

WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER BACK OF THE BUS...



# SchNEWS

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Friday 28th March 2008

Free/Donation

Issue 626

## VERGE ON THE ROAD

AS SMASHEDO MOVIE TOUR GOES AHEAD DESPITE CENSORSHIP ATTEMPTS

SchNEWS and SmashEDO have combined forces to bring the world "the film they tried to ban" - **On the Verge**, the story of the four-year campaign against EDO MBM, Brighton's favourite bomb-builders. Determined to beat the censorship imposed by Sussex Police and their allies (See SchNEWS 625), SchMOVIES has taken the show(ings) on the road.

The first leg of the tour over the last week has taken in Oxford, Bath, Hereford and finished up at Bristol's Kebele social centre. According to movie director Steve Bishop, "The whole things has been massively energised by Sussex Police's cack-handed attempt at censorship - so cobblers / bollocks to them basically. Venue organisers have been surprised at the turn outs - obviously huge credit has to go to everyone who organised a screening at short notice."

It's perhaps to be expected, but still heartening, that Quaker meeting houses and anarchist

social centres have refused to be intimidated, and have worked to make sure screenings have gone ahead despite all the pressure on them.

In Hereford, landlord of the The Barrels pub Peter Amor - despite being "to the right of Margaret Thatcher" - was determined to show the film saying, "freedom of speech is important - you know Voltaire and all that". After visits from local cops saying they were following orders from "Head Office" hadn't deterred him, it took a last minute letter from a council official threatening him with a six month prison sentence or a £20,000 fine before he reluctantly pulled out. Guerilla Cinema (our local contacts) managed to get another venue and after a certain amount of clandestine skulduggery in an alleyway over fifty people crammed in to see it.

Police attention shows no sign of abating with the Common Place - a radical autonomous centre in Leeds - being the latest place



Are you an independent film-maker who is unable to reach a wide audience because of hard hitting political content? We can help.

Our specialist film promotion agency can call on a national network of associates to give your film that extra publicity shot-in-the-arm which will take it to the next level.

"Thanks to the fabulous promotion work of Sussex Police we've gained invaluable national and international interest in our new film 'On The Verge'. We couldn't have done it without them. See you at Cannes." - Andrew Beckett, Smash EDO

I got a good shot there - you can use that footage in your next film



MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU!

to have their licence threatened by the local council if they show the film.

Only one town (a community centre in Chichester) has actually cancelled as a result of police action but offers of screenings from as far afield as San Francisco, Belfast, Athens and Australia are pouring in.

For the time being SchMOVIES is resisting the urge to put the film in any easily downloadable format because in the words of Steve Bishop, "We want people to watch this film together - to weep, to laugh, to be inspired and empowered - to meet others and take action together. Whether that's going to be achieved by people sitting in their bedrooms gawping at Youtube is debatable." Despite this, the film will be available in a variety of formats shortly...

\* To get a full list of upcoming tour dates check out [www.smashedo.org.uk/diary.htm#tour](http://www.smashedo.org.uk/diary.htm#tour)

## TERMINAL DISASTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Yesterday was the start of another inglorious chapter in the story of air travel as Heathrow Terminal 5 (T5) officially opened for business. After the whopping £4.3 billion quid spent on essentially a better-lit new cattle shed, it should have been a red letter day for triumphant British Airways management. But the only red on show was that of hundreds of 'Flashmob' protesters who - having previously milling around the check-in areas looking innocuous - simultaneously ripped off their over-garments to reveal matching red t-shirts emblazoned with the simple message, "STOP AIRPORT EXPANSION".

They made a peaceful protest, chaperoned by plenty of police and a fair number of ma-

chine guns - and took full advantage of the presence of national corporate media there to cover all the opening day razzmatazz.

