

ABC *bulletin*



Anarchist Black Cross Bulletin

June/July 1999 No.2

Editorial

Mr Straw has seen to it for the jury trial... Now the war is over in the six counties all those hard won lessons in keeping us in our place are coming to the mainland. How much longer till the cops are all armed and they bring in the shoot to kill policy... Hang on.

Blair and Co are making sure that they will start the next century in total charge - and what do we say? Look upon June 18th and despair for that is what we have in store for your bland future!

Oh what a shame US expert on fingerprints Mr Wetheim destroyed 100 years of certainty the filth have placed in finger print evidence, no conviction by finger print can now be safe! Scottish courts are now facing the nightmare of cons demanding their cases be reopened ...well what are you waiting for?!

We have received news from the ABC CNA group of Vitoria that they have been stopped from visiting their imprisoned comrade Pombo Da Silva, under the incredible excuse of "questions of security". Please send letters and faxes of protest to the Management of Penitentiary Institutes, in order to withdraw this prohibition and let Pombo Da Silva be visited by the comrades of the CNA.

Director General de Instituciones Penitenciarias

Don Angel Yuste Castillejo

C/ Alcalá, 38-40 28014 Madrid

fax (0034) 91-335 40 52

Mutiny Trials end Seven Acquitted

The Full Sutton mutiny trials ended last month with the acquittal of seven prisoners. The trials were the culmination of a year long police investigation into the January 1997 Full Sutton uprising; itself a result of the security clampdowns which followed the Whitemoor and Parkhurst break-outs.

This is the same period as the introduction of the Incentives and Earned Privileges scheme was announced, and almost simultaneously as Full Sutton was chosen as the pilot for the phonecard pin-number scheme. In November 1995 E wing prisoners staged a 3-day work strike and riot squads were sent into the jail, with 60 prisoners shipped out.

Taking Control

On the evening of 20th January 1997, both B & C wings went up. Sparked by Dessie Cunningham being beaten up and taken down to the block, which was already full of prisoners there on spurious pretexts, prisoners took control of both wings, barricading areas and seizing files and papers from the screw's offices and setting them as well as the offices ablaze. The prison was wrecked.

Investigation

In May last year after a lengthy police "investigation", thirteen men were committed for trial. Last August three C wing prisoners were convicted of mutiny and got a 5 year addition to their sentences each. One other prisoner William Edmonds, who the authorities claimed as the main instigator and had been released on bail, attended the committal hearing but not the trial. The remaining nine, all from B wing, stood trial at Newcastle this year. The trials ended last month (May), with seven of the prisoners acquitted of the charges. The two others, Paul Lyons and Michael Guest were sentenced to three and five years consecutively. Both plan to appeal.

Vendettas

Most of the acquitted were men the Prison Service had old scores to settle: Mark Gillan had been in the Ripley uprising, Patrick Francis had been in Strangeways and Stewart Bowden, who had been at Strangeways and the "mini-mutiny" at Full Sutton in 1992.

Thanks to FRFI for information.

Inside: Mumia Update, Jail breaks, Letters, Prisoners justice day and more ...

A Red skin Writes...

Out of the Skinhead-movement of the 60s and 70s, especially in the USA and UK, developed a Skinhead-culture, which doesn't follow the widespread Nazi-ideology. But represents anti-fascist ideas and actively fights Nazis. As everywhere in the western, imperialist world, especially in Germany, as a politically left, anarchist, anti-fascist thinking and acting person, you don't have a lot to laugh at-especially if you're imprisoned.

Fascist Judge!

When I called a judge an "example of a fascistic judge from a picture-book" in 1995 at my trial, and for stating I wanted to kill the judges and threats and insults of court and prison officers, this exclamation was worth 7 months of prison! The end of my punishment is noted to 2010. At the moment I'm sitting (a 27 year old redskin) in solitary confinement and have seen quite a lot of prisons in Germany. The advantages of the solitary confinement cells, are they are kept as large as possible, due to suspicion of a planned escape through taking hostages.

