



WAKE UP! IT'S YER GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER

SchNEWS

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Simon Jones
1973 - 1998

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LICENCE TO KILL

“The judge has decided Simon’s life is only worth fifty thousand pounds.” - Tim Jones, Simon’s brother.

“The law’s refusal to punish these serious crimes is just one more indication of how little importance our law makers give to casual workers’ health, safety and right to life.” - Simon Jones Memorial Campaign.

Bosses up and down the country were yesterday celebrating the fact that killing your workers won’t get you locked up behind bars after a jury trial at the Old Bailey. Richard James Martell, general manager of Dutch-owned Euromin, based at Shoreham, was found not guilty of manslaughter and his company found not guilty of corporate manslaughter, over the death of Simon Jones in 1998. Instead they were given a £50,000 fine with £20,000 costs for breaking health and safety regulations.

Simon Jones was killed on his first day of work when he was sent as a casual worker to Euromin. After just a few minutes “training” he was unloading cargo inside the hull of a ship. Within a few hours he was dead after having his head almost severed by the grab of a crane thanks to a cost cutting exercise by the boss.

But yesterday at the Old Bailey that mattered for nothing – Simon was just another statistic, one of the hundreds of people who die at work every year, while the companies that employ them get off scot free or have to pay pathetic fines.

As the Simon Jones campaign said, “We are painfully aware that in 21st century Britain the fight for the most basic of workers’ rights - the right not to be killed or injured at work - is still being fought. The Crown Prosecution Service has put obstacles and obstructions in the path of this prosecution at every turn. The Health and Safety Executive have consistently shown themselves to be either unwilling or unable to take the necessary action against employers to ensure the safety of workers.”

It took over three and a half years from the day Simon was killed for the trial to get to court. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) had to be dragged kicking and screaming every step of the way until in an historic U-turn they were told by two High Court judges that they were adopting an approach that was “baffling” and “beggared belief” over their refusal to prosecute. That it even got this far was because of a relentless campaign by family and friends.

In the dock

The death of Simon was tragic, but no accident. In fact it was a direct result of the low paid ‘flexible’ economy (let’s call it ‘flexploitation’) which is now endemic throughout the country. The growth of casualisation, where people are forced into low paid jobs with little or no training, no job security, no sick pay and no holiday pay means bigger profits for companies – but more deaths and injuries for the people working for them.

For Simon this meant he was sent to Euromin to work as a stevedore by temp agency Personnel Selection. As Emma Aynsley, Simon’s girlfriend at the time pointed out “He was doing one of the most dangerous jobs in the country for about £5 an hour with no training whatsoever. It was like asking someone without a driving licence to drive an articulated lorry.”

Since the abolition of the National Dock Scheme in 1989 casualisation has returned to all British docks. Within four years of the end of the scheme, the accident rate on the docks had leapt by a third. But profits for the companies involved had also leapt with a 41% saving in wages caused by five thousand redundancies and a cheaper labour force with much fewer rights.

One of the sacked Liverpool dockers (see SchNEWS 165/6) who went on strike to stop the casualisation of their jobs, joined Simon’s friends when they shut down Euromin a few years back. He told SchNEWS at the time “We went on strike for over two years to prevent deaths like this, which are inevitable with an untrained, casual workforce. Before casualisation, this sort of thing would never have happened. If these companies are allowed to get away with employing casual staff to do skilled jobs the death toll will just keep rising.”

D.I.Y.

Simon wrote for SchNEWS and was involved like all of us in supporting the Liverpool dockers’ strike. This also meant that from the beginning, the memorial campaign set up in his name was committed to taking direct action to ensure that his death wouldn’t be brushed under the carpet like so many others. The list of actions to make the authorities take notice has been impressive. The campaign occupied and shut down Euromin for the day; occupied and

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For crossing the border:

Two people were nicked for breaking their bail conditions by being 50 yards inside Stirling County.

shut down the temp agency Personnel Selection that sent Simon to his death. Occupied the Department of Trade and Industry on the day that Simon’s case was being debated in Parliament; shut down Southwark Bridge outside the Health and Safety Executive’s HQ until they got to speak to the director, and picketed the CPS for their failure to prosecute.

If it wasn’t for Britain’s casual labour economy Simon would still be alive. And if it wasn’t for the direct action campaign that has been fought for the past few years Simon’s death would have been brushed under the carpet.

So what does this now mean? That scumbags like James Martell can carry on cutting safety corners to squeeze an extra pound of flesh, and temp agencies like Personnel Selection will carry on sending anyone anywhere as long as they can keep half their wages?

SchNEWS knows that under the present law it is almost impossible to find anyone guilty of corporate manslaughter charges and no doubt there will be calls for the laws of the land to be changed. But we also know that it isn’t just laws that need to be changed, but a whole new world built, one where people are more important than profit, where people like Simon Jones aren’t killed just to make some boss or shareholder a little richer.

