



WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER EURO-TRASHING...

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UNREST FOR THE WICKED

A EUROPEAN UNION OF PROTESTS KICKS OFF AGAINST AUSTERITY MEASURES

Mass protests and strikes have broken out across the whole of Europe this week as the reality of already imposed and still pending austerity cuts becomes clear. Across the EU, rallies were held in thirteen capital cities and in Spain a general strike saw millions take action.

On Wednesday (29th) around 100,000 representatives of the European trade union movement, including German miners and Polish shipbuilders, brought Brussels to a standstill to protest against the forthcoming savage spending cuts. The message "We will not pay for their crisis" is now resounding across Europe.

Despite trade union claims that the event passed off entirely peacefully, the anti-capitalist bloc on the demonstration clashed with police. Their numbers swelled by visiting No Borders activists (see SchNEWS 740), local anti-capitalists joined the main demo. However they were isolated and surrounded by plain-clothes police. Over a hundred were arrested 'preventatively' and many others injured. There was a heavy police presence outside the No Borders campsite all day.

As the day of action - called by trade union umbrella organisation ETUC - took place outside, the EU Commission announced a package of proposals to crack down on hard-pressed member states, threatening them with huge fines if they failed to run their economies "efficiently."

There can be no doubt that the Commissions idea of 'efficiency' will closely mirror the IMF prescriptions for failing economies - privatise everything in sight, cut benefits and drive down public sector wages. Banks of course, will still profit healthily having receiving life support from the public sector.

Meanwhile in Greece, where the financial crisis hit first and hardest in a country that was already in open revolt (see SchNEWS 711, 720, 733), new laws were introduced criminalising trade union activity. The government has completely removed the protective mechanisms within previous anti-terror legislation which previously prevented it from applying to trade unions or political activity 'in defence of freedom'.

Simultaneously the law now punishes more severely (with 10 years imprisonment) anyone who gives "substantial" information to terrorist organizations to facilitate their work, or gives them material or "immaterial" support even if the "terrorist acts" were not finally carried out.

With these changes, the prosecuting authorities are basically given a free hand. Even minor offences (such as property damage or disruption of transport, etc) carried out by an organized team of demonstrators can now be arbitrarily characterised as terrorist activity. Coupled with this is new legislation allowing state's witnesses to be anonymous. Can the rest of Europe expect similar draconian legislation as unrest spreads?

Poland

Trade unionists threw petards and blew whistles as they marched through Warsaw demanding an end to 'abuse by economic elites'.

Spain

Unions claimed ten million workers stayed at home for the nationwide strike. There were 11 reported injuries and 65 arrests during clashes with police.

Greece

Rail workers and doctors walked out yesterday in protest at deep cuts into workers' allowances, which are designed to reduce the national deficit.

Slovenia

About half of public-sector workers remained on strike for the third day against a planned wage freeze.

Ireland

One man blocked the entrance to the Dail, the Irish parliament, with a cement truck in a protest against the country's enormous bank bailouts. Written across the back of the lorry was: "All politicians should be sacked." - finally a concrete answer we can all agree with.

* For more from Brussels see <http://bxl.indymedia.org> (mostly in French), www.noborderbxl.eu.org (in 12 languages including English)



NO BORDERS UPDATE: BRUSS VERSUS THEM

The No Borders Camp in Brussels is in full flow, mixing up education and action to spread the word about Fortress Europe's repressive immigration policies.

After a crowd of around 100 assembled on Saturday (25th), the action got underway on Sunday (26th) with a demonstration targeting a local detention centre. A heavy-handed police response saw the crowd kettled and seventeen arrested. A photographer who took a picture of an injured policeman was snatched out of the crowd, pulled behind a concrete block and beaten up.

On Wednesday, a No Borders contingent joined the anti-capitalist block in the anti-austerity march (See *Unrest For The Wicked*).

Numbers on the camp have been swelling throughout the week and there are currently around 600 campers in Brussels. See next week for a full action report.

* See www.bxl.indymedia.org/action_timelines/timeline-nobordercamp-brussels

EDLs ON WHEELS

Coach company Ausden Clark has announced a ban on carrying the EDL to demos following a Corporate Watch exposé of fash-ferrying bus businesses.

In an email to Corporate Watch, Ausden Clark's operations manager Adam Frost said, "We are deeply sorry we got involved in the transportation of such narrow-minded individuals... and we are NEVER going to transport this group again."

Mr Frost claimed the company only became aware they were bussing fascists to Bradford to try and start a race riot when they were contacted by the coach's concerned driver. Apparently the bus had been booked by a previously unknown man who gave false details and paid in cash.

