

The Saints of the Future

Gus Abraham

We have seen men and women born in other lands join the fight for peace.

We have seen some, in their own lands, start building the long bridge that says "You are not alone",

We have seen them take action and cry out their 'Ya Basta'.

First we saw them imagine and put into practice their demands for justice,

Marching like those who sing, writing like those who shout, speaking like those who march.

-Ya basta!

Ceud mile fàilte – a hundred thousand welcomes. That's what Blair and Bush will be getting from the people of Scotland and around the world gathered to oppose their world of war, poverty and exploitation. Welcome to Scotland, the home of golf and the worst poverty rates in Britain. While diners at Andrew Fairlie's restaurant in the Gleneagles Hotel tuck in to "Roast Anjou Squab with Black Truffle Gnocchi", one in three children are born into poverty and a quarter of our senior citizens live below the poverty line. In Glasgow's Shettleston, life expectancy is 63, the same as Iraq.

Welcome to Scotland – home to all of Britain's nuclear weapons at Coulport and the strategic nuclear submarine fleet at Faslane. Our seas are littered with munitions dumps, our soil is scattered with disintegrating military bases and our air is full of the sound of fighter jets training to bomb foreign lands.

In July the leaders of the world's 'most powerful economies' will be gathering in Perthshire. Normally the home to bad-taste golfers in Pringle and check, the elite Gleneagles hotel will instead be brimming with nervous security guards, armed police and the leaders of the Global State.

In the 1970s, with the so-called oil crisis highlighting the increasing interconnectedness of the world's economies, meetings of the 'Library Group' began. Founded by the United States, this group included France, Britain and Germany, who soon invited Japan for these initial 'fireside chats'. The G7 (or Group of Seven Nations) was formed in 1975, with Canada and Italy joining; the EU joined in 1977, although it does not have the same status as national governments. Russia achieved partial membership in the group in 1998, and full membership as of 2003; thus the G7 have become the G8.

The purpose of the G8 and their summits is described as threefold: providing collective management of the world economy; reconciling globalization tensions among G8 members; and generating global political leadership 'where heads of state and government take cooperation further than their officials and ministers can' (Bayne, 2001: 23). That's brilliant isn't it?

Over the last quarter century the G8 has emerged as the central forum for global governance, and until relatively recently they have managed to meet and plan in secrecy, making decisions and controlling the systems that affect all of life on earth. But this time there's a cute twist with Tony pleading that he wants to make "Africa" and "Climate Change" top billing.

"Africa"

This is Tony's Band-Aid moment. In his eyes he's an amalgam of great world leaders and fêted "Good Celebrities" – the Saints of the Future. In Tony's head he's Ghandi (without the loin-cloth), Martin Luther King (minus the morality or the rhetorical skills) and Bono without the shades. All humble Tony has is a cleanly ironed shirt and a team of professional liars.

But, as so often with Tony's dreaming, there's a problem. As Gill Hubbard and David Miller point out in their recent book 'Arguments Against G8', Pluto Press, a collection of analysis of the G8 by

leading writers and activists:

"Despite declaring himself the saviour of Africa, weapons are being sold with the blessing of the Labour government on an unprecedented scale. For instance, the government of South Africa is purchasing warships and military aircraft to the value of US \$4.8 billion from the UK and other European suppliers. The UK has also sold arms to Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Zambia."

But this record should be added to George Monbiot's documentation of the Labour government's pivotal role in the privatisation of water utilities in South Africa (and especially the role of 'Saint' Clare Short), that...

"according to a study by the Municipal Services Project, [privatisation] led to almost 10 million people having their water cut off, 10 million people having their electricity cut off, and over two million people being evicted from their homes for non-payment of bills."

