

The newsletter of

ANARCHIST PRISONER SUPPORT

Issue Three. June 2003 Free/Donation



*"While arrests and convictions are steadily on the rise,
profits are to be made – profits from crime.
Get in on the ground floor of this booming industry
now!"*

*(An advertising brochure from a prison
investment firm)*

UP DATE FROM ISSUE TWO

In our last newsletter we introduced the War Chest this was also brought up at several meetings through out the year (mainly concerning people arrested). Here at Anarchist Prisoner Support we believed this would have been a great way of uniting all the different fractions within the anarchist movement, let me fill you in on the war chest. It was going to be a united campaign, to raise funds that would have been readily available for local (Irish) activists facing imprisonment. The money raised, would have been used for bail, legal expenses etc. For this to have been able to materialise, we were all going to have to work together, but sadly after many more arrests, with no-one getting involved in the project, (no-one even willing to keep us updated). The 160euro we put in has gone to anti war activists in Cork, and the war chest has been scrapped for now, after long meetings, about why it did not work, when approached, activists agreed with it, but were unwilling to help. We feel it's everyone's duty to get involved, because it is everyone's struggle. the support network is in place why is it not being used?

The day to day running of APS is running more smoothly now thanks to new people getting involved, and the web site is up and running, We now meet every Sunday afternoon for new people to get involved, with letter written sessions and a chat about any queries they might have, The first few no-one turned up, but is slowly getting better.

The Anarchist Federation up in Belfast has been a tower of strength, help with members, sending info and giving up space in there anarchist bulletin "resistance" every month to us. They also let us speak at there public meetings. Anarchist Syndicalists have also giving up room in there paper for us, and have been supportive, also thanks to all the people in Cork, and to the people who donated book. Thanks.

We had a second visit from Portland's Anarchist Prisoners Legal Aid Network, new contacts made and some useful advice. thank you, hope to see you again soon.

The proposal drawn up by Jason, was talked over with us first, where we pushed for prisoner support to be central to it, along with education (proposal available on request).

We have campaigns running continually, one of which we won (details in magazine) we have made contact with several new prisoners, as well as remaining in touch with dozens of other comrades. All prisoners on our prisoner list in issue 2 received money from us from our last gig, books have continuously been sent. APS newsletter has been translated into Turkish, cheers Mert. People have contacted us from all over Ireland for info, things are looking up. All members of Anarchist Prisoner Support are involved in various campaigns of a revolutionary nature.

APS VIEW ON ANTI WAR PROTEST IN FEBRUARY

A protest was planned last February at Shannon airport .against the use of the airport as a stopover point for American warplanes currently bombing Iraq? The plan was to try and engage in another mass trespass of airport grounds. After the other actions this would be another way of highlighting the issue.

In the days and weeks coming up to the protest media hysteria and government scaremongering grew to a fever pitch. Headlines screamed stuff like "PEACE THUGS" Our bus was stopped and searched as we reached the outskirts of Shannon.. What they were looking for I don't know. They never search the warplanes for guns or weapons!

We marched up to the airport fence and it didn't take us long to realize we were well outnumbered by a small army of guards. Guards with dogs,, guards on horses, vans, helicopters and water hoses at the ready. And the Irish army apparently on standby..

People linked arms and approached the fence and the police blocked our path trying their best to look hard and tough. There was a pretty good atmosphere for a while and a bit of light hearted jostling.. The other march just filed past us, refusing to be associated with the likes of us anarchist types.

Soon the line started moving further around the fence, which the cops didn't like at all .. Things got a bit hairy, there was a flurry of arrests, it was hard to try and keep track of everyone getting dragged off to the waiting vans. The police got carried away. One cop smacked a protester in the face for no reason at all but people managed to get his number.

All in all 10 people were arrested and are being charged under the ever ready Public Order Act.

The government doesn't want people protesting. They're happy to stay sitting on the fence. We'd like to tear it down. It is only through direct actions that the airlines pulled out of Shannon. Marches can only achieve so much. They'd like to label us as violent, they brand us as criminals for daring to have an opinion. They want to marginalize us and paint us as extremists.. It's perhaps more criminal that Shannon is still being used for Bush and Blairs questionable and dubious military campaign. Who are the real violent extremists?

No one that day saw any of the razor wire anywhere in the end , it was a pure fabrication to scare people away?.

We didn't get the fence down in the end, but at least we gave it a go.. I thought it was important just to go down and not be intimidated into staying away.

DONATE TO THE MASS DIRECT ACTION DEFENDANTS: cheques made out to 'Shannon Solidarity', c/o Ecology Society, Students Centre, NUIG, Newcastle, Galway. Or money can be sent to the Bank of Ireland in NUIG, Newcastle, Galway. Account number 89174196. Sort code 904018. Account name Shannon Solidarity.

