

WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER COR BLIMEY WE'RE STILL 'ERE

Weekly

SchNEWS 150

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Free/Donation

Thinking the Unthinkable

"There is a place for report writing, lobbying, propaganda, protest and legal challenges but when it is playing by the rules set down by the state it simply postpones the inevitable. Direct action, in stark contrast, challenges the omnipotence of the state and the power of industry. Tactics that have a direct effect on profits make industry sit up and take notice."

Robert Allen, Republican News

For the last three years, with nearly a million words and 150 weekly issues, SchNEWS has been one of the many voices of dissent in a world dominated by corporate media. Are our rantings, ravings and reportings just the voice of a few demented activists or do ordinary millions of people have any common cause with what we say?

Over the past twenty years, the agenda of this country has been forced further to the right, but according to the 14th report of British Social Attitudes published last year, this agenda - once ruthlessly pursued by the Conservatives and now New Labour- isn't one the public always identify with. People aren't happy with the gap between the rich and poor, the majority seemed to be largely unmoved by talks of dole scroungers, and even people who grew up with the so called 'Thatcher Revolution' are still in favour of free speech, the right to protest and other basic rights.

So why this continual clamp down on dissent? The ever widening gap between rich and poor? Why the onslaught on the welfare state, if this is not what the majority of people believe in?

In Britain in the early '80s, think tanks like the Adam Smith Institute and Centre for Policy Studies moved the goalposts to the right, first airing proposals in the sympathetic pages of the Economist, The Times and Telegraph, softening public opinion in advance. By the time Thatcher or her ministers embraced an idea it had already been injected into the intellectual bloodstream. In Europe unelected bodies like the European Round Table of Industrialists get to the politicians long before we even hear of forthcoming legislation. Religiously pursuing the key mantras of "competition" and "deregulation", they have also- according to Secretary General Keith Richardson- been incredibly influential in pushing for a Single Market within Europe, and the TransEuropean Networks which will

involve the creation of a huge network of high speed trains, motorway and airport expansion programmes.

In Sharon Beder's book 'Global Spin - the corporate assault on environmentalism' she reveals the sophisticated techniques being used around the world by powerful capitalist forces, who are trying to change the way the public and politicians think about the environment.

And don't forget the Bilderberg group, described in the Times Newspaper in 1977 as "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 to just happen." (see SchNEWS 125)

So when people tell you that those involved in direct action are undemocratic, point out some of these power players behind the scenes.

WHAT NEXT?

"Society will not be fundamentally changed by attempts to influence the parliamentary process, or by setting up small groupings to be the vanguard of a revolution. The organisations which take on the struggle will need to be founded on a politics of mass action which has the power not just to protest but to resist oppression and create change."

Danny Burns 'Poll Tax Rebellion'

What SchNEWS and other independent publications must continue to do is shout, but louder, more persistently and coherently than before. The state isn't always going to find this to its' liking as the three year prison sentence of three editors of *Green Anarchist* for merely writing about direct action show. But if we don't think the unthinkable and demand the so-called "impossible" (you know, crazy ideas like making sure the whole world has food, clean drinking water, and a decent living standard); if we don't set up our own think tanks and try and move the agenda to one where people and the planet are more important than money then who will?

The world is crying out for radical change. Sucking up to the big corporations that are killing the planet and the politicians who serve as their agents isn't gonna help. And while our stunts can grab the media limelight for a few moments, it is only grassroots community-based activity, that will ever get large numbers of people to get off their bums and change this world for the better. Don't let people tell you that's pie in the sky - read

your history books and see that it can and has to be done.

But working locally doesn't mean we stop thinking and acting globally. While the corporations become ever more powerful, we are going to see even more attacks on our living standards. The Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) is just one example. If signed this will invalidate all international and domestic law regarding environmental, social and labour rights that work against business interests (see SchNEWS 141). But it is just one example of the increasing attacks on ordinary people ahead unless we act NOW. As the draft manifesto of People's Global Action Against 'Free' Trade points out "Only a global alliance of peoples movements, which can implement action - oriented alternatives, can defeat this emerging globalised monster."

