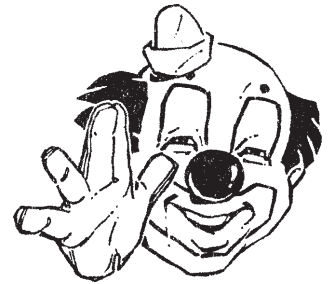




MIT'DRERODOT!, MIT'DRERODOT!, IT'S YER INTERNATIONAL...

SchNEWS

FROM BIRMINGHAM TO THE BERMUDA Δ EVERY WEEK



Issue 167 - Friday 15th May 1998

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"I get £89,000 a year... I'm worth it, you're not"

Home Secretary Jack Straw

He calls it a soapbox 'shoutabout'- The Home Secretary stands on a little box in his Blackburn constituency, and takes questions from the public.

Nigel Cook, sacked from a Polygram subsidiary after trying to organise a union against poverty pay, asked Jack Straw about the minimum wage and casual jobs. Straw fudged.

When Nigel Cook asked what he was paid he tried not to answer, until eventually he lost his temper. The Home Secretary boasted: "I get £89,000 a year...I'm worth it, you're not"

With perks, his salary climbs to £147,000...meanwhile five million workers earn less than £4 an hour, and almost one million women workers earn less than £2.25 an hour. Nigel Cook was sacked nearly a year ago after trying to organise a trade union at M&S Packaging. He was forced to take a job there thanks to the Job Seekers Allowance, which spells out that an unemployed person must take any job that is available, no matter what the pay or conditions. Refuse - and you lose your benefits. Workers at M&S are paid as little as £3 an hour, for 12 hour shifts with no sick or holiday pay and no maternity rights for women. M&S package CDs for Polygram which sell for over £10 each. Meanwhile in 1996 Polygram made a cool £3 billion.

John Pearson from the Thameside Unemployed Workers Alliance had his benefit stopped after refusing to sign an amended Job Seekers Agreement, which said he must apply for more jobs - whatever the pay and conditions. During an appeal John spoke for 2 hours with 3 witnesses and a demo outside, he won his case on a technical point.

* Party and protest! **Sat 23rd May** Demonstrate against PolyGram, Glenfield Park, Blackburn 11am - bands such as Tulip lounge will be playing on the one year anniversary of the sacking of Nigel Cook. Contact RNCC, PO Box 14, Accrington, Lancashire, BB5 1GG Tel 01254 679605

* **Tues 19th May** Speaker from the Reinstate Nigel Cook campaign with video from the demo outside the BritAwards (remember when Chumbawamba threw water over John Prescott!) upstairs @ Hobgoblin, London Rd, Brighton 8pm.

CRAP JOBS OF THE WEEK
(courtesy of Blackburn JobCentre)

Van driver £50 a week***Lab Technician £65 a week***Care Assistant £2.65 an hour (nights)***Security Guard 2 x 12 hour days followed by 3 x 12 hour nights £2.75 per hour
Ring the SchNEWS desk with your horror jobs and New Deal nightmares.

Play Gets Grief

"Thespionage", the Brighton based politically aware theatre group have caused the Benefits Agency and the Police to stop in their tracks. Their new play 'Grief Encounter', which is part of the Brighton Festival umbrella, tells the story of a bunch of 'fictional characters' learning how to survive within the constraints of the JSA. The play, set in a Brighton pub, features themes of police infiltration. Life began to imitate art this week when the writer had his benefit suspended and two uniformed cops in a scene identical to one in "Grief Encounter" pushed their way into his home and threatened to return with a warrant to take his computer. Members of the cast have been pulled in by the DHSS even though participating doesn't mean they break any of the 'availability for work' rules. *To see what all the fuss is about SchNEWS recommends all readers go and see Grief Encounter for a top night out. The Pavilion Theatre, New Rd, Brighton. 7:30, Mon 18th - Tues 19th May, £5/4 conc. Box Office 01273 277772, or phone SchNEWS for London dates.