* Simon Jones Memorial Campaign, PO Box 2600, Brighton, E.Sussex, BN2 0EF www.simonjones.org.uk

* Watch ‘The Navigators’ on Channel 4 this Sunday (2nd December) at 10pm. Directed by Ken Loach the film shows how, since the privatisation of the rail industry, experienced workers who used to be in charge of rail safety have been replaced with casual inexperienced labour – with frightening consequences. The film was written by Rob Dawber, a railwayman who died earlier this year from mesothelioma, a cancer caused while working with asbestos on the railways. <http://rob.dawber.net/>

* ‘Fighting to Win’ is a pamphlet about various strikes with a section on deaths in the building industry. Copies from Revolutions Per Minute, BCM Box 3328, London WC1N 3XX www.red-star-research.org.uk/fightframe

GENE-TRICKS

Reports in the scientific journals Nature and New Scientist show that genetically modified (GM) crops have contaminated all of North America. In Canada where GM oil seed rape has been grown commercially for six years, GM pollen and seed is now so widespread it is difficult to grow conventional or organic strains without them being contaminated. Not only that but also some GM plants are developing into superweeds, as they have acquired resistance to more than one weedkiller by crossing with other GM strains.

In Mexico wild maize growing over 60 miles away from GM varieties have been genetically contaminated. Of course the long-term effects of wild plants being contaminated by GM crops is totally unknown and may have knock-on effects on the animals that feed on them, we just don't know. So in the light of these findings will the government halt GM crops? Will capitalist pigs fly?

* The snappily titled Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (PGRFA) (see SchNEWS 329) was adopted at the United Nations Food and Agriculture conference at the beginning of the month. In theory the agreement should have totally undermined the biotech companies control over genetic resources in food crops, unfortunately it's unlikely to happen. Under international law the terms of new treaties should overrule older ones, this meant this treaty would have trumped the World Trade Organisations (WTO) TRIPs Agreement (see SchNEWS 328). But carefully placed wording in PGFRA appears to suggest that the WTO will still be able to continue to be genetic bullies on behalf of the biotech giants www.ukabc.org/

* Pharmacia the American Pharmaceuticals group will next October sell its share of the biotech firm Monsanto. An industry analyst said, "If management does not have to give presentations every year on Frankenfoods that can only be a good thing." Check the cybersquatted www.monsanto.org - telling you exactly what to expect from this nasty biotech company.

ANARCHRISTMAS

This year we've saved the expense of producing a glossy Christmas catalogue, but we thought we'd better still dosh out some enlightened Christmas pressie advice:

If granny put her ecstasy testing kit to good use last year then she'll love the latest **Class War Anti-Jubilee Calendar**, and for days that she feels too tired to take part in the class struggle, she might find the **Housmans Peace Diary** more relaxing. Calendar £6 from "London Class War" P.O. Box 467, London E8 3QX. Diary £6.95 from "Housmans" 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX.

To guarantee a seriously rocking Christmas why not get yer hands on a copy of the **SchNUSIC CD** with something for everyone; punk, dub, folk, techno. To get your copy send £7 to SchNEWS. Alternatively if feel like 2002 might be the year to start cleaning up your act then get hold of 'Go M.A.D!' It includes 365 easy ways to help change the planet, from taking a natural love drug then counting little creatures and putting a spider plant on your desk. Only £3.99 + £1 p&p from The Ecologist 01626-832225.

And if you want to miss boring Bond returns this Christmas and are stuck for alternatives why not curl up with a nice SchNEWS annual? (details on our website)

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Keep SchNEWS FREE! Send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 10 for next 9 issues) or donations (payable to Justice?) Ask for "Originals" if you can make copies. Post free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o on-the-fiddle, P.O. Box 2600, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 0EF.

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SchNEWS in brief

Ourpower in Brighton & Hove want to form an alliance of residents and community groups to discuss and take action for the type of city we'd like. Meeting: Sat. 1st 11am-1:30pm, Friends Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton info@ourpower.org.uk. ** Actions at all Brighton **Esso** garages, Sat. 1st as part of the national day of action. Meet noon outside Esso in either Hove, Lewes Road, Hollingdean Road, Dyke Road or London Road (Patcham) www.stopesso.com ** **The Black Cat Collective** in Bristol wants more people to get involved in "the destruction of Capitalism and the overthrow of the State". 07905-720575, Black_Cat_Collective@yahoo.co.uk ** Over 2000 people protested last week against three major dams in **Lesotho**, South Africa. The police responded violently injuring three elderly women. The protesters were demanding fair compensation for the property that will be submerged www.irn.org/programs/lesotho/ ** **Manchester Radical bookfair** Sat. 8th at Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street. Info 0161 273 1736 merci@gm.apc.org ** Sat 8th is also **Kebele** community centre's sixth anniversary free party at Easton Community Centre, Bristol. 0117-9399469 kebele@marsbard.co.uk ** **March against US obstruction of the fight against climate change** (catchy). The US government refused to sign the Kyoto treaty despite being the world's largest polluters. March in London from Prince Consort Rd, 11am, 8th Dec. to the US Embassy, Grosvenor Sq. Also weekly climate vigils, 5-7pm Mondays at the US Embassy. Tel 07903-316331 www.campaignagainstclimatechange.net.