(http://qsilver.queensu.ca/~mispadmin/pages/Project_Publications/Reports/bell.htm)

So watch the spinning get frantic as they try and square the circle of Tony's emotional hand-wringing and much over-acted sincerity with the rape and carnage their collective policies bestow on the rest of the world. Watch too as Blue Peter politics kick-in big style: Poverty is about dark-skinned people in far-off lands who – some think – deserve our hand-outs. It's not their fault they're in a mess, but it's not ours either. It just sort of happened because, er, it's hot, and they don't have proper vaccinations or something.

As Salih Booker, director of Africa Action, describes the G8:

"Together they have a decisive influence over international financial institutions, including direct control of 46% of the votes in the World Bank and 48% of the votes in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The G8 members similarly control other powerful international institutions, such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO)... Although their decisions may mean life or death for tens of millions with no seat at this table, there is no global body that can demand accountability from the rich-country leaders."

"Climate Change"

Climate Change might be a bit trickier. The G8's own web site is cute on this, here's an extract:

"The UK Prime Minister sees climate change as 'probably, long-term the single most important issue we face as a global community'. For this reason climate change will be a priority during the UK's G8 Presidency this year, along with Africa."

So what's the plan? Well as they themselves admit, "The G8 accounts for over 65% of global GDP and 47% of global CO² emissions" – or put another way, those seated around the table represent little more than one-eighth of the world's 6.2-billion people.

Tony's trouble is not to upset the others who either flatly deny there's really a problem or admit there's sort of a problem but don't want to do anything that would hamper business. So that's why Tony comes up with three great sidesteps. The trick here is to be seen to be doing something, while actually doing nothing. With this in mind his G8 statement reads:

The UK has set out three broad aims for climate change in the G8 in 2005:

- Building a solid foundation on the science. We need to further explore the relationships between greenhouse gas emissions and the associated level of climate change.

[This is a sop to the Americans. It's a duplicitous lie meant to delay action. It's morally indefensible.]

- Reaching agreement on how to speed up the science, development of technology and other measures necessary to meet the threat.

[This focus on technology is pie in the sky. It's yet another 'pipe-end' solution meant to distract from the reality that what is needed is a massive change away from our production and consumption, profit-driven economies.]

- Engage countries outside the G8 who have growing energy needs, such as China and India, both on how these needs can be met sustainably and how they can adapt to the impacts which are unavoidable.

[This is blame-shifting on an enormous scale. Of course it's good to develop and share renewable technologies, but the problem lies in the massive over-consumption of the North, not in the developing countries.]

Of course behind all this is the fact that the world's scientific community has known exactly what the problem is for years. Calling for more science is a boon to the Americans who will come up with a whole heap of horseshite from the Institute of Oil Barons, Texas, or the Research Centre Into How We Can Carry On Making Billions, Illinois.

There's some great links on the official G8 web site (www.g8.gov.uk). Take this one from the American EPA site on global warming:

"What has changed in the last few hundred years is the additional release of carbon dioxide by human activities. Fossil fuels burned to run cars and trucks, heat homes and businesses, and power factories are responsible for about 98% of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions, 24% of methane emissions, and 18% of nitrous oxide emissions. Increased agriculture, deforestation, landfills, industrial production, and mining also contribute a significant share of emissions. In 1997, the United States emitted about one-fifth of total global greenhouse gases."

In another bit on the official G8 site, they ask:

'What are the world's governments doing to tackle climate change?'

"Climate change is a global problem and requires a global solution. In 1992, the world's governments adopted an international agreement to tackle climate change, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Convention enjoys almost near universal membership with 189 countries (including all the G8 countries) having ratified it. This was followed in 1997 by the Kyoto Protocol which sets out more specific, legally-binding commitments to levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Currently, this has been ratified by 128 countries and is due to come into force on 16th February 2005."

Well, that's sort of true isn't it? Blair making the ecological crisis a centre point of this summit is a sick joke. It's like tobacco companies holding a bring-and-buy sale for cancer research.

