



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER JOB'S A GOOD'UN...

# SchNEWS

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## THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER ...IT IS NOW!!! AS THE EDO DECOMMISSIONERS WALK FREE AFTER TRIAL ACQUITTAL

**"It's a real victory for the anti-war movement, The jury were presented with the facts and they supported our motivations. If people in Britain knew the truth away from media manipulations they would all support our actions"** - **Ornella Sabeine, EDO Decommissioner.**

After a nail-biting twenty-four hiatus, the jury came to decision on the Decommissioners Case (see SchNEWS 721) - 100% Not Guilty! Six of the seven defendants Tom Woodhead, Bob Nicholls, Ornella Saibene, Harvey Tadman, Simon Levin and Chris Osmond came smiling out of Hove Trial Centre at the end of a gruelling three and half week trial. Elijah Smith was remanded in custody for another offence. Five were acquitted on Wednesday afternoon, the other two Chris and Elijah had to wait until this morning. They had waited eighteen months for this moment.

The jury decisions were all completely unanimous, an indication perhaps of the depth of feeling ignited by the evidence presented of war atrocities committed in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead.

It was on the night of the 16th January 2009 that six activists broke into EDO MBM's manufacturing facility on Home Farm Rd Brighton (see SchNEWS 663). For an hour they wreaked havoc with hammers. Filing cabinets and computers were hurled from top-floor window. Machinery was also sabotaged. One of the reasons that the six had so much time in the factory was ironically that Sussex police saw a bomb in the car-park and cordoned off the area for specialists to arrive. The 'bomb' was in fact a dummy, a prop for EDO to display at trade fairs, precision guided out of an upstairs window by the decommissioners.

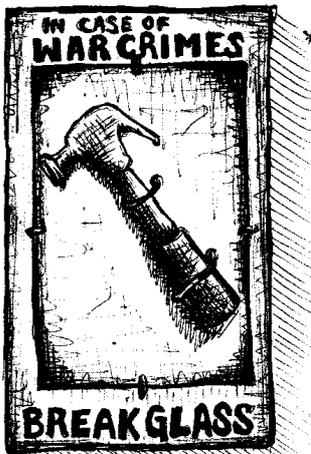
The six had pre-recorded videos to be posted on Indymedia after the action (see [www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfa8R2AxUFg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfa8R2AxUFg)). In his video Elijah Smith said "I don't feel I'm going to do anything illegal tonight, but I'm going to go into an arms factory and smash it up to the best of my ability so that it cannot actually produce munitions and these very dirty bombs that have been provided to the Israeli army so that they can kill children. The time for talking has gone too far. I'm not a writer, I'm just a person from the community and I'm deeply disgusted".

The jury requested to view those videos again

before they made their historic decision ...and they obviously liked what they saw.

In effect the trial was turned around: it was EDO MBM in the shape of managing director Paul Hills who found themselves in the dock. Laughably they had come to court intending to pass themselves off as a company primarily manufacturing in-flight entertainment equipment. He was presented with a dossier of evidence painstakingly built up over the years by campaigners, which pointed firmly at the company's complicity in war crimes.

Paul Hills was due to be giving evidence again on Thursday after accusing a campaigner of intimidating him as a witness at the regular weekly noise demo. Funnily enough Hills wasn't available at the time and the court heard that he was flying to the U.S. Perhaps we should spare a thought for Paul standing right now in front of ITT's board explaining how a bunch of goddam two-bit limey punks were able to smash his factory up with hammers and walk out of court smiling.



The answer is that Paul Hill's evidence was more full of holes than his factory's windows. Here's just a few edited highlights of five days of his cross-examination.

Hills revealed that the company have owned the rights to the main bomb rack used on Israeli F-16s - the VER-2 - since

1998. He admitted removing website evidence of his company's dealings with Israel as early as 2004, the date of the first protests. He admitted having interfered with the crime scene, retrieving debris and papers, before police photographers arrived. He claimed to have police permission but no police statement backed him up. There has been speculation that £189,000 is actually an underestimate of the damage caused and that more controversial evidence may have been spirited away. After being warned at one stage by the judge that he was at risk of perjuring himself if he contradicted evidence he'd produced in earlier court cases, crucially he ended by admitting that anyone looking at the evidence presented to him in court would form the reasonable belief that his company was involved in arms sales to Israel.

