



WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER FAR WRITE...

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FASH GET THE BRUM RUSH

AS ANTI-FASCISTS CLASH WITH THE FAR RIGHT IN BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE

Last Saturday, business-as-usual shopping at the Bull Ring in central Birmingham was brought to a halt as sporadic street fighting broke out between a burgeoning new section of the far right in Britain – the English Defence League (EDL) – there to demonstrate against ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ (read: any Muslims), and anti-fascists alongside the Unite Against Fascism (UAF) umbrella group. The mainstream media obligingly printed pictures of white lads being beaten up by Asians, fuelling the fires of racial hatred. Around 400 anti-fascists – mostly local youths - did a good job of kicking the arses of some 150 EDL bandwagoners. In total 35 were arrested and three injured.

The English Defence League, and Casuals United, are supposedly non-BNP, non-NF multi-racial groups united against Islamic fundamentalism and Sharia Law in Britain. But a handful aside, all the faces on their side of the demo were white. Casuals United are the product of a recruitment drive on the football terraces – a common practise in eastern Europe, with footy supporters seen to be patriotic and with a gang mentality. Despite maintaining the charade that they aren’t linked to the BNP, the EDL were started by a BNP member, are fronted by known Combat 18 members, and you couldn’t slide a rizla through the gap between the BNP and EDL agendas, apart from the EDL trying to draw British Afro-Caribbeans into the Islamophobic mix. They say the UAF is a government backed campaign to target them – admittedly it has support from Labour MPs as well as SWP involvement - but the fact is that regardless of

the UAF, anti-fascists have actual broad public support, and the EDL/BNP don’t.

The rise of the EDL this year has followed demonstrations and scuffles at several Military parades in Luton and other towns between far right nationalists versus Asian and white anti-fascists (See SchNEWS 670, 671). In Luton the National Front demonstrated on April 13th, and on May 24th the EDL demonstrated there – both times mosques and other properties were attacked in Muslim-heavy areas of town. Far-right groups are planning to return in larger numbers over the August bank holiday at the Harrow mosque in North West London, and are threatening another demo in Manchester in early October.

The public presence of British racist nationalists and xenophobes continues to increase – as is typical in times of economic hardship - however the up-for-it anti-fascist movement is also growing stronger but needs increased support, particularly out on the street.

* **Mobilisation against BNP’s Red, White and Blue festival** – August 15th - against the BNP as they try to have their celebration of island-mentality xenophobia. Meet at Market Pl Codnor, Ripley, Derbyshire DE5 at 9am followed by a National Rally at 11am, see <http://nobnfpfestival.wordpress.com>

* See these websites www.uaf.org.uk <http://jasonnparkinson.blogspot.com>

* And if you think it’s tough taking on the fash in Britain, read about the plight of anti-fascists on the mean streets of Moscow in this web-only article – see www.schnews.org.uk/archive/news687.php

CELT IN ACTION

As the **Scottish Camp for Climate Action** at Mainhill draws to a close after a successful week of workshops and action, the camp has moved south to the site of yet another open-cast coal mine, this time in Wales.

Following last week’s sabotage of a conveyor at a nearby mining site (see SchNEWS 686), a visit was paid to Lord Home, the Mainhill site landowner (currently under investigation by the FBI for fraud as well as by Scotland Yard for false expense claims) who has an agreement with Scottish Coal to turn over part of his estate for a new mine. Banners were draped, frisbee games and a picnic were held on Home’s lawn.

The Camp culminated with a demo against the serious health hazards for the local community and coal’s contribution to climate change, outside the offices of South Lanarkshire Council whose members have approved new coal extraction despite massive local opposition.

Local Councillor Daniel Meikle of the family business Meikle Construction and chair of the planning committee for many years, was a particular target for campaigners’ ire.

The Camp also released a dossier entitled ‘Adverse Effects of Opencast Mining’ which paints an alarming picture of a whole host of health issues from cancer to asthma and depression, caused not just by the coal dust, but also by noise and the increase in heavy goods traffic.

* See <http://climatecampscotland.org.uk> and <http://coalactionedinburgh.noflag.org.uk>

Following hot on its heels, **Climate Camp Wales** premiered on Wednesday (12th) with around 60 protesters descending on Ffos-y-Fran, a controversial open-cast coal mine in the Merthyr Tydfil borough, about four miles from Newport.

The Camp will occupy the site until 16th August, with campaigners from the six areas of Wales aiming to address the lack of honesty in government policy - with its grand promises about limiting climate damaging activities, yet continued investment in and expansion of the coal mining industry.

Local campaign groups in the region, such as Residents Against Ffos-y-Fran (RAFF), have been consistently ignored by government and planners, despite some campaigners living only 36 metres from the 1,000 acre mine. Although a report funded by the Welsh Assembly expressed concern over the detrimental health effects of the air pollution and dust particles, objections have so far been discounted.

