

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER WILD WEST EUROPE...



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FRONTIER LAW

EYEWITNESS REPORT FROM NO BORDERS DEMONSTRATION IN BRUSSELS

The No Borders camp in Brussels last week persevered in getting their message across by means of various direct actions despite widespread arbitrary arrests and shocking police violence, including physical and sexual abuse in police custody. At least 500 mostly 'preventative' arrests took place, and 14 people were seriously injured. **Here's a day by day report...**

SATURDAY 25TH

The camp officially began on the site of an old railway station, now a huge development called "Tour and Taxis". Workshops also took place at Gesu, a large squatted monastery housing migrant families and activists, a thirty minute walk from camp.

SUNDAY 26TH

The first demonstration kicked off at 2pm with a visit to an allegedly closed detention centre near Nossegem Station. The noise demo was in commemoration of Semira Adamu, killed in 1998 by police deporting her.

Police used horses, a water cannon and a barbed-wire fence to block protesters' access to the 'closed' centre, where migrants were visible at windows, apparently trying to communicate.

Those coming by train from the camp were blocked, frisked by police and had their cars searched. 100 people were kettled for an hour, then released on condition of bag searches and forced to show their faces to a video camera. Police violence escalated during the demonstration at the centre, where a girl lying on the floor was kicked in the head by police and hospitalised. A bottle was thrown and hit a cop on the cheek. In retaliation, police grabbed a man from the crowd at random, beat him so badly his eardrum burst, and arrested him. All 17 arrestees were later released without charge.

WEDNESDAY 29TH

A Trades Union demo of 100,000 people marched against austerity cuts and ECOFIN (see Schnews 741). A space at the back of the demo was pre-arranged and cleared for No Borders to join the march in their own anti-capitalist block.

Determined not to allow No Borders to join the demo, police swept Brussels, arresting anyone suspected of being a camper. Mass "preventative arrests" clocked up to around 350. Inside the big police station at Ixelles many people were detained together in a large hall and later moved into cells. Inside people chanted and resisted with many removing their plastic handcuffs and damaging cells. Toilets and sinks were ripped off and bricks removed from walls. Police were unable to close some of the doors due to damage.

Using the distraction of the demo to their ad-

vantage, 30 activists blockaded a Frontex (the EU border security agency) conference for an hour before being removed by police.

THURSDAY 30TH

Several autonomous actions took place, including BP's headquarters which was blockaded, plus The Royal Palace Hall, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Greek Embassy spray-painted with slogans like "You have blood on your hands - No Borders".

A planned direct-action "game" was cancelled due to the mass arrests the previous day. Many people seemed physically and mentally exhausted after a traumatic time in police custody. Many were held for 12 hours without food, water or charges.

Later, two women from camp were picked up by police while walking in the direction of the Gesu squat. While in custody they were forced to strip in front of male officers. One woman refused and had clothes physically ripped off her. They were later released, again without charge, in a highly distressed state.

FRIDAY 1ST

The day of a planned demo. Police put a ban on any gathering of more than five people around Central Station from 3pm-6am. Police vans and water-cannons were at several locations near camp and few made it out without arrest.

In retaliation for the mass arrests and sexual violence, 30 people attacked a police station, breaking windows and doors, letting off smoke bombs and starting a fire. Police vans were also attacked with Molotovs. Six unrelated people caught up in the resulting turmoil were arrested. According to an eyewitness, they were heavily mistreated inside the station with beatings, kickings, spittings and verbal abuse lasting several hours. At least one of the arrested was visibly injured and constantly asking for a doctor. Dozens of police were present; the abuse took place in front of the office of the head of the police station.

Despite the repression, several other actions took place: anti-Frontex banners and flyering at the airport, Frontex windows and doors smashed and smoke bombs were let off, locks glued at the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). A building of Sodexho - the French hotel and catering company with a 50% share in Corrections Corporation of Australia and UK Detention Services, had windows smashed and oil was spilled over another Sodexho building. Steria, the company that designed the Eurodac fingerprinting database - leading to thousands of migrants a year being deported - had its windows smashed and "Smash Eurodac" spray-painted across it. The Italian Embassy had excrement thrown over it.



SATURDAY 2ND

The official No Borders demonstration, negotiated with police in advance. Numbers started small due to more police repression, but swelled to around 1200 over the day. By 1.20pm the center of Molenbeek, a popular neighbourhood with lots of migrants, was reportedly under siege. Riot police patrolled with dogs and many streets were blocked.

Meanwhile, three activists visited a police recruitment event at the Commensurate in Ixelles, Brussels to question the abusive, sexist and corrupt behaviour of police. One of the activists had been arrested getting on a bus to the union demo three days earlier. He was held for almost 24 hours with no food or water, strip-searched, humiliated and his wallet containing 250 Euros was "lost" by police. A female activist confronted police about the sexual abuse of women arrestees that week. The public event was well attended and activists were dragged out by flustered police in front of a shocked audience and held for over 8 hours, again without food or water. Their dictaphone was taken and its memory erased.

