



BING-BONG! WAKE UP! IT'S AVON CALLING.

SchNEWS

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Free/Donation

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New Age PEACE CONVOY



Neo Labour POLICE CONVOY

FESTIVAL PIED

"Society needs to condemn a little more and understand a little less. New age travellers? Not in this age! Not in any age!" - John Major, 1992.

It was ten years ago this month when Castlemorton Common became home to the largest free festival this country had seen since the Stonehenge celebrations in the early eighties.

Travellers heading for the Avon Free Festival found themselves up against Avon and Somerset Police's all-new fun-stopping information-gathering 'Operation Nomad' with "dedicated resources...to gather intelligence in respect of the movement of itinerants and travellers and deal with minor acts of trespass." So people found themselves across the border heading for the picturesque Malvern valley where a truly amazing free festival sprung up with around forty thousand people partying for seven days and nights.

The Free Festival scene had been happening up and down the country since the early 70's, and this new explosion was a fusion of old style traveller culture and weekend ravers attracted to the soundsystems of DIY, Spiral Tribe, Bedlam and a host of others. One leaflet at the time explained "To be at one of these gatherings is to feel a surge of energy; to feel a people free from the restrictions of rip-off clubs, crap pubs, dumb shit security, money-mad promoters." Of course the authorities didn't exactly share this view and with the press whipping itself up into a frenzy ("Hordes of Marauding Locusts" and "These Foul Pests must be Controlled" being a couple of classic headlines) - new laws we were warned, were just around the corner.

The authorities in particular seemed to be going gung-ho for a group of people who had pushed the free party boundaries for the past two years - Spiral Tribe. 13 people were nicked and put on trial for 'conspiracy to cause a public nuisance' with the judge promising two years in prison if they were found guilty. Thankfully they weren't despite a trial that lasted four and a half months and cost the taxpayer £4 million.

As a result of the free festival scene, mixing with the first stirrings of the road protest movement at Twyford Down and the M11, the Tory Home Secretary ranted about getting "Tough on rapists, tough on armed robbers and *tough on squatters*" a hotch-potch of a Bill was introduced into parlia-

ment - the most draconian ever to be aimed at alternative British culture. It's name - the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (which SchNEWS was a part response to, but that's another story).

Pig Posse Payout

Fast forward 10 years. This year's Welsh Green Gathering has been cancelled for the second year running - thanks to objections once again from the cops. Last year Dyfed Powys police objected on the grounds that festival land would be contaminated with "human waste, diesel and cannabis." This year the gathering, in the planning since June last year, was to take place in Margam Country Park, South Wales and all seemed to be going well. Until the Detective Inspector of Port Talbot police stuck his oar in and said he feared serious public disorder so £60,000 to police the crowd of just four thousand had to be coughed up. The Council, fearing a riot, cancelled the booking.

Er, public disorder at a Green Gathering? Maybe if you count people overdosing on lentil flapjacks or being trapped in dozens of deadly dream catchers or perhaps a pack of pedal-powered powder peddlers pelting police with a barrage of crystals. In fact, the event was going to be so riotous members of the Welsh National Assembly were planning to take part in green forums and the Centre For Alternative Technology along with other such axe-wielding maniacs were to busy themselves at the event promoting sustainable living. Not to mention the festival helping to restore the park and converting to solar power the presently disused road-train.

The Welsh Green Gathering is now seriously out of pocket and threatening to sue the Council. Organisers reckon the decision was linked to a yearlong direct action campaign against an incinerator in Swansea. Yesterday the incinerator was given the green light. Green Party spokesman Martin Shrewsbury commented "Port Talbot council are supporting an incinerator to poison us all and cancelling a festival about alternative sustainable energy."

Party On

Glastonbury has now gone to the Mean Fiddler dogs, with licensing regulations stating that the same sort of surveillance techniques ironically first used against travellers ten years ago now will now be used

at this year's event. So it's watch towers and CCTV and infra-red cameras for gate-crashers and ticket holders alike.

So what are we gonna do about it? Isn't it time to rediscover the free festival spirit? Perhaps keeping our shit together and looking after each other at Stonehenge again this year can be a start to build on. As Tash, a free festival veteran, told SchNEWS "People nowadays expect to pay their money and for everything to be provided. In the old festival days, people had to do things for themselves such as sorting out the infrastructure such as toilets and welfare."

Of course, the state has now all the laws it wants to deal with any unregulated fun, so we've got to be cunning and we've got to be organised. But if we are to once again break away from the bureaucrats, cops and corporate leeches then what other alternative is there?