Scientists estimate that a reduction of 70% of greenhouse emissions over this century is necessary to prevent the worst effects of climate change, including flooding, hurricanes and droughts. Yet the Kyoto pact, which is part of the United Nation's framework on climate change, only requires developed countries to reduce greenhouse emissions by 5.2% by 2012. And the United States, which is the world's biggest polluter – spurting out 5,795.6 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per annum – has refused to sign the pact.

Ultimately the British State's role in Scotland, and the Blair Government's attempt to portray themselves as champions of the world's poor, will make Tony the laughing stock of the rational world. The gap between their fantasy of enlightened hope and the reality of the Labour government's role in the New World Order will be exposed.

The G8 are met with massive resistance wherever they meet, here is a partial and incomplete guide to the protests...

Actions/Events Diary

SATURDAY 2ND JULY - Make Poverty History March, Edinburgh, from 11am

As the leaders of the world's richest countries gather in Scotland for the G8 summit, join tens of thousands of others in Edinburgh demanding trade justice, debt cancellation, and more and better aid for the world's poorest countries.

The day's events will start from 11am, and will include:

- rallies with international speakers, celebrity supporters and music
- the creation of a giant human white band around Edinburgh city centre, with staggered starts at 12pm, 1pm and 2pm - so no need to rush!
- entertainment, 'market stalls' and activities
- an opportunity for you to send your messages directly to the G8 meeting in Gleneagles

The event will be a family friendly, safe and fun day - so bring as many people as you can!

www.makepovertyhistory.org

SUNDAY 3RD JULY - "Ideas to Change the World", G8 Alternatives Summit, Edinburgh

Usher Hall, Queens Hall & Edinburgh University. Will feature prominent speakers from around the world in eight plenary sessions and more than 36 workshop/seminars. The purpose of the Alternatives Summit is to present a serious ideological challenge to the corrupt policies and ideology of the G8.

Plenary Sessions will focus on: War & Imperialism, The Attack on Civil Liberties, Africa, Climate Change, Asylum & Immigration, Nuclearism, Corporate Globalisation & Privatisation, Aid, Trade & Debt

Speakers will include: Mark Curtis, author of *Web of Deceit & Unpeople*; Susan George, Vice-president ATTAC France; George Monbiot, radical journalist & author; Trevor Ngwane, Anti-Privatisation Forum, South Africa; Dita Sari, President, National Workers' Struggle Indonesia; Scott Ritter, former UN Weapons Inspector; Ken Wiwa - son of Ken Saro Wiwa, executed by Nigerian government; and many others.

For more information including a list of confirmed speakers visit: www.g8alternatives.org.uk

Tickets £10/5

Contact Usher Hall for tickets 0131 228 1155

www.usherhall.co.uk

MONDAY 4TH JULY - Blockade of Faslane Nuclear Weapons Base, from 7am

Non-violent direct action called by Scottish CND and Trident Ploughshares to disrupt Faslane as much as possible, primarily by blockading the entrances. Faslane is home to all four Trident submarines, Britain's own nuclear WMD Programme.

www.banthebomb.org

www.tridentploughshares.org

www.faslaneg8.com

TUESDAY 5TH JULY - "Close Dungavel, No-one is Illegal!", mass protest at Dungavel Detention Centre, Ayrshire

Dungavel is where Scotland imprisons hundreds of people, including families and children who have committed no crime. They have merely crossed borders fleeing persecution and poverty, seeking safety and freedom.

Coaches leave in the morning from Edinburgh. Shuttle-bus service from Glasgow. For more info contact Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees: glascamref@hotmail.com

www.closedungavelnow.com

WEDNESDAY 6TH-8TH JULY - "Another World is Possible", convergence on Gleneagles.

Assemble 12noon at Gleneagles Train Station for a march to the gates of the Gleneagles Hotel on the opening day of the G8 Summit. Gleneagles Hotel, Auchterarder, between Perth and Stirling on the A9.

