



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER BROCK AND A HARD PLACE

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GO FORTH AND MULTIPLY

AS MASS CAMPAIGN AGAINST SEED CONTROL NEEDS TO TAKE ROOT

October 2nd to 16th is Seed Freedom Fort-night. Starting on the anniversary of Ghandi's birth and ending appropriately on World Food Day, there are two weeks to get out and partake in a wide range of seed related actions. But why should you dig it?

We spend a lot of time at SchNEWS banging on about political and economic slavery and injustice, fighting the system, protesting the military-industrial complex et cetera et cetera, but all this depends on one thing; that people are alive to face these things. And the main reason for this (OK, alongside water and air, which haven't yet been fully destroyed / annexed and privatised yet but it's perhaps only a matter of time) is, of course, food. And all food is plant based. Everything eaten on each either grows, or eats something that grows, or eats something that eats something that grows (even discounting the unnecessary, destructive, inefficient and ultimately cruel consequences of humans participating in the latter two).

And planet Earth has evolved a great system of food. Food has adapted (and yes, has also slowly been adapted) to grow perfectly well all by itself in every local ecosystem. It grows to maturity and offers its bounty up to be eaten, along with a free miracle package capable of reproducing and growing to be another similar plant – a seed. Lay it on the ground (or in some animal poo) and hey presto! More food just grows anew! Its so simple and elegant and successful, hundreds of millions of years in the making.

But western corporations long ago decided that that was all rubbish and they should interfere with nature and life at will, with little or no understanding of the ultimate consequences to life's delicate symbiotic balance, just so long as there's potential for making the people who own the companies loads of money by doing so.

Having already saturated the planet with agri-chemicals – ultimate damage to the ecosystem incalculable - since the advent of GM companies like Monsanto have been thinking bigger. Why not get the middle man to interrupt the process of life itself and then own and sell the right for life to continue? Stop nature giving away that perfect profit-opportunity for free! It all sounds so obvious, safe and, er, wise when you put it like that, doesn't it?

Hence in recent years the appearance of

'terminator' seeds, genetically modified to create sterile plants and, simultaneously, a drive to push for the patent and 'copyrighting' laws needed to own species of life and outlaw seed saving. A recent European Court of Justice judgement supported the EU wide control of seed varieties and the crackdown on anyone engaging in traditional variety seed saving practices, designed to stop them from sharing their preserved diversity.

This drive to economically force use of a small number of corporate-controlled seed varieties has led to an estimated 75% loss of (food species) varieties to have been lost in the past century.

While the spectre of GM galvanised a big wave of activism which scored notable successes here in the UK and elsewhere, nonetheless globally the companies have built an expanding multi-billion dollar GM

empire and they are still marching ahead with the big seed takeover.

Mass resistance is needed on a global scale – it's no accident that Ghandi's birthday was chosen to kick off this call out for heightened awareness and action. A determined refusal to allow this self-evident madness to prevail is urgently required. As our main Mahatma said, "An unjust law is itself a species of violence" and of the course the classic, "One has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws."

So what are you waiting for? Fertiliser? Join (or organise!) marches and protests at offices of seed multinationals, patent and government bodies. Go guerilla gardening with a backpack full of seedbombs. participate in seed swapping. Plant the seeds of disobedience and help the resistance er, sprout and grow. Peoples' right to live off, and in harmony with, the ecosystem they evolved in is right that er, superseeds any attempt to constrain it.

For more details, nurture your knowledge here and Join the Global Alliance for Seed Freedom

BLACK & WHITE ISSUE

Badger activists may have already set back the date of the first pilot cull in Gloucestershire. The first licence was issued here but the company entrusted with carrying out the cull may simply not have enough farmers on board to carry out the killing. Meanwhile in Somerset the licence hasn't even been issued.

The cull aims to kill 70% of the badgers in the zone. There is actually quite a narrow window for this to happen as badgers are far less active from mid-November onwards and the free-shooting method chosen relies on the animals being above ground. For the cullers then, time is of the essence and yet many farmers have missed the deadline to register.

Gloscon – the company running the shooters originally set a deadline of 21st September for participating farmers to have their cheques and 'police witness statements' in. According to Stop the Cull's ears on the ground many have not managed this and there is increasing evidence that farmers are starting to shy away from the wildlife massacre.

Animal activists are already busy on the ground conducting sett surveys so they can be ready to disrupt the shoots. Others have been marking telegraph poles with signs warning the public of the dangers to humans and wildlife.

