

abc bulletin



Anarchist Black Cross Bulletin

April/May 1999 no.1

editorial

Here it is then. Welcome to issue 1 of the bulletin. Our paper, *Taking Liberties* will be produced less frequently and feature more in-depth articles. So send us any news or info you would like to see featured. Let us know what you think. We hope to include in future issues contributions from prisoners who have formed a group inside – HMP ABC. We are working with them at the moment on the arrangements for setting this up, and if you would like to contact them or get information on joining, we will put you in contact. We hope to feature the latest developments in campaigns, updates in cases and carry reports on prison resistance.

This issue comes out as a conference takes place on the continent to discuss co-ordinating prisoner support and solidarity at a Europe-wide level. Over Easter in Berlin groups met with the aim to “start a common discussion; for the understanding of the different starting conditions [and] to develop inceptions of an international network and organisation out of the common features”.

A similar conference takes place in June in Cologne to discuss the implications of Europol – which monitors and exchanges information on crime between Europe’s police forces – and the response to it by prisoner support organisations. We will report on any developments from these initiatives as and when they happen.

Justice for Mark Barnsley

Mark Barnsley, is an anarchist prisoner who himself was involved in prisoner support activity in the 1980s. He is serving a 12 year sentence following an attack in a Sheffield pub in 1994 which has become known as the Pomona incident. Mark went for a drink with a family friend and his 6 week old daughter in June 1994. While drinking outside the pub a group of 15 students opposite began verbally abusing and threatening them. Mark approached them to ask them to stop. This resulted in him being physically attacked. As he tried to escape he was punched and kicked to the floor. During the struggle one of the students produced a knife, but dropped it on the ground. Fearing he would be stabbed, Mark managed to snatch the knife from the attackers as several of the students tried to gain possession. Mark attempted to escape but was again punched to the ground. One of the students then said he would let him go if he dropped the knife, which he did.

British Justice - Great

In the tradition of Great British justice, Mark was the ONLY person arrested and charged. He has so far served 5 years and is looking to build support in his campaign to clear his name. He was invited to submit his case to the Criminal Cases Review Commission concerning the large quantities of evidence being withheld by Sheffield Crown Prosecution Service, since his imprison-

ment. A second mass phone-in took place on 30th March to Sheffield CPS, with callers asking why they’re still withholding evidence. Mark also has an application before the European High Court, which lists some 70 violations of Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Right to a fair trial).

Support Mark

An incident of self-defence has become yet another miscarriage of justice. With so many abundant facts we strongly recommend you write to Mark and give him your support. And write to either of his support campaigns for more detailed information. As we write, Mark is at HMP Durham but is most likely to be moved back to Full Sutton. Please put senders address on the back of letters (or better still send it recorded delivery to ensure Mark receives it).

MARK BARNSELEY (WA2897)
HMP Full Sutton, York, YO41 1PS.

JUSTICE FOR MARK BARNSELEY, c/o 145-149
Cardigan Road, Leeds, LS6 1LJ. E-mail
Snide@globalnet.co.uk

JUSTICE FOR MARK BARNSELEY (Ireland Support Group) c/o 1-5 Donegall Lane, Belfast, BT1 2LZ

Inside: Full Sutton trial update, Mumia Must Live!, Screw sent down, Hepatitis scare and more...

Hepatitis scare in Scotland

ABC have received news of an alarming number of instances of the Hepatitis C infection breaking out at Glenochil prison with nothing being done about it. The treatment recommended by experts from the HIV & Hepatitis clinic at Ruchil and City Hospital in Glasgow and Edinburgh respectively, is Alpha Interferon.

Morality Clause

Unfortunately, for those infected prisoners these experts don't have clinical responsibility for their welfare; instead they must be treated by the budget orientated Health Centre within the prison, which has no intention of providing this lifeline to those infected and has them baffled by the 'morality' clause. This clause stipulates that all those suffering from this highly infectious, chronic disease must undergo fortnightly drug tests over a period of one year. This is a bizarre prerequisite for necessary life saving treatment for a drugs related disease carried almost exclusively by addicts.

There are hundreds of prisoners going to die slow painful, unnecessary, deaths as a result of being denied proper medical care on a purely pecuniary basis. It is impracticable to implement this barbarous policy without facing the consequences. Hepatitis C is many times more infectious than HIV and could lead to some instances of deliberate infection and extremely wanton behaviour on the unsuspecting in the same way as the HIV virus was deliberately passed on by the bitter victims. The consequences of this policy are potentially disastrous. If you know anyone in other prisons who are having similar problems receiving medical treatment for Hepatitis C or other diseases, let us know. The scale of medical negligence and under funding in British prisons is appalling and an issue we will return to in future issues.

