



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER MORE BOTTLE THAN ARISTOTLE...

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AS ATHENS HOSTS THE PARAMILITARY OLYMPICS



GO GREECE FIGHTIN'

ATHENS EXPLODES INTO RIOTS AFTER MURDER OF 15 YEAR OLD PUNK

Six days of solid rioting, banks and government buildings burned to the ground, police stations besieged by thousands of angry demonstrators chucking Molotov's. Universities have been occupied, a general strike has been called, the opposition is calling for new elections and the government seems to have gone to ground. The few cabinet members who've been spotted talking to the media have been giving it a 'nothing to do with me mate' shrug as chaos reigns in Athens and beyond. Students at the Medical School of Athens kept the deputy Minister of Health hostage in the Ministry building for an hour. There's been over 200 million euros worth of damage in total, and something like 600 buildings have been damaged or destroyed. It's official - Greece is in a state of Anarchy.

It all started last Saturday when police shot dead a fifteen year old punk, Alexis Grigoropoulos. This act of cold-blooded murder by overtly fascist police was caught on mobile phone cameras, and was the spark for a wave of protests against the police. The Greek police's immediate reaction - tear gas, batons and bullets - turned the situation into a city-wide riot as gangs of young anarchist punks took the opportunity to tell the police what they thought of them - in the only language that they understand.

Greek streets are littered with burning cop cars and riot vans, and running battles are continuing between police and demonstrators. Parliament and the HQ of the riot police were besieged on Tuesday. Despite rumours earlier in the day that the protests were running out of steam, around twenty police stations were attacked yesterday (11th).

The Greek police are notorious for their brutality and racism, as well as their links to far right groups. They haven't been reformed since the days of the fascist colonels came to an end in the '70s, and pretty much every Greek has got a story of brutality at the hands of the police.

After having killed a young boy, the police, in typical arrogant fashion, spun the story that he was killed by a ricochet. Erm, excuse me - Don't £*%ing shoot at kids! It's no defence to say that 'oh I only meant to shoot at his feet' - if you shoot at kids you're already beyond the pale. When you hit one it's murder.

But anyway the Greek youth (and most of the older population as well come to think of it) seem pretty savvy to police lies. The riots have already gone way beyond protesting against the police, becoming a mass wave of direct action against an unpopular government. Greeks have put up with a corrupt and incompetent government for years now, they've watched as the state has squandered their wealth and dashed their hopes for material improvement.

GREEK EARN

Things have reached a real tipping point when they start to affect the middle classes in a big way. The working (and workless) classes are usually screwed over anyways, so the downturn isn't such a big shock to them, just another in a long line of shocks. But so long as the middle classes are there to help keep the proles down the rich can sleep in peace at night. But when the middle classes start getting it in the neck, the elites start to notice that they're out on a limb.

What's known in Greece as the 800 Euro generation (highly skilled people in supposedly 'decent' middle class graduate jobs who work for around 700 quid a month) had been promised that joining the Eurozone would be a short-cut to North European style-prosperity and opportunities. Instead what they've got is English prices and East European wages, and a shrinking say in how their country is run in a privatise-or-die age.

What's really interesting is that the people on the streets are rallying behind Anarchist banners when they challenge the state. Indy-media Greece is reckoned to be the most active local Indymedia site in the world, and the old guard of moribund Stalinist trades unions haven't had a bright idea since 1989.

As one Athenian lefty who was willing to talk to us put it: "*Greece is like a coiled spring. We're in an impossible situation here. All of our expectations have suddenly been cut short. This is a poor country, and normally people are very conformist, but when you take away peoples' hopes everything's up for grabs.*"

Just a few years ago the Anarchists were seen by most people as just a bunch of troublemakers. Now suddenly everyone is radicalised. Let me give you an example: Some of my friends are in an anarchist group that steals stuff from supermarkets and distributes it in the local markets. A few years ago people didn't want to know, but now when they do it people applaud them."

And possibly, just possibly, what's happening in Greece is just the beginning. Peel away the spark (Alexis' death) and specifically local issues (a government that makes even our Brown-streak-of-a-government look like a paragon of competence and virtue - nearly), and what we begin to see is the effects of the credit-crunch (better known as a recession) on first world countries. The same pressures that have pulled the rug from under the Greek economic

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For having a train ticket...

Police arrested one man after he attempted to board a train at King's Cross Station. Police have taken to converging on London station platforms in the hope of catching fare dodgers.

This particular traveller, on his way to the anti-militarism conference in Edinburgh, actually had a ticket, however the ticket inspector said it wasn't valid till after 6pm. A few heated words ensued. As this was happening five plain clothes police pounced on the ne'er do well, thinking he was one of those pesky fare dodgers, and manhandled him.

It all seemed like it would be written off as a misunderstanding until the cops phoned his details in to the Police National Computer and found out he had been arrested several times on political protests. Hey presto! before you could say 'politically motivated arrest' he was handcuffed and carted off to the slammer.

non-miracle are there in the UK, it's just that here peoples' relative wealth has shielded them from rising food and oil prices. In Greece a few extra pence to a loaf of bread or a bus fare might be just enough to turn grumblings against the Man into inklings that maybe someone ought to do something about it, and maybe, just maybe, they're the ones to do it.

