



# SchNEWS

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Starbuck's Coffee: Roasted Greek style...

## ABORT MISSION

### SchNEWS LOOKS AT THE RESURGENCE OF FUNDAMENTALIST ANTI-ABORTION ACTIVISM

There has been a disturbing rise in activity by anti-abortion campaigners in the UK. Even in supposedly right-on Brighton, fundamentalist Christians have been harassing women on and off for the last two years outside the BPAS abortion and contraception clinic. Armed with poster-sized pictures of aborted fetuses, and leaflets full with misinformation and bad science, they are claiming some measure of success in their attacks on vulnerable women trying to exercise their right to chose when and if to have a child. One blogger, writing on 'Christian Concern' wrote "My resolve was strengthened by seeing that campaigning can save lives. A young woman who was entering the clinic to abort at 22 weeks decided not to. I went away thanking God for two lives rescued - mum and baby."

After a brief pause (following several arrests for harassment), they are back, every Tuesday and Thursday between 9am and 12pm. In the past people have mobilised to oppose them, but the problem with noisy counter pickets is that they can end up being counter-productive; upsetting potential service users and mobilising the pro-lifers to hold larger and more confrontational pickets.

Only a very small minority of people here in the UK are actually against abortion. But, as anarchist-activists know all too well, small groups of highly dedicated and organised individuals can cause a hell of a lot of trouble. The picketers outside Brighton's clinic are part of a wider ultra-conservative group, the "Abort67" campaign. Almost all the Brighton picketers come from a single church, the evangelical New Frontiers Church in Worthing. Opposing them and defending women's reproductive rights in Brighton is the newly formed Brighton Pro Choice campaign:

It's not before time that that pro-choice activists got organising. The Abort67'ers are planning a "40 days for life" with 40 days of demos outside abortion clinics up and down the UK (Brighton included), starting with Lent on the 22nd of Feb.

#### FOETAL ATTRACTION

As if that wasn't bad enough, in the wider UK political context, lunatic Tories have been doing their damndest to push reproductive rights back decades, (well, centuries really). The most influential of these is the doyenne of the *Daily Mail* – the certifiably mad compulsive liar, Nadine Dorries, MP for Mid Bedfordshire. Last year she attempted to 'amend' the Health and Social Care bill, to stop abortion providers from providing abortion counselling. She and her ilk claim that there was a conflict of interest – that counsellors would push for abortion as they would profit from the extra terminations. The fact that there was not a shred of evidence did not stop the amendment gaining a worrying amount of traction in the Commons. Fundamentalists are totally impervious to facts though – they know that they're right,

whatever the evidence says.

The Dorries amendment was roundly defeated last year – even the Tory leadership balked when they realised its implications, and kicked it into the long grass via a Commons consultation. But pro-lifers never really go away. The 'Dorries amendment' was/is intended to disrupt abortion services – letting fundamentalists give 'independent' abortion advice ('independently counselling women that "sure you can have an abortion, but you and your unborn baby will burn in hell for eternity").

But the Tories are divided. The leadership aren't particularly anti-abortion. Cameron & co don't really want to shell out for the extra benefit scrounging proles that would be born without abortion, but he knows that ultra reactionary positions play well to the Tory base.

That's why people like Nadine Dorries can't be dismissed as a joke – backed up by the Christian Right in this country and in the USA, they are single minded in their attempts to deny women control over their bodies. In fact, Dorries is back in the news trying to push for 'abstinence only' sex education, using the idiot troll logic that current sex education encourages child abuse. Where do you even begin with that one?

#### PRO-LIFE KILLS

Just because the reactionaries were set back in the Commons doesn't mean that we can afford to be complacent. Abortion, contraception and reproductive choice is a simple matter of biological survival. Forget, for a moment, "pro-life" or "pro-choice" positions: The question is how can we ensure the continued survival of our species through sustainable reproduction?

Human beings take up a lot of time and effort to raise, and they consume a huge amounts of resources (especially the wealthy ones). This is a serious investment for anyone, and, just in case you hadn't noticed, those resources must come from a finite source – our planet Earth. And us modern humans have been prolific; we've shot up from 1 billion to 7 billion of us since 1800, and we're consuming a hell of a lot more resources than we can get away with. The idea of adding unwanted children to the billions already out there is just insanity.

For an organism to survive it has to replace itself at a sustainable rate. With other animals this is taken care of by predators or by scarcity of resources. Us humans haven't hit the finite resource wall yet, but when/if that happens, it will be ugly. Just like the biologists' models of unchecked rabbit populations overeating their grass, humanity is facing a massive die off in the not too distant future.