SchNEWS spoke to one Stop the Cull activist who said "The public response has been

amazing – we're getting hundreds of e-mails a day from the general public asking what they can do to intervene and save badgers"

For more on how to get involved www.badger-killers.co.uk

What you can do to save the badgers

If you can head into the zones Contact your local hunt sab group – a full list of them can be found here, many are planning their own forays into the cull areas. Before the cull it'll be vital to have a good idea of where the setts are. If the cull starts then people with vehicles and phones are going to be vital to track the shooters and take direct action. There is accommodation in Gloucestershire for those willing to make the trip. Contact stopthebadgercull@gmail.com
If not: Do a information stall in your high street or leaflet a supermarket – put pressure on the supermarkets that are supporting the cull and sourcing milk from the affected areas. Contact stopthebadgercull@gmail.com for the resources you'll need.

Contact the cullers – a totally unrelated site <http://www.badger-killers.com> has the contact details of a number of interested parties. Remember folks – keep it polite, it's quantity not quality that counts.

PARTY & PROTEST

For events listings updated weekly see www.schnews.org.uk/pap

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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ZAP ATTACK

Zapatista communities in the Chiapas region of Mexico have been under sustained attack from paramilitary groups since September 6th, one year after the previous invasion of their lands last September. The attackers, from the groups Pas Y Justicia ('Peace and Justice...') and Union Hidalgo, have been shooting at farmers on land of the autonomous municipality of La Dignidad as they attempted to peacefully resist without arms, forcing residents to flee their land. Around 70 people are said to be displaced while 14 remain missing.

Campasino leader Hugo Blanco says: 'Lately the attacks on Zapatista communities are intensifying, the principal and strongest attack is the one that the autonomous community of San Marcos Avilés is suffering... These attacks and the continued detention of Francisco Sántiz López and Alberto Patish-tán Gómez, are the spearhead of the attack to crush the zone liberated from neoliberalism, where the people govern themselves through the Good Government Juntas. [The Juntas] are seen as the great enemy by the transnational corporations as they are a living example of the fact that "Another World is Possible.. A World where Many Worlds Fit".'

The paramilitaries are said to be financed by the ex-PRI candidate Carlos Cleber González Cabello. Paz Y Justicia emerged in 1995 after a failed military assault on the EZLN (the Zapatista National Liberation Army).

The violence has led to an global outcry from solidarity groups, along with active movements in the country known as the 'Other Campaign'. Meanwhile, Zapatista spokespeople have called on the newly formed Yo Soy 132 movement to unite behind the resistance. Yo Sol 132 is a mass protest movement for 'real democracy' which sprung up in opposition to the biased election coverage earlier this year.

BROUGHT TO FACEBOOK

On Friday 14th September Azhar Ahmed was found guilty of 'Improper use of public electronic communications network' under section 127 of the Communications Act 2003. As SchNEWS reported, in March Azhar had posted a Facebook update criticising lack of publicity received by civilian deaths compared to the deaths of British soldiers. While the tone and some of the wording of the post could (at best) be described as undiplomatic, Azhar had never intended people outside of his 'friends' list to see it.

West Yorks Police originally charged Azhar with a much more serious charge – racially-aggravated harassment. At the first court appearance, realising this charge wouldn't stick, the CPS decided on a prosecution under the relatively obscure Communications Act. The act criminalises any messages that are "grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character", meaning a large proportion of all status updates and Tweets could be covered.

The case probably would've been quietly dropped had it not been for the amount of right-wing attention it had received. Unsurprisingly the champions of free speech, the English Defence League (EDL), were waiting outside of court to harass Azhar even more. Despite the fact that their own Facebook pages are covered in racist, hate filled messages they claim that the judicial system favours Muslims and ethnic minorities. Meanwhile – in the real world – a Muslim teenager now has a criminal record and has become a hate figure for the far right merely for sharing his opinion with friends. Sentencing is due in October.

HAIGH STACKED

The first squatter to be sentenced under the new squatting law has been imprisoned for twelve weeks after being arrested in a long-term empty flat in Islington, London on 2nd September.

21-year-old Alex Haigh had been living in the property for a couple of months before the law came into force, along with other squat-mates – two of whom are now facing the strong arm of law too. One received a fine while the other is awaiting sentence and a possible jail term. A long way from media caricatures of long-haired posh drop outs – Alex is an apprentice bricklayer from Plymouth and had moved to London looking for work.

Neighbours had been unaware of the flat being occupied, while the owners, a London housing association, had known and independently started civil proceedings under the old system.

This didn't stop the pigs taking it on themselves to batter down the door and arrest the occupiers – only informing the owners afterwards. Since the government passed the bill, ministers have been urging the Met to come down hard on squatters to act as a 'deterrent'. The government says it expects around 4,200 squatters to be prosecuted each year. What's a few ruined lives when there are vacant buildings at risk of being occupied eh?

