

WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER ON THE PROWL...

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EASY, TIGER...

AS THE CIVIL WAR IN SRI LANKA ESCALATES WITH GROWING CASUALTY LIST

Worldwide protests - which in London led to violent clashes with police - from the Tamil diaspora have erupted in response to the escalation in the Sri Lankan military onslaught against Tamils in the so-called 'safe-zone' in the north-east of the country.

As reported in SchNEWS 665 the Sri Lankan military has driven the separatist rebels of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, AKA the Tamil Tigers, out of most of their former territory into a narrow enclave on the coast. Since then, in the face of a deafening silence from the international community, the Sri Lankan army has squeezed the Tigers into an ever tinier strip whilst a humanitarian disaster has unfolded with 200,000 civilians trapped between the forces. The media, which isn't allowed into the zone, has received horrific eye-witness reports from those fleeing the violence, who managed to avoid being detained by government forces or shot by the Tigers.

The ordeal continues for many Tamil civilians outside the zone when they are put in heavily militarised over-crowded 'model villages', or concentration camps, where those suspected of Tiger connections are disappeared by paramilitaries, whilst dissenting voices are silenced and accusations of 'genocide' are becoming commonplace. The International Federation of Journalists accuses the Sri Lanka government of using a combination of anti-terrorism laws, disappearances and assassinations to silence journalists. Sri Lankan journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge was murdered on January 8th this year.

HUNTED TO EXTINCTION

The recent round of protests began on April 6th after reports of the Sri Lankan army use of chemical weapons on Tamil civilians at Bhuthukudiyurup in Mulaithivu in the 'safety zone' over the Easter weekend. NGO 'War without Witness' commissioned investigations by doctors concluded that victims' wounds were consistent with Mustard Gas attacks delivered via high explosive rocket launchers and aerial bombing. Due to government exclusion of international agencies and NGOs from the combat zone and hospitals no comprehensive forensic or chemical analysis could be carried out.

Hundreds of civilians were dying every day last week from government artillery strikes, the lack of medical treatment for victims and starvation. An attack on two hospitals killed 30 immediately, including young children and medical workers, and injured 300. At one hospital hundreds had been waiting for food when the shells landed. Despite condemnations from human rights and humanitarian agencies the world's leaders have failed to find time from their summit junkets to act to end the unfolding tragedy.

The Sri Lankan government declared a two-day ceasefire on April 13-14th but still refuses to negotiate with the Tigers, who are holding the 200,000 civilians in the 'safety zone' hostage. Determined to wipe out the Tigers the army resumed its shelling this Wednesday, with further massive civilian casualties likely.

LAW OF THE JUNGLE

Britain has witnessed a number of large scale and dramatic protests. 300 Tamil youths who began a blockade of Westminster Bridge were joined by thousands more throughout the week, culminating with over 100,000 Tamils marching through central London on April 11th. Police responded to the initial protests by kettling the group before attacking many with batons. Several people were arrested under the Terrorism Act for carrying the Tamil national flag, which is also the flag of the Tamil Tigers - officially a terrorist organisation. Two Tamil men went on hunger strike, although one has since suspended his fast in response to efforts to organise international talks.

It's no coincidence that such a large section of the Tamil diaspora reside in Britain. The British meddling on the island began way back in 1776 and continues to the current day in the form of continued arms sales against the background of toothless requests for a ceasefire.

When the British first arrived, following on the heels of previous colonial rulers the Portuguese and the Dutch, they merged the previously distinct kingdoms of the Tamils and the Sinhalese - the majority ethnic group of Sri Lanka - to create a unitary state

ALL THE HITS!

NOW
THAT'S WHAT I CALL A
POLICE STATE
2009

IAN TOMLINSON

NETCU **CIVIL CONTINGENCES ACT**

AND MANY OTHER CHART TOPPERS

that was later named Ceylon. Following this they brought around a million Tamils from India to work in the tea fields.

Following independence in 1948 attempts were made to prevent persecution of the minority Tamils by introducing a system of proportional representation to avoid Sinhalese electoral dominance while the new constitution included clauses prohibiting discriminatory legislation. However, the PR system was quickly dropped while the anti-discrimination laws were widely ignored until they were finally dropped completely in 1972. Around a million Tamils of Indian origin were disenfranchised immediately after independence and many were deported. This was followed by the Sinhala Only Act - which discriminated economically, culturally and linguistically against the Tamils.

