

WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER PARK 'N' RIOT...

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Free/Donation

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WILD AT HEART

AS SMASH EDO ANNOUNCES THE LOCATION FOR MONDAY'S REMEMBER GAZA DEMO...

Our comrades at SMASH EDO have announced the location of their Remember Gaza demo.

It's going to be in Wild Park, just outside the city centre and very near to EDO/ITT factory itself.

Wild Park isn't difficult to find, just check out www.smashedo.org.uk for full directions.

The demo is occurring virtually on the anniversary of the Decommissioning (see SchNEWS 663) when six activists broke into the factory and wrought havoc with hammers to as one of them Elijah Smith put it "smash it up to the best of my ability so that it cannot actually work or produce munitions... which have been provided to the Israeli army so that they can kill children."

Once again the demo hasn't been negotiated with police (and anyone in any doubts as to why that is should check out our very own - On the Verge, which documents Sussex Police's efforts to shut down the campaign).

As Smash EDO put it themselves - "For

three weeks in January 2009, the bombs rained down on Gaza. At the end of Israel's brutal bombing campaign and ground offensive over 1400 Palestinians had been murdered, including 314 children.

Here in Brighton EDO MBM/ITT manufacture some of the weapons components that devastated so many lives. All over the world thousands of people watched appalled at the carnage on the streets of Gaza. Thousands marched and raged at the destruction of peoples' homes and lives. On January 18th 2010, the anniversary of the final day of Operation Cast Lead, we will come together to remember the people of Gaza.

We will not allow those who supported their pain and profited from their suffering to go unchallenged. We will not let this genocide be forgotten. On the first anniversary after their deaths, we will rise up. We will take to the streets. We will remember"

*** SMASH EDO REMEMBER GAZA
1.P.M WILD PARK, BRIGHTON**

For more see www.smashedo.org.uk

SHIPS IN THE FIGHT

Since Japanese whalers sliced Sea Shepherd vessel the *Ady Gil* in two last week, the marine conservationists have faced a propaganda onslaught accusing them of lying, polluting and preparing to attack the whalers with bows and arrows.

The *Ady Gil*, with the Bob Barker, had been chasing the Japanese fleet's mother ship, the *Nisshin Maru*, away from the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary in the Antarctic and had succeeded in bringing whaling operations to a standstill.

The confrontation began when activists hurled stink bombs of rancid butter onto the deck of the *Nisshin Maru*. The whalers responded by trying to force the *Ady Gil* away with high powered water canons. According to Captain Chuck Swift on the Bob Barker, harpoon ship the *Shonan Maru No. 2* then started up suddenly and rammed the stationary *Ady Gil*, shearing off a eight foot section of the hull.

The six crew members were rescued by the Bob Barker, but the boat could not be saved. Despite the crew of the Bob Barker's round the clock efforts it had taken on too much water and three days later had to be left to sink. Before abandoning, the crew boarded the boat and pumped out the fuel before it leaked into the sea.

Despite video footage clearly showing the whaling ship tear into the *Ady Gil*, the whalers promptly fired up the propaganda machine with a statement from their PR company claiming not only had Sea Shepherd lied about the *Ady Gil* sinking, but also that they were pol-

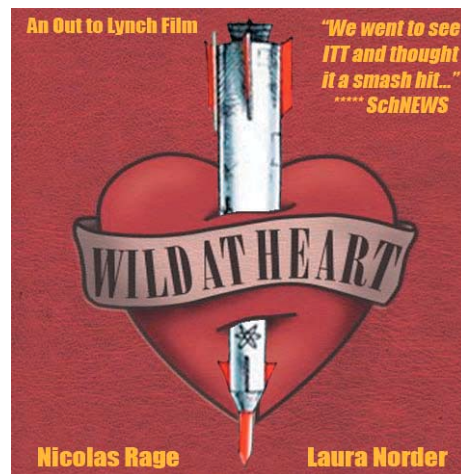
luting the environment with a fuel spill and, most bizarrely of all, that the crew had bows and arrows on board ready to launch a full on medieval assault on the whalers.

Sea Shepherd Captain Paul Watson dismissed the claims, made in a statement by Glen Inwood, as, "one of the most absurd media releases I have seen this clown issue in years." In response to photos of bows and arrows floating next to the stricken boat Captain Watson said, "I suppose the only reason for this is that guns don't float and he needed a 'smoking gun' but had to settle for a 'floating arrow'."

Unfortunately, the New Zealand government seems more than ready to believe that marine conservationists were preparing a pirate attack, Foreign Minister Murray McCully saying, "If they are going to go down there looking for trouble and determined to find it then there's nothing we can do to stop them, except urge them to improve their conduct."

Captain Watson responded to the comments saying, "Perhaps Murray McCully should review the video evidence before he fires off asinine statements half-cocked concerning issues he has not obviously been briefed on."

Despite the loss, Sea Shepherd operations are up and running with the Bob Barker joining the Steve Irwin in pursuit of the Whaling fleet. Captain Paul Watson said, "We now have a real whale war on our hands now and we have no intention of retreating."



