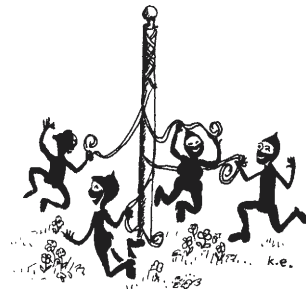




TWO GREEN FINGERS UP! IT'S YER SPROUTING

SchNEWS

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MAYPOLES & BEANSTALKS

“In Africa, Asia and Latin America, resistance to the attacks of the International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation and World Bank is growing. No issue is isolated, whether it is rail strikes or opposition to the New Deal here, land occupations in Brazil, opposing oil companies in Nigeria or disrupting immigration controls in Germany. Our resistance is as global as capital.” (Mayday 2000 leaflet)

Mayday is all about celebration, of people coming together, revelling in the diversity of struggles worldwide. That's why this year May 1st has been chosen for the next international day of action.

Mayday has had a turbulent history, hijacked and taken away from the people. Mayday is the time when Red, Green and Black come together. Here's yer very brief SchNEWS guide to Mayday:

The ancient Pagan festival of Beltane has historically been celebrated at the beginning of May, with the coming of Spring and the rebirth of life.

Along came the Christians, devouring everything in their path and replacing Beltane with a holyday, a celebration of all that is associated with the wonders of their God.

But a new religion clawed its way across the Northern hemisphere. It had no time for festivities or sentiment. Everyone was to embrace with open arms the new spirit of Capitalism. Inevitably May celebrations were abolished and replaced with a longer working week.

Longer hours brought worse conditions for the workers, less control over their work and families saw less of each other. By May 4th 1886, the workers of North America had had enough, and called a General Strike. A mass demonstration was held in Haymarket Sq, Chicago, to bring the working day down to 8 hours, to give more rights and autonomy. Thousands turned out for the day, were charged by the police, and a stick of dynamite was thrown. Eight of the organisers were arrested, and four were eventually hanged. The judge told them at their trial, “Not because you have caused the Haymarket bomb, but because you are Anarchists, you are on trial.” It was later

discovered that it was actually a police officer that threw the dynamite. Shock!!

Four years later, in solidarity with the Haymarket Martyrs, workers and Trade Unions recognised May 1st as International Workers Day. Mayday was well and truly back on the calendar!!

Mayday could be a grey day for investors according to City of London Police, warning “infiltrators could place bugs in computers and learn passwords, sympathetic staff could leave doors open allowing them to storm the buildings.” Meanwhile the Sunday Mirror warns of hordes of anarchists disregarding their usual attire “armed with spades and trowels.” So, anyone dressed in suits and looking like the seven dwarfs with bulges under their jackets are going to raise suspicion. Hi-ho!
The police, with their usual consistency, said “We are well prepared for the threat” while being quoted “Met calls for help as anti-City mob plans fresh riot”...any takers?

In Britain, the abolition of Mayday made workers even more adamant that the day should be recognised. Strikes were a regular feature of May 1st, until 1978, when the Labour Gov't declared the day a Bank Holiday. Attempts to wipe out the history of Mayday have been common. The US has attempted to re-name Mayday as Americanism Day, as well as Loyalty Day. Thatcher wanted to rename it Trafalgar Day! Hey, why not Thatcher Day!?!
Mayday this year is being taken back by and for the people! The Peoples Global Action (PGA), a network of activists from all over the world, have called for an international day of action. Previous globally co-ordinated actions such as the mass street parties on June 18th last year (see Sch 214 & 217/8) and the November 30th demos in Seattle and elsewhere (Sch 240) were called to coincide with major meetings of global policy makers. May 1st is just as significant, as it is traditionally the day chosen by people fighting for social justice and a fulfilling life.

Loads of events are planned for the Mayday weekend in London, Bristol and around

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For Wearing a Football Shirt. Back in 1996 on a warm July day in Derry, Liam Forbes was walking along when he removed his jacket to reveal a Celtic football top. Gangs of rowdy Orangemen hurled abuse at him resulting in the arrest of ...Liam for disorderly behaviour! He subsequently sued the RUC for wrongful arrest and last week received over £2000 in compensation.

the country. But this one's for everyone...

Friday 28th- Critical Mass cycle ride. Meet 6pm, Southbank, London. Also a tour of the East End (Pankhurst, anarchists, etc) 7pm Whitechapel tube.

Sat 29th/Sun 30th- Conference-Festival of anarchist ideas Speakers include everyone from Chumbawumba to a former Black Panther. Kids space, football games, videos, discussions. 10am-6pm each day at The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Rd, London N7, nearest tube Holloway Rd.

Also on April 30th - All this comes at a time when the government are attempting to turn us all into terrorists (see Sch 242 & 251). Come dressed as yer favourite 'terrorist' for a mass photo shoot. Meet 2pm, Highbury Fields, London N4.

