



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER REALLY GOT ME GOING...

# SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

Friday, 4th November, 2011

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Issue 795

## DEDICATED FOLLOWERS OF FASCISM

AS EDL VISIT BRUM BUT FAIL TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE KINKS IN THEIR STRATEGY

On Saturday 29th October 2011 the English Defence League (EDL) paid their third visit to Birmingham. Previous excursions ended in running battles through the streets (see SchNEWS 687) The march was the EDL's second big mobilisation this year, although not hyped as much as their September outing in Tower Hamlets (see SchNEWS 787).

In the end the EDL's numbers were relatively low - around the 300-400 mark, in contrast to a turnout of 3000 in Luton in February (SchNEWS 758) and around 850 in Tower Hamlets earlier this year. This could be the EDL on a downward slide.

EDL facebookers are moaning that the demo format (i.e. turn up in a randomly chosen town, stand around in a car park listening to coked-up egotists chuntering on about Sharia Law before the cops push you back onto your bus) is getting stale and numbers in attendance are dwindling.

SchNEWS travelled up with some mates from the anti-fascist network and watched the first half hour of the EDL demo before cops forcibly cleared away onlookers.

The fash met up in Wetherspoons, Walkabout and O'Neill's on Birmingham's Broad Street and marched a hundred yards down the road to Centenary Square where the police had set up a pen for them complete with portaloos and a tinny sound system. George Crosses and a Union Jack were displayed alongside an Israeli and American flag. One banner, confusingly, read: "Gary Glitter would love Sharia Law, but the kids don't".

The stage was set for the EDL leadership to say their piece. The first speaker (who's name we didn't catch) hit a bum-note by resigning on the spot. A passer-by began Sieg-Heiling the EDL which caused a crowd surge with around twenty EDL clashing with police in riot gear. Beer cans, fireworks and a

rock were thrown. However, this attempt to break out of the cordon was unsuccessful.

The break-away group was then berated from the podium and told that this was exactly what "the Islamists wanted". At this point the EDL started fighting each other. Nice one lads!

All in all, the EDL's Birmingham outing was a fairly desultory effort, compared to previous efforts some Leaguers were able to break out of police cordons and go on the rampage. This may be down to the leadership losing their bottle in the face of continual prosecutions of organisers in cases of public disorder. In a way the EDL has the worst of both worlds as it lacks a formal organisation but is clearly controlled by a small cabal responsible for its public face, media strategy and liaison with the police. With that cabal effectively bailed away from demos (Stephen Lennon / Tommy Robinson's stint in Bedford gaol has served as a warning) the EDL is slightly rudderless with the hooligan hardcore being told off from the podium for being overenthusiastic but nobody else wanting to join in 'cos of all the drunken aggro.

However, the fact this was not a good day for the EDL should not be a cause for complacency. The fact remains that hundreds of racists were able to gather, virtually unopposed in Britain's second largest city, close to majority Asian and Muslim areas in a way that has not been seen for a generation.

The opposition, such as it was, came from a coalition of Unite Against Fascism and local groups who organised a 'Unity' event in Chamberlain Sq few hundred metres from Centenary Square. The crowd numbered no more than 200-300 throughout the day. Local Conservative and Labour politicians took to the podium alongside

AS TOP INVESTORS HEAR THAT THEIR PLANS FOR GREECE MAY BE SUBJECT TO REFERENDUM...



BEFORE THREAT OF DEMOCRACY INTERVENING RECEEDS...



'community leaders'. The only break from this dreary monotony came when Martin Smith from Love Music Hate Racism took the stage and announced that he "didn't feel like playing music today", expressed his anger at the poor turnout and asked why we couldn't listen to some real anti-fascists. A few brave souls ventured towards the EDL lines but were firmly dealt with by the overwhelming police presence.

The cops were in fact in control the whole day forming lines around both the EDL rally and the counter demo, having that morning put fencing around the Occupy Birmingham site preventing entry. Filter cordons were set up throughout the city centre and those attending the counter demo were searched under Section 60 of the Public Order Act. Everything was heavily stewarded.

