



CRASH OF THE TITANS AS PROPOSED IMF SOLUTION SPARKS RESISTANCE...

Greece is further troubled as government officials get ready to announce IMF imposed wage cuts that will resonate across the country's entire public sector. Emergency demonstrations were held across the country (Thursday 29th April) in protest against the cuts by grass-roots trade unions, leftist and anarchist organisations.

Demonstrators took to the streets of Athens and Thessaloniki, banging drums and chanting slogans such as "no sacrifice for plutocracy", and "real jobs, higher pay". They were joined by uniformed police, coast guard and fire service officer (who were on strike). "The fight must be constant until the stability pact - these unpopular measures passed by the government - is overturned," said demonstrator Olga Raptou. An unofficial police estimate put the Athens crowd at about 20,000; organisers said the actual number was much higher. Petite scale riot occurred in Exarcheia, Athens' anarchist hub, between police and protesters where cops cleared the scene with tear gas. There were clashes across most of the capital's neighbourhoods as reported in Greek Indymedia.

There has been no end to incensed incidents since the general strikes began this year. Wednesday saw solidarity actions for Giannis Dimitrakis, an anarchist that was arrested and heavily wounded by police fire after a robbery at a branch of the National Bank more than 4 years ago. There was an 1000 strong demonstration in Athens with 100's of cops also in attendance. Many other cities also participated. Three radio stations were occupied by protesters on the day. In Buenos Aires, Argentina, a protest took place outside the Greek Embassy where 50 activists attacked the building with Molotovs. Five were arrested. On the 14th April, during the evening news, 70 anarchists occupied the TV station 'Creta TV' in Heraclion,

Crete; where they were left to broadcast unhindered. Six anarchists were arrested suspected of being members of Revolutionary Struggle, a terrorist group accused of a rocket strike against the U.S. Embassy and the shooting of a riot policeman on April 11th.

The IMF is set to pour further fuel on the fire by demanding that the government steps up the unpopular policies to rein in a public sector deficit of 13.6% and €300bn debt over the next three years. Greece's debt has come home to haunt the big powers within the EU. The crisis in Greece risks undermining the euro and spreading to the rest of Europe. This situation is posing a huge dilemma for the major financial institutions, in particular for the European Central Bank and all the major capitalist powers within the EU. If they allowed the "market to let rip" and let Greece default that would be the beginning of the end for the euro. The fact is that the Greek crisis is part of the overall global crisis and because of that should it go into a downward spin there could be no end in sight and this could spread to the rest of Europe and have a major impact on the world economy. Among the measures under consideration is an increase of VAT from 21% to 25%, a further 10% increase in levies on fuel, alcohol and cigarettes and a cut in bonuses. This is the toughest austerity programme the country has seen since the second world war - a mix of wage cuts and tax hikes - the income of the average Greek is down nearly 20%, with low- and middle-income earners especially hard-hit. The inequity of the measures has created a hostile climate as crime has also risen and the mood in city centres has become increasingly edgy. There is another 24hour general strike planned on May the 5th, *watch this space...*

MAYDAY! MAYDAY!

The four horsemen of the apocalypse are set to swoop on central London once again, this time for an Election Meltdown Mayday march. The horsemen will drag the carcasses of four party leaders to Parliament Square, where the effigies of Gordon Brown, David Cameron, Nick Clegg and Nick Griffin will be hung, drawn and quartered - or guillotined, according to the whims of the assembled baying mob. After the symbolic execution, a people's assembly will convene on the green to put the world to rights.

The Silver Horse represents money meltdown and is the parade for you if it's bankers, bailouts, cuts, and expenses that gets yer bile flowing. It will drag David Cameron from Conservative party HQ, SW1P 4DP, at 2pm.

The Red Horse represents war and is for those disgusted with the last nine years of Neo-Labour conflict. With Gordon Brown trailing behind, it will make it's way to Parliament from Labour Party HQ, 39 Victoria Street, SW1H 0HA at 2pm.

The Green Horse represents impending environmental disaster and will lead a column of eco-warriors. Departing Liberal Democrat HQ, 4 Cowley Street, SW1P 3NB at 2pm, it will also drag poor-man's Obama, Nick 'Break a' Clegg.

The Black Horse will ride under the banner of Anarchy and is for all you blac block-ers. Dragging the fetid Nick Griffin, the parade will form a contingent on the TUC march from Clerkenwell Green, EC1R 0DU, at 1pm. It will go to Trafalgar Square, then continue on to Parliament square, arriving for some gym-karma with the other horses at around 2.30pm.

After last year's appearance at the G20 protests was reined in by repressive policing, here's hoping this time these harbingers of doom are chomping at the bit and ready to gallop in order to stay out of the Met's kettles...

* See www.meltdown.uk.net/election/The_Plan_Mayday.html

MELTDOWN BRITAIN: DEBTS ALL FOLKS...

It's the elephant in the room as we lurch towards another election - IMF-style austerity cuts in the UK. In order to bail the banks out of their self-induced crisis, the UK government directly spent £50bn from tax revenue income in 2008, not to mention the hundreds of billions of pounds of support committed since to prop up the whole sorry system.