From the struggles of the Zapatistas in Mexico, to the landless peasant Movimento Sem Terra of Brazil; to the international solidarity for the sacked Liverpool dockworkers and the Encuentro for Humanity and Neo-Liberalism in Spain last summer, people are getting together around the world and learning mutual lessons.

Change will never come from the rich and powerful - it's up to us. Here's to the next 150 issues (let's hope they're not necessary!)

Think-Tanks

***Class War** (73), 50p + large SAE : London CW, BM Box 5538, London, WC1N 3XX

***Fourth World Review**, 24 Abercorn Place, London, NW8 9XP

***Do or Die** - the voice of Earth First! £2 inc p+p PO Box 2791, Brighton, BN2 2TT

***New Internationalist**, PO Box 79, Hertford, SG14 1YB.

SchNEWS BENEFIT

FIL PLANET (ex- Back to the Planet)

D.J. Pick-n-Mix (Al) + Brighton Bands

Balzac & Dutch Sugar

@ The Concorde, Brighton, **Mon. Jan**

19th, 9am til 2pm (£3 rich / £2 skint)

Undercurrents 8

A Screening of *the Alternative Video News Digest*

@ Cinematique, Ship St, Brighton (above Cybar) Thursday 22nd January, 8pm.

£1.50/£1.00 (unwaged)

LET OUR REVENGE BE THE LAUGHTER OF OUR CHILDREN

EIRE

Downs but not out...

At 8 in the morning on Wednesday clearance work began on 3,000 broadleaf trees at the first Irish road protest camp at Glen of the Downs, near Bray, Co Wicklow. With only 8 protesters on site, Gardai [Old Bill] and security men stood guard over chainsaw gangs who began cutting at both ends of the Down working towards the middle. As the phone tree went into action people began mobilising across Ireland and a 30,000 signature petition seeking an injunction was taken to the High Court that afternoon. **The 100 mile, 18 million pound road expansion scheme from Rosslare Port to Dublin is 85% funded with EU money.** It is intended to be part of the Super Highway being constructed across Europe, designed to enable multi-nationals to transport consumer crap faster in increasingly larger lorries unhindered by commuter traffic. (See European Round Table of Industrialists on front page). By Thursday the Protesters had secured a court decision preventing further felling until a Judicial Review is heard next week. The Camp appeals for everyone who can to come down and slow down the cutters. Be self sufficient, bring bolt cutters, rope, and other useful items. Take a DART to Bray and a bus or taxi from there, or the Wicklow bus from Busaras. Tree 64, Glen O' the Downs Kilmacano **MOBILE 003531 88 210 7471 / 003531 88 210 7471**

FRANCE

In France the birth of a new unemployed workers movement is going from strength to strength, with one Economics Professor commenting "in France the most uncontrollable movements are those that start from the bottom. Look at the students in 1968, or the railway workers in 1995."

Emerging just before Christmas, the marches and job-centre occupations are escalating, with leaders of student movements and low-paid workers promising to back the protests. On Saturday there were demonstrations in 77 of France's 95 regions, while the week before, luxury restaurants, hotels and foodshops worried that the sit-ins could turn violent showered protesters with foie gras and other seasonal delicacies!

On Tuesday an estimated 20,000 activities marched in towns, while in Paris 300 people stormed the Commodities Futures Exchange, spray painting the walls with slogans like "Death to speculators" and "Give us money to live". Eleven cops were injured by chairs, water dispensers and rubbish bins hurled from the building's windows.

The movements demands include an immediate increase in benefits (some long term unemployed receive just £210 a month), an end to laws that allow landlords to evict jobless tenants and a halt to energy companies cutting supplies to unemployed customers who cannot pay.

CRAP PRISON REG OF THE WEEK

The inmates of HMP Woodhill are not allowed to receive stamps because the governor fears they may be impregnated with LSD!

