

WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER S.W.A.L.K...

SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk

Friday 16th February 2007

Free/Donation

Issue 576



Slaves to **FASHION**

HAVEN IT LARGE

PROTEST PRESSURE BUILDS ON 120 MILE GAS PIPELINE THROUGH WALES

Protesters against the National Grid Welsh gas pipeline (see SchNEWS 569) seized the initiative on Valentine's day by taking the struggle to the pipeline's terminal at Milford Haven. Up'n at 'em by 5am, pipeline activists were at the gates at dawn, and eight people soon occupied a rickety jetty in the harbour - bringing work to a grinding halt - and five more locked on with heavy metal arm tubes at the site entrance, blocking access to the site for several hours.

Heavy handed cops soon arrived on the scene, but it took them many hours to cut every one free and eventually make their thirteen arrests. In the meantime, although they had no qualms in directing cars to mount the verge and pass dangerously close to the lock-blockers, trucks had no chance and a queue of over thirty lorries soon stretched back down the road.

Supporters of those arm-deep in the action were rounded up and held (illegally) on a bus for an hour and a half, before being marched up to the top of the road and 'encouraged' to hold a demonstration in a pen, under section 14 of our old friend the Public Order Act. They

refused to co-operate but enjoyed being able to tell one copper who arrived late on the scene and asked who the organiser of the demo was, "er, that police officer over there...!".

The 120-mile project cuts a motorway sized swathe through from Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire to Tirley in Gloucestershire - often through ground deemed unsuitable for building houses on, with some living nearby refused even having domestic mains gas - let alone a giant main pipeline close by which even industry experts predict will suffer at least one crack in its lifetime.

Inspired by the initial squatting of the pipeline in November, camps sprung up at Milford Haven, Trebanos and Cilfrew, with locals and activists regularly disrupting work. January saw a number of actions, including at a new location at Alltwen, Pontardawe - where people chained themselves to machinery in order to stop the work carrying on the other side of the valley from the Trebanos camp.

On February 7th, the DTI announced approval for the start of phase II of the environmentally damaging project, across the Brecon Beacons heritage site - which

MEDIA HAW OF THE WEEK

Hats off to **Brian Haw** who won channel 4's 'Most Inspiring Political Figure' award, with over 50% of the vote (see SchNEWS 575). As Brian stated in his acceptance speech: "I would like to say a warm thank you to everyone who voted for me. This is a vote against this government's killing, maiming, torture, stealing. Its a vote for the children of Iraq and Afghanistan, for all our children - our future. For truth, justice, peace and democracy for all." A certain T. Blair polled a whopping 6% of the vote. Brian's anti-war occupation at Parliament Square goes on. See www.parliament-square.org.uk

the national park authority called a "huge blow". But activists' ain't gonna let their protest go down the tubes, and are upping their efforts, with one spokesman declaring: "Milford Haven is supposedly a potential target for terrorists. Yet this pipeline will commit us to another thirty years of fuelling a cause of terrorism: Western corporations taking countries' gas to expand consumption and their profits. This is not just a Welsh problem it is an international one! We all know about the effects of carbon dioxide on climate change - with the UK's main contributor being Gas! Peace, love and f*ck fossil fuels". To get involved: Trebanos site phone 07733190958.

AND GETTING AWAY WITH IT

So there's 3,000 new criminal offences on the books since Neo Labour came to power. The government's crime strategy has been to hit the poor with anti-social behaviour orders (see SchNEWS 492), target migrants and refugees (see SchNEWS 571), ramp up the anti-protest laws under the cloak of war on terror™ (See SchNEWS every week), and of course liberally dish out plenty of good old fashioned iron bars - there are actually now more people in prison than voted new Labour (give or take!).

And what about the richer, more powerful people breaking laws and harming others in their pursuit of big money (i.e. Criminals)? Despite promises to the contrary, the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Bill currently trundling through parliament leaves this group strangely untroubled.

The bill is designed to make it easier for company bosses to be held to account for workplace accidents, but as usual, when it comes to the crunch, company bosses have little to worry about. Since the Health and Safety at Work Act came into force in 1974, 10,000 people have died at work - but only 11 directors have been convicted of manslaughter (only 5 of those were jailed).

Last year eleven people were killed at work every week. According to the Health and Safety Executive almost 75% of these accidents were caused by managers cutting corners to maximise profits. Last week an inquest into

the death of steel fixer Kieron Deeney passed a verdict of "unlawful killing", after he fell 40 feet to his death through a hatch covered by a piece of plywood. And nothing is quite as cheap as casual labour, with accidents much more likely to be suffered by agency workers like Simon Jones (see SchNEWS 182 and www.simonjones.org.uk for more info).

Despite the usual vote-winning, tough sounding talk down the years about prosecuting company bosses more often, Tony & Co have been a little less than enthusiastic about actually upsetting their pay masters: the Corporate Manslaughter Bill has been delayed nine times already. The Confederation of British Industry and Institute of Directors have been pushing hard to derail the bill, worried that improving staff safety at work could prove a costly venture.