It was this that the defendants needed to convince the jury of - that there was an obvious link between this factory and the bombardment of Gaza.

A witness, Sharyn Lock, provided the back-



ground necessary for the jury to understand the full scope of the horror then unfolding in Gaza. Now a trainee midwife, in 2009 she was a human-rights volunteer in Al-Quds hospital, Gaza City. She was in the Gaza strip for the whole of Operation Cast Lead, and able to show footage of a missile strike on the hospital, just metres from the maternity ward. The jury also saw news reports of the white phosphorus attacks on the UNWRA compound, which incinerated much-needed food and medicine. Sharyn closed her evidence by saying she had no doubt that those who armed the Israeli Air Force 'had the blood of children on their hands'.

After hearing of the verdict she told SchNEWS "Brilliant news. I am so proud not only of the eight UK civilians who risked their liberty to protect fellow civilians whom they may never meet - but also of the jury who recognised that it is everyone's responsibility to uphold international law, even if that means decommissioning the weapons."

By the time this went to print the news of the verdict was spreading. Right-wing nutjob and Daily Mail journalist Melanie Phillips was first in with her considered opinion on 'the ignorance and bigotry of the judge'. The Israeli ambassador was crying foul saying that it was 'not a great era of the British system' (sic) - according to Israeli news source he was reportedly 'furious' at the judges 'blatant anti-semitic stand'. Even David Icke put it up on his website.

On the more positive side, the decommissioners were congratulated by Noam Chomsky, who said "I would like to express my respect and admiration for those who are undertaking non-violent resistance to oppose British participation in Israel's cruel crimes in Gaza".

So what next for Smash EDO? Unable to extract any usable quotes from the after-verdict party at the Community Garden, SchNEWS spoke to an increasingly bleary eyed Andrew Beckett, press spokesman for the campaign: "When we first started banging pots and pans outside the factory back in 2004, we never believed we'd get anywhere like this. EDO must be reeling, their dirty laundry is now flapping out there for the whole world to see. We're not to going to let up the pressure on this factory - watch this space".

\* See [www.smashedo.org.uk](http://www.smashedo.org.uk) \*

\* <http://decomissioners.wordpress.com> \*

\* View these SchMOVIES of the trial: The opening day of the trial - <http://schnews.clearerchannel.org/snippet-decoms-day-one.flv> \* The day of the first verdicts - <http://schnews.clearerchannel.org/special-report.flv>

### CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

**For riding a bike...**

Imagine cycling along happily during a Critical Mass bike ride, providing the tunes with a soundsystem on a trailer, only to be distracted by a wave of fluorescent yellow and stopped by the police - that is, made stationary, against your will - and then be charged with obstruction of a road and cycling without due care and attention. This happened to one unlucky cyclist in Edinburgh on the 25th. Warning to all cyclists: the hazard of police cars swinging into your oncoming path without warning or reason.

**INFORMATION FOR ACTION**

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## VILLAGE PEOPLE

The Democracy Village occupation in Parliament Square (see SchNEWS 728) had a High Court ruling against them on Tuesday (29th) to vacate by 4pm today (2nd). However, minutes before, solicitors for the village managed to lodge an appeal, giving a reprieve for a fortnight.

They're appealing on grounds that the ownership of the land is far from clear-cut - and the judge had bent the law to give Boris Johnson and the GLA the right to evict.

The camp are launching Operation Rolling Thunder, an ongoing programme of non-violent direct action. They want people to come and do their own actions, to help with the site, keep it tidy and maintain the gardens.

After the appeal was lodged, the village - surrounded by press - took the protest off the square later in the afternoon and moved towards parliament. Two managed to climb onto the lawns at the front of the Houses of Common, and managed to stay for 20 minutes before being nicked. Meanwhile a group of about 40 - and these numbers were more than doubled by participating tourists, as well as press, spilled out onto the road and blocked the road outside the Commons for up to an hour.

The protesters then left and moved up towards Downing St. Whitehall was blocked for 15 minutes leading to eleven arrests for obstruction.

