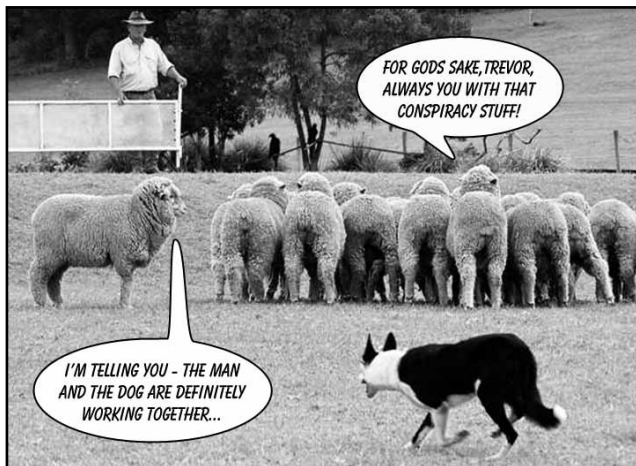




SENSE OF HUMMUS



Dish out the tofu and crack open yet another oversized tub of hummus. It's time to ditch the dairy and celebrate **Word Vegan Week** which kicks off this Saturday (27th). Although you'd be joining a growing movement (now quarter of a million strong in the UK), meat consumption has increased four fold in the past fifty years and now livestock outnumbers humans three to one! Yet 850 million people still go hungry worldwide with an estimated five million children dying each year due to malnutrition. The rearing of farm animals has forced millions of small farmers off the land and the agricultural techniques employed are having an ever more harmful effect on our planet. OK, so maybe the vegan thing is going through a bit of a rebrand at the mo', but as well as being about respecting the life of all the living creatures with which we share our planet, veganism is also one way we can tackle food poverty and climate change.

Take the forests (Please! International logging corporations especially welcome!). Trees are essential storers of carbon dioxide and help to regulate our climate - but are being chopped down at the rate of 13 million hectares a year. Already almost one-third of the world's forests have been converted to agriculture use and the World Resources Institute reckons that 60% of current deforestation involves clearing the way for food production. One fifth of this is being used to graze cattle and another 10% is utilised for grain production to feed the beasts themselves.

But of course, land in the UK is much more valuable if you build on it - so most of the feed for our livestock is imported from abroad. Europe as a whole imports 70% of its protein for cattle feed, leading to one European Parliament report stating that, "Europe can feed its people but not its farm

WHY BEING VEGAN IS PART OF THE SOLUTION

animals." Some six million acres of land in Brazil is being used to grow soya beans for animals in Europe alone - at the same time as 20 million Brazilians suffer from malnutrition. In fact it takes ten times more land to produce one kilo of protein from meat than it does from soya. "If present trends of meat-eating continue" says science writer, Colin Tudge, "then by 2050 the world's livestock will be consuming as much as 4 billion people do." A plant based diet requires just 20% of the land of that required by an omnivore.

TAKING THE PESCATARIAN

And it's not just the land that's the problem. Fish-munching 'veggies' should beware that more than a quarter of all the world's fisheries are fully exploited. In Canada at least 140 distinct varieties of salmon are already extinct and many more dolphins, turtles and seals are caught up and killed in giant fishing nets. Not that all the fish caught is eaten - biologist Lee Alverson calculates that around 27 million tonnes of fish are wasted every year because they are the wrong kind or size for the fussy supermarket shopper (that's more than the total amount of fish eaten in 1950). Shrimp boats that drag the bottom of the sea are the most wasteful, scooping up 10 kilos of other marine life for every one kilo of shrimp that's actually used.

Last November the United Nations Food & Agriculture Organisation reported that livestock production accounts for 18% of greenhouse gas emissions - more than all the world's transport combined! Head of the FAO's Information Unit, Henning Steinfeld says that "livestock are one of the most significant contributors to today's most serious environmental problems. Urgent action is required to remedy the situation."

Animal foods account for most of the energy used in agriculture, sometimes up to 20 times more energy per 'edible tonne' than grain production! Housing pigs and chickens in huge windowless sheds requires loads of energy for artificial ventilation, conveyor belts and electric lighting.

You don't need refrigeration or freezers to store yer fresh veg!

The fleshy tastes of an increasingly wealthy population, from whom the big food corporations are only too willing to extract as much profit as possible, are on the rise. People are consuming more meat and dairy every year. During the first fifty years of the 21st century, meat production and milk output are both set to double. Many formerly subsistence farmers are turning to grow cash crops for animal feed because it pays better. Such intensive monoculture threatens biodiversity and moves local farmers further away from sustainable agricultural systems. But it's not the poor eating the meat - a US citizen consumes 15 times more beef than someone from Honduras. The Danes are the biggest pig munchers, getting through their way through twice their own body weight in pork each year, ten times more than a South African.