At around 3pm a breakout was attempted from the Unity rally. Around a hundred youth marched toward a gap in police lines, only to be held back by Unity stewards. Unwillingness to shove the stewards out of the way gave the police time to form lines. At 4pm, after the EDL coaches had begun to leave, another breakout was tried, this time successful, but was unable to confront the EDL.

Across the country cops have put into place a blueprint to deal with EDL demos. Local councils demand that fascist and anti-fascist demonstrations are both restricted, the area is swamped

CONTINUED OVER...

## CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For spreading evil spirits...

Brighton Cops went in for some ghoulish behaviour when they pounced unannounced on a Zombie Drag Queen, lurching peaceably home on Halloween weekend.

It was the night of a big city centre wide arts event called White Night, with street performances, installations, urban fetes and much hallow'een themed revelry in all directions.

And our undead hero/heroine (heroi?)'s crime? The Queen of the Dead was spotted by two boys in blue giving a friend a sip of a drink, which in the eyes of the uniformed Van Helsing's added up to 'drunk'n' disorderly' at the hellish time of 12.30am.

In a surreal scene which fascinated onlookers thought was all part of the entertainment, the zombie was unceremoniously arm-twisted and dragged off, thankfully not to be decapitated - but nonetheless receive a 12-hour ban from the Old Steine area.

But no doubt she will rise again.

## SQUAT NEXT?

AS HOPES OF STOPPING LEGAL AID BILL REST ON A LORD'S PRAYER

Unsurprisingly last Tuesday's vote to criminalise squatting (see SchNEWS 794) went the government's way by a fairly sizeable margin. Clause 26 of the Legal Aid bill creates the new offence of squatting in a residential building - and was passed by 283 to 13. An amendment excluding premises that had been vacant for over six months was also defeated.

The night before the vote Squatters Housing Action Group (SHAG) staged a demo in London with a march and bike ride converging on parliament. The intention was to have a picnic then sleep outside for the night, the Met had other ideas though and used oppressive SOCPA legislation to harass, kettle and ultimately move on the protesters. Police were being particularly petty - pushing people over, nicking bikes and arresting 12 people - on an otherwise entirely peaceful action.

The bill now heads off to the Lords where it should get a bit more of a going over. Squatters are unlikely to receive much sympathy from the majority of the landed gentry, but they do tend to be a little more cantankerous than their elected

counterparts. Although the hurriedly pushed through amendment was a kick in the teeth for the homeless and vulnerably housed, it's far from over yet. Assuming the bill does get duffed up by the oldies, it'll head back to the Commons once again, buying a bit more time.

The question now is - where to take the fight next? Lobbying the Lords, setting up info-shops and doing media interviews might help, but it's probably too little too late. Many squatters choose to live outside the 'system' so appealing to it to save them is alien to many. Squattastic, the regularish London squat meeting, will be held at 2-4 Tufnell Park Road, N2 0DL from 2pm to discuss the legislation and the response to it.

In Brighton there will be a demo in support of squatting on Saturday 5th, forming up at Victoria Gardens from 11am and marching to an undisclosed location at midday. Victoria Gardens is also home to Occupy Brighton, who have condemned the move to criminalise and fully support the march. Bring soundsystems, banners and ire.

\* For the latest happenings see <http://network23.org/snob> and [www.squashcampaign.org](http://www.squashcampaign.org)

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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with police who use Forward Intelligence Teams to target known anti-fascists and EDL leaders and to ensure both sides are controlled by stewards. In the case of the antis police procure stewards from local mosques or Muslim organisations.

The result, at the moment, is a stalemate which often allows the EDL to demonstrate unopposed in city centres around the UK.

The fact that elements within the EDL are becoming frustrated with these set piece demonstrations sets new challenges for anti-fascism in the UK. The EDL and its fellow travellers have on the streets and online begun to turn their anger on the left. They've made noises in this direction promising a 'ring of steel' around the royal wedding for instance and condemning protesters against student fees. UAF meetings and stalls have been attacked and last Saturday night a group attacked the Occupy Newcastle site. A fair bit of the bluster from Casuals United and their ilk is just that - prominent threats were made against an anti-fascist benefit in Dalston last week but nothing came of it. However there is a willingness to have a pop at soft targets, small meetings and street stalls.

