

Make Poverty History

July 3, 2005

Yesterday was the big march in Edinburgh. We grabbed a ride on the transport van from the convergence. It's an aspect of this mobilization that someone has thought about every possible support feature—even down to hiring minivans to transport demonstrators. Mark, who has led climbs in the Himalayas, was our driver. "How long will you be picking people up," we asked. "Until everyone gets home," he replied. I was thinking about how bus driving is one of those unglamorous jobs that aren't high status in ordinary life, and how missing the action in order to drive other people to it is the kind of thing that a hierarchical society reserves for some lesser class—but here it's a job that has plenty of volunteers, because it needs to be done. And how we appreciate it!

Edinburgh was packed with people, and full of the energy of a city when a big demonstration is happening. The organizers of the Make Poverty History march asked everyone to dress in white, and most people did. Not the clowns, the fairy army or the anarchists of course, but the overall impression was a sea of white and those of us who had neglected to pack any white clothes stood out like little dark blots. Lisa, Juniper, Geneva and I cruised through the rally area, then ran directly into a small group of the local Pagans with whom we had a date to have a ritual later. Niall, Louise and Victoria were carrying a banner for the combined Dragon Network—a Pagan activist network in the British Isles, and Scotland Reclaiming. "Now is the day, Now is the hour, Ours is the Magic, Ours is the Power!" it read.

We marched together for a short while, but the march was so crowded the pace was more of a crawl. I'm always glad for that, politically, as it means that there are lots and lots of people there—over 200,000, we're told. But I'm not so glad for that personally, and our group of four cut out after a bit to do what we like to do: walk fast along the edges of the march, duck in and out, meet friends and hang out with them, stop off and check out the side streets. We stopped into the Dissent meeting and training space at the Edinburgh University Student Union. We had some moments of excitement when we heard a call to go support a group of anarchists being chased by the cops. We watched a lot of very nervous cops in light blue vests being ordered around the streets, running after a contingent in black. The captain was bawling out orders, and we realized that in the U.S., they all have radios so we never hear the orders. Here they don't. They also don't have guns! Later they brought out black helmeted riot cops, who also did not appear to have guns, and surrounded the group in black and penned them in. People came out onto the street above to cheer and chant and support them, and our friends in the great action band, The Infernal Noise Brigade, serenaded them. The cops eventually let them all go.

The nice moment for me was that we actually had half an hour to sit in a café and eat

something while sitting still, not driving, walking, or in a meeting. Well, it turned into a sort of informal meeting about the actions, with a friend we met. I went outside to go over to where we'd planned to meet for the ritual, and ran into Rooh and Maren, friends from the EAT course who also wanted to come. Rooh writes amazing and wonderful chants and we cruised back through the crowd, singing.

About forty people gathered for the ritual. Niall and Louise and Victoria had planned the first part, to introduce the rest of us to the Scottish land spirits. Some of the Tribe of Brigid arrived from England, women I knew from Reclaiming events, and a group of the Findhorn people I'd met the week before, and we began. There was some trouble and misunderstanding at first, trying to mesh our various traditions. It's been my experience that when people meet who are channeling strong powers, but at somewhat different frequencies, the energies create what feels like either intense anxiety or irritation until they mesh. When we finally meshed, Niall and Louise led invocations to Bride and the Cailleach, the Old Woman, invited us all to invoke whatever deities we felt moved to call, and then led a beautiful visualization of a web of healing that we are all creating for the earth. I led a spiral dance, and we raised a very intense and wonderful cone of power. Niall was holding my elbow and I could feel our energies gradually align, and feel the Wild Old Woman howling through me, whipping up the winds, raising a storm, and then Bride the healer singing love and compassion. The rain was indeed threatening as we grounded and opened our circle, and word came that gale force winds were expected back at the convergence. Alarmed, we headed back, again gratefully catching the vans.

Today was the day of the various Alternative Summits, but though I was originally scheduled to speak at one of them, no one had contacted me recently, I couldn't find my name on any of the programs or schedules although others kept telling me they'd seen it somewhere on the internet, and I eventually gave up looking for it and settled in to work on the greywater systems. Almost all of them needed some major reworking, as they were based on the premise that water drains away through soil, and the soil we're camping on is such pure clay that they simply weren't draining at all. Applying the permaculture principle that the problem is the solution, we're turning them into ponds, but that required the use of a mini-bulldozer digging machine, and a lot of time and redesigning. So I spent a lot of the day appreciating some deep irony in the universe, as I worked on the pond being dug by Fuzz, whom I met in Rafah right after Rachel Corrie was killed, crushed by a bigger version of an Israeli army bulldozer as she tried to prevent it from demolishing a Palestinian home.

Tonight the camp is filling up. Lots of trainings and meetings and new people eager to help are arriving. Tomorrow is the Faslane blockade. I am hoping to go, but also pulled to stay and finish the greywater systems. I haven't had time yet to do any of the usual things I like to do: trainings for actions, facilitating meetings, obsessing about actions. But for once, there are plenty of other people around to do them, and lots of support.

Now for a shower!

-- *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.