Throughout the 50's, 60's and 70's the Tamils responded to the increasing repression and discrimination with non-violent resistance and political negotiations. The response was military repression, torture and disappearances while agreements to devolve power to Tamils under a quasi-federal system were unilaterally abrogated by successive governments. The situation culminated in 1983 with the events of 'Black July' when devastating anti-Tamil pogroms resulted in thousands of Tamils being burnt alive.

1983 is generally accepted as the start of the civil war that has raged since. While Tamil Tiger abuses have been widely documented since then, they pale in comparison to the campaign of torture, rape and extra-judicial killings on a genocidal scale subsequently waged by the authorities.

Throughout this period the British government has continued to supply arms to the Sri Lankan military. Although Home Secretary David Miliband has recently called for a ceasefire, action to make that a reality has been notably absent. Britain failed to support a UN briefing on Sri Lanka with Miliband declaring that a vetoed resolution would be worse than no resolution, leading to claims that Britain is shirking its obligation to prevent genocide.

* See www.warwithoutwitness.com and www.guerrillanews.com/headlines/20130/Killings_and_Concentration_Camps_in_Sri_Lanka_International_Community_Silent

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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DAY OF ANGER

A planned nationwide strike and series of demonstrations by pro-democracy activists in Cairo fell flat as protesters were faced with overwhelming security forces. Dubbed 'The Day of Anger', organisers had planned for full scale strikes and demonstrations all over Cairo on the 6th April, in commemoration of the 6th April strikes of 2008.

In preparation, vast numbers of riot police lined the streets and campuses of Cairo, amongst them plain clothes officers guarding landmarks and major buildings. Activists were warned away as they attempted to gather. Around three hundred gathered at the Journalist's Syndicate building, where they were penned in by armies of riot police manning the gates. Events were far more volatile around the Ain Shams Universities, where riot police apprehended protesters calling for educational reforms. Despite attempts by the authorities to distract students with various concerts and sporting events there was enough of a turnout to result in fifty three arrests, as well as eight injuries, although these were predominantly inflicted by opposing groups amongst the students.

The turnout overall was weak in contrast with the April strike of last year, a disheartening fact for Egypt's steadily growing underground protest movement. This can be attributed mostly to the sheer scale of pre-emptive action taken by the government to quell the strike. Not only did the police vastly outnumber the protesters, there had also been numerous key figures arrested in the days leading up to the strike. Amongst these were left-wing activists and members of the Muslim Brotherhood, an organisation that currently has the largest numbers of any opposition group.

A variety of protest groups were involved in the action, amongst these were the Kefaya group (Arabic meaning 'enough'), officially known as The Egyptian Movement For Change, the grass roots coalition encompasses amongst its members a diverse spectrum of political views, ranging from socialist liberals to devout Islamists. They are all united in their vehement opposition toward president Hosni Mubarak.

Mubarak's government has been in power for over twenty seven years. He naturally maintains that his election 'victories' have been perfectly legitimate - but the people of Egypt have long tired of his ploys. Moreover he has kept Egypt in a state of 'emergency rule' for twenty five of those years, allowing the state the right to imprison individuals for an indefinite period of time without a trial.

There is without a doubt a culture of fear widespread amongst the Egyptian people - protesting is illegal, with hefty punishment wrought on detained dissidents. The emergency laws allow for arbitrary arrest, whilst the atmosphere pervading these arrests allows for police atrocities to keep going unheeded. Meanwhile Egypt's constitution allows little leeway for an alternative government. In your dreams New Labour...

PATHOLOGICAL LIARS

It didn't just take a man's death - it took incontrovertible proof of that man getting an unprovoked beating for the mainstream media to raise their heads out of their Islington ghetto and take a real look at 21st century British policing. Following the death of Ian Tomlinson at the G20 protests there's been plenty of coverage of the violence inflicted by cops. But while the liberal media expresses "shock" SchNEWS knows that police violence is par for the course. When a "public order" situation arises the police are always keen to exert their authority in a zealous manner.

Of course there's now a media storm around police brutality and the scrutiny has to be welcomed, but are we going get palmed off with the blame being pinned on dodgy operational decision-making and a few 'bad apples'? Are we going to see another de Menezes whitewash? Violence by the police on the scale we saw at the G20 must have been sanctioned right from the top. The truth is that Tomlinson was merely unlucky - it could have been any one of us.

