



CUCKOO! CUCKOO! IT'S YER SWISS CHEESE...

SchNEWS

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WORLD TRASHED ORGANISATION

Tripods tower against the Birmingham skyline as people dance around in a 10,000 strong street party, in front of a canary yellow army of nation-wide conscripted police. Only streets away, inside the secure walls of Birmingham's G8 conference hall, Clinton, Blair and the global summit team are dancing away to "All you need is love". By Monday the G8 globalisation tour has moved to the Palais des Nations in Geneva for World Trade Day to pay their respects to the great dollar of capitalism. Meanwhile, out on the street, hundreds of protesters are being arrested, beaten and deported by the Genevan authorities. And that's just for starters. Here's the SchNEWS guide to reclaiming the world...

As Clinton, Castro, Mandela and Blair flew out of Geneva this week, they left a city in shock after the worst riots seen here since 1932.

For four days this small city was under siege as the leaders of the 132-nation World Trade Organisation (WTO) met for their 50th anniversary at the United Nations building. The opposition was led by People's Global Action rejecting the whole process of globalisation and corporate power that is the new world government.

Even before the Ministers had stepped off the planes, the city had erupted. Five thousand people came to Saturday's Street Party, and by midnight it had turned into a full scale riot. One car was set alight and thousands of police charged the main encampment, firing teargas into the crowd. The demonstrators smashed hundreds of windows, mainly banks and corporate offices, until 5am causing over half a million pounds damage.

Genevans awoke as one on Sunday to a tense atmosphere of confusion, and a city resembling a warzone. On pavements, phone boxes and walls the graffiti message was clear: "WTO ASSASSIN"... "WTO vs THE PEOPLE"... "REVOLUTION '98".

From the moment the world leaders sat down on Monday morning to the conclusion on Wednesday evening the streets were filled with riot police and demonstrators, with the constant noise of sirens and low-flying helicopters.

MONDAY: The offices of Lockheed, multinational arms traders, were occupied

by one group, while another spontaneous street demo stopped traffic and set off smoke bombs. By lunchtime the United Bank of Switzerland was forced to close and police kept back while road after road was blockaded. The group continued up to the UN building, surrounded by armed police, chanting in French, Spanish and English. By nightfall there was a highly-charged stand-off as a party kicked off next to the University.

TUESDAY: Activists from Colombia, India, South Korea, Mexico, Nicaragua, Argentina, Aotearoa/NZ and across Europe, continued a frenzy of meetings under the banner of People's Global Action, networking and organising direct action. In a deliberate display of non-violence, hundreds marched gagged and bound through town, symbolising the global muting of human rights. At the Rousseau statue, they enacted a burial of his "social contract" between people and rulers. Meanwhile the director of the WTO, Renato Ruggiero, told the conference that everyone must pedal faster towards globalisation, or face the danger of falling off. (His Mercedes was later overturned).

Then, as darkness descended, so did the people. A crowd of around 500, many "L'Hiphop", kids from nearby council estates, confronted police at Plain Palais, systematically trashing the nearby McDonald's and Pizza Hut. The police fired CS gas to disperse the angry mass, who began to smash more shops, overturn cars and run through the city in small groups, causing chaos. Plainclothes police on mopeds gave chase. At 2am they surrounded Artamis, a huge squatted alternative Centre, and arrested everyone. Since Monday the total detained stood at 287. As SchNEWS went to press over 100 people were still being held in prison.

WEDNESDAY: Hundreds assembled outside the UN for a final push - an attempt to enter the building and stop the General Assembly using Gandhi-style tactics. As they walked headlong into the line of riot police, there was a blur of truncheons and the ambulances began to arrive. According to staff at the hospital over 60 people a day have been treated, some requiring major operations. The squatters are organising demonstrations against police brutality tomorrow (Saturday), and

Crap Arrest of the week

For being in a wheelie bin. OK the two occupants were pushed by their mates into the ranks of riot cops gathered in Birmingham. The two were held overnight but released without charge.

the inhumane treatment of those arrested: strip-searches, lack of medical assistance, and psychological stress. The conference is over, and for now Geneva is quiet.

"This is without doubt a popular uprising against the issue of globalisation," one activist told SchNEWS. "Not just in Geneva but in cities all over the world people are beginning to realise the consequences of this crazy process and the importance of resisting by any means necessary."

* The next meeting of People's Global Action will take place from April 1st 1999 in Bangalore, India. Contact www.agp.org

* SchNEWS and Squall have produced a little booklet 'United Colours of Peoples Global Action' - interviews with people involved in global resistance from East Timor to India. For a copy send SAE to SchNEWS.

