



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER POST-PARTY...

SchNEWS

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Endless Shit Flinging

Thousands of people from more than 70 countries came to a very wet London last weekend to take part in the European Social Forum (ESF) and the various autonomous events across the capital. They came to see if 'another world is possible', yet as expected, last weekend was hijacked by people whose vision seems seriously at odds with many people involved in grassroots politics.

An article about the way the Socialist Workers Party operates is hardly news. With its paid officials, the biggest leftist grouping in the UK often try to take control of new movements to feed their recruitment drives, continually wearing different hats and setting up front groups to try and catch the protest mood of the moment. Obsessed with the tradition of marching from A to B ending with us all having to listen to boring speeches from MPs, they are antipathy of the direct action anti-capitalist movement.

With the rise of this movement they invented Globalise Resistance, and quickly dominated the Stop the War Coalition which was big on marches but crap on civil disobedience. One of their leaders Lindsay German has actually described direct action as 'elitist.'

So, it's no surprise that they quickly took control of the organizing of the ESF, presenting people with a stark choice - either go along with what 'the unions' want, or they withdraw their funding and the ESF will not happen. A coalition of the major UK trade justice and environmental NGOs complained in a letter that they had been keen to get involved in the organising of the ESF "but have found it difficult to do so because of the lack of transparency and openness." Autonomous, non-hierarchical, groups were also amongst those excluded. This hijacking also meant that the goodwill that these events need to thrive began to evaporate.

GLArse

This disenchantment with the way the ESF had been hijacked, eventually boiled over with the storming of the podium on Saturday evening which prevented the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone from speaking. Livingstone is a prominent member of the Labour Party - the party that took us to war against Iraq and who recently announced that people should cross a tube workers' picket line. But his Greater London Authority sponsored the event so of course he got to speak. A leading SWP hack Alex Callinicos complained about the "thuggish behaviour" of the "black bloc" and "small and unrepresentative groups that had been consistently hostile both to the ESF itself and to the coalition that brought it to Lon-

don." Meanwhile Lee Jasper from the National Assembly Against Racism and a Livingstone side kick, tried to play the race card against those who stormed the stage. The reality was that the action seemed to have the support of the majority of the 1,000-strong audience after the occupiers explained why they were doing it.

Wombling Free?

Outside of the ESF, those involved in the autonomous zones were facing constant police harassment. Squatters complained that the ESF had increased police pressure and surveillance on them. One SchNEWS bod who joined a demo said "Around 30 cyclists and 50 samba drummers visited climate change criminals on Friday as part of a Rising Tide organized demo. Accompanied by around 150 police, 6 vans and the usual photographers. Nice to know we present such a threat to civilization. If there is ever a terrorist plot in the UK we'll be OK as long as they parade through London dressed in pink!"

Then of course there's the Met Police's unhealthy obsession with the Wombles who eventually decided to hire a venue after the cops promised to evict any squatted social space they tried to take. This harassment led to some arrests on their way to the anti war demo at Trafalgar Square. Worse was to come for Javier Ruiz from the London Indymedia collective, who spoke at both autonomous and official ESF events. Javier went to the stage at the end of the anti war march to try and announce that there would be a demo in support of those nicked. The stewards refused, a scuffle broke out, and the police were eventually called for by the stewards and he was beaten and nicked.

Does any of this matter? Or does this have all the Monty Pythonesque hallmarks of the 'Judeans People's Front', something SchNEWS has been trying to avoid for the past ten years. Well, the autonomous spaces newspaper reckons it matters "Many people believe that the process of organising the ESF

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For trying to report crap arrests...

At the end of the ESF demo on Sunday in Trafalgar Square an Indymedia activist wanted to make an announcement on the stage about a demo in solidarity with the four people who were arrested and beaten up at Kings Cross earlier in the day to the assembled 70,000 activists. The SWP stewards prevented him from doing so and called the cops who promptly arrested and beat two more people as well.

is just as important as the event itself... the social forum passes by in a whirlwind of packed schedules crammed into just a few days, yet the organising process takes almost a full year. It's in this process that the real opportunity to build networks and solidarity lies. And yet it is this process which has been so flawed, and which has contributed directly to the creation of the Autonomous Spaces."

Another unhappy lot were Babels, the international volunteer translators. "Many opportunities of experimentation and innovation have been missed out on during the organization of this forum resulting in the exclusion of many. This is in total contradiction to the Porto Alegre* charter. Instead, the London ESF has employed classical neoliberal organization, management & service delivery, with the result that the form has been totally dependent on the state. This has had disastrous consequence for the development of our movement."

SchNEWS isn't in the business of squabbling, and our strapline has always been don't listen to us, but go out there and see things for yourself. We've been trying to build bridges, not by imposing what we think is right but by offering skills and solidarity to anyone who's fighting for a better world. But the actions of the SWP ruling elite push this tolerance to a limit.