On arriving in Bradford the unfortunate driver found his coach used as barricade to separate the howling racists from anti-fascist protesters with the police sandwiched in-between.

The apology was prompted by a Corporate Watch article headlined 'Nationalist Express' (borrowed from SchNEWS 735 perhaps?) which listed details of coach companies accepting the racist dollar marking them out for letters of protest from readers and 'concerned clients'.

* See www.corporatewatch.org/?lid=3726 for the full list of companies.

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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SCHNEWSFLASH: ECUADOR

This Thursday morning (30th) the government of Ecuador fell foul of a coup attempt by an alliance of military, police and right-wing politicians. President Rafael Correa is currently being held in a military hospital while rebel soldiers have taken control of the runway in Quito airport and controls the most important military airbase.

Trouble started at around 9am, when a thousand police took to the streets demonstrating against cuts to the bonuses they receive in addition to their wages and terms of promotions. It quickly became obvious that this was little more than a pretext to cause right-wing chaos when soldiers occupied the airport...

* See www.schnews.org.uk for the full story

PUMP ACTION

Climate activists shut down a London Shell garage over the weekend with a rooftop occupation and series of mischievous pixie actions.

Members of the "Petroseige Crew" clambered onto the roof of the Camberwell petrol station on Saturday (25th) afternoon. When staff refused to close the garage and continued to serve customers, activists blockaded the forecourt entrance and exit. Red paint was thrown all over one of the pumps.

Eventually, cops arrived to forcibly reopen the site. However, just a few hours later another autonomous imp hit the 'emergency pump shutoff' button. A good 20 hours later the site remained closed and activists had called for a 'party at the pumps'.

The protesters declared the action in solidarity with the people of Rosspoint in their struggle against Shell (see SchNEWS 733) – see also www.shelltosea.com

CHEEKY MINKS

Around 5,000 mink are roaming Northern Ireland, having been broken out of a farm which breeds them for fur. In the early hours of Sunday (26th), animal rights activists cut the wires of cages containing 32,000 animals, then cut the fences and opened the gates of Anderson's farm, providing them with an escape route out into the woods of County Donegal. While over 100 have been recaptured, groups of mink have been spotted standing, dazzled by headlights, in the middle of roads.

This farm normally holds 52,000 mink in its caged pens. Mink belong to the weasel family and are highly prized for their soft, glossy fur.

Animal-rights groups in Ireland have stated they had nothing to do with it, although they did praise the action. "I commend whoever risked their freedom to do this as these animals have a horrendous life," said a spokesperson for Ireland's Alliance for Animal Rights.

* See www.afaireland.org

INCA-HOOTS

Last Friday (24th) saw hundreds of student protesters topple a perimeter wall at Cuzco, Peru's second busiest airport, leading to flight suspensions and cancellations that left over 500 tourists high and dry. Elsewhere protesters managed to overturn a civic vehicle. Cuzco is the main 'hub' serving up tourists for Machu Picchu, the lost city of the Incas. The site attracts over 1,500 eager sightseers daily.

The situation has arisen because the government plans to build a reservoir in the nearby district of Espinar. Locals downstream fear it will eliminate their source of water. Students are backing the residents who have been blocking roads in the region for the past two weeks in protest.

The feisty protests at the airport were eventually broken up by tear gas. Official claim things were back to normal after a two-day closure, but the protesters have vowed to fight on.

TEK THE BISCUIT

Today (1st) sees the preliminary hearing in Haverfordwest Magistrates Court for those arrested and charged during the bust of the UK Teknival in Pembrokeshire this May (see SchNEWS 727) – and the numbers answering charges has risen dramatically from six to as many as seventeen.

The case has been deemed too complex for the local magistrates to deal with alone, so it's now going before a district judge 'for direction'. What this means exactly for those charged (apart from yet another long and expensive journey to Wales) isn't yet clear, but a top UK defence lawyer has warned that Haverfordwest is a 'kangaroo court', and says, 'there'll be no justice there'.

Justice is looking pretty thin on the ground for one of the defendants in particular, who will have to appear in court without any legal representation whatsoever. It turns out that the local Haverfordwest solicitor he'd got to help fight his case neglected to process his claims for legal aid in time, despite them being submitted months ago. Effectively this means that his case can't go to a decent solicitor who is an expert in the field. Without fair representation, it has much less chance of being thrown out of court.

With already draconian licensing laws – and worsening – it's becoming harder to hold gatherings and create festivals and entertainment away from the confines of the commercial mainstream.