BILDERBERG WATCH

"A clique of the richest, economically and politically most powerful and influential men in the Western world [who] meet secretly to plan events that later appear just to happen" What **The Times** said about the Bilderberg group, who held their annual meeting in Scotland just a few days before the G8 summit. Heard about it? No way - the media moguls are top members. *** Read the hot spring '98 **Corporate Watch** mag- fatter, slicker and more gripping than ever before. Subs £12/£10 a year, cheques/p.o.s payable to Corporate Watch, Box E, 111 Magdalen Rd, Oxford, OX4 1RQ, Tel 01865 791391

STREETS AHEAD

Leeds showed us how to have a good time this summer with their 4th Reclaim the Streets last Saturday. Testosterone-charged West Yorkshire coppers threatened to ruin the party before it had started, petulantly waving around side-handled batons and vigourously wrestling the not-yet-inflated bouncy castle from the vigourously bouncy crowd. They later denied their use of CS gas, despite one officer giving himself a faceful as the gas blew downwind. But after half an hour of unrest the police suddenly withdrew to the full-on 600-strong party: bouncy castle, billowing banners, free food and techno....

At the end of the afternoon everyone escorted the system safely away, whilst the police sent a few cheeky snatch squads into the crowd's dwindling remainder; one person was seen to be run down and then beaten with truncheons. 22 arrests were made. Witnesses: Tel 0441 1994 77.

Wolverhampton partied at their first RTS on that same sunny Saturday. No police violence here, though the old bill did intercept and seize the Headz Collective soundsystem on it's way, but it was returned the following morning. 800 people went for it all day highlighting Wolverhampton's abysmal traffic problem by blocking two major junctions in the town centre. The police helped to prove this point by blocking the road with lines of riot vans. Over 200 officers then forced the protesters back into a pedestrianised section of town where people partied on!

Congratulations to the Polish Green Federation who enjoyed a 150-cyclist demo in **Warsaw** recently, painting cycle lanes promised for 2 years on the roads themselves! Owing to the high cost of chemical paint remover, the authorities have decided to let them stay!

London RTS on Sat 6th June is not only from Euston station at noon but also from Brixton (call 0171 2814621) *** **Hull** is also Reclaiming the Streets on Sat 23rd May. Meet 1pm at Queen's Gardens, near Prince's Quay.

SchNEWSannual

The sexy SchNEWS Annual features issues 101-150 plus top photos, special articles, cartoons, and a comprehensive contacts list - the Yellow Pages of direct action. It's yours for £6 + 84p SAE to the usual address (see back page)

WELCOME TO THE GLOBAL STREET PARTY!

On the 16th of May the biggest ever party in history kicks off with tens of thousands of people in 37 cities across the world simultaneously transforming their privatised, polluted streets into places of celebration and empowerment; a true global commons - involving RTS groups worldwide. Here's the Global Street Party list as it stands at the moment: Bogota (**Columbia**), Berlin, Bielefeld, Thuringen, Hamburg, Dresden (**Germany**), Lyon (**France**), Birmingham, York (**UK**), Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne (**Australia**), Tel Aviv (**Israel**), Geneva, Zurich (**Switzerland**), Turku (**Finland**), Madrid (**Spain**), Ankara, Istanbul (**Turkey**), Gothenburg, Stockholm (**Sweden**), Dublin, Derry (**Ireland**), Seattle, New York, Berkeley, Olympia (**US**), Vancouver (**Canada**) Prague (**Czech Republic**), Toronto, Vancouver (**Canada**), Athens (**Greece**), Luxembourg (**Luxembourg**), Ljubljana (**Slovenia**), Bratislava (**Slovakia**), Utrecht (**Holland**), Turin (**Italy**), Zagreb (**Croatia**). For full review see next issue. For Legal Support in Birmingham Reclaim the Streets take this number with you: 0961 512 147

LYNDIS PERCY

After a month long trial involving 17 MoD witnesses, National Security Agency (NSA) officers and the Treasury solicitors, peace activist Lindis Percy was found guilty of contempt of court and given a 12 month suspended sentence for pulling up by-law signs outside the US Menwith Hill spy installation. The illegal by-law signs (declared so by York County Court) were deliberately moved on site by NSA staff to entrap Lindis, as part of a dirty tricks campaign to bang her up for exposing the Big Brother spy base. In January a report for the European Parliament revealed that "within Europe all e-mail, telephone, and fax communications are routinely intercepted by the US National Security Agency". Anyhow, the illegal spy-laws which were put there to outlaw any direct action around the base are still there. So, it's business as usual!

