

Weekly SchNEWS

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Friday 2nd October 2009

Free/Donation

Issue 693

WHO ARE YA? AS SchNEWS LOOKS THE WRONG WAY AT THE ENGLISH DEFENCE LEAGUE

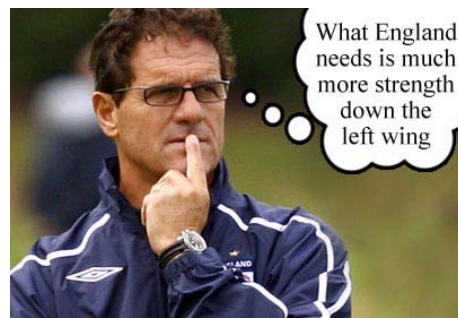
Seemingly coming from nowhere, the EDL and their allies have grabbed headlines and created a very public right-wing street presence for the first time in many years. Although they've had a sound thrashing everywhere they've raised their heads since their first announced demo in Birmingham in August, (see SchNEWS 687) they keep coming back for more.

In fact their latest flyer takes advantage of the beatings they've received – with the slogan "It's not racist to oppose Radical Islam" the image (taken during the Birmingham fighting), is of a grey haired geezer having the Union Jack pulled off him by a snarling mob of Asian youth. In a high profile grab for attention they're planning demos in Manchester on Oct 10th, Swansea on the 17th and Newport on the 24th. They're coming to town near you, soon.

So are the EDL racist, fascist or what? They've made a big deal about how they have

black members and in a recent photo opportunity (for the *Daily Star*), they publicly burned the swastika flag and brandished a sign defending "Israel's right to exist". In that sense they're doing a lot to distance themselves from the lunatic far-right's obsession with the evil hand of the Jew being behind every disaster that befalls the white race. This has caused a certain amount of amusing kerfuffle on Stormfront, (our favourite race-hate website) with the white supremacist wi-fi warriors really not knowing whether to sieg heil or stay away. The EDL have even taken to brandishing the Israeli flag at their demos.

But the EDL aren't the first organisation on the right to trade in the tired old horse of anti-semitism for the brash new nag of Islamophobia. The BNP took much the same route a few years ago. Back in 2004 Nick Griffin penned a column explicitly distancing himself from what had been the orthodoxy of his fellow-travellers



on the far-right (only ten years ago Nick was as raving a holocaust-denying, anti-semitic as one could hope to meet in a dark alley). The tabloid hysteria and public reaction following 9/11 and 7/7 created an environment in which campaigning against radical Islam was likely to be far more fruitful. Since then the BNP's focus has been on Muslims, with Nick Griffin referring to Islam as 'a cancer'. The party has even had a Jewish candidate in Epping Forest.

Some criticism of "radical Islam" is obviously entirely valid – and indeed there's probably a few hundred nutters in the country who would like to see the victory of a global caliphate and the introduction of sharia law, but they're hardly representative of the Muslim community as a whole. In fact they probably see the EDL as a brilliant recruiting tool. But strangely, the EDL haven't chosen to stand outside Finsbury Park mosque; instead they've taken their cause to the centre of major cities with large Muslim populations and waited for it to kick off.

Could this all be part of an overall strategy? Who benefits from images of radicalised Asian youth fighting with outnumbered white men? The perception that some kind of race-war is taking place on the UK's streets can only benefit the BNP. As long as the resistance to the EDL is perceived as coming entirely from Muslim youth then this becomes a persuasive narrative for many. A 'strategy of tension' could pay dividends for white nationalists. The 2001 Oldham riots were sparked by National Front activists in Asian areas (See SchNEWS 313). As coverage of the EDL

Continued overleaf...

PRESS GANGED AS COPS USE JOURNALISTS FOR EVIDENCE GATHERING

Earlier this week Sussex Police forced Brighton's local rag *The Argus* to hand over footage of the Brighton Mayday demo (see SchNEWS 675). Pushing a 'special procedure production order' through Lewes Crown Court, under section 9 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, the police got the courts to grant an order for "all media containing moving and/or still images...published and unpublished of the march/procession/assembly/demonstration and subsequent disturbances which took place in Brighton, East Sussex on May 4, 2009."

