



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER DROWNING NOT WAVING...

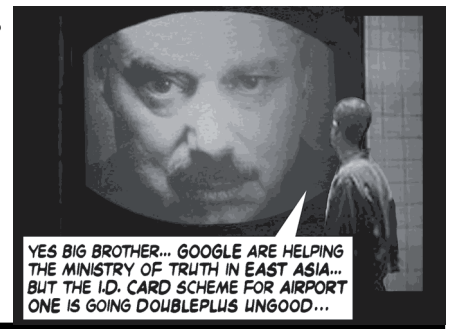
SchNEWS

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Free/Donation

Issue 529



YES BIG BROTHER... GOOGLE ARE HELPING THE MINISTRY OF TRUTH IN EAST ASIA... BUT THE I.D. CARD SCHEME FOR AIRPORT ONE IS GOING DOUBLEPLUS UNGOOD...

SINK OR SWIM?

IN AT THE DEEP END AS BRISTOL ACTIVISTS SQUAT POOL

Activists across Britain are resisting on a range of different fronts as neo-liberalism attacks communities and environments. It seems this new wave of direct action is washing over the country (See SchNEWS 526, 527). It's time for another SchNEWS round up.

In Bristol, a city with a long tradition of anarchist community action, a group of local agitators have dipped a toe into radical politics in their struggle against the closure of a local swimming pool. This is their story in (mostly) their own words...

For several years, locals have been campaigning against the closure of their swimming pool, Bristol North Pool. The issue was one of huge local concern: a petition with over 6000 signatures was presented to the council, and there was even a Save Bristol North Pool Party candidate in local elections. Nonetheless, in October last year, the council closed it. The huge building, which is grade II listed, and in a prime location, was left standing empty to fall derelict. Enquiries about its future to the council were met with the response that 'discussions have not yet taken place'.

An action group came together and planned an occupation of the building. More people got involved, and came up with the idea of a community space. Finally, late last Friday night, eleven members of our group entered the pool through an open window. We stayed there overnight (with no running, bombing, or petting SchNEWS hopes) and a public protest hit the streets outside the next morning..

POOLING RESOURCES

A press release was put out to local media: "We are a group concerned about the disappearance of public space and the privatisation of public services in Bristol. On Friday 20th January 2006, we reclaimed Bristol North Pool on Gloucester Road.

This year we have witnessed the closure of Speedwell and Filwood pools, the Robin Cousins sports centre as well as Bristol North. We've also seen recent cuts in library services glossed as "restructuring", a process which also threatens our hospitals.

With this protest, we are asking the question, Who owns Bristol? and providing our own answer.

As part of this community, we want to see more not-for-profit public spaces, where we can exist as people, not consumers. As a practical symbol of this we are now rescuing this building from closure and disuse with the

aim of providing a non-commercial space in the local community. It will be a place where all people in the local area are free to create, meet, share skills, learn, connect and entertain in a non-hierarchical environment."

ARM-BANDITS

A drumming, singing, banners and free-cake style protest got going on Saturday 21st. Hundreds of passers-by were made aware of the issue. Almost all of them were very supportive. The council, clearly embarrassed by the publicity if not their failure to do anything with the pool building, acted abnormally quickly. A couple of burly security staff turned up, switched the alarm off and then left. At about 5pm on Saturday we received an eviction notice, calling us to court at 10am on Monday morning. The timing of the summons meant that we had no opportunity to seek legal advice.

Having barricaded the doors, on Monday about forty people turned up to protest our eviction, and we handed out flyers and held up signs saying 'honk in support' to the cars driving past as we waited to hear the verdict. It finally came - we'd lost and could legally be evicted. If the people in the building resisted eviction, they could be arrested.

There were plenty of media reporters to record the bailiffs arriving and breaking a window for entry.

Once in, we expected them to immediately go in search of the people inside. Instead, they spent time smashing open two doors leading to the outside, for no apparent reason. The council later issued a press statement saying that £5000 worth of damage had been caused by the protest, implying that we had caused it!