THURS 7TH JULY - Climate Justice Alarm, 13.45

A one off event organised by Friends of the Earth Scotland to sound warning bells to try to wake the G8 up to the fact that time is running out to tackle climate injustice. Edinburgh and Everywhere.

www.foe-scotland.org.uk

SATURDAY 9TH JULY - Alternatives Concert, Gleneagles

Who's Who? An Incomplete Guide to Protesters and Action Groups

Dissent!

Dissent is a largely anarchist-oriented network planning a rural convergence somewhere near Gleneagles... In their own words:

"The Dissent! Network, has formed to provide a networking tool to co-ordinate radical resistance to the Summit. The network was formed in the autumn of 2003 by a group of people who have previously been involved in radical ecological direct action, Peoples' Global Action, the anti-war movement and the global anti-capitalist movement which has emerged around meetings of those that rule over us.

The Network has no central office, no spokespeople, no membership list and no paid staff. It's a mechanism for communication and co-ordination between local groups and working groups involved in building resistance to the G8, and capitalism in general. It hopes to exist long after the world leaders have returned home in the early summer of 2005.

Dissent! is open to anybody willing to work within the Hallmarks of Peoples' Global Action (PGA).

PGA was founded in February 1998 by hundreds of people from social movements as diverse as the Brazilian landless peasants movement (MST), Reclaim the Streets in the UK, the Zapatistas in Mexico, radical ecologists from the Ukraine, Maori from New Zealand and squatters from across Europe, all of whom had gathered in Geneva for the founding conference. The PGA Network was created as a tool for co-ordination and communication between groups, movements and individuals wanting to organise global anti-capitalist resistance, particularly to international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and to draw attention to the possibility of alternative forms of social organisation..."

Note: An intervention was made, commenting that the PGA Hallmarks do not cover everything and do not, in themselves, make a movement. Some found

the Hallmarks problematic. Some groups present at the meeting would not join the mobilisation under the Hallmarks, due to the problems they have with them.

www.dissent.org.uk

G8 Alternatives

G8 Alternatives is a coalition of groups led by Socialist and Trotskyist organisations. G8A is a network that enables organisations and individuals from a broad range of social movements to come together to plan for and organise events and activities which offer alternatives to the agenda of the G8, such as mass non-violent peaceful protests, an alternative summit, cultural and creative events, and a convergence space with camping and other amenities to facilitate protest at the Summit. Events facilitated by G8A will be non-violent, non-discriminatory and non-partisan.

The network includes those who oppose the G8 as an institution and also those who wish to press the G8 to adopt different policies.

"What unites us is our belief that 'another world is possible' and that we need to have a massive mobilisation that brings together anti capitalists, international development campaigners, trade unionists, peace activists, environmentalists, human rights campaigners and more to discuss, debate and demonstrate."

G8A welcomes participation from any group or individual committed to social justice, international development, environmental protection, peace and human rights.

www.g8alternatives.org.uk

Make Poverty History

"Every day 30,000 children are dying as a result of extreme poverty. This year we finally have the resources, knowledge and opportunity to end this shameful situation." MPH

"The gap between the world's rich and poor has never been wider. Malnutrition, AIDS, conflict and illiteracy

are a daily reality for millions. But it isn't chance or bad luck that keeps people trapped in bitter, unrelenting poverty. It's man made factors like a glaringly unjust global trade system, a debt burden so great that it suffocates any chance of recovery and insufficient and ineffective aid." MPH

MPH is a UK coalition of NGOs (people from Oxfam, local churches and big relief groups) within the Global Call to Action Against Poverty who are focused on issues of debt, trade and aid. This is the official body organising the main march around Edinburgh on Saturday 2nd July. This is sanctioned opposition - Bono, Nelson Mandela, and Bob Geldof. The march will be huge, estimates vary up to 200,000 people.

www.makepovertyhistory.org

Free Party People

The Free Party network will be organising parties around the event and will be working to help make safe the free party at a possible rural convergence space. Crew 2000 have agreed to help out with supplies of fresh water for partying people, advice for party goers and a chill-out/rest area. Also a club night for the MPH demonstration with some top flight DJs and live acts.