In 1996 during the fight against capital I robbed a bank. As I didn't want to deny my political ideas during the trial, I got in addition the "security custody", i.e. after 2010 I'll be kept imprisoned.

Harsh regime

The daily chicaneries of the regime are various: so far I have been refused a university study through mail, leaving the cell only in irons; daily cell raids; several body checks per week, i.e. taking off all the clothes in front of prison officers; limitations at the supply of journals; suppression of getting post packages; solitary visit of the prison yard; severe solitary confinement; no participation at the prison divine service (Ha Ha); severe censorship of the out and incoming mail; and so on! But that's exactly what keeps me going on - because only if we fight actively and resist, we can move something! Still today I'm facing more trials - I called a prison lawyer a "Nazi-Pig"! Nevertheless even being put under such pressure it's possible to maintain ones own political identity and keep on fighting!

Thomas Meyer-Falk

JVA Bruchsal

Zelle: 3117

Schönbornstr. 32D - 76646

Bruchsal

Germany

Benefit tape for international prisoners produced by HMP ABC. Includes prison poetry, and some cool punk tracks.

Available from Avon & Somerset ABC for £2.30 p + p paid.

Also available soon, a benefit for Mumia CD featuring many great bands including Fun-da-mental, Chumbawamba etc. See next bulletin for more details.

Open letter to supporters of prisoners' rights

I have been asked to write to you, on behalf of my comrades behind bars, to encourage you to support the range of solidarity activities being organised in support of the occupants of the Woodhill Torture Unit on International Prisoners' Justice Day.

Rather than asking for piecemeal actions in support of individual prisoners or Prisoners Justice Day, we are calling for the focus of prisoner support to be centred on Woodhill for the day, as a show of solidarity with all of us who are fighting for justice and humanity behind bars.

The brutality taking place at Woodhill is of significance to all prisoners, not least because of its role as a 'big stick' being held over our heads. All those involved in supporting prisoners, no matter which gaol they are currently being held in, should be concerned by the regime at Woodhill and by the sustained ill-treatment of those who fall victim to it.

At a time when human rights in prison, and those who are fighting for them, are under an unprecedented attack by the state, we need an effective prisoners solidarity movement more than ever. The movement can only start to become effective if it puts aside petty sectarian considerations and delivers mass collective action in support of those prisoners who are on the frontline in terms of the states current attempt to smash prisoner resistance once and for all.

The prisoners in Woodhill have shown immense courage in defiance of the attempts to brutalise and break them, but they are presently isolated and vulnerable. You can help to end that isolation and raise their spirits by giving maximum support to the International Prisoners' Justice Day activities, which we hope will form the basis for building a truly effective prisoners' solidarity movement. The brutality at Woodhill must end.

An injustice to one is an injustice to all. Solidarity is strength!

John Bowden, HMP Full Sutton

HUNGER STRIKE FOR PRISONER JUSTICE DAY

Prisoner Justice Day will soon be here again. We try to commemorate this day in different ways .we've had pickets, leafleting and gigs in the past. This year we are going to attempt to recreate the 'Hungry for Justice event we organised in Birmingham. Over 100 prisoners and their campaigns joined in the 3 day event, which incorporated a demonstration outside the Criminal Case Review Commission, a public meeting and a march through Birmingham. For families and friends it was a time they could talk to each other of their experiences, publicise their campaigns and take action with their loved ones inside.

Although the event stressed miscarriage of justice cases, we're hoping this year many prisoners tired of the way they are treated will join in. The ABC supports many different prisoners, if you're up for it, so are we!

Hopefully the focus this year will be HMP Woodhill. Many will know of the recent court case which challenged the legality of a regime designed to break prisoners, both physically and mentally. Unfortunately due to legal incompetence it failed, but prisoners within the Closed Supervision Unit (CSU) are still fighting back and need all the inside/outside support they can get. Woodhill CSU is there for 'troublemakers', the cons who fight back against the system . The threat to long term prisoners of being dumped in the CSU is ever present. Woodhill is part of a system of three other centres, which have similar regimes. We want to see an end to them all...