To donate money to Cork activists arrested at Shannon.

Account name: Elinor Rivers and Joe Moore. Account no. 84913184. Permanent TSB. Lapps Quay. Cork. Sort code: 990701.

WOMEN IN PRISON.

There are many organisations and groups supporting prisoners, and they usually have many different approaches to this support. Normally, a group does not support all the political prisoners that they know of because the number is too great, they narrow it down by focusing on a particular group, for example, a country, because they share the same language, or share a particular background, for example, focusing on animal or earth liberation prisoners, anti-fascist prisoners etc., sometimes writing is easier if there are already known facts about the person and shared interests with them. The reason to have a specific interest in female political prisoners is not so specific. It is just that it seems quite often that the focus lies on male prisoners, because their numbers are so much larger. One of the first things that I noticed when I became involved with prisoner support was how male dominated it appeared to be with little information available about female political prisoners. It is important to become more aware about female prisoners.

There are 16 prisons in the only 2 of these house majority are held in with a small number, held perspective for the year people were committed to as 8616 male and 923 at the figures for a single



Republic Of Ireland and female prisoners. The vast Mountjoy Female Prison in Limerick. To put this 2002, just over 9,539 prison. This breaks down female. It is useful to look day as well, as this shows that on the fourth of June, there was a total of 3,160 people in custody, of that number 83 were women. 67 of them were held in Mounjoy while just 16 were held in Limerick. The majority of women in prison in 2002 were in the 25–30 age bracket.

On the 4th. June 2003, there were just 17 women in prison in Northern Ireland, they were held on Mourne House in Magheberry Prison.

There are 19 womens prisons in the UK as a whole and Britain imprisons a greater percentage of its female population than any other EU country, except Portugal and Spain, with the population expected to rise by over 40% in the next decade.

The female population in Britain is increasing at three times the rate of their male counterparts and more women killed themselves in prison in 2002 than ever before.

Of the 3,980 women in prison on the week beginning 6th. June 2003, 76% suffered from mental illness, 50% reported a history of abuse and 30–70% have suffered sexual abuse. 40% of these women were addicted or using drugs before entering the prison and 70% were unemployed with 10% being homeless before conviction. It is expected that 47% will reoffend within two years of release.

Whilst inside, women face bullying and abuse by officers and inmates. Nine officers and five managers from Holloway prison are under investigation for allegedly running and allowing a regime of sexual bullying.

For many women, their problems do not end on release, four out of ten women prisoners expect to be homeless when let out. More than 3/4 of women in prison are serving sentences of less than twelve months, which means, that although they risk losing their jobs, homes and children, they cannot complete any rehabilitation programme while they are imprisoned or receive any help from probation services on there release.

If the prisoner list below appears to be American orientated, it is because America understands that prisoner support is the heart of the anarchist movement, so information on American prisoners is easier to find. If anyone has information on prisoners in Ireland or the UK, please forward the details.

Writing to prisoners for the first time can appear daunting but it does get easier. Contact us for advice and help, we also hold regular letter writing workshops.

Ulla Roder

HMP Corton Vale. Stirling. FK9 5NY. Scotland.

In for damaging a British Tornado Warplane at RAF Luechers. Ulla is from Denmark but is currently living in Scotland.

Sonia Hayword #KV5943.

HMP Cookham Wood, Rochester. Kent. ME1 3LU.

15 months for anti bloodsports and SHAC campaign.

Jennifer Greenberg #3100201610

Rose M. Singer Center. 1919 Hazen Street. East Elmhurst. NY 11370. USA.

Sentenced to 1 year for property destruction at an Anti Huntington Life Sciences demo.

Fran Thompson. #1090915. HU3A

Chillicothe Correctional Centre. 1500 W. Third Street. Chillicothe, MO 64601. USA.

Longtime eco activist serving a life sentence for shooting dead, in self defence, a stalker who had broken into her home.

Helen Woodson #03231-045.

FMC Carswell, PO Box 27137. Admin. Max Unit. Fort Worth. TX 76127. USA

Serving 27 years for robbing a bank and then setting the money on fire while reading out a statement denouncing greed, capitalism and the destruction of the enviroment.

Jana Simms # 13320330.

PO Box 9000. Wilsoncille. OR 97070. USA.

Interested in art, karate, homeless kids and sciences. In for taking her kids back from the state.

This is by no means a comprehensive list. For a longer list contact APS.



UPDATE ON BRIAN MCCARVILL

Brian McCarvill is a radical social prisoner, who was recently involved in a lawsuit against the Oregon Department of Corrections (ODOC), challenging their censorship and rejection of anarchist publications. The lawsuit alleged that ODOC frequently censored radical materials, 'simply on the basis that they portrayed the Anarchist circle-A symbol, the Anarchist Black Cross symbol, the Anarchist Black Flag, and the terms 'Anarchism' and 'Anarchist'....'. This lawsuit, McCarvill v. De Haan et al, was settled by contractual compromise on April 22nd. 2003.

