



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! OII GERROF MOI FENCE...

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ACRES AND PAIN

Two large marches in a week sounds like a good thing - politics out on the street where it belongs. But according to most of the media, making sure foxes die is more important than making sure innocent Iraqi civilians don't.

It was a tale of two very contrasting marches: The Countryside Alliance's 'Liberty and Livelihood' march attracted mass media hype for the three weeks leading up to it and plenty after it, while the Stop The War demo was draped with a raft of 'conservative' estimates of numbers in the papers - think of the police estimate and halve it. The Stop The War march brought together a 400,000 strong crowd - the most racially diverse group SchNEWS has ever seen on a demo - with the clear message that Iraq must not be bombed, and supporting the related issue of ending Israel's occupation of Palestine. The Countryside Alliance could hardly claim the same clarity of purpose. They were out on the streets for... er apart from being pro-fox hunting what the fox were they on about?

The supposed Liberty and Livelihood message was that the Countryside Alliance are the guardians of the misunderstood rural way of life championing 'country ways', one of which just so happens to be killing for fun... but hey, they've been doing it for ages so doesn't that make it a minority right? The Alliance claim to be finding time to fight just about every rural issue that springs to mind, whether it be broadband internet access for rural poor, questioning pricing practices of supermarkets or campaigning for the provision of public services throughout our green and pleasant land.

The truth is far more sinister. The Countryside Alliance does little more than pay lip-service to major countryside issues by creating a broad base of touchy-feely policies muddying rural issues with the political dead dog that is bloodsports.

Last year the Countryside Alliance spent three million pounds on their pro-bloodsports campaign, compared to £200,000 on all other campaigns. Yet the CA policy statement only mentions the hunting issue once - why? What do the CA have to hide, other than the fact that they know that the media war surrounding the hunting issue is all but lost, that the great British public will never come to accept

the hunting of wild animals and that the only way to stop the ban is through the back door? Under such circumstances it should come as no surprise that the CA are keen to wrap themselves in just about any rural flag they can lay their hands on, whether it be protecting rural post offices or fighting modern threats to the tweed industry.

It's when the Countryside Alliance claim to represent *all* country folk - including the small farmers and rural labourers - that the smell of manure really wafts in. How can the CA justify putting so much into fighting to protect the bloodlust of an elite landed gentry with huge arable estates funded by massive subsidies? According to ActionAid's *Farmgate report: the developing impact of agricultural subsidies*, 80% of subsidies are swallowed up by 20% of the richest 'farmers'. Meanwhile the remaining majority are being driven against the wall as they try to cope with inadequate subsidies and farm gate prices lower than those of production.

RURAL WARRIOR

As Charles Secrett of Friends of the Earth, put it: "the Countryside Alliance spends way too much time worrying about hunting, and not nearly enough working on the major threats to rural life... Unless there is a new system of sustainable food production, the next Countryside March may find there are very few farmers left to mobilise."

Well what are the real issues facing country folk on a daily basis? The right to hunt foxes? Spokesman for the foxes, Basil Brush, said "Not in my back yard old boy! Boom boom." Brendan Boal recently spent nine days interviewing small farmers in Devon and Dorset, who voiced concerns over issues as diverse as low milk prices, abusive business practices of supermarkets and the impact of rich urban 'incomers' buying up their 'weekend country retreats' and destroying the social structure of rural communities. When asked about the significance of the Countryside Alliance, however, Brendan said that the overwhelming response was very much to the effect: "they're nothing to do with the likes of us, the whole thing is for... hunting people". While Brendon and his team travelled from farm to farm (sustainably by bicycle you'll be pleased to know) he observed that "what was noticeable on our travels was the

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For being in a park!

Hundreds of people were arrested in Washington DC last weekend for the cheek of being in a park on a permitted demo during protests against the IMF/World Bank. People were "pre-emptively arrested" in Pershing Park by riot cops, handcuffed for over 22 hours, given barely any water or food, denied access to lawyers and made to spend the night on a wooden floor while half hog-tied. Most were charged with a misdemeanour equivalent to a traffic violation. For more about the protests and the usual American protest clampdown <http://dc.indymedia.org/>

preponderance of Alliance placards outside of expensive homes that were clearly no longer working farms. In short, the very incomers [that] farmers feel alienated from are the ones that are providing a large measure of support for the CA".

Last week some country folk from the Wye Valley told SchNEWS about the plight of rural and farm labourers - those who have worked on the land over generations but are not farm owners - who are in fact the majority of rural folk. "The large scale argo-businesses, and the massive supermarket food distribution stitch up crushes small farms who can't compete with the economies of scale, and the intense mechanisation takes away many rural jobs." "We know of rural workers who were threatened with the sack if they didn't come down for the march last week". A MORI poll at the march found that 73% of marchers thought that hunting should not be the key concern of the Countryside Alliance.

Next week half a million foxes are marching to Hyde Park to hear Basil Brush talk about the ban on chicken hunting, but apparently most foxes are more worried about the threat of hunting. Boom boom.