PYRAMID SCHEMERS

The Viva Palestina convoy had planned to arrive in Gaza on the 28th of December for the first anniversary of Israel's deadly attacks. It was finally allowed in last Wednesday (the 6th). The convoy's passage had been blocked by the Egyptian state, who, acting on the orders of the US & Israel, have tightened the blockade even further. Stuck just outside Gaza in the port of Al Arish with 230 trucks and ambulances, the Viva Palestina crew decided to stay put until they were allowed access to Gaza.

Things turned nasty during a Palestinian demo at the Gaza-Egypt Rafah Crossing. Stones were thrown at Egyptian border police, who responded with shots. Palestinians returned fire, killing one Egyptian soldier. Dozens of Palestinians seriously injured. Meanwhile the convoy's sit-in protest at being refused entry was broken up by heavy handed Egyptian police, leaving 55 protesters injured, ten needing hospital treatment.

But the Viva Palestina Convoy wasn't the only game in town. The Gaza Freedom March, 1300 activists who also intended to enter Gaza on the 28th, was denied access leading to demonstrations in Cairo by internationals and Egyptians. Demonstrating under a dictatorship, with a brutal security apparatus is an incredibly courageous act, but protesters managed a series of rolling demos, candlelight vigils, and even a flash mob demo near the Israeli embassy. Under pressure, the Egyptian authorities eventually agreed to allow the Convoy through, where they spent 48 hours delivering aid to Gazan medical facilities.

Egypt is currently constructing an underground steel wall to block Gaza's one remaining reliable connection to the outside. Rafah's tunnel network provides food, fuel, livestock, building materials and, during last year's bombing, two German doctors to the Strip's besieged citizens. Using US technical assistance and US 'development' money, if this iron wall is completed Gaza's Palestinians will be made to pay for electing Hamas and reduced to surviving off the meagre supplies that Israel and Egypt allow through the crossing they control.

While Egypt is mostly following US-Israeli orders, the Egyptian state has its own axe to grind with Hamas. Within Egypt Mubarak and his secular pro-US party's biggest political rivals are the Muslim Brotherhood. Despite being officially banned the Islamists have a huge following throughout Egyptian society. Hamas began its life as the Gazan wing of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. A successful Islamist government on the other side of the Rafah crossing is a major headache for the Mubarak administration, and so with the US and Israel gunning for Hamas, its been all too easy for the Egyptian state to play ball.

* www.vivapalestina.org and www.freegaza.org

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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GAZA ARRESTS WITNESS CALL OUT

From 27th December 2008 to 18th January 2009 Israel launched a brutal assault on Gaza, murdering 1417 people. In London a huge outpouring of rage manifested itself with nightly demonstrations at the Israeli embassy.

On the tenth of January 100,000 people marched from Trafalgar Square to the Israeli embassy. These demos were characterised by a militancy not seen before in the UK's mainstream Palestine solidarity movement. They also saw a growing number of young Muslims taking to the streets side by side with anarcho black-blockers. The Forward Intelligence Team (FIT) were out in force, however, and many people didn't mask up.

The state were clearly concerned by the prospect of a new mobilisation of angry young muslims, especially if they were to build bridges with other dissenters. In April and May, the gutter press and the crimewatch website published pictures of participants in the demos who the police were after. In total 73 people were arrested, both at the demos and in raids. Although people had been arrested for a variety of different offences (eg criminal damage and assault) all the charges have now been bumped up to violent disorder.

The trial of the 73 Gaza defendants is one of the largest public order trials of recent years and is comparable in scale to the attempt to fit up hundreds of people after police attacked the 1990 poll tax demonstrations. The poll tax defendants were aided greatly by the Poll Tax Defendants Campaign who collected footage and witness statements.

Initial hearings in the Gaza cases have been held at West London Magistrates Court and the trials are set to be held in March at Isleworth Crown Court.

Several people have plead guilty and at least three have already been sentenced, to between 15 and 20 months in prison. More people are due to be sentenced on 12th and 19th February at Isleworth Crown Court. Judge Dennis, eager to bang as many people up as possible, has reserved the trials for himself.

The defendants need support. Please try and make it to some of the hearings. Both witnesses and film footage are needed to help their defence - both to actual arrests and the general attitude and actions of the police. Witnesses who were present for the following times and places are especially needed: 28th December, 29th December, 3rd January, 7th January, 8th January, 10th January, 17th January, 24th January; Kensington High St, outside the Israeli Embassy (majority of charges relate to this location esp. between 16.45 and 17.45 on 10th January); Starbucks, Shaftsbury Avenue (on the 10th and 24th of January), Notting Hill Gate (10th January - 15.45); Hyde Park Underpass (including just before and just after Underpass, on the 3rd January - 17.15-18.15 and outside the Israeli Embassy from 18.00).

Any footage showing any assault on protesters by the police at any stage during the demos is also vital.

Please contact ellie.schling@googlemail.com if you can help, think you were at one of the places above or have footage of the demonstrations.