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A big thank you to Sanae Mattsura in Japan for sending us the fax machine. Not that we advertise, but we're sure her website [www.2.marinet.or.jp/\(squiggle\)sac](http://www.2.marinet.or.jp/(squiggle)sac) is great.

INDIA

In the early hours of last Sunday, 25,000 people occupied and closed the site of the Maheshwa Dam, in the Navada Valley, West India. If the privatised hydro-power dam is built, it will submerge at least 61 villages, including the homes of 2,200 families. However, locals are promising to continue the siege until the project is halted.

Many people have already been affected by work on the site. Some have had to move out of their homes despite there being no resettlement plan. Others are in fear of their homes crumbling to the ground as the explosions are so near their villages.

Back in October, a rally of 10,000 people protested at the site. The Government's response was to increase the pace of the work. This time police were tipped off that there was to be another occupation, and blocked roads entering the site, but were no match for the vast numbers of locals who know the alternative routes in the valley! The fight continues!

MEXICO

In what is perhaps the biggest global co-ordination of protest since the Gulf War, there have been over TWO HUNDRED actions at Mexican embassies in 130 cities worldwide since the Acteal massacre of 45 Zapatistas on Dec 22nd (see Sch149). In London on Monday, SchNEWS were among a delegation who, in an unusual move, met the Mexican Ambassador for an hour to demand independent investigation into the government's involvement in the murders. Then, on Wednesday, an unarmed woman and her toddler were shot by state police during a 6,000-strong protest in Chiapas.

GLOBALISATION ACTIVISM

7-8th March ZAPATISTA CHALLENGE CONFERENCE Mexico Support Group 0181-682 2402 www.acephale.org/encuentro/challenge.html **3-5th April GATHERING VISIONS**, Manchester Un **May 1st - MAYDAY '98**, Bradford, Tel: 0117 907 3667 **May - PEOPLE'S GLOBAL ACTION**, Geneva, against the 50th anniversary of the World Trade Organisation. See: www.agp.org **15th-17th May - PEOPLE'S SUMMIT**, Birmingham, against the G8 meeting. New Economics Foundation 0121 632 6909 **June 14-16th - RECLAIM EUROPE!**, Cardiff, against EuroSummit '98, the finale of Britain's six-month EU Presidency. www.geocities.com/RainForest/5581

SCHNEWS IN BRIEF

Capital & Class, London Forum 98 7:30 third Tuesday of each month starting 20th January 'From Welfare to Work'. Lucas Arms, 245 Grays Inn Rd WC1*** **Courses in Environment and Development:** Ethics, Politics & Participation. Starting Saturday 24 January, Friends Meeting House, Ship St, Brighton.*** **Coalition against BP in Columbia** Meeting Sat 24 Jan at the Latin American Golden Years Club, Cancell Rd, London SW9 6 HN/0171 357 0388 *** **Terry O'Halloran Memorial**, Sunday 25 January 2pm music, poetry, readings at **Karl Marx's Tomb. Undercurrents 8** Wed 21st Jan The Wedgewood Rooms Albert Rd Southsea, Portsmouth *** **A Critical Mass** commemorating the death of cyclist Gustav Schrompf killed by a speeding car will be taking place on 27th January at 9:45 am at the South Bank under Waterloo Bridge.

AUSTRALIA

Anyone heading for Oz? Australia are holding their first DIY conference under the banner 'Direct Action Jamboree'. Melbourne activists are hosting a long weekend from March 6 - 9th to coincide with International Women and Labour Days. The Jamboree is being organised by a coalition of food coops, environmental groups, anarchist bookshops, etc. Contact P.O. Box 199, Brunswick East, 3052, Melbourne Australia. email: harry@alphalink.com.au

ARRESTOMETER RESURRECTION

The war against **Animal Rights Activists** continues this week as 12 people receive sentences under **Sections 3 and 4** of the **Public Order Act**. They were jailed for between 3-6 months at Portsmouth Crown Court by Judge Selwood, the same dodgy wiggled one that gave the Gandalf Defendants a three year stretch. Last