

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER SHEEP IN WOLF'S CLOTHING...



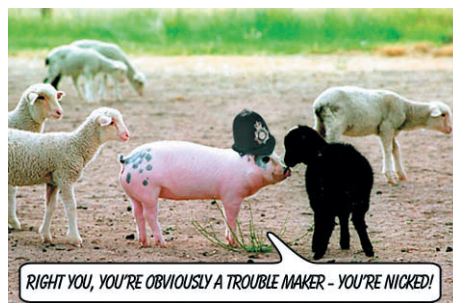
SchNEWS

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BAA BAA BLACK BLOC

AS COPS LAUNCH ACTIVIST WITCHUNT AFTER MARCH 26TH ACTIONS

Operation Brontide swung into full force last week, coincidentally just before the Royal wedding. Cops claim to be after 276 people for offences including violent disorder and criminal damage committed during the March for the Alternative on 26th March (see SchNEWS 765). In fact this is a legally dubious fishing exercise designed to seize equipment and display state power.

The Met followed up Wednesday morning's raids in Hove (see SchNEWS 769) with a number of "proactive raids across London", including Offmarket, Transition Heathrow, Petrosiege and Ratstar Social Centre, while images of "suspects" have been circulated amongst regional forces. These raids are allegedly "part of an intelligence led operation"; yet only two arrests were made directly related to the warrants executed at seven properties, neither of which have resulted in any charges.

The police are treating anyone who was in the convergence space or near the black bloc as un-

der suspicion of Conspiracy to Commit Criminal Damage and Conspiracy to Commit Violent Disorder. The logic being if you wore similar clothes to someone who smashed a window or punched a copper, you must have spoken to them about it beforehand. Obviously they would never even be able to charge, let alone get a conviction, based on this 'evidence'. However the Met are willing to raid houses, seize phones and laptops, transport people to London, interview them, then release them on police bail with no way of getting home.

Having spoken to several of those already hauled in, the interrogators' level of intelligence seems to be extremely low all round. Highlights include questions such as "have you ever been to a Black Bloc squat?" and "is the Black Bloc an organisation you hold dear to your heart?" Most people are then being released on police bail, which begs the question of why bother nicking them in the first place with bugger all evidence?

If you're worried about being nicked yourself check out the advice from one arrestee (<http://indymedia.org.uk/en/2011/05/478691.html>) and FITwatch (<http://northern-indymedia.org/articles/1079>): "If either you, or anyone you live with, went on the March for the Alternative and you "associated with members of Black Bloc" or went to the Mayfair convergence space, it's time for a clear-out. Anything you wore on the day needs to go, check through your phone if there are any dodgy texts deleting them is pointless- get a new number. Get a new hard drive for your computer or better still get rid of the whole thing, even just temporarily, cause if the police take it you can never trust it again."

* On Kate and Will's happy day itself, a further 55 people were arrested - resulting in a whole 5 people being charged. Arrests included all round nutter Chris Knight, for conspiracy to cause public nuisance, one man for singing "We All Live in a Fascist Regime" and several zombies.

The zombies were part of a Queer Resistance demo highlighting the impact of the cuts on the LGBTIQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer and intersex) community. It was an entirely peaceful 'Royal Zombie Wedding Celebration' complete with cake and marriage blessings, yet even this was too much for the Met to handle, with large numbers of cops snatching as many of the undead as they could get their hands on.

It seems that, thanks to some scaremongering news stories, the Met were left with more money than sense to protect the happy couple from the marauding anarchist menace. Having blown stacks of taxpayers money on trips to the seaside, mass preventative arrests and repression of peaceful protest hopefully they've got enough left to cover the inevitable legal bill.

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For being a potential kerb scrawler...

Police wrote a new chapter in idiocy at around 9.30 last Friday morning. A 16-year old from Kent was stopped and searched near Soho Square, London. Upon finding two pens on him he was promptly arrested for being "equipped to commit criminal damage".

