



WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER PAY YER DUES...

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FLAMING JUNE?

AS LARGEST MASS UNION WALKOUT SINCE THE 1980S SET FOR JUNE 30TH

Is the big fight on? Union responses to the Tory cuts have so far been fairly muted - the M26 outing (see SchNEWS 765), resembling a cross between a family picnic and a Labour Party rally. However on June 30th the largest public sector strikes since the 80s are planned. With the Daily Mail claiming that 'Union Barons' plan to 'unleash hell', what's actually going to happen?

Well who's on board? On J30, up to 750,000 public sector workers, including many members of the UCU, NUT, PCS and ATL unions, including teachers, health workers, air traffic controllers, job centre wallahs, police support staff etc, etc. will go on strike. It remains to be seen whether the strike will unfurl as another generalised 'day of action', but marches are planned across the country and activist groups are planning to support picket lines and hold solidarity actions.

Ostensibly about public sector pension cuts (unions legally have to ballot to strike over a specific issue), the strikes are the first wave of mass industrial action against the proposed austerity measures. To keep hammering home the point - these austerity measures are only necessary because of the ruling classes determination to ensure that the pain caused by the banking crisis is borne by anyone except the people who caused it.

More strikes are planned for the autumn. The biggest unions, Unite and Unison, have not balloted this time for reasons best known to their compromising selves, but could be on the bandwagon come September. The RMT are leading the way with four days of industrial action planned in June.

This has immediately led to Tory calls for harsher anti-strike legislation, despite the UK already having the most draconian anti-union



laws in Europe. Notwithstanding the already restrictive regime, the government has now said that any trades union action that it deems 'disruptive' might cause a further clamp-down. This could include a minimum turn-out requirement. Currently, strike ballots are successful if the majority of voters are in favour, whatever the turn out. Also on the cards is a 'minimum services agreement', which would mean unions would have to ensure services continue throughout strikes.

With the ConDems not budging, will the union movement finally see the need to move beyond legalism and put up a real fight? Here's hoping.

* See Generalise the Strike on www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=100787720014939 plus www.anticutsnetwork.blogspot.com and www.ukuncut.org.uk

GREECE: NO CASH IN THE ATTICA

On Wednesday(15th) rioting broke out in Athens as the Greek government is in the process of passing yet another new batch of austerity measures as the country's economy goes down the pan. With youth unemployment at 40 per cent, there was no shortage of angry youth available to join thousands of other unionists, activists and er pissed off people in besieging the parliament building in violent clashes with security forces. The riots coincided with a 24-hour general strike of public sector workers.

The recent protests have been against the latest £25 billions-worth of planned cuts, meaning further significant job losses and a mass programme of privatisation. This is despite everyone knowing that Greek elite have has run up their national credit card so high to the Euro-loan sharks that it will never be in a position to pay off it's debt, and can only be ground into the dirt in vain attempts to do so. This delaying the inevitable of outright default or at least 'serious restructuring' just punishes the Greek people further.

Bowing to some of the pressure, and with several politicians from his own of his own Labour-esque Pasok party refusing to pass the cuts, Prime Minister George Papandreou has made the desperate play of offering to resign. He thinks forming a new "unity" coalition with the right-wing party may bring some parliamentary stability and renewed legitimacy for the austerity programme.

He's somewhat missing the glaring point that what the masses now want is an end to austerity, not just the government who authorised it all, holding the rights of German banks and pension funds in higher regard than its own people's welfare. And how much of all that profligate debt was sucked up by the rich elite in the first place?

Not a citizenry known for its passivity, its likely Greece is entering a summer of serious discontent that will exceed the unrest of 2010 which saw brutal clashes with police at demonstrations, walk-outs and rolling strikes by unions, all of whom have rejected the government's proposals.

But the biggest problem facing the government is not the strength of feeling against the cuts or a lack of alternatives - but it's complete subservience to the whims of international institutions. Tied into the eurozone, and having had its autonomy kicked into the gutter by restrictive IMF loan structural conditionalities - signed into last February when the first massive public protests began - public opinion is now the last thing informing Greek politics.

When Greece was bailed out last spring, the IMF and EU countries had to pump money into the 'junk' debt rated country in order to stop it pulling the rest of the eurozone down in international markets. This meant several European country's banks in particular - such as those of France, Germany, the UK and Portugal - are now relying on Greece's recovery

or those debts won't be serviced.

The lack of any such recovery over the last year has led to a new crisis. Similar to the events leading up to the 2008/09 credit crunch, the prospect that the billions owed by Greece might never reappear has meant more aid and more loans in the form of a second bail-out to avoid a capital flight away from the European markets, and more tax-payer fronted pay-outs.