Eventually all the protesters were evicted. Nonetheless, our efforts this weekend were far from wasted. We gained an unbelievable level of community support. On Tuesday we held a meeting about the building's future, attended by over 70 people. We discussed how we could reclaim it for community use and what we could organise in it. All kinds of ideas, enthusiasm and skills came forward and we are confident that thanks to the direct action we took, people in the community have been mobilized to work together and, together, we will succeed in making Bristol North Pool a community space again."

* More details and some pics at www.bristol.indymedia.org

* If you've got a story of a local action email or call the SchNEWS hotline.

CRAP ASBO OF THE WEEK

For lighting up

A Berkshire man who puts up a display of Christmas lights each year to raise money for a local children's charity has been threatened with an order by police because of the anti-social behaviour of the large numbers of people who come to see the spectacle. Thames Valley Police said more than 40 crimes committed in the area last year were "directly linked" to the lights. Vic Moszczyznski's display raised £5,000 for Daisy's Dream, a local charity working with bereaved children.

EAR TO THE GROUND

Updates from local campaigns recently covered in SchNEWS...

DALKEITH PARK: This week the treehouses at Dalkeith Park protest camp were evicted - with the last camp taken by bailiffs on Wednesday with thirty one arrests. (For background see SchNEWS 526). But as tree felling got under way work was stalled by the discovery of yet another camp in the path of the destruction in the form of protesters bunkering down in tunnels. In fact it was a badger sett - and now because of badgers' protected status, the developers have to wait until the council decide what to do with this final line of eco-resistance. A road-busting spokesbadger said that they will stay underground while their human counterparts pursue legal means to halt the destruction of the park. See www.save-dalkeith-park.org.uk.

CAMP BLING: Meanwhile, in Essex, residents of Camp Bling and pressure group Parklife are keeping up the pressure on the local council in their fight against a proposed dual carriageway. An extensive and deep tunnel was unveiled at Camp Bling on Wednesday, adding to the defenses of the camp against eviction, and Government Offices were occupied by activists on Monday. Officials are meeting today (Friday) - behind closed doors of course - to decide the future of the road scheme. A final decision is expected in spring. Watch this space... (or go to www.savepriorypark.org)

34 BROADWAY MARKET, HACKNEY: After the public meeting about the eviction of Tony's Café on January 16th which over 200 attended - and where Reverend Campbell Taylor (who chaired the meeting) told the councilors in ungodly fashion, 'Why can't you (the council) admit that you've fucked up,' The cafe is still open but under eviction alert (for more see SchNEWS 527).

* On Friday 27th Jan (today) at 10.30am, Spirit - who continues to run the Nutritious Food Gallery, the shop he has worked and lived at since 1993 (though it is now a squat) - is in Shoreditch County Court, and could be facing imminent eviction.

* For more see <http://34broadwaymarket.omweb.org/modules/wakka/HomePage>

SUTTONGRAD SOCIAL CENTRE is a long-squatted community space at 2-4 Sutton St, Whitechapel, London E1. The multicultural group of campaigners, musicians, and artists who call it home face immediate eviction from today, from a council keen to develop the land into a car park. Urgent help is needed from 8.30am onwards.

THREE'S A CROWD

Two weeks after Tony Blair promised ABSOs for kiddies with his 'Nuff Respect' campaign (see SchNEWS 527) up to 200 youths demonstrated in Leeds, last Saturday (21st) against the encroaching police state. The police and their corporate pals in local shopping centres have been planning to issue a dispersal order for parts of Leeds City Centre which will give the coppers the power to disperse groups of three or more youths for whatever reason tickles their fancy (regardless of whether hoodies are being worn or not). Last Saturday's demo kicked off earlier than anticipated when a Leeds Corn Exchange security guard called the police with a view to stopping the action. Undeterred the crowd paid a visit to the local nick in Millgarth street and went on to a rally back at the Corn Exchange with chants of 'being young is not a crime!' and 'two's company, three's illegal!' There's a fuller report of the action, with pictures, at www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2006/01/332120.html

INSIDE SchNEWS

Dutch Ploughshares activist Turi Vaccaro has been sentenced to six months following his disarming of two F16 bombers. His action was carried out to remember the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. He also has to either pay 750,000 euros compensation for the damage he caused or spend a further year in prison. Send letters of support to Turi Vaccaro, HvB De Boschpoort, Nassausingel 26, 4811 DG Breda, The Netherlands.