If you can get a perfectly healthy diet from a vegan diet (and you can) why kill animals to feed ourselves? Pigs have to be given powerful antibiotics during their short (six months) lives, in an attempt to tackle the diseases rife in the filthy battery conditions in which over 95% of them are kept. Poultry farmers send 800 million chickens to slaughter each year in the UK, most of which are kept in huge sheds containing up to 40,000 birds. Two thirds of all eggs are produced by battery chickens which have to live in an area smaller than an A4 piece of paper, even though their wingspan is four times bigger. The more rustic sounding 'barn egg' laying chicken gets an A3 sized bit of paper to live on whilst to call a chicken 'free range' all the bird must have is 'access to the outdoors' during day light hours (on the way to the slaughter house, perhaps?).

Then there's the torture-in-a-tin that is foie-gras, where ducks and geese are force fed until their livers swell ten times its normal size. The French polish off 30 million ducks a year in order to munch on this 'delicacy' and Viva! is running a campaign to outlaw the cruel industry - check www.viva.org.uk/campaigns/foiegras/index.html for more info about the campaign.

* See www.vegansociety.com to learn more about how the animal-free diet can save the planet.

PARTY & PROTEST

October

* **27 - Anarchist Bookfair** - Queen Mary & Westfield College, Mile End Rd, London, E1. 10am-7pm. Jam packed with stalls, talks, meetings, films, cabaret, food, creche and more. Tube - Mile End or Stepney Green www.anarchistbookfair.co.uk

* **27 - The Plight Of The Iraqi People Under Occupation.** Iraqi voices in a day-long conference of analysis and discussions. With Dr Kamil Mahdi (Exeter University), Mazin Yunis (Iraqi League), Nadai al Qattan (aid worker) and more! 10.30am - 4pm, United Reformed Church, Buck Street, Camden Town NW1 8NJ (tube: Camden Town). <http://solidarityiraq.blogspot.com> or 07989861380.

* **27 - Pre-emptive Peace Strike** - despite the security raid last week (See SchNEWS 607), protesters are still at Parliament Square. With meeting and open mic session. From 2pm. For more call 07886662091 www.peacestrike.org

* **28 - Free Stuff Bonanza** - Halloween Festival - bring your stuff to give away from 1pm, stalls open at 2.15pm. Books, records, vids, cds, clothes, kids stuff, household stuff etc plus tea and cake. At Pullens Centre, 184 Crampton Street, London, SE17 3AE. Tube - Elephant & Castle.

* **30 - Photo/media Exhibition** - of this year's Camp for Climate Action and this year's G8 protests in Rostock, Germany; as well as video and audio from Indymedia. 7pm-11pm, Foundry, Great Eastern St, London, EC2A 3JL.

November

* **3 - "Bash the Rich!"** march on David Cameron's house in Notting Hill, London. www.londonclasswar.org

* **10 - Stop The Wall! Boycott Israeli Apartheid!** Day Of Action - a picket and protest on Oxford St, London from 1pm. Meet Marks and Spencer, 258 Edgware Rd. (tube Edgware Rd) tel 020 7837 1688 <http://stopthewall.org>

* **10 - Shac demo** against HLS - a march against the animal abusers in the town centre then back for demos at the labs. 11 Am at Riverside Rd, Huntingdon. Email info@shac.net web www.shac.net

* **12 - Block the Builders blockade** at AWE Aldermaston. Help block Britain's own WMD weapons factory in a day of non-violent direct action. Overnight accommodation available Sunday. Legal support on the day. www.blockthebuilders.org.uk tel 07807 522454.

* **14 - 28 - 'Hands Off Iraqi Oil'** - a national speaking tour to build the campaign against the forced privatisation of Iraq's oil industry. Speakers include Greg Muttitt (Platform) and activist and journalist Ewa Jasiewicz email freelance@mailworks.org web www.HandsOffIraqiOil.org.

* **17 Combatting Pro-War Media Bias** - a half-day conference organised by Media Workers Against the War. With Andrew Gilligan, Phillip Knightley and others. Time and venue tbc. £10/£5. www.mwaw.net

HACKNEY STICK

The London Coalition Against Poverty have called for people to picket the Hackney Council meeting this Halloween (Oct 31st). The Council's Homeless Person's Unit (HPU) have been systematically denying people their rights by intimidation of vulnerable applicants and the use of delaying tactics and unjustified refusals of claims - this picket will demand that the council immediately halt these illegal and unjust practices. Trick or treat the council from 6-7.30pm at Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street E8. See www.tiny.cc/vdevt Tel: 07932 241737.

STILL ARE WARRIORS

New Zealand Police have conducted a massive series of armed raids against Maori rights, peace and environmental activists in the country. On 15th October, seventeen people were arrested in house raids by armed police. They have currently all been refused bail and are being held on firearms charges while the police build a case under the terrorism legislation. Police claim to have broken up an insurrectionist movement and have suggested that there will be further arrests.

Despite the only terrorist attack in New Zealand's history being the sinking of the Rainbow Warrior (by French secret agents), the government introduced the 2002 Suppression of Terrorism Act, following with the rest of the western world in the post 9-11 hysteria. But of this course this story is just another twist in the centuries old struggle over Middle Earth, or we mean, New Zealand.