BARING YOUR CLAUSE

And it's not just about deaths at work. Clauses 3 and 5 in the bill legislate for exemptions for deaths in public services such as prisons, child protection and probation, military operations, mental health institutions and detention centres - all the kinds of places with volatile situations and the potential for dangerous abuses of power. These public areas should be the first on the list to have thorough mechanisms to protect the vulnerable people they provide for.

Some shred of encouragement can be taken from the House of Lords vote on 5 Feb however; 2:1 in favour of allowing prosecutions to be made when people die in police custody or prison cells - although the government is expected to fight this decision, so the fight is far from over.

Other public services are affected by this legislation. Back in 2005, the Corporate Manslaughter case against Balfour Beatty and Network Rail over the Hatfield rail disaster collapsed. Four people were killed and 102 injured, but the court couldn't find a "controlling mind" in the company (tried looking in the boardroom?) and, therefore, couldn't decide who was really responsible for all the proven mistakes! In July 2006, Balfour were fined £10m and Network Rail £3.5m. Balfour's fine was cut to £7.5m on appeal, as their fine was 'disproportionate' - Bonus discount! And, if that wasn't enough, the two companies claimed £21m back in legal costs for the bungled manslaughter trial.

So the reality remains that capitalism allows fictitious corporate entities to be treated as moral beings, with the responsibility for human lives and safety, even though they can not ultimately be held accountable beyond a slap on the balance sheet for 'mistakes' made in their relentless cost cutting, profit-increasing ventures. No wonder it pays off to cut corners and gamble with workers and the public's lives to make a killing. Visit www.fack.org.uk

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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PARTY & PROTEST

* For full listings updated weekly see
www.schnews.org.uk/pap

FEBRUARY: 17 - Unite Against Fascism - Stop the BNP National Conference, 9.30am-5pm. TUC Conference Centre, Great Russell St, London WC1B 3LS Nearest tube: Tottenham Court Road. www.uaf.org.uk ** **17 - Call for social justice** outside the **Zimbabwe Embassy**, 249 The Strand, London (nearest tube: Charing Cross). **WOZA** (Women of Zimbabwe Arise) & Zimbabwe Vigil invite you to endorse the Zimbabwean People's Charter, 2-6pm, call 07811 452030. ** **17 - Starbucks picket** at Clapham North Tube, 11.45am ** **19 - Mass sleep-out in Parliament Square** to highlight the desperate plight of refused asylum seekers made destitute by government policy. Even if you just come down for a shift or bring a flask of tea. justfair@refugeecouncil.org.uk ** **20 - 'Composting Capitalism'** - why recycling the corporations can halt climate chaos. **A World to Win Open Forum** on strategies for tackling the eco-crisis. 6.30-8.30pm at The Hub, 5 Torrens Street, Angel, London, EC1V 1NQ (rear of Angel tube). Free. www.aworldtowin.net ** **21 - Mass Lone Demo - Parliament Square** 6-7pm - pro-

testing against **SOCPA** - the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (see SchNEWS 483) For more see www.markthomasinfo.com email tricia_bird@yahoo.com ** **21 - Noise Demonstration: Naming the Dead in Somalia** at EDO MBM, Home Farm Road, Brighton, 4-6pm. While the USA bomb Somali villages and the press look away, we will confront workers with the names of people killed in the 'war on terror'. ** **21 - Demo against Newhaven Incinerator** organised by DOVE on the day of the Planning Application decision. Meet 9.45am outside East Sussex County Council offices, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes. More info: www.dove2000.org ** **22 - Camp Bling** - protest against the Priory Crescent road widening scheme, at the next full meeting of Southend Borough Council. 6.30-7.30pm, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend, Essex. Tel 07739 189165 email priory_parklife@yahoo.co.uk www.savepriorypark.org ** **24 - No Trident / Troops Out of Iraq - National Demo**. Assemble 12 noon Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park. Rally in Trafalgar Square organised by CND and the Stop the War Coalition. For more see www.cnduk.org There is also a callout for an automomous bloc on the day - look for a large red and black banner with the word 'RESIST' on it near Speakers' Corner.

THAT SINKING FEELING?

The financial bilges of the good ship SchNEWS are struggling to keep out the icy water of unpaid bills. After the office move and computer freak-outs our outgoings are currently £100 a week more than regular donations cover. We're still afloat thanks to the odd generous individual, but we still need help to keep pumping it out with more small monthly donations - which you can do as a standing order or online (see www.schnews.org.uk/extras/help.htm)

* **V For Video Activist - The SchMOVIES DVD Collection 2006** is out now and available for £6 incl p&p (comes with free 2005 DVD) - and we still have copies of the **SchNEWS At Ten** book and other annuals all going for bargain prices see www.schnews.org.uk/pages_merchandise/merchandise.html

MACE OF SPADES

A violent assault on a car full of hunt monitors earlier this month has left one with a broken arm. Around a dozen hunt supporters joined in with the frenzied attack, attempting at one point to roll the Landrover. After a failed attempt to steal the keys, the attackers smashed all the windows and attacked the driver with a spade.

