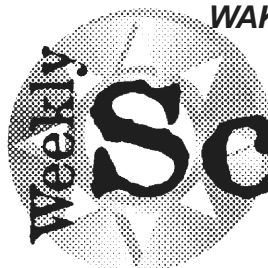


WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER BURNING ISSUE...



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THE BIG SMOKE

AS SchNEWS ASKS WHY IS LONDON BURNING?

Across the entire media spectrum the opinions are now flying thicker and faster than the half-bricks were just two nights ago. So here's SchNEWS' half-assed crack at explaining the recent turmoil on the streets of the U.K.

The recent riots are far too complex for a simple explanation (Maybe it's just something about Tory governments and Royal Weddings). The facts aren't all in yet by any means. The riots certainly weren't 'pure criminality' but neither were they anything like a politicised insurrection. Riots in different parts of the country and even different parts of the capital each had their own flavour. If they had one thing in common it was the fact that they didn't happen in the estates – the fight was taken to the High St. Hatred of the cops and the possibility of free stuff on a long summer's evening proved to be an intoxicating mixture. As an aside – both the footage and the roll-call of those in court right now show – this was a long way from race riot - black and white can unite – if only to loot Foot Locker.

It seems to us that everyone is asking the wrong question – why did *they* riot? When in fact the more obvious question would be – why did it take 'til now? A toxic combination of neo-liberalism and the gangsterism that goes with the criminalisation of drugs has created ghettos in the London and throughout the U.K. Everyone knows it – and the 'feral underclass' has become the acceptable focus of snobbery, hate and fear.

Through the boom-time, all political parties supported the same solution – a benefits system that would keep the poor out of good people's faces. Subsistence cash to stop them bothering the rest of the population as they grabbed their little piles of buy-to-let loot, their own little capitalist empires. Much was made of catering for 'stakeholders' in society, the

EDL OPPORTUNISM

Our it'll be all white on the night mates seem to forgotten to look up vigilantism on Wikipedia before they set off on their pub crawl in Enfield on Wednesday. By the way lads, the basic idea is to go where there is crime and then prevent it – not to go somewhere peaceful, start making monkey noises at the black folks and then throw bottles at the cops.

underlying assumption being that those who didn't hold a stake could safely be fenced in with ASBOs, CCTV, youth curfews, increased police powers and a prison building program. Nobody wanted to know what was going on inside these areas.

The middle class knew they were being screwed when they had to bail out the bankers but they also knew that any real justice might dismantle a lifetime's savings. En masse they voted Tory and made the decision to bonfire the benefits system in a massive transfer of wealth from the chavs to the chav-nots. This is what lies behind the right-wing's blanket refusal to even consider what might have caused the uprising – preferring to dismiss it as 'mindless' amid the predictable calls for water cannons and the immediate return of national service.

SHOE'S ON THE OTHER FOOT

Now they're reaping the whirlwind of structuring society entirely around people bought into a system where acquisition of material wealth was the only legitimate aspiration. Massive disparities in income and status developed and in a city like London the different social strata exist cheek-by-jowl. Ghettos are colonised by wealthy enclaves. A short wander around the streets of Stoke Newington or Hackney shows how the process of gentrification rubs the noses of the poor in a wealth and security they will never have. The current recession has made it clear to those not already safely a rung or two up the property ladder that they will never make it.

A blind eye has been turned to the corrosive affect of advertising on kids – the insidious viral marketing scams of the very brands whose stores we've seen go up in flames. A list of the targets of the London riots reads like a list of daytime TV adverts- Curry's, Matalan, JD Sports, Aldi, Footlocker and PC World. The initial spark for the riots was the killing of Mark Duggan. But once it was clear that the police were no longer in control of events youth squared the circle of being born in a consumer culture without any cash. They've been outside the mall with their noses pressed against the glass for a long time. Now the window's shattered and they've scarpereed with the lot.



Back to the spark that began it all - the death of Mark Duggan – shot by a police armed response unit in Tottenham on Thursday 4th August. This was initially reported in the mainstream media as an exchange of fire, in fact it was reported as a positive news story - with prominence given to the angle of a police officer being miraculously saved from a bullet that struck his radio. After four days of rioting the facts are slowly coming out. Duggan's gun (if he had one) was never fired. As with Tomlinson, as with De Menezes first the police kill and then they start to lie. Those lies were repeated as fact by a compliant mass media.

A demonstration of family and friends gathered outside Tottenham police station on Saturday (the family were not given access to Duggan's body until 36 hours after his death). The situation turned violent – footage has emerged of a group of toiled up cops beating a young girl on the ground. That's when it all kicked off and that night Tottenham went up in flames.

What's missing from the picture presented by most media analysts is what a bunch of c*nts the police actually are. As anarchist political activists we have a choice about our engagement with the police, we run up against them when we mobilise and so we get a tiny glimpse of what it's like to live in an area where everyone is treated as potential criminal. Check out the youtube video of Darcus Howe pointing out the humiliation of constant stop&search on young men, while virtually being shouted down by a BBC interviewer Fiona Armstrong who doesn't sound as if she's too well acquainted with the grim realities of inner city life <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mzDQCT0AJcw>

Then the rioting went viral – not just because of the intoxicating power of Twitter or Blackberry but because the conditions for it exist all over the country. Currently the Tory government is talking tough, with Boris Johnson talking of rioters as if they were foxes to be run to earth. Cameron promising new laws and threatening a New Moral Army, almost as if he hadn't been caught glad-handing people who hack into dead girls phone messages in the pursuit of profit. As they continue to push forward the austerity agenda SchNEWS asks - is this only the beginning?