After crossing the hurdle of their own stupidity (the police had to resubmit their application to the courts as they'd made crucial mistakes in their original submission), Sussex's boys in blue found it fairly easy to persuade the judges that it was necessary to dump on journalistic integrity from a great height in order to find the culprits responsible for kicking over some bins and redecorating the front of McDonalds and Barclay's.

According to the legal team at Newsquest (*The Argus*' dark overlords) it's 'fairly standard' for the police to request/demand/threaten footage and information from journalists, with 700 demands like this made every year. What's different about this case is that, as anyone who was at the Mayday demo (or saw it on telly) will know, the entire event from beginning to end was already filmed by FIT cops and took place in some of the most CCTV'd areas of the UK. Presumably, the police want to use *The Argus*' footage to identify protesters. In other words, force the media into operating as a conscripted FIT team.

We spoke to *Argus* crime reporter Ben Parsons

about the implications for both the press and protesters of this latest police boot stamping on the fragile neck of civil liberties. Parsons said:

"It puts us in a difficult position. We act in a spirit of co-operation but not collaboration with the police. The line we (*Argus*/Newsquest) take is that we won't just hand stuff over because they ask for it, they have to go through the formal legal process. We don't send our cameramen out to act as extra eyes for the police. It's not how we see our role, we're not data gathering source for the police."

The EDO decommissioners who targeted the Brighton-based arms factory back in January (See SchNEWS 663) have had their court case adjourned until May 17th 2010, due to delays in finding legal aid and the prosecution's seeming reluctance to provide evidence.

Despite this, the planned week of solidarity events is going ahead during 17th - 26th of October. The line-up includes:

* **Sat 17th** - Decommissioners solidarity demo in Bristol. Meeting opposite Hippodrome at 2pm ** Launch demo of Target Brimar, Manchester see <http://targetbrimar.org.uk> ** **Mon 19th** - Rally outside Brighton Town Hall 12 noon-2pm calling on Brighton and Hove Council to condemn EDO. ** **Thurs 22nd** - Rally 12noon-2pm outside the Foreign Office, London, demanding an end of arms exports to Israel. ** **Fri 23rd** - **Bass Not Bombs** benefit gig, Bristol, featuring Lowkey, Ironside, Dub Revolution and more.

* **For more see www.smashedo.org.uk**

GIVEN A BARAK-ING

Ehud Barak, Israeli defence minister and 'genius' behind the 28 day aerial bombardment of Gaza's refugee camps last winter (See SchNEWS 661), showed his face at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton this week. But it wasn't just Gordon Brown who was welcoming him to Britain; he also arrived to a team of UK lawyers - acting on behalf of their Palestinian counterparts - applying for an arrest warrant against him for his involvement in the killing of 1,400 people in 'Operation Cast Lead'.

Citing the precedent of the ICC ruling which issued an arrest warrant for Sudan's president for war crimes in Darfur, legal teams applied for a warrant through the City of Westminster magistrates court this week. But Attorney Tayaab Ali confirmed on Tuesday (29th) that the application had been denied, with the judge citing the immunity tendered to senior foreign officials, not to mention the fact that he was hobnobbing with Gordy down in Brighton.

However his presence didn't go entirely unnoticed. With little more than 12 hours notice a national demo was called, and some 50 people turned up late Tuesday night (29th) to protest against an even more unwelcome than usual guest at the party conference.

* See www.palestinecampaign.org

in the mainstream press didn't start until their Birmingham demos, not many people are aware of the ruckus in Luton back in May (See SchNEWS 670), when pre-cursors to the EDL overturned cars and smashed windows in Asian areas. That's why the youth are out in numbers to confront them.