After being in the cells for nine hours he was released - suffering only from having been fed dodgy green potatoes and beans. Our hero told SchNEWS, "I think they arrested me to try and deter me, if anything it's made me more likely to organise."

School kids, teachers, accountants and everyone else carrying writing materials beware: the cops have lost the plot and are making up the script as they go along...

TOTALLY STOKED

Following the Tesco / Telepathic Heights eviction riots in Bristol two weeks ago (see SchNEWS 769), bubbling anti-police sentiment spilled over into violence again last Thursday (28th) at a protest against the "total overkill" policing of the previous week.

The event was arranged on Facebook, despite the "peaceful" online organiser cancelling at the last minute with a bad case of the heebie jeebies. Things started peacefully and by 10pm there dancing in the street to a mobile sound system. However, things kicked off when protesters' attempts to march down the street were met by a heavy-handed police response. As mounted police and riot cops attempted to hold the lines they were met by rocks, bottles and missiles.

The clashes continued throughout the night and into the morning, with the crowd of protesters growing from an initial 200 to around 400. At one point protesters tried to move into the city centre. Riot police managed to prevent any mass movement but around 50 people made it Cabot Circus where a McDonalds had its windows put in. On Friday (29th) morning, a police raid on Telepathic Heights led to a roof-top stand-off, which saw protesters beating back riot police with whatever came to hand.

There were injuries on both sides and 37 people have been arrested so far. Of those, nine have now been charged with violent disorder, one man has been cautioned and 23 have been released on bail. According to SchNEWS's source, this was not an anti-Tesco protest but had a more 'No justice, No peace...' flavour.

Meanwhile, two more of Bristol's long established community hubs are facing eviction. After a long court battle, the Classics Freeshop and the Emporium are set to face the bailiffs any time after May 5th. Found in the same autonomous area of Stokes Croft, the Freeshop has overseen the free trading of clothes, books and household items for three years, while the Emporium has hosted exhibitions from those well-known black-listed anarchist organisations like, er The Big Issue and Amnesty International.

TOMLINSON VERDICT

The jury in the Ian Tomlinson inquest has returned a verdict of unlawful killing, marking the first victory in the Tomlinson family's two year search for justice.

After more than a month of listening to evidence, the jury concluded that PC Simon Harwood had - after all (as the videos clearly show) acted illegally, recklessly, dangerously and used "excessive and unreasonable" force when he struck Ian with a baton before pushing him to the ground at the G20 protests in April 2009 (see SchNEWS 682).

The verdict could pave the way for manslaughter charges to be brought against Harwood, as the CPS are now reviewing their initial decision to sweep the episode under the carpet (see SchNEWS 732). Harwood will also now face an IPCC disciplinary hearing, which will be held in public.

The Tomlinson family welcomed the verdict, but declared they had "a long way to go in their search for justice".

After two years of attempting to cover the affair up, the police issued a far from groveling apology saying, "It is a matter of deep regret that the actions of an MPS officer have been found to have caused the death of a member of the public."

It is with deep regret that we tend to find the police are a bunch of lying bastards.

PARTY & PROTEST

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

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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MAYDAYS OF THEIR LIVES

One and a quarter centuries after the police killing spree against workers in Haymarket Sq, Chicago, the workers are still a-agitatin'. Mayday 2011 saw demonstrations against cuts, joblessness, inequality and casino capitalism up and down the country, and around the world.

The largest UK crowd assembled in London, with over ten thousand stomping through the city streets. Although the march was peaceful, a scout of the surrounding streets showed that several riot vans were never too far away, and the small black bloc presence at the back was closely guarded by some high-vis companions. Prominent amongst the marchers was a large number of Sri Lankans, protesting against the genocide of the Tamils. The strong international presence also included those from Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Greece. At the end point rally in Trafalgar Square, many joined the 'Occupation Against the Cuts' camp, which has been setting up in the square weekly since 26th March.