People and Planet

The largest leftwing student organisation in Scotland. There will be a P&P G8 Summer festival bookable through the People and Planet website. Ticket price £15 (£12 before the 6th June) includes MPH counter-summit, and festival including campsite space:

<http://peopleandplanet.org/g8/>

Scottish CND

Scottish CND are aiming to support all the demonstrations, in providing legal support. There is a guide to Scottish law for activists on their website:

www.g8legalsupport.info

S-CND will co-ordinate from an office what arrests are made and where, try and provide transport for those arrested and follow up for those who are, providing liaison with lawyers.

Trident Ploughshares and CND are organising the blockade of Faslane on Monday 4th. They have organised floor space for 1,000 people in Edinburgh and for 500- 1,000 people in Glasgow. Buses are organised from Edinburgh and Glasgow to Faslane. They are supporting the Wednesday convergence on Gleneagles, and the MPH march. There will be an anti-war zone at the rural convergence space.

S-CND are behind the call to blockade the Faslane Nuclear Submarine base on the Clyde, because:

"The G8 depend on their overwhelming military might to defend and extend the globalisation that allows them to exploit and oppress the poor. Nuclear weapons are the ultimate expression of the militarism that makes economic globalisation possible. Military spending drains resources away from health, education and international development. Poverty leads to conflict, and conflict leads to poverty. We cannot make poverty history unless we also make war history."

www.faslaneg8.com

www.banthebomb.org

Friends of the Earth Scotland

FoE's actions will include a Climate Justice Alarm at 1.45pm on Thursday 7th July. There will be individual and collective actions throughout Scotland, the G8 nations, and the world – all sounding a climate alarm at the same time.

FoE are part of G8A and Counter Summit events. WDM, WoW, FoE, FoES have organised an event at the CoS Assembly Hall, Edinburgh on 3rd July on trade justice, debt, aid, corporates and climate: pushing the government to go further towards MPH goals.

FoE London are in the Up in Smoke coalition with Oxfam, People and Planet, WDM etc. There is a report showing that climate change impedes the Millennium Development goals. FoE has organised 'Global Warming 8 conference' with representatives of countries affected by global warming – Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh, 5th July.

FoES's Global communities project is collaborating on cultural events with Ya Basta! – a new Scotland-wide network of cultural activities and action responding to the arrival of the G8 leaders, encompassing a diverse range of performances, gigs, workshops, film screenings and exhibitions, aiming to bring together artists, activists and interested individuals to share ideas on how cultural activities can be used to protest and celebrate.

There is a New Consumer event at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh on 1st July with an evening concert with the Proclaimers and others, and to include a meeting point with an accommodation notice board.

www.yabasta.org.uk

www.newconsumer.org

www.foe-scotland.org.uk

Indymedia

Indymedia is the anti-capitalist movement's online presence, and represents a revolution in media communications. It is an open publishing forum for people to report their own actions. There will be a primary Indymedia centre in Edinburgh above the Forest Cafe and mobile units covering events and actions.

Along with Camcorder Guerillas, Variant are helping to co-ordinate an associated Glasgow media centre, and look out for a Glasgow G8 newsheet.

Indymedia is part of no faction and want everyone to use the sites, go to:

<http://scotland.indymedia.org>

www.indymedia.org.uk

www.camcorderguerillas.net

The Wombles

The "White Overall Movement" derives from folk on protests padding-up to protect themselves from police assault.

In their own words:

"WOMBLES, despite the media manipulation and hype, has always been an open meeting ground for people struggling for a new world based on the dignity of people to live freely, without coercion, states, private property and exploitation. A world without classes and ethnic, sexual or gender divisions. A world without borders.

A message too to those who think a riot shield or prison sentence will protect them...