The rescue package, conditional on the government passing the harsh austerity measures, would allow Greece to pay off its creditors until September. Greek insolvency would plunge its creditors into their own crisis, forcing them to tax their citizens to make up for the deficits.

A more dramatic possibility is that Greece could pull out of the euro altogether. Sending shock waves through global markets, and having to rebuild its economy, the future of Greece might signal a change in attitude towards the power of global capital. However should the state turn around to tell the EU/IMF to f*** off and return to the drachma, its newly insular economic future would be equally bleak.

Initially seen as a cure-all political and economic project, the European superstate now hangs in the balance - and there's no provision for states deciding to renounce membership. What was thought of as a way to unite the nations may now be the reason for a fall-out of massive proportions.

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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PARTY & PROTEST

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MEXICO IN A NARCO-CHY: EYEWITNESS REPORT

Life in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico seems pretty cheap. A city the size of Gaza (1.3million), physically separated from its neighbours in the rich world by an apartheid fence, it had a murder toll of 3,000 in 2010 - and 2011 has so far proved to be just as violent. To put it in some perspective that's like two Operation Cast Leads every year.

Both the police and the state prosecutor's office (something like the CPS here) have a policy of not investigating murders. More than official lethargy or the result of intimidation by the narcos, this is a case of protecting their own. The soldiers, city police and federal police that patrol the streets are in a literal sense the real criminals. The organised murders, robberies, kidnappings and major drug deals, are generally committed by members of the armed and uniformed services. In Juarez they are known as 'La Linea' - an semi-formal conspiracy of active and ex police who do the dirty work for the cartels.

To quote an anonymous community worker in a barrio in western Juarez: "So to deal with the insecurity they billeted the army here. It was straight after that that the banks round here started getting knocked off, each time the robbers had military gear and military style clothes."

As a response, many residential neighbourhoods are literally closing themselves off from the problem; gated communities have become the norm for all but the poorest areas, chopping up streets and transforming the city into a series of suburban ghettos. Although many people hate the idea, when you hear the stories its hard to argue with. The same goes for the number of armed citizens here; after the 2nd, 3rd or 4th robbery, many people - old, young, men, women - keep a loaded gun under their bed. All these measures may help against the backdrop of desperate, disorganised

INTO VALLEY OF DARKNESS

On Tuesday (13th) Israeli military powers destroyed 18 structures in Fasayil, Southern Palestinian Jordan Valley, in their relentless pursuit of ethnic cleansing. At 6 am they entered and cordoned the village with ten military jeeps, one civil administration vehicle and three bulldozers. No one was allowed to enter the area for over 3 hours.

Overall nine homes and nine animal shelters were demolished, leaving nine more families homeless and without means of production. Violence broke out as soldiers attacked a woman and her little girl. Furthermore a power line to the Fasayil Wusta area was cut leaving residents with no access to electricity.

For updates see www.jordanvalleysolidarity.org

SOAS I WAS SAYING

Around 200 demonstrators from the School of Oriental and African studies gathered outside the London University on Monday(13th) as inside, Universities Minister David Willetts was delivering a lecture on public benefit from science and research. The protesters wanted to confront him and raise attention to the government's £449 million worth of cuts to the university budget however Willett scampered away under police guard before any confrontation was possible. After this events turned disorderly. Police reaction according to witnesses was unwarranted (nothing new) with extreme brutality used. At one point a Camden officer on the scene, badge number EK751, was covering his badge number whilst kicking a young man on the ground. Arrests led to a 33yr old man charged with violent disorder, a 15 yr old boy with violent disorder and assault on an officer and two men with wilful obstruction.

crime that's the symptom of a completely broken society. If the organised criminals want you, then there's pretty much bugger all you can do about it. And those gates can equally serve to lock you in with the gangsters, preventing your escape.

Sometimes during robberies and attempted kidnappings and extortions civilians have succeeded in fighting off the narcos - sometimes killing and wounding them. The narcos have a response ready for this: kill the home defender for sure, but make sure you kill his family first.

Juarez once once described as the 'laboratory of the future'. Perfectly situated to provide the USA with cheap goods, with a population totally lacking even the most basic rights, they constitute a perfect labour force from the point of view of employers. 17 years after the signing of NAFTA, that future has arrived. Whereas before the yearly murder rate was in the hundreds, now it is in the thousands. Yet, magically, in the last year or so the economy has begun to 'recover' - but of the entire city only the maquilas (border sweatshops) are profiting; and they are also the only places free from narco violence.