Brian stated that the compromise settlement gives him and similarly situated , 'the relief that they could reasonably have expected from the US District Court'. This development was, thus, seen as a victory, especially as much of Brian's legal work was done from the Disciplinary Segregation ('the hole'). Both Brian and his cellmate Rob Thaxton, were sent to the Hole for 120 days, after individuals on the outside, attempting to aid Brian's legal work, sent in postcards featuring the anarchist 'circle-A' symbol and the message 'This is not a gang symbol'.

On May 15th., Brian was moved to Two Rivers Correctional Institution (TRCI) in Umatilla, Oregon. This was just a week after he had emerged from Disciplinary Segregation for his misconduct report over the postcards. It is clear that this latest manoeuvre from ODOC is due to Brian's anarchism and his recent legal success. He writes 'I have been transferred for simple punishment and retaliation; they (ODOC) have sent me to the worst place that they possibly could have sent me.'

Much of Brian's property was 'lost' during his transfer, with only a small amount having shown up at TRCI so far. He has had a few recent problems with censorship and is considering this situation.

Worse still, Brian has suffered for years with serious back pain (from two slipped discs, and calcium build-ups over fracture trauma). He has been sent to a prison where there are no chairs in the dayroom with back supports. ODOC has full knowledge of this situation. Brian is also attempting to get dentures – he has not had any teeth at all since November 2002. Work was scheduled to begin on these dentures in late May in Oregon State Penitentiary. No work on dentures is done at TRCI. It is imperative that Brian is transferred back to OSP.

We encourage those on the outside to begin a discussion on how to broaden and deepen our support for Brian and for all other prisoners in struggle.

Write to Brian at : Brian McCarvill# 11037967.

TRCI. 82911 Beach Access Road. Umatilla, OR 978822.
USA.

Write to ODOC Interim Director, Ben de Haan, demand



an end to retaliation against Brian, his return to OSP and a guarantee of adequate medical care.

Ben de Haan. Interim Director. Oregon Department Of corrections. Central Administrations Office. 2575 Center Street NE. Salem, Oregon 97301-4667.USA.

ROB THAXTON

On Sept. 3rd. 1999, Rob Los Ricos was sentenced to 7 years on charges of Assault and Riot after a Reclaim The Streets party in Eugene, USA. The judge used Rob to make an example of and sentence him to a

mandatory minimum of 5 years for assault and stacked 2 years riot charges on top, making Robs sentence 7 years in all.

Rob has continued his struggle whilst in prison and along with his supporters formed the Anarchist Prisoners Legal Aid Network (APLAN), a resource sharing and communication network for incarcerated anarchists.

Also, Rob has produced many prison writings, including 'Rob The Rich' and 'Fuck You Bearden.'

Rob and his cellmate Brian McCarvill were behind the circle A, 'this is not a gang symbol' postcard campaign, due to this campaign Rob received 120 days in solitary confinement.

Rob needs our support – any letters or donations would be appreciated.

WRITE TO ROB AT:

Rob Thaxton #12112716

OSP. 2605 State Street, Salem. OR 97310. USA.

Send donations (checks or money orders) to 'Rob Los Ricos', POB 50634, Eugene, OR 97405.

www.defenestrator.org/roblosricos/index.html.

STUART DURKIN.

Stuart Durkins fight against fascism started when he was a young child and used to spend weekends with his Gran. His Gran was Jewish and used to break down in tears recalling the horrific deaths her family endured in Nazi Germany.

Stuart was brought up in the Chapeltown area of Leeds. Chapeltown has a great diversity of people and Stuart had childhood friends from all ethnic backgrounds, as Stuart says "To me colour did not matter a bit." However, it did matter to others and

Stuart often had to endure name calling such as 'nigger-lover'. These taunts often ended in fights as Stuart would not let these racists insult his friends.

Stuart was sentenced to 13 years in prison, in Italy, after becoming involved in a fight in a bar. Stuart and his then girlfriend were enjoying a quiet drink, when they were interrupted by 3 racist skinheads, who after verbally abusing them, started to get physical. One of the skinheads ended up in intensive care, and Stuart, an English lad ended up in an Italian jail.

Stuart has been an active anti-fascist and anarchist for over 20 years and would welcome letters, in English, from like minded people.

Stuart would also like to receive books, tattoo mags., gel pens (with clear casings) and sketch pads so he can keep up with his art work.

Stuart was recently transferred to an English prison.

Stuart Durkin HJ9354.

HMP Wandsworth. PO Box 757. Heathfield Road. London SW18 3HS.

