



SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk



Friday 14th February

Free/Donation

Issue 856

BOSNIAKTION

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA HAS BEEN SHAKEN BY A SERIES OF UPRISINGS AND RIOTS. MASSIVE PROTESTS HAVE NOW SHUT DOWN THE CAPITAL SARAJEVO AND FIVE OTHER BOSNIAN CITIES.

SchNEWS spoke to Bosnian blogger Amila Bosnae.

Spring has come early to Bosnia-Herzegovina

If you're not very familiar with Bosnia-Herzegovina, the first thing you need to know is that it has one of the most bloated administrations in the world. The Dayton Agreement which ended the war in 1995 divided the country into many smaller administrative units, completely based on ethnic lines. With a population of less than 4 million, it has a state government with three (3) Presidents—one for each of the main ethnic groups—then two larger entities, Serb-dominated Republika Srpska (RS; not actually a republic) and a Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (FBiH) with mainly Croats and Bosniaks. There is also one town that has a special status outside of the two larger entities. Everything is divided, even some schools where children are kept apart according to their ethnicity. At every level there are Presidents, ministers, governments, cabinets—hordes and hordes of bureaucrats producing nothing except a piece of paper now and then. That doesn't stop them from awarding themselves ridiculously high salaries, of course. Corruption and nepotism are rife, youth unemployment is above 50% and twenty years of severe mismanagement have taken their toll.

BABIES' REVOLT

The current rebellion is not the first of its kind, although what we are seeing now is different in character from previous waves of protests. Last summer, the Baby Revolution became the first large movement to take to the streets and show solidarity across the imposed ethnic lines, completely freaking the politicians out. Those protests, also called the #JMBG protests, started because the state apparatus had stopped issuing ID numbers for newborns (the acronym for the ID number is JMBG). The politicians would not agree on a law regulating it so it simply halted. When their negligence endangered the lives of infants who needed treatment in other countries but couldn't get passports, people took to the streets. The protests quickly gained momentum, but ultimately fizzled out. However, other protests had

and have been going on without gaining exposure in mainstream media: for instance, workers who hadn't been paid in years had been protesting weekly, but their protests were falling on deaf ears.

NO BOSSES NEEDED

Precisely one such protest was what sparked this current rebellion. Workers from the northern town of Tuzla, who had lost their jobs when their companies were privatised and then declared bankrupt had for a long time been protesting. Last Thursday, their anger finally spilled over, spreading through the streets of Tuzla. There were reports of police brutality that day. On Friday the 7th of February, the protests not only spread to other cities, but escalated to proper riots. Government buildings were set ablaze, several governments forced to step down. The protesters of Tuzla formulated a list of demands, the first of which was to protect the protests. Other cities quickly followed.

Again, the ruling elites are freaking out because the masses are clearly focusing on socio-economic issues. Everything would be so much easier if people would just stay in their enemy tribes, but a flag won't feed any mouths, and a flag seems to be the only answer any of the politicians in power have. So they have tried to misrepresent the protests, discredit the protesters as 'drug-gies' and 'hooligans'; they have sent riot police to beat them up, and they are using the pliant mainstream media to repeat the mantra of ethnic animosity. In the Serb-dominated part of the country, this seems to have worked especially well, as hardly any protests have taken place there. But it seems that the ball has started rolling, and even though there certainly are obstacles, it's a pretty big ball.

HERZ GOVERNMENT

It moves me to tears to see the immense interest in the people's assemblies being held across Bosnia-Herzegovina these days. This evening, one was held in Sarajevo, but there were so many people present that most of them couldn't even get inside the building where it was held. Therefore, another one is planned to take place on Friday at the Olym-

pic hall Zetra which has thousands of seats.

The demands of the protesters differ from town to town, but have a number of similarities: protect the protests, state salaries need to go down, the governments need to resign and be replaced by people with no party affiliations, rip-off privatisations need to be annulled, transparency ensured, corruption fought. All real and huge problems that those in power are panicking to see addressed out loud. They are working to turn the protests into an ethnic issue yet again; leaders from RS have met with top-officials in Belgrade while the Croatian Prime Minister visited Mostar. They all talk about threats to the stability, and while it certainly is worrying that foreign heads of state feel the need to meddle in Bosnia-Herzegovina—with the country's recent history in mind—more and more people are realising that the only stability they are afraid of is the stability of their own thrones.