The same conditions that make the city perfect for big business are the same that make the city perfect for the narcos. With an average wage of \$50 per week, it's all too easy for young kids to get sucked up into the world of the Cartels; canon-fodder for perhaps a few hundred dollars a week (a fortune in Juarez). And of course, free trade in goods means unending lines of trucks and goods flowing across the border. Whilst the US Immigration and Customs agents bust individuals with a kilo or two of weed on them, the goods trucks ferry tons of cartel grass, coke, heroin and meth to the US consumer, their journey facilitated by those same free trade arrangements....

- For much fuller story including details of individual cases, and news of the emergent community fightback against the status quo, see complete article on web at www.schnews.org.uk

KEEPIN IT MONTREAL

More than 200 took part in anti-police demonstrations in Montreal on Wednesday (8th) night, after two people were gunned down and killed by police. On Tuesday morning police had opened fire on Mario Hamel, a homeless man supposedly holding a knife, and also managed to hit Patrick Limoges, a hospital worker on his way to work. The demonstrators marched through the streets and started smashing windows as they made their way to the spot where the deaths occurred.

The protesters then utilised materials from a construction site that was en route as missile-fodder; hurling chunks of concrete and bricks at shop and restaurant windows. As the march continued, pink paint was splattered on the road, nearby buildings and one bystander. No march would be complete without a few slogans and banners thrown in for good measure. One sign stated "Never again". A megaphone wielder warned "We don't forgive, we don't forget" in English and French.

He went on to say, "I'm here to protest in favour of an independent inquiry committee, because cops investigating cops over these shootings - it just doesn't work man". Overall the protest was relatively quiet with no injuries and no arrests. A silent vigil was also held at noon on the same day outside St-Luc hospital were Limoges worked. Hospital employees then walked out of the hospital and held up traffic as they held walked to the still blood-stained scene and held an impromptu vigil of their own.

THIN END OF THE WEDGES

Obviously inspired by SchNEWS' report last week of a potato field decommissioning in a corner of a field in Flanders, British anti-GM activists are planning a visit to a GM trial in Norwich. The Sainsbury Laboratory is currently conducting a trial of supposedly blight resistant potatoes at the John Innes Centre - and **Stop GM** are heading there on Saturday 23rd July.

Although GM was all but driven from these shores almost 10 years ago (see SchNEWS 448), it has been gradually creeping back. While the science is still just as shaky, the advantages to monopolising seed markets has some fairly influential backers in both business and government.

If you fancy going on a field trip yourself keep an eye on stopGM.org.uk - details are vague at the moment, but expect a "carnival procession of families and farmers led by the next generation on pedal tractors" along with sound systems, "experienced grassroots campaigners" and non-GM chips.

SCHNEWS IN BRIEF

Slut Walk - Last Saturday thousands marched provocatively/non provocatively (Christ, what a minefield) through London to protest a statement made by a Toronto policeman that "women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimised" - some demonstrators perhaps then caught the tail end of the ****World Naked Bike Ride** - this exhibitionist protest has caught on globally with a few thousand braving the rain (in Brighton at least) to make a point about oil dependency and cyclist vulnerability. www.world-nakedbikeride.org ****** If yer bits aren't too chafed you might want to join **The Silent Victories Tour** - a ten day long bike ride around the South West of England, starting 1st July and visiting places saved by direct action in the 90s (SchNOTE: remind us to tell you about the 90s sometime, it was great). For more contact silent.victories@gmail.com. ****** There was also fun for more gymno-phobic (look it up!) activists this week, as a group dressed from head to toe in black hit the streets of **Oxford** in the early hours of 15th June, to throw paint over their local **Armed Forces** offices.

...and finally...

Toymakers Mattell have been under fire this week. Not only do they warp young girls' (and boys') body images and gender stereotypes by pedalling the plastic doll and aspirational fantasy world of Barbie, but they've also been packaging her using materials supplied by Asia Pulp & Paper.

APP is infamous for the way it indiscriminately wrecks Indonesia's forests, destroying the homes of some of the last tigers, orang-utans and elephants. Greenpeace has successfully previously forced Carrefour, Tesco, Kraft, Nestlé and Unilever (what a rogue's gallery) into dropping APP and at least promising more greenwash, er stringent standards in future.

On Tuesday (14th), activists rolled out banners on Mattel buildings with an exasperated Ken remarking "Barbie, it's over. I don't date girls that are into deforestation." Mattel were quickly forced into placative statements about how they are 'moving toward' creating a 'sustainable procurement' policy. That may be a start but Ken is still refusing to take Barbie back, and she was last seen sobbing alone in her dreamhouse.

Greenpeace UK are aiding pre-teens without a Barbie doll of their own by hiding over 800 of them in trees across the UK. But isn't it every girl's dream to fight deforestation, stop global warming and save endangered species?

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