Further civil disobedience is planned - and all are welcome to get involved. Those with experience in direct action are particularly welcome.

\* See [www.democracyvillage.blogspot.com](http://www.democracyvillage.blogspot.com) and [www.democracyvillage.org](http://www.democracyvillage.org) or see Facebook site. Site mobs 07981877462, 07722444146

## COMMUNITY GUARDING

### Lewes Road 1 Tesco 0

Lewes Road Community Gardeners have won the first spat in their bid to keep the Brighton thoroughfare greener and Tesco-free.

As contractors pulled up at 7.45am on Friday (2nd) to the garden entrance with a bulldozer, activists put themselves in harm's way to save Brighton's guerilla garden (set up on the site of a derelict Esso garage in May 2009 - see SchNEWS 727) from a supermarket and betting shop.

Two refused to give way as the 'dozer driver recklessly swung his metal bucket over the fence in an attempt to dislodge them from the entrance. One was hit on the head, although not seriously.

In the end as more community supporters and the local press/TV arrived the contractors from Gilbert-Ash and Terrins turned surprisingly more conciliatory and even asked for the metal buckets that they had left on the wrong side of the fence, back.

As the day progressed an appeal against the original possession order (June 21st) was rapidly put together by garden supporters and nearby residents and lodged at Brighton County Court putting the ki-bosh on further eviction attempts that day.

Which was kinda handy as the EDO Decommissioners trial verdict victory knees-up took place in blazing sunshine in the garden environs, much to the dismay of the local filth seen driving up and down Lewes Road, disgruntled, during the afternoon.

Gardeners and residents are now bracing themselves for further eviction attempts on Monday/Tuesday (July 5/6) should developers Alburn Minos Ltd and Tesco go for a High Court writ. The appeal against eviction should give 14 days grace but no-one's holding their breath.

In the meantime Garden reps are cranking up the pressure over the flawed public consultation process by Brighton Council and their hand-in-glove relationship with the developers.

Come and support the gardeners all next week as they enter a second week of battle-station occupation. Lewes Road Community Garden next to the Co-op.

\* See [www.lewesroadcommunitygarden.org](http://www.lewesroadcommunitygarden.org) [www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=100115925878](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=100115925878)

## CALAIS UPDATE

### SchNEWS travels to Calais in the wake of the eviction of Africa House...

Following the eviction of Africa House two weeks ago (see SchNEWS 727), the remaining Calais migrants are now camped out in hidden 'jungles' and small scale squats scattered around the city.

The surly CRS cruise the streets in riot vans and constantly raid the camps and squats, sending the migrants sprinting to hiding places in the bushes or the nooks and crannies of abandoned buildings. As one Sudanese man commented, "Here we live the life of rats". The success of the migrants in evading the CRS has led to an increase in arrests as they walk to the food distribution centre, something the CRS has agreed in writing not to do. No Borders activists are now trying to escort migrants on their way to eat.

The presence of No Borders activists is crucial in preventing police abuses. The establishment of a morning police watch with whistles and an air horn to warn migrants put a stop to the early morning raids that had plagued the new African squat. And although SchNEWS got called an "English dog" by a CRS officer with a ginger Poirrot-esque moustache, the police can do little except glare and take passport details.

SchNEWS spoke to migrants who had fled wars, dictators and extreme poverty, people who had left their families behind and risked everything, including their lives, to try for a better life. They were bewildered at how the fabled democracies of Europe could treat them with such inhuman brutality and racism and could have such disregard for their own laws. A Sudanese man told SchNEWS, "In Africa, they say if you have a problem, go to Europe. But we are here and life is very bad. We have no answers." But they spoke with respect for the No Borders activists and the work they carry out, a number proudly proclaiming "I am No Borders".

However, numbers are currently low and activists limited in what they can achieve. Those on the ground are urgently calling out for more people to take the short ferry hop over (free if you sweet talk you way into a car) and make a real difference to desperate people.

\* See [calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com](http://calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com)

## ATENCO PRISONERS FREE

Twelve Mexican political prisoners seized in the aftermath of the 2006 Atenco uprising (see SchNEWS 543) have been released following a sensational high court ruling. Judges ruled that not only was there no evidence to sustain the prosecution's case but also that the charges the twelve faced - organised kidnapping - didn't even exist in Mexican law.