A group of us are working on a project called 'Bosnia-Herzegovina Protest Files' where we translate declarations from the protesters, videos, articles and witness accounts. An avalanche of texts is being produced about the uprising at the speed of light. It can be overwhelming and seem chaotic, but we are undeniably watching history unfold. It's all still very early days, but we are hopeful.

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For being...

On a footpath

On January 4th 2014 it became apparent that, at the Barton Moss protest camp, police removed a footpath sign in a tactic to arrest protesters for highway obstruction. After countless arrests and pointless confrontations a court has finally ruled that the road is a footpath. Nearly all of the 100 arrested had charges of highway obstruction. Hopefully, this makes all of them officially crap arrests. As a celebration, the camp had a party and despite the rain, attendee's called it "better than Reading".

The camp is opposing fracking, like the widely reported camp at Balcombe, but much colder and wetter.

Is the protest now advancing onto the freeway of victory?

PARTY & PROTEST

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

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

Copyright
Published in Brighton since 1994

BODGER AND BADGER

ACCIDENT PRONE OWEN PATERSON TAKES ON BRITAIN'S FAVOURITE MAMMAL

Accident prone Owen Paterson takes on Britain's favourite mammal.

Fresh from the political kicking he's getting over the floods it's not clear whether Environment secretary Owen Paterson has got his sights set on another badger cull or not. But badgeristas up and down the country aren't taking any chances and are keeping the pressure on.

The badger culls in 2013 were disrupted by constant direct action, and failed to reach their targets, but culling is still being considered for summer this year. Natural England has told landowners wanting to cull to start preparing their applications, although the supposedly independent expert panel has yet to release their assessment of the previous cull. Other options are also being considered include contraceptive injections for badgers.

There are protests against the badger cull coming up in towns and cities all round the country, including two in Birmingham that target the National Farmers Union conference on the 25th Feb. The NFU have been the main advocates for the cull, providing financial and practical support to the operation. Then there are demos in St Alban's, Stratford upon Avon and Exeter in March. There won't be any culling during the winter so campaigners are focussing on stopping new areas from signing up to the cull. Some local councils and large landowners have stated they will not support a cull, and there are numerous petitions to ask more councils to reject culling.

SchNEWS spoke to Brighton Stop the Cull: "The badger cull is supposed to be about stopping bovine TB, as badgers can transmit the disease. The ethics of killing wildlife to prop up the intensive farming industry may be dubious. However, in this case at least, it just doesn't work anyway. Killing badgers is a bizarre distraction from solving the real problems involved with the dairy industry." See Schnews 836 for more about Bovine TB and the dairy industry.

STRETCHY STATISTICS

The government has now released the rather small amount of information about the cull that they intend to tell the public (although perhaps even this was by accident, apparently). The most interesting thing about this is the extreme spin doctoring involved. Owen Paterson has even admitted stretching some of the statistics about how many herds have been infected with TB since 2011.

The original stated aim was to kill 70% of the badger population of the cull zones. At that point DEFRA were claiming that 7900 badgers were in the cull zones. The estimate of the population then took a steep dive soon before the cull started. This statistical skullduggery means that if the 70% of the original population estimate had been killed, there would be no badgers left at all. In the end DEFRA worked out that 1016 were killed by 'free shooting' which was the method being trialled. In desperation the method was changed to trapping and shooting which allegedly took the figure up to 1879, which definitely isn't 70%, whichever population estimate you use! SchNEWS awaits the announcement that Somerset isn't

underwater at all and that any evidence to the contrary can be put down to the weather 'moving the goalposts'.

The pilot culls are also supposed to be testing whether free shooting is effective and humane. There was never any method to seriously assess whether the deaths were humane, nor post mortems to see how many badgers were actually infected. In previous trials only 1% of badgers were infectious. Cases of TB had already fallen before the cull started because stricter biosecurity had been introduced, leaving the effect of culling to be interpreted however you wish. If you were even allowed to see the data that is.