Danny Beltane of SNOB(aha) the Brighton squatters association. "This is a far harsher sentence than anyone expected - this smacks of the kind of punitive sentencing handed out after the riots. This is the real class war. How can they justify taking someone from a situation where they were providing for themselves and forcing them into state incarceration at the cost of thousands a week?"

STREET'S AHEAD

Alex and his friends were arrested around 24 hours before the first raid in Brighton that SchNEWS reported on, though overall the earliest eviction we know about (so far) was of a crew based in Street, Somerset. Despite living there for a couple of months and not causing any problems, bored local cops decided to kick in the door and arrest everyone inside at 9am on Saturday 1st September. If anyone can prove they were nicked under section 144 earlier, we'll send them a free graphics book.

With the wild variations in enforcement – stretching from a friendly bobby asking if you'd mind leaving, to three months inside (for a guilty plea!) – many squatters are looking towards the thousands of vacant commercial and industrial properties. Unsurprisingly the lobbyists behind criminalisation are already pushing for the law to be extended and backbench Tories are lining up to lend the latest bandwagon their support. Chatham MP Tracey Crouch snarled "it's important that we look into [non-residential squatting] and try and outlaw it as soon as possible" – no doubt before retreating to one of her taxpayer funded homes.

For advice and support to help hold on to your home and keep you out of prison you could do worse than the Squatters' Legal Network.

RECLAIM HINKLEY POINT

International Call out for mass Act of Civil Disobedience at Hinkley Point. October 5-9th. A camp and long weekend of action against the proposed new Nuclear Power Station in Somerset. March, rally and mass trespass! Legal observers still needed - contact rosbeauhill@hotmail.com. Buses will be leaving from various locations check the website for details, See www.stopnewnuclear.org.uk for full programme

BORDER INTO CHAOS

Over 100 undocumented people blocked the main route into Calais' port on Tuesday (25th). The militant migrants – who succeeded in blocking access for most of the day – were protesting their ill treatment at the hands of the French police and the crisis of homelessness which has gripped the town in recent weeks. The mood was defiant, with singing, chanting and banners reading 'We are not criminals', despite the stormy weather and pissing rain.

The blockade fittingly took the form of a temporary camp. After the cops evicted the town's food distribution area, which towards the end of the summer had become like a mini-Sangatte as people set up camp under the awnings desperate for shelter, 60-plus men were left with nowhere to sleep, and without tents, blankets or sleeping bags which were taken to the dump.

Further evictions of squatted derelict buildings during the round of mass evictions throughout September worsened the situation. Even last-ditch-attempt shelters dotted through the town against the sides of old buildings or secluded in patches of scrubland were flattened the next morning (Wed 26th). Nearly fifty people were arrested during this swoop and taken to the detention centre.

Conditions in the full-to-bursting Coquelles detention centre on the outskirts of Calais have been reported from those inside as bad, with basic necessities like shoes denied, and no attempts from the police to inform people of their rights or their situation. There is one minor imprisoned who the police refuse to believe is under 18. Numbers of PAF (Police Aux Frontieres) roaming the streets have risen again, and the general atmosphere is oppressive, dangerous and desperate.

Earlier this month, on 12th September, another long-standing squat was evicted. This one was en route to the channel tunnel and numbers had been swollen by refugees from Sudan and Chad who had moved there after the mass evictions in the centre of Calais in the spring. About forty people were kicked out in the early hours and all their possessions taken to the town dump. Soon after bulldozers moved in to destroy the place.

Our No Borders correspondent on the ground said: "Calais' Mayor, since getting back from her summer holiday, has been thrashing out threats, and not just at 'migrants' and No Borders. The Mayor has been demanding local associations and charities help to evict people themselves otherwise she'll close down the area where the charities give out food altogether. A nice bit of bribery – turf out the homeless or she'll starve them out.

The town hall has also been regularly threatening to shut down a new space for an internet cafe, workshops, language classes, bike maintenance etc for migrants and locals. The Mayor's obviously threatened by the idea of a safe space for undocumented people where community alliances can be made.

Despite relentless harassment and attacks on people's means of living and existence, the resistance continues. Buildings that lay empty will be occupied, fences will be jumped over and surveillance systems will be evaded. Friendships and Alliances across borders will be made and the daily fight against the greed of this racist society will go on.

* For more about Bikes Without Borders and how to donate useful stuff to Calais view this story on see www.schnews.org...

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SchNEWS warns all readers, 'and finally...' has not finally been abandoned just yet. Honest!

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