The day then went from bad to worse for BA as all the many millions they have spent on preparation and full public dummy run trials of the new set up proved largely wasted. Staff couldn't log on to new computer systems, baggage handlers struggled to park near planes or get through security before new 'fastrack' check-in machines malfunctioned and T5 ground to a complete halt. Tens of planes had to be cancelled, costing BA a fair few quid no doubt, and thousands of passengers got the kind of airport experience that might lead them to give up all air travel for good. Or, failing that, the misery that they deserve.

Either way, it was another shambolic big project implementation by corporate Britain - not that we're complaining. (Why oh why can't our corporate overlords do everything with ruthless efficiency and eliminate all those stupid mistakes... not!)

But beyond a few headlines and some disgruntled customers, it was all just a temporary blip and they will no doubt sort out the teething troubles. After all it's only a question of money - and BA accumulates plenty of that. They made over a half billion pound profit in just six months last year, even despite a £270 million fine dished out for their part in colluding with 'competitors' over passenger fuel surcharges.

And mentioning competitors in inverted commas is particularly relevant to T5. The

new terminal opening is seeing the biggest ever UK reshuffle of airline kit and personnel. The airport is being organised to reflect the way the US-EU so called 'Open Skies' Agreement is panning out. In fact, that deal, spun under the inevitable 'Free Trade' tag, is a great demonstration of the tendency of unregulated markets to contract into cartels and monopolies.

Over recent years, major airlines have been flirting rather than fighting, and all the big players have signed up with each other to form three main 'strategic alliances' with their erstwhile competitors. Sharing resources, they sell each other's tickets, advertise seamless coverage of more routes and reap the additional profits to be had. Working together gives them more global reach and the power of collective muscle flexing when it comes to keeping the airport operators, politicians and regulators acting in their favour.

And now they are gradually realising those alliances in physical space at airports around the world. It'll all help in their plans to continue massive growth of air travel - and leave them better placed to lobby against all those annoying climate change doomsayers.

Which they appear to be doing extremely well - T5 is estimated to be enabling up to 80,000 new flights, even before the planned new third runway the government seems so keen on is built - to be followed by T6 and T7 we presume...

\* For more see [www.planestupid.com](http://www.planestupid.com) and [www.notrag.org](http://www.notrag.org)



## FOR YOUR PERUSAL

A British film crew has been hitting the mainstream headlines for breaking a ban on visiting remote barely contacted tribes in the Peruvian Amazon. Looking for a location for their drearality TV series where personable Brits 'Mark and Olly' live alongside yer bona fide savages for the entertainment of Discovery Channel viewers, they got a permit to visit the Matisigenka Indian community.

But soon quickly decided the locals just didn't look the stereotyped part they wanted: "The shorts, the guys playing soccer and the school... just won't cut it" and set off deeper inland, ignoring the fact their permit expressly stated they weren't allowed to visit uncontacted or recently contacted tribes, causing a flu outbreak which took several lives and made scores more ill.

The regional Indian organisation FENAMAD confirmed that the crew did go deep upriver despite their flat schoolchild-like denial, "The accusations made do not tally with the facts, as we never entered the headwaters, we were not in the locality quoted at any time and certainly not at the time of any outbreak and, in any case, there has been no officially reported outbreak." (No sir, it wasn't me, I wasn't there, and even if I was I didn't do it, even if anything was done. Which it wasn't..honest!). The head of the local Protected Areas department didn't buy it and they have now been banned from entering the area.

But another, less media-friendly news-nugget of a story, gets less copy: the ongoing expeditions into deepest Peru by oil companies that threaten the indigenous people and the whole eco-system for more seriously than one errant film crew.

Drilling – accompanied by environmental destruction and disease spreading – has been going on for decades, fuelled by dodgy governments up for raking in the cash from selling off exploratory rights to vast swathes of land, some home to indigenous tribes who've lived there for thousands of years. The global oil price surges of late have led to a renewed interest in the area, with increasing fossil fuellishness and damage threatened (See SchNEWS 613) – just when mankind should be doing everything possible to preserve and promote these precious places...