Later, a man and woman out walking near camp were stopped by police. The woman was told she was going to be raped before being bundled into a van by five policemen and her hood pulled down over her head. She was released soon after on the other side of camp, highly distressed.

Back on site, the owner of Tour and Taxis had rented out half the camp space inside the big train station to a "Brazilian dance party" which was not part of No Borders. Heras fences were erected dividing the space in two. A knife fight in the audience meant police were called and took this opportunity to enter the camp in full riot gear with batons raised and dogs on leads, causing panic. Fortunately the camp's police liaison team, along with Tour and Taxis own security, persuaded them to leave without incident.

Throughout the week activists have been working on finding accommodation for a Roma family with six children and another on the way who were staying at the camp. The search continues.

The camp legal team and lawyers are appealing for testimonies and complaints of mistreatment and preventative arrests by police. They can be contacted at juridixnbc@vluchteling.be. Other activists are also looking into taking action from their home countries. Contact your local No Borders group for details.

* See www.noborderbx1.eu.org

PARTY & PROTEST

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

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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RED LEICESTER

After the flop in Bradford (see SchNEWS 737), the EDL bandwagon is going to Leicester this Saturday (9th). This time their rally has been banned by the council, and the EDL have promised to illegally march anyway, and will not be liaising with police. But it seems that many in the EDL are happy to do it this way - with no police cordon to stop them from kicking off (and stop them getting their arses kicked!). So without the structure of an organised rally, they will have to assemble their 'mob' as it arrives in small groups - and police will have greater powers to disperse them. And then there'll be the anti-fascist counter-demos to contend with, without the police protection they've previously relied upon. The organisers of this illegal EDL rally will risk fines or imprisonment - so that'll be another problem for their organisation. All moving rallies are banned in Leicester that day, only static assemblies are allowed.

When the Leicester EDL rally was called, the Leicester UAF held an emergency meeting on September 9th, which was attacked by thugs. Two disrupted the meeting and several others assaulted UAF members, and the police came and arrested two EDL. Previously the Leicester UAF had received death threats and racist abuse over the phone from the EDL - leading to one arrest.

The EDL rally is 12pm-4.30pm from Humberstone Gate East, Leicester city centre, fairly near some Asian areas of the city. Opposing them will be the Muslim Defence League who will meet at Leicester Central Mosque, Conduit St, LE2 0JN, from 10.30am-5pm; the UAF rally will assemble 11.30am at the Clock Tower, city centre. There is little information about any call-out from autonomous anti-fascists, but they will be there on the streets taking it to the EDL.

Later in the month some of the EDL will be leaving dear Blighty to go to Amsterdam for the planned 'European Defence League' demo on October 30th in support of far-right, Islamophobe, Zionist politician Geert Wilders, who's trial for crimes of race hate began this week (4th). He faces a year in prison. The event is being organised by the European Freedom Initiative, which is an umbrella group for far-right Muslim-haters across Europe, including the new Dutch and French Defence Leagues - modelled on the EDL and also featuring football fans. Their rally will be at the Museumplein, Amsterdam, 2pm-5pm. Details about resistance to this will be given when known.

IT'S IN THEIR MAKE-UP

Palestine solidarity activists blockaded Israeli settlement company Ahava's Covent Garden shop on Saturday (2nd). The cosmetics company profits from the occupation of Palestine, selling Dead Sea mud and mineral products which all originate in the illegal Kibbutz Mipzta Shalem settlement in the West Bank.

Using a concrete lock-on, the two activists stayed put for four hours, keeping the shop closed for most of the day. An info-board informed curious passers-by of the illegality of the shop's merchandise.

They were only prised off when the police, unable to get a cutting team in, resorted to buying a hammer and chisel from a nearby hardware shop and having a crack at it themselves. Both blockaders were arrested and charged with aggravated trespass, but are planning a political court case as the charge only applies if the action had prevented 'lawful' business.

This is the fourth time Ahava, a target of the Israeli boycott campaign, has been blockaded (see SchNEWS 704). In August this year four activists were acquitted after facing charges for a similar action.

* See www.bigcampaign.org

CUT IT OUT!

An anti-cuts protest took place in Birmingham on Sunday (3rd) as the Tory conference began. Around 7000 took part in the 'Right to Work' march, which followed a carefully-planned route through the city centre. The march was not permitted near the conference venue, the ICC, and was kept on course by an 8ft high solid steel fence. A police spokesperson boasted afterwards that 'the protesters were peaceful and the operation went largely to plan'. Nothing to ruffle the government's feathers so far...

It seems the day's events may have had a greater effect on some of the protesters themselves. A black bloc of around 50 built up at the beginning of the march, but struggled to do anything away from the main march when attempts to break away were kettled by police. The cops slapped a Section 60 on the group, searched and demasked them. "The cops were flexing their muscles," one protester told SchNEWS, "They use events like this to practice their crack down on 'black bloc' tactics."

The general feeling among the radical block seems to be that the experience highlighted the need for more focussed action, avoiding the usual masks vs cops power games. With the details of the Chancellor's slash-and-burn agenda due on the 20th October, there's time to get inspired...