Mumia Must Live!

Mumia Abu-Jamal, former Black Panther and supporter of MOVE, the radical black organisation attacked by the FBI through the 70s and 80s, still waits to hear to hear if his appeal will be heard by the US federal Supreme Court. Mumia has been on death row since 1982, sentenced for the killing of a Philadelphia cop in December 1981.

Dodgy forensics

The case has been thoroughly discredited: witness intimidation, fabricated confessions and dodgy forensics have been used by the police and prosecution to ensure that Mumia is executed - as well as having his trial presided over by the notorious judge Albert Sabo, who has sent more black men to their deaths than any other judge. By sheer coincidence folks, our judge also happens to be pals with the Fraternal Order of Policemen (FoP).

Media smears

The FoP have been conducting a vicious media campaign against Mumia and his supporters as he builds his appeal for a retrial. A massive benefit concert in New Jersey took place for Mumia on January 28th. In the run up, the FoP lobbied to force the event to be cancelled and called on concert goers not to give their money to the campaign for a "cop killer". They claimed that 2,000 tickets were returned out of 16,000. In fact,



567 were returned, which were put on sale immediately and were snapped up in minutes! An international day of action is planned for the weekend of April 24th/25th - **Millions for Mumia**. In Britain, the Mumia Must Live! campaign are planning an event in London on that weekend. For more information on Mumia, his campaign and how you can help support him contact:

Mumia Must Live!
BM Haven
27 Old Gloucester Street
London WC1N 3XX

e-mail:
mumia@callnetuk.com

or visit the site:
www.callnetuk.com/home/mumia

No charges in Alton Manning killing

On 23rd February the CPS announced their decision not to prosecute anyone for the "unlawful killing" of Alton Manning, a black prisoner in the privately run Blakenhurst Prison.

Alton, 33, of Sparkbrook, Birmingham, died in December 1995 after being restrained by seven warders, one of them holding him in a neck lock, whilst removing him from his cell at the jail near Redditch.

Indifference

Initially the death of Alton was met with the same indifference by the state as was faced by Stephen Lawrence's family. The Manning family like the Lawrences, found out quickly that if they wanted justice for their son's death they would have to campaign for it. Demonstrations were held outside Blakenhurst prison, marches took place in Birmingham and local MPs also got involved. It took two years and three months of constant pressure by the campaign, before the case got to the Coroner's court. In March 1998, after 15 days of evidence an inquest jury re-

turned a unanimous verdict of unlawful killing. Immediately after the decision, seven warders were suspended.

CPS do nothing

It took the CPS another 11 months of doing nothing to announce that they were going to do nothing. The CPS said that there was "no realistic prospect" of obtaining manslaughter convictions against officers allegedly connected with the remand inmate's death. Why then couldn't the CPS charge the 7 warders with "joint enterprise"? It seems to work quite well with black people. This decision by the CPS, once again shows that when a black person dies in a prison or police cell or on the street, it will not be taken seriously.

Racism is not only institutionalised within the police force, it is the same in the armed forces, the prison service and the very state itself. The "Campaign for Justice for Alton Manning", though disheartened, are not giving up. Inspired by the perseverance of the Lawrences, the campaign will continue to fight for justice.

All Burned Out!

On 15th February, the North wing of Haverigg prison on Cumbria went up in smoke as 109 cons took control of the wing for 3 hours. The prison called in the MUFTI squad from every prison in the surrounding area - details are sketchy, and we have no further information other than all prisoners involved have been moved to

prisons around the north of England. The last disturbance at Haverigg was in October 1993 with a similar uprising.



Woodhill gets scrutinised

The battle of 4 cons against the regime at Woodhill reached the High Court in January. Woodhill prison was opened in 1997 as a new control unit designed to break "trouble-makers". The regime was trying to break active resistance against the prison system by putting cons on what is called the "continuous assessment circuit" - being ghosted around every 28 days from one segregation unit to another, if it is felt you are not towing the line. This includes being banged up at Woodhill. Rifat Mehmet and Sean O' Connor are among those who have recently been on hunger strike at the prison.

