



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER DESIGNATED PROTEST RAG...

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HAMMERING HOME THE POINT

EYEWITNESS REPORT FROM THIS WEEK'S SMASH EDO PROTEST

The 'ITT's Hammertime' Smash EDO demo in Brighton on Wednesday (13th) ended with over fifty arrests, after police made it clear they were going to protect the arms makers at any cost.

The demonstration planned to lay siege to Brighton's premier weapons factory for the day, but police repression and a newly developed policy for preventative arrests put paid to the ambitious plans to push the factory out of town. With both a section 60 and highly restrictive section 14 in place, police were given even greater powers, which they gleefully exercised.

The announced meeting point was Wild Park, near the site of the EDO-ITT factory in Brighton, while the 'Wildkatz Social Centre' (a squatted building in nearby Stanmer village), had acted as a convergence space overnight, housing 70 or so activists from around the country. On the morning of the demo the squat was surrounded by around 200 police and the lanes of the tiny village lined with police vans. Eventually, after unmasking, around 50 protesters were able to leave the building in a mobile kettle which escorted them towards Wild Park, unfortunately having to leave a wealth of defensive props behind. Coppers also broke into someone's car at the convergence centre nicking two reinforced banners and... the car stereo.

The cops had built a heavy metal barricade at the top of Home Farm Road, where EDO-ITT is located, despite there being enough police to sink a ship at the bottom. On the grass verge by the turning the police had made a 'designated protest area' in which protesters were permitted to be civilly disobedient. This consisted of metal fencing and, thoughtfully, some portaloos.

Meanwhile approximately 20 people were left surrounded in the convergence space and told by police that they were not allowed to leave to "prevent a breach of the peace" or, as it's more commonly known, a protest. About an hour later this small bloc, complete with wheely bin soundsystem, was permitted to walk out of Stanmer surrounded by a blue bloc at least three times their size. Halfway to the factory the guard detail received orders to scarper, jumping into vans and speeding ahead, not even stopping to offer a lift. Seizing on this brief respite from police accompaniment the protesters cut up through the woods to the factory.

GOING WILD

By 10am about 200 protesters had converged on Wild Park, mostly masked up black bloc style. There was a surprisingly professional papier-mache F16, the remaining reinforced banner and plenty of inflatable hammers. Early on in the morning an announcement was made that the factory was closed for the day, rousing a cheer from the barricades. Protesters were massively outnumbered by about 500 police who had come from as far afield as Wales. Their fun day out consisted of making neat lines and formations, like synchronised swimmers in yellow, trying to kettle the protesters from the word 'go'. One protester told SchNEWS, "In one word, I'd describe the policing of the day as 'overkill'... If the financing of the policing of the demo had come out of the military budget rather than the police, it would have been a huge success."

Undaunted the Smash EDO crew didn't make it so easy for them. As police lines advanced into the Wild Park meeting place, the protesters made a run for it into the woods, emerging some time later in the field behind the factory. Activists holding a reinforced banner clashed with the police line heading up the field, with one man arrested, suffering a cut on the head in the process. Approximately 20 were kettled at the top of the hill while the rest scattered back into the woods.

Determined not to abide by the police's plan for the day, groups of protesters avoided repeated attempts by the police to contain them. This resulted in an extended cat-and-mouse game around the local area over the next couple of hours that mainly centred around avoiding getting kettled rather than actual attempts to breach the factory fence. At midday around 100 activists were back at the 'designated protest space', and just as groups started to reorganise and gear up for another co-ordinated attack, police lines blocked the traffic and advanced, driving people onto the road.

As the protest was pushed away from the factory and towards town, police formed lines at strategic points along the way, splitting the group into smaller blocs, then kettling any group of 10 or more protesters. Some of those outside of these kettles were then told they had to either leave the area or be arrested, while other police informed them they couldn't leave, resulting in the farcical scene of a 12 foot plane being hurriedly manoeuvred

AS ACTIVISTS LAUNCH THEIR NEW WEAPON IN THE FIGHT AGAINST EDO/ITT...



through the back alleys of moulsecomb.

By 3pm, the majority of the protest was kettled, leaving the stragglers to return to base to muse over a day that didn't go entirely to plan. Around 50 arrests were made throughout the day, mostly for Section 14 and 'breach of the peace', and mostly the unlucky ones caught in the kettles. This is one of the first times this police tactic of mass preventative arrests has been used in the UK, following widespread use in Brussels at the No Borders camp and in Copenhagen. As police brutality hasn't seemed to temper the commitment of Smash EDO protesters so far, could this be a new way of trying to sap the resolve of this determined bunch?

STICK IT TO 'EM

In town, a group from the main demo held a picket outside Barclays - ITT's middle man on the stock market - and attempted to glue on to the doors before realising that gluing on to sliding doors doesn't actually have the desired effect. Despite this apparent lack of foresight, the main entrance was closed as a result and they started to use the side door. Another glue-on happened at a branch of RBS (one of the main investors in the arms trade), this time on a more suitable type of door, though a group of people were arrested later on in the day, accused of the action. All are now bailed, and those arrested earlier on for somehow breaching the peace whilst in the middle of a kettle have also been released without charge.