As the far-right seemed to break up into one main party (the BNP) seeking electoral success, and a bewildering variety of splinter groups (compared to the loony far-right the left is just one big happy family), many were left wondering – where are the footsoldiers? A crucial part of any fascist party's route to power lies through control of the streets or, as Nick Griffin once put it, "well-directed fists and boots". A BNP that devotes itself exclusively to ballot box politics isn't likely to end up in government. On the other hand being publicly associated with a gang of boneheads probably isn't going to get you invited on to Question Time. The BNP also publicly disassociated themselves from the instigators of the Oldham trouble, while privately congratulating them.

Searchlight have uncovered numerous behind-the-scenes links between the BNP and the EDL, with BNP organisers taking a leading role. That at least would explain the EDL's public hatred of the National Front, long the BNP's political rivals. Certainly a glance at the EDL's forums suggests that there is no chance of them forming their own political party. With Casuals United they are trying to recruit from the football terraces as though it's like the 70s when anti-IRA sentiment was the single issue that bound the feuding football tribes together.

How much of a threat are the EDL? Potentially, given the anti-Islamic propaganda spewed out by the tabloid press, they could act as a potent recruiting tool for the far-right, sparking riots which lead to greater voter turnout for the BNP. But it's questionable how many of their footsoldiers are really ideologically committed to the project and, if met with a robust response now, they may disappear as quickly as they came.

* See www.antifa.org.uk

ON YER DENMARKS...

The run up to December's COP 15 climate summit in Copenhagen (7th - 18th), kicked off last Saturday (26th) with around 1,500 demonstrators taking part in a mass demo and attempted sabotage of a coal fired power plant on the eastern edge of the city. Protesters marched in two blocks designed to be adaptable to changing police manoeuvres, culminating in a huge rally in front of the Amager power station, whilst another group cut a hole in the boundary fence and got onto the site. According to safety regulations, this should have caused production to stop, but not wanting to break the habit of a lifetime, the power station carried on regardless of the potential risk to human health.

Seen as a trial run for the Reclaim Power! march on 16th December by law enforcement and activists alike, police used new anti-protest laws, arresting an estimated 100 people in mass 'preventative' arrests and injuring many with baton-happy tactics. Under this mass arrest technique, police kettle protesters and arrest them one by one. These unlucky comrades are then sat in long lines and forced to wait for the vans to arrive to cart them off to the local cop shop.

The Danish press sided with the work of the demonstrators, and the group who organised the action, Shut It Down, announced that although the plant didn't grind to a halt as planned, they were happy with their achievements and saw it as an affirmative step towards the internationally planned action in December. See <http://shutitdown.dk>

VESTAS INTERESTS

It's been eventful at Vestas recently with police busting barricades, arrests and court appearances.

Last week police managed to remove the majority of the wind turbine blades from the site after breaking up the protest camp early in the morning. Arriving before protesters had a chance to lock on or get up a tripod, cops handed out dispersal agreements, including a map showing the area recipients were banned from entering for three months.

Threatened with arrest and bail preventing them from returning, they moved out. Three hours later the blades were loaded onto waiting barges. Cops and heavies were swarming around the area all day, snuffing out any chance of direct action.

The week before, police arrested four activists who had scaled a crane in an attempt to stop removal of the blades (see SchNEWS 691). Their court hearing took place on Tuesday (29th). After the four pleaded not guilty and elected to have a jury trial, the date was set for March 16th next year. The judge also eased some of the draconian bail restrictions previously imposed banning them from the Isle of Wight completely and preventing them from even seeing each other.

The next day was the turn of James Beecher, up on charges of aggravated trespass and going equipped to cause criminal damage, after being nabbed climbing into a wind turbine blade with 'Save Vestas' stickers, tape, glue and cable ties. James also elected for a jury trial and was released on bail until November 27th.

Vestas workers and activists also made it to Brighton last weekend as the (Indian) Summer of Mild Irritation descended on the Labour Party conference, taking place spitting distance from SchNEWS HQ (although despite our best efforts nobody managed to land a greenie on Lord Mandy). Trying to bring the campaign to the assembled grumpy trots and miffed liberals, one worker addressed the crowd from the sound system van while another spoke at the post-protest meeting.