Recommended reading

'The rich at Play: Fox hunting, land ownership and the countryside alliance' by RPM 07967 886257

www.red-star-research.org.uk

'The World is Not For Sale: farmers against junk food' by Jose Bove and Francois Dufour. (Verso 2001)

'Farmgate: The developmental impact of agricultural subsidies' compiled by ActionAid. 0207 561 7614 www.actionaid.org

No Dutch Luck!

On Thursday (3rd Oct), Colin Davies, owner of The Dutch Experience Café in Stockport was sentenced to three years in prison at Manchester's Minshull Street Crown Court, after being found guilty on all eight of the charges he was facing. The heaviest sentences were for the November 20th offences because he'd carried on opening the café after the September busts. Colin Davies "persistently flouted the law" by being involved with cannabis even while he was on bail for other drug-related offences, even though he uses it a pain killer for back injuries he sustained in a work accident in 1995.

There may be an appeal, but in the meantime, when we know which prison Colin is going to end up in we will give details for letters of support. After already doing 9 months on remand, he will have another 9 to still do. Colin's dad was also in court to face charges of perjury.

Just to rub it in, that afternoon The Dutch Experience Café was raided by hords of police, including the 'Special Colin Squad', who spent the afternoon preventing the café from re-opening. www.dutchexperience.org

Polish Top TEN

Missed out on Newbury? Well get over to Poland where the country is having a huge road building programme inflicted upon it – and the environmental and social costs of being in 'Europe' mount up. The rail system which served the country for years is being starved of funds, and the tentacles of TEN are extending eastward. TEN – the Trans Europe Network – is the world's biggest transport project pushed by the transport and oil industry to help the movement of consumer goods across Europe, and is currently reaching the new frontiers of countries soon to join the EU like Poland. The Poles are bringing in new legislation which will enable roads to be built without environmental impact studies and force people in their paths to sell at a price offered to them. As service stations, concrete ramps and truck parks spew forth over Poland, the average Pole had better consider getting a car and ditching public transport if they want to be like us in the EU club. So - if you're up for a bit of digger diving... pbielski@ore.most.org.pl www.aseed.net

* Bialowieza Forest, Poland – Europe's last primeval forest of high bio-diversity including bison, wolf, lynx, and much more is under threat from logging. www.zb.eco.pl/gb/3/workshop.htm

Inside SchNEWS

On 4th September, anarchist George Karakasian was sentenced by a Cyprus court to 7 months in prison for 'assaulting a police officer' at a demo outside the Israeli ambassador's home. George also received a fine for 'possession of an explosive device': an old bullet found when his home was raided following the demo.

The charge of 'causing serious physical injury to a police officer' was incurred by no more than a grasp at the cop's hat; by contrast, George was then dragged inside the ambassador's home and beaten by five state riotcops, whilst they shouted 'fuck your anarchy' at him. After being hospitalised with his injuries, he discovered when he attempted to pick up his case notes that his medical records had mysteriously 'disappeared'. Send letters of support to George to Leukosia, Central Prison of Cyprus, Wing 2B 6523, Nicosia, Cyprus. * Did anyone see Philip Paden, get arrested in Wardour Street at 8.50pm during this years Mayday demonstrations? He's charged with affray and accused of using a plastic dustbin lid to hit police officer's shields. Philip was wearing a white paper suit, white arm guard and holding a pink plastic dustbin lid. If you can help call his solicitor Andrew Katzen 0208 986 8336.

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SchNEWS in brief

Last chance to hear Native American activist **Rod Coronado's** perspective on ecological direct action next Thursday (10) at the Friends Meeting House, Hill St., (off Corporation St. in the city centre) Coventry. ** This Sunday (6) there's a Leeds **Underground Film Festival**-Another World is Possible running from 1-9 pm @ City Art Gallery, The Headrow, Leeds, LS1. Films include 'Argentina In Revolt', 'Gaza Strip' and 'Another World Is Possible' made by 33 Italian Directors about G8 summit in Genoa. Admission free. www.leedsundergroundfilm.org.uk ** There's a national demo this Saturday (5) in support of the **Hackney Library strike** – meet 12 noon, Hackney Town Hall. The bankrupt Labour led council is currently recruiting scabs to break the 10-month-old strike. 0207 8356 8710 unilibs@yahoo.com ** An Orwellian political satire book '**Hard Choices**' by Brighton writer Carol Hayman is now on the web after being dropped by publishers Times-Warner because it was too close to the bone post 9-11. Read it at www.hardchoices.co.uk ** A new email list has been set up to discuss **Solstice celebrations** "that include the possibility of amplified music in the Wiltshire area and near Stonehenge if at all possible!" <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stonehengeentertainmentdiscussion> ** Party this weekend at **Squatgate Park**, 167 London Road, Brighton 12noon to 9pm – bring your own CD's and vinyl ** And don't forget pre **SchNEWS 8th birthday benefit night** upstairs at the Albert Pub, Trafalgar St on October 14th with L.S.D.S, Miss CMC & MAMA, Judge Trev, Jelly & more. ** **RIP Martin Callaghan**, much loved Liverpool activist - who once spent a year in a tree-house at the M65 Stanworth Valley road protest, and later worked on festivals, allotments and community direct action with Greenloops.