Police used a compliant media to ratchet up the temperature before the summit with Commander Simon O'Brien boasting: "We're up for it and we're up to it." The name given to the police operation, "Glencoe" refers to an infamous 17th century Scottish massacre.

There was also the "G20 Terror Plot" - more media spin about nothing - the weekend before the G20. A Plymouth man was arrested for graffiti, his house searched and police allegedly found imitation guns and fireworks. All his housemates were arrested and held for days. Eventually the five were either released without charge or released on police bail - there was no evidence of terrorism.

On the day the Met as predicted (by us anyway) kettled the crowd. Contrary to mainstream media - the kettle is not a new tactic, having been used since 1999 at least. By the end of the day bands of police were roaming the centre of London attacking people at will.

In almost every piece of footage surfacing of police violence there are officers in the characteristic blue-topped uniform of the Forward Intelligence Team see (SchNEWS 639).

The climate camp at Bishopsgate was viciously broken up and Ian Tomlinson was tragically caught up in it on his way home from work. Immediately the police media machine went spluttering into gear, claiming no contact with him - a lie; that he died solely of a heart attack - another lie. The pathologist involved had been reprimanded by the General Medical Council for dodgy verdicts, and a second autopsy was carried out by the Forensic Pathology Services which usually deal with suspicious deaths. Another lie is the claim that the police medics treating Ian at the scene came under a hail of bottles thrown at them - when in fact one plastic bottle was thrown, then no more as protesters realised someone was injured.

Utterly unfazed by the criticism, the Met have been back in the headlines for battering pro-Tamil protesters (see front page) - the state's bully boys and executioners know they're above the law. They've even attacked vigils for Ian Tomlinson - see YouTube. www.youtube.com/watch?v=6THfDGy1hN4

But what the media have totally failed to question is why was there a police kettle around an entirely peaceful demo on the day of the vigil. The video shows a man trying to leave the cordon and being manhandled. A woman outside the cordon objects to the behaviour and is back-handed across the face and batoned around the legs. Police then invoked Section 14 of the Public Order Act to move press away from the scene - sadly most press obeyed this order rather than risk arrest - so much for speaking truth to power.

We can't rely on the media or the IPCC to protect us from the boys in black. The police are the front-line of the corporate state. The only question is how long are we gonna put up with this shit?

RIGHT TO ROMA

Currently the world's oldest settlement of Roma people, dating back to the 1600s, is under threat of being destroyed for an upmarket development, and the communities made homeless. Roma people settled in the Anatolia region after coming across from India in the 10th century, and the site at Sulukule, Istanbul, dates back to the Byzantine period and is now a World Heritage Site. The plan is to raze the ancient buildings to the ground; turfing the Roma people out. But this is just one of many situations across Europe where Roma and Sinti people are being ethnically cleansed, in circumstances that echo the Roma deaths during the holocaust.

This racism extends to Britain, as SchNEWS has covered for years, with violent evictions of Gypsy sites and the imminently pending threat to Dale Farm, a site in Essex of 1000 people (See SchNEWS 669). Similar or worse

plights face groups in Italy, Greece, Romania, Czech Rep, Russia, France, Serbia and Slovakia where local authorities are performing violent expulsions on communities who have nowhere else to go.

The situation in Italy is particularly harsh for Roma and Sinti people, where it is estimated by the EveryOne Group that the Roma population has been lowered from 160,000 to 60,000 in recent years - and that around 2,000 are currently dying each year due to child mortality and an average life expectancy of just 40.

In the area of Pescara, recently hit by the catastrophic earthquake, all the makeshift accommodation and aid being offered to homeless victims was denied to Roma people, with the authorities calling them 'vultures' and putting up checkpoints to keep them out.

* See www.everyonegroup.com

TOO CRUEL FOR SCHOOL

AS NOTTINGHAM COPS GO OVER THE TOP IN CLIMATE CLASSROOM

In the very early hours of Easter Monday 14 environmental activists were arrested in Nottingham on suspicion of conspiring to shut down the Ratcliffe-on-Soar coal fired power station for a prolonged period.