Not that any of these selfless acts of charity stopped bank bosses handing out giant bonuses to themselves last year of course - a whacking £6bn in total - with the wholly taxpayer-owned RBS handing out £1bn in 'reward' bonuses.

This huge increase in government spending has led to the ballooning of the national debt to £900 billion. The majority of the increase went to staving off financial Armageddon. This means that 10% of all taxation will go just to financing the national debt.

International credit agencies like Standard &

Poors are warning that the UK's triple-A credit rating is under review (i.e. the perceived likelihood of the UK being able to repay its debts). If they do downgrade the credit rating it's likely to trigger a capital flight from the UK the likes of which haven't been seen since '76 when Denis Healey called in the IMF.

After the election, whichever bunch of clowns in suits have been elected, we're gonna find out who really runs the country. As the Greeks, Spanish and Portuguese are finding out - the shadowy forces of international capitalism can impose ruthless solutions on economies - always with the result that public services are slashed and money is channelled upwards.

All three main parties are promising big restructuring after the election - meaning big cuts

in public services. The Institute for Fiscal Studies thinktank, whose widely accepted number-crunching usually forms the basis of government policy and opposition attack alike, this week said that all three of the main parties' manifestos had failed to account for any more than a tiny fraction of the actual level of cuts needed.

And of course those cuts aren't going to fall on the necks of those whose profiteering caused the crisis in the first place (or those still making a mint). Nope, it's front-line services and welfare that are gonna get the axe. Will this be the trigger to get the hitherto apathetic British public out onto the streets? ...here's hoping.

To paraphrase the ancient anarchist saying- "It doesn't matter who you vote for...a bunch of bankers are gonna get in."

OFF THE RAILS

Climate change campaigners shut down a train line shuttling coal between an open cast mine and a power station for eight hours on Monday (26th), by chaining themselves to the rails.

The Bristol and Bath Rising Tide activists locked on to the tracks with chains and padlocks at around midday, bringing trains travelling between Pfos y Fran Open Cast Coal mine and Aberthaw Power Station in South Wales grinding to a halt.

Police arrived shortly afterwards and, at around 4pm, began cutting through the padlocks and arresting those not locked on. When police succeeded in prising away the last activist at 5.15pm, a second group then locked on further down the line.

After a total of 18 arrests, the line reopened at 8.10pm. The 18 have been charged under the 1861 Malicious Damages, which ludicrously carries a maximum penalty of life. All 18 have been bailed to appear at Merthyr Tydfil Magistrates Court on 10th May at 10.00 am.

As well as targeting our disastrous reliance on fossil fuels, the action was also in solidarity with residents. Kim Green from Rising Tide said, "This action is also in support of the local people of Merthyr Tydfil whose campaign 'Residents Against Pfos y Fran' have been fighting the mine for over six years. The mine causes noise pollution for up to 16 hours a day, dust and dirt are carried into the town by the wind, and it turns the rain black."

She added that the failure of the Copenhagen climate talks and unwillingness of government to doing anything about it all just highlights the need for the people to take grass-roots direct action.

*See www.risingtide.or.uk

DEPORTATION UPDATE

Iranian activist Bita Ghaedi has received a new date for deportation after her removal scheduled for the 20th was cancelled due to the volcanic ash cloud.

Bita, a fervent campaigner against the regime in Iran, had her application for asylum rejected in April after the UK Border Agency placed her application on the fast track scheme – a process that sees over 90% of claims rejected (see SchNEWS 709). She was arrested in a dawn raid and taken to Yarl's Wood detention centre.

According to her partner, Mohsen, she is in a critical mental and physical condition. Because of Bitas's campaigning, she is seen as a 'Mohareb' – an enemy of God – by the Iranian regime. This is punishable by death.

Bita is due to be deported on flight BD931, leaving Heathrow at 19.00 on 5th of May. Campaigners have called for demonstration outside the Home Office in Marsham Street for this morning (30th) at 11am.

*The deportation of Sunny Idika, who was taken to Birmingham prison following last week's disturbance after the death of a Kenyan detainee at Oakington detention centre (see SchNEWS 719), was cancelled on Monday (26th).

Cambridge Migrant Solidarity and No Borders activists had gathered at the airport for a last ditch attempt to prevent the deportation, but shortly after arriving they found out that Sunny had been taken from the airport to Colnbrook. He remains at risk. There have been rumours that further deportations of detainees involved in the Oakington protests are imminent.

*See www.ncadc.org.uk

PARTY & PROTEST

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

OBTUSE ANGLES

March for England brought a variety of anti-social factions together in Brighton city centre last Sunday (25th). Over 100 officers from 3 counties including mounted police got called in to deal with the 150 nationalistic flag wavers and the 150 counter protesters that assembled.

March for England group had sent ripples across the internet as they announced plans for a get together on St. George's day to celebrate their national identity. The UAF (United Against Fascism) caught wind of this and screamed that people must "STOP THE RACIST EDL IN BRIGHTON". Controversy arose as to how factual this claim was, with some wondering whether the English Defence League, which have certain connections with MfE, would have shown face at all if the UAF hadn't announced their arrival in the first place. Hmm.

