



ISSUE 2, 6.11.2003

NewsWire

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Pixies Target Cambridge CCTV

By Eye-Spy / Pingouin, 01.11.2003
13:20

On the morning of Saturday 1 November, banners appeared hanging from a number of CCTV cameras in the centre of Cambridge, drawing attention to the ever-increasing invasion of our privacy by blanket surveillance.

CCTV has been installed to address the issues of crime, but a growing number of independent studies demonstrate they have little or no effect on reducing crime rates. One study suggests for example that CCTV does not have any effect on violent crime. Where CCTV seems to have an effect (such as vehicle crime), people have noticed a displacement effect, where crime is moved but not reduced. The extent of CCTV coverage and funding were based on the assumption that the camera must work, and apparent public support but, at the time of installation of most of the schemes (including Cambridge which was done in 1997), no serious independent studies were carried out. Now, despite the questionable effect of CCTV on crime, more money is put into updating the existing cameras and extending the coverage to new areas. In addition, most



studies have also pointed out the discriminatory monitoring towards young men of ethnic minorities and video voyeurism.

With the advance of new technologies, privacy issues are becoming much more important. Behind the popular and very convenient perception that "if you have done nothing you have nothing to fear" lies the prospect of a broader use of CCTV not only to monitor crimes but also to enforce social conformity. Philosophers such as Michel Foucault have discussed the possibility that the information society could turn into a Panopticon, an ideal prison in which the inmates restrict their own behaviour because they are always potentially under observation.

In the future, face recognition technology will become more and more accurate and already programs to efficiently read car number plates are available and in use. The city of London was thinking of using this technology to establish a database that would include all British citizens whose faces were registered in the Driving License Bureau. In this case any person could in theory be instantly identified by the police.

A loud "NO" to primate experiments

By Someone in Cambridge, 11.10.2003
19:02

About 1000 people marched through the centre of Cambridge on Saturday 11 October in an angry (but never violent) show of outrage at Cambridge University's continuing attempts to gain planning permission for a new primate laboratory on Huntingdon Road, and the incredible suffering that this would no doubt involve in the name of scientific research.

In February 2001, South Cambridgeshire District Council heard a planning application from Cambridge University to build a huge new research complex to carry out experiments on monkeys. It would be Europe's largest primate vivisection laboratory.

The University's proposals have already

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If you want to get involved, e-mail imc-cambridge@lists.indymedia.org or come to one of our open meetings at 7.30 every Monday in Clown's Café, King Street.



been rejected twice by South Cambs District Council, but the Government is now threatening to overrule this decision on the grounds that the centre would be of "national importance".

The proposed site would cover acres of green belt land close to Girton, a village on the northern outskirts of Cambridge. It would also be close to the junction of a motorway and several major 'A' roads.

Transport is always on the agenda

By Manos / Cambridge IMC,
10.10.2003 15:39

Three campaigns in Cambridge are constantly working to prove that traffic jams are not the only form of collective action that can be taken in relation to transport. The relatively new but rapidly growing CAST.IRON group is working to restore regular, timetabled rail services to the Cambridge-St Ives Line. Apparently fed up with the initial lack of interest of those "in charge", they are now mobilizing to build Britain's First Community Commuter Railway.

Meanwhile, Transport 2000 works for policies that give greater priority to the environment, saving lives and conserving natural resources. The current campaign

focuses on the proposal to dual the A428 westward from Cambridge, which could worsen traffic problems in Cambridge.

The oldest, but still very active, is the Cambridge Cycling Campaign which gives a voice and power to the cycling community in Cambridge (i.e. most of us!) Cycling means reduced congestion, less pollution and better health and they are not afraid of telling everyone every Saturday noon in Cambridge Market Square or through actions.

BP: "Profit is more important than people"

By medico, 16.10.2003 14:14

On Monday 13 October, activists from the campaign group People and Planet infiltrated a BP careers presentation in the Crowne Plaza hotel to protest against the company's involvement in the controversial Baku-Ceyhan pipeline project. Posing as potential applicants, the activists entered the meeting room and started to mingle in the crowd, taking advantage of the tables of free food and drink kindly provided by BP.