* Sarah Hibson and Peggy Walford were up in court last month charged with causing £10,000 worth of damage to the security fence at Burghfield nuclear weapons factory. The women admitted the damage, but entered a defence of "lawful excuse" arguing that the base was responsible for the increasing incidence of leukaemia cases in Berkshire through radiation emissions. The jury failed to reach a majority verdict and the Crown Prosecution Service is seeking a retrial. Info: 0171 607 2302

STATELY ROAMS

This weeks potential host is the Duke of Devonshire. He's not only claiming a 40% tax exemption for his home, Bolton Abbey. He's also getting it for 18,000 acres of land, 12,000 of which have National Park status. If you want to go and piss him off ring the Tourist Centre to arrange your visits: 01756 710 533

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For walking on the pavement... Police in Leeds took the 'step off the pavement' message of Reclaim the Streets a wee bit seriously, trying to run into someone by driving along the pavement themselves. When the pedestrian uttered a complaint to the officers, they grabbed him and gave them a ride in the van down to the station.

GATECRASHERS WAKE NEIGHBOURS

On MayDay, typical of current form, Nottingham authorities deployed helicopters and riot squads to trash a free party in Sherwood forest. Desert Storm, Smokescreen and a four other soundsystems along with four vehicles were seized, and 14 people nicked. The various charges, including refusing to leave the land - section 61 of the CJA - were later dropped, or cautions accepted, and soundsystems returned for £150 each.

Might it be that landowner the Duke of Welbeck, being Britain's 5th richest man, explains such police zeal? The nearest house stands on its own 2 miles from the party site. They didn't even notice the party, but were woken up by police sirens and helicopter overhead. One of the officers remarked on the CJA: "It's all a bit vague and ambiguous, we had to sit for ages wondering which bits to use!"

Subscribe!

Keep SchNEWS FREE! Just send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 20 for next 20 issues) or donations (payable to Justice?) Ask for "Originals" if you can make copies. Post free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o on-the-fiddle, P.O. Box 2600, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2DX.

Tel/Autofax: +44 (0) 1273 685913 GET IT EVERY WEEK BY E-MAIL: schnews@brighton.co.uk

Sorry for the small type (Is that big enuff, Robbie?!) Happy Birthday KTJO ("Lesley" in 'Grief Encounter') May 18th

SchNEWS IN BRIEF

Announcing the birth of a shiny brand new force for ecological protection - **The E Team!** Available for virtually any info on setting up and running a campaign, with years of experience and a large database at their disposal. The E Team can be contacted on 0181 28731182, 07970 392904, or eteam@cableinet.co.uk *** Mikron Theatre Company presents 'If You Go Down To The Woods': **tales from the Newbury Bypass** at Manchester's Birch Community Centre Sat, May 23, 8pm. Plus bookstall, bar and vegan food; tickets £5/£3 from Frontline Books *** **Women's Environmental Network** are holding a day of workshops, training, info and suchlike, with food and a creche (if you contact them by 22 May). As part of World Environment Week, Making A Difference is on Sat 6 June, 11am-5pm at the WEN office, 87 Worship St, London, EC2A 2BE and costs £3 (free to members). Call Cathy to register: 0171 2473327 *** **RARR - Residents Against the Relief Road** in Epsom, South London have started building tree houses, walkways and a tunnel but need more bodies urgently. If you can help protect lots of trees in a beautiful park from destruction then call 01372 727014 or 0370 878920 for info/directions *** In Bristol, Knowle West Housing Estate's only green space (40 acres) faces a similar fate - this time for a bus depot. The City Council has neglected to consult residents and much support is needed - digging has already started! So help **Reclaim the Field** on Sat 23rd May, 9am-12noon @ Filwood Playing Fields, Creswicke Road, Knowle. Call 0117 9879667 for info *** The **Hillgrove** campaign is as lively as ever with the next (national) demo, planned for Sunday 31st May, 12noon @ the farm - Dry Lane, Witney, Oxon - which breeds cats for vivisection, despite an intensive campaign to discourage the practice! *** For those of you who live an accessible distance from Elephant and Castle/Kennington tube, and have not yet noticed the **DIY infoshop** at 56a Crampton St, it's about time you did. As well as a bike library, 3 day-a-week bookshop and comfy tea-making/drinking environment, 56a houses @n @rchive - a radical reading space housing thousands of items on any subject you can shake a stick at. 56a is open Thur and Fri 3-7pm *** Movement Against the Monarchy's **Enemies of the State** Tour is in full swing, with dates remaining in: Birmingham - on Sat 16th May, 7-9pm at the Friends of the Earth Centre, 55-57 Allison St, Digbeth, following the Global Street Party; Brighton - on Weds 20th May (call London MAM on 01523 160145 for location) Cardiff - on Mon 15th June, 7-9pm @ Clwb Ifor Bach, Womanby St, after the Euro-Summit. Also, look forward to an action in Edinburgh against the Queen's summer tea-party. Meet 2pm, Parliament Square on Thurs 2nd July *** In Oxford people have squatted the old London Midland Scottish station building in Park End Street, in protest against a planned "**spagetti junction**" development Contact 07970 343 486 for more info. *** If you've ever seen a black and white '**Fuck Work**' sticker, it was produced by UNAMERICAN ACTIVITIES. Fundamentally disgusted by the exploitative jobs most people have to do to support capitalism, Unamerican encourages people to take part in building an alternative business model which no longer creates these crap jobs - starting by disseminating 5 million Fuck Work stickers! Send US\$6 for a bunch of them and reading material - (cheques payable to Sriini Kumar) to UA, PO Box 410663, San Francisco, CA, 94141-0663, USA. Or drop in at http://www.unamerican.com, or mail at feedback@unamerican.com ***