What with factory occupations in Obama's home town of Chicago, and a general strike in Italy (and serious protests in Iceland - see SchNEWS 657), these local actions look like they might be beginning to coalesce into a movement to challenge the smug and self-satisfied bastards that have been getting away with far too much for far too long.

Already, Greek-inspired anarchy (and Anarchism) seem to be spreading around Europe. When *The Times* talks about "mobs causing violent scenes in Italy, Spain, Russia, Denmark and Turkey" you know something's afoot. There have even been solidarity actions across the world including Germany, Melbourne and New York, and cities across Blighty have joined in the fun. Hundreds marched in Edinburgh in support of Greek comrades, the Greek Embassy in London was shut down, and in Bristol an amazing 30 police vehicle were attacked, as well as other actions in Newcastle, Leeds and elsewhere. Olympic Airways (Greece's national carrier) was blockaded on Wednesday.

Get yer riot porn now...

- * See www.indymedia.org.uk
- * www.libcom.org - for comment and analysis
- * <http://www.occupiedlondon.org/blog> - up to date, blow by blow account of the riots
- * For some proper riot porn see <http://english.aljazeera.net/Services/Gallery/Default.aspx?GalleryID=200812721427182379>

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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HAVING NO TRUCK

As far as anti-arms actions goes, it's hard to beat the news from Pakistan from the other day. Three actions over four consecutive days have destroyed some 200 US Humvees and armoured personnel carriers, as well as other weapons heading for US troops engaged in the occupation of Afghanistan (sorry, we mean, at the invitation of 'Mayor of Kabul' President Karzai). In one of the major blowbacks from the war in Afghanistan, groups fighting under the banner of 'The Taliban' have virtually taken over the northwestern border of Pakistan. On the Afghan side of the same border, the original Taliban that were so famously routed from Mazar Al Sharif in 2001 by the US and the Northern Alliance, are back in force, controlling most of the South and East of the country.

How things have changed in the last eight years. Back then most Afghans were glad to see the back of the Taliban, asking themselves "what could possibly be worse than that humourless shower of bastards?" Well, eight years later they've got their answer: The Americans.

Meanwhile some elements of the Taliban have softened their image a little- allowing some music and wedding parties here and there. And they've also been paying close attention to what their 'Islamic brothers' have been getting up to in Iraq over these last years, and now the hills of Afghanistan are alive with the sound of car-bombs. The Taliban have taken over from the Iraqi insurgency as the biggest killer of US soldiers (after obesity that is).

What's going on in Afghanistan hinges on its neighbour Pakistan much more than anything that US or British squaddies get up to in the country. Pakistan, having nurtured both the Taliban and Al Qaeda for years, got bullied into supporting the US war since 2001. They've been playing a double game ever since. Ironically both the Americans and the Taliban rely on Pakistan for their supplies. Whilst the US base in Tarbella is a launching pad for aerial assaults, and US weapons reach Afghan bases through Pakistan, Pashtun men regularly cross the porous North-Western Frontier into Afghanistan to fight the Americans.

The 'War on Terror,' as viewed from the North-western Frontier Province, is a very weird place indeed. For a region that is probably the least developed in the whole of Asia, a war is being fought that could be the template for a slew of future wars which will look like scenes straight out of The Terminator. Remote control warriors sit in pre-fab buildings in Arizona controlling unmanned Predator Drones armed with Hellfire missiles that use smart targeting to hunt down terrorists from high in the skies. Needless to say the vast majority of the casualties of the Predators are civilian, as almost every week there are stories of yet another wedding party being hit by US remote missiles.

Somehow even though it's politically unacceptable to allow US troops to fight in Pakistan, Playstation warriors who drop the kids off at school, commute to work and spend the day targeting towel-heads before coming home to dinner with the family is somehow alright. As villages that don't have electricity or running water are ripped apart by the most sophisticated killing machines on the planet, the rage that these atrocities cause serve as the best possible recruitment campaign for the Taliban. Meanwhile, on Planet Washington president elect Obama promises to withdraw troops from Iraq to push them on to the new front line in Afghanistan, leaving the US sucked into an unwinnable war just like the one that the Soviets fought in the '80s.

CONSTANT THREAT

The Dale Farm gypsy community in Essex is under threat again. Last week they were joined by supporters in a protest outside the Royal Courts of Justice, London, where the Basildon Council are appealing a High Court decision from May this year which halted the planned eviction of Dale Farm, and ordered local authorities to find alternative land for them to live (See SchNEWS 632). This is despite the fact that the community of 100 families - effectively a village of 1000 people - actually own the land, but don't have planning permission. In fact the eviction of Dale Farm is more about ethnic cleansing, rather than planning permission per se.

Basildon Council are trying to get the green light for a £2 million eviction of Dale Farm, with the self-proclaimed 'gypsy eviction specialist' bailiffs, Constant & Co, chaffing at the bit to be let out of their cages to do the dirty work. It was after seeing footage of Constant's violent evictions of previous traveller evictions that persuaded the High Court Judge to halt the Dale Farm eviction in May, and urged Basildon Council to not use them in any future eviction.

