarkets in migrant ‘zones’ in Germany. They up the prices in their supermarkets so that migrants, who have to shop there, get even less for their 40 Euros a month (£27). A large part of their workforce is made up of undocumented migrants, on strike since March about low pay and bad conditions. Other actions included the usual trashing of institutions and corporations as well as cyberactivism, where hackers broke into the SIS.

The camp was based on self-organisation. People sorted out kitchens, showers and toilets as well as going on daily skipping runs to feed the camp. “I like it that people are so open here and that it’s well organised. It’s decentralised and provides a platform for resistance and engagement in Europe” Gaston, an asylum seeker, told SchNEWS. Everyone got together in their immediate areas to form barrios, which centred around a kitchen/meeting area. Someone from each barrio could then go to an inter-barrio meeting to make more general decisions about the camp, actions and broader political aims.

ALIENATED

One of the biggest, fattest, most vicious lies we’ve been told is that asylum seekers are stealing our jobs and invading our lives out of choice. The opposite is true: they don’t want to die, it’s as simple as that. There are an estimated 22 million refugees worldwide, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in May 2002 and the situation most refugees find themselves in is desperate. As Osaren told SchNEWS,

“They borrow money, sell things, cars, homes if they have them before they leave to seek asylum in another country. If they are lucky they get a bad job and can start to pay back the money they have borrowed.”

In Germany, people who’ve been granted asylum are restricted to a specific area or part of town. In some cases they’re tagged but usually they’re just monitored to make sure they don’t nip across a boundary to make a phone call or go to the supermarket or something. So far this system of separation where refugees are kept in isolation and require special permission to leave their ‘area’ is unique to Germany. Children have no right to education and there’s no right to healthcare or work. “All we can do is sit, maybe eat something, and think. Those of us who can go home will probably have to in a year or two if we don’t get any chances to live here. Those who cannot return will just self-destruct. Their strategy is to separate and persecute us.” - Abdul, asylum seeker in Germany.

As the WTO (World Trade Organisation) threatens to have a scrap with anyone blocking free trade and the ‘free movement’ of money, people find themselves confined to ever smaller areas, watched for their every move. For these reasons the No Borders network are demanding the right to freedom of movement without any limitations for all the people of the world. At the heart of the problem is SIS - a centralised database used to collate info on Europe’s unwanted. At the same time as the action camp in Strasbourg an Afgani family in the UK who had been sheltering in a Mosque were violently removed by riot cops and banged up in a detention centre. This was because their asylum application in Germany had been turned down – information that the UK got from their finger prints.

Germany is the model for Fortress Europe and Britain is trying to push through tougher laws this autumn to keep up with their fascist policy. The government’s latest white paper ‘Secure Borders, Safe Haven’ states that the already racist border controls are to be tightened using the SIS database, iris recognition, ID checks and increased powers to screen passengers. It doesn’t take a genius to guess the colour of the skin of people most likely to be harassed by immigration cops. The Secure Borders white paper states that the govt target is to deport 30,000 refugees by spring 2003 – that’s 2,500 a month. All new asylum seekers are to be housed in four planned accommodation centres to further segregate them from our soci-

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For calling someone Mister.

A Turkish economist has been charged with spreading separatist propaganda after referring to the imprisoned Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan as “Mr.” It’s against Turkish law to show support for Ocalan or his organisation the Kurdistan Workers Party. Calling someone Mr (or ‘sayin’ in Turkish) is used to show respect, so he could now face three years in prison.

Talking about his experience of the camp, Osaren from the self-organised migrants Voice Refugee Forum told us, “The distance between the activists and refugees is very wide. Very few activists engage with refugees on a daily basis. My advice would be for activists to get closer to the most repressed people in society, find out where they are and support them from below. The struggle can’t have a base unless this has happened. We need to re-evaluate support and resistance from the base.”

Here’s some of that resistance ...

* **Italy:** “We have occupied houses with Italian activists and migrants working together, we are now 500 people strong and have 10 houses with 100 migrants and people without papers. Last Tuesday the Italian military sank a ship carrying 60 Albanian migrants. There will be no investigation.

* **Lyons, France** “Despite police repression we have been fighting for a year, occupying buildings and organising demonstrations.”

* **Seville, Spain:** “We come from a place where 7,000 migrants live and work with no water, no food, no medicine - we are living in plastic shelters. Because of these conditions we decided to organise ourselves. We have occupied the Seville University for the last 2 months. Info: solidarity@hotmail.com

* **Belgium:** “Over 25 people are occupying the ex-Somalian embassy in the capital Bruges.

* **Germany:** From 17 Aug – 21 Sept there will be a caravan tour of Germany campaigning for the rights of refugees and immigrants. To find out dates and places check www.humanrights.de.caravan/index_de.html.