The victory was celebrated by activists in Mexico and around the world who have relentlessly campaigned for justice over the last four years. Outside the courthouse, Trini del Valle, wife of one of the prisoners, Ignacio del Valle, told the gathered crowd from the Popular Front in Defence of the Land (FPDT) and the Justice and Peace Committee for Atenco, "I see tears of happiness in the eyes of my compañeros and I would like to say thank you to everyone, thank you to the Mexican people and international solidarity. The federal and state governments are not invincible!"

As the High Court judges assembled on Tuesday (29th), international campaigners staged solidarity demos in Spain, Germany, the US, New Zealand and Britain. *For the full article see [www.schnews.org.uk/archive/news729.php](http://www.schnews.org.uk/archive/news729.php)*

### SchNEWS ONLINE FEATURE

**HONDURAS:** On the first anniversary of the military coup in Honduras, we look at the popular movements which have arisen since...

\* See [www.schnews.org.uk/features](http://www.schnews.org.uk/features)

## FIN TUNED TACTICS

Bluefin tuna must be heartened to know that there are at least some out there willing to prevent their ending up on an expensive sushi platter in the short term, and extinction of their species in the long run.

800 endangered bluefin tuna were released from fishing nets by Sea Shepherd anti-poaching activists (SchNEWS 713) off the coast of Libya. The action was carried out as part of Operation Blue Rage, targeting the illegal overfishing of bluefish tuna. The fish are being pushed out of existence as a sushi delicacy popular in Japan.

The Sea Shepherd's vessel, the *Steve Irwin*, has been patrolling the Med during summer 2010 to monitor fishing of the species. The fishing of the bluefin tuna is supposedly monitored by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna, yet evidence suggests that their quota of 13,500 tons a year is exceeded to the tune of tens of thousands of tons and there is little enforcement.

Activists on the *Steve Irwin* approached the Italian trawler *Cesare Rustico* in the afternoon of June 17th, but when confronted, the crew insisted that the haul did not exceed any quotas, and that the nets contained fish caught by other vessels. These excuses evaporated when activists inspected the nets. A five person crew then took the risky decision to dive down to the cage and succeeded in releasing the lucky 700-800 fish.

Its not all plain sailing, however. Two days later, the *Steve Irwin* was attacked in Libyan waters while attempting to inspect the contents of the second of the *Cesare Rustico's* nets. The *Cesare Rustico* was supported by three other vessels, which fired a barrage of flares at the deck and wheelhouse of the *Steve Irwin*. The activists were forced to retreat to safety, yet, demonstrating true Sea Shepherd resilience, the mission now continues the search for bluefin poachers in the waters of Cyprus and Turkey.

\* See [www.seashepherd.org/news-and-media/news-100617-1.html](http://www.seashepherd.org/news-and-media/news-100617-1.html)

## ...and finally...

Now, the SchNEWS crew have become somewhat divided on the subject of voting. But one thing's for sure a few of us would have been tempted to put the big X next to the name of Jon Gnarr, now mayor of Reykjavik. Doyenne of the city's bohemian underground (his massage therapist wife is Bjork's best friend), he named his party - "the Best Party", handily putting it head and shoulders above the rest. "No one has to be afraid of the Best Party," he said, "because it is the best party. If it wasn't, it would be called the Worst Party or the Bad Party. We would never work with a party like that." His manifesto commitments included free towels at swimming pools, the re-introduction of the polar bear and the promise of "a drug-free parliament by 2020". They gained 34.7% of the popular vote.

Mr Gnarr is best known there for playing a television and film character named Georg Bjarnfredarson, a nasty, bald, middle-aged, Swedish-educated Marxist whose childhood was ruined by a militant feminist mother. In reality he's an anarchist whose political party is a who's who of the Icelandic punk scene.

With his party having won six of the City Council's fifteen seats, Mr. Gnarr needed a coalition partner, but ruled out any party whose members had not seen all five seasons of "The Wire". The Social Democrats duly brushed up on the antics of Stringer Bell et al and joined the Best Party in power. Shee-it!

### Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all arms manufacturers around the country that they may be next. Honest.

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