Perhaps some of the indigenous tribes affected can learn from the story of the Achuar tribe, Amazon residents in the North East of Peru. They suffered at the hands of Occidental Petroleum, the company who came into their area 30 years ago and began oil extraction and processing. Over the years they caused illness outbreaks, with fatalities, and contaminated the land by dumping billions of barrels of toxic waste.

All indigenous indignation was ignored. Occidental then pulled out eight years ago and handed over operations to a firm called Pluspetrol, but business just continued. Their livelihoods finally ruined, the tribe finally took direct action and, armed with shotguns and spears, occupied oil wells in October 2006. And it brought swift results: the government and the company, losing millions of dollars a day, were finally forced to come to the negotiating table. The Achuar obtained a commitment from Pluspetrol to reduce contamination and to pay millions of dollars to clean up and establish a 10-year health plan. They also effectively blocked any new oil exploration on their territory. Duly empowered, they then, last year, took the fight home to roost and filed a class action lawsuit against Occidental, in Los Angeles – a case still pending.

It just shows what determined people can do when they get together to fight for their rights...

\* For more on indigenous struggles see [www.survival-international.org](http://www.survival-international.org)

## NAGGING DOUBTS

The Grand National at Aintree is on from April 3rd-5th. While it is the sort of spectacle that brings out yer weekend punter for a casual flutter, it's not actually just a bit of harmless fun. In fact the steeplechase race has killed thirty five horses in the past decade, with three 'destroyed' last year alone. The gruelling course – one of the most difficult in the world – involves sixteen fences, and often only ten of the forty horses competing actually finish the race.

This is part of a horse racing industry which breeds horses searching for 'winners', with the rest mostly destined for the abattoir. Around 420 racehorses are killed every year, with 160 dying during or immediately after a race – killed due to leg or spinal injuries, heart attacks, burst blood vessels or exhaustion amongst other causes.

Fight Against Animal Cruelty in Europe (FAACE) and Animal Aid are holding a demo at Aintree, calling for a ban on the Grand National, on April 3rd – meet 11am opposite the main entrance to Aintree Racecourse, Ormskirk Rd, north Liverpool, in front of the Aintree railway station. This event is being held during Horse Riding Awareness Week

See also [www.animalaid.org.uk/racing](http://www.animalaid.org.uk/racing), email [action@faace.co.uk](mailto:action@faace.co.uk)

## TAA VERY MUCH

Hold onto your hats, get your glad rags on – next week Brighton becomes host to its very first Temporary Autonomous Art Exhibition! Running from 2nd-6th of April and coming to a reclaimed space near you, the TAA is promising to be Brighton's finest community arts, music and performance event of the year.

Born out of frustration with the commodification of art, and a lack of autonomous space, TAA aims to create a free, not-for-profit environment, built and enjoyed by the whole community. Gallery exhibition and studio space have become the preserve of an artistic elite, with rent soaring and many galleries becoming sterile, impersonal, and out of reach of the majority. TAA provides artists, musicians, writers and performers who would otherwise have no outlet with a space to display their work, uninhibited by the constraints of the mainstream art cliques.

While TAAs have been happening for 8 years now in London, Bristol, Manchester and Edinburgh, this is Brighton's first and from Wednesday to Saturday, midday to midnight, anyone can get involved. Exhibit your own stuff, get involved in workshops for kids and adults, and check out the evening entertainments, film, spoken word, open mic, cabaret, live music and DJs. There's something for everyone – and if all gets too much, you can always regroup at the TAA café and bar.

And if you can't make it, local alternative radio station 4a ([www.radio4a.org.uk](http://www.radio4a.org.uk)) will be doing live broadcasts from the venue.

Despite the friendly local bobbies shutting down one of the fundraising events for the TAA (See SchNEWS 623), and pestering some of the organisers, many people have been mucked in to reclaim the building, fix it up, clean, creating a stage, and make it safe. Check out [www.subterraneanartbrighton.org](http://www.subterraneanartbrighton.org) for more details.