Italian activist found hung in prison cell

The Turin street party in Italy has been postponed after a massive clamp down by the state. At the beginning of March a police operation led to the eviction of two squats and the arrest of 3 people for their alleged involvement in sabotage against the TAV High Speed Train which is destroying the Val Susa. The next day there were demonstrations, where the cops assaulted people ensuring a riot. At night the squats were re-occupied and there followed weeks of demonstrations to get the three people released. However, the courts refused and on 29th one of the men, Baleno, hung himself in his cell.

The journalists who declared him a terrorist didn't even respect his family's wish to stay away from Baleno's funeral, so one of them ended up in hospital, while others had their cars smashed. The next day eight thousand people expressed their anger in a demonstration that led to one of the local prisons and Palace of Justice being pelted with stones and bottles. One of the two remaining prisoners is now in home detention, the other is on hunger strike - and a street party is still being planned for the future. **Radio Black Out** <blackout@ecn.org>

* A Reclaim The Streets party celebrating the fifth birthday of the road protest camp against the A33 in northwest Germany came up against tooled up cops, not happy with this free outbreak of celebration. They cordoned off the party goers who still went for it for eight hours until 240 were eventually nicked. Undeterred Global Street Parties are planned for Berlin, Nuremberg and Bielefeld. Camp contact: nbg_aktiv@postmaster.co.uk

INSIDE SCHNEWS

Matthew Cowern, on 23 hour bang-up and miles from home for disobeying orders, is serving four years for possession with intent and is bored, bored, bored. Find it in your heart to drop him a line... MF2800, HMP Preston, 2 Ribbleson Lane, Preston, Lancs, PR1 5AB.

RECLAIM EUROPE! - NO TO BIG BUSINESS! CARDIFF 9th - 16th June

Radical alternative to the Eurosummit and its corporate agenda. Mass demonstrations, cycle blockade, workshops, street events, parties and other surprises. More info 0171 2729333 email reclaim.Europe@btinternet.com

SCHNEWS INTERNATIONAL

A sister issue to SchNEWS has been launched in Israel, called HIT'OREROOT, meaning 'waking up'. The first issue reported on activist arrests, elections, Vanunu on nuclear weapons, what to take to a vigil and Reclaim the Streets. Next issue on McLibel! Guy Bar-Oz can be contacted on wakeup@truetoyou.com

...and finally...

Mr. Daxx Edder has announced modest plans to build a Holyland Theme Park in Mesquite, Nevada an hours drive from Las Vegas. Mr. Edder said "We are trying to reconstruct the holy bible. Plans include a tram ride past the parting of the red sea and a thirty three story model of Jesus that you can climb inside." What else - front row seats to watch the virgin birth?

... disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers never to tell the truth especially when the whole world's a stage, you never know who's in the audience. Then you will feel content. Honest..