Global summits like the G8 are not cheap. Entertaining the world's richest robber baron national leaders costs a cool \$15 million dollars a shot. In contrast, for every pound that reaches Southern countries in aid, £10 is paid back in debt to the World Bank.

Global Street Parties Roundup

Birmingham: Seventy thousand people have gathered to hold hands round the International Convention Centre and are calling for the eight leaders of the worlds most industrialised nations (the G8) to give debt relief to the third world.

However, those eight leaders whom US President Bill Clinton said "will focus on things that really affect people on the street" won't hear them cos they've moved 35 miles away. The reason, according to a report on BBC "Midlands Today" was the planned protests!

A few hours later and most of the Christians have gone and it's the turn of a ten thousand strong Reclaim The Streets (RTS) posse, to bring the Bullring part of the city to a standstill, as they party and protest in the street. **Welcome to the Global Street Party**, happening in 37 cities across the world, not just against car culture but also free market globalisation...

Please, as they say, turn over...

RESIST

REFUSE

RECLAIM

Street parties in 37 cities - a selection...

Toronto, Canada: Hundreds of people took over one of Toronto's major streets, but soon after the party kicked off police did their best to spoil the fun, pushing people over and bursting balloons with knives just like the nasty kids that you didn't want at your party. A part of the crowd was intimidated and left, the rest tried to keep the street reclaimed and were met by more police violence. In the end four people were nicked under 'unlawful assembly' legislation. One man, Gregory Herrington, was also charged with three counts of assault police and one assault with a weapon, and released on a \$2,000 bail with his wrist in a cast. He faces the most serious charge against political activist in well over a decade.

Tel Aviv, Israel: Over 500 people joined Israel's first RTS. The organisers decided to get a police permission, but as the crowd got far bigger than they expected they ended up choosing their route as they pleased, ending in a pleasant sunset rave.

Ljubljana, Slovenia: The Ljubljana lot went for Critical Mass instead where, unfortunately only 40 people showed up. Still they had a good time biking around at an average speed of 5.3km/h as their "Ministry of Correct Image, Department of Statistics" informed us.

Lyon, France: Lyon crew (about 200) managed to block a main street for a while with tripods, drumming and a float, but decided to withdraw when "nearly a million police" (perhaps a slightly exaggerated estimate) eventually showed up with clear intentions to behave badly.

Utrecht, Netherlands: Nearly 1,000 had a wild party and blockaded a six lane highway for five hours. We don't know if there was a translation error but they say police mixed with the crowd at the meeting point, sat on the pavement, *assisted to get the soundsystem generator going* and were eager to go wherever the crowd would lead them, keeping a very low profile until the very end!

Brisbane, Australia: No info about the numbers. Lots of arrests, after one hour police towed away the soundsystem. Still the party went on with drumming and whistling until dark.

Sidney, Australia: The third RTS in Sidney seems to have been a massive success; about 3,000 people, three different stages (Rock, Techno and Reggae) and a nice and cheerful party. The English Judges on the scene voted "9.9 across the board, absolutely the best, culturally most diverse and interesting party we've ever seen."

Prague, Czech Republic: The party set off very well with four soundsystems, drummers, puppet theatre and fire performances enjoyed by more than 3,000 people. Somehow police didn't get the joke and ensured what turned out to be the biggest riots in their for the last four years. Three McDonald's were destroyed and sixty four people nicked, but all were later released without charge except nine who remain in custody facing hooliganism charges.

Stockholm, Sweden: Had a demo against "mad car disease" with party mood, colourful costumes, carnival drums and high spirits!

Turku, Finland: 1,000 people occupied a bridge and a street in the city Centre; they had seven bands playing and a hell of a time

Reclaim The Streets, London: 0171 281 4621
Sat 6th June - meeting points @ 12 noon
North - outside Euston Station
South - outside Ritzy, Brixton Tube

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Scary Monsters

It's slightly unusual for Euro MPs to resort to direct action to make their point, but on May 12th the Greens, dressed in pirate costumes, unfurled Jolly Roger flags & banners inside the Strasbourg plenary saying, "Stop Bio-piracy!". The incident - to mark the second reading of the **European Life Patents Directive** caused consternation, with one member declaring to the chairperson, "This ship has been taken over by pirates. Will the chairman get rid of them." The vote in favour of the Directive ended a 10 year battle between the biotech industry and everybody from patients to indigenous peoples.

The decision gives the go-ahead for the privatisation of life in Europe. Human genes, embryos and body parts will become corporate property along with animals and plants, including entire species. Already, under current stricter rules, human umbilical cord blood cells have been patented by US company Biocyte and the application for the cloning process that created "Dolly" covers all mammals including humans.