SIDE EFFECTS

The Hunt Saboteurs Association, the prime movers behind co-ordinating on the ground resistance to the cull say the badger cull has resulted in lots more people getting involved in direct action against bloodsports. They said "Every single night of the cull so far there have been people out directly stopping it, including many not normally inclined to pushing the boundaries of the law." There's also been an upsurge in the market for badger costumes as a result of numerous demos to save this iconic species (although SchNEWS reckons a panda costume'd do in a pinch). There's a very popular sticker campaign run by Stop the Cull to vote out the Tories because of the badgers. (Sadly Labour have weighed in, with shadow environment spokeswoman Maria Eagle saying "This isn't about being sentimental, I'm not one of those people who says that no badgers should ever be culled")

The pilot culls are supposed to run for four years and be extended to new areas, but the future of the whole project is currently twisting in the wind. What is clear is that if it does continue opposition will be huge. Even those who don't care about furry animals are angry that it cost £4000 to kill each badger so far.

For more info on how to get involved on the streets or in the fields see Stop the Cull on Facebook

COME ONE, COME ALL (EXCEPT THE ROMANIANS)

Those hilarious madcap god-bothering racists UKIP are planning a meeting in Portslade (just up the road from SchNEWS TOWERS) next Tuesday (18th). Unite against Fascism and other local anti-fascists plan to make a ruckus outside.

Earlier this year Nigel Farage went to Hove and was opposed by a mass demo. There were also more peaceful attempts to disturb UKIP by reporting a cancellation of the Hove meeting. In-between the talks of denied Holocaust claims and being caught in the rain that "was caused by the gays", UKIP will be talking about topics such as banning the immigrants. Or maybe they won't get a chance to talk. Who knows?

Schnews will be live on the scene! See the footage here afterwards - <https://vimeo.com/schnews>

DO YOU GIVE ATOS?

Wednesday 19th of February, has been declared a national day of action against ATOS, the private company that runs the Department for Work and Pensions' notorious fitness to work tests.

The Work Capability Assessment is part of the government's drive to target anyone in receipt of state benefits – an effort to force people off sickness and disability benefits onto the cheaper Job Seeker's Allowance.

Even leaving aside the morality of the political onslaught on the poorest, ATOS administration of the WCA has been cack-handed from the beginning, coming in from criticism from the Public Audit Office. 40% of appeals against ATOS 'back to work' decisions are successful. They've repeatedly told terminally ill people that they're fit for work and removed their benefits. In a further twist of the screw benefits are now suspended during the appeals process, leaving victims nowhere to turn except food banks.

This really is a national day of action so look for your local assessment centre and get down there!

<http://blacktrianglecampaign.org/>
<http://dpac.uk.net/>

PARTY & PROTEST

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

...and finally...

They've been referred to as the Toytown EDL before now, but the Casuals United have really taken the identity on board with their latest whizzo scheme.

They're planning a trip to Legoland and unfortunately it'll be no fun day out. What's up? Have the little yellow fellows decided to build a Lego mega-mosque near Windsor?

Well, not quite ... on 9th March the park's been hired by the Muslim Research and Development Foundation for a family day. The organisation is headed by academic Haitam Al-haddad who depending on who you listen to may or may not be an 'extremist' preacher. Certainly his views on wife-beating and homosexuality won't find him any friends here.

Quite how he's going to put those views into practice while playing 'Laser Raiders' or earning his Legoland driving licence is something the fash are unclear on. However our block-headed friends at Casuals United News Team* are bricking it that the whole trip is cover for a fund-raising beany for the Taliban.

They're planning on a static demo at the park's entrance on the day along with friends from the EDL. Their keyboard warrior division has sprung into action with some vigour and even got Legoland's Facebook page taken down while Thames Valley Police scrutinise the racist scrawlings.

SchNEWS looks forward to a three way exchange of colourful half bricks.

*Their joke – not ours!

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, it's the fracking messing with the weather, not gay marriage or even immigrants. Honest.

Subscribe!

Get SchNEWS free every week by email in pdf or text file - visit our site, or send us stamps and we'll post it to you. Copy and distribute! Keep SchNEWS free with donations (via website or cheques payable to Justice?). Posted free to all prisoners.

SchNEWS, c/o Community Base, 113 Queens Rd, Brighton, BN1 3XG. Tel +44 (0)1273 685913 Email mail@schnews.org.uk Web www.schnews.org.uk