The camp is offering a variety of workshops from herbalism and low impact development to direct action and lobbying, as well as providing information about current climate campaigns such as those at Vestas and Rosspport. This Friday sees a ‘green awareness day’, organised by residents in the Merthyr Tydfil area. The event, taking place in the town market, will include representatives from sustainable energy firms, the local council’s recycling department, Friends of the Earth and the Climate Camp.

For directions and how to get involved see: www.climatecampcymru.org

NOTES FROM A SMALL ISLAND

The workers occupation of the Vestas wind turbine factory on the Isle of Wight (see SchNEWS 686) came to an end last Friday with the remaining six workers leaving minutes before the bailiffs moved in, two by abseiling down the factory wall, one by leaping 30 feet from the balcony and the other three using the more conventional method of walking out the door. The camp outside the factory continues however, and the last week has seen nationwide acts of solidarity.

According to a SchNEWS reporter at the scene, the camp continues to grow despite the eviction, as does local support. A handful of workers remain at the camp with the environment and union activists. Elsewhere on the island, the rooftop protest of the Vestas site in East Cowes continues but is due to end today (14th) after 11 days and nights up on the roof. Far from giving up though,

the protesters plan to head straight for the constituency office of Conservative MP Andrew Turner, whose nimbyism in opposing construction of a wind farm on the Isle of Wight contributed to the withdrawal of Vestas from British production.

Here on the mainland, things kicked off on Monday (10th) with a joint action by Climate Rush and The Yes Men, who welcomed home Peter ‘I’m a kindly pussycat’ Mandelson from his holiday in Corfu by chaining themselves to the gates of his Regent’s Park home. Following on from this, Wednesday (12th) saw a national day of solidarity with protests all over the country including Nottingham, Oxford, Cardiff, and Brighton.

With the campaign still growing nationwide, it’s not too late to get involved, see <http://savevestas.wordpress.com/> for details of what’s going on in your area.

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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CIGGY STUBBED OUT?

As the British festival scene continues to assess the ramifications of the Big Green Gathering being shut down by a police campaign (See SchNEWS 685), SchNEWS was contacted this week by people living at the Cigarrones travellers site in southern Spain, to tell us that this site is also being clamped down on by authorities and currently in a very precarious state.

The site, near Orgiva, Andalusia has been a popular park-up for (mostly) British travellers for 19 years, and alongside other nearby sites/camps like El Morion and Beneficio, has become a big part of the story of what happened to the British traveller/free festival scene after it was repeatedly attacked by the UK Govt - from the Battle Of The Beanfield in 1985 (See SchNEWS 678) through to the criminalisation of ravers and travellers by the Criminal Justice Act in 1994 (See SchNEWS 1-50).

This April, as Ciggy prepared to hold the 13th annual Dragon Festival on the site, the local authorities and local landowners conspired to make the site not viable for a festival or park-up by digging some 2,500 6ft x 6ft holes in the dry riverbed land, on the pretext of planting trees - many of which have since died in the parched land. The excavations have also damaged the roots and killed several large established trees. Untaxed and unroadworthy live-in vehicles on the land were towed off and scrapped by police.

The free Dragon festival did go ahead this year, although it was a tamer affair than usual as the sound system rigs were set up on another site. Afterwards, several people who owned

land used for the Dragon were fined 30,000 Euros for holding an unlicensed event. Apparently it's been other 'posh neighbour' Brits who own nearby land that have supported the clampdown, objecting to one of the most popular and anarchic free festivals in Europe, albeit with its reputation for being a noisy 24/7 'avin' it banging muntfest.

Cigarrones hasn't been a Temporary Autonomous Zone - it's been a permanent one, and quite blatantly so - but the authorities and police have been winding up the pressure in recent years on the large traveller and hippy contingent that the Orgiva area has become a centre for, and getting hotter on such things as unlicensed live-in vehicles and cannabis cultivation. During the summer months sites in the area often dwindle as people head north to avoid the baking heat, but it's now questionable whether Cigarrones will be a viable site for those returning in the autumn. Some parts of the site have been bought and people remain there, but the rest of the site which was squatted is now more like a bomb site than a travellers site.

If there is an agenda beyond simply clamping down on travellers, it could be that there's a sandstone quarry nearby, and the plan is to quarry the dry riverbed that the site sits on. Standing in the way are the parts of the site which are privately owned. It could be the end of an era at Cigarrones, but no doubt other sites will be expanded or new ones created, and hopefully the Dragon will reappear next year in another form.

* See www.partyvibe.com/conspiracy

GREEK TRAGEDY

After the tumultuous insurrectionary events in Athens last December (see SchNEWS 659), one arrested protester - Thodoros Iliopoulos - remains in jail, and is now a month into a hunger strike. He was one of many people rounded up and arrested more or less at random in retaliatory police sweep-up operations during the riots. All except Thodoros have since been bailed, and he remains inside on charges he insists are fictitious and politically motivated. On July 9th the court of appeals made explicit, in rejecting his application, that it did so on the grounds that Thodoros is an 'anarchist' and therefore a "danger for democracy".