The driver made an escape and had x-rays in the nearest hospital. Police are now investigating the incident, not the first of its kind at the Old Surrey, Burstow and West Kent Hunt. In 2000, a protestor was run over and almost killed at a meet by a hunt supporter, leading to a high-profile campaign against them (SchNEWS 274).

Could it be that hunters have such pent up violent tendencies that if their hunt is stopped they will have to vent their anger on people? This incident suggests as much, and that's bad news for the rest of us as hunting has, in theory, been outlawed.

Meanwhile the Warwickshire Hunt continues to hunt foxes week in, week out, with no police interest - inspiring a fancy dress demo outside Warwickshire Police HQ on Feb 9th. Hunt supporters continue to say they will defy the ban, while the local Chief Constable merely says "hunting per se is not a policing priority." This has left Coventry Animal Alliance to conclude that laws are there to be broken - especially when they're not being enforced! Robbers, drug dealers and gangsters turned up to show thanks to such slack law enforcement.

* Feb 9th marked the 16th anniversary of **Mike Hill's** death, an 18 year old lad killed by a huntsman during a hare hunt in Cheshire. See www.jillphippis.org.uk

* Get the latest news at www.huntsabs.org.uk
* Rumour has it there's a fancy dress party outside Parliament Feb 19th...

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LOOSE THREADS

Just in case exploited slave labour in sweatshops, climate-busting transportation miles and the resource wastage of flimsy made-to-replace-every-three-months fashion items wasn't enough to leave you heading straight for the charity shop, a new report explains how even the production of the main raw material for the clothing industry - cotton - screws both people and planet. Updating the story of the ultimate symbol of imperial slavery, 'The Deadly Chemicals in Cotton' by the Environmental Justice Foundation (in collaboration with the Pesticide Action Network UK) highlights the routine use of harmful chemicals, including nerve agents and neurotoxins, on today's cotton crops.

The developing world has 30% of global pesticide use and 99% of pesticide induced deaths.

Cotton is the most valuable non-food agricultural product, so naturally using corporate-logic it's also the world's 'dirtiest' crop, with US\$2 billion's worth of chemicals sprayed over it every year, half of which is toxic enough to be classified as hazardous by the World Health Organisation. Many of these chemicals are banned or restricted in the West, but it's a different story in the globalised third world - where 99% of cotton production happens. Some of the worst toxins are Aldicarb, a powerful nerve agent (one drop absorbed through the skin is enough to kill an adult), Endosulfan - attributed to thousands of fatalities amongst farmers in West Africa and India (leading to its ban in 2001, quickly overturned by the pesticide industry), and friendly sounding poisons like Monocrotophos and Deltamethrin. Vomiting, paralysis, incontinence, coma, seizures and death are just some of the many side effects suffered by farmers and children in the developing world who are routinely exposed to pesticides so shops from Primark to Prada can stack 'em high and sell 'em cheap (or really expensive). If you have to buy, make sure it's organic cotton and here's hoping for the hemp revolution sometime soon...

* **The Environmental Justice Foundation's Cotton Campaign** is at London Fashion Week's Ethical Fashion arena Esthetica, Stand ES20, 12-16th Feb, with copies of the report and screenings of EJF's award winning documentary 'White Gold - The true cost of cotton'. See www.ejfoundation.org and www.pan-uk.org/cotton.

...and finally...

Are you a female stud or a male slag, spreading your love around a little too freely, and behind backs? How about the convenience of paying a one-off fee to expunge the guilt of your dodgy liaisons? Launched on Valentine's day, a new website is offering the public chance to offset their infidelity by funding one of CheatNeutral's certified 'monogamy-boosting' offset projects, funding people to stay loyal and faithful. Naturally, they urge customers to first measure and reduce their unfaithfulness as much as possible, but by offering people the ability to offset the remaining 'unavoidable' cheating, they claim to be "saving relationships, making people feel better about themselves, and providing practical, achievable ways to reduce global levels of heartbreak."

If you're wondering what the cuckold this crazy-sounding scheme is all about, the site's designers point to the logic of Carbon Offsetting schemes in explanation: "It's a joke - about paying for the right to carry on cheating. Carbon offsetting is also a joke - about paying for the right to carry on emitting carbon. What we need to be doing is reducing our emissions. Offsetting stops us thinking about how to do that." The site may not help a vast new army of slutty anti-offsetters into action as much as amuse them, but so far over 65,000 people have done their bit (having had their bit) and offset in a bid to save the world's love-o-sphere. See www.cheatneutral.com

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - flattery might get you everywhere but donations will get you even further. Honest!