Regime exposed

The court heard how prisoners have been confined in their cells for 23 hours a day "in a brutalised and coercive regime ... [which] forces prisoners to use cardboard mattresses and go without books and other personal possessions". Warren Slaney is one of the other defendants at the trial who is still fighting back and shouting his innocence even louder. After his move to Wakefield he was beaten up by screws then charged with the usual - assault. Not to be defeated he ripped up the charge sheet in front of them and shoved it down the only decent place for it - the toilet!

Since the recent quashing of the judicial review, Warren has been returned to Woodhill. He is about to go on dirty protest so we are sure he would appreciate any messages of support:

**Warren Slaney JB2574
HMP Woodhill
Tattanhoe Street
Milton Keynes MK4 4DA**

Satpal in segregation (again)

Satpal Ram has been put into segregation (after another altercation with a screw) in Belmarsh prison. He is asking supporters to send a protest fax to the Governor of Belmarsh. You can copy and fax the short model letter below:

Fax: 0181 317 2421

For the Attention of John Knight, Governor, HMP Belmarsh.

Dear Mr Knight,

I am most concerned that Mr Satpal Ram E94164, has been put into segregation after he refused to be used from a single to a double cell. Putting Mr Ram into segregation is extremely harsh punishment for what is a very small matter.

I would kindly ask you to return Mr Ram to normal location in a single cell and that as soon as possible he is returned to HMP Frankland.

Yours sincerely,

Screw sent down

And while we're on the subject of Belmarsh, Barry Lugg, a screw at the jail is seeing prison life a little differently at the moment. Sick screw Lugg, got banged up for 10 weeks in January after threatening and then committing a racist assault on a black traffic warden. He told them "I'm going to treat you like I treat my prisoners" – and proceeded to attack them! Fearing a custodial sentence, he attempted suicide (he couldn't even get that right). The magistrate, seeing Lugg as one of his own, took pity on this scumbag, giving him the minimum sentence. We would be interested to hear from prisoners how brave Barry's welcoming party went – presumably he received a few tips on improving his rope tying techniques and maybe a little assistance! We can only hope.

STOP PRESS ...KENNYCARTER

In early March prisoner activist Kenny Carter was placed in solitary confinement at Full Sutton on GOAD.

Kenny is no stranger to seg units and control units, due to his past history as a prison organiser. Kenny had been back on normal location for only 4 months when he was jumped in his cell by a goon squad and placed back in segregation where he remains.

The fact is that Kenny is being victimised because of his reputation as a defender of prisoners' rights, and it is important that he is supported. Letters of support to:

Kenny Carter (AD3434), HMP Full Sutton, Moor Lane, York YO4 1PS

ACQUITTAL AT FULL SUTTON TRIAL

The trial of the defendants charged with taking part in the Full Sutton uprising of 1997 are taking place at Newcastle Crown Court as we go to press. Since 1995, the regime has been constantly tightening with restrictions on phone calls, the amount of personal possessions allowed in cells and cuts in privileges. This is the situation which led to the 3 day work strike in the jail back in November of '95 [see *Taking Liberties* no.20 for a more detailed account]. Prisoners called to testify have been faced with intimidation from screws in the run-up to appearing. According to one, "the treatment of defence witnesses here [HMP Durham] is a clear attempt to punish us for supporting those who the state and prison service are trying to fit up". The latest we have is that one defendant has been acquitted. *For a full report see next issue.*

STOP PRESS ... Raf Ballarin Released

We have just received the news that Rafael Ballarin, sent down in 1996 for defending himself from a fascist attack, has been released from prison. The authorities have been bombarded with letters from supporters around the world in protest at his jailing. The Granada group of the Spanish ABC released the news on the 29th March. The campaign to release other anti-fascists continues apace! *More news in the next issue.*

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS CONTACTS

Belfast ABC - PO Box 505, Belfast, BT12 6BQ N. Ireland

Birmingham ABC - PO Box 3241, Saltley, Birmingham, B8 3DP

email: bhamabc@yahoo.com

London ABC - 27 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3XX

email: londonabc@hotmail.com

Penzance ABC - c/o LOFT, PO Box 19, Penzance, Cornwall, TR18 2YP

Sheffield ABC - PO Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY

Somerset ABC - PO Box 478, Taunton, Somerset, TA2 7YR

Wolves ABC - PO Box 339, Wolverhampton, WV10 7BZ

Subscriptions:

Free to prisoners. Unwaged £3, Waged £5, Organisations £10. To receive 6 issues of the bulletin and two issues of *Taking Liberties*. From Sheffield ABC, PO Box 446, Sheffield, S1 1NY. Cheques / Postal Orders payable to "ABC"

Name.....

Address.....

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