

WAKE UP!! IT'S YER LOOKING FOR A PARTY...

Weekly SchNEWS

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GRASSROOTS STRUGGLE

AS POLICE NOTCH UP ANOTHER VICTORY IN THE WAR AGAINST FUN

Yet another independent festival has been cancelled after a concerted campaign by bureaucrats, nimbys and police.

The Grassroots Festival was a small volunteer-run event due to take place in Cambridgeshire in early September. Organisers had lined up three days of revelry, from poetry to Drum 'n' Bass and culminating in a communal banquet replete with juggling waiters.

The Festival faced determined opposition from the very start. According to one of the organisers, Mooney, when the application process began in January the council made it clear they would do all they could to stop the festival taking place. Martin Ford from the Police licensing board went one step further and told organisers, "I'd rather put pins in my eyes than have this festival in my county."

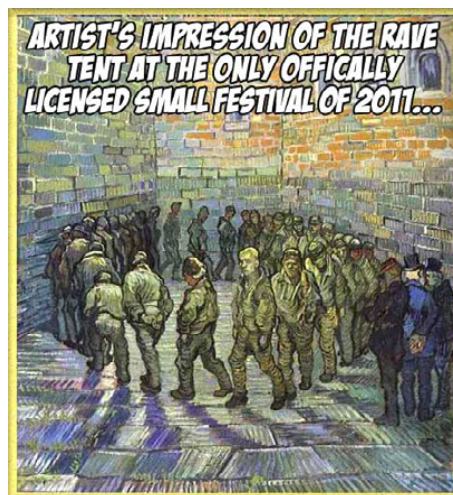
Mooney said, "They didn't want it to happen so they played their games. They couldn't use legislation so instead they used dirty tactics." The now familiar modus operandi involved heaping ludicrous demand after ludicrous demand on organisers and stalling for time to the point that the festival risked financial ruin if they pressed ahead.

After the initial consultation, organisers met monthly with the local authorities and there were six revisions of the festival's management plan in total. Each time they were

presented with ever more unreasonable conditions, ranging from heras-fencing the A11 in case of invasion by wandering partygoers who had strayed three miles over fence and field, to installing security watchtowers (with or without machine gun nests) to ensure the unruly throng of 2000 didn't erupt in spontaneous revolution.

Each time, organisers either met the conditions or managed to argue their case that what they were being asked was beyond the realms of sanity or reason. However the killer blow came with the final application for a licence. When handing in the application, local authorities clearly told organisers that they only needed to submit one paper copy and that the pack of other relevant licensing bodies, such as traffic management and the fire brigade, would be happy with an emailed copy. At the eleventh hour of the last day they had to submit the application, organisers were then told that the licence would be refused unless all the bodies had paper copies. With no time left to do this, organisers would have had to resubmit and wouldn't have received a decision until just days before the festival. If the licence had been refused at that point it would have spelled financial disaster for all involved and so organisers were left with no choice but to cancel.

A despondent Mooney told SchNEWS,



"In some countries people welcome celebrations." After the attacks on Strawberry Fair (see SchNEWS 715), the Big Green Gathering (685), UK Teknival (727) and Thimbleberry (707) amongst others, it is becoming increasingly clear the UK isn't one of them.

* The "Rave 6", charged under section 136 following the police attack on this year's UK Teknival, has now become the "Rave 10" after four more people were charged. To contribute to a fund set up to help pay the sound system crew's fines, overdue hire charges and legal costs see www.dalera6.co.cc

CLIMATE CAMP WALES

Chwimia eich arse at Cymru! Or, in other words: get your arse to Wales! The first UK Climate Camp of the season kicks off on the 13th August til the 17th, hitting out again at the open cast coal miners currently desecrating most of the Welsh countryside. This year the campers plan to take on another coal bad-die somewhere in the south of the country after last year's targeting of Ffos-y-Fran, the largest mine of its type in Europe (see SchNEWS 687, 688).

Environmentalists keen to get in on the Welsh action should meet in Cardiff outside Merthyr Crown Court at 2pm on the 13th to get the week started with a solidarity demo for the 13 people who blockaded the railway at Ffos y Fran opencast mine in April (see SchNEWS 720). The 13 are being sentenced so could do with a bit of support from all those planning on going to the camp this year.

Keep your eye peeled for more info on the UK Climate Camp (19th-25th August, Edinburgh) in the next couple of weeks.

* See www.climatecampcymru.org for info on Climate Camp Wales or www.climate-camp.org.uk for the national event

CAMPSFIELD HOUSE HUNGER STRIKES

Detainees at Campsfield House Immigration Removal Centre near Oxford are the most recent to go on hunger strike over the inhumane treatment and prolonged incarceration at these institutions. Earlier this year, hunger strikes took place at both Yarl's Wood and Harmondsworth Detention Centres (see SchNEWS 713).

The strike of 147 of the 216 male detainees at Campsfield began on Monday (2nd), some of the demonstrators having been kept at detention centres for over three years. In a public statement, the strikers emphasised the mental stress they experienced due to being separated from their families and being imprisoned indefinitely without any prospect of release. For the removal process itself they claimed they were 'tortured, restrained (and) strapped like animals' on a regular basis. They also drew attention to a case of attempted suicide by a detainee in July this year.