There was a smattering of direct action in Birmingham following a city centre protest of a few hundred protesters. After the march, a breakaway Fortnum & Mason Solidarity Bloc expressed their support for the 146 UK-Uncut activists nicked at the M26, by targeting a Topshop in shopping centre the Bullring. After blocking the shop entrance, heavy-handed security gorillas hauled the activists away. Later in the night branches of HSBC, Nat-West and Lloyds TSB were sabotaged with black spray paint rendering cashpoints inoperable. The Lloyds TSB's front doors were also D-locked shut.

Things also got a little tetchier down in sunny Brighton. "Protesters hold city to ransom" screamed local toilet-roll-daily the Argus, the day after the 200 strong demo. However it was less of an armed kidnapping with threats to send back bits of the Pavillion one by one until demands were met, and more a gathering at the sea front and an escorted walkabout.

The mood was one of celebration and mischief, with most attendees in face-paint, several clowns and a big dice to decide which route the march would take. Despite the fluffy feel, ridiculous numbers of coppers on ma-hoof-sive horses wasted no time in strapping on the riot gear and kettled the group almost immediately. The kettle was then led on a tour of the sights, with anyone who tried to deviate from the coppers' itinerary getting a shove and a baton back into the kettle. The demonstrators eventually broke away and had the usual game of 'run around until the plod gets knackered'. Eight were arrested during the day with four now facing charges.

Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester, Bradford, Portsmouth, Cambridge and Oxford also saw peaceful marches through their high streets.

A lively anarchist bloc together with union groups reclaimed Newcastle's town centre in support of workers rights, the peace movement, anti-racism and anti-cuts. The march ended in a rally with speeches, bookstalls and dancing.

Oxford's action was led by Oxford Save Our Services and had a strong union presence marching against public sector cuts. There was a similar demographic in Cambridge where hundreds came out into the sunshine to protest against the millions of public funds the county council has been slashing from their budget. The day finished with an hour of music and poetry in Market Square. Both events had a low police presence and no arrests were made.

* To read a round-up of other Mayday demos across the world - see the extended article on www.schnews.org

INDYMEDIA: FROM THE RUBBLE OF DOUBLE TROUBLE

Regular (but inattentive) visitors to Indymedia, the internet's stalwart purveyor of all things radical, might be a little surprised to find that the project itself is in jeopardy. Created for Mayday 2001, UK Indymedia has survived a number of shocks, including police seizure of servers, legal threats and a 24/7 barrage of lunacy. It has become a hub, meeting place and a vital resource for the entire UK activist scene. The newswire fluctuates from wild-eyed conspiracy theorising to solid analysis via slanderous gossip - and the features aren't much better. However this time the crisis has brewed up within.

For most activists, Indymedia just happens - but behind the scenes are groups of committed activists keeping the whole thing running. In the last few years, there have been serious disagreements about the direction of the whole project. In the red corner Bethemedia, who feel that Indymedia needs to update and transform itself into an aggregator site - something like Indymedia London has been for a while - with no newswire but a selection of articles pulled in from local Indymedia collectives and perhaps other radical news outlets.

In the other red corner are Mayday Indymedia - whose plan is simply keeping Indymedia UK going in its present form, 9/11 newswire nutters 'n all.

Quite how these two gangs ended up at each other's throats is not really any of SchNEWS business - suffice to say that it got quite nasty and personal (in an e-mail lists slanging match kind of way rather than any actual fisticuffs). An agreement to disagree was made in Bradford in late 2010 - formally on May 1st 2011 the two groups would split and migrate to different web domains - nobody was going to get to keep the www.indymedia.org.

SPINELESS FACEBOOK

Whether you are orchestrating an uprising against an Arab dictator, or planning to wave a few placards to protest the closure of your local library, Facebook has rapidly become a key organising tool for activists around the world.

Facebook's faceless masters however, seem to have taken issue with being a revolutionary weapon and have instigated a purge of pages of UK activist groups. Around 50 sites disappeared down the internet memory hole in a 'night of the long nerds' on April 29th. Anarchist, student and anti-cuts protest groups were amongst those pages erased. No warning was given and no permission asked.