FUNKY GIBBONS

Another Smash EDO activist finally won his legal battle with the authorities this week. Ceri Gibbons was acting as a legal observer at the Carnival Against the Arms Trade back in June 2008 (SchNEWS 634) Despite the fact that he was clearly wearing a hi-vis jacket labelled Legal Observer, he was arrested for a minor public order offence. It was only while he was in custody that the charge was changed to "conspiracy to commit criminal damage".

He was released 30 hours later, after his house was searched and with strict bail conditions to stop him protesting. Dithering plod eventually charged him with an entirely different offence in November 2009 - "failing to follow the route of a public procession" as well as resisting arrest.

'Resist arrest' went out the window when video footage clearly showed Ceri getting punched in the ribs by one cop who'd managed to lose his shoulder numbers. The other charge was thrown out this week as an "abuse of process". Mr Gibbons says he intends to participate fully in the next Smash EDO demonstration but "will be dressed in black and wearing a mask"

FRISKY BUSINESS

Of the 16,761 people stopped and searched under section 44 counter terrorism laws in 2002/03, 18 were arrested in connection with terrorism, while 359 were arrested for 'other reasons'. Of the remaining 16,384, two, journalist Pennie Quinton and activist Kevin Gillan, took their complaints against the police to the highest level..

Seven years later and the European Court of Human Rights has ruled that not only were the two unlawfully abused as they made their way to a demonstration at the Excel centre arms fair but also that section 44's random stop and search powers were too widely drawn and lacked adequate parliamentary and legal safeguards against abuse. In short, illegal.

The crucial fact about Section 44 is that allows the police to conduct stop and search without 'reasonable suspicion'. It has been used regularly against protesters. The whole of Greater London has been designated a Section 44 zone for years.

While Quinton and Gillan were awarded £30,400 each, Home Secretary Alan Johnson was left to bleat about how the powers were an "important tool" in fighting terrorism. Ever the sore loser, Johnson announced he would take the unusual step of appealing to the court's 'grand chamber' of 17 judges, which requires him to show 'exceptional circumstances'. Johnson said until the appeal is heard the police powers would remain in place.

Since the powers were introduced in 2000 their use has exploded, with 117,000 recorded searches in 2008. Anyone that has attended a demo, taken 'too many' photos, looked a bit shady or not white or just looked at a copper funny knows the police have used these powers arbitrarily and will continue to do so.

* For more info about your rights see www.freebeagles.org

PARTY & PROTEST

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

XMAS-SIVE ATTACK

For migrants in the squats and camps of Calais, the Christmas period has provided no let up from police harassment and brutality.

On Christmas Eve, showers set up for the migrants were set on fire by mystery arsonists - the day after they opened. On the 30th, police raided Ethiopia House, the African squat housing refugees from the destruction of Eritrean, Sudanese and Ethiopian squats and camps. They made 28 arrests.

As the freezing weather came in with the new year, the squat was raided again and police arrested around 50 of those who couldn't run away or hide. By the evening, all but four had been released.

Activists report that police continually harass the migrants of Ethiopia House, the Arab squat and the Hazara jungle, even resorting to nicking migrants that leave the shelters to urinate.

Following a busy Christmas, numbers are low in the No Borders camp. Activists are having difficulty effectively monitoring the police and urgently need more volunteers. Call 07534 008380, email calais.press@riseup.net or see www.calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com

BOUGH DOWN

A Worthing Council meeting to decide the fate of Titnore Woods (see SchNEWS 547) has been postponed until March.

The council had been planning to meet on 28th January to decide whether to grant permission to the West Durrington Consortium to develop the site. Activists now have another couple of months to resist the plans, for information on how to get involved see www.proteccourtwoodland.co.uk or just get yerself down to the protest camp.

* For more see our special SchNEWS feature for a history of the campaign and why you should care. Coming soon online...

CAT ON A SQUAT TIN ROOF

The Black Cat community centre in Bath is reopening at a new site after they finally lost their battle against eviction from their original home (see SchNEWS 704).

To celebrate, the new centre's doors will be thrown open for a party on Saturday (16th). Oldfield Park Methodist Church, 110 West Avenue.

...and finally...

You don't have to wait 'til Mayday to get into a beef with burger-barbarians McDonald's it seems. McRage has exploded across the globe. OK, well, there were two separate incidents in the US last week of police called to restrain angry people trashing branches of the ever popular cardiac inducing, rainforest trashing junk merchants.

But this time it wasn't black block hooligans pumped up on anti-corporate propaganda and deranged by the inadequacies of their vegan diets. Nope... it's was customers turn to have a pop.

In Toledo, Ohio, a woman punched her way through the drive-thru window because of a shortage of chicken nuggets. She got nicked but not so another customer who ran amok in a Kansas City branch, throwing a bucket of water over staff and smashing three cash registers. Apparently her burger was 'sub standard'. She is still at large (and quite possibly supersized).

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, you need to Shut ITT because it is rocket science. Honest.

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