

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER OVER-EGGED...



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COP THAT!

AS SchNEWS TAKES A WILD SWING IN THE DIRECTION OF THE LATEST SMASH EDO TRIAL...

It was smashing news this week for one anti-arms trade protester. Chris Bluemel, a music teacher from Southampton, was acquitted last Friday of assaulting Police - despite admitting to punching a cop in the face!

The case arose out events at last year's Carnival against the Arms Trade in Brighton (See SchNEWS 634) which saw a mass car-park invasion of EDO/ITT by protesters. Chris was charged with both Assaulting Police and Common Assault. His defence rested on the excessive force used by police in clearing the car-park and the beating he himself received. He showed the court photos of bruising on his arms and back - bizarrely taken on a Naked Bike Ride three days later (with the naughty bits covered by post-its!).

In their verdict three magistrates said that the

evidence of PC Dugan, who received a punch in the face after beating Chris to the ground, had been 'vague and contradictory' in his description of the timing of events, while in contrast Chris was clearly a man of good character who had been 'credible and consistent' about what had happened.

Commenting on the policing of events, magistrates said that although the actions of police had been lawful at first, they descended into unlawful and excessive force in the last moments when protesters were being driven from the car park with batons and police dogs. There was no evidence of any violence used against the police by the protesters. In the circumstances Chris had been reasonable in fighting back against the police who were clearly 'not acting in the execution of their duty'.



It only comes as a consolation prize after the BNPs electoral breakthrough - they've now got two MEPs including nasty Nick Griffin himself - but it was heartening to watch him and his burly thick-set minders scuttling to escape from a handful of students waving placards and a hail of eggs in front of parliament. The normally placid Unite Against Fascism were more up for it - the thought of Nasty Nick finally having some power finally spurring them into direct action.

Chris told SchNEWS "This marks the end of an extremely difficult year, which began with a police raid on my house, in which a huge amount of computer equipment and campaign materials was seized, and ended with a trial on ludicrous charges. The police have so far refused to apologise for the disruption and stress they have caused to my life, including the fear of losing my job had I been convicted."

* See www.smashedo.org.uk

CRAP MASS ARRESTS OF THE YEAR

In London the Met police have been rounding up and arresting children as young as ten who have committed no crime, for the purpose of getting their DNA on record. A FOI request has revealed that in 2008, police in the Camden area arrested and took DNA samples from 386 under-eighteens in a practice they describe as a "long-term crime prevention strategy". This big fishing expedition will furnish the UK database on children with DNA records which will be held for six years or until the kid turns eighteen.

The European Court Of Human Rights has come into conflict with the Home Office over the extent of British plans for a National ID Database, which stores DNA data amongst other biometric details. In December 2008 at the ECHR in Strasbourg a panel of seventeen judges unanimously condemned British powers to hold DNA data of all arrestees indefinitely - and regardless of the seriousness of the alleged crime - as 'blanket and indiscriminate'. The judges ruled that some 857,000 innocent people should have their DNA data deleted. The Home Office is fobbing the ECHR off by only slightly watering down their plans and will still store samples of those arrested (but not convicted) for serious crimes for twelve years, and keep DNA data six years for those arrested (but not convicted) of minor offences. Those who are convicted will have their DNA information held indefinitely.

The National Identity Register (See SchNEWS 466) and the Children's Act 2004 - which saw the creation of a database for every child in the country (See SchNEWS 452) are just two components of the grand Neo-Labour vision for an Orwellian British state, and no doubt the Tories will be happy to carry on the good work if they get in.
* www.no2id.net www.privacyinternational.org

A RIGHT HULA-PERU

AS INDIGENOUS BLOCKADE IN AMAZONIAN REGION TURNS INTO A POLICE MASSACRE

Last month SchNEWS reported on mass protests in the Amazonian region of Peru as thousands of people from indigenous communities blockaded waterways and roads, and staged marches, pickets and occupations in opposition to legislation that will allow the plundering of the region's natural resources (See SchNEWS 675). The protests have continued ever since and last week erupted into violence when Peruvian special forces attacked protesters blockading a bridge.

At 2am last Friday (5th), police approached sleeping protesters, who were into the 56th day of a previously peaceful protest. When they refused to disperse, the police opened fire - first with tear gas, then with live ammunition - firing from both sides of the bridge and from helicopters. In recordings made during the attack police were heard to shout "Shoot the dogs in the head" as protesters fled. A number fought back, wrestling weapons from the police and turning them on their attackers.

The raid left at least 22 police and between 30 and 100 protesters dead. It has been impossible to ascertain exactly how many were killed as an aggressively enforced curfew in the area has prevented the community from searching for missing people. There have also been reports of police burning corpses and dumping bodies into the river to conceal the extent of the crime. At least 150 people are still being detained following the attack while local hospital workers have claimed that police forcibly removed some of the hundreds of wounded and took them to an unknown location.