Massive lobbying by pharmaceutical and biotech companies has taken its toll on MEPs who finally adopted this directive. "This is a most deplorable step on the road to degrading life into an industrial commodity... [and] an open invitation to bio-piracy in Third World countries," says Greenpeace's Benedikt Haerlin.

As well as the obvious ethical implications of patenting human and animal genetic material for "medical" purposes, the freedom to patent plant species could, in a short space of time, wreak havoc with the lives of small-scale farmers. Already Nestle's L'Oreal has patented South Pacific ceremonial plant Kava, for use in reducing hair loss, while India has reacted furiously to news that Basmati rice has been awarded a US patent by RiceTec.

Indigenous peoples, who reject the whole concept that the discovery of living material can be owned, are at particular risk of having blood lines and genetic sequences patented. The Directive will blatantly legalise the theft of indigenous genetic resources.

Many genetically engineered crop test sites have been trashed by locals who object to being guinea pigs in these often secret environmental experiments. And pressure is still needed from consumers to persuade retailers and manufacturers to label foods which contain modified ingredients.

*** Early last Sunday morning a large X was scythed across a field of genetically manipulated rapeseed at the Walton experimental farm in Aberdeen (fit like?), while the Grim Reaper and an angry tomato (!) joined in the destruction of mutant oil seed rape at Edge House Farm in Belsay - one of the North East's licensed 'Monasanto' test sites.

*** Occupy a test site for a month! Starting this weekend somewhere in East Anglia and in London: 01603 768235.

*** Genetics Forum, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF. 0171 837 9229, email geneticforum@gn.apc.org

Barkin' Students

Over 1,000 students at the Barking UEL have squatted the campus finance department in protest over £2.4 million education cuts, which will put 80 people out of work, remove a medical Centre, and scrap much needed grants. As SchNEWS goes to print they've been there for 60 hours- and have just been served an injunction. With the support of the NATFHE teachers union the students have lobbied

board meetings and set up picket lines outside the main building, and have now organised several committees. While the UEL sits in the bottom 10 on the Times Higher Education League Table, its fat cat manager Frank Gould is the fourth richest vice chancellor in Britain. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Atlantic, students from Ohio State University have occupied their presidents main office over administrative cuts. Contact Cora Murphey: 0181 5906017 or 0956 267729.

SchNEWS in brief

Don't Forget the Dockers' **March for Social Justice** which kicks off 12 noon at Thames Embankment (Temple Tube) on Sat 30 May *** That is, if you're not taking part in a Party/Action (11am) to save the 20 acre wildflower meadow at **Ashton Court, Bristol**. Camps have so far been successful in delaying work but security is increasing so the camps need to do likewise. Call 0467 430211. NB It is not a beer free zone! *** Faslane Peace Camp is party-actioning on 30-31st May in celebration of their recent eviction escape. 01436 820901. *** AR/T/ERROR#1, a week of creation and activism (inc. films and DJ's!): 23-30th May at an undisclosed Brighton location. Non-Brighton residents call 01273 685089 *** Calling all West Country bands - the newly formed Devon Youth CND are planning an open air benefit in Exeter in August. 01237 477750 *** On Sun 7 June the **Movement for Socialism** is holding a Founding Conference at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1, 10am-5pm. The fee is £5/£2/£1, send it (payable to Movement for Socialism) to: S. Ballard, 14 Dorset Rd, London, N22 4SL *** 50 activists (amongst them a 30-strong Dutch rent-a-mob) occupied a bridge in the Aspe Valley (French Pyrenees) to stop construction of a devastating motorway and blocked another construction site for the same motorway some days later, which is quite remarkable considering the heavy-handedness of local cops. Both actions were part of the Dutch action trip to the Aspe Valley (SchNEWS 159). La Goutte d'Eau, the action Centre based in a former railway station, is still threatened with eviction, the court decision is due in June. *** Okay so it was a while ago, but the cases of those knicked at the Brighton New Year Summerfield party are coming up. Give solicitor Des Murphy a ring on 602 111 if you saw any arrests.

and finally...

Some people at Birmingham were having a happy time chucking missiles that fell in party-goers nowhere near the police being targeted. What's this about? Obviously they'd been reading the Oddbin's Book of Streetfighting for Beginners. Those whose revolutionary credentials include an inability to think or aim straight may find more gainful employment lain out in front of oncoming police riot vans, and there's no shortage of people who'd like to put them there.

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all Brighton readers not to believe the rumours that we are constantly loaded. Always try and book your coach tickets well in advance so we won't have to run around like blue-arsed flies trying to find extra coaches (which then cancel at the last moment). Put some donations in the collecting tin in the Peace Centre so we can cover the few hundred quid we lost taking people to Birmingham. Then we might be able to organise coaches to other events in the future. Honest.