* **Britain:** Shut the Dover removals centre picket on Sat Oct 19th. Meet 10am Western Heights, Dover and move on to Sangatte Red Cross Centre. – contact Kent Committee to defend asylum seekers.

For more about actions and camps around the world www.noborder.org or info on prison building contact: CAGE 07931 401962

GENOA

It's a year since the G8 summit in Genoa (See SchNEWS 314/5), when the Italian city became a militarised zone, with police cruising round in armoured cars and the city centre ringed with a 15ft steel fence. The 250,000 people who marched through the streets opposing the eight most powerful leaders in the world faced massive police repression, with over 6,000 tear gas canisters fired by cops who also used live ammunition with which they killed Carlo Giuliani.

One year on, up to 100,000 took the streets of Genoa on Saturday 20th to remember Carlo Giuliani - much more than the 30-40,000 expected, which shows the anti-capitalist movement is still alive and well after September 11th. At 5:27 p.m., the time that Giuliani was shot by a young police trainee (Officer Plannica) trapped in a paramilitary police jeep, the crowds broke into a prolonged cheer and released hundreds of coloured balloons into the sky. "This is not a funeral. We wanted to have a celebration of life, of the right to live and of so many rights that are denied in the world and in Italy," said Giuliani's father in the piazza where his son was shot.

But as a final sickening note to Carlo's murder, Officer Plannica sold his story for 30,000 euros (£20,000) to one of Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi's TV channels, claiming he was not guilty of murder or manslaughter.

The worst aspect of pre-meditated police violence a year ago was a raid on the Indymedia Centre and Diaz School where some protestors were staying. During the raid 93 people were arrested with 63 put in hospital, but none of those arrested have been charged with any offence. This year a press conference by many people beaten and arrested at the Diaz School called for deputy prime minister Gianfranco Fini, leader of the fascist National Alliance party, to be held accountable for the brutal raid. During the raid police produced two molotov cocktails as evidence that the School was a base for violent protesters. Since then it has emerged that these molotovs were in fact recovered seven hours earlier hidden in Genoa city centre, with a policeman confessing that he planted the explosives: "I brought the molotov cocktail to the Diaz school. I obeyed the order of one of my superiors." His superior, Pietro Troiani, from a mobile police unit in Rome, is already being investigated after another colleague accused him of providing false information to justify the raids.

The Italian Government has come under fire for failing to prosecute those responsible for police brutality against demonstrators and Amnesty International has criticised the police. MPs in Rome are calling for another enquiry. 77 police officers are under investigation, including the one who shot Carlo Giuliani. Genoa police chief Gianni De Gennaro was demoted after admitting some of his men might have used "excessive force."

In Italy the cops may be blatantly fascist, but in Britain the situation isn't much different. Two people arrested at a demo outside the London Italian Embassy last February recently had their charges dropped. Police at the demo had punched and kicked protestors and one cop (PC D343) was heard to say "I don't give a fuck about the law". That's because, like in Italy, the police can get away with being violent towards protestors and never get punished.

* Indymedia have produced a video, Genoa Red Zone. Copies from www.cultureshop.org

* Read "On Fire: Genoa and the Anti-Capitalist Movement" published by AK Press for £3 a go. www.akuk.com.

SchNEWS in brief

This Saturday sees the beginning of the **National Week of Action Against War and Sanctions on Iraq**. Info 0845 458 2564 www.viwuk.freemove.co.uk ** Last Saturday over 150 people demonstrated outside the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in London calling for the government to abandon the testing and possible future commercialisation of **GM crops**. 17 bags of crops from GM test sites that have been destroyed this year were dumped on the steps of the building. www.geneticsaction.org.uk ** **Direct Action Against War Now** are organising a demo and occupation of Oxford Street Selfridges who sell products produced in illegal Israeli settlements. Sat 3rd, 1pm at the entrance - or dress as shoppers and do what you have to do once you're inside. 07817 061 183 stopselfridges@soon.com ** There's a Justice for Mark Barnsley national meeting and social this Saturday (3rd) to discuss the future of the campaign. 1.30pm, at The Lin12 Club, 21-23 Albion Street, Bradford. www.freemarkbarnsley.com ** A **new protest camp** set up to protect Bilston Woods, Penicuik, near Edinburgh from being destroyed to make way for a bypass is now up and running and urgently needs people and tat. 07753 808709 ** **Trident Ploughshares** have a two week (4th-19th August) disarmament camp at Coulport, near to the Trident nuclear warhead depot on Loch Long. Info: 0870 4583117 www.tridentploughshares.org ** Demonstration against the **Draft Mental Health Bill**, noon 12th August at the Department of Health, Richmond House, Whitehall. ** The Nigerian Women occupying a **Chevron oil pipeline terminal** (see last week's SchNEWS) have ended their occupation after reaching an agreement with the company <http://nigeria.indymedia.org>

