

SELF DEFENCE

AS STUDENTS ARE DENIED LEGAL AID FOR IMPRISONABLE OFFENCES

Reckon students are all bone-idle skiving filth who haven't even got the wit to tie their shoelaces properly? Well then you'd be in disagreement with Judge Parsons (of Brighton magistrates). He's just refused legal aid to seven students up in front of his bench for 'aggravated trespass' (punishable by up to three months inside) on the grounds that "they are intelligent enough to represent themselves".

The seven are accused of D-locking and supergluing to EDO MBM's infamous factory of death in Brighton on the fifth anniversary of the Iraq War. Despite the fact that the student protesters are all in their first year and none are studying law, the judge is perhaps paying the defendants a compliment in considering them equal in legal know-how to a barrister (who study for around six years before they are considered ready to defend their clients). They are under stringent bail conditions to stay away from EDO MBMs factories.

Of course legal aid is gradually being whittled away for all of us (See SchNEWS 618). But the decision to cut off the supply this time is interesting in the light of how many cases against EDO protestors have ended in failure for the authorities (See SchNEWS 535). Campaign spokesman Andy Beckett told SchNEWS "By robbing these defendants of their rights to adequate legal representation, the authorities are launching an attack on our campaign as a whole. They've been forced to drop cases when it looked as if evidence of police collusion with the factory owners was about to emerge. But that evidence only emerged after careful examination by trained solicitors. The whole thing smacks of a desperate attempt to secure convictions against supporters of our successful campaign".

The National Union of Students is up in arms at this abuse of the student's status to trick them out of their right to legal representation. In the words of the USSU education

officer; "That students are being denied legal assistance simply because they are students is disgraceful. A fair and public trial is a human right. When students take on international arms dealers without legal representation it is laughable to claim that the proceedings could be fair or equal. At a time when civil liberties are under attack nationally, this court is specifically targeting students as an isolated and disempowered group."

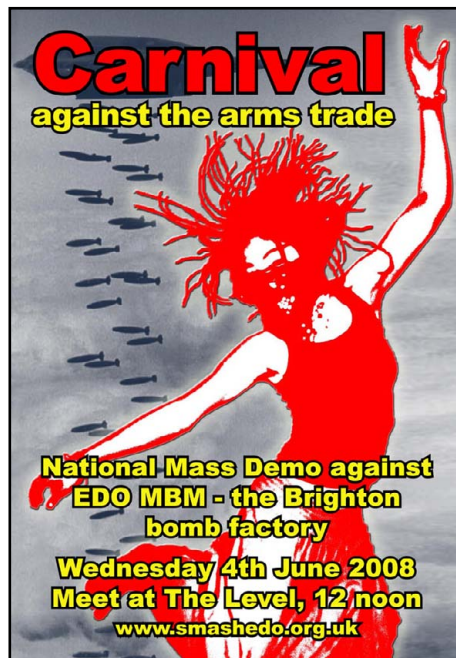
To support the defendants, fight for civil liberties and take action against the arms trade join Smash EDO at the Carnival Against The Arms Trade...

RUBBISH ARREST OF THE WEEK

For recycling

One Wrexham woman found herself on the wrong side of the law when she helped herself to four plastic garden chairs from a privatised council tip. The Waste Recycling Group - instead of lending her a hand for helping push towards their target of 65% of all rubbish being recycled - phoned the cops.

One house search later and the chairs have been returned to their rightful place: a landfill, and the would-be Womble is waiting to see if the CPS is going charge her under the Theft Act.



The Smash EDO campaign would like to invite you to join the Carnival Against the Arms Trade - a big, lively and interactive experience featuring live music, a critical mass bike ride (meeting 11.30am by Brighton train station), and other creative festivities of resistance. Bring your own whistles - instruments - banners - masks or anything else you can think of. The event will have a theme of red to symbolise the victims of the arms trade.

So far this year has been a hectic but successful one for the Smash EDO, especially with the campaign film 'On the Verge' touring the country, despite heavy police repression.

The Carnival will be a great opportunity to show EDO that the movement is bigger than ever and growing. If you want to promote it yourself in any way, flyers can be downloaded from the website below.

Meet June 4th, The Level, Brighton, 12 noon. See www.smashedo.org.uk/carnival.htm

SKELTON'S IN THE CLOSET

New information is slowly coming to light about Sussex Police's attempt to censor 'On the Verge' - the Smash EDO movie (see SchNEWS 625). Initially Chief Inspector Laurence Taylor put out a statement denying all police involvement. The very next day Sussex police P.R. dogsbodies issued a press release stating "Brighton and Hove Police were aware that 'On The Verge' was being shown at the Duke of York cinema. However, we do not become involved in, nor do we have knowledge of, the law relating to film certification. That is a matter for Brighton & Hove City Council. However, a junior officer, who is not based in the city, alerted the city council to the showing and they advised the cinema of its responsibilities."