Inside SchNEWS

December 9th marks 20 years since the arrest of **Mumia Abu-Jamal**, the American radical black journalist, in Philadelphia for allegedly killing the police officer Daniel Falkner. At the latest court hearing new evidence was denied consideration by the prosecution. The new evidence was a video taped confession by someone who claims to be guilty of Falkner's murder. Mumia remains on death row. Saturday 8th December is a global day of protest to demand Mumia's immediate release from prison. www.freemumia.org

* American eco-activist **Rob 'Ruckus' Middaugh** has been sentenced to three years for his involvement in the Mayday 2001 Reclaim The Streets celebrations in Long Beach, California. He accepted a plea bargain rather than risk a 16-year sentence if found guilty of all charges. Rob now has two "strikes" in America's "three strikes and your out" rule, which means if he's nicked again he could face 25 years in prison. Send letters to: Rob Middaugh #6859467, PO Box 86164, Los Angeles 90086-0164, USA.

* **Robert Moaby** is on remand for allegedly sending threatening e-mails to the Director of the Bank of New York (who fund the vivisection Huntingdon Life Sciences), would like to receive letters: Robert Moaby GF7721, Hospital Wing, HMP Jebb Avenue, Brixton, London SW2.

* A Trident Ploughshares activist has just received a vindictive three months in prison for Breach of the Peace for her part in the Big Blockade of the Faslane Nuclear Base. The harsh sentence might be something to do with her comments about the Scottish legal system. Write letters of support to **Jenny Gaiawyn**, HMP Cornton Vale, Cornton Road, Stirling, FK9 5LY.

* Independent footage is urgently needed of the police operations outside Euston station, on **Mayday** this year, to help in a trial starting on 3 December. If you can help contact Moss & Co. solicitors on 020-8986-8336 andrew@mossllaw.co.uk

Anti-War Actions

There's a mass action in opposition to militarism and violence next weekend (Sunday 9th and Monday 10th December) at **Northwood Military Joint Forces Headquarters**, London. December 10th is also International Human rights day. The 9th will be a mass rally/blockade of the military HQ and the 10th will be organised on an 'affinity group' basis - basically, get together with some mates, go along to a training day beforehand and hey presto, you have an affinity group! There will be legal support at the event. Meet 10th Dec. 7.30am Outside Northwood tube station. More info: 07950 567099 www.northwood.cjb.net

* **Stop Star Wars: Stop War Spying: Stop Afghanistan War** is a women's only gathering at Menwith Hill military base to protest against the star wars military programme. Meet 12th December, 10 am onwards in the lay-by opposite the Black Bull pub on the A59, 7 miles west of Harrogate, just before you get to the golf-balls. Women should go for the day & be self-sufficient because there are no facilities. Tel: 01943-468593 flossiemintballs@aol.com

SNATCHED

On 25th November an 'immigration snatch squad', raided a flat in Streatham, south west London, one person fell to his death from the balcony, trying to escape. He is the fourth person to die this way since 1994. With the government planning a ten-fold increase in arrests of failed asylum seekers. How many more deaths will there be? Jenny Jones, Green Party member on the Greater London Assembly, is furious "there should be an immediate halt to the operation of the asylum snatch squads and the Government should review the targets it is imposing on the Immigration Services" (and maybe the methods they are using). More info National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns. 0121-554-6947. www.ncadc.org.uk

* Protest outside the Yarl's Wood refugee detention centre in Bedfordshire. At 2pm, Sunday 2nd December. More information from www.stoparbitrarydetentionsatjarlwood.co.uk.

* Hands Off Asylum Seekers - Candlelit Vigil 6th December at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, 6pm - 7.30pm Info 0121-554-6947.

...and finally...

Hunts around the country are preparing to resume their murderous 'sport' in foot and mouth free areas from 17th December. A permit system means their followers will only be allowed on roads 'cos of the risk of spreading the disease. Unfortunately for the hunts there's a certain faction who follow hunts (the ones with the black hoodies) who aren't easily controlled, and who will still be legally entitled to use footpaths near the hunt. This has angered the fanatical Australian hunter Janet George who claims to 'speak for the countryside'. She is openly advocating violence towards Hunt Sabs encouraging farmers and 'stewards' to hold down and spray sabs with disinfectant 'from head to toe'. But we don't think the sabs will take kindly to being sprayed with animal tested toxic chemicals...

If Hunts can't control their 'followers' they could loose their licences, now wouldn't that be a shame! Contact the Hunt Saboteurs 0845-4500727 www.huntsabs.org.uk

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers if you want to kill someone, become a boss and do it at work. Then you'll get away with it.