Enraged by this outrageous but perhaps unsurprising political intervention from the multi-billion pound business, Bristol IMC investigated the closure of the Bristol Anarchist Bookfair page. They were informed the site had been disabled as it was an "inauthentic account" that violated Facebook's "Statement of Rights and Responsibilities" by not providing a real first and last name. SchNEWS is now rifling through the phone book for the personal details of Mrs Clothing at Tesco, Ms Geeks Are Sexy and Mr R.I.P Raoul Moat You Legend...

A DIFFERENT THANET

A small band of union protesters gathered in London on Thursday (5th) to demonstrate against the anti-union activities of Thanet Earth, the glasshouse complex in Kent that grows tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers for supermarket shelves. They staged a lunchtime picket at a Marks and Spencers in Marble Arch, and a 'Race to the bottom' at Tesco's flagship store in West Kensington. Thanet Earth have recently received criticism for discouraging union membership in their agency-based workforce, by scrapping rotas and bringing in extra agencies to dilute existing union membership.

uk website, which was going to be archived. This was all supposed to happen on May 1st.

Both collectives planned to apply for IMC status (a complex global process) - however as of this week Mayday Indymedia have been blocked from achieving the status, largely following the revelations around the Gateway 303 postings (see SchNEWS 755 - er, sorry guys). The revelation that Indymedia UK moderators were able to monitor IP addresses in real time has proved controversial (although of course anyone involved in Indy admin over the last few years must have been aware of it.)

This failure to gain IMC status by the Mayday collective stymied the whole process, with the BTM team insisting that as the May 1st deadline had been reached then UK Indymedia had to be mothballed. In response the Mayday collective seized the whole site from under their noses by technical wizardry. This is of course about as far away from consensus decision-making as it gets.

So what are we, the punters, left with? On the face of it it's worked out quite well - we've got an editorilaised aggregator site, providing us with the best of independent media Bethemedia.org.uk

Meanwhile good old Indy continues on its wayward path at www.indymedia.org.uk

Maybe it's possible to bury the hatchet - or if that just can't be done then just turn to www.schnews.org.uk where the collective operates with a frankly chilling level of cohesion reminiscent of a cloned hivemind.

THE LYING DUTCHMEN

Sea Shepherd vessel the Steve Irwin (last encountered in SchNEWS 753) successfully evaded Somali pirates this week, travelling through the Gulf of Aden on their way to the Suez Canal.

The cunning new paint job of camouflage colours and '77' painted on the bow fooled the pirates - and a US military Blackhawk helicopter - into thinking the ship was a Dutch warship. The three pirate skiffs that had been tailing Steve Irwin for a few miles soon backed off, and the vessel continued on its way to the Mediterranean Sea, where it will be defending the threatened bluefin tuna and disrupting illegal fishing operations.

...and finally...

SchNEWS has been worrying about the budget deficit this week. OK, all this anti-cuts action and politicising of the public is a good thing for activism and yes, of course, all 'deficit' means is money being taken from the poor and given to the rich in order to pay for the mistakes they made whilst telling the poor how great it all was - but anyway, we think we've solved it.

There are 23m Facebook users in Britain. If we say 8m of them are of working age, and hypothesise that on average they spend just 15 mins of productive time a day having a sneaky (but ultimately mostly shallow and pointless) facebook session, then - you do the maths!

OK, well: 8,000,000 people x 0.25hours x 250 business days per year x £12 average hourly rate = £6bn pounds - more or less just the amount of cuts needed per year; and all yer gotta do is pull the plug on Facebook (itself pulling the plug on activists and campaign group pages - see above).

Depriving the CIA of their easiest source of info about what's going on in the world (or how many drinks you had last night) would be a mere added bonus.

If you axed twitter as well, we'd start running a budget surplus by 2015...

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