* For more on Castlemorton and the history of free festivals <http://tash.gn.apc.org/>

* Party and protest throughout the summer www.schnews.org.uk/pap/guide

* Festival Eye out soon. Send £3 to BCM 2002, London WC1N 3XX (out end of May). www.festivaleyeye.com

SQUATTERS - MAKING LIFE TASTE BETTER

The day SchNEWS hits the street the squatted community centre at the old Harvest Forestry organic shop in Brighton is due to be evicted. The centre, which has been open for two months and used as an info shop, occasional café, art space and for children's activities, was occupied in protest against the proposed Sainsbury's led New England Consortium's development due to be built there. The proposal includes a car park, two posh hotels, yuppie flats, inadequate key-worker bedsit style accommodation and, a massive new Sainsbury's.

There has been massive local opposition to this plan and residents have vowed to resist the eviction by barricading themselves inside and are willing to risk arrest. They have put out a call for Brightonians to come down to show their support for community centres not corporate developments - as early as you can get down to the ex-Harvest Forestry building on New England St (near Hobgoblin pub).

U'WA, U'WOT?

The U'wa tribe of Colombia were celebrating last Friday, after it was announced at Occidental Petroleum's AGM that the company were giving up drilling oil on their ancestral land. According to Occidental, after spending \$16 billion on exploration drilling they have decided there is no oil at that particular site. When Occidental's plans became clear in the early 90's, the U'wa became a symbol of resistance to oil exploration. Using tactics ranging from blockades at the drill site, lawsuits, shareholder resolutions and non-violent civil disobedience, the U'wa along with activists in over twenty countries have confronted Occidental and its major shareholders.

The U'wa at one point threatened a mass suicide if and when Oxy moved in to their mountains. The tribal leaders said that many would throw themselves off a high cliff in an act of mass ritual suicide. In a statement they said "the U'wa way of life is not negotiable" - an alien concept to corporations who believe that everything ultimately has a price. Unsurprisingly Occidental responded with the might of the US backed Colombian military who have violently repressed them and their supporters, killing activists and U'wa children in the evictions. Perez, President of the U'wa Traditional Authority said about the struggle, "the blood spilled will not go unpunished... It will be a bittersweet memory that will remain in the minds of those who participated in the most difficult moments of this process."

Occidental also finds itself centre stage in the growing scandal around the Bush administration's military aid proposal to hand over \$98 million of U.S. taxpayers' money to defend the companies Caño Limon oil pipeline in Colombia, which runs through traditional U'wa land. Operations have been suspended since February because of intensive guerrilla attacks. This pipeline shows how oil drilling destroys an area - an estimated 1.7 million barrels of crude oil has been spilled since 1986, deforestation has occurred with forests cleared for oil exploration, production and roads, opening the forest to outsiders. The oil brought violence, with the Colombian military, leftist FARC guerrillas, right-wing paramilitaries and drug traffickers battling over resources.

The U'wa are still threatened by another oil company, Repsol. As Kevin Koenig, from Amazon Watch, said "this is an important victory and a real milestone in the larger struggle to win recognition and respect for indigenous peoples rights around the world. Unfortunately, until we address our society's addiction to fossil fuels by transitioning to renewable energy sources, the world's remaining pristine ecosystems and traditional cultures will continue to be threatened by unscrupulous oil corporations."

More about the connection between the oil industry, threats to indigenous populations and global climate change at www.moles.org/ProjectUnderground/motherlode/drilling/intro.html

Inside SchNEWS

Last Friday five of the seven WOMBLES had their charges thrown out of court. On Halloween last year the seven were walking to a party dressed in white overalls and Halloween masks when they were set upon by the cops and then nicked. Two were found guilty of threatening behaviour and were fined £100 each but both are planning to appeal.

The two who were found guilty answered police questions in custody, this was the only evidence that convicted them. Remember if arrested answer "No Comment" to all police questions.

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SchNEWS in brief

Police last night declined to comment on whether the **300-400 hardcore anarchist troublemakers** they warned of on May Day, had got on the wrong train and ended up at Millwall ** **DAAWN (Direct Action Against War Now)** have called for an anti-capitalist bloc at the Palestine Solidarity demo on Saturday 18th May. Meet 12pm at Speakers Corner. <http://DAAWN.cjb.net> ** There have been protests throughout Europe at the inclusion of the **Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)** being added to the EU list of banned terrorist organisations. Yet they have given up armed struggle over the past years, and are changing its name! SchNEWS waits with baited breath to see if Turkey are added to the list for its continuing military terrorism against the Kurdish people. www.khrp.org ** This Sat (11th) there will be a **mass trespass at Hatfield Moor** to protest against the commercial peat extraction. Only last week power lines mysteriously 'fell' down causing havoc in the peat mine. Meet 12pm, Tyrham Hall Hotel A614 south of Hatfield Woodhouse. 0778 778 2259 www.peatalert.org.uk ** On Sat 18th May there will be a demo against those **baby killers Nestle** at their UK HQ in Croydon 11am - 12 noon more info www.babymilkaction.org/press/press6may02.html ** **The hotbed of anti-capitalism and socialism which is Surrey** is now publishing a monthly newsletter 'Black Star'. Offers of help call 07810 595392 or black_star_news@hotmail.com. ** **The Subversive Sussex Walk** takes in rebellions, sabotage, squatting, etc. starts 2pm on the seaford outside the Old Ship Hotel, Sat 11th and 18th.