BRISTOL FASHION

People are considering legal action against Avon and Somerset Constabulary after 50 officers in full riot gear broke up a free dance party at Cumberland Basin, near Bristol a couple of weekends back, seriously injuring at least nine people. Cops made no attempt to negotiate with party-goers, telling them "If you're down there, you're going to get hurt." The police had even thoughtfully brought an ambulance with them just in case they kicked anyone's head in - which they did. Police blamed party-goers for the injuries commenting "It was clear a rave at this location would put a risk of harm to those attending." The 'location' was under a motorway flyover, far away from residential housing, which had been used as a party site on numerous occasions before. Avon and Somerset Police seriously got their fingers burnt over the massive Steart beach party over the Jubilee weekend (SchNEWS 363) and local media have been busy whipping up a frenzy as "hooligan ravers" descend on the countryside to have fun. One party organiser told SchNEWS "We reckon the cops decided it was pay-back time."

The Free Party Defence Collective is now appealing for witnesses to mount legal action 07810 601703 www.guilfin.net

* Four Brighton based sound systems have finally been charged after having rigs seized from a Shoreham warehouse during Easter bank holiday. Despite never getting to turn on sound systems, attract a crowd or actually disturb anyone other than local plod, party organisers have been charged with 'Conspiracy to cause public nuisance' - and all for not quite getting to throw a free party.

* Thanks to the cops and the local council this year's Welsh Green Gathering was cancelled, and so a Greenwar Gathering is being organised. It's on an urban common in Glamorgan starting 8th August. For details of how to find it see the environment pages on www.protest.net or email: Plebs.Col@ntlworld.com

APPEALING

Nine unnamed prisoners who have been locked up in the high security Belmarsh Prison, without trial, since September 2001 have won an appeal against their imprisonment. They were interned under the knee-jerk Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (see Schnews 363). The Act makes it legal for the government to imprison non-UK nationals who they believe to be involved in 'terrorist activities' and whom they are unable to deport - because for example, they could face degrading treatment or death. Those detained are not given a reason for their internment, and they can't defend themselves in court. The appeal was upheld because the Act breaches the European Convention on Human Rights. Unfortunately the ruling does not make the detention unlawful, and the nine individuals are still behind bars. The Foreign Office will appeal against the verdict on Oct 7th. www.blagged.freemove.co.uk/ta2000/index.htm

Positive SchNEWS

England's first ever earthship is to be built in Brighton. An earthship is a building made of rammed earth and used car tyres and solar energy and rain provide heat, power and water. They also have their own sewage systems. Not only do they help solve the problem of a growing tyre mountain, but provide low cost homes as they are cheaper to build than conventional houses. The earthship will be built in Stanmer Park as part of the Stanmer Organics project and it will be a meeting place for groups and a model for future houses. There's an open day at Stanmer Organics this Saturday (3) where you can see the earthship site, learn about permaculture techniques, organic food and green-recycling as well as crafts and music. 11 - 4pm 01273 620486. Email: info@stanmerorganic.org.uk For more about earthships: www.lowcarbon.co.uk

Inside SchNEWS

A 22 year old man from Stockholm has received 5 years prison for actions at the EU Summit in Gothenburg last year. Five others are still in prison. Send letters of support and money to: Solidarity Group GBG, c/o Syndikalistiskt forum, Box 7267, SE-402 35 Gothenburg, Sweden. e-mail: solidaritetsgruppen@hotmail.com

...and finally...

So what is it with asylum seekers that make them want to come to our shores? The hospitality and all year sunshine? Our generous benefits system and friendly immigration officials?

Er, no. According to research after interviewing 65 asylum seekers, the main reasons people come here include: Margaret Thatcher, because the old bag gave the impression of the UK being a powerful country; Manchester United football club as evidence that Britain is loaded; and the Beatles and the Spice Girls contributing to the idea that this is a progressive and tolerant place.

The authors also mentioned that many of the asylum seekers they interviewed were fleeing persecution and were more concerned about escaping their own country than about where they would end up, and get this, few knew much about British asylum policy or had any detailed knowledge of benefit levels they might receive, let alone how they compared with other European countries. Funny that, SchNEWS always had the impression that before coming here refugees would be surfing the Net trying to find out the best location to come and sponge off taxpayers, before legging it out the backdoor just in time to escape torture and death.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all asylum seekers you would be bordering on the insane to think there is any refuge in this country. Honest.

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