As the austerity measures bite and the EDL's anti-Islam rhetoric loses its bite there will be an attempt to re-orientate the Leaguers towards attacks on organised working class resistance. Anti-fascism will have to become part of every activist's arsenal.

\* <http://antifascistnetwork.wordpress.com>

## EXTRAORDINARY PETITION

Over 100,000 people in Britain have now signed an official e-petition urging the government to put British detainee Babar Ahmad on trial in the UK, instead of extraditing him to the US. The petition has been actively supported by a wide range of celebrities, including world boxing champion, Amir Khan, comedians Mark Thomas and Marcus Brigstocke, and actor Robert Llewellyn, who have been appalled by the ongoing detention without trial. Ahmad is now in his 8th year of detention, making him the longest detained-without-trial British citizen in the modern history of the UK.

Now that over 100,000 people have signed the petition, the matter becomes eligible for parliamentary debate.

\* [www.freebabarahmad.com](http://www.freebabarahmad.com)

## BRING 'EM TO BOOK

Our mates at Corporate Watch have done a book, snappily entitled "Targeting Israeli Apartheid: A Boycott Divestment and Sanctions Handbook" - an exhaustive rundown of who's who in the Israeli economy, encouraging campaigners to take direct action against the British companies complicit in Israeli apartheid, militarism and colonisation. (yes, real research, not just Wikipedia hacking like us!)

The book begins by examining the Israeli economy, industry by industry, and suggesting where the movement should focus its campaigning energy in order to be most effective (sneek peek: Barclays are a top target!). Part two contains five in-depth geographical case studies. The final section looks at how campaigners can bring the fight home to the UK (and there's also a few cartoons).

For more details, or to obtain a review copy of the book please contact Tom Anderson, tel: 02074260005, email: [contact@corporatwatch.org](mailto:contact@corporatwatch.org), [www.corporatwatch.org](http://www.corporatwatch.org).

### PARTY & PROTEST

For events listings updated weekly see [www.schnews.org.uk/pap](http://www.schnews.org.uk/pap)

## HEARTS OF OAKLAND

### OCCUPY EVERYWHERE ROUND UP

Amongst all the violence this week, Occupy Oakland was the site of an assault on an iraq veteran, Scott Olsen, by police on the 25th October. He was shot in the face with a gas canister that fractured his skull. As others rushed to help cops threw a thunderflash.

Sometimes it only takes one; in Tunisia it was a fruit stall holder setting himself on fire, in Greece the death of a 15 year old boy...could this be the moment that stirs more of America into action?

Occupy Oakland General Assembly responded, by consensus, to the clearing of their camp by calling for a city-wide general strike on Wednesday (2nd). The last general strike in Oakland was back in 1946.

On the day thousands marched down to Oakland's port (one of the US's busiest) and shut it, and much of the city, down. Cops used teargas and stun grenades to attack the protesters later that night. By midnight an unused building had become a beacon for protesters, and a party was in full swing, but not for long as large numbers of police in full riot gear crashed the blowout. \* See [www.occupyoakland.org](http://www.occupyoakland.org)

**LONDON:** Protesters plan to occupy Canary Wharf on November 30th during the public sector general strike ([www.facebook.com/pages/Occupy-Canary-Wharf/215157485213150](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Occupy-Canary-Wharf/215157485213150)). Canary Wharf Group have pre-emptively secured a High Court injunction to prevent Occupy LSX protesters loitering in the East London business district.