MATHEW LAMONT

Mathew Lamont has been highly involved with groups such as 'food not bombs' (an anti military network that serves food as a protest to war and arms), Copwatch (an organisation who monitors unlawful police activity) and POWER (an anti-authoritarian, anti-war, anti-racist group) and has been in jail since April 20th. 2002.

On April 20th., Mathew was followed from the Long Beach info. shop by Detectives, where he was then pulled over and arrested. The Detectives had no right to search the car as they were from a different county.

Mathew was charged with possession of a destructive device, transporting a destructive device and having the instructions to make a destructive device and received three years.

Mathew has been threatened by Nazis in the jail.

If you are in a punk band, maybe you could do a benefit gig or mention him in your zine. Mathew also needs letters of support.

Mathew Lamont CDC T-90251. 4-b-b-yard. Cell 201. PO Box 5500. Wasco State Prison. Reception Centre. Wasco. CA 93280.

For more info. contact: www.stoplbrepresion.org

HAROLD H THOMPSON.

Harold Thompson was born in West Virginia, USA on April 9th. 1942. He is the son of Irish parents (coming from different sides of the community) and grew up in a household where politics were regularly discussed and dissected in rational debate.

Harold served in the US army during the Vietnam debacle and was discharged after becoming wounded. The experience and pointlessness of war spurred him into becoming active in the influential anti-war movement, which flourished at the time across Europe and America.

Harold has now spent over 20 years in prison, including many in solitary confinement. Harold spends much of his time helping other prisoners with their legal briefings, refusing to aid only the worst elements in prison society, such as, racists and rapists. Harold has always been open about his anarchist, anti-authoritarian, anti-racist and anti-sexist principles, and this has led to abuse, not only from prison personnel but also vicious attacks from fellow prisoners who do not like Harold's willingness to help minority inmates. As a result of this Harold's health has suffered badly, though he refuses to let all this adversity break his morale.

Harold is also in the middle of a court case against the US Government over the refusal of anarchist literature into prisons so any donations would be useful. APS have raised 100euro for Harold case and we are trying to build on this. The Tennessee Department Of Corrections recently dealt Harold a new blow, which has prevented him continuing with his legal work. The Department has removed typewriters and word processors from the authorised prisoners property list, which means they will not be able to have them repaired when they break down. Since no court in the U\$A accepts handwritten documents, it is obvious this measure is intended to prevent inmates working on their trials – in other words to make prisoners still more imprisoned.

Harold's word processor broke a short time ago, and due to this repressive measure, he cannot go on with his trials, both his and that of other inmates.

Harold and his comrades have decided to raise a solidarity campaign to get this ban lifted and thus, help Harold to get another word processor. One of the ideas is to send a letter of protest to the Tennessee Department Of Corrections Commissioner.

Quinton I. White, Commissioner. Tennessee Department of

Correction. 4th. Floor, Rachel Jackson Building. 320 Sixth Avenue North. Nashville. Tennessee. 37243-0465. USA.

Letters to send are available from APS or you can write your own.

Contact Harold at:

Harold H Thompson #93992. Northwest Correctional Complex. Route 1 Box 660. Tiptonville, Tennessee 38079. USA

CASSIDY WHEELER.

Cassidy was sentenced to an eight year prison sentence for shoplifting. He feels the severity of his sentence was due to his political activist background.

Cassidy is working on building an international support network and needs help stocking his 'undercover' 'zine lending library.

You can get in touch with Cassidy at:

Cassidy Wheeler #14282456. SRCL. 777 Stanton Blvd. Ontario. OR 97914-8335. USA.

FREE AND CRITTER.

On the night of June 16th. 2000, Jeffrey 'Free' Luers and Craig 'Crittter' Marshall fire damaged 3 vehicles in the Romania Chevrolet car lot in Oregon. The cost of the damage to the vehicles was around \$28,000. Their action was planned to cause no harm to any human life and indeed no-one was injured. Their action was inspired by their simple desire to do something to prevent, what they consider to be, the continuing destruction of the global environment.

Crittter plea bargained and received 5 years for his action. Free, however, faced other charges relating to previous arson, which he completely denies and was given the ludicrous sentence of 22 years and 8 months. This was a political judgement rather than a judgement based on any facts.

Free is currently filing for an appeal and is asking people to write letters to the Attorney General in Oregon in support of this appeal. You can download a sample letter from

<http://www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk/downloads/index.html>.

This appeal is to make that Free does not spend the next 22 years in prison. Please take a few minutes to write a letter on Free's behalf. Make sure to include the appeal no., a return address and please be polite!

Free also needs letters, please write to him at:
Jeffrey Luers #13797671. OSP. 2605 State Street, Salem. OR
97310.USA.