The anger doesn't fade believe me, not for a moment, not by a long way. Some of us fight to keep alive, some of us are alive because we fight, either way the battle is one & the same. As one riot cop said in court when justifying the need to get his gun out & start shooting people, "they kept coming, we couldn't stop them". Remind me again why we do this, remind me again why all this is fucking worth it.

The creative urge is an indestructible urge - we know what our anger means.

We are dangerous people not simply because we desire freedom, but because we desire it together. These are the criminal activities of the working class, these are the crimes that we live by. In the words of Bobby TBS "a troublemaker's what you made me" (anything else would be a crime). If we're not causing trouble, we're not doing it right. This is everything we are. This is all we have.

And I'm proud as fuck to be a part of it - the travelling circus, the whispering conspiracies, the deafening global roar, all the chaos & wonder, courage & warmth, never once, in the face of brutality & murder, doubting itself, the madness & togetherness, the desire & danger & damage done. The fearlessness with which we continue to grab at life. When you dare the world to be special, the world will respond... They kept coming, we couldn't stop them. THIS is what our anger means.

Humanity is not the future you try and create, the future is the humanity you refuse to let go of. We hold it all in our hands..."

Paul Robinson, Gothenburg Prisoner

Black Bloc

A message describing the Black Bloc and their tactics is included here, to counter the inevitable propaganda that will be put out by the mainstream and corporate media:

"The Black Bloc is a fairly recent phenomenon, probably first seen in the U.S. in the early '90s and evolving out of protest tactics in Germany in the '80s. The Black Bloc may be in part a response to the large-scale repression of activist groups by the FBI during the '60s, '70s and '80s. It is impossible at this point to form a radical activist group without the fear of infiltration and disruption by the police and, for some, taking militant direct action in the streets with very little planning and working only with small networks of friends are the only meaningful forms of protest available.

Although there is no consensus among us on what we all believe, I think I can safely say that we have a few ideas in common. The first is the basic anarchist philosophy that we do not need or want governments or laws to decide our actions. Instead, we imagine a society where there is true liberty for all, where work and play are shared by everyone and where those in need are taken care of by the voluntary and mutual aid of their communities. Beyond this vision of an ideal society, we believe that public space is for everyone. We have a right to go where we want, when we want and governments should not have the right to control our movements, especially in order to hold secret meetings of groups like the WTO, which make decisions that affect millions.

We believe that destroying the property of oppressive and exploitative corporations like The Gap is an acceptable and useful protest tactic. We believe that

we have the right to defend ourselves when we are in physical danger from tear gas, batons, armored personnel carriers and other law enforcement technology. We reject the idea that police should be allowed to control our actions at all. Looking at Rodney King, Amadu Dialo, Abner Ruima, the Ramparts scandal in Los Angeles and the Riders in Oakland, many of us conclude that abuse by the police is not only endemic, it is inherent.

We live in a society that is racist and homophobic and sexist and unless that is taken out of our society, it cannot be taken out of the cops who enforce the rules of our society. In an even larger view, we live in a society that has agreed to give some people the right to control what others do. This creates a power imbalance that cannot be remedied even with reforms of the police. It is not just that police abuse their power, we believe that the existence of police is an abuse of power. Most of us believe that if cops are in the way of where we want to go or what we want to do, we have a right to directly confront them. Some of us extend this idea to include the acceptability of physically attacking cops. I have to emphasize that this is controversial even within the Black Bloc, but also explain that many of us believe in armed revolution, and within that context, attacking the cops doesn't seem out of place.

- from a letter by Mary Black

For more information visit:

Indymedia: www.indymedia.org.uk and www.scotland.indymedia.org

Schnews: www.schnews.org.uk

1820: www.1820.org.uk

Scottish CND: www.banthebomb.org

Dissent: www.dissent.org.uk

G8Alternatives: www.g8alternatives.org.uk

City Strolls: www.citystrolls.com