Time to plan... Over the next 2 months we're going to be making our plans with the involvement of as many campaigns and individuals as possible. If you want to get involved with the Hungerstrike please contact London ABC and we'll keep you posted.

Asian Woman Prisoner's protest Against Prison Racism

On 19 April 1999, Biba Sarkaria, an Asian woman prisoner in HMP Cookhamwood began a hunger strike when she was denied her right to leave for a religious festival, Vaisakhi. She has now been transferred to Holloway Prison and has stated that she will not end her hunger strike until she has been transferred back to Cookhamwood and is given the rights granted to white prisoners.

Biba Sarkaria has for years demanded equal rights for Asian women prisoners and has challenged the prison authorities over a series of incidents of racism and human rights abuses. Biba has kept in touch with many Asian women prisoners when they have left Cookhamwood and with other Asian women prisoners in other prisons. Through her efforts an Asian women prisoners support group has been set up. According to Patricia Powell, also a prisoner in Cookhamwood, 'They wanted any excuse to get rid of her. Biba knows her rights more than any of us and she fights for them not just for herself but for all of us'. Tina Malloy, a friend and a fellow prisoner also expressed concern that Biba has a serious heart condition, and she was already very weak when she was taken to Holloway.

Racism at Cookhamwood Prison

In 1997, Biba's father had a heart bypass operation and she heard that he was in hospital. After phoning everywhere and receiving no reply she ran out of phone cards. She approached the prison officers to make an important phone call which she could pay for. They refused point blank. The very next day a white woman who could not trace her alcoholic husband who often went missing was allowed three phone calls.

On 15th May 1999, when Biba asked her doctor for some extra tablets for a headache, she was refused. When complaining about her treatment, she commented 'I feel like I am being held as a hostage'. Later that day, five officers came to Biba's cell, and took her to the segregation block where there were no blankets and no water. She was already on hunger strike and was now effectively denied any liquids. In the morning she was told that she had been taken to the solitary block because she had been overheard making threats to take someone hostage.

In Biba's own words 'I feel I have been victimised and I am not going to stop my hunger strike until I get back to Cookhamwood and I am allowed the same religious and cultural rights as white prisoners. I want an end to this victimisation and I want to be compensated for this inhuman treatment.'

Details: South Asia Solidarity Group

Tel: 0171-713-7907

0181 572 1895

HAROLD THOMPSON

U.S. anarchist prisoner Harold Thompson is having a rough time at the moment. Due to a corrupt prison librarian official working hand in glove with White Aryan Brotherhood scum, Harold has been brutally assaulted, robbed and placed in segregation for his 'own safety'. Because of his work as prison house lawyer, officials seem to be colluding with white supremacists to halt his good work. If you can please write protesting (civily) to :

Warden Jack Morgan, Turney Centre Industrial Prison, Route 1, Only, Tennessee 37140-9709, USA,

in order that Harold might get a transfer avoiding further White Aryan Brotherhood victimisation. You can write to Harold at the same address.

Harold H. Thompson #93992.

US Anarchist Prisoner Needs Help

Ali Khalid Abdullah is a New Afrikan Anarchist prisoner incarcerated in Michigan, USA. He has recently been denied parole again, as part of an effort to maximise the number of prisoners in jail so that the governor of Michigan can push ahead with building more jails (after all, if more prisoners are paroled, they don't need to build the six new prisons). As a response to this, prisoners eligible for parole, who, like Ali, get knocked back for trivial or previously unmentioned reasons, are now taking the parole board to court. Ali also wants to do this, but needs the cash to make it possible. A lawyer to file the papers will cost about US\$1000 to \$1500.

PPWC

He is the founder of the Political Prisoners of War Coalition, an activist group inside prisons, mainly in Michigan, that fights for prisoners rights and to raise the consciousness of those incarcerated. PPWC has also published many articles, not just on the prison situation and related matters of oppression, but also on the struggle of peoples all over the world for a better life and freedom and justice. Ali himself has written extensively on political, social and prisoner issues. Ali is also a member of the IWW, and in regular contact with ABC chapters all over the world. One of the reasons he needs to make this appeal for outside funds is that he has put any money that has come his way into this political work.