So far the mainstream Peruvian media have toed the government line and have only reported on the deaths of the police officers. President Alan Garcia has responded to the situation with a torrent of racial abuse and paranoid ravings. After denouncing the indigenous protesters as "savagely and barbaric" and intent on leading "Peru into irrationality and a backward primitive state" he then suggested they were being manipulated by "foreign forces" - a thinly veiled broadside at Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales in Venezuela and Bolivia.

Following the attack Peruvian authorities ordered the arrest of Alberto Pizango Chota, a leader in AIDSESEP - the indigenous organisation which has been coordinating the movement - on charges of sedition and inciting violence. Pizango Chota took refuge in the Nicaraguan embassy where he was granted asylum this Tuesday (9th) when the Nicaraguan ambassador, Tomas Borge, declared him to be "a victim of political persecution".

Despite the violence, the indigenous communities have vowed to stand their ground and the protest has now spread to the districts of Trompeteros and Andoas where protesters have seized control of two oil installations, shutting down the Northern Peruvian oil pipeline run by Argentine company Pluspetrol. The authorities meanwhile look set to continue the clampdown and have declared their intention to remove a blockade on the motorway between the cities of Yurimaguas and Tarapoto.

* See www.amazonwatch.org www.aidesep.org.pe

ONE NIL 'IN

Israeli forces murdered another peaceful protester against the Apartheid Wall (See SchNEWS 544) in occupied Palestine last Friday (5th). Yousef Tzadik 'Akil' Srour became the fifth resident of Nil'in village to be killed in a year of weekly demos against the Wall cutting through their West Bank village, which stands to lose another 600 acres of its agricultural land when the Wall is completed.

Akil, who was prominent in the weekly anti-Wall demos, was shot in the chest with live ammo. According to a local eye-witness, "the soldier was to our right and Akil was running to the left to help an injured man... when he was shot in the heart."

Meanwhile, over in Gaza on the same day, a farmer was shot in his lower spine by the Israeli army as he was leaving his fields. Khaled Ismail Mohammed Jahjuh had been harvesting the fruit from what was his orange and olive trees near Rafah, when he was shot in his jeep on his way home. He's the 18th person to be shot working in their fields in Gaza since the end of the massacre in mid-January.

* See www.awalls.org www.palsolidarity.org

Indigenous Palestinian farmers from the Jordan Valley at risk of losing what little remains of their land to illegal Israeli colonial settlements will be touring Brighton and London from June 12th-19th. Last week two villages were demolished in the Valley with hundreds more locals due to be made homeless soon. The ghettoisation of the West Bank continues relentlessly despite Obama's recent much hailed lip service to peace and justice for the Middle East.

* For more on the campaign to stay on their land visit www.brightonpalestine.org

STAR RUCKS

Anti-Starbucks protesters in Brighton have been stepping up their year-long campaign against a new branch of the giant coffee chain as a public enquiry against it got under way this Wednesday.

A make-shift alliance of small businesses, local residents and campaigners started protesting outside a former bookshop in the Kemptown area when Starbucks opened without planning permission just over a year ago. It has managed to stay open as a coffee shop despite the trading license being for retail use only. The campaign has succeeded in bringing Starbucks to a public enquiry, and protesters showed up in force outside Brighton Town Hall at the start of the three-day hearing. One member of the campaign who attended the hearing said the first day went well as the Starbucks representative "got roasted". The planning inspector is set to decide on the issue in six weeks time.

Despite the council filing an enforcement order against the branch - which has been flagrantly ignored - it is the protesters who have faced a clampdown from the authorities. Police have kept a constant presence and protesters have been photographed and warned under council noise by-laws for speaking on megaphones. Earlier this week the American anti-consumerist performance artist Reverend Billy came along in a lively show of support for the campaign.

Locals are concerned that the vibrant St James Street will lose its character as local businesses are squeezed out by multinationals. Local campaigner Jon Barrenechea commented that "there are already sixteen other coffee outlets in the area so there is no need for it. Those local, independent businesses need all the help they can get."

SCHOOL OF PROTEST

Protests are continuing at Lewisham Bridge Primary School, which is being occupied by locals to prevent the Grade II listed building from being knocked down by the council and replaced with a privatised mega-school. This week the Hands Off Lewisham Bridge group extended its ongoing occupation of the rooftop to the nearby garden, which will be used for a community space and food growing. The rooftop protest camp has received an eviction notice, and will need support to resist an eviction. There is an open day today (12th) from 3pm, so all are invited to come down and say hello and have a cup of tea. Find the school on Elmira St, London SE13 7BN.