As was widely reported in the mainstream media, over 200 police raided a school in Sneinton Dale, Nottingham where the protesters were staying, arresting everybody inside. Cops apparently had some 'intelligence' about the massive protest and had cancelled officers' leave in planning the raid. They say they found 'specialist' equipment in the school that could have been used to disrupt the power station, including 'equipment that could be used to tie people to machinery' (the humble bicycle D-lock?)

All those arrested were taken to various police stations in the area and released on bail in the evening without being charged. All police stations in the area were at maximum capacity, and locals were outraged that the operation involved so many officers, who they said were normally so hard to find when you needed one!

Could it be that the police wanted to avoid a repeat of the court case when Greenpeace activists were arrested at Kingsnorth Power Station in 2007 (run by E.ON, who also run Ratcliffe) – and successfully argued during a trial that they were acting lawfully to prevent damage caused by climate chaos (See SchNEWS 646). This way the Police nipped the protest in the bud, and can avoid any further legal scrutiny

for E.ON by just dropping the charges after.

During another action in 2007, Ratcliffe was invaded by local climate activists locking onto the conveyor belts that take coal up to be burned (See SchNEWS 583). This power station emits more carbon dioxide than several developing countries put together, and is one of the worst sources of carbon emissions in the UK.

Police caused massive damage throughout the school, despite the activists only using one room in an annexe. They decided to search the entire building and smash all doors down – despite someone from the school with keys turning up, who was told to go away. The school is now closed till further notice – nice job by the boys in blue trashing kids education.

After the arrests, three vanloads of coppers in full gear arrived at the Sumac Centre, one of the addresses of the arrestees, which they presented a search warrant for. A room upstairs was searched, and some papers and a computer taken. Other addresses saw police cruising the street, and they continued to monitor the Sumac Centre.

While some are inclined to speculate wildly about how the police found out about the alleged plan for the action, SchNEWS suggests that playing the blame game is the perfect way to help the cops destroy a movement, while solidarity and some sensible thinking will go a long way to successful actions.

* See also www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/nottinghamshire

W-HACKED IN JAIL

Back in 2006 what started as a teachers strike in Oaxaca, Mexico, escalated into a full blown rebellion against the local power structure that lasted for five months. After enduring regular beatings, arrests and a number of disappearances and murders, the uprising was finally brought to an end by a massive military and police operation involving thousands of personnel backed by armoured vehicles and helicopters (see SchNEWS 567). But that wasn't the end of the matter for those who have continued to face persecution for their involvement.

One of the leaders of the movement, David Venegas, was arrested in 2007 and charged with possession of illegal drugs with intent to supply, sedition, conspiracy, arson, attacks on transit routes, rebellion, crimes against civil servants, dangerous attacks, and resisting arrest. Venegas beat all but the drug charge and was released on bail eleven months later. He maintains that the drugs were planted on him hours after he had been taken into custody. The case against him is so dubious that at least half of the police who participated in his arrest refuse to testify against him.

The verdict in this case was due at the start of April but, in what has been described as "harassment by delay", it has been twice

postponed. The first postponement came when Venegas failed to arrive 15 minutes early for the hearing of the process of 'identification' – a process nobody had bothered to inform him about beforehand. The latest delay came on April 13th when the judge stated that he needed more time to read the dossier information. A date for the verdict has not yet been set. The process has sparked a number of demonstrations by supporters who claim the delays are part of a campaign to prevent Venegas participating in the social movement.

Venegas is not the only participant of the 2006 uprising to face persecution. Last October police arrested Juan Martinez Moreno for the murder of Indymedia journalist Brad Will (see SchNEWS 653). Moreno remains in prison despite a recent injunction from the Federal Judiciary declaring his imprisonment pending trial to be unconstitutional due to irregularities in the case, (irregularities that we presume include the existence of photographic and video evidence that clearly depict the real killers, a motley crew including the ex-mayor of Oaxaca and two policeman).