Those on charges face heavy fines or even imprisonment – and were already plunged into great debt by costs incurred when the Teknival was busted and closed down, with gear confiscated and vehicles impounded. The main trial is planned for November. Watch this space for developments and join the Facebook group 'Drop the Charges over UKTek' to show your support.

* This Saturday (2nd) there will be a big benefit night in Bristol to raise funds to support the UK-Tek arrestees. A mass of 15 soundsystems will join forces at the Lakota, 6 Upper York St, Bristol, for at night of thumping dance music from jungle and techno to trance, 10pm-6am, £10 on door.

* See www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=141577695869973&ref=ts www.dalera6.co.uk

HAPPEN-STANCE

The Happendon Wood protest camp, protecting the Douglas Valley south of Glasgow from open-cast coal mining (see SchNEWS 739), is having a Action Camp this weekend (Oct 1st-4th). The site was squatted on September 12th, just down the road from Mainhill, a seven-month protest camp against Scottish Coal which was evicted in February this year (See SchNEWS 708).

The Action Camp will be about protest camp skill-sharing - direct action, building, cooking etc - and exploring the biodiversity of the area. There will be accommodation space and communal meals for donation - but bring wet-weather gear, stuff to help build defences and action materials.

On Monday (27th), the camp was put on alert after a visit from the National Eviction Team. They had a snoop around, called it a 'pissy little camp', then left. No eviction papers have yet to be received but the bailiffs will be aware that it took five days to evict Mainhill, with 45 arrests.

The camp is in the Douglas Valley near M74 junction 12, between Carlisle and Glasgow. Site mob 7806926040 <http://happendon.coalition-scotland.org.uk>

PARTY & PROTEST

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

AMSTERDAM-BUSTERS

On Friday 1st October, an historic ban on squatting in all circumstances comes into force in the Netherlands. All Dutch squatters will be instantly criminalised - in a country where squatting used to be largely legal. The new law, voted for by the right-wing, Christian-dominated Dutch government, makes squatting a crime punishable by up to 2 years and 8 months in prison.

It's a far cry from the golden age of Dutch squatting in the 70s and 80s, when a table, chair and bed were all you needed to legally set up home in an unoccupied building. At this time there was a vibrant, thriving community of around twenty thousand squatters. Numbers have dwindled substantially since thanks to a series of increasingly repressive measures, including the introduction of 'anti-squatting', whereby unoccupied buildings are watched over by enterprises whose job is to prevent squatting, with some remaining space let cheaply to tenants.

Despite some city councils claiming that the new law won't have too much of an effect on already existing squats, the capital Amsterdam is preparing for a sudden crackdown. The Mayor and police commissioner have promised to waste no time in exercising their new eviction powers. They have announced plans to evict around 200 of Amsterdam's 300 squats, which house several hundred people, over the coming months.

You can bet it won't be an easy ride. On Monday (26th) around 300 squatters staged a demonstration in Amsterdam's Dam Square, setting up a tent camp to highlight the possibility of their impending homelessness, and occupied the building that is the city's former fire brigade headquarters. More protests are planned, with 1st October set to be the main day of action in Amsterdam, and Nijmegen on the 2nd. Activists and squatters in the Netherlands have issued a call out for people to demonstrate over the coming days.

* See <http://indymedia.nl>, <http://squat.net>

...and finally...

Who can forget the pictures of George W. Bush lurching around on a Segway two-wheeled electric scooter and having to jump off before he lost control. If that wasn't the moment the fate of the hi-tech Californian-dreaming future personal transportation solution became doomed, then don't worry, it's now well and truly destined to go the same way as the Sinclair C5 or the DeLorean sports car.

On Monday, the millionaire owner of the Segway company, Jimi Heselden, was found dead at the bottom of a cliff near his Yorkshire home – complete with his precious pogo-stick on wheels beside him. Police aren't treating the death as suspicious – just stupid, presumably, for expecting his gzyrosopic duo-cycle, designed for the smooth plazas of Pasadena, to have the footing of a mountain goat on a rocky cliff edge.

Still, the deceased is no great loss to humanity – he made his fortune selling a type of blast-proof metal and mesh fencing for military use – as used by coalition troops!

With Iraq and Afghanistan, business was booming so much that Heselden was recently able to show largesse by donating £10m to a community charity working in 'disadvantaged' areas. The irony of his fortune coming from areas considerably more 'disadvantaged' than anywhere around Leeds is only matched by the petard-ish nature of his demise. It's like us tripping up and getting impaled by our own punning headlines...

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SchNEWS warns all EU-crats, Europe: it's not working. Honest.

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