Meanwhile the Occupy London protesters may well get to spend the festive season outside St Paul's Cathedral. The City of London has promised to put off eviction measures until the Christmas bells cease to jingle. Negotiations between protesters and officials resulted in the offer to halt eviction for now in return for the number of tents being reduced. Occupy London member Tina Rothery said: 'We would have to make a slight reduction in tents in order to free up space for the fire brigade. There's a hindrance of access for St Paul's churchyard. We're not blocking it but they would like more space.' After the U-turns from St. Pauls top brass, the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams came out sounding sympathetic to the cause. He spoke out for a 'Robin Hood tax' on banks and understands 'the widespread resentment with the financial establishment' \* <http://occupylondon.org.uk>

**BOURNEMOUTH:** The council have now announced they'll be seeking eviction in court on Friday(4th).

**BIRMINGHAM:** Protesters in Birmingham city centre moved camp on Wednesday(2nd) from Victoria square to the community gardens by Symphony Hall, following the council's request to make way for an annual German Christmas market! How bloody civilised. The protest movement against corporate greed which has spread across four continents takes a back step for Christmas... Protesters said "there is no contradiction between our aims and moving for the Christmas traders." No comment.\* <http://occupybirmingham.org>

**GERMANY:** Thousands of protesters took to the streets in Germany this Saturday(29th) to protest over the wealth schism in our society. Occupy activists stationed outside the European Central Bank in Frankfurt plan to stay camped for the next two weeks. According to organising group Attac 5,000 demonstrators marched in Frankfurt past the German National Bank HQ and the European Central Bank. In Berlin, 1,000 protesters congregated outside the main city hall in similar furore. Further protests are planned in both cities for November 12. <http://occupygermany.org/>

### ANTI-CAPITALISM IS CRISIS?

OK, we might all be living through a global financial crisis, but guess what: SchNEWS is skint. We need another bailout to save us from being forced to default on our newsletter obligations, which could threaten the whole alternative media-zone... See <http://www.schnews.org.uk/extras/help.htm>

## QUAKE UP CALL

On the same day that an on Wednesday anti-fracking protesters held a "frack mob" outside the Shale Gas Environmental Summit', two of the more intrepid anti-fra scaled a fracking shale gas rig in Lancashire, shutting it down.

Around 50 people showed up for the Frack Mob, most in costumes ranging from smart suits to chem suits. Naming and shaming the green-wash hawkers' conference. Fracking/shale gas is being promoted as a green energy source, possibly because that's the colour of the flames that come out of the water supply in fracked areas.

The actions coincided with the release of a report into the consequences of shale oil extraction. Yes, the industry's own report, commissioned by Cuadrilla, came to the same conclusion as the rest of us- that fracking is the 'probable cause' of the 50 seismic tremors in the area around their rigs. Mark Miller, Cuadrilla's chief executive, tried desperately to put some spin on the report, claiming that 2.1 on the richter scale isnt all that bad. Yeah, like, the 50 earthquakes we caused were only small, so what's the big deal? "There's a certain level of seismic activity that can occur even with a truck going past a house," he said. Er, thanks Mike.

Colin Eastman, one of the climbers, said: "Conventional fossil fuels have begun to run out and the system is moving towards more extreme forms of energy like fracking, tar sands, and deep water drilling. The move towards 'extreme energy' is literally scrapping the bottom of the barrel, sucking the last most difficult to reach fossil fuels from the planet at a time when we should be rapidly reducing our consumption altogether and looking for sustainable alternatives. In the UK fracking for shale gas is planned alongside, not instead of, extraction of conventional fossil fuels like coal."

There are plans afoot for another 800 fracking rigs in the UK. Plenty of work for Frack Off to be getting on with. [www.frack-off.org.uk](http://www.frack-off.org.uk)

### ...and finally...

For a mainstream American TV network showing live aerial feed from a breaking news event, running out of helicopter fuel moments before it all finally kicks off may be regarded a misfortune. For two network choppers to run out simultaneously - well that looks like more than mere carelessness (apols. to Oscar Wilde).

This strange turn of events is just what happened this week as two separate blind-eyes-in-the-sky, previously circling over the Occupy Oakland protests for ABC and CBS news, both suddenly cut transmissions and returned to base - citing a lack of gas. Minutes later the cops moved in and attacked the protesters with batons and teargas, from which reports of much unsavoury police brutality emerged. Americans were spared Arab Spring-style scenes of protest repression and only short clips later appeared on news broadcasts. Huge coincidence or state forces at work - you decide!

Occupy'ers should always hold on to another Wilde-ism: "An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all."

### Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, consistency is the last refuge of the unimaginative. Honest. (No more Oscar Wilde. Honest)