MISCARRIAGE OF JUSTICE

Ray Gilbert is a 44 year old scouser of mixed race, who has spent the last 22 years in jail, Ray's interests lie in sport, politics, law, history, human rights, cooking and reading, the history of revolutionary movements in other countries including Ireland. He wants to get his case in the public domain so he can get out and clear his name. Mail, Books and (Soul and Irish music) tapes can be sent to Ray at Ray Gilbert H10111, HMP Woodhill. HU6B CSC Tattenhae Street, Milton Keynes, MK4 4DA.

IN THE TRENCHES

Ali Khalid Abdullah. Ali is a New Afrikan anarchist who has been in prison in Michigan for 12 years on charges relating to his attempt to shut down a major drug dealer and also, for 'redirecting' funds from capitalist ventures to community groups. While in captivity he founded the political prisoners of war coalition, and has been extremely active in the struggle to aid and educate other prisoners and oppressed people in general. He has also written extensively on various subjects relating to history revolutionary theory, and social critique, and has remained a steadfast opponent of patriarchy, heterosexism, racism, environment destruction, and capitalism despite repression and marginalisation.

Since imprisonment, Ali has been denied parole 5 times for reasons that have never been explained or justified.

Ali Khalid Abdullah s/n#148130 16770 S. Waterower Dr. Kincheloe, MI 49788. U.S.A.

SOLIDARITY MEANS ATTACK

by Craig Marshall.

Before starting this short rant, I want to address the fact that I am probably going to piss off and alienate some of the 'supporters' I have by writing this. Tough shit. The reason I am writing this is not to make friends, it is to make people think. If you get offended by what I have got to say, there is probably a reason beyond that, I am just an asshole, but that is a title I will gladly accept if this gets even one person to expand their efforts toward actually putting ecocidal

corporations out of business for good.

There are many people out there who call themselves 'supporters' of the ALF, ELF, Earth First!, or any other groups doing direct action, but if all these supporters out there only support from outside the movement, they are doing little more than pacifying their consciences. Solidarity means attack.

Solidarity is defined in my cheap ass prison dictionary as "a unity of interests among a group," and unity is defined as "singleness of purpose or action". If someone states that they are in solidarity with myself or other ecologically motivated saboteurs, that singleness of purpose is to stop the destruction of the many different life forms that share this planet with us. So if one is truly in solidarity with us, (s)he does not sit around talking about how much they support direct action, (s)he gets their hands dirty and takes action. I do not consider wearing some environmental groups T-shirt or simply stating that one supports direct action as solidarity. The ecocidal forces destroying life on this planet need to be taken out, and talking just is not going to do it. The dissemination of news of actions can be a valuable tool, the kind of thing that inspires action, but it is action that will bring this system to its' knees while those who ONLY speak of support continue to live on their knees giving fellatio to the master by perpetuating the myth that we are all free because we can say that we support direct action.

Talk is not enough, it is not even close – if there were as many people swinging hammers in the forest as there are people running chainsaws, those chainsaws would not be running long. I have heard some supporters of direct action say that direct action and sabotage are not for everyone, well, why the fuck not? When I have raised this question in the past, my 'white male privilege' has been raised as an issue. Though this may be a valid point, some people seem to be more interested in pointing fingers than confronting the privilege (though I probably should not call it privilege but stupidity) that allows them to sit back in relative comfort, while allowing, through their inaction, life form after life form to be eradicated. Talking about supporting direct action and sabotage just is not going to cut it. This is not about competition, it is not about who has monkey wrenched more machinery or who has liberated more lab animals, it is about the fact that if we all do not start doing something soon then we are all fucked. It is not about the one or two or two hundred endangered species that you did not give enough of a fuck about to spur you into action, it is about the

whole web of life and how your inaction is tantamount to your condoning the natural worlds destruction. To put this into simpler terms – every life form on this planet is on the road to extinction that is paved by the human race, and you are to blame if you do not do something drastic to stop civilisations destructive course. Solidarity is not a word to just throw around to make you feel like you belong. Solidarity attack.

Write to Craig Marshall at:

Craig Marshall #13797662. SRCL. 777 Stanton Blvd. Ontario. Oregon 97914. USA

RELEASED PRISONERS

Malachi Nicholls, Callum Currie, Howard Oakes, John winfrow, Michael Davison, Jason Litzner, Chris Plummer, Stephanie Vale, Janne Kuusisto, Alicija Kordasz, Eugene Novozhilov

PIT-STOP PLOUGHSHARES APPEAL

"Since our February 3rd. non – violent disarmament of a US Navy War Plane at Shannon Airport, much has happened. The Irish Army and Navy have been deployed to make overt what was covert – the militarisation of a civilian airport. 50,000 US troops, heavy munitions, including components for Tomahawk Cruise and Patriot missiles, passed through the airport. Shannon airport has become a pit–stop of death for the US war machine.