More recently thanks to diligent inquiries by one SchNEWShound the name of the officer involved has come to light. The man responsible for contacting Brighton Council's environmental health officers was one Detective Constable Ian Skelton. Now

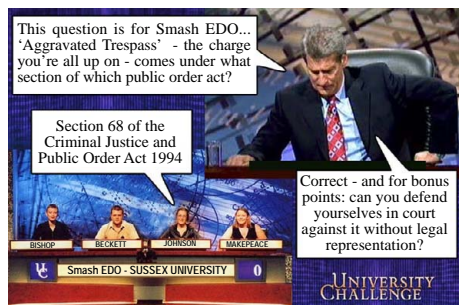
Ian isn't based in the city it's true but he's not exactly a maverick lawman patrolling a rural backwater either. In fact his base of operations is Sussex Police HQ in Lewes, all of seven miles up the road.

Following the Brighton hoo-ha, the film received police attention wherever it was shown around the country. Sussex Police then denied involvement in a campaign, telling *The Guardian* "To confirm, we haven't sent a circular to other police forces."

Sussex Police are being charmingly coy about exactly which department DC Skelton works for but his rank indicates that he's probably in a plain clothes outfit. SchNEWS wonders how SPECIAL a constable Ian really is, but don't want to BRANCH out into unwarranted speculation.

More news soon as the Freedom of Information wheels grind their slowest - we expect a full and accurate explanation sometime after the London Olympics.

* See also SchNEWS 630



HARLEM GLOBESQUATTERS

Residents of Dalston, London, being priced out of their houses as they watch the economic forces of gentrification fill their streets with overpriced coffee chains and other global franchises, are to be visited by some seasoned anti-gentrification activists from New York. Juan Haro, a speaker from Movement for Justice in El Barrio, will bring his experience of fighting the same forces in Harlem to help Dalston residents resist the landlords and multinationals who are destroying the fabric of their community.

Haro commented, "Here in El Barrio (East Harlem, New York City), landlords, multi-national corporations and local, state and federal politicians and institutions want to force upon us their culture of money, they want to displace poor families and rent their apartments to rich people, white people with money. They want to change the look of our neighbourhood, with the excuse of "developing the community."

* May 24th, at Passing Clouds, Richmond Rd, Dalston, The talk has been arranged by Hackney Solidarity Network, starts 7pm, followed by Latin bands and djs (talk - free, music - a fiver). hackneysolidarity@hotmail.co.uk

DUBYA OR QUILTS

Doing one last junket over to Europe before he goes off to Hangar 19 to get his brain de-programmed and re-booted by the aliens responsible for 9-11, George Bush (remember him?) is coming to London from June 9th-16th.

The last time he was here in November 2003 (See SchNEWS 431), he was met by protests up and down the country, including 300,000 in London - thought to be the biggest mid-week protest ever. Only last week John Bolton - former Bush apparatchik and warmonger - cancelled a visit to Bristol because of anti-war demonstrations.

* Watch out for updates about anti-Bush demonstrations in SchNEWS.

PARTY & PROTEST

MAY - 31st - Say NO to Heathrow's 3rd Runway - the Carnival March will walk around the airport perimeter to Sipson - the village which would be wiped out by a 3rd runway. Called by Campaign against Climate Change, HACAN, NOTRAG and others. Assemble Hatton Cross Underground Station (Picadilly Tube Line) 12 noon www.make-a-noise.org ** **JUNE - 1st-8th - Stop the Arms Trade Week** - there will be a week of events by CAAT around the country, concentrating on the Control BAE campaign, bringing the government to justice about the BAE-Saudi arms deal. www.caat.org.uk ** **7th - Manchester Anarchist Bookfair** - For all your anarchist requirements including books, pamphlets, t-shirts, paraphernalia, plus cafe and vegan food. Jabez Clegg, 2 Portsmouth Street, off Dover Street, off Oxford Road (opp Manchester University Student Union), M13 9GB. 11am-5pm, www.bookfair.org.uk ** **June 13th-16th - ARUK2008** - UK Animal Rights Gathering - talks, discussions and workshops on a wide range of issues and activities related to animal rights campaigning, as well as a chance to relax with like-minded people and socialise and network with other campaigners from all over the UK. at Friend Farmed Animal Sanctuary near Tonbridge, Kent, www.veggies.org.uk/event.php

For full listings updated weekly see www.schnews.org.uk/pap

SQUATS THE BIG DEAL

The International Days of Action for Squats and Autonomous Spaces, which took place on the 11-12th April, saw a flurry of squatting activity across the UK, with new spaces established and a range of events taking place (See SchNEWS 628). The Days of Action, which emerged from the international squatters meeting in Dijon last year, saw a variety of creative forms of resistance, ranging from a Reclaim the Streets in Wellington to a bicycle tour in Rotterdam and theatre performance in Athens (see <http://squat.net/en/news/april2008world060508.html> for the full round up).