Since then, Thodoros has been on hunger strike in protest. He has now not eaten in over a month and his health is extremely poor. Despite the recommendations of doctors, the prison management delayed permission to transport Thodoros to a hospital until day 34 and his life is now in danger, as his protest is continuing.

Six days of solid rioting - which kicked off after police shot dead a 15 year old punk - saw banks and government buildings burned to the ground, police stations besieged by thousands of angry demonstrators chucking molotovs, universities occupied and a general strike called. The Greek cops are notorious for their brutality and racism, and links to far right groups. Since the riots the state has regained control and things have since settled down into their previous repression groove. In July, 3000+ protesters in Omonoia Square, central Athens, clashed with heavily armoured riot police who deployed tear gas and stun grenades - and molotov-hurling nazis working within the police front line.

To read Thodoros impassioned protest statement and keep up with Greece 'after the riots', see www.occupiedlondon.org/blog

...and finally...

It's not all roses at present in wealthy expatriate capitalist playground Dubai, which, in recent years, has rapidly transformed itself into an international city-star by using legions of slave-like poorly paid immigrant workers to thrust ever bigger money-worshipping skyscrapers into the desert skyline, while luring in jet-set capitalists with 6 star luxury beach resorts to make it a hub of world trade and tax free haven.

Whilst most of this stinks, at least be comforted by the knowledge that it stinks for many of the rich inhabitants too. Literally. Because, in typical lawless capitalist style, they've cut costs and been dumping their waste in the sea. A lovely mixture of raw sewage and chemical waste has been washing up in the local surf, wrinkling more than few posh noses.

"It's a cesspool. Our tests show too many E.coli to count. It's like swimming in a toilet," said Keith 'it's all a bit' Mutch, poor manager of the Offshore Sailing Club, which has posted warnings and been forced to cancel regattas (aahh, shame!).

The stench, and health risks, have forced the closure of swathes of prestigious beach front as the stinking rich bicker with the authorities over who is to blame and how to sort it out. Meanwhile, due to the lack of rainfall and weak tides, it seems the elites will be swimming with turds at leisure as well as at work for some time to come.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS is in no way insinuating that all football fans are fodder for the far right. See <http://sloughtownsoapbox.blogspot.com>

BAD KOREA CHOICE

Earlier this month, a 77 day worker occupation of South Korean car manufacturer Ssangyong came to an ugly end when 100 commandos and 300 riot police stormed the factory, resulting in a pitched battle with the militant strikers. The aftermath has seen mass arrests and prosecutions of union members and workers.

The sit-in began in late May when the struggling Ssangyong, under bankruptcy protection, announced plans to make 2,646 workers redundant. While over 1,600 workers left the company voluntarily, over a thousand others opposed the move and around 800 of them occupied the factory's paint shop in protest.

Despite worker offers to reduce hours and participate in temporary layoffs, the stand-off remained until the August 5th when the state moved in. In the ensuing chaos, strikers attempted to hold the police at bay with fire bombs, hand made cannons, catapults and strategically lit fires, but were eventually overran by police lowered onto the roof in modified shipping containers and shimmying down ropes suspended from helicopters.

Some 64 people involved in the occupation have since been arrested including all of the core union leaders. A number also face investigation for acts of violence against police officers and the company's security personnel.

Prosecutors and police have even raised the spectre of reds under the bed during the investigation, claiming, "Outside forces with a strongly pro-communist character were involved in the strike" and that "ideological documents" were found suggesting that there were plans to "establish a military committee", charges that have yet to be substantiated in any way.

It is also noticeable that all the attention has been focused on the actions of the union while ignoring the illegal and violent acts perpetrated by the company and the police. There has been no mention of any police facing any charges for the indiscriminate assaults on fallen union members during the raid. Moreover, although company employees were booked without detention, none have been arrested for attacking members of civic groups with pieces of wood in front of the factory's main gate.

Police are also doing nothing about the fact that the company violated the Fire Services Act by cutting off electricity and water for fire hydrants, the Emergency Medical Service Act by preventing medical personnel from entering or exiting the occupied factory, and denying basic human rights by blocking individuals from bringing the workers water and food.

Civic groups and labour organizations have been unanimous in criticising the hard-line and anti-labour stance of the prosecutors and police and warn that more strikes could result from the witch-hunts.

DISARM DSEI 2009

Destroy the Banks! Destroy the Investors! Destroy the Arms Trade! DSEi - the world's largest arms fair - is back on at the ExCel Centre, Docklands, East London, September 8th-11th. Demo on 8th at a location in London - www.dsei.org
August 16th - DSEi Public Meeting - Stop the arms before they get to DSEi Arms Fair. Call for actions at local arms dealers/factories in fortnight running up to the DSEi Arms Fair at the ExCel Centre. 2pm, Calthorpe Arms, Grays Inn Rd, London, WC1X

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