Contributions can be sent to:

Cynthia Ritsher, PO Box 554, Lincoln, MA 01773 USA;

or alternatively, as a cashier cheque or postal or bank money order to **Ali Khalid Abdullah #148130, Saginaw Correctinoal Facility, 9625 Pierce Road, Freeland, Michigan MI 48623, USA.**

(Put Ali's full name and prison number on the cheque). Or in Europe, send to **PO Box 17773, London SE8 4WX** (make payable to Red & Black Club and specify it is for Ali)

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN SUCCESS! CZECH ANARCHIST FREE AGAIN!

We received a short message from the International Secretary of the Czech-Slovak Federation of Social Anarchists (FSA-IWA) letting us know that comrade Michal Patera was released from custody and that comrade Václav Jez was released from prison on bail. This is almost too good to be true! Thanks goes out to all comrades around the world who contributed to this unexpected development by attacking the repression of the Czech state through actions, demonstrations, protest letters, solidarity events and donations and who did not desert the two. More is not currently known to us. Further details will hopefully follow soon. Michal Patera is being accused of "attempted murder" according to the Czech criminal code for having defended himself against five nazi-skins who attacked him in an obvious attempt on his life. One of the attackers was shot. Václav Jez was convicted to a two-year prison sentence in July 1997 after having defended himself against Nazis in a similar case.

You'll never walk alone!

NEW WITNESS GIVES HOPE TO BRIAN

Taking Liberties readers will remember the case of Brian Parsons, a former Colyton labourer, who was sent down in 1989 for the murder of an 84 year old woman in Dorset. Brian said he was innocent from the start, and is still fighting on 11 years later. Proving your innocence for many can mean intimidation from screws and further punishment as well as enduring the years it can take to get your case back to the court of appeal. Give the Criminal Case Reviews Commission (CCRC) a couple of years and they might actually remember your name! After a long wait Brian was given leave to appeal last year and expects a hearing sometime in July. Brian and his family's hopes are high in the light of a new witness coming forward. Unfortunately his application for bail was turned down in April, despite the cases being "evenly balanced".

Mumia Update

On Saturday April 24th, massive demonstrations in support of a new trial for Mumia Abu Jamal were held in Philadelphia, San Francisco, and around the world. The Philadelphia demonstration drew approximately 25,000 people, and a similar number attended the San Francisco action. These are believed to be the

largest demonstrations in support of a political prisoner in U.S. History.

Philly mobilisation

The demonstration in Philadelphia drew supporters from all over the US, as well as other countries. The rally in Philadelphia included dozens of prominent speakers including Leonard Weinglass (Mumia's attorney), Geronimo Pratt, and Robert Meripol (son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, the last U.S. political prisoners to be officially executed). Zach De La Rocha and Tom Morello from the band *Rage Against the Machine* spoke. Mumia's son Mazi, also spoke on behalf of his father's case. Following a very long rally, demonstrators took to the streets in a march which was over a mile long. The march was impressive not only for the size, but the breadth of the support, which included people from all walks of life and political persuasions.

Worldwide support

Most important though, was the realization that those who travelled hundreds or thousands of miles to attend these actions each represented a hundred people who likewise stand with Mumia, but did not make the journey in person. The government thus knows that it is not just the tens of thousands of angry protesters they saw on the streets on Saturday, but the, literally, *Millions for Mumia* who they will have to answer to, should plans for the execution of Mumia not be halted. Solidarity demonstrations in support of Mumia were held in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Lisbon, London, Melbourne, Oslo, Stockholm, Vienna, Stuttgart, Saarbrücken, Karlsruhe, Dublin, Cork, Montreal, Toronto, Halifax, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Niagra.

ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS CONTACTS

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

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

Brum 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

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 "Anarchist Black Cross"

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

HAVEN DISTRIBUTION

Free Books to Prisoners - New Catalogue Out Now

Haven Distribution 27 Old Gloucester St. London WC1N 3XX