As well as anarchist actions, Brighton saw some fascist fun and games. The English National Alliance and English Defence League announced that they were going to come to Brighton to 'ave a go at the Smash EDO lot, and a few did turn up at the train station to wait for homeward bound demonstrators. Despite the sad non-appearance of their great leader, Bill Baker, who had broken down at Pease Pottage, a few rather heated political debates ensued when the fash came up against the peace loving activists.

Smash EDO press spokesperson Andrew Beckett said, "Despite repeated assertions that they were 'facilitating peaceful protest', the police employed highly repressive tactics in an attempt to quash the demonstration from the start. The large numbers of arrests made today, mostly from within police cordons, will only be used to attempt to justify this massive and disproportionate police operation to protect the workings of EDO/MBM ITT".

* See www.smashedo.org.uk

INFORMATION FOR ACTION Copyleft
Published in Brighton since 1994

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EDL: LEICESTER IS MORE

A thousand EDL supporters rampaged through the streets of Leicester (see SchNEWS 742) on Saturday (9th), attacking locals, anti-fascists and police.

Over 2,000 police from 13 forces were waiting to corral the EDL and the 700 UAF counter-protesters into opposing pens, separated by police and three-metre steel fences. The leaguers immediately began to hurl bottles, cans, bricks and coins at police and the UAF.

Despite their numbers, the police struggled to contain the frothing thugs and three times they burst through police lines and poured out onto the streets. With around 200 breaking loose, packs of EDL staggered through the city, sporadically clashing with local black and Asian youths.

One group of EDL supporters smashed the windows of a fast-food restaurant before kicking open the door and threatening the families eating inside. Another group attacked the International Arts Centre Fabrika, smashing the windows and trying to break into the building as staff fled through the back door.

Police arrested 17 leaguers and there were a number of injuries, including one police officer who suffered a broken leg in a skirmish.

The police rounded up the feral fash before they managed to force their way into Asian and black estates, where, in a number of areas, the residents were waiting. When rumours circulated that the EDL were headed for the Highfields estate, hundreds of residents assembled outside the African Caribbean Centre to defend their neighbourhood.

Anti-fascist opposition in the city centre was limited though and the local youths on the streets were, for the most part, chased away.

Before the demo began, around 10 EDL coaches stopped in nearby Market Harborough. The flash-mob of around 500 EDLers was cordoned off by 100 police. After around an hour and a half, they got back on their coaches.

NO SURRENDER MONKEYS

As many as 3.5 million demonstrators took to the streets across France on Tuesday (12th) to protest against Nicolas Sarkozy's plans for pension reform.

The strike included air traffic control, rail and buses, refineries, schools, universities, gas and electricity sectors, docks, post offices, weather forecasting stations (who made sure the rain, for the most part, didn't scab on the strike), tax collecting offices and loads of other sectors - even some municipal police went on strike (the poor things are openly complaining about suicidal depression because of the stress). Blockades and General Assemblies appeared fairly extensively and many sectors will continue the strike indefinitely. Loads of High Schools took part, with even the Ministry of Education admitting to over 230 blockades. And, of course, there was the traditional mini-riot at the end of the Paris demo as night fell - without which no large demo is complete.

The strike continued in some sectors on Wednesday - in Paris, for example, only 25% of trains were running in the morning, causing massive traffic jams. "The stoppage has been extended until at least Thursday, which will be a decisive day for its continuation," said Bruno Duchemin, the secretary general of the FGAAC-CFDT rail-workers' union.

The Sarkozy government's legislation raises the minimum retirement age from 60 to 62, and raises the age at which workers become eligible for full pension from 65 to 67. This is the third general strike in the space of 5 weeks.

Following the strikes, labour minister, Eric Woerth told RTL radio, "I'm not denying there were a lot of people in the streets but at the same time what can we do?" Well, since you ask...

HUNT INTENSIFIES

Police and bailiffs have struck out at anti-coal action camp Huntington Lane (see SchNEWS 735) camp by tearing down treehouses and lopping branches off trees to stop activists getting the upper hand. The camp has been trying to protect a huge area of outstanding natural beauty where works are going on for a massive open cast coal mine. But at 8.30am on Wednesday (13th), the National Eviction Team with police support came on site and started to trash the place without so much as an eviction notice.

The place that was targeted is part of the site that will be open casted, and temporary roads, offices and a water main have all been installed in the last 24 hours with diggers and machinery already setting to work. None of the campers were present at the 'eviction' as they have been holding a site where a link road is being built to connect the two planned mines and where the majority of construction work has been going on.