\* SchNEWS hears on the grapevine that a Brighton-produced TAA spoof-tabloid to big up squatting has been hit with censorship just like 'On The Verge' – Brighton's SmashEDO documentary. OK, it's not quite the same orchestrated clampdown, but their printer has refused to print it because of the content. Hopefully, it won't transpire that all other printing firms turn out to have been nobbled and you will be able to read 'the paper they tried to ban' at the TAA!

## MUMIA'S THE WORD

This week Mumia Abu-Jamal's appeal for a new trial was turned down in the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, Philadelphia. His conviction still stands for the murder of a policeman he was fitted up with in 1981 (See SchNEWS 584), but the court has ordered a new sentencing hearing to decide whether he will remain on death row or be sentenced to life imprisonment. The authorities remain blind to all the evidence that has emerged proving his innocence and despite having already locked this man up for over 25 years, seem determined to punish him further for being a former member of the Black Panthers and a radical journalist.

There will be a protest today (28th) at the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London at 5pm.

## PARTY & PROTEST

**MARCH: 29th - No Borders Nottingham and the local Zimbabwean community** will be demonstrating in favour of asylum rights and against the Mugabe regime on the day of the election in Zimbabwe. A show of solidarity with Zimbabwean asylum seekers. At Speakers Corner, Market Square, Nottingham, 2pm, [www.nobordersnottingham.org.uk](http://www.nobordersnottingham.org.uk) \*\* **29 - Bike Ride to Campsfield Demo** - Riding roughly six miles in protest against Campsfield refugee detention centre. Meet at Martyrs' Memorial, St Giles, Oxford, 11am-12pm, [www.closecampsfield.org.uk](http://www.closecampsfield.org.uk) \*\* **APRIL: 1st - Fossil Fools Day** - Roll up, roll up! The climate circus is in town - bring the spirit of carnival and mischief to the fight for climate justice. Rising Tide International is calling for a day of action against the fossil fuel industry. See the website for details... [www.fossilfoolsday.org](http://www.fossilfoolsday.org) \*\* **4 - Shut Down Guantanamo** – One of the weekly demos held by the London Guantanamo Campaign, calling for the closure of Guantanamo and other illegal prisons in the war on terror. Outside Starbucks Cafe, 55-59 Oxford Street, London, W1D 2EQ (tube Tottenham Court Rd.), 6pm-7pm [www.guantanamo.org.uk](http://www.guantanamo.org.uk) \*\* **4 - Anchor Rocks** - in aid of the Anchor Project, a non-profit organisation working with London-based unaccompanied asylum applicants aged 10-17. Featuring live music from Stanley, Cedars, We Used to Make Things and Opaque. At The Windmill, Brixton, 8pm till late, £5 [www.anchorproject.org](http://www.anchorproject.org) \*\* **5 - Climate4Change** - Artist happening and mash-up in a derelict Mercedes show room with film, performance, cabaret, music, collaboration. At 341 Finchley Road, London, NW3 6ET, opp Camden Arts Centre, 6pm-midnight, tel 07946457908, [www.haringeyarts.org](http://www.haringeyarts.org) \*\* **5 - Benefit for Radio 4a** – in support of the local Brighton alternative radio station. 7-10pm. With music from My Federation, Gloria Cycles & Dirty Social. At Concorde 2, Marine Parade, Brighton. (Under 16s must be accompanied by an adult) See [www.concorde2.co.uk](http://www.concorde2.co.uk) and listen to [www.radio4a.org.uk](http://www.radio4a.org.uk)

## ...and finally...

Cops in Italy are searching for a thief who is hypnotising supermarket and bank staff to give him money out of the till. Obviously discarding the well trodden Paul McKenna route of turning a tiresome party trick into a multi-billion self-help empire, the crook is taking the more direct route to relieve the eternally gullible from their money. In a nice touch, the last thing the cashiers recall is the hypnotist saying "Look into my eyes", before remembering nothing at all of events after that, when they calmly handed over bundles of cash to the mystery man. Now, that's magic.

### Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - if you don't take on the fly boys, they'll runaway out of control... Honest!

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