



STATE OF THE OCCUPATION

AS UK OCCUPY MOVEMENT STAYS PUT, AMERICA'S GOES ON THE MOVE...

The Occupy movements around the world are reaching crunch time this week after it kicks off in New York and London was served with an eviction notice from The City of London Corporation.

Last week (4th), representatives from the Occupy LSX camp met with their opposite numbers from The City of London Corporation, at the corporation's request (See SchNEWS 795). During this meeting it was proposed that as long as the camp was able to clear some space for Fire Brigade access they would be allowed to remain without legal persecution until after Christmas. The next day, as this proposal was going through consensus at the camp, the corporation added no less than 12 added extras, ranging from demanding that the camp recognised itself as unlawful, that it was trespassing and preventing freedom of movement for the public, and that the corporation had the right to sue for possession of the area – to name but a few. These extras were not announced to the press and kept as quiet as possible. Occupy LSX rejected the terms, and responded with a few demands of their own. Demands that any other Local Authority in the country would be legally obliged to fulfil, but which The City of London Corporation remain scarily exempt from. Simply, the camp asked that the corporation: 1) Publish full, year-by-year breakdowns of the City Cash account, future and historic; 2) Make the entirety of its activities subject to the Freedom of Information Act; and 3) Detail all advocacy undertaken on behalf of the banking and finance industries, since the 2008 financial crash. The Corporation doesn't have to do any of this because it is in fact a medieval hangover (officially entitled The Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of the City of London) which has gone unreformed for centuries – it's a local authority whose electorate is composed almost entirely of businesses - it is a powerful advocate for the financial capital.

DRAGONSLAYERS

The occupation's demands obviously caused some consternation amongst the lizard cabal, as dialogue was immediately halted, and the corporation issued eviction notices. Our feudal overlords sent their minions to the camp on Wednesday (16th) to post signs (and assault at least two tent dwellers, one of whom needed hospital treatment) demanding the removal of tents and structures from the area around St Pauls. Officials handed out notices embossed with the Corporation's coat of arms showing two rampant dragons embracing a George Cross. The eviction notice doesn't really have any force in law – it's a notice of intention from the Corporation, setting a deadline before further legal action, and demanding the removal of all tents and structures from the so-called Red Land (no doubt a favoured basking ground). The deadline was set for 6pm on Thursday (17th).

In the lead up to zero hour the cathedral bells rang out into the night and the camp assembled to hear speeches from John Cooper QC, the move-

ment's legal knowledge box, as well as occupiers and supporters. As the clock struck 6pm, the collective raised their hands in a 'silent scream', a minute-long synchronised hand waving that symbolised er... well, make your own mind up. A banner proclaiming 'You Can't Evict An Idea' was unfurled and the message is resolutely one of defiance against the eviction order. As SchNEWS goes to press the atmosphere at tent city is according to the official spokesman "just so beautiful, so emotional" with people relaxing and music playing. There was at time of going to press no sign of any action taken to enforce the eviction. And the next steps? As the spokesman put it, "Of course we're going to hold the space, why wouldn't we? We're reasonable people making reasonable requests. This legal action by The City of London is just a distraction tactic. We want to have an open and honest dialogue about the issues we've raised and they're refusing to do that. Until this dialogue happens, we will remain."

IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

Across the pond, things in New York have come to a violent head. In the early hours of Tuesday (15th) morning, 1,000 riot cops stormed into New York's tent city in Zuccotti Park, arresting hundreds of protesters, detaining journalists and levelling tents and structures. Elsewhere in the US police took pepper spray and batons to Occupy protests in Seattle, Dallas and Oakland, California. Apart from a hardcore few, displaced New York protesters sought refuge in churches and all-night restaurants, and at 5.30pm EST on Tuesday, people were allowed back into Zuccotti Park, on the condition that they didn't erect any tents. A co-ordinated mass action had been planned for Thursday (17th) before the eviction, and on the two month anniversary of the movement, ex-campers, students and unions made it their mission to shut down the Wall Street trading floor.

