

BRIGHTON ROCKED

AS SMASH EDO MAY DAY MAYHEM HITS THE STREETS OF BRIGHTON...



Brighton Festival got off to an unorthodox but flying start on Monday as over 1,000 people turned out to take a stand against War, Capitalism and Greed. At 11am cyclists started to gather at Brighton Station and half an hour later the 50-strong critical mass bike ride with two sound systems headed for the sea accompanied by two police horses, Evidence Gathering camera teams and a number of vans.

Organisers of the Mayday!Mayday! Protest - Smash EDO - took a leaf out of Reclaim the Streets book keeping the party's location secret 'til the last minute. The signal to gather at Palace Pier roundabout was given online and via Smash EDO FM at 11:45am. By 12.30 a crowd of approximately 500 had gathered around a sound-system and were dancing. They soon saw off the assembled FIT (Forward Intelligence Team) and Evidence Gatherers. A Mayday flag was run up the lamp-post in the centre of the roundabout. On high alert following the recent discovery of the existence of police brutality,

the world's media were also there in numbers - so police behaviour at this point was notably hands-off.

At 12.45, headed by two reinforced banners carried by hard-hat and mask wearing chaoto-nihilists, the march moved off and streamed up North St. Bring-



ing up the rear in true carnival spirit was the kids bloc in buggies, on scooters and on foot, faces painted and papier mached flowers held aloft.

The first target selected from the Anti-militarist Map of Brighton(1) was Barclays. Masked figures swiftly scaled scaffolding outside the premises and unfurled a banner saying "Arms Dealers out of Brighton"(2). The branch was also redecorated with red paint as the crowd made a safe space for the climbers to get down without having their collars felt.



The march was being headed by police horses and as the crowd reached the Clocktower, police thought the march was going straight on. But the march turned right, and after realising their mistake, the police horses were cantered round and raced to the front of the march sending bemused tourists and shoppers fleeing for safety.

On Queens Rd towards Brighton Station is the Army recruitment centre. Metal shutters across the front meant that a quick re-spray was the only option, before marching on to the train station. The crowd was visibly more up for it by now - clearly angry not just about the weapons factory but by the beating and kettling handed out at the G20.

For a real 90s-retro feel the crowd paused outside McDonald's before surging forward



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MAYDAY MAYHEM IN BRIGHTON

CENTREFOLD: POLISH ANTI-FASCISTS KICK OFF GREECE BLACK BLOC 'AV IT ICELAND HEATS UP AND MORE...

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CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For softshoe shufflin'...

Not exhausted by the weekend's revelry Smash EDO were straight back on the day-shift with a Wednesday noise demo. Unfortunately cops weren't quite so happy. Sussex Police very own Sgt 'Sunshine' Avery decided to nick someone for kicking a metal barrier - in plimsolls. Fortunately for Brighton's most media-friendly copper (see the 'And Finally' film on SchMovies new DVD 'Uncertified'), a BBC camera team were there to record the arrest for a rather pathetic 'attempted criminal damage'. An hour later cops released the barrier-kicker from the confines of the van having failed to find any damage inflicted on the metal and reinforced concrete.



behind the reinforced banners. Brew cans rattled ineffectually against the windows of the golden arches, as a line of riot cops formed along the store-front. One cop-van was rocked as the masked crowd turned on it. Soon a smoke grenade was billowing red clouds from under the vehicle. Short shield police backed up by horses moved into the crowd splitting it into two.

Fleeing down side-streets and arming themselves with wheelie-bins full of bottles, the crowd swiftly outwitted the police and regrouped - before a pink-fibreglass car (out of Wind in the Willows) joined in the uphill stretch along Ditchling Rd in the vague direction of EDO's weapons factory. The uphill struggle came to end as lines

Continued overleaf...

**MAY DAY
MEDIA WATCH**

Previous mass demonstrations by the EDO group have barely made it into the national media – but now with protest and policing up there with swine flu in the national media agenda – the likes of the *Telegraph* were speculating wildly about the possibility of activist-celebs Marina Pepper and Nicky Fisher.