As soon as one of the BP executives started his introductory talk, however, the group moved to the front of the room and took out their placards and the mock pipeline they had constructed with the words "STOP BAKU-CEYHAN" painted on. The BP executive did his best to ignore the protestors and keep the audience's attention, but found it increasingly hard, stammering and pausing to glare at the intruders. Afterwards, the activists gave out leaflets explaining their



opposition to the pipeline.

Unfortunately, it seemed that the BP oilmen present were not quite so willing to engage in conversation. When one of them was asked how the pipeline would match up to BP's claim to environmental responsibility ("In our own working environment BP has a simply stated goal – to do no damage to the environment"), he simply refused to answer. Similarly, when one student asked about opportunities for employment within the company in the renewable energies sector, specifically solar energy, another representative replied that BP did not have much interest in renewable energies as they were not sufficiently profitable.

International activists shot by Israeli army

By jolifanto, 26.10.2003 16:25

Cambridge based activist, Mika, is currently taking part in direct action as part of the International Solidarity Movement to defend the rights of the Palestinian people. Here is one of his recent reports.

On the night of Friday 24 October, two Palestinian boys and two Nablus ISMs were shot in Balata Refugee Camp by soldiers.

Five of us were standing just inside the entrance to Balata refugee camp, observing a clash between three Israeli military vehicles and Palestinian stone-throwers. As always, we were hoping that our clearly visible international presence would make the soldiers less likely to kill somebody, and that we could deter them from entering the camp proper.

The two jeeps and Hummer drove in and out of the entrance, shooting both rubber and live bullets. The Palestinians responded with stones and two molotovs, but not with shooting. Several times the Hummer would sneak into a backstreet and come tearing down on the stone-throwing boys from behind. The soldiers were clearly playing. They weren't on an operation, ie arresting someone or

searching a house. Their purpose appeared to be to create the clash – something that happens 2-4 evenings a week.

At one point, the soldiers shot out the electricity, sending the camp into pitch blackness. Before we could pull back, they let off a volley of shots down the left. One bullet went through a brick wall, striking Mark's left thigh, cutting open Jeremy's left thigh and entering his right leg. We ran them to a nearby Palestinian house and waited for an ambulance.

On the way to hospital, the ambulance was stopped by soldiers, who delayed us by opening the back doors, staring at us and denying that Mark and Jeremy had been shot by soldiers.

Mark (US) and Jeremy (Australia) are in hospital - Jeremy had a 1 square centimetre fragment of the bullet dug out from his leg - it was sitting in pretty deep. But they'll both be fine. Two Palestinian boys were also injured, though they had v minor wounds and were released from hospital pretty quickly.

The sole report on Nablus in Ha'aretz, the main 'left-wing' Israeli newspaper: "Palestinians throw two explosive devices at IDF soldiers in Nablus; no injuries reported."

In other news from the region, the Israeli Judge Advocate General has announced that there will be a military police investigation into the shooting of Tom Hurndall, the British ISM activist shot by the IDF in Rafah in the Gaza Strip while he was trying to protect of a group of children from Israeli fire.

One cannot help feeling a certain degree of cynicism as to whether it is at all likely that the investigation will come out with the truth. The official investigation into Rachel Corrie's death cleared the driver of the bulldozer and the Israeli military of all responsibility. Since the beginning of the second intifada only 9 soldiers have been charged with illegal killings and not a single conviction has been obtained.

In a separate announcement, Tom Hurndall's family have said that they intend to turn off his life-support system. He has been in a coma since he was shot in April.

Coming up

8 November: Anti-Gap Action, Market square, Cambridge

8 November: Smart Bombs, Dumb Wars Conference, London

9 November: International Day of Action against the Apartheid Wall, Market square, Cambridge and elsewhere

12-15 November: European Social Forum, Paris

19-21 November: Bush State Visit, London, protests everywhere

Links

CAST.IRON <http://www.castiron.org.uk/>

Transport 2000 <http://www.t2000cam.org.uk/>

Cambridge Cycling Campaign <http://www.camcycle.org.uk/>

Baku-Cheyhan pipeline project <http://www.baku.org.uk/>

Stop Primate Experiments At Cambridge <http://www.primatoprison.org/>

Notes from Palestine <http://www.notesfrompalestine.net/>

Resist Bush <http://www.resistbush.org/>