MAY 1st London: Resistance is Fertile. Come prepared for a mass gardening action: “Armed with trowels, seeds, and imagination, the idea is to garden everywhere and anywhere. An urban adventure at the threshold of nature and culture, guerilla gardening is about taking back our own time and space from capital. Guerilla gardening is not a street party. It is an action demanding everyone's participation and preparation. An adventure beyond spectating.” Meet 11am Parliament Square, outside Parliament. More details phone 0207 281 4621, or check out www.reclaimthestreets.net

Brighton transport, meet 8.30am, Mon May 1st at St.Peters Church Tickets £6/£5 from the Peace Centre, Gardner St.

Also in London on Mayday, the TUC have hired the Dome for a 'bargain' £12.50 ticket bonanza. UNISON are not impressed with this misappropriation of Union funds to prop up Blair's pet project. Watch that space for alternative pickets and demos!

MAY 1st Bristol, contact P.O. Box 13, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB. Email bristolmayday@angelfire.com and check out www.maydaysw.fsnet.co.uk

For more info on Mayday, check out www.freespeech.org/mayday2k

For the complete history of the Haymarket Martyrs go to www.midnightnotes.org/mayday

MONEY ON TAP

Last Saturday (8th) Bolivia was put under a state of Martial Law following a week of mass protests against the privatisation of their water service. People are set to face huge increases in their water bills and peasants who previously received free water will now have to pay.

Protests came to a head last week with highways blocked in five out of nine provinces; students going on hunger strike; and some police even joining the protesters.

By Friday (7th), it seemed the protests were having an effect, as state officials stated they were about to give in to the demands. However, by the next day the National Government had backtracked and President Hugo Banzer declared a state of Martial Law to last for 90 days. At present the army are occupying the streets, radio stations are under siege, human rights agencies are being invaded by government agencies, gatherings of more than four people have been banned, guaranteed constitutional rights have been denied, and all media has been silenced.

Protesters have been met with extreme violence and arrests which have so far resulted in two deaths. President Banzer has stated that the government will not climb down on this issue, claiming that "the chaos has begun to spread...just at the moment in which we are beginning an important economic reactivation plan."

The water industry was taken over last year by Aguas del Tuman, a consortium led by London based International Water Limited which is jointly owned by Italian utility Edison and US Bechtel Enterprise.

Coordinator in Defense of Water & Life, a citizens coalition opposed to privatisation and loss of democratic rights, has called for people to target the consortium and hopes to raise the Bolivian predicament at this weekend's protests against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington. (see next week's SchNEWS!)

SchNICE ONE!

SchNEWS ain't all doom and gloom, so we've decided to resurrect our Nice One! column. If you've got positive news, let us know.

How would you like to buy energy for your home which was produced without the risk of oil spills, radioactive waste and climate change? The good news is that you can.

Since the de-regulation of the energy industry in '98 you now have the freedom to choose your electricity supplier. Most Regional Electricity Companies (RECs) are now offering 'Green Energy' options, where energy will be supplied from renewable resources, or invested in renewable energy projects. Although you pay more the price is continually coming down as demand increases. Last year saw the launch of Unit Energy, the first UK energy company to deal exclusively in green electricity. They offer competitive tariffs to domestic customers and small businesses and can be contacted on 0845 6011410, admin@unit-energy.co.uk or visit their website at www.unit-e.co.uk. Friends of the Earth have produced a report on the environmental performance of different RECs and the green energy options that are available. Copies available at 020 7490 1555, e-mail info@foe.org.uk, or visit their website at www.foe.org.uk. The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) have info on green energy companies, with a discount for CAT members on their first Unit(e) leckie bill. CAT: 01654 702400 email: info@cat.org.uk

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SchNEWS in brief

4 Glen Of The Downs activists remanded in prison for refusing not to interfere with the construction of a £20m dual carriageway have been set free. Although the Judge didn't say why, first reports indicate that under Article 41 of the Irish Constitution it is illegal to force an individual to make a promise that goes against their conscience! Tel 0035 31497 3773 www.emc23. ** A website has been set up in support of **Ruth Wyner and John Brock**, the two Cambridge homeless hostel workers who have been imprisoned for refusing to betray client confidentiality (Sch 242) www.cambridgetwo.com ** National Demonstration against 5 years of **live exports** at Dover Eastern Docks, 11am Sat 22 April, 01304-215909. ** **Shove Your Charity!** Demonstration to 'welcome' the Windsors at Lincoln Cathedral, 11am 20th April. ** April is **Biodiversity Month**, not that much of it is left. In the last 50 years half of Britains ponds and ancient woodlands have been destroyed. Going for Green 0800 783 7838. ** There will be a day of action against **Bae Systems** Annual General Meeting in London, 4th May. In previous years the meeting has been completely closed down, with opportunities for autonomous actions at over 90 Bae sites throughout the country. Contact Campaign Against Arms Trade 020-7281-0297. www.caat.demon.co.uk. ** Meanwhile the **University of East Anglia** has set a precedent in becoming the first University in the country to avoid investments in companies which manufacture weapons. Students have set up a clean investment campaign: Not In Our Names Campaign 01603-507436. ** There's a National Demonstration at **Huntingdon Life Sciences** on 22nd April as part of World Day for Laboratory Animals. Meet outside Huntingdon Lab, Cambridgeshire at midday. Phone 0121 6326460 for more info and transport details from around the country. ** The **Cannabis 2000 Free Festival** is on May 6th. Meet at Kennington Park at 1pm to shuffle to Brockwell Park, where the festival's taking place. For more info call 0181 671 5936. ** April 17th-23rd is **Real Nappy Week**, when the financial and environmental cost of disposables and the alternatives to them will be highlighted. Real Nappy Project, P.O. Box 3704, London SE26 4RX Tel: 020 7481 9004. Women's Environmental Network this week launched the first fully-funded project to promote greener alternatives to disposables. Tel: 020 7247 4740