Both the local *Argus* and plenty of the national media were geared up for a repeat of the G20, hoping for plenty of juicy scenes of anarchists versus police that could be played out over the TV and papers gloriously free of any sort of context and perspective.

It's worth pausing to take a look at the reporting (to use the term loosely) by the local *Argus*. Giving generous space to Sussex police, they'd chosen their take on the event before it happened with three front pages in the 10 days preceding the demo.

This week, they selected (and blatantly made up) facts to justify headlines like 'Shameful!' and 'City Brought to Standstill', with the usual old standbys brought out - a random passer-by saying that it all looked a bit scary, and the moral force of a mother who claimed her kids were frightened.

Even the more reasoned analysis offered by the *Argus*' Andy Chiles on Thursday did precisely what it accused Smash EDO of, namely being 'riddled with contradictions'. He failed to see the connection between the arms trade and EDO/ITT's Brighton factory, which produces 'electrical components rather than any weapons', following EDO boss Paul Hill's lie in the *Argus* last week. In a first public defence of his company's business, Hills stated "We make things that ensure the safe carriage and release of weapons from aircraft." As this week's massacre of up to 200 civilians in Afghanistan by a Predator unmanned aerial drone showed, this is often far from true.

Chiles criticises the 'mass of red and blackclad people with covered faces', for their 'daunting' appearance - without trying to come up with an explanation for this - whilst acknowledging that this group caused only 'minor vandalism' and was absent in the chaos towards the end of the afternoon. A few selected quotes and slogans from protesters are offered along with unsubstantiated claims that some passers-by were 'clearly intimidated'. His analysis does at least negate his paper's sensational headlines. One wonders what the *Argus* headline would be following the bombing in Bala Baluk this week.

The *Telegraph* devoted much of their article to police statements and injuries, ignoring the more serious and numerous ones of protesters, whilst the *Daily Mail* were plain wrong, claiming that 'the American Express building, (and) police stations' were targeted.



BRIGHTON ROCKED *continued...*
of riot police backed with horses started batoning peoples' legs.

BREW - WHAT A SCORCHER!

The crowd, having picked up a number of enthusiastic festival goers, turned downhill through the side-streets towards Preston Park (apparently the intended end-point of the demo). A heavy police presence was deployed outside RBS and the Thales arms company offices opposite the park.

As the police pursued the demonstrators through the park the black clad mob encountered a group of elderly folk in their best bowling whites enjoying a quiet game of bowls on the green. This being English Anarchy, the protesters kept off the grass whilst they tussled with the police, who - British bulldog-style - tried to stop anyone crossing the park. "We're not playing this game any more", one cop was overheard saying.

A couple of hundred stayed in the park for a bit of a party but fears of a kettle persuaded most to keep moving. Another thrust in the direction of the factory was sidestepped on Preston Drive and following scuffles people began moving back into town. By now the march had fragmented with many deciding the sensible thing to do would be to disappear into side streets after having made a forceful show against the targets of war profiteers.

What had started out as a full-on protest against war and profit had by this time turned into an impromptu drunken street party, with local youth joining various anti-authoritarian elements. It's a familiar story that just as the bulk of the initial protesters

are beginning to tire and disappear, further waves of people respond to the forces of law 'n' order breaking down as an opportunity to take out their frustrations on a society they feel neglected or criminalized by. It was after this that some of the more random chaos took place: the rooftop occupation and graffitiing of the Palace Pier ice cream shop wasn't claimed as a bit of vegan direct action but more of a case of youthful high spirits. Still, having a load of people who've never engaged in any kind of politics chanting "Who's streets? Our Streets!" while taunting the police can't be all bad.



May Day was another successful day of action and Smash EDO goes from strength to strength despite the vindictiveness of the authorities with arrests and failed prosecutions. It spearheads a growing national anti-militarist network, whose groups have been inspired by the five-year Brighton campaign. This network was consolidated - and future actions planned - at the Anti-Militarist Gathering in Brighton the week-end before the big demo.

(1) - Map - www.indymedia.org.uk/media/2009/04/427416.pdf

(2) - Not "Arms dealers out of our communities" as incorrectly stated on yer 'make it up as we go along - day out by the sea-side' Indymedia

Night Actions

* In the night cheeky pixies came out into the streets of Brighton and smashed an HSBC Bank, sprayed up three Barclays cashpoints and disappeared as quickly as they came...