* See www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=94554226367&ref=ts

WELL UNFAIR REFORM

"The Welfare Reform Bill was designed for the land of the never-ending boom. We are now stuck in the quagmire of recession." - Frank Field, MP.

With unemployment in Britain passing the two million mark and steadily rising, the government is seemingly still clinging to a fantasy that they can boot everybody off benefits and into non-existent jobs. The Welfare Reform Bill received its first airing in the House Of Lords this Wednesday, proposing a dismantling of the welfare system on a scale Margaret Thatcher would be proud of if she still had any marbles left.

This is a multiple attack on the most vulnerable in society. Income Support will go - affecting amongst others, maternity and carers' allowances, and especially single parents. Mothers will face a fine - leading to prison - if they refuse to name the father of their child on the birth certificate, and up to seven years for giving false information. Non-payment of child maintenance may lead to the seizure of passports and driving licenses. Drink and drug addicts will have to submit to testing and rehabilitation, and those who can't find jobs after a two year period will have to 'work for their benefits'. There will be sanctions for non-attendance at job centres and work-focused interviews for the over 60's. The list goes on. Inevitably immigrants, who, because of institutionalised racism, are the lowest paid and often the first to lose their job, will also be disproportionately affected.

Of course there's good side to all this for someone: employers will be able to bypass the minimum wage by workfare, and privatised prisons will continue to profit from an increase in 'criminals'. That this Bill is being waved through by MPs who have been busy lining their own pockets with taxpayers money - during a time of economic crisis where vast amounts have gone on bailing out the banks - shows how completely divorced from reality they are.

* The Policing and Crime Bill is also currently going through Parliament, further criminalising prostitution as new offences, longer sentences and forced rehabilitation for sex workers and clients is put on the table. Safe brothels will be closed and police and prosecutors will be able to keep 50% of all monies seized, heightening their vested interest in staging raids. The bill will inevitably force prostitution underground, yet another blow to vulnerable sex workers whose numbers can only increase as a result of the benefit cuts. www.prostitutescollective.net

Party & Protest
Events listing updated weekly
www.schnews.org.uk/pap

FORM A DISORDERLY KEW

The London Eco Village (See SchNEWS 677) is up and running on squatted landed in Brentford, west London. Last Saturday (6th) around 70 people descended on a site at Kew Bridge, clearing it of debris, installing a kitchen and compost toilet and beginning work on a herb garden.

A spokesperson told SchNEWS that the guerrilla gardeners have had an extremely positive reaction from the local community and that even the old bill dropped in, telling them to give them a call if anyone gives them any hassle.

As well as developing the garden, the aim is to open up the site to the community to promote sustainable living by staging regular open days and workshops and inviting local schools to get involved in the project.

Anyone wanting to get involved or willing to contribute much needed materials can contact Carolyn on 01727 812369 or Gareth on 07515 166011 or email diggers360@yahoo.co.uk

PLANE SELFISH

In the early hours of Wednesday morning five people cut through the perimeter fence of London City Airport and locked themselves to a private jet forming a large human wheel-clamp out of their bodies and metal tubes.

The five protesters from Plane Stupid were highlighting the selfishness of private jet use which until the recession was the fastest growing section of the aviation industry. A spokesperson for Plane Stupid said "Because of their low passenger capacity, small jets emit between five and ten times more carbon per passenger than commercial flights. In an age where we face potentially catastrophic climate change, this is no longer an acceptable form of transport. It's time that private jets were grounded for good."

London City Airport, while being a hub for rich business people, does very little for the residents of Newham: air pollution levels regularly exceed European safety limits and Newham has the highest levels of mortality in under 30s in the UK from asthma. In just over 20 years the airport has only managed to directly employ 120 Newham residents out of the 406 directly employed staff the airport claim to employ.

The five were arrested for criminal damage and aggravated trespass.

* www.planestupid.com

...and finally...

The Ministry of Justice, naturally unconcerned about pursuing MP expense fiddling crooks, is more worried about slang in prisons. It seems that those doing bird are refusing to conveniently refer to drugs openly using such words as 'heroin' and 'crack' and apparently have taken to using code words. Fancy that! But this is not exactly a new idea of course - in fact the lingo worrying the rozzers so much is apparently similar to Elizabethan thieves' cant, believed to have been developed from Romani roots by medieval gypsies.

Rochdale prison officers say that after exhaustive code breaking they have determined the cantish terms 'chat' and 'onick' mean heroin, 'cawbe' is crack and 'inick' is code for a cell phone or a SIM card.

They don't explain what 16th century blaggers were doing with words for mobile phones - let alone heroin or crack - but the MoJ is taking no chances and has put all chokeys around the country on alert to look out for coney-catchers.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - we're really glimflashy about all these hulvers running the ox-house. Honest!

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