Of course not everything is black and white. Anarchists can forget about the real world and become obsessed with lifestyle politics and hairstyles. Not everyone in the SWP is bad, just like many people in trade unions aren't bad. On the Friday we had a SchNEWS stall at the official ESF Alexandra Palace and chatted to some brilliant people and there were some amazing speakers and discussions. But as so often, the very people that help build new movements of struggle, are bypassed, vilified and their ideas corrupted and turned into ineffective protest in order to build yet another dead-end party (Let's call this new one Respect) If Another World is Possible, SchNEWS hopes we aren't just gonna replace it with one bunch of political cronies for another.

* Porto Alegre is where the first World Social Forum took place

* For more on how the ESF was hijacked www.enrager.net/features/esf/

SchNEWS has a new book

Finally after a year in production, and a decade to make, the SchNEWS at 10 book is here. Covering the last ten years of direct action from the M11 link road protests to the war in Iraq. And seeing as it's coming up to that festival of consumerism that is Christmas, why don't you buy the SchNEWS at 10 book for your inner anarchist, and be guilt free in your spending.

To order a copy send a cheque payable to Justice for £9 (£7 + £2 P&P), or order the book in your local bookshop ISBN-09529748 8 6

DOUBLE UZBEKISTANDARDS

The UK Government can't keep saying they are against torture when they are making use of the torturers' work elsewhere." - Steve Crawshaw, the UK head of Human Rights Watch.

Hot news from the War on Terror! You can sleep safer in yer beds now the UK government has stepped in to rid Uzbekistan of its deviant president, Islam Karimov... Oh, wait a minute. No, it seems we're wrong. The US & UK funded White House guest Karimov - notorious for, amongst many things, boiling dissenters alive- is *not* in any danger. The UK government has actually stepped in to rid Uzbekistan of its deviant *British Ambassador*, Craig Murray, whose heinous crime has been to criticise the Uzbek regime, a prominent ally of America in the 'War on Terror'.

Soon after arriving in Tashkent in 2002, Murray gave a speech to a human rights group attacking abuses in the country. He then contacted foreign secretary Jack Straw to question the morality and reliability of using information from detained militants under torture, which would be handed to the Americans. He felt the Uzbek government was torturing people into 'confessing' to convince the West of its vital role. Murray eventually wound up labelled 'unpatriotic' by the Foreign Office, who said intelligence gathered through torture (though never directly by the Brits, naturally!) was 'worth the risk' to protect British nationals. But Murray kept on, and became the victim of a Foreign Office smear campaign accusing him of heavy drinking, driving the embassy Land Rover down stairs and issuing visas in exchange for sex. The harassment led to a nervous breakdown, and then Murray committed the worst crime of all: he went public about it. So he was stripped of his security clearance - he now wouldn't be able to see the stuff he was angry about - and finally, last week, they sacked him.

So what exactly was he making a fuss about? Well, Uzbekistan currently has 6,000 political & religious prisoners, who's torture and murder are routine. As well as the boiling to death of at least two detainees, others have had ribs and skulls smashed with hammers and flesh ripped off with pliers. Some have been forced to stand for two weeks up to their knees in freezing water. And what action has been taken by the Anti-Terror Alliance, so keen to topple 'evil' rights-abuser Saddam Hussein? You guessed it. Bugger all. In fact, in 2002-3, the US and UK gave \$500m in aid to Uzbekistan, \$79m of which went to the cops and intelligence services responsible for the torture. And in early 2003, Tony Blair gave the green light to all UK weapons exports to the regime. So much for an 'ethical foreign policy'... None of which, of course, has anything to do with Uzbekistan being a 'key western asset' at the centre of Central Asia's massive oil and gas fields, or with it being the site of a major 'War On Terror' strategic US airbase, for the use of which the US slips the regime another \$75m. And remember, the Foreign Office issued a new 'mission statement' earlier this year. Combating 'global terrorism' and those shadowy 'weapons of mass destruction' occupied the top two priorities. Then came combating 'illegal immigration'. Human Rights came a poor 6th, out of 8...

* The Foreign Office culture of 'turning a blind eye' to unpleasant, but useful, regimes is of course not restricted to Uzbekistan. The annual Foreign Office report on human rights was widely expected to reflect the frustration in Europe with Russia's unwillingness to curb gross abuses by its military as the war in Chechnya enters its 5th year. Last year's report had already warned that these abuses could bolster support for 'extremists'. However, in the wake of the Beslan school massacre, Jack Straw has suddenly delayed publication, apparently to allow Russia to focus on its 'grief and sense of loss' and to 'condemn totally the terrorists responsible'. Internal leaks, however, indicate he felt the report was 'too critical' of trigger-happy president Vladimir Putin.

More Flinging!!

The SWP are obsessed with the unions, waiting for their big battalions to stir into action. But at SchNEWS' own conference, speaker after speaker pointed out that if we are to win the fight against capitalism, then we won't get anywhere by asking nicely. This really isn't rocket science yet as Anne Jones talked movingly of the death of her son, she said it was his friends, not the unions who had taken direct action to try and get justice for her son and better working conditions for others. One person asked "What's the point of fighting organisations that can't fight?" Take the Transport and General Workers Union who cancelled last Friday's demo in support of cleaners after Canary Wharf Group took legal action to stop the demonstration. The cleaners - mainly women of African and South American origin - clean the desks and empty the bins of some of the richest bankers in the world for little more than £5 an hour, minimum holidays and zero pensions. One key demand from the unions is that employers greet the cleaners with a "hello" and a smile in the early morning. Now that's real fighting talk!