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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CHARITIES SHOPPED

British charities have contributed over one million pounds to Israeli settlements in the last 5 years. Several British charities currently fund religious yeshivas, security and social facilities in West Bank settlements. All receive tax rebates and are eligible for gift aid, which is where the Inland Revenue adds 28% to a donation made, effectively funding settlements from British taxes.

Examples of settlements that benefit include Modiin Illit, built next to the Palestinian village Billin, which used donations to build a swimming pool; Bat Ayin, Shavai Shomron and Kiryat Arba, which received money to build libraries and play grounds, and Maale Levona which received funding for settlement security.

Christian Friends of Israeli Communities, which raised money for Maale Levona's walkie talkies and CCTV, describes these settlers as "scanning the roads and hilltops for suspicious movement, constantly on the alert for possible signs of peril."

East Jerusalem settlers such as Elad who have demolished Palestinian homes in Silwan to build the archeological site Ir David Park also have a charity arm registered with the UK charity commission. This is despite the British consulate in Jerusalem advising its staff not to visit the controversial park.

At least 5 British charities raise funds that benefit Israeli soldiers. Over £1,400,000 has been sent by UK charities in the last 5 years to pay for soldier's recreational and educational facilities and provide accommodation for lone soldiers on leave. One charity, the *UK Friends of the Association for the Well Being of Israel's Soldiers* last year raised £800,741 which went

to furnishing Israeli military bases, making them more comfortable for soldiers.

The *Jewish National Fund* also contributes to military activity. The JNF is currently on a fund raising drive to build roads for military use along Israel's borders, such as that with the Gaza Strip. They also solicit funds to build a recreational park in the Negev's Ramon Air force base for use by air force families.

Many Hesder yeshivas, based in both Israel and the West Bank, which combine religious education with compulsory service in the Israeli military have UK charity arms. One, Keshet Yehuda in the Israeli Occupied Syrian Golan Heights, a yeshiva famous for graduating soldiers who enter combat units, receives donations from the *Lewis Group Trust*. The *Lewis Group Trust* is owned by clothes retailer *River Island*.

Charities that fund Jewish people from around the world to emigrate to Israel also collect money in the UK. One such charity, *Nefesh B Nefesh* advertise sixteen settlements on its website describing them as attractive places for new immigrants to move to. *Nefesh B Nefesh* use charity money to pay for immigrants' flights and settling in costs and have recently registered in the UK.

The question is, should British charities that fund Israeli settlements receive tax rebates from the Inland Revenue, when the UK government recognise that settlements contravene International Law?

*For more on the Israeli boycott see <http://www.bigcampaign.org/ED-F Off>



UAE HAVING A LAUGH

Over 70 well known comedians and authors are to lead a campaign during the festival to free the five civil rights activists detained in the Middle East. Ahmed Mansoor (a blogger), Nasser bin Ghaith (a lecturer), Fahad Salim Dalk, Ahmed Abdul Khaleq and Hassan Ali al-Khamis (online activists) all face up to 5 years imprisonment for breaking the UAE's stringent code of conformity. The country's penal code basically prohibits slandering the President, or any of its supreme (you don't get a choice to vote for me) council, or defacing the flag or any national emblem.

Amnesty will ask audiences during the fringe to sign up to a global petition that is campaigning for the activists to be freed through texts messages or postcards. The organisation believes their case is particularly significant considering the fact they were imprisoned for actions before the Arab spring reached full flow. Their crime was supporting a petition challenging the ruling families in the UAE to stop making membership in the Emirate's federal council so restricted. Strictly speaking they had posted on online forums that have since then been closed down and replaced with travelling advice (no better way to take your minds off things than a little holiday, eh?).

Fringe old timer, Ed Byrne said, "People have a right of free speech and for the UAE five that right is being denied." Well that is the polite way of putting it.

...and finally...

Neo-nazi rock fans must have thought they'd taken one tab too many last week as their t-shirts offered them some friendly advice. Punters at "Rock for Germany" were given 250 free t-shirts with a skull and crossbones design and the words "Hardcore Rebels" written on the front. However when these "rebels" got home and washed them the logo disappeared to reveal the words "If your T-shirt can do it, you can do it too - we'll help you get away from rightwing extremism".

The stunt was organised by Exit (basically Germany's version of the UAF) who had sought to undermine the message of the festival organisers - the National Democratic Party (NDP). Unsurprisingly the NDP, Germany's biggest neo-Nazi party, failed to see the funny side.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers the kids are doing it for themselves. Honest.

UNLUCKY SEVEN

Last Friday (5th) marked the seventh anniversary of Babar Ahmad's arrest. Normally such anniversaries don't merit a mention, but in Babar's case he has spent the entire time in prison without trial.

First arrested in December 2003, by anti-terror police, Babar was subjected to a "serious, gratuitous and prolonged attack" (see SchNEWS 474). He was never charged however and eventually received compensation for the assault. Four members of the Territorial Support Group (TSG) were found not guilty of ABH in June 2011 - weirdly after the trial the jury apparently asked to shake the hands of the officers.

This was all fairly academic to Babar though as he had been rearrested in August 2004 and was facing extradition to the US under the controversial Extradition Act 2003. The Americans allege that he was involved with a pro-Taliban website, though under the act they do not have to provide any evidence to extradite him. Babar maintains his innocence and wants to be tried in the UK, however there is "insufficient evidence to charge Babar Ahmad with any criminal offence under UK law". As a result Babar has been stuck in HMP limbo for the past 7 years.

Babar's final appeal against extradition is currently with the European Court of Human Rights. The judgement is expected to be delivered in late 2011. In the meantime Babar's family have set-up an e-petition calling for him to be tried in this country - <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/885>

Classified of the Week

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Ex-display model, slight fire damage, quick sale preferred. Possibility of similar items in future.

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