Squatters and community direct action groups in Britain demonstrated the resurgence of a networked and politically active squatting movement, marked by the national squatters meeting that took place in Leeds in February. During the week end in April, eight cities across Britain saw city-centre buildings occupied - some just for the weekend, others are still going...

It will come as no surprise to regular SchNEWS readers that these spaces have received special attention from the authorities, as the boys in blue continue their quest to dispose of positive, non-corporate community jaunts. The former Wilco building in Cambridge, squatted to provide a cinema, caff, and activities space, was raided by armed police after a 'tip-off' from a neighbour on the pretext of looking for illegal drugs. After a thorough search, Cambridgeshire's finest uncovered a supermarket trolley, and the Mill Road social centre lives to fight another day. It will host a welcome meeting tonight (23rd) at 7pm.

TIED UP IN NOTTS

Two men arrested by Nottingham Police under the Terrorism Act have been released without charge - after 7 days. One was a student the other a member of staff at Nottingham University. Nottingham cops staged a major uniformed operation on campus during the arrests and subsequent house searches.

And what triggered the clampdown? - the discovery by a clerical worker of an edited Al-Qaeda training manual. One small thing - it had been downloaded from a U.S Government website. The student was in fact researching U.S foreign policy and his personal tutor stated that she was in possession of similar materials.

The Uni bent over backwards to assist the cops, saying the institution "has been co-operating fully from the outset throughout this inquiry. Here, at the institution, we fully accept that this sort of police operation is necessary and reasonable for the welfare of our communities." This fawning was repaid by one investigating officer who told academic staff "This would never have happened if the student had been white."

During questioning, the police regularly attempted to collate information about student activism and peaceful campaigning. They asked numerous questions about the student peace magazine 'Ceasefire', and other student activities. The overt police presence on campus, combined with increased and intimidating police presence at recent peaceful demonstrations, has created a climate of fear amongst some students. Many saw the operation as a message from the police that they are likely to arrest those who have been engaged in peaceful political activities. University authorities also spoke of stopping groups or individuals who "unsettle the harmony of the campus."

Meanwhile, in the capital, the space opened for the days of action has at last taken the revolutionary step of giving itself a name. The Bowl Court social centre in Shoreditch attracted mainstream media attention for their Squatters Estate Agency and, despite customary threats from the building's owners, intends to carry on its good work. Check <http://bowlcourt.co.nr> for the latest.

The last few weeks have also seen spaces fighting back against court orders, with the sacrosanct possession order being resisted in London and Brighton.

The WominSpace, off Mare Street in Hackney has, over the past three months, hosted welding, stencil-making and herbal skill-share workshops and held a regular café and meetings space. The first eviction attempt was thwarted with the help of the North East London Squatters Network, but on the 9th May their luck ran out and the space was evicted.

After successfully defying police and bailiffs last Monday (see SchNEWS 632), the 88 London Road social centre, a former Methodist church in Brighton, remains fighting and has been hosting a regular 'free kaff' on the street outside. Clearly peeved, Brighton's police have vented their frustration at anyone else unlucky enough to be squatting in the city, with three illegal police evictions carried out in the last ten days.

* If you fancy joining in on the community spirit, look for an empty building in a city near you! Check out www.squat.net and www.squatter.org. uk for inspiration, information and advice.

COALMOUTH ACTION

Activists fighting the building of new open cast coal mines in Britain are planning a mass trespass and picnic at a new site in Derbyshire which is about to be destroyed in the pursuit of the black stuff. With Earth campaigners urging world leaders to look to renewable, clean energy sources before we fuck the world up beyond repair, UK Coal carry on in their pursuit of money regardless and have plans to build seven open cast mines in the UK.

The new site is 122 hectares and will have one million tonnes of coal ripped out of it over the next five years. Supported by Earth First, the **Leave It In The Ground** campaign hope to kick-start their campaign against open cast mines with a fun day and trespass allowing people to see the pretty site before it's permanently destroyed when the diggers and drills roll up. Bring your picnic mats, sturdy footwear and vegan sausage rolls to the Visitors Centre in Shipley Country Park, Heanor at noon on the 26th May.

* Call 07852 460871, email derby@earthfirst.org.uk www.earthfirst.org.uk

...and finally...

A German mail company came unstuck when it 'inadvertently' issued stamps of Rudolf Hess, Hitler's one-time right hand man deputy. Fortunately stopping at a mere 20 stamps, the Nazi collectables were the result of a service that allowed clients to order custom made envelopes.

* Rudolf Hess was the Nazi top dog who flew to Britain to arrange a truce with the leading racist genocidal empire of the time... er us.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - if you're going to take the law into your own hands, don't try do-it-yourself when it comes to representing yourself in court. Honest!

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