For more coverage of Brighton May Day 2009 see www.indymedia.org.uk, www.smashedo.org.uk, www.fitwatch.blogspot.com

GOING CHEAP ON AMAZON

Throughout the last month the Amazonian region of Peru has erupted in protest with as many as 8,000 people from 1,350 indigenous communities blockading key waterways and road routes in the isolated oil and gas region and staging marches, pickets and occupations in surrounding towns and cities. Coordinated by the National Organisation of the Amazon Indigenous People of Peru (AIDSESEP), the communities have organised against environmentally damaging exploitation of resources and the failure of the government to recognise indigenous rights.

While in the cities of Iquitos and Atalaya government buildings and banks have been picketed and airstrips occupied, in the jungle region of Napo-Curraray locals have blockaded one of the main Amazonian tributaries servicing the Anglo-French oil company Perenco, which has a monopoly on oil production and development rights in the region. Now a month old, the blockade of cables and canoes has been breached twice. In the first weeks of the action two boats, including one from Perenco, forced their way through and shots were fired at pursuing protesters. Earlier this week a Peruvian Navy gunboat also breached the barricade, causing a number of injuries and sinking canoes. Community leaders are said to be outraged at the action and have condemned the military intimidation. The situation remains tense with two more gunboats said to be circulating in the area.

Similar protests took place in August last year when thousands of indigenous people brought Peruvian hydrocarbon production to a complete stop by blocking crude pumping installations, shutting down the only crude pipeline in Peru. The protests came to an end when the Peruvian

Congress voted to repeal two of the laws that threatened indigenous territories.

The repealed laws were part of a raft of legislation passed without a congressional vote by Peruvian President Alan Garcia as part of a Free Trade Agreement with the US. Many more laws remain on the statutes which indigenous organisations claim will not only lead to a profit driven destruction of the rainforest but also dispossess hundreds of indigenous communities whose land titles have not yet been formalised by the Peruvian government.

Although AIDSESEP leaders have met with the president of the Peruvian congress, Javier Velásquez - in talks they described as 'fruitless' - they are holding out for 'transparent' negotiations, preferably with Garcia himself. The demand seems unlikely to be met though as Garcia, one of the few remaining adherents to US Free Trade Agreements left amongst Latin American leaders, met with Perenco chairman Francois Perrodo less than a fortnight ago to discuss further exploration and drilling. After Perrodo pledged to invest \$2 billion in the region the government passed a law which declared Perenco's work a 'national necessity'.

Despite the intimidation and Garcia's pandering to big business, the communities aren't backing down - in particular the Napo protesters who have signalled their intent to step up the campaign and begin blocking more tributaries. "This is not only about indigenous rights but also the basic human right to live in peace" said AIDSESEP president Alberto Pizango Chota. "We're not seeking confrontation but to simply be allowed to protect our environment, our homes and our lives."

* See also www.aidesepp.org.pe, www.survival-international.org



SICK NOTE

This is a letter Brighton rag *The Anus* (sorry, *Argus*) refused to print claiming it might be libellous. Er, against who?

Dear *Argus*,

I was part of a group of first aiders who provided first aid to people on the May Day demonstration in Brighton. After witnessing violent policing and incompetent police medics on previous demonstrations we felt this was necessary.

The Argus on Tuesday reported that 3 police officers had been injured. I'd like to add that our group of first aiders treated approximately 40 people, mainly for minor injuries. These included a fractured finger, soft tissue injuries from police batoning to the legs and police jabbing batons in the abdomen, and an open knee wound.

The Argus also reported that 'one person was struck in the face by a missile and had to be treated by a police medical team.' At the request of the injured person the police medics quickly handed this patient to our group of medics who treated her.

An asthmatic protester was hit on the chest by police batons. While first aiders were trying to calm his breathing police were trying to clear the area. A friendly shop keeper let the man be treated in his shop.

Some first aiders were concerned that they'd seen a protester knocked unconscious by police batons. Police medics would not allow them to treat the casualty. When he regained consciousness they believed he was arrested.