The most prominent of those in custody is Tame Iti, a well-known heavily tattooed Maori rights activist of whom one local journalist commented, "He could not lead a clandestine terrorist conspiracy without a face transplant." (meaning his very recognisable inked features and not a suggestion that he has hideous looks unworthy of a charismatic terrorist leader).

Tame is a member of the Tuhoë people, who live in the Urewera mountains and were the last Maoris to surrender to the colonial government. The treaty signed in 1840 between their people and the Crown contained the phrase Tino Rangatiratanga, meaning self-determination. Tame is adamant that this treaty has been violated and has conducted a number of high profile actions, such as setting up a tent in front of the parliament buildings as the 'Maori Embassy to New Zealand' and shooting a hole in the NZ flag during negotiations over the treaty.

The other 16 arrestees are all active in the peace/environmental and land rights movements. They have been labelled the Urewera 17 because police allegations centre around supposed 'terrorist training camps' in the mountains.

For more: www.civilrightsdefence.org.nz and www.indymedia.org.nz

*There is an international day of solidarity declared for 27th of October. London demo: 'Free the Urewera 17!' Saturday, Oct 27, 12- 3pm at NZ High Commission London, 80 Haymarket, SW1Y, Westminster.

SKOOLS OUT

This summer the Tubas Friendship and Solidarity group helped to fund the building of a school in the village of Fasayil in defiance of Israeli military restrictions. Volunteers from Brighton also went out to help with construction of the tent-based learning centre (see SchNEWS 584). But Palestinians in Fasayil are prevented from building any new structures by the occupation force's military administration and last week the Israeli military issued a demolition order ordering the Palestinians to remove the building by November 29th or face demolition.

The response to the latest demolition order in Fasayil is typical of the quiet strength and courage of the Palestinian people - "They can knock our school down as often as they want. We cannot stop them from doing so. We will build the school again and again and again. They cannot destroy our determination to give proper education to our children. Our children's education is our future. They will not succeed in their attempts to drive us from our land."

The community is hoping to have a large presence of international and Palestinian solidarity activists in the area at the end of November.

* For more info see tubas.brightonpalestine.org or www.stopthewall.org

BY GEORGE

After last week's raid by Greater London Authority-hired private security goons on the peace camp at Parliament Square (See SchNEWS 607), when all of Brian Haw's camp of supporters had their tents pulled up and were ordered to not camp on the grass of the Square, the protesters continue to maintain their presence. Most of them (apart from Brian) are now camped on the pavement.

Except for one protester, Maria Gallastegui, who last Friday cheekily got around the no-tents-on-the-grass dictat by pitching her tent on the plinth of the statue of David Lloyd George - before the actual statue arrived and was unveiled this week. After 36 hours, Maria came down of her own free will, after the GLA legal team tried to scramble together a legal case to have her removed, which came to nothing. Meanwhile police stood around admitting that she was not breaking the law, and a climbing team hung in the wings. Scaffolding and plastic covering was put around her to hide the scene.

Presumably they didn't want any more bad PR over the statue, itself the target of a letter from John Pilger, Harold Pinter and others published in the *Tor-graph* describing the celebration of Lloyd George as 'highly topical and utterly disgraceful'.

Maybe he's there to make Blair look good - L.G.'s legacy outshines even 'call me' Tony! Involved in bombing such countries as Afghanistan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, not to mention helping send 750,000 men to their deaths in the trenches. He is also famous for his quip during a 1932 League Of Nations talk about disarmament that, "we insisted on reserving the right to bomb niggers". In fact, he was unlucky to not feature in SchNEWS 'Worst Britains' poll from 2003 - but we've put an entry in for him, so he can take his place among other hallowed heroes of the empire like General Dyer or Lord Elgin - and Jeremy Clarkson. (See www.schnews.org.uk/worstbritons/index-results.htm)

...and finally...

Proving SchNEWS reaches all corners of the globe, we this week received an email from a punter in the punjab (well somewhere in india anyway). Apart from singing our praises (of course), he alerted us to the fact that we're not the only ones with trust issues when it comes to cops, demonstrated by a recent online poll by the Times of India - largest circulation of any English broadsheet in the world (over 2.5 million and rising - in your face Murdoch, your tired rag gets less than 700,000. Plus T of I is still family owned, resisting selling out any of the corporate media tycoons since getting independence from the Brits in 1950). They asked for opinions on the statement, "Police in India spells fear and trouble in the common man's mind" - to which the answer was pretty unequivocal: Agree - 96%, Disagree - 3%, Not sure - 1%. Impressive figures, even for our anarcho-anti-capitalist "Resist the fascist pigs" bi-monthly meeting....

*N.B. Any Murdoch despisers out there (and who isn't?) may be slightly cheered up by playing a new online game called Whack-A-Murdoch where you get to smash the power-crazed global overlord's balding head with a large hammer. Unfortunately, he then pops up somewhere else to buy up another local media outlet but at least you get the endless pleasure of committing GBH on a man happy to admit "I don't run anything for respectability." Show your lack of respect at www.stopbigmedia.com/=whackamurdoch

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers... you are what you eat - don't end up as the meat in the sandwich. Honest!

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