Fight War, Not Wars

The Stop The War Coalition has called for a day of action on the 31st October to oppose the possibility of full-scale war on Iraq. They have suggested occupations, teach-ins and blockades as suitable actions for the day.

A London-based group of activists have called for help organising a series of proposed actions on the day including an anti-war themed Critical Mass, a tour of London's military offices, and a set of moving blockades. Until they get more help with organisation these suggestions will remain merely ideas, so if you've got any time or ideas to contribute get in touch. <http://www.cm-london.cjb.net>

* There's lots of other anti-war events planned for this month, including a 'stop 'star wars' and stop the bombing of Iraq' demonstration at US spy-base Menwith Hill, North Yorkshire, on 12th October 12noon-4pm, organised by the Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases 01943 466405 www.caab.org.uk. On the same day there's a Stop the War Teach-in at London's SOAS University: a day of lectures, discussion, debates and film covering all aspects of Bush and Blair's "War on Terror". In the Main Building from 11am-7pm www.soasstopwar.org/events.htm#disc

* For full listings of regular anti-war activities check out www.justicenotvengance.org

Rebel Alliance

Brighton's irregular gathering of Direct Action Groups - will be screening 'Escape From Woomera' about the breakout of refugees from the Woomera Detention Centre in the desert of Central Australia. After the film there will be a speaker from Barbed Wire Britain talking about the campaign against the Yarlswood detention centre for asylum seekers in Bedford. Monday 7th October 7pm @ Unemployed Centre, 6 Tilbury Place, Brighton (off Carlton Hill, behind American Express building). Free.

Positive SchNEWS

Congratulations to Greenleaf Bookshop of Bristol, who celebrated their 20th anniversary last month. Give them, and other independent bookstores, your support. Greenleaf, 82 Colston St, Bristol, BS1 5BB 0117 921 1369

* SchNEWS now has a list of radical bookshops and distributors on our website – let us know if we've missed any.

Campaigns In Brief

Last Friday more than a hundred protesters on skateboards, bikes and feet reclaimed the streets in protest against plans that will destroy parts of **Lancaster**. Chelverton, a mega construction company backed by Carillion (formerly known as Tarmac), and Richardson Developments are planning to rip the soul out of Lancaster by building a 63,000 square feet super-store, dozens of "large-scale" retail units and a major new road on land between the tranquil Lancaster canal and the city centre. According to the council's own studies this would close down local traders in the city centre as well as in neighbouring Morecambe, never mind more traffic, noise and pollution. The plans also threaten the Homeless Action Centre, the Polish Centre and the Musician's Co-op (well-used rehearsal rooms and recording studio). Stop Chelverton! really need to hear from anyone who is fighting the company elsewhere or knows anything about them. 01524 383 012. stopchelverton@gmx.net www.nephridium.org/lancaster

*A group has been set up to campaign against a planned Safeway's expansion in **Bridport**, because they know that the store would add to problems of rural exclusion, reducing access for those who use public transport and leading to the closure of local shops. The campaign group has organised a benefit gig with Billy Bragg and local performers for 12th October @ Bridport Arts Centre, 7.30pm.

* The revised plans for redevelopment of land at **Brighton Station** including a giant Sainsbury's can be seen at the council offices in Bartholomew Square from next Wednesday. BUDD (Brighton Urban Design & Development) have organised a public meeting on October 24th at the BRIGHTHELM Centre, North Rd, Brighton 7.30pm to discuss the revised application. 07966 528944 www.buddbrighton.org

...and finally...

It would be funny -if it wasn't so tragic- the way British justice works. Martin Maynard, the man who nearly killed the hunt sab Steve Christmas (see SchNEWS 274) by deliberately running him over in his Land Rover had his court case last week.

Steve, who was very lucky not to die, suffered a crushed pelvis, four broken ribs, a damaged lung and severe internal bleeding. He also had a metre of intestine removed and metal plate fitted in two different operations in hospital where he was on the critical list for months. So after Maynard was arrested you would have bet your last quid on him going down for a long time. But no. After not turning up for court a total of four times, and the police not bothering with an arrest warrant, last week he finally made it into the dock. He must have been the judges best mate because the charges of GBH with intent were dropped to driving without insurance or license and he was fined the sum total of £75 plus costs. Meanwhile four women could be going to jail when their court case begins next week. After Maynard tried to kill Steve, other hunt sabs were quite understandably angry and held a demo outside the hunt's kennel. A few windows were broken by people unknown but the women have been caught by the catch all cons. **Disclaimer** www.sahc.org.uk

SchNEWS warns all countryside dwellers – Bean there, dung that. That's why we're non-compost mentis. That be the truth, Squire.