



WAKE UP! IT'S YER DIGGING FOR VICTORY...

The Vivisection Debate

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Hear No Evil See No Evil Speak No Evil

ANIMAL PHARM

LAST RITES FOR NEWCHURCH GUINEA PIG FARM

“The mass-moronic media spun this day into a victory for intimidation but we know this is a victory for compassion, for unceasing activism against all odds and lends hope to the countless animals that continue to die at the hands of the animal abuse industries.” – Save the Newchurch Guinea Pigs.

This week Darley Oaks Farm in Newchurch, Staffordshire, which bred guinea pigs for vivisection, announced they would be closing at the end of the year. The campaign to close the farm began in 1999 with the liberation of 600 guinea pigs being bred for scientific ‘research’. The video footage and photos taken at the time of the appalling conditions in the farm kick-started six years of struggle.

This success for the animal rights movement was achieved in the face of large scale police intimidation and harassment. It builds on similar triumphs at Consort, Hillgrove, Shamrock and Regal Rabbits and breaks the deadlock between the government and the animal rights movement. Will Huntingdon Life Sciences be the next to go under? Momentum in the movement had perhaps slowed as a result of the state’s bottomless well of support for the animal abusing industries. The mainstream media conspired to paint a simplistic picture of animal rights terrorism. Fanatical balaclavaed bunny-huggers who will stop at nothing versus a poor small farmer who only wanted to help children with leukaemia. In fact at the beginning of the campaign the farm was turning over £1 million a year selling pathogen-free guinea pigs for as much as £20 each.

The Save the Newchurch Guinea Pigs Campaign bore the brunt of a centralised government strategy of intimidation. The policing operation has cost at least £2,225,000 ie over eight grand a week! Staffordshire Police created the bizarrely named “Environmental Protest Unit” specifically to target campaigners. This unit pioneered the use of ASBOs against protestors, trying to ban those convicted of minor offences from the whole of Staffordshire.

Full use of all the new public order legislation was made against activists and hundreds of arrests and many raids on activists’ houses followed. Two or more people could be an illegal assembly under these new laws, and it was made illegal to demonstrate outside the homes of employees. Staffordshire filth also helped bring in an injunction under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. The injunction was brought by solicitor Timothy

Lawson Cruttenden. TLC (as we like to call him) is a pioneer in the dark arts of eroding the right to protest by twisting laws designed to protect women from stalkers. His name has become familiar to campaigners as he has based his career on smashing protest – animal rights, GM and anti-arms trade. He boasts on his website “We are the market leader in obtaining ground-breaking injunctions on behalf of individuals and corporations who have been the subject of harassment by direct action protest groups.”

The injunction meant that police could harass and arrest virtually anyone present at the protests. Peaceful campaigning was made virtually illegal. In addition, the farm hired private security to assault protesters, with one of the owners telling a Swedish newspaper, “If I could only shoot about thirty of them it would probably be calm. If I could kill a hundred of them, I would be guaranteed to get rid of the problem”. The cops around had no problem with all this.

With peaceful campaigning outlawed, the campaigners were left with a choice of giving up and leaving the animals to their suffering or taking the struggle underground. Illegal actions against the farm and its suppliers multiplied and it is in this context that the so-called animal rights “terrorism” occurred.

Media attention has focussed almost exclusively on the campaign of intimidation waged against the owners of the farm. And in particular the desecration of a woman’s grave. Save the Newchurch Guinea Pigs refused to condone this action and no link to the campaign has been proved. Despite numerous arrests no-one has been charged for the grave robbery. Every attempt has been made to blacken the animal rights movement with the tag of irrational terrorism, as the corporate media line up to march in time with the pharmaceutical industry.

EXPERIMENTALISTS

What seems to get lost in the media storm is why activists want the farm shut down in the first place. Mainstream media present vivisection as a totally polarised debate: science on one side and sentimentality on the other. They push the absolutist line that animal rights activists are against the exploitation of any animals for human needs, full stop. So far this has enabled the pharmaceutical and ‘life sciences’ industry to present itself as pro-human and pro-health. So it never gets mentioned that the vast majority of experiments conducted at

Continued overleaf...

CRAP ASBO OF THE WEEK

For being a foetus

A Staffordshire ‘boy’ has been threatened with an Anti-Social Behaviour Order - and he hasn’t even been born yet. Julie Brown, from Burton-on-Trent, was told her son had annoyed neighbours driving around on his motor scooter. She has already named her baby Dominic, but he is not due until September - and she has the hospital scan to prove it.

Julie said “I was angry because nobody came and checked and the letter was sent despite the fact we don’t have a son yet, let alone one who causes trouble riding around on a scooter.” A council spokesman said: “The letter appears to be an unfortunate mistake and we will be sending a written apology to the couple.”

Assault With Battery

Shocking news for Taser International, the US company who make every crowd-controller’s friend, the Taser stun-gun (In use with British Police since 2004). Despite the American Civil Liberties Union and Amnesty separately reporting more than 120 deaths in the US and Canada related to the weapon since 2001, the company has insulated itself from any criticism and continued to market it as ‘safe and humane’.