Positive SchNEWS

Mega rich football stars don't often appear on the pages of SchNEWS, but Inter Milan's Argentinean Captain Javier Zanetti talked his club into donating player fines for late arrival to help villagers in a Zapatista stronghold in Chiapas rebuild after they were attacked by the Mexican Army in April.

The donations included £3,475, an ambulance and the captain's shirt. Zanetti wrote a note to the villagers saying: "We believe in a better world, in an unglobalised world, enriched by the cultural differences and customs of all the people. This is why we want to support you in this struggle to maintain your roots and fight for your ideals."

The team manager visited the village in June, bringing the donations and the blessings of the team and its oil baron owner. The donations helped the villagers to rebuild houses and water pipelines, and the club has offered to supply football gear and balls for budding Zapatista footballers.

The Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos expressed his thanks in an e-mail accompanied with a photo of him wearing the Inter captain's shirt. "Brothers and sisters of the Italian team, I wish you the greatest success in your sporting campaign," said the e-mail. SchNEWS waits to see if Manchester United will follow.

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Where there's a Wilton there's a way

Anti-Capitalist Action! 5th-6th November 2004: Business leaders, politicians and academics are planning on meeting at Wilton Park Conference Centre near Brighton and Worthing in East Sussex for a two day Conference called "International Rule Making for Global Capital Markets". The Conference is to be attended by leading European Business leaders and is supposed to be informal and "off the record". An opportunity for the elite to meet, discuss and strategise.

The Dissent! Network, coordinating resistance to the 2005 G8 Summit to be held in Gleneagles www.dissent.org.uk, are planning on organising resistance! Keep an eye on Indymedia and www.freewebs.com/shuttheg8 for more information.

Information about the Conference can also be found at the Wilton Park website www.wiltonpark.org.uk. Wilton Park is near the junction of the A283 and A24, 10 miles north-west of Brighton.

* 'Reflections on Summit Mobilisations' is an excellent new booklet from the Dissent! Network. For copies send £2 to Box 8, 245 Gladstone St., Nottingham, NG7 6HX www.dissent.org.uk

SchNEWS in brief

"What is **Nanotechnology** and should we be worried about it?", talk next Thursday (28) 6 pm. Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton 01273 696104 www.cowleyclub.org.uk ** Demo at the **US Embassy** to encourage the new US president to take action on **climate change**, Thursday, November 4th, 6pm Lincoln's Inn Fields (Holborn tube) for march to US embassy, 020 8855 3327 www.campaigncc.org ** **Make Your Own Bio-Diesel** Course at Centre for Alternative Technology 19-21 Nov, 01654 705981 www.cat.org.uk ** Tues Nov 2 '**I'm So Bored With the USA!**' US election night discussion on American imperialism and international anti-capitalism. Upstairs at Downview pub, opposite West Worthing station, 7.45pm. ** There's a picket of **Marks and Spencer's** in Support of the **Boycott Israeli Goods** Campaign next Sat (23) from 12pm, Opposite Churchill Square, Western Road, Brighton. 07900698550 ** Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, People & Planet, Transport 2000 and Rising Tide are organizing a 'pledge' to oppose and actively **resist the major expansion of airports** in Britain, planned to double air traffic in the next 20 years. The idea is to show the government the threat it faces from the large number of people who oppose this policy. The risk of large scale opposition will force the government to reconsider its plans. www.airportpledge.org.uk ** Shout for anyone in the Brighton area who can help out editing the **new SchNEWS at 10 film**. Premier 6.0 skills preferable.

...and finally...

"We would be ridiculed [if the remarks were published] in parliament and the media." - Simon Hart, Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance. Oooh good - another chance to put the boot into the foxhunters! The foxhunting brigade has long told us the lie that they only go fox-hunting to control the numbers of foxes, which they claim are a pest. But, a letter from Lord Daresbury the Master of Foxhounds has complained about a "shortage of foxes"! Yes apparently there aren't enough foxes and land-owners should do more to solve the "problem" through the artificial enhancement of fox numbers. A bit like Rentokill saying we should encourage more rats in our cities so they can kill more! The encouragement of foxes in hunting areas has long been known by anti-bloodsports campaigners - many hunts use artificial earths - man-made fox holes - to encourage more foxes to breed and supply food to foxes.

The letter came to light when an email from Simon Hart, the Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance was leaked to the media. In it he says, "the Alliance is here to play its part in securing hunting's future but we cannot do this if the core arguments are undermined. I am one of those who has never been happy about our reliance on the 'pest control' case." Er, that's cos they haven't got a case! Why don't foxhunters just admit that they go foxhunting for fun - at least they would be honest blood-thirsty toffs and bumpkins, instead of lying bloodthirsty toffs and bumpkins.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers you'd better tow the party line and not to disrupt any legal activities... Honest!