The cluster of flags and football shirts was encircled by the police to keep rivals apart as they marched through town from the station. Outside the King&Queen pub the UAF held a noisy counter-demo, contained by a crowd pen. The parade's finishing line was clearly separated for each to avoid clashes, as the two sides chanted, sang sweet melodies and yelled insults at each other. Local anarchists and anti fascists were also in attendance, keeping an eye on unfolding events and scouting the area after the crowds dispersed on the look out for the fascist element of the march. It seems the fanatical patriots for the most drank, grumbled amongst themselves and dispersed. Overall there was no blatant fascist presence achieved throughout the day.

Nine arrests were made in an attempt to uphold the law, one in a minority report style where a Brighton resident got carted off to the cells as he merely approached the starting point of the march.

Meanwhile the actual EDL are mobilising for a rally in Aylesbury this Saturday May 1st.

CHINESE BURN

On April 23rd (Friday) villagers in China set fire to a construction site in Emei Mountain in protest at the forced demolition of their homes to make way for a government-sponsored holiday resort complex, which will include such essentials as luxury hotels, activity centres, clubs and parks.

The flare-up occurred in Baoning Village of Emeishan City, located in the scenic zone of Southwest China's Sichuan Province, a popular tourist area. Of course, as ever, the lure of tourism profits is enough to just kick out any incumbent locals.

Around 10 villagers descended on the site, using gasoline to set alight materials within it, attacked government officials and police officers, resulting in seven people getting injured.

Over 1100 houses were deemed suitable for destruction in 5 towns across the area in accordance with a city plan back in 2001. This was temporarily put on hold following protests over the land lost by villagers but was resumed February this year. Such occurrences are quite common in China, as residents often take extreme measures to protect their homes, like throwing home made fire bombs at demolition squads.

A common strategy is holding their ground and threatening to commit suicide. There were at least 2 incidents in the past year where the residents actually killed themselves, burning themselves alive in front of the government demolition squad to protest the unfair compensation and land requisition, and to show their will to "live or die with their homes".

RADIOACTIVE WASTERS

A few weeks after a number of turnout 'leading' environmentalists came out gay pro-nuclear power, a timely reminder why flawed humans playing god with such elemental forces is such a bad idea (let alone the astronomical costs or the perils of creating waste so toxic if you look after it well it's still lethal hundreds or thousands of years later, and if you look after it badly, can kill or bring birth-defects and disease on a large scale for generations.)

Last week saw the 24th anniversary of the Chernobyl Disaster – the world's worst ever civil nuclear accident. (SchNEWS 71). Half a million people at least are thought to have been effected by the fall out with doctors as far away as the Ukraine and Belarus seeing "highly unusual" rates of cancers, mutations and blood diseases.

As part of an international weekend of action to mark the date, and highlight the craziness of government plans for ten new nuke generators, twenty plus activists from Stop Nuclear Power Network descended on Sizewell – one of the locations earmarked for further development – to hold a weekend protest camp.

Actions included a demonstration at the gates, a public meeting in nearby Leiston and info/campaigning workshops on the beach, and also took in a tour of the flood-prone lands where EDF plans to build the new Sizewell C.

Participants also led a silent procession to pile pebbles decorated with messages and symbols into a cairn in memory of the victims of Chernobyl and the nuclear industry. A banner was held that read "CHERNOBYL – 26 April 1986 – NEVER AGAIN"

*See www.stopnuclearpoweruk.net

SchNEWS IN BRIEF

RIP Stevie T. Known on the festival/free party scene for years for saving people's lives with tea (and SchNEWS crew from the early days). Stevie passed away naturally in Portugal last week, and his vehicle and trailer – with his ashes onboard – are being driven back to England next week. Watch out for a big free party in the Brighton area in his honour sometime soon.

Long-term sounds system crew Reknaw had their rig and vehicle torched and destroyed last weekend at a squat party. They are having a benefit gig on April 30th 7.30pm-2am at the Dirty South, 162 Lee High Rd, Lewisham, SE13 5PR, £5. www.reknaw.com

Birds, Booze & Bulldozers – the novel by ex-SchNEWS writer Pete Styles – a bare-all (barring too much really) romp through his times as an eco-protester in the 90s, is now available as a free pdf. This book does what it says on the tin so don't expect a po-faced, worthy discourse. <http://pstymail.wordpress.com>

...and finally...

Here's one way to beat those winter fuel bills and stick it to the privatised energy corporations. After being cut off for not paying his bills, one man in Saxony decided to cut out the middle man and get his energy straight from the source. Rather than just attaching a magnet to the meter, or jumping the leccy from next door like anyone else, he stuck a meat hook on the end of a cable and slung it over a nearby power line, drawing the power straight into his house.

It's not clear how long our hero had been getting away with it- or what state his household appliances are in. One employee of the local power company described the stunt as 'insanely dangerous'. Don't try this at home – no, really, don't.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, the end is nigher than it was the last time. Honest.

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