The US military passed through Ireland, with no UN mandate, to wreck and slaughter and plunder on the Iraqi people. 12 years of destructive sanctions were followed by several weeks of intensive hi–tech bombing. The retail looting on the streets has been a prelude to the wholesale looting of Iraqi resources by US oil companies.

On Good Friday, Jenny and Martin from the Catholic Worker entered Shannon Airport carrying out a memorial for the Iraqi slain and planted a bed of potatoes as a symbol of hope. They remained in the airfield for over two hours without defection – exposing the double illusion that 'the weapons are secure/ they secure us!'.

In response to our Ploughshares witness we have spent 4–11 weeks in Limerick Prison, been slandered by Government

Ministers, restricted in our movements by harsh bail conditions (required to sign on at a specific Garda station in Dublin and banned from County Clare where our trial is set to take place on June 24th.).

We have also been 'Presidentially Pardoned' by the US President Josiah Bartlett of the West Wing (Martin Sheen). We have been blessed with support and solidarity by many wonderful folks in Ireland and around the world. We have been inspired by continued non-violent resistance by brothers and sisters who know the war against the poor continues despite mainstream media declarations of finality and 'peace'.

Our community is resilient in spirit but vulnerable in infrastructure for the trials ahead. Ciaran O'Rielly is employed fulltime in a Dublin homeless shelter, Dierdre Clancy has sporadic editing work, Damien Moran receives a stipend as a seminarian. Karen Fallon and Nuin Dunlop have had no income since being released from Limerick Prison.

We wish to thank all those folks who have given us support over the last four months (transport, short/long term accommodation, financial contributions, correspondence, solidarity vigils outside court and prison);

We are asking you to accompany us for the next four weeks as we put Ireland's complicity in the US war and occupation of Iraq on trial in the geographically isolated town of Kilrush, County Clare. We are in dire need of financial support to continue this witness of non-violent disarmament and resistance to war."

To financially support the Pit Stop Ploughshares, money can be paid into the 'Ploughshares Defence Fund', Bank Of Ireland, Finglas Branch, Co. Dublin, Ireland: Account Number 18972983, NSC 900551

OR

send to 134 Phibsborough Road, Dublin 7, Ireland.

CAMPAIN AGAINST PRISON SLAVERY

Slavery has NOT been abolished in Britain, behind high walls and locked doors it still flourishes. Working class people are being forced to toil in poor conditions, beyond the reach of health and safety inspectors, denied even the most basic employment and trade-union rights, and severely punished if they refuse to work.

In British prisons, there have been savage cuts in education budgets over the past half decade, any pretence at rehabilitating prisoners and empowering them with trade skills has been abandoned. They are now seen as a readily exploitable labour force, a Third World colony in Britain's own backyard, cheap, non-unionised, available, and literally compelled to work.

If prisoners refuse to work, or are not considered to be working hard enough, they are punished-placed in solitary confinement, brutalised, denied visits, having days added to their sentences. Private companies are making enormous profits from prison labour, £52.9 Million in 1999, and that figure is growing rapidly. They use it because it is CHEAP-prisoners may be paid less than £5 for a week's work – and for prisoners there are no 'sickies', no holidays, no union meetings, no transport problems, and if there's no work they can simply be locked back in their cells. Prisoners are treated as the bosses would like to treat all of us.

The issue of prison slavery is an issue for ALL working-class people, not least because it undermines workers' pay and conditions generally. Not because prisoners are somehow 'stealing' jobs, they have absolutely no choice in the matter, but because companies can drive down the wages of their own employees by using prison labour, and it brings with it the threat of short-time and redundancies. The employees of Dysons, the vacuum-cleaner manufacturer, for example, were thrown out of work when Dysons decided to use cheap non-unionised labour in Malaysia, but how many Dysons' workers knew that for some time the company had been using cheap, non-unionised labour at Full Sutton prison? Not surprisingly the latter-day slave-masters are desperate to keep their involvement secret, from their own employees, and from the wider public.

The Campaign Against Prison Slavery was launched at a conference in Leeds on February 1st 2003, attended by about 60 people. At this founding conference it was decided to target Wilkinson's, a large highstreet store who use prisoners to do packing work, paying them

a maximum of £9 for a 30 hour week. Wilkinsons claim to be a company with a 'caring' outlook, a company 'working in partnership with local communities', a company with an 'ethical' view. But in contrast to their publicity material, the reality is that rather than offer jobs to the community Wilkinsons prefer to use the slave labour of a captive non-unionised workforce in order to keep their costs low and their profits high. This greedy company would rather use slave labour than give more work to their own workers or employ new ones, they are a ruthless anti-union firm, who run their stores with minimal staff whose wages they have recently cut, no doubt telling their employees it was time to 'tighten their belts' as there wasn't enough work to go round while secretly using the forced labour of prisoners.