THE DRINKS ARE ON US

Veterans for Peace was started in 1985 by ex-soldiers and peace activists who dedicated themselves to setting up non-profit educational and humanitarian projects in countries torn apart by war. As they put it "We know the consequences of American foreign policy because once, so many of us carried it out. We find it sad that war seems so delightful, so often, to those that have no knowledge of it. We will proudly, and patriotically, continue to denounce war despite whatever misguided sense of euphoria supports it." Their latest project is to rebuild Iraqi water treatment plants that were bombed during Desert Storm. They are trying to raise more than \$60,000 so that many Iraqi people can access safe drinking water. www.veteransforpeace.org

Positive SchNEWS

On Wednesday AMEC, the company that wants to build the Yusufeli dam in Turkey (SchNEWS 346) held its AGM at the Portland Hotel, London. This time though the activist shareholders outnumbered the non-activist shareholders, so armed with a share each, whistles and red cards they messed up the proceedings. The plan was to have 3 different noise demos throughout the morning - so that everyone wouldn't be thrown out at once- and to ask some quality questions from the floor. The first noise demo started after about 20 minutes leading to a dozen people being thrown out. Another happened about half an hour later and led to more being forcibly evicted by the now pissed off security. Each resolution was easily voted down by the activists which meant the company would have to conduct a poll after the meeting. Questions were raised about not only the Yusufeli Dam, but also the Chalillo Dam in Belize and the Bingley and Birmingham bypasses. One shareholder who had nothing to do with the protest stood up to berate the board for dragging the company into this sort of situation. These sort of demos serve as a warning to other companies that grassroots movements won't take environmental destruction lying down.

THUGS-IN-BLUE™

On May Bank holiday Irish activists held the biggest yet Reclaim the Streets party in Dublin, turning much of the city centre into a traffic-free party zone. That is until the *thugs-in-blue™* put 24 people in hospital and arrested another 20, after repeated baton charges on a peaceful crowd. The protest started with a Critical Mass, which after causing chaos for 2 hours, met up with the mass of party people at the pre-arranged point. Here crowd barriers were d-locked together across the street to prevent the cops from following the now 1000+ carnival to the final destination. Two sound systems quickly set up and were joined by a samba band. At 4.30pm RTS activists pushed a broken down car, which they had bought and stashed nearby, into the party. This was the cue for the pigs to steam in, batons drawn, but as they pushed people back someone threw a flare into the car, filling it with pink smoke and sending the pigs into a right tizzy. Lashing out with their batons they repeatedly beat one man while he was on the floor, attacked another who was on crutches and arrested people from Ireland Indymedia who were filming what was going on. Even a photographer from the Irish Independent was nicked after he refused to hand over his camera, while others from the corporate press had the batteries taken out of their cameras rendering them useless.

After a tense stand off, the crowd and a sound system moved off with the cops baton charging them and making more arrests, including on one occasion a man who had nothing to do with the protest and was just walking past. Further up the road riot vans drove at high speed at the front of the demo and tooled up cops charged into the crowd smashing skulls and beating people while they were on the floor. One youngster, who eye-witnesses put at about 14, was attacked by five *thugs-in-blue™* leaving him with a cracked skull. At 9pm more people gathered at Pearce St. police station to protest at the brutality and in solidarity with those inside.

For more info check out www.indymedia.ie

JOLLY ROGERS

This Sunday (12th) at 1pm, A-Spire the Leeds squatted social centre will be leaving the Concord Street squat in a giant pirate ship setting sail for the city centre. Once there they will be giving out free coffee outside Starbucks, free info outside Borders and free clothes outside Harvey Nicks. As they say "They gentrify our areas, we will downgrade theirs."

www.a-spire.org.uk

...and finally...

With the American war on terrorism in full swing and busy checking out anyone who dare question the status quo, then it's reassuring to know that the Denver Police Dept. have been playing their bit to crackdown on dissent for years. They've been busy gathering 'evidence' on their local 'criminal extremists.' Dodgy characters like Sister Antonia Anthony, a 73-year-old Franciscan nun and the American Friends Service Committee, a pacifist Quaker group that has won the Nobel Peace Prize for its advocacy of non-violent social change! These 'criminal extremists' as the police like to call them, now have extensive files with lists of members, information about being seen at demos, physical descriptions, home addresses, places these do-gooders frequent... you get the picture. The American Civil Liberties Union are now suing the police for all this unconstitutional spying, and trying to get a court order prohibiting the Denver cops from making any more nosey-parky files. Info: www.aclu.org.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all festival goers not to let the pigs treat ya like sheep. Honest boyo!