The only way to stop this is by taking control of our reproductivity. And, using the same science that has gotten us in this 7 billion strong mess in the first place, we can apply the brakes. We're actually doing so. As we wrote back last

September, the number of new born children entering the world has finally stabilised. 2012 will see as many children born worldwide as 2011. A stable population is a big deal, and may just help save us all. This global miracle has occurred thanks to a combination of increased levels of female education and emancipation, combined with laws and programmes that make access to contraception and abortion straightforward. This is a global phenomena – a quiet, methodical worldwide feminist revolution that has been taking place in countries as diverse as Brazil, Bangladesh, China and Iran (yes, even Iran). The countries that aren't catching up are either ultra conservative (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, United States) and/or ultra messed up (Somalia, Afghanistan, United States). And people like Nadine Dorries want to turn the clock back.

#### GATT FLAP

Long time Brighton peace activist John Catt, an 86 year old pensioner, appeared in the High Court on Thursday 9th. He is seeking a judicial review of of the 'domestic extremist' database.

John, long a stalwart of SMASH EDO demos, found himself and his vehicle targeted by various police forces as a result of warnings placed on the record by Sussex Police, despite the fact that he has never been convicted of a criminal offence.

After diligent use of Freedom of Information requests it became apparent that John was on the notorious and murky database of 'domestic extremists' held by the network of different National Extremism police teams under the control of ACPO – the senior police officers private association. Numerous photographs of John and reports on his activities appeared on the database.

John is seeking to have his inclusion on the database ruled illegal under section 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. If he succeeds it will have wide implications for all of us who've had the misfortune to be scrutinised and harassed by the anti-protest cops. In the likely event that the authorities wriggle out then it's another welcome spotlight shone into the world of the UK's political police.

Emily Apple from Fitwatch said: "This is an important case testing the fundamental right for people to attend a protest without having information about them recorded by the state. Unfortunately, we have seen time and time again institutions such as HMIC and the IPCC fail to properly investigate serious issues regarding the policing of protests, and it is down to individuals to take action to expose and rectify these seemingly unending intelligence gathering practices."

Jeremy Johnson, lawyer for the Metropolitan Police and ACPO, attempted to paint John and the company he keeps as dangerous extremists. Apparently our local rabble rousers Smash EDO have no fewer than "261 associated individuals on the NPIOU database" though, on the plus side, "there may be a time when Smash EDO is not considered a threat by the NPIOU – such as when they achieve their objectives."

As we go to print the two judges hearing the case are still considering their verdict.

# A BRIDGWATER TOO FAR

## AS NUCLEAR PROTESTERS GET OUT OF THE TREES AND INTO THE FARMHOUSE

Protesters occupying trees at Hinkley Point in Somerset were evicted on Weds 8th February by police and a 5-man climbing team hired by the French company EDF. The mature oak woodland is due to be cleared this month so that preliminary work can begin on building 2 new nuclear reactors and a radioactive waste dump at the site.

Speaking for the South West Against Nuclear network, Theo (out of the Theo and Shannon band) told SchNEWS, "This isn't even the beginning of the campaign – this was just a foray, following the news that trees were being felled ahead of schedule. People heard about the destruction and took a stand as quickly as they could. Sadly the combination of the weather and an aggressive security presence meant the tree-sit couldn't be sustained. Thanks to everyone who made the effort to come and support".

The eviction came around 11am, after the occupiers had spent a sleepless night in sub-zero temperatures. One of the occupiers, Michael, said "Security guards and dog-handlers kept us awake all night with taunts and intimidation from

barking dogs."

Said Theo "It appears that EDF have acted ruthlessly and probably illegally to end a legitimate peaceful protest. Clearly, if the current work is only to clear dead elms as EDF claim, then the protesters in the oak trees were not in any way preventing this work. In the light of this company's record however, we do not expect them to play clean. This is a company who last November had 2 employees jailed and were fined 500,000 euros (£428,000) in France for spying on anti-nuclear campaigners. Astonishingly, this is a company who have also been given the green light to destroy a beautiful part of our Somerset heritage, before they have even won planning permission for their proposed Nuclear project."

### BARNSTORMING

Undeterred by their hasty eviction, activists have now squatted a former farmhouse on the perimeter of Hinkley Point nuclear power station.

Having taken the site in the early hours of Sunday 12th February, the occupiers of Langbor-

ough Farm now aim to highlight EDF's attempts to destroy some 500 hectares of West Country as well, presumably, as providing a base to toss the occasional spanner from. So, if you wanna help just head down.

On 10th-11th, on the anniversary of the Fukushima earthquake, there will be an attempt to 'surround hinkley', with the Stop New Nuclear Alliance calling for thousands of people to turn-out and blockade the power station. In the meantime, if you can make it down to Somerset, numbers are more then welcome down on the farm.

\* <http://stopnewnuclear.org.uk>

### MANURE GONNA LOVE THIS

Spring is in the air (either that or it's still winter and we're experiencing the effects of runaway climate change) and so it's time to get yer seeds and shovels and go gardening- guerilla style. For the uninitiated, guerilla gardening is a movement dedicated to liberating space in urban areas for the benefit of people and nature.