NF OFF

On Sat 8th the National Front marched in Margate to highlight the 'plague' of asylum seekers currently sweeping the town. Whilst actual NF members only numbered around 100 what was more worrying was the amount of locals who turned out in support. Around 50 to 150 locals cheered as the police helped the NF to march. There was large resistance to the march from anti-fascists, who mounted a counter-demo which prevented the NF from concluding the march and holding their rally at their preferred destination. Police arrested 5 anti-fascists.

Opposition is vital as the NF are heiling the march as a major victory and stating that "...the asylum seekers' problem offers a glorious chance to get the nationalist message across." (David Irving denied that the march ever happened.) Kent Socialist Alliance 01304 216102

* St. George's Day anti racist benefit gig for the **Morning Star** newspaper starring Angelic Upstarts, Blyth Power, Attila the Stockbroker + more. Sun 23rd April at 7pm, The Dome, Tufnell Park, tickets £8 from Rough Trade or Stargreen or £10 on the door.

CRAP CROP

Bio-tech companies that produce genetically modified crops were celebrating this week after the European Parliament voted *against* them being held legally responsible if any of their frankenstein food turns out to be harmful to humans or the environment.

A spokesperson for Friends of the Earth commented "Consumers should know that when they buy GMO products they are dealing with companies which don't accept responsibility for potential damage caused by their products."

Meanwhile, the government has announced the location of 31 of the proposed 80 genetically modified farm scale trials. The trials are planned to run until 2003 and are funded by tax-payers to the tune of about £3.3 million. The government appears to be struggling to find the 75 test sites it originally planned despite offering farmers a £10,000 bribe. In fact three farmers have already decided to pull out.

The location of the test sites can be found at www.environment.detr.gov.uk/fse/location/index.html or get a copy of this month's Earth First! Action Update from P.O. Box 1TA, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE99 1TA.

The DETR GM Crops Policy Unit can be contacted on 020 7944 5277.

Aventis Crop Science have become the chief cheerleader of genetic engineering and are behind nearly half of the trials announced so far. Never heard of Aventis? That's because like our old friends Monsanto they have recently modified their name (see SchNEWS 246). Last year they were AgrEvo, at the end of the year they merged with pharmaceutical giants Rhone-Poulenc to form Aventis. The result - the world's largest 'life sciences' company. AgrEvo were behind all of the farm scale trials last year and have managed to become very cosy with New Labour. Last year Friends of the Earth forced the Government to back down after Government/AgrEvo collusion on farm scale trials was found to be illegal by the High Court. In 1998 they were named and shamed by the Government for failing to comply with certain conditions for GMO tests. Despite this, two of its employees were appointed by the government to 'independently' supervise Aventis's farm scale trials. Last year, faced with direct action against their crops, AgrEvo, as well as Monsanto went to the courts to get an injunction against six genitex snowball activists (Sch 184). Aventis is now lobbying, along with their biotech mates to have the location of test sites kept secret. Give 'em a call on 01277 301 301.

* Corporate Watch have just produced an in-depth briefing on Aventis available for 40p. Issue 10 of Corporate Watch is out now with articles on how New Labour's modernisation of the planning system is skewed in the interest of developers, Countryside Residential & Hockley, the Campaign for Planning Sanity, how supermarkets destroy jobs + a whole lot more. Essential. £3/£2 from Corporate Watch, 16b Cherwell Street, Oxford OX4 1BG, tel 01865 791 391 www.corporatewatch.org

...and finally...

Dr Douglas Wise, a veterinary academic and lecturer at Cambridge university, who represents the Countryside Alliance, provided a new insight into hunting with dogs this week. Speaking at the hunt enquiry, he said, "It sounds pretty ghastly to be eaten alive but, thank goodness, it probably isn't as ghastly as one might believe".

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all anti-capitalists not to let the seed of doubt grow. Don't take any shit (except for yer allotment). Dig it!