The detainees statement asserted, "There is no justification whatsoever for detaining

us for such period of time. Our lives incidentally have been stalled without any hope of living a life, having a family or any future... We the detainees are also humans."

The Home Office has rejected claims that any mistreatment takes place at the centre, which is run by private company the GEO Group Ltd on behalf of the UK Borders Agency, and have refused to comment on the attempted suicide. In statements to the press the UKBA have, typically, tried to downplay the strike by making the assertion that the detainees may have refused meals but still have access to food from an on-site shop and vending machines. The six week hunger strike of the women at Yarl's Wood has also never been officially recognised by the Home Office. If they find understanding the concept of 'hunger strike' so challenging, perhaps its no surprise that the European Convention on Human Rights appears to fly right over their heads...

* See www.closecampsfield.org.uk

RENATA ZELAZNA IS FREE!

Renata Zelazna, the Polish anarchist imprisoned in Holland was finally freed on Monday (2nd). She was arrested in April and charged with attempted murder of a policeman (see SchNEWS 721 & 732). Renata was sentenced to 117 days imprisonment and given a €300 fine but was released immediately as she had already spent way more time than that inside.

* See www.free-renata-zelazna.webs.com and www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=121038371247468

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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A DREADFUL BORE

More action on the west coast of Ireland this week as Beat the Boreholes campaigners continue to aggravate those gas-obsessed drillers bent on ruining another natural beauty spot (see SchNEWS 733, 730). The Rossport solidarity campers waded out at high tide on Sunday (29th) to the latest rig in the Sruwaddacon estuary and lashed out with ropes, tying them round the legs of the drilling platform.

The ten activists halted drilling for two hours as they occupied the space under the rig before the Gardai arrested six. Backup from three kayakers was quickly snuffed out by security in speedboats with Gardai arresting one of them. Everyone was released later without charge. Both rigs have now been moved a few miles upriver towards Aghoos and are positioned opposite the house of Rossport 5 member Willy Corduff (see SchNEWS 710) - a move some people think is a tad provocative.

It's not too late for a sojourn to Eire yourself... see www.rosssportsolidaritycamp.org

MORE BANG FOR YER BUCK

Turmoil has hit the streets of Bangladesh as garment workers protest over low wages. On Sunday (1st) protesters collided with police for a third day over demands for a new minimum wage. Thousands of angry workers took to the streets of Dhaka in protest over their pay after union leaders said the rise did not match the cost of living.

The garment industry is Bangladesh's second largest employer, with more than 3.5 million people - mostly women - working in thousands of factories all over the country. International companies such as Wal-Mart, H&M, Zara and Marks and Spencer sell clothing made there.

Some 80 people were injured in the latest clashes with police, who fired rubber bullets and beat protesters with batons. Reports said a crowd blocked a highway in the city's north for several hours, jeering at officers and pelting them with bricks. In another part of the capital, protesters attacked vehicles and looted shops. Nearly 250 people have been hurt in similar violence over the past two days.

The Bangladeshi Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, called on the workers to accept the new minimum wage and stop hurting the sector, which is worth some 80% of the country's annual £10bn export income. She said the continuing unrest, which has forced the closure of 20 factories in Dhaka's textile hub, could threaten employees' livelihoods. The government is more concerned that corporates will up and go somewhere else than taking seriously the struggles and demands of their people, who survive on starvation wages despite working for the world's biggest brands. Anti-sweatshop campaigners in the UK calculated that to provide a living wage for workers, retailers would have to increase the price of a T-shirt by just 6p and a pair of jeans by 12p.

* See www.nosweat.org.uk

IAN TOMLINSON PROTEST

Around 200 people gathered outside the Director of Public Prosecution's office on Saturday (31st) to protest against the decision not to prosecute Simon Harwood, the policeman who murdered Ian Tomlinson at last year's G20 protests (SchNEWS 732).

After listening to speeches they marched to the spot in Cornhill where Ian Tomlinson died, followed by a small number of police. A minute's silence was held at the spot and was observed by passing city workers as well as protesters.

* See www.iantomlinsonfamilycampaign.org.uk

PARTY & PROTEST

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

WREKIN CREW

Protesters from the Huntington Lane Camp in Shropshire successfully navigated a raft down the River Severn on Sunday to raise awareness of the proposal by UK Coal to mine 900,000 tons of coal. The raft, made from recycled materials, flew a huge "No New Coal" banner as it sailed past EON's Buildwas B coal-fired power station and on to Ironbridge where locals and tourists cheered the protesters making their photo-op opposition plain.

Another group from the camp spread the message on land by walking along the riverside and educating anyone crossing their path. There is no shortage of issues raised by the proposed mine and the impact that it would have on the surrounding Shropshire Hills Area of Natural Beauty. The extraction is set to include 250,000 tonnes of fireclay as well as the coal and devastate 230 hectares of prime heritage land, all in the shadow of one of the area's most prominent landmark hills, The Wrekin.