Back on the Isle of Wight, demonstrators are regrouping. The camp at the magic roundabout is still going strong and actions continue. In recent days activists have set up a Vestas theatre, with the site gates as the stage and po-faced security guards as the starring thespians.

As ever there is still plenty to be done and more support is urgently needed. "The campaign is definitely not over," Jackie told SchNEWS, "it's just changed its direction."

* See www.savevestas.wordpress.com

ALL SIZEWELL THAT ENDS WELL

This Tuesday five anti-nuclear blockaders were acquitted at Lowestoft magistrates. Charged with aggravated trespass during a demo at Sizewell B nuclear power station on July 24th last year, the five were acquitted when the prosecution failed to provide evidence that they were on private land ... mainly because they were in fact on a public road.

And sadly they never even got to bring out their expert witness to give evidence about the recent German studies (the KiKK study) which found that all types of cancer as well as leukaemia occurred significantly more frequently in the vicinity (within 5 km) of nuclear power plants... See <http://stopnuclearpower.blogspot.com>

* **Nuclear power campaign strategy weekend** 21-22 November, London (venue to be announced) To book your place, help organise or get more details email nonewnuclear@aktivix.org or ring 01524 383 012 and leave a message.

PARTY & PROTEST

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

SchNEWS IN BRIEF

Attempting to draw attention to the continuing crisis in Calais (See SchNEWS 692), a group of migrants began a hunger strike on Wednesday (30th). The migrants, from Iran, Afghanistan, Sudan, Palestine, and Egypt, have vowed to continue the strike until Western countries offer them asylum. Benjamin, an asylum seeker from Iran said: "The police tell us we cannot be here but we have nowhere to go. The world is ignoring us so we are making our suffering public by going on hunger strike in full view."

* **New social centre open in London** at 7 Giltspur St EC1 A9 - nearest tube St Pauls. According to them "No to fascism and domination by system of false money" - Ring 07961244310 or just knock and ask for Frank.

* **Oct 13 - Beat The Bankers! Manchester** - Bring pots and pans to make some noise against the bankers who have brought the economy to its knees, and it's the poor who will pay. 5.30pm outside Northern Rock, Albert Square, Manchester.

* **Oct 17-18 - The Great Climate Swoop** - Mass blockade of one of the UK's biggest coal fired power stations at Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Nottinghamshire 07932 096677 www.thegreatclimateswoop.org

...and finally...

Two physicists in Zurich claim to have worked out exactly who the global super elite really are. Stefano Battiston and James Glatfelder undertook a complex analysis of the world's financial markets as they were in 2007, covering 48 of the richest economies. They worked through the tangled web of stock purchases, company ownership and indebtedness to major banks and venture capitalists and the like to ascertain where they'd end up if they kept 'followin' da money' - what they call the "backbone" of the economy.

Glatfelder was quoted as saying: "You start off with these huge national networks that are really big, quite dense. From that you're able to ... unveil the important structure in this original big network. You then realize most of the network isn't at all important."

Their methodology accounted for secondary ownership - owning stock in companies who then own stock in another company - in an attempt to quantify the potential control or influence a given entity might be able to exert on a market.

They define "backbones" as being whoever own 80% of a country's market capital and, amazingly (shock, horror, surprise), they consisted of shockingly few big fish shareholders.

And fewest of all were found in (...wait for it) the US, UK and Australia.

They were apparently surprised that their findings 'uncovered' that nearly everything is really owned by a few super powerful hedge fund owner types. The biggest they identified was US-based Capital Group Companies - with a trillion dollars under their control they've got their fingers in all the major pies in 36 of the 48 countries surveyed. Fidelity Investments is another in the trillion dollar club. Between them they own sizable chunks of nearly every big UK corporate. Their PR is not existent - the message to enquiring journalists: "I'm sorry, but we do not discuss our holdings, our philosophies or our strategies." But at least we know who they are now.

The scientists are next going to work on a paper tentatively entitled "Ursine defecation in arctic environments."

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, look out for things that go BNP in the night. Honest.

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