Early on in the day, thousands assembled and broke through the barricades around Zuccotti Park to take back their space. Bloody clashes with police ensued as protesters faced riot cops, resulting in arrests and beatings while the crowd blockaded the roads into New York Stock Exchange. Reports have also been coming out of police stripping clothes from arrestees as they were dragged out of the demo. A student march gathered in Union Square, around 2 miles from the violence on Wall Street, and various blocks of Occupy demonstrators started to march towards the students. The roving demonstration spread out through Manhattan with blocs breaking through police lines in some places, being kettled in others, taking over the subway, and general giving it the anarchic big one. The cops have been seriously heavy handed with eyewitness reports of hundreds of people with head wounds, cuts, bruises and batterings from cops. As SchNEWS goes to press the protest is still in full swing, with tens of thousands occupying Brooklyn Bridge.

CRAP CONVICTIONS OF THE WEEK

For sitting pretty in a shop...

On Thursday (19th) ten of the thirteen Fortnum & Mason defendants (see SchNEWS 777) were found guilty of aggravated trespass following their occupation against tax-avoidance of the store during the M26 anti-cuts protest.

The unlucky UK-Uncut activists had been whittled down from an initial 145 arrested, the vast majority of which had their charges dropped. The police had been quite explicit about the reasoning for choosing the ten: as always, regardless of your own personal actions, they're looking for 'organisers'. This blatant attempt to give politically active people the heebie-jeebies filtered its way up to Westminster magistrates court (read: no public jury) where the decisions were tenuous in the extreme.

Found guilty in part on the premise that the individuals intended to 'intimidate' staff, customers and police, the magistrates then admitted that the defendants themselves hadn't done anything intimidating... Instead, their crime was failing to scarper past the luxury jams - and the impenetrable cop kettle - back on to Oxford Street as soon as they suspected their comrades of disrespecting the holy temple of silver napkin rings and Easter eggs. They were also told they had encouraged the actions of others 'by their presence'. Well, as far as SchNEWS could see, there was no magic circle of Derren Brown-alike puppet-masters.

In the verdict, the magistrates mentioned the need to balance the right to peaceful protest against the right to 'legitimate business' and found in favour of the latter – using a conveniently loose definition of 'legitimate' and a conveniently hard-line, capitalist-favouring misinterpretation of 'peaceful'. Those convicted have been sentenced to a six-month conditional discharge and a £1000 fine in court costs. The £40 million worth of tax-dodging by Fortnum's owners Whittington Investments never came up.

In Paris, Les Indignés camp at La Défense has also been facing the rough treatment from authorities. Set up on 4th November to coincide with the G20 summit in Cannes, the camp had been slow to grow to the same numbers of protesters seen in London and New York. Cops moved in on Tuesday (16th), apparently just to tidy up a bit – stating they were there to clear cardboard boxes and furniture that had been collected as part of the settlement, and not to evict the people. About 100 police officers and gendarmes raided the camp, confiscating the protesters' tarpaulin, cardboard boxes and signs. Resolute demonstrators immediately set about rebuilding the camp and have pledged to stay.

The occupy movement isn't just in London, New York and Paris (dahling!). Go find the occupation on a high street near you. For a comprehensive list of UK sites, see the web version of this article and check www.occupywiki.org.uk

PLATO SMASHING

More anti-austerity protests swept Greece on Thursday (17th) during the largest ever annual commemorative demonstration for the 38th anniversary of the student uprising of 1973. Back then, student protests led to multiple fatalities at Athens Polytechnic, which in turn acted as a catalyst to the overthrowing of the 7-year-long military regime. Ever since, it has been traditional to watch the fires burn bright around Athens, in places such as Ex-archeia and Syntagma square. Since the events of 2008 (see SchNEWS 659) this day has gone from merely rebellious to properly revolutionary.