* <http://narcosphere.narconews.com/notebook/kristin-bricker/2009/04/oaxaca-david-venegas-verdict-delayed-again>

MALLETS MALLETT

Residents of the run down Buenos Aires neighbourhood of San Fernando took community relations into their own hands last week when they demolished the beginnings of what was balled an 'economic apartheid wall'

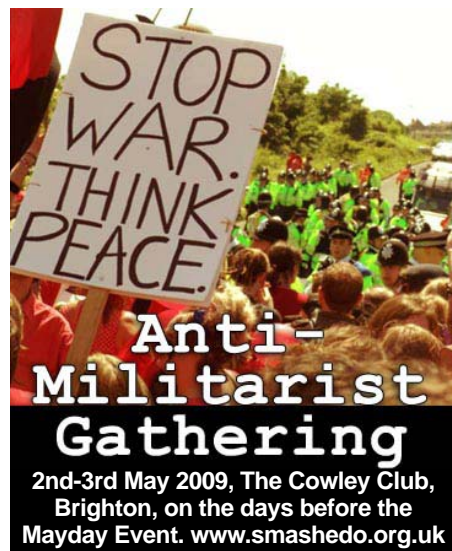
The wall, the pet project of Gustavo Posse, the mayor of the neighbouring and considerably more affluent area of San Isidro, was to have separated the neighbourhoods with a 1600 metre long and 3 metre high barrier. Labelling it an 'anti-thief' wall, Posse claimed that the project began in response to a request from a 'group of neighbours' concerned about security. This came despite the area having a larger police presence than any other district in the province.

As initial protests and vandalism brought the issue to the attention of the wider population the wall provoked national outrage and was labelled the 'wall of discord' by the Argentine media. Even president Cristina Kirchner chipped in claiming to be 'astonished' and comparing it's construction to apartheid.

Construction had begun on the first 240 metres of the wall before the San Fernando residents decided to implant what has been dubbed 'justice by mallet' Police stood and watched as the group, which included pensioners and children, took to the wall with whatever tools they could lay their hands on. Machinery from the company involved in the construction of the wall arrived to salvage what they could but to no avail.

The afternoon after the wall had been reduced to rubble, a judge ordered a halt in construction based on the case brought to court by representatives of San Fernando. The judge declared the wall to be a "squandering of materials and labour" that would cause "moral damage".

Posse, who reported the demolition crew for 'destruction of public works', is still refusing to understand defeat, announcing that "of course" work would continue, in the name of "humble, worker" neighbours "not from the slums". However, Carlos Stornelli, the Minister for Security in Buenos Aires province has promised to use all the "power of the police" to stop the project should they try to restart construction. "This (the wall) cannot exist in the mind of anyone" he said.



PARTY & PROTEST

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

RAY OF BLIGHT

James 'Elijah' Smith was found guilty of aggravated trespass this week after a two day trial at Yate magistrates in connection with actions at Raytheon's Bristol office. On 5th November 2008 he d-locked himself to the doors of the office. Elijah is of course one of those arrested and charged following the decommissioning actions at Brighton's EDO MBM/ITT (See SchNEWS 663). As a result of this case he was sentenced to ten weeks imprisonment.

This was despite police evidence being described by the judge as 'vague and sketchy' and videotape of Elijah's brutal arrest (he was handcuffed while locked on and after the lock was cut five cops knelt on him and forced him into a 'viper' restraining harness).

Raytheon was targeted in 2008/9 by Bristol campaigners because of its role in profiting from the production of weapons of mass destruction, the type used across the Middle East, and more recently in the Israeli assault on Gaza earlier this year. Over the Christmas period campaigners sustained a rooftop protest for over four weeks at the office (See SchNEWS 661). Details of the anti-Raytheon campaign are at www.raytheonout.wordpress.com

James is currently on remand at Bristol prison due to charges arising from the decommissioning of the EDO/MBM (ITT) factory in Brighton on January 17th. In the court he looked well and healthy, and his fighting spirit was still strong - which almost resulted in him being kicked out of court and down to the cells!

* **Support the EDO 2! Eliza Smith** VP 7551 HMP Bristol, 19 Cambridge Rd, Horfield, BS7 8PS, **Robert Alford** VP 7552 HMP Lewes, 1 Brighton Rd, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1EA

** See <http://decommissioners.wordpress.com>

**MAYDAY!
MAYDAY!**

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GETTING ON OUR TITS

As the protest camp at Titnore Woods approaches its third birthday, campaigners remain in good spirits and continue to welcome visitors to the woods in Durrington, West Sussex.