Large communities like Dale Farm come about because life on the road and working itinerantly is now nearly impossible in England. Park-up land around the country has been taken away and their only recourse is to buy land and live on it - with or without planning permission.

The judge's decision on the appeal is due in the new year, but already some 200 people have pledged to join the community to resist if it comes to an eviction. SchNEWS will keep you posted if and when that happens...

* For more info dale.farm@btinternet.com

* See also www.gypsy-traveller.org

ANTI-MILITARY TATTOO

From November 29th-30th activists from around Britain gathered in Edinburgh to plan to disrupt NATO's Parliamentary assembly in November 2009, when politicians will be converging on the city to rubber stamp NATO's military newest schemes. The anti-militarist gathering was the beginning of a process aimed at building a mass-mobilisation to stop the summit.

The gathering was also a chance to discuss the growing network of local anti-militarist groups, with the call-out stressing the need to build a new, effective anti-militarist movement in the UK. In their words "...to look beyond the ethics of banner waving to what we can achieve through direct action. In short, it's time to move from anti-war protesting to anti-war resistance".

"This movement has already begun. Smash EDO have taken its fight to the streets of Brighton, army recruitment centres across the UK get their windows smashed and daubed in graffiti on a regular basis, the rooftop of Raytheon Systems in Bristol has been occupied, Heckler & Koch in Nottingham have been targeted, nuclear military bases at Faslane and Aldermaston continue to be besieged by blockaders... These are just some examples of a huge number of ongoing campaigns and battles to shut arms factories, suppliers and military bases."

More gatherings are planned in Scotland and around the UK in the lead up to the NATO conference. See <http://edinantimil.livejournal.com>

* NATO are also meeting in Strasbourg on April 3rd-4th 2009 and plans are afoot to disrupt it. There's a Dissent! meeting in Strasbourg from 16th-18th January in preparation, see www.wombles.org.uk/article2008122310.php

* Just yesterday (11th) the rooftop of Raytheon was again occupied in an early morning action. As the sun came up a banner was unfurled and later that afternoon saw a demo outside the office.

STANSTILL

Stansted reached a stand-still this Monday (8th) as Plane Stupid climate campaigners blockaded a runway at the airport. In the early hours, while the runway was closed for maintenance a group of over fifty protesters snuck in carrying metal gates and locked themselves into their own fortified enclave (an impenetrable triangle of building site fencing). During the morning a reported 56 flights were cancelled. 57 protesters were arrested, mostly for Aggravated Trespass. Plane Stupid are saying they are 'determined to turn the climate talk into climate action.'

Aviation is Britain's fastest growing source of emission, accounting for at least 13% of the national climate impact. Britain's new commitments to tackle climate change is yet another folly of government rhetoric as airport expansions at Stansted and Heathrow (see SchNEWS 600) are rolled through.

Predictably, mainstream media still refused to use the Stansted action to open up the debate about the challenges we face, and the threat of an expanding aviation industry. A headline in *The Times* read '*This anti-flying circus is absurd: The Stansted demonstration ignores the great benefits of cheap flights*'.

But funnily enough *The Times* have changed their tune since the mid-sixties, when BAA began a commercial airport at the ex-WWII airbase at Stansted. And you'll be pleased to know that this week's protest is not just another fad of the new 'eco-terrorists': In 1967, 400 locals and two MPs campaigned against the new airport. And *The Times* headline of the time, *Stansted - A Real Mistake*, went on to say 'The choice of Stansted does not stand or fall by the number of fine buildings in the vicinity, or the number of acres lost to wheat, or the status of the north-west corner of Essex as a 'lung for London'... the calculations themselves are suspect: no attempt is made to estimate social costs and benefits.' Admittedly, this was not in relation to climate change, but overall environmental damage - but the link was obviously glaring then as it is now.

* See also www.planestupid.com

XMAS JEERS

On Wednesday, the fascist BNP entirely failed to relaunch a Brighton and Hove branch as a large and diverse crowd gathered at their meeting point. The BNP told the local papers their meeting had been cancelled due to the unexpected publicity they received. Nevertheless, a few bonehead thugs managed to turn up for the chance to photograph their opponents, although they were a little shy about their politics if anyone had wanted to join their vile 'party.'

Unite Against Fascism used the opportunity to peddle their hierarchical socialism and a few local politicians turned up to promote the very same political parties that leave people so desperately disillusioned they'll turn to any alternative, even glossed-up fascism. But in general the crowd was demonstrating a robust and radical opposition to any attempt to expand the BNP in a city famed for its large gay, lesbian and whatever community.

This Saturday (13th) the BNP are trying to have a Xmas party in Crawley. There will be protests at their redirection point at B&Q, London Road, Crawley from 6pm. Other BNP branches are holding Xmas parties in their areas, although these are not generally advertised. Maybe because whenever people do find out about BNP events there's disruption of one sort or another. This Xmas help the BNP celebrate the birth of an asylum-seeking Palestinian Jew the way they'd want you to...

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