First aiders witnessed another protester being knocked to the ground, and repeatedly hit with batons. Shortly after one of the first aiders was hit with a police shield.

At the palace pier, first aiders witnessed and called 999 for a woman who was having multiple seizures. Between seizures she got up and ran through police lines. When trying to pursue her, first aiders were told by a police medic to ignore her because she was 'doing it for attention'. The first aiders successfully managed to guide paramedics to her.

Yours Sincerely,

First-aider, Brighton.

IN BEDS WITH THE ENEMY

An anti-fascist meeting was banned at Luton University on Friday 1st by Bedfordshire police. After a military parade for returning service personnel and attempted BNP rally (see SchNEWS 670 and 671), local students were to meet with the local MP and trade unionists. Police banned the meeting on the grounds of public order.

Also, the local Luton Islamic Centre was hit with an arson attack this week (5th), causing considerable damage, although no one was injured. Farasat Latif, secretary of the Centre believes that far-right extremists who had been sending written death threats to the mosque are responsible. Islamic Human Rights Commission chair Massoud Shadjareh said "The blame for this attack does not lie solely on the shoulders of the criminals who committed this act but also on those politicians and media personnel who legitimise Islamophobia under the cover of fighting terrorism and promoting cohesion". See also www.uaf.org.uk

COAL CARAVAN

The Coal Caravan 2009 finished on Monday (4th) having travelled 219 miles by bike through the North of England visiting sites and communities threatened with new open cast coal mines and power stations. The riders' launch party began in the Midlands with Nottingham's Critical Mass bike ride on April 24th before making its way meandering through the likes of Shipley Glen, parts of Yorkshire, Fairbairn Ings and the North East where it finished up.

Along the way the party talked to local people, handed out newspapers with detailed info about the dangers of coal expansion and of viable alternative solutions and organised (bicycle powered!) films and events including showings of *The Age of Stupid* at community events. The caravan experience, which has been an inspiring example of how to strengthen this growing campaign nationwide, has been blogged with photos at <http://coalcaravan.wordpress.com>

DRONING ON

One of the worst single attacks on civilians in Afghanistan since the start of the US-UK invasion/occupation took place in the village of Bala Baluk, Farah Province yesterday. Local medics estimate that up to 200 died in the attack. Villagers said that women, children and the elderly had been hiding inside walled compounds to stay out of danger whilst US Predator Drones and war planes attacked suspected Taliban fighters several miles away.

It didn't work though. No doubt the advanced heat seeking sensors on the US military machine spotted the warm bodies of potential terrorist targets and closed in for the kill. Whole families were wiped out.

The killings of civilians by US forces have been increasing in number and regularity. Since Afghanistan has been declared top priority for the US War On Terror (sorry, Overseas Contingency Operation), bodies have been piling up. Didn't you hear - Afghanistan is the new Iraq while Pakistan is the new Afghanistan.

In typical doublespeak, anonymous US officials blamed the Afghans themselves for the deaths, claiming that the Taliban had probably killed them in some sort of media stunt. This, despite Al Jazeera publishing photos of locals fishing out fragments of US bombs.

With the 'surge' of 30,000 extra troops into Afghanistan and the deliberate escalation of violence across the border into Pakistan things are looking as bad as they ever have in the last 30 years from the viewpoint of most Afghans.

Just because the US-UK Middle Eastern military campaign looks a bit jaded and worn at the seams in the age of the Credit Crunch, it doesn't mean that its gone away. The bomb-makers and their corporate backers are still reaping in the profits of war. With Mayday seeing more than a thousand people on the streets of Brighton to fight the war profiteers, it shows that at least there is still some resistance - not enough however to stop escalating casualties in the new number one destination in the War on Terror.

RAVEN'S AINT NO MORE

In the early hours of Friday May 1st the squatted island in the Thames, Raven's Ait (see SchNEWS 669, 670, and 671) was evicted by over 50 cops including specialist climbing teams. Crossing on black zodiac inflatables and wearing helmets, balaclavas, and flackjackets, with sidearms to hand, the police kicked down doors and took people outside and off the island. Overhead a low flying helicopter used thermal imaging to locate the approximately 20 sleeping residents. The few who resisted eviction were arrested.