In terms of pimping out prisoners' labour to companies like Wilkinsons the Home Office are relying on being able to assure not only its cheapness and reliability, but also to assure anonymity. Few of the companies exploiting forced prison labour would be comfortable with their employees and customers knowing about it. A primary aim of the Campaign Against Prison Slavery is to secure reliable and up to date information on these slave companies, and to expose them and target them. In order to obtain such information we are relying on prisoners, their friends, and families, to let us know what's happening in the British penal slave shops, to let us know which companies are contracting the work, what it's nature is, and how much (or rather how little) prisoners are being paid. The very fact that the secrecy surrounding prisoner exploitation can be broken, and prison slavery be put on the agenda, will in itself have an effect on the Home Office's ability to sell prisoners' labour.

We are already finding that this is a highly controversial issue with the public, and we have had a great deal of support. These are capitalist companies who care about the illusion of self-image, they don't want to be linked to slavery, they don't want customers boycotting them, and they certainly don't want people picketing outside their stores.

The first CAPS Day of Action against Wilkinson's was held on April 5th, with pickets of the Nottingham, Worthing, Leeds, Birmingham, and Luton stores. We distributed thousands of leaflets, put up posters outside the stores, held up banners and placards exposing Wilkinsons, and generally made our presence felt. All the actions were extremely successful in the sense that we won a lot of public

interest and support, and Wilkinson's management were clearly very upset by the actions.

Encouraged by the public support more Wilkinson's pickets were quickly organised and on May Day the Leeds, Birmingham (Acoc's Green), Stratford, and Blackwood, Gwent stores were picketed. The Worthing branch was picketed again on May 3rd.

On May 10th Wilkinson's Headingley branch was picketed by members of the Leeds, Bradford, and Wakefield CAPS groups.

Wilkinson's Halifax store will be targeted on Saturday May 24th (meet Halifax train station at 11.30am), and on Saturday June 7th the Birmingham group will be picketing Wilkinson's Great Barr store (meet 10.30am outside Mark's & Spencers in Birmingham city centre.) On June 24th there is a national picket of Wilkinson's store in Leeds city centre, which we'd like as many people as possible to attend. Pickets are also planned of Wilkinson's Wakefield store, as well as further pickets of the Worthing store. To highlight the campaign the Birmingham group also plans to picket Winson Green prison on Sunday May 25th from 1.30 to 3.30pm. The Leeds group hope to do a similar future picket of Armley prison.

There are Wilkinson's stores in towns and cities all over the country, so it is easy enough for activists to organise their own actions. Just a few people with leaflets and placards helps to highlight what this company is doing. Sample leaflet artwork can be supplied by e-mail.

We are already getting reliable and up to date information from prisoners on other companies exploiting prison slavery. For example we know that Virgin are using prisoners at Lewis prison to pack headphones for their airlines, while prisoners at Ford are doing laundry for Butlins. Prior to Xmas long-term prisoners at Full Sutton prison were being forced to fold paper party hats for the Bishop Auckland firm, Thompsons Xmas Company, but prisoners there are currently working for Ard Electronics (Tel- 01282 683000). Industrial Rubber PLC (Fielder Drive, Fareham, Hants. Tel - 01329 287955) are exploiting prisoners at several prisons, and using them to do particularly mind-numbing work trimming rubber mouldings.

A relatively recent development in the prison slavery market is the use of prisoners to operate computers. In Rye Hill prison for example, an internet company called Summit Media pays prisoners £9 per week, but charges it's customers over £50,000 for 2-3 weeks work. On their website Summit Media stress their

reliability, but this sits incongruously with their use of slave labour. Readers may recall all the fuss in the media a couple of years ago when the data from the 1901 census was posted on the internet, people were keen to find out what their ancestors were up to and the site was proving hugely popular. However the site was quickly closed down when it was discovered that the data it contained wasn't worth beans, hardly surprising considering that prisoners had been forced to input it.

There's a lesson to be learned from the 1901 census story, prison labour is only exploitable because it is being judged as reliable by greedy companies. With the stroke of a computer key or the snip of a thread of cotton it becomes considerably less reliable. Work strikes, go-slows, mass fuck-ups, these and other acts of resistance can make the prison slavers look at things differently. Currently prisoners are trapped in a nightmare where they are simply warehoused and used as cheap labour, where 'education' is a joke, and where things will only continue to get worse. By joining together in the Campaign Against Prison Slavery activists on both sides of the bars can hopefully change things and reject prison slavery and the Prison Industrial Complex.

If you have information on companies using prison labour and/or if you would like to get involved in the Campaign Against Prison Slavery please get in touch.

Mark Barnsley
May 2003

JOIN US!