* Last Monday, a peace activist from New York State, Daniel Burns, was sentenced to six months in prison for splattering his own blood. He, and three others due for sentencing this week under the same charges, happened to be in a military recruiting station at the time, and left their own claret statement all over windows, walls, pictures and a stars'n'stripes as a protest against the soon-to-start Iraq invasion. The so-called Saint Patrick's Four were convicted for damaging government property and entering a military recruiting station for unlawful purposes. Blood, of course, is only lawfully spilt on government property if it's the government doing the spilling. For more see www.stpatricksfour.org

TAKING THE PISTE

Next month, the Italian city of Turin has the dubious honour of hosting the Winter Olympics. Many Italians are opposed to this televised corporate sport fest, with all the so-called investment going into the hands of a few big companies.

Protests have been hotting up over a high speed rail link which will cut a path of devastation through the Susa Valley - just so Turin and the Alps have got a fast link for the games. For several weeks the railway has been interrupted with demonstrations, road blockades, and graffiti messages against the railway line and the police occupation of Susa Valley cover the area. On Tuesday a protest camp in the valley was violently evicted by police - 20 people including five police officers were hospitalized by the clashes. Earlier that day a major highway and the streets of Bussoleno were barricaded. The car of the President of the Piemonte region, two police cars, and an Olympics store were attacked. Presumably a few new personal bests were set.

* Publicity seeking anarchists tried to snatch the Olympic torch as it was being paraded through the streets of Trento in northern Italy by Italian athlete Eleonora Berlanda. The action was to highlight the corporate exploitation of the Olympics, especially Coca Cola's sponsorship of the Olympic flame. The four naughty anarchists were arrested were charged with theft, causing injury, violence, and resistance. Still in the Olympics it's not the result, it's the taking part that counts. Gold medals all round!

SchNEWS in brief

There's a Vigil in memory of Bereket Yohannes this Sunday (29th) 12pm at Harmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre, Colnbrook bypass. Bereket, from the African country of Eritrea, became the 7th asylum seeker to suicide in a UK detention centre. 61 detainees in Harmondsworth have signed a joint statement concerning conditions there - with some refusing food until demands are met. 07947 615341 www.ncadc.org.uk/newszine66/bereket.html ** After the vigil visit a detainee in Harmondsworth or Colnbrook - but bring two forms of ID ** New issue of Reading's 'Gay Bishop' is out, this month looking at health services for local residents. To see a copy email: readinggaybishop@yahoo.co.uk ** Next Tuesday (31st) 'Corporate Crime in Iraq' discussion on the future of Iraq's resources in the face of western corporate piracy. Basement Social Centre, 24 Lever Street, Manchester 7:30pm 0161 273 8283 gmdcnd@gn.apc.org ** Could Dan Glass or anyone who knows how to get in touch with him contact the post Dublin Mayday 04 legal support group at legal-mayday@gluaiseacht.net ** David Jones - EDO MBM's managing director - has resigned. He was responsible for the injunction taken out on protesters (See SchNEWS 521) Did he jump or was he pushed? See www.roughmusic.org.uk/#eight ** Bristle Book Out Now - The Bristle team have brought out a great 200 page full colour book of stencils, murals, graffiti, and subverts from around Bristol. £5 from Kebele Kulture Project. £6 by post (cheques to 'Bristle') c/o 14 Robertson Rd, Easton, Bristol BS5 6JY. www.bristle.org.uk

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

"A national ID card for the UK is overly ambitious, extremely expensive and will not be a panacea against terrorism or fraud, although it will make a company like mine very happy." - Roberto Tavano, biometrics specialist for Unisys.

Having covered the litany of expensive privatisation balls-ups which Neo Labour have presided over as they outsource and corporatise public records, it didn't come as a surprise to SchNEWS when computer boffins claimed the proposed ID card and accompanying national database would be another monumental IT cock-up (See SchNEWS 431). Not only is the ID card and database a violation of civil rights, it is also due to run on technologies which will cost a bomb... and then not even work.