Well, now its not just bleeding heart liberals and hippies in resistance – cops in four US states have filed suits against the manufacturers claiming they were injured by the guns in training. They’re accusing the company of misleading law enforcers about the capacity of the weapon to inflict injuries. (We’re still ‘stunned’ that they thought being temporarily paralysed with a 50,000-volt jolt wouldn’t hurt!). We’d guess you could feel the electricity in the room as vice president Steve Tuttle, looking amped-up, announced the company planned to “aggressively fight” all of the suits.

One firearms consultant, quoted in the Associated Press 12 August 2003, explains the appeal of Tasers to sadist police worldwide: “It is the most profound pain I have ever felt. You get total compliance because they don’t want that pain again.” It also only leaves small visible injuries, making them ideal for ‘compliance enforcement’, with no awkward evidence turning up in court. Amnesty have called for an end to Taser exports because they are so popular on the torture circuit.

US troops in Iraq were pleased to find that Tasers worked particularly well there because Saddam had been an enthusiastic user of electrical pain-giving.

Meanwhile, closer to ohm in the UK, “normal” cops are not currently allowed Tasers, although Scottish police had them on hand for the first time ever during the G8. They have also been issued to firearms teams, whose specialist training ensures they don’t randomly socket it to members of the public unless they are black, wearing a coat, or using public transport.

Just like Pepper Spray which was initially supposed to be used only in ‘extreme’ circumstances, expect such electro-shock weapons to become a normal piece of equipment for our increasingly tooled-up police.

Animal Pharm cont...

Huntingdon Life Sciences are for the benefit of agri-chemical companies. Over three million animals are experimented on and killed each year in the UK. The number of lethal experiments continues to rise year on year as does the number of experiments conducted on primates. A huge growth area in experiments involves Genetic Modification – patented life forms. The majority of ‘procedures’ have nothing to do with life-enhancing medicine.

In contrast with their ‘anti-science’ label, animal rights groups have long demanded a full public inquiry into the medical benefits of vivisection. Animal testing creates misleading results which serve as a smoke screen for pharmaceutical companies when their latest batch of dodgy snake-oil turns out to have even worse side effects than the last lot. Evidence suggests that animal experiments are of little use in protecting human health. Tobacco companies until recently used the results of vivisection to “prove” that smoking didn’t cause cancer, delaying acknowledgment of the link for years.

Take the painkiller Vioxx which passed animal tests with flying colours; in humans it massively increased the risk of heart attacks. Those who have suffered from taking Vioxx accuse the drug company Merck of putting profits before patients’ lives. Drug reactions are so common that they are the fourth most common cause of preventable death in the UK. A common industry trick is to perform tests in a variety of species and simply discard the unfavourable results.

Vivisection is a notoriously secretive affair and for good reason. Whenever the animal rights movement has successfully raided or infiltrated labs they have uncovered not just appalling and often senseless cruelty but incompetence which renders any claims to be practicing science meaningless. Last year a survey of 500 GPs showed that over 80% mistrust animal experiments, and would welcome an independent scientific inquiry into the effectiveness of animal testing.

Given such strong state backing for vivisection you’d think that the government would have proof of how it benefits medical research. Last year Caroline Flint from the Home Office, which issues the animal abuse licenses admitted that “The Home Office has not commissioned or evaluated any formal research on the efficacy of animal experiments.” Let’s get this straight – they issue licences for lethal experiments, but they don’t know whether they do any good or not? Brilliant!

“Let the debate be won between open minds, not a retreat into the culture of unreason” - Blair speaking about the campaign against HLS in 2002.

OK Tony, why not hold a Royal Commission on the use of animals in scientific experiments? That’s what Neo-Labour promised before the election in 1997, so what happened to it? The animal abuse industry hides behind the police and the government because they know that if the full extent of its activities was ever publicised the public outcry could only swell the ranks of the animal rights movement.

In fact the use of animal experiments to develop drugs for humans is so deeply flawed that even the scientific director of HLS says the accuracy of using animals to predict effects in humans is a mere 5-25%! With so many problems with vivisection isn’t it time there was an open debate about it? The anti-vivisection campaigners would welcome this debate, but it’s an issue the drug companies and government want to shy away from because it’s an argument they’re afraid of losing – so instead they criminalise those fighting for compassion.

Science is of course not the question – money is. The City established a £10m fighting fund

last year to combat ‘animal rights extremism’. The recent anti-protest laws are as a result of its lobbying. Vivisection is being protected because Britain’s leading economic role in the “Life Sciences” (looked after by Lord Sainsbury – the government’s unelected science supreme who has more pies than fingers) must be supported at all costs. GM got kicked out of the country thanks to dedicated activists and the establishment is scared that vivisection, although more firmly entrenched, might be next. * To celebrate that Newchurch guinea pig farm is closed, Save Newchurch Guinea Pigs will still hold their national demo on the Anniversary of the Liberation of 600 Guinea Pigs at noon, Saturday 3rd September in Burton on Trent. www.liberation-now.org 07913533286.

* The campaign against vivisection at Huntingdon Life Sciences continues. www.shac.net 0845 4580630.