Individual Subscription--£2 per year (further donations welcome)

Press Subscription--£20 per year

Affiliation (Trade unions and organisations) – £50 per year



FIRST LETTER

OK, you have read the newsletter and have been touched by the brief bios of at least one of the prisoners in it, and now you want to send a letter to express your feelings of solidarity and support. The only problem is how the hell do you write a letter, Christ, you do not even write to your own family! How are you supposed to write to someone you do not know and will probably never meet and who exists only as a structured collection of words in a periodical?

First things first, do not be intimidated, face it, your first post is only an ice breaker, so it does not need to be that long and full of detail. A few words, explaining who you are, where you heard about them, and expressing your full support, on a postcard is probably as much as it needs. If you have trouble finding the words, imagine yourself in prison and write what you would want to read. Secondly, do not promise anything, all you are initially sending is your support.

If you do get into extended communication, still do not promise anything that you cannot follow through on, you would not want to build up the prisoners spirits, just to have them smashed by you, prison can do that all by itself, without your help.

A few things to remember about sending letters to prisoners, first, include a return address, if not your own than a PO Box number, put it on both the envelope and the letter itself. Secondly, do not put any "sensitive" information in your letter. All post is opened and screened for such stuff, and also to check that you are not sending in drugs, iron files for the bars etc.

One thing to remember is each prison may have different rules for post, so if you have any problems, try to find out exactly what you can get away with, without causing harm to the prisoner you are trying to contact.

Finally, if you have any questions, there are a couple of web sites that may be of help to you, the two below are ABC sites but you can always contact the APS by e-mail or post. Happy posting!

UK

Brighton ABC page: <http://www.brightonabc.org.uk/action.htm>

USA

The ABC home page:

<Http://www.anarchistblackcross.org/support/writing.html>

Ireland APS home page

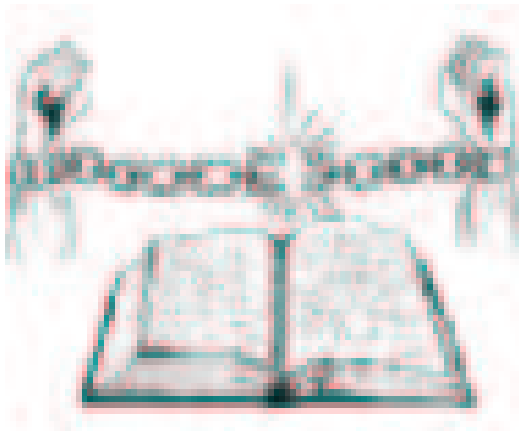
<http://anarchistps.tripod.com/>

AN APPEAL FOR BOOKS

Most of us have many books that we no longer need, books that we have read but would never read again or even unwanted presents. These books are no use to us and are more than likely just gathering dust on our shelves, however, to a prisoner one of these books would mean a lot.

Some prisoners work on a 23-hour lock up principle, which means that for 23 hours a day, you are locked in your cell with nothing to do. Most prisoners fill their time by writing letters and reading books and magazines, and it does not take long to work your way through the decent books in the unsubstantial prison library.

Many political prisoners may have more time on their hands than others as they might be refusing to do prison work, working for companies that exploit prisoners by paying ridiculously low wages. Getting political books and magazines into some prisons is no real problem, however this is not the case all over, so we are appealing for political books as well as fiction. Some of our international comrades are using their time inside to improve their English language skills and so are grateful for any books written in English. If you can help in any way, you can send books, zines etc. to Anarchist Support c/o PO Box 3355, Dublin 7, Ireland. Or you can get in touch with us at anarprisonersupp@hotmail.com and we will arrange collection. Thanks for your help and any donations are welcome.



SOME USEFUL CONTACTS.....

Campaign Against Prison Slavery.

againstprisonslavery@mail.com

Haven Books.

Free books to prisoners.

Haven Distribution. 27 Gloucester Street. London. WC1N 3XX. UK.
APLAN.

Anarchist Prisoners' Legal Aid Network. 818 SW. 3rd. Avenue. PMB
#354. Portland. OR. 97204. USA.

weneversleep@ziplip.com

Break The Chains.

www.breakthechains.net.

breakthechains02@yahoo.com

Earth Liberation Prisoners.

www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk

Women In Prison.

[Http://www.womeninprison.org.uk](http://www.womeninprison.org.uk)

Fempages prisoner list.

Useful information on writing to
prisoners.

[Http://www.j12.org/fempages/fempris.htm](http://www.j12.org/fempages/fempris.htm)

Isolation. International Platform Against Isolation.

isolation@post.com

Anarchist Federation. PO Box 505. Belfast.

www.af-ireland.cjb.net

Anarcho Syndacalst Federation

www.asf.org.

Cork Autonomous Zone. CAZ. 4 Knapp Street. Cork.



Anarchist Prisoner Support.
anarprisonersupp@hotmail.com
PO Box 3355, Dublin 7, Ireland.