The island had been used as a community space, providing workshops and classes to the local community since February and plans were already being made

SHELLS BELLS

Shell returned in force to Glengad, west Ireland, on the 22nd April to attempt to begin work on the offshore section of their controversial gas pipeline. Following the brutal attack by Shell security on Willie Corduff as he blockaded a truck on the first day of work (see SchNEWS 673), local resistance has intensified. The compound being built on Glengad beach contravenes planning laws and is essentially an illegal development. At least 100 local people have gone on several occasions to attempt to remove the fencing and end work.

They face continued violence from both the Gardai and Shell's IRMS security (recently exposed for recruiting right wing Eastern European paramilitaries). On Sunday ropes were attached to the fences to pull them down. While the action was not successful in removing the fences on that day, momentum is building locally and nationally and a day of action has been called for this Saturday to force Shell from Glengad.

As ever, the odds remain firmly stacked against the Rossport community. After the attack on Willie, the Gardai put out a fabricated account of what happened, turning the attack on Willie on its head, and stating that masked men had attacked the compound destroying Shell's equipment. The media ran with the story, with some going as far as to suggest that the resistance in Mayo was in fact a recruiting ground for republican paramilitaries and that the campaign had connections to the recent killings in the north. There was no basis for the claims and it was clearly another attempt by the powers to turn public opinion against those resisting in Mayo.

It looks set to be another summer of action and a new Rossport Solidarity Camp is currently being built on the coast at Glengad to provide a place to stay for anyone wanting to engage in "holiday". The Rossport Solidarity Camp is also hosting a summer gathering from the 29th May to the 1st June combining workshops, direct action training and action.

* See www.corribos.com

NINE LIVES

The Nine Ladies protest camp has finally completely tatted down and left the site after nine and a half years. The occupation started in 1999 to stop the destruction of Stanton Moor through the re-opening of two dormant coal quarries within 100 metres of the Nine Ladies stone circle in the Peak District, Derbyshire.

The protesters had said that once they'd received it in writing that the quarry was definitely a non-starter, they would leave after three months. This confirmation came on January 18th this year in the form of a joint statement from the Peak District National Park Authority, Marshalls (who took over from original quarry company Stancliffe Stone), and Edward Manners of Haddon Hall who owns the site. With the campaign having saved the twelve hectare site from quarrying, the only concession for the quarry company was a three hectare extension to the nearby Dale View quarry - also owned by the Stanson Estate.

Nine Ladies has been the mother of all protest sites in Britain over the past decade. During its time, there's been an estimated thirty tree houses, which included some amazing eviction-resistant structures such as the three-storey 'sky raft' - with a lock-on on top - suspended by polyprop from birch trees in a overgrown old quarry cutting, as well as a caravan suspended in mid-air. There has been over fifty dwellings in total on site. The SchNEWS people who visited the site in 2004 described it as 'Lord Of The Rings meets Mad Max'.

A long-term Nine Ladies resident told SchNEWS: "We'd like to thank everyone who's contributed in any way to Nine Ladies. It's been a long haul with many ups and downs over the years and a real slog to tat down! It's now rapidly being reclaimed by nature. Hopefully a good precedent has been set with a victorious result for a British protest site so it may inspire more people to get out there and get together".

* See also www.bilstonglen-abs.org.uk/tr/nineladies

ROLLER BALLS

A protest camp has been set up across the road from Rolls Royce in Derby, who make the fuel rods for Trident missiles. The new site, on the edge of a sports ground next to the RR plant, was taken last Saturday and three tree houses have already been put up.

This site is urgently calling out for help and the usual gear - ropes, tarps, food, etc. The camp is between Alvaston and Spondon on Raynesway (A5111), three miles out of Derby (round the corner from the Alvaston Bypass protest camp which ran for six months in 2002 - see SchNEWS 340). Site mobile 07914863726.

* Already this weapons plant sees a monthly demo by Trident Ploughshares, on the 4th Monday of each month. For more details see www.tridentploughshares.org

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