Protesters set out to march to the US embassy to mark the event. Some anarchist comrades decided to use the same slogan as was used by the armed resistance against the Nazi occupation, "When the people are confronted with the threat of tyranny, they either chose the chains or the guns".

"We are all anticipating violence", veteran leftist Dimitris Hadzisokratis told the mainstream media. On the day, police presence was 7,000 strong. Ordinary cops and riot police were kitted to the max with clubs, tear gas, pistols and shields. The whole city centre was shut down; banks were boarded up tight, shops rolled their shutters down and all iron doors were firmly shut in preparation for what turned out to be more than 50,000 disgruntled people out on the streets. Anarchist blocs en masse amounted to over 3,000. A banner drop simply stated "Don't need a military regime, Democracy is ruining everything on its own" and "Fight united for the revolution".

Two hours into it, 20 people had been detained. The Polytechnic building in Exarcheia was kettled by police blocking access to it. By 4pm, a stand off was in full swing by Syntagma square between protesters and police (who else?). As the clock approached 6, a police cubicle next to the EU building was aflame. Riot police slowly started to break up the demo. The official number for those detained is 78, with 11 arrests. This was the low-down at the time of print; events will surely continue to rattle the Greek capital as the night rolls on.

Many protesters have clocked on to the fact that the Eurozone is a detriment to Greece. They think it is time to leave the Eurozone, "because this way they are killing us". The European Commission force worked out this week that the economically defunct country is owed a hefty 60bn Euro from tax evaders, who stash their capital in off-shore accounts. This figure is equal to 25% of Greek gross domestic product; another bitter pill to swallow. The new Grecian government has got its work cut out. As the austerity rolls out, the economy is contracting – meaning that even with all the extra loans, the debt position is still getting worse.

* More info atsee: www.occupiedlondon.org/

SchNEWS PRESENTS
You haven't LIVED... until you've found something worth DYING for.
SEA SHEPHERD
PUNK BENEFIT GIG
FRIDAY 25 NOVEMBER
LEFT FOR DEAD
DJ PINK PANTHER + DJ JONNY BANG BANG
OPEN 8 TILL LATE
COWLEY CLUB, 12 LONDON ROAD, BRIGHTON

FACTORY FLOORED

A sad day for the Bristol squat scene as the long-running Factory social centre (see SchNEWS 791) finally bit the dust in the early hours of Wednesday morning. SchNEWS spoke to one of the squat's defenders. "I was in bed when there was a loud bang like a firework going off – they used a battering ram to get through the front doors and smashed the windows on all the floors to get in."

Bailiffs also gained access through the roof. The building was swiftly cleared. Although the bailiffs weren't wearing ID several privately admitted to being from a firm called Delta. Two arrests were made – both were swiftly released – one a case of mistaken identity.

The Factory was occupied from March 2010 and during that time it provided a dwelling place, a regular people's kitchen, a film screening venue and a meeting space. The evictors – the PG Group, a Catholic religious charity plan to turn the whole shebang into luxury flats, offices, a cafe, an art gallery and a small health centre.

* see <http://freefactory.wordpress.com/>

BNP: UNION JACK SHIT

Local anti-fascists were out and about around the South Coast this week as the BNP tried to rear their ugly mugs once again.

Over the last month, the BNP have been trying to establish a street presence down south. They've attempted with varying degrees of success to hold stalls in Worthing and Bognor, and made a morale-boosting effort to host Nick Griffin in Hastings. Throughout they have been opposed by a rag-tag but determined bag of anti-fascists.

Although the official nasty party have managed to hold street stalls under the radar, Griffinbore couldn't show his face in Hastings and a constant weekend vigil by anti-fascists has frustrated any further stalls. The most recent effort in Worthing on Remembrance Sunday was abandoned as quote "there are too many scruffy commies in town".