Face The Muzak

Cuddly venture capitalist Richard Branson likes a laugh, and making loads of money. And he did both at the V Festival last weekend.

The festival has a noble tradition of trying out fun new surveillance techniques on punters, and this year was no exception. In order to keep festie-goers safe from terrorists and the great unwashed, CCTV cameras were stuck all over the place and wired up to face recognition software to scan for known troublemakers. Letters were sent to 250 undesirables asking them not to come.

In previous years they have used Automatic Number Plate Recognition to target known offenders, as well as using palm-wipe drug testing kits on attendees. Although anyone asked to be drug tested has the right to refuse, the police can regard the refusal as reasonable suspicion of possession of drugs and conduct a full search.

SchNEWS commends the V organisers on their bold ‘Brave New World’ theme and we look forward to visiting next year’s Ambient Cavity Search Tent.

Hit The Decks

In case you thought it was just corporate-sanitised festivals that were turning all 1984, don’t worry. Underground parties abroad are proving they can attract even more brutal Big Brother tactics.

Last Saturday Versus II, a 1,500-strong *legal* rave in Utah (home of bigamy), USA (home of the free), was closed in a huge raid involving SWAT teams and the Utah National Guard as well as large numbers of police. Soldiers with assault rifles stormed the stage to get the music off, and tear gas, dogs, stun guns and a low-flying helicopter were used to disperse the crowd. Ravers were kicked to the ground and beaten with batons and rifle butts. People who tried to film the bust had their cameras taken or smashed. And just to prove that cops do have a sense of humour, they nicked all the bouncers for possession of drugs they’d confiscated from people on the door. The organisers of the party have set up a website - www.music-versus-guns.org to publish personal reports and footage that didn’t get confiscated.

Meanwhile in the Czech Republic there has been a wave of anti-police demonstrations across the country this month, after riot cops were used to break up the CzechTek free festival on July 31. 1,300 police waded into the teknival in Mlync with water cannons, batons, lashings of tear gas and a tank, claiming that they needed to act to stop people trespassing to get to the party. Ravers fought back with bottles and sticks.

Explaining why he authorised the raid, Prime Minister Jiri Paroubek said: “These were no dancing children [but] dangerous people with anarchist proclivities and international links,” who “provoke massive demonstrations against

the peaceful society” and are likely to spread “AIDS, jaundice and salmonella”. The ‘peaceful’ Czech society didn’t buy it, and Paroubek has seen his popularity cut in half with dozens of angry protests. The Czech government are now considering passing a new CJA-style law allowing local authorities to ban raves if they think they’re a threat to “peace, property, or state security”. For more Czech out: <http://en.policijnistat.cz/Uvodni>

Inside SchNEWS

Mi Gao Huang Chen, a Chinese takeaway owner known locally as Michael, was brutally killed in Wigan on April 23rd this year. He was beaten to death by 20 white youths armed with piping, wooden planks, tools and lumps of concrete. Six of them have now been charged with murder and fifteen teenagers have been arrested on suspicion of violent disorder and assault.

The gang also attacked Mr Chen’s partner, Eileen Jai who tried to defend him from them and was seriously hurt in the process. Now Wigan CID have charged Eileen with affray and common assault. She is due to appear before magistrates on September 2nd.

Min Quan is a campaign group who defend the human rights of the Chinese community in Britain. They have started a campaign called “Takeaway Racism” in response to Mr Chen’s death, which focuses on attacks against Chinese-owned businesses. They have started a petition to request that the charges against Eileen be dropped.

On their website Min Quan list racist attacks and highlight the way that the police fail to take them seriously or offer protection to victims. Mr Chen had been the target of harassment for a long time before his death at the hands of his persecutors. Racist incidents have risen massively since the July 7th bombings. Since 1991 there have been over 70 murders in mainland Britain with a suspected or known racial motive. www.minquan.co.uk

...and finally...

When are the powers that be going to clamp down on religious extremist leaders preaching hate and calling for the assassination of people in other countries? Take Pat Robertson, for example. A right-wing televangelist, head honcho of the shadowy Christian Broadcasting Corporation, former presidential hopeful and Bush buddy, he said that President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela should be assassinated because he was a “terrific danger”. The country - second biggest supplier of oil to the US - was “a launching pad for communist infiltration and Islamic extremism” and killing him (and taking control of the oil presumably) would be “a whole lot cheaper than starting a war.”

Seeking to distance the Bush Administration from this religious hate cleric, Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defence told reporters that “our department doesn’t do that kind of thing. It’s against the law.” He’s clearly forgotten the US’s attempt in April 2002 to overthrow the democratically elected Chavez. Old Rummy and his White House cronies met the then head of the Venezuelan business lobby, Pedro Carmona, to lend support when he illegally seized power for a few days until a popular uprising saw Chavez’s return to the presidency.

SchNEWS says stop these crazed nutters now before they destroy the very fabric of civilization with their loony doctrines – we’d even give up some of our civil liberties if someone would gag these fundamentalists hell bent on violent incitement. Then again, wiping out the Neo-liberals would be a whole lot cheaper than starting a war...

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SchNEWS warns all readers going underground - There’s no graver issue than keeping skeletons in the closet. Honest!

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