Guerrillas of Love have been active since 2005, planting fruit trees, sowing veggie and wildflower seeds throughout the UK. They're asking for all the help they can get-whether that means pitching in or donating spades, bulbs, seeds etc.

There's a talk (followed by some planting) planned in Coventry University on the 22nd of Feb (part of the university's Go Green week). GOL see Guerrilla Gardening as a long term occupation for the land, for the land. If you wanna join and help, or book a talk, contact them at [squirrybottles@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:squirrybottles@yahoo.co.uk)

To find out more go digging for information at [www.guerrillagardening.org](http://www.guerrillagardening.org) Dig it!!

### ...and finally...

Police in Siberia have been facing a threat to the Russian state that they have been totally unprepared for. It's not fascist gangs nor Chechen terrorists this time, but children's toys and Lego models that have been shaking the establishment to its very core with angry 2cm<sup>2</sup> placards. In the city of Barnaul, police have been seeking ways to combat the mass, miniature protest toy protest that is #occupySIBERIA.

Siberia's top investigators think that they may have found the ringleaders though: Prosecutor Sergei Kirei had this to say, "People are not stupid. The figurines did not come there by themselves. They did not write the placards on their own."

Having identified the leaders of the toy protest as full sized human beings, they have been trying to clamp down on the human element. One sympathiser with the diminutive Occupy offshoot explained the logic of the petite protests.

"They tried to tell us our event was illegal – they even said that to put toys in the snow, we had to rent it from the city authorities. The authorities' attempt to limit citizens' rights to express their position has become absurd. We wanted to hyperbolise this attempt and show the absurdity and farce of officials' struggle with their own people."

### Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all breeders, there's no better argument for abortion than a Christian fundamentalist carried to term. Honest.

# AMID GREEK WOES

## DEAL OR NO DEAL AS GREEK CITIZENS REFUSE TO BOW TO E.U. TROIKA'S AUSTERITY PACKAGE

An emergency general strike was called for in Greece on Tuesday (7th) by trade unions and leftist organisations. Once again people took to the streets in response to yet another austerity package as dictated by the troika (the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund). The measures must be accepted in return for the second rescue package.

The strike took place on the same day as Angela Merkel expanded on Europe's future and the talks between Greek PM Lucas Papademos and the leaders of Greece's three largest political parties in yet another attempt to reach an agreement over the 130 billion euro package.

The strike shut down many schools across the country. Local and government offices were shut for the day. Hospitals operated with emergency staff. Bus, rail and metro services were operational but more dysfunctional than usual due to the strikes. The demonstrations were relatively peaceful with 20,000 attending the Athens protests. A German flag was set alight as they called on the Greek PM to resign shouting "Democracy here and now!" by the steps of Parliament, riot cops cleared the protesters in Syntagma square with the aid of tear gas.

The troika and Greek government negotiations are another way of saying the troika gives the Greek government the terms they must abide to if they are to continue to get their welfare packages. The latest package is hitting 130 billion euros (£109 million). The 'negotiations' read a little something like this: a 22% decrease in the national minimum wage (32% if you are under 25), a cut in unemployment benefit, the loss of 15,000 state jobs this year with a total of 150,000 job losses by 2015, cutting GDP by 1.5%, recapitalising banks without nationalising them to name but a few. If Greece agrees to a deal (deal with the devil or default that is the question), EU leaders are expected to approve the package by the week's end. But Greece is in a catch 22 where

they have to reduce their deficit by spending less, but without government investment there is no growth. It's uncertain how long this can go on for; Greece has been kept solvent since May 2010 with EU loans. It is a lose lose situation. At time of press Greece needs to find 300 million euros to hit the target mark for 2012 and convince international lenders it has what it takes because this time it will surely be oh so different, eh? The 300 million euro was a proposed cut to pensions the Greek government rejected because, after all, elections are looming up.

### OUT OF PATIENTS

Greek citizens continue to fight to assert their rights. On Monday (6th) a general hospital in Kilkis was occupied by its workers. This is another ripple of the austerity measures. They have issued a statement saying it is now fully under workers control. All decisions from now on will be made by a workers general assembly. As of Monday (6th) hospital workers will only deal with emergencies until their wages have been paid to them and their wage levels return to pre-austerity levels. There are similar stories of autonomous grass roots action taken up by exasperated people all across Greece from city suburbs to farm dwellings. On Wednesday (7th) morning 100 union members of GENOP-DEI (union of electricity workers) entered the Ministry of Development building and occupied the 6th floor thereby confining minister Papakonstantinou within. Riot police managed to get him out later that afternoon bashing a worker or two en route to the target minister. Meanwhile, the steelworkers' strike in Athens enters its 100th day.

\*SchNOTE: since this article was written the austerity measures passed, a number of cabinet members resigned and many pissed off Greeks vented their frustrations by burning loads of stuff – some things never change.

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