Let's not even dwell on the at least 2,430,000 tonnes of climate changing CO2 emissions due to be pumped into the atmosphere during its lifetime.

The camp at Huntington Lane Surface Mine Site was set up in March after trees were felled on the site indicating that UK Coal intended to begin mining (see SchNEWS 714). Since then, there has been a permanent camp at Huntington, where residents have been busy building tunnels, structures and defences around the camp. They've managed also to interest local press and keep the campaign visible from beyond the nearest hedge.

Already the proposed date for the commencement of work has been forced back, first from early June to the end of June, then to mid July to early August; latest word on the street is that it has now been put back until the end of August.

It's not too late for more bodies to make a difference. Anyone wanting to get involved is welcome at the camp and donations of food, tools and water are always needed.

* See www.defendhuntingtonlane.wordpress.com

ECO-BATTLE IN RUSSIA

Russian environmentalists hit out this week at the proposed plans to clear a centuries-old forest to make way for a major new road between Moscow and Sheremetyevo International Airport.

Around 100 masked activists separated from a march in Khimki, the region where the forest is, and descended on the city hall where they hurled bottles, fireworks and - according to some sources, Molotov cocktails - at the building, spraying pro-forest slogans on the walls. By the time cops arrived the protesters had made their escape. The police then hotfooted it to the protest camp in the woods, set up in July to protect the land, but made no arrests. Seemingly restrained by Russian standards, they only did their best to distract the camp from preparing for their two upcoming meetings with official bodies to discuss the destruction of the forest. Since this visit police have reverted to type, arresting and detaining without charge two anti-fash civil rights activists - Alexey Gaskarov and Maxim Solopov - in connection with the city hall violence.

This has been a hotly contested issue ever since the state revealed their plans. A local journalist who opposed the scheme at the beginning was brutally beaten and left crippled and brain-damaged in 2008 by a mystery assailant. Some protesters from the camp and two journalists were also attacked in July this year by a group wearing neo-fascist symbols, but when the police arrived they started arresting the protesters rather than their attackers.

* See Facebook - Freedom for Russian antifascists Alexei Gaskarov & Maxim Solopov

ON YER BIKE

London's new two-wheeled green dream bike hire scheme was launched last week (31st) with a great Boris fanfare. But before a crank had been rotated the 'Barclays Bikes' were rebranded with stickers highlighting the bank's investment in the arms trade.

Activists had worked through the night, placing stickers on the "Borisbikes" with messages such as: "£20M INVESTMENT IN BIKES. £7300M INVESTMENT IN BOMBS" and "FUNDING DEPLETED URANIUM BIRTH DEFECTS IN IRAQ".

Transport for London said that only a small number of bikes were affected but activists claim they stuck messages on around 4000 of them.

"I have nothing to say," was the reply given by Barclays chairman, Magnus Agius, when asked about the stickers at the press launch.

Barclays paid £25 million to sponsor the bikes and a "Barclays Super Highway" cycle lane network. Their branding is prominent on the bikes and the cycle lanes themselves are painted Barclays' blue. Whilst the push for pedal power is obviously a good thing, hijacking the vibe to promote a key financier of global death and destruction is an idea clearly in need of a supersize D-lock.

EDO ATTACKED

Anti-war protesters attacked EDO in Brighton early on Tuesday (3rd) morning, lobbing paint bombs and trashing the company's new CCTV camera. Smash EDO campaigners promise to keep the pressure on the weapons manufacturer after the acquittal of the EDO Decommissioners at the beginning of July (see SchNEWS 729).

* See www.smashedo.org.uk

...and finally...

Big Brother and the like might be flailing along here on British TV, only still clinging on thanks to the need to fill crap z-list papers with 'stories' and Simon Cowell's bank account with money, but the concept is still busy sweeping the world before it.

In Malaysia, for example, they don't bother with whiny, egocentric wannabee twenty-somethings desperate to launch meeja careers. No, they've been putting the fun back in fundamentalism with a religious-reality contest called Imam Muda (Young Leader), running since May this year. In what could have been called 'I'm an Infidel Get Me Out of Here', aspiring Muslim clerics were pitted against each other in such unmissable contests as slaughtering sheep, reciting verses from the Koran and counselling young people against promiscuity.

In true reality style, the contestants have been confined to a hostel, cut off from family and friends and the world at large whilst being kept under constant surveillance for moral fortitude... "Day 23 in the Big Mullah house... And Mohammad is in the praying room again..."

Gradually the field was nail-bitingly whittled down, with the Alan Sugar role each week played by judge Hasan Mahmood al-Hafiz, a former national grand imam. "You're fatwahed!" Last week, Kuala Lumpur's biggest mosque played host to the grand finale and a 26-year-old religious scholar was finally ordained the winner, scooping prizes including a job as a cleric, an all-expenses-paid pilgrimage to Mecca and the Prophet's special prize... an iPhone (presumably already set up with a hotline to Allah).

How long before the Christians keep up with the bin Joneses and launch their own Pope Idol when the current ex-fascist, kiddie-fiddler-friendly incumbent kicks the bucket?

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers, we're munting it up at Boomtown next week, so no issue. Honest.

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