The main camp site hasn't had much trouble apart from some bailiffs and coppers having a nose this week, but the camp is now on red alert. A great turnout of local supporters and people from up and down the country after the news spread of the attack has meant that 'business as usual' is going on at the camp, but more bodies are needed to ensure the site is fully defensible and resistant to eviction attempts. As one camper put it "the more supporters there are, the happier we are, and the more work can get done."

* See <http://defendhuntingtonlane.wordpress.com>

CALAIS: BURNING ISSUES

Drunk racists targeted Calais migrants last Friday (8th), setting fire to tents under the bridge where a number of Afghans and Africans sleep.

After the assailants had torched a tent belonging to a boy of 15, a migrant returned to the area and confronted the pair. The men were arrested by passing policemen.

In a separate attack, a charity worker was assaulted by thugs who work for a security firm because of his work helping migrants. He has been charged with assault despite the fact he was the one injured.

Police pressure on the migrants remains relentless. Africa House has seen several major raids over the last few weeks as well as frequent morning harassment of migrants brushing their teeth.

The Sudanese jungle is also being targeted. The migrants shelter has been destroyed and the area fenced off. Police patrol the area regularly and the migrants lack proper shelter.

* See calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com

CRUDE BUT EFFECTIVE

Crude Awakening mass demo against the oil industry and climate change comes to London this Saturday (16th). Plans for the day have been shrouded in mystery with details only being released of three meeting points for the three blocs forming the protest.

The **Dirty Money Bloc** meets 10am at Euston Station, targeting the investors in the oil industry - dress as a banker, bring props and be prepared to hold a space. The **Building Bloc** will focus on the oil extractors themselves, meeting 10am at Waterloo Station - bring tools and be prepared to build and occupy (a head for heights may also come in handy). The **Body Bloc** will meet at Victoria Station also at 10am and will be host to the dead stilt walking crew and other carnival type folk - dress bold and colourful and reclaim the streets. Visit www.crudeawakening.org.uk to sign up for text alerts for your preferred bloc.

* See www.crudeawakening.org

SchNEWS IN BRIEF

* **Representatives from the Wildkatz** squatted social centre outside Brighton (see SchNEWS 740) were up in court on Monday (11th) after being served with a possession order. The judge found in favour of the application and the Wildkatz crew are now waiting for an eviction order. In the month the space has been opened it has been used to stage an alternative freshers week, film screenings, benefit gigs, free meals, kids days and as the Smash EDO convergence space for Wednesday's demo. See wildkatzproject.org.uk

* **Edinburgh students stormed a university** careers fair last Wednesday (6th) in protest against the presence of every Saudi prince's favourite deathmongers, BAE. Around a dozen students from Edinburgh University Students for Justice in Palestine burst into the fair with banners and headed straight for the BAE stand. After being asked to leave by security, the students staged a die-in, which continued until they were threatened with arrest. See www.sjp.eusa.ed.ac.uk

* **The police officer who shot and killed** Greek teenager Alexandros Grigoropoulos (see SchNEWS 659) in 2008 was found guilty of manslaughter with direct malice while another officer was sentenced to 10 years for his complicity in the killing. The killing sparked the riots and civil unrest that tore through Greece at the end of 2008.

* **As part of a global week of action** for climate and environmental justice, Bristol and Bath Rising Tide activist group dropped a banner reading 'Import CO₂AL, Export Poverty' from Avonmouth bridge near one of the largest coal import docks in the UK. See <http://risingtide.org.uk>

...and finally...

With the impact of the soon-to-be-announced mega austerity cuts still to come, it could be that millions will soon find it hard to make ends meet.

But help is at hand. There'll be no shortage of people forced to turn to shoplifting or petty crime to survive - and now there's a website that will pay you to sit at home and spy on everyone in the hope of catching them.

The Orwellian online scheme was dreamt up by Devon company 'Internet Eyes'. They want people to sign up and monitor multiple real-time CCTV feeds from shops and businesses - and then compete to correctly alert them of any perceived suspicious behaviour occurring. The most eagle-eyed snooper each month can win a £1000 prize. But beware! Falsely alert too often and you could be booted out of the game.

The obvious ethical and moral implications of all this aside, for those nosey punters wanting to feel the power of armchair policing, the reality of watching endless hours of the duller TV ever conceived while maintaining enough concentration to correctly separate crime from lingering, is tiring and demanding work. So Internet Eyes will reward you for it - at staggering rates ranging from 50 pence for 30 hours hard surveillance work in a month...right up to a whopping £1.50 for 60 hours. And you thought sweatshop labour got a raw deal.

To top it all, the masterstroke is to make you pay to sign up - £2 a month or £13 for a year (meaning if you fail to win the monthly prize, you have to put in eight and a half 60-hour months before you break even). For the company, 500 mugs signing up is your monthly prize covered - everything else is gravy while you sell the service for top dollar to businesses. Ker-ching!

Big Brother is not only watching, he's fleecing you, you voyeuristic gullible idiot!

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