There is a call-out for building materials - mainly wood beams for tree houses, tinned food and drivers with vehicles to help transport tat to the site. The proposal for the construction of the Tescopoly monstrosity is currently under council scrutiny so now is the time to vent some spleen - write to the Development Control Manager at Worthing Borough Council, Portland House, Richmond Rd, Worthing by 14th May, quoting WB/09/0146/ARM. The Worthing Herald could also do with some mail in their inbox so email them at letters@worthingtoday.co.uk - Protect our Woodland! encourage readers to pepper their arguments with specific criticisms of the proposed development like increased traffic congestion, visual impact, trade loss from competing local businesses, loss of local character etc. Remember every letter counts.

For those who want to get more involved there is a meeting at Beechwood Hall, Wykeham Rd, Worthing, at 8pm on April 30th. If the proposals are accepted the existing Tesco store will be demolished and the site used to extend the car park to a ludicrous 800 parking bays. A even larger tower of Tesco will then be re-built in the field immediately west of the car park cos the one Durrington currently suffers from is obviously just not big enough. Voice your dissent whilst it is still on the table.

* See also www.eco-action.org/porkbolter/camp-titnore.html

The Metropolitan police yesterday promised a full inquiry into **ALLEGATIONS** that one of their officers was spotted behaving 'proportionately' during the G20 protests.

Despite initial denials, SchNEWS has been passed 90 seconds of grainy footage showing an officer in **FULL RIOT GEAR** simply standing opposite a group of protesters. Throughout the film, the burly officer fails to **CONCEAL** his **FACE** and his **BADGE NUMBERS** remain fully visible. Not reaching for his **BATON**, despite verbal provocation, he shockingly does not **BRUTALLY ATTACK** any scrawny hippies or even **SLAP** or **ROUGHLY PUSH** around a single lentil-munching soap-dodger.

Jacqui Smith, Home Secretary, demanded the officer's immediate suspension, saying the footage "raised serious questions" and was a "shocking breach of standard police procedure".

A senior Met bigwig has defended the officer claiming it was 'an isolated incident', and saying, "Our officers train hard to develop their basic stony-faced aggressive posture, public communication failure techniques and intimidation skills. In almost all cases they look to escalate confrontations with protesters and enjoy the free license to let the uniform

FOOLS GOLD

Last Sunday (12th) 28 protesters were arrested at Lake Cowal, western NSW, Australia, in protest against Barrick Gold's giant open-cast gold mine. The mine uses a deadly cyanide process and takes huge amounts of water from a continent suffering its worst droughts for a century. Barrick Gold - the world's largest gold mining company, run the mine on land taken from the Wiradjuri people - and it was with authorisation from these traditional owners that the protesters entered the site. As they occupied the pit of the mine, stopping work, another group of fifteen blockaded the main gate while Wiradjuri people performed a smoking ceremony.

This mine isn't just about the stealing of aboriginal land on a massive scale. It uses a large-scale toxic process to leech gold from the ore using copious quantities of water and tonnes of cyanide. Fifteen million litres of water is pumped per day from bores, sucking dry a wide area, including the Murry-Darling River basin - also depleted due to the heavy irrigation of nearby tracts of agricultural land. Millions of litres of a highly toxic cyanide solution drain back into the water table.

Protests - and legal action - from the Wiradjuri people has been going on for a decade against the mine, including annual gatherings. "We asked our supporters to enter the mine site to bear witness to the destruction and document the mine's impact. It is important that Wiradjuri maintain access to our cultural sites," said traditional owner Neville Chappy Williams. It's suspected that thousands of artefacts were found and disturbed during the mine's construction and are being kept secretly in a fenced compound within the mine site.

* See <http://sydney.indymedia.org.au> and www.savelakecowal.org

...And Finally...

and position of power go to their heads, letting off steam by directing their internal anger and frustration at defenceless hippies who no-one in the mainstream press gave a toss about until now.

"But, in the heat of the moment - they are only human after all! Things can get of hand and reasonableness and decency can flare up. However, I accept in this case it appears this one officer apparently acted out of character and used seemingly proportionate force.

"However, we should be wary of drawing too many conclusions from video evidence taken out of context - after all the officer involved might have just clubbed someone to the ground and was taking a breather just as the camera started recording.

Obviously we don't want the hard fought reputation of our loyal officers to be tarred with this kind of non-representative brush with the law - a few good apples can spoil the whole rotten barrel. We will now review our procedures for clamping down on people with video cameras to make sure this kind of embarrassing situation does not occur again."

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - proportionate policing is an oxymoron. Honest.

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