As one activist summed it up: "The government aren't scared of a few thousand people having a riot and smashing up the streets - they're scared of the general public sympathising with it."

* See <http://birmingham.indymedia.org.uk>

FUR CRYING OUT LOUD

The fur-sellers of Brick Lane, London, were confronted with a 40-strong group of animal rights activists on Saturday (2nd). The group congregated outside the targeted fur-peddler's shop by shop, before marching down Cheshire Street. Most of the stores tried to ignore the protests and called the police. Still, the majority were forced to shut up shop for the day, when they could no longer ignore the noisy faction demonstrating against their evil trade from the street outside.

In an apparent success, the owner of the Vintage Store came out to say that real fur would no longer be sold at his boutique. At another furry emporium information and literature was received by the owners with the conclusion of them considering a possible fur-free policy. Support was given by locals and the wider public, some of whom gave their vote of confidence for the boycott of fur-sellers.

Repeat protests are planned over the coming months to increase pressure on London's fur trade. * See www.caft.org.uk

DAM SQUATTERS

Amsterdam's squatters aren't taking the new anti-squatting laws (see SchNEWS 741) lying down. In answer to the new eviction policy 800 squatters and sympathisers demonstrated on October 1st. One house was immediately squatted and the demo remained for a while to support and celebrate this first "illegal squatting action". The protest was later violently attacked by police on foot and horse-back - which was initially resisted and pushed back - but eventually managed to split the demo. This didn't stop the squatters from fighting back and taking over the streets, which resulted in riots for several hours in Amsterdam's inner city. For the first time in a decade cops used tear gas.

Since Friday riot cops, special military police, water cannons and helicopters have been stationed throughout the city. The strategy seems to be one of keeping all the squatters in a constant state of emergency, leading to a rising tension in the city which the police are not used dealing with. People are expecting the first eviction wave to begin soon.

* Put <http://indymedia.nl> through Google translator

ITT'S HAMMERTIME

Smash EDO are holding a mass demo at EDO/ITT in Brighton on Wednesday 13th October. Anti arms trade campaigners plan to lay siege and shut them down for the day. This will be the first mass demonstration since the EDO Decommissioners, who smashed up the Brighton death dealers during Israel's massacre in Gaza, were acquitted by a unanimous jury verdict (See SchNEWS 729).

Info for the Day: Meet at the Wild Park Cafe at 10am, or if you're coming a long way a convergence space will open on the 12th. There will be a meeting about the demo at 7pm at the Cowley Club, an anarchist theme pub, 12 London Rd on the 12th where you can find out more about the demo and convergence space locations.

Previous mobilisations at EDO have seen paint pelted at EDO from Wild Park, windows put in after a mass invasion of EDO's property, MD Paul Hills' car redecorated and thousands of activists targeting companies investing in EDO in Brighton's city centre. Smash EDO press spokesperson Andrew Beckett said, "this time the message is clear - our aim is to close down the factory for the day. The police cannot stop us from surrounding EDO/ITT".

Sussex Police, gearing up for a charm offensive while dusting off their telescopic koshes and ordering in extra pepper spray, have recorded a YouTube appeal calling for Smash EDO to negotiate with them. Smash EDO have always maintained a non-negotiation stance on the grounds that "dissent is meaningless if it can only occur with state approval".

Despite the PR veneer, police attempts to clamp down on the campaign continue. This week a five year restraining order was slapped on Smash EDO campaigner Elijah Smith. One of the EDO decommissioners (see SchNEWS 729), he was convicted of witness intimidation after making a political outburst at Brighton Magistrates' Court while he was on trial for another EDO related offence. Smith had been on remand for the previous six months and was understandably pissed off. The order will impose an exclusion zone, preventing him from continuing to protest against EDO/ITT.

The judge used a new amendment to the Protection from Harassment Act (PHA) 1997, a law originally used to protect people from stalkers, but now frequently used against protesters. Restraining orders, which can now even be imposed on people who are found not guilty, may turn out to be a replacement for the increasingly out of fashion ASBOs. Previous attempts by EDO to slap injunctions on anti arms trade activists resulted in a year long high court battle ending in failure (see SchNEWS 492).

* See www.smashedo.org.uk/hammertime.htm

...and finally...

The sight of a hoodied-up youth is usually enough to strike terror into the heart of Middle England, but it must take an extreme level of paranoia to start getting the shakes when the youth is only two-years-old.

This happened last week in Norwich when a toddler was sternly ordered to take off his coat hood when he waddled into a Co-op with his grandad. The security guard wasn't going to take any chances with the latent criminal tendencies of a baby-faced hoodlum already well into the terrible twos.

When challenged over the obvious lack of threat involved, the guard revealed who he really fears - much bigger, older menaces. Apparently, 'eight-year-olds will moan' if they see special treatment being given to other pre-pre-teens. The steets might not be safe, but at least the Co-op is . . .

Disclaimer

SchNEWS advises all readers, buy yer hammer early before Brighton hardware shops run out of stock. Honest.

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