Now Corporate Watch have published a report which looks at what the IT corporations who stand to take the contracts for the ID card are saying privately about the technology. And guess what - the companies themselves are saying it will be a 'disaster'. Take Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, former chair of QinetiQ for instance, quoted as saying: *"The requirement for 100% accuracy is huge and I don't think we've ever seen a system which is 100% accurate."* The report finds concerns about the lack of transparency, the inability to manage an IT project of this massive scale, and biometric scanning (eg iris, face or fingerprint recognition) technology which is too unreliable. For more see www.corporatewatch.org.uk/?lid=2298

At The SchMOVIES

The new SchMOVIES 2005 DVD hits the big screen at the Duke Of York's cinema, London Rd, Brighton (Tel: 01273 602503) on Feb 1st at 6.30pm. Also screening on the same bill is **Bury My Heart In Palestine**, an account of a visit by three Brighton filmmakers to Palestine in 2003 - for more see www.brightonpalestinecampaign.org And it's a benefit for Smash EDO and SchNEWS. (£6.50/£5.50 conc, £5 members)

* For more about Smash EDO see www.smashedo.org.uk

* To order copies of SchMOVIES 2005 DVD see www.schnews.org.uk/schmovies

CAUSING A FENCE

It all went pear shaped for an Israeli fruit importer in court this week when seven protestors who had blockaded Carmel Agrexco's premises in Uxbridge back in November 2004, were acquitted of aggravated trespass.

Carmel Agrexco is 50% owned by the Israeli state and is the largest importer of Israeli produce into the EU. They deal extensively with produce from settlements in the Occupied Territories.

Before taking part in this action many of the defendants had witnessed first hand the suffering of Palestinian communities under the brutal Israeli occupation, having served as volunteers with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), documenting human rights abuses by the IDF in the West Bank and Gaza, and taking part in non-violent civil resistance to the occupation organised by Palestinian civilian committees.

The action, which shut the factory down for a day, was taken as part of a week of protest against the apartheid wall, built by the Israeli state on Palestinian land. The 9 metre high wall, condemned by the International Court of Justice, is called a 'security fence' by the Israelis.

In a bizarre case of life imitating court, the case was thrown out because Agrexco themselves had built a security fence at their depot on land they didn't own! The fence had been erected some years earlier to keep out 'undesirables'. The protesters weren't on Agrexco's land so they weren't trespassing - aggravated or not. How d'ya like them apples?

There will be a press conference next Tuesday at the Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square from 6.30pm.

RIP

Dennis Sherez died in his sleep on Tuesday January 17th aged 29. Much loved in Brighton as a founder of Bust the Box, his irreverent and eclectic music has been inspiration and delight to thousands at free parties and festivals for many years. There are very few people who through their words and actions give so much magic to the lives of so many. Dennis' friends will remember him for his determination to cut through the bullshit and speak his mind. He always found time for his friends and it is with much love and respect that we will raise our glasses to his memory each time we hear one of his favourite tunes for years to come.

...and finally...

Taser International, creators of the "stun gun" used and loved by police forces around the world (including here), have been taking a battering of late. On top of the 200 or so deaths the "non-lethal" weapon has been linked with in North America alone, the company will soon face US cops who are suing the company for injuries caused by electro-muscular disruption during training (See SchNEWS 509).

A chink of light could be shining out of the gloom though. Hope comes from an ongoing case over the mysterious death of 35 year old David Glowczenski, who met his maker shortly after meeting his local constabulary last year. While David's injuries corresponded exactly to the wounds a Taser inflicts, his family are being told that David in fact died of ... "Excited Delirium."

This rare medical condition is characterised by a sudden onset and the group most at risk are young men in police custody. In fact, the doctor who arrived at this verdict admits he "doesn't understand the condition fully" either. Still, don't sweat the small stuff, doc, your conclusion might get the boys at Taser off the hook, free to get back to making a killing on the 'non-lethal' arms market.

Remember kids, Tasers don't kill people, Excited Delirium does.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - don't squat in the pool - you're bound to be asked to leave... Honest!

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