

Arise, the Faerie Army!

June 20, 2005

Friday, June 17 -- which happened to be my birthday, was also the last formal day of work at the Cre8 Summit, the garden project built on land slated for a motorway in the low-income Glasgow community called the Gorbals. All week long, activists and a steady stream of locals had been building the garden, collecting rubble and building new beds, filling tires with topsoil and planting hazels, berries, fruit trees. The atmosphere was relaxed and happy, the police unobtrusive. We even got some good press.

When anarchist organizing works, it's a beautiful process to behold. Work and play blur, and everyone chips in and does what needs to be done without anyone giving orders or directions. The garden consistently had that feel. People were doing hard, sometimes unpleasant physical work: hauling rubble, digging out banks, picking up garbage—but all of it joyfully, with something of the feeling of kids building a clubhouse or digging a snow fort out of a bank. Addi, the slender, smiling woman from Ao Tearoa (New Zealand), who had been at our training, decided to build a labyrinth, and soon had devoted young men carting bricks. Jo, the magenta-haired videographer I was staying with, along with Flee and others built a Sensory Garden, with raised beds accessible by wheelchair devoted to Smell, Taste, Touch and Sight, with tripods hung with chimes for Hearing. I had offered to lead a cob session, but one day it rained, and the next day the clay was too wet. Finally, on my birthday we had two tons of topsoil delivered, which proved to be a perfect consistency for cob—which is a kind of adobe made of clay, sand and straw. We mixed up a batch by dancing on the clay until it deflocculates—loses its molecular structure and becomes a kind of glue holding the sand particles together in a natural form of concrete. We added straw and rolled up big balls, or 'cobs' then punched and pummeled them into a bench on a base made of chunks of concrete. Rob and Uri and Harry, some of the Earth Activist Training organizers and former students, joined in and we rolled up balls and discussed anarchist theory.

When we broke for dinner, a young Quebecois woman named Miriam asked me for advice. She'd painted a faery on the mural at the front of the garden, and wanted it to say something. "I want a faery army," she said, "for the actions. Like the clown army." There is indeed a Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army in the works, which has been holding clown trainings for months and hopes to field hundreds of clowns at the actions.

"Do you realize that, on this land, if you call for a faery army you will get a real faerie army?" I asked her.

"Yes, that's what I want!"

"A faery army—let's be a faerie army!" Others started taking up the cry, and suddenly I realized that a faery army is, of course, exactly what I want to see marching up the road on July 6, bringing alive all the powers of the land and the raging earth to confront the power of the G8. On Miriam's mural, someone had painted, "Beneath the concrete...the garden!" (A revision of an old Situationist slogan from the sixties: "Beneath the concrete...the beach!") Miriam added: "The faerie army rises, Hidden power of earth."

After dinner, I suddenly found myself confronted with a small blockade, keeping me occupied until the Chaos kitchen produced five or six different kinds of cakes, and some very sweet cards, a bottle of champagne and one of cider. A group called Tapooka that teaches circus arts came by and completed the celebration by teaching us to spin plates. I passed on the stilt-walking lesson, but felt quite happy and touched. As a kid, I never had one of the those birthday parties with clowns—only rich people did such things in those days. Now I'd had one! Then we made cob again, and worked on the bench until dark. All in all, I haven't done so many creative projects since art school, if not nursery school!

The next day, Saturday, was the closing festival and party for the first phase of Cre8, which I had to miss as I'd promised to go up to Findhorn for a talk and training. For that matter, I missed the train as well, in spite of Rob's valiant efforts to get me there, due to Glasgow's maddening layout of one-way streets and labyrinthine detours. But I arrived in time to speak to a good crowd of people, many of whom are planning to come down to the actions. Sunday I did a day-long training for the group—direct action as a spiritual practice.

Findhorn is often perceived by activists as one of those apolitical, New Age places where people are more likely to meditate than act—and I'm sure there are people here who fit that description. But the people in the workshop have an impressive record of political and social activism. They include an old Rainforest Action Network campaigner, a Greenham Common woman who was on a walk I took part in in 1985 across the military firing ranges of Salisbury Plain to Stonehenge, an organizer from Australia who has helped to save a mountain sacred to the aboriginals, another who is restoring the native Scottish forests in the highlands, and many others. They are really excited about coming down to Gleneagles setting up a neighborhood at the eco-camp, and forming affinity groups to take part in the actions.

And we do seem to have a rural convergence site underway. The council has signed a contract, the first tests to see if there is residual methane from an old dump a few fields away have come back okay. We're pricing plumbing parts and tracking down barrels.

Thanks to all who have sent us energy, and special thanks to those local organizers who have been sweating through various bureaucracies and negotiations literally for months, staying up too late, making one more phone call, sending that last email and handling that last detail. May they have enough strength left to enjoy it when it happens. As for me, I won't quite relax and be sure it is happening until we're on site, setting up those compost toilets we've been obsessing about for weeks.

-- *Starhawk*

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The G8, the annual agenda setting meeting of the heads of state of the eight most powerful countries in the world, will meet in Gleneagles, Scotland, July 6-8. For more information on the mobilizations, or to donate directly to the action, see:

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Starhawk is an activist, organizer, and author of *The Earth Path*, *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising*, *The Fifth Sacred Thing* and other books on feminism, politics and earth-based spirituality. She teaches [Earth Activist Trainings](#) that combine permaculture design and activist skills, and works with the [RANT trainer's collective](#), that offers training and support for mobilizations around global justice and peace issues.