A further blow for our 'It'll be all white on the night' foes came when they advertised a meeting on their website happening in Bognor/Littlehampton on 15th November at 7.30pm - with the no doubt riveting main address to be given by one Jonathan Hall (Brighton BNP organiser) on the subject of public spending. Spice was added to this snoreathon by an attempt to keep the meeting place secret.

Unfortunately for the red white 'n blue brigade, they aren't running a very tight ship and the venue location was leaked - Aldwick Parish Hall. It turned out to have been booked by BNP Barnham Parish Councillor John Robinson. It wasn't even his own Parish Council Hall (where he had no support for hosting his party's meetings) but one further into the bowels of Bognor. On the night of the meeting anti-fascists attached banners saying "Racism in secret is still racism" to road signs and roundabouts along the route to the hall. In the face of such opposition, the meeting was called off and never took place.

According to Brighton anti-fascists "The BNP might want to claim that the meeting went ahead at another location but there is some very reliable information to the contrary. At the time that the November 15th meeting was supposed to take place, John Robinson and Jonathan Hall were sitting at home wondering what went wrong."

* <http://brightonantifascists.wordpress.com>

PARTY & PROTEST

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

COWA-BUNGA BUNGA

In the wake of Burlesquoni's departure, strikes and protest have spread across Italy, against the economic crisis faced by yet another eurozone country.

Mario Monti, Italy's new Premier, was 'selected' by the Senate to manage the country out of its economic crisis. For his cabinet, the former economist and European Union competition commissioner has hand-picked fellow bankers, professors and business elite, to form an unelected technocrat governing body for the 'democratic' nation.

Three years after the bankers wrecked the financial system, they've now been put in charge of Italy's political system. As the lamp-post swinging godfather of fascism himself put it, "Fascism should rightly be called Corporatism, as it is the merger of corporate and government power."

This worrying trend is spreading throughout the eurozone as countries with no hope of paying off their national debt are ruled by the very people who were at the epicentre of the banking crisis that caused their downfall. And it's not through the choice of the electorate.

Monti has yet to announce the details of his 'anti-crisis strategy', but Italians are already on the streets over the blatant hijacking of their government by the financial corporatocracy. In Milan, students clashed with riot cops as they marched to Bocconi University, the breeding ground for the country's future finance moguls. In Sicily, demonstrators threw eggs and smoke bombs at banks, and rocks at police, who hit back with pepper spray.

...and finally...

Third-Eyeless in Giza: If 9/11 was a significant date that spawned a thousand conspiracies, its got nothing, numerically speaking, on 11.11 on 11/11/11. Its only natural, given that such a perfect symmetrical, palindromic date anomaly won't occur until for another thousand years. Yes, OK, there has been one every year since 01.01 on 01/01/01 but this was, well, the Big One (one,one,one, one, one, one, etc.)

Naturally enough then, the attention was focused on, er, the Great Pyramid of Cheops, in Egypt, long held to be the centre of immensely significant psycho-geographical alignments. Never mind that it was built in a time before the Gregorian calendar was even a glint in the eye of the Catholic church. That wasn't going to deter the clinically spiritual from wanting to take advantage of any mysterious powers that might radiate from the hallowed site on the day.

A Polish New Age crew announced they planned a simple meditation ceremony, one that would help save the World from cosmic disaster. An Egyptian company applied to hold a "hug the pyramid," moment when 120 people would join hands around the ancient Toblerone-shaped tomb. Other groups quickly muscled in, including the 'Universal Kabbalah Network' and the '11.11.11 Gathering of Souls', also saying they'd be converging. (Handily they've all got facebook and twitter accounts.)

Local newspapers were soon swirling with threats of Jewish and Masonic rituals taking place and the authorities got spooked. Without warning the Great Pyramid was suddenly closed to the public for 'necessary maintenance' until the 12th. (no doubt for the real Knight Templar ceremony to take place) Hopefully the New Agers will survive another millennium and come back for another go.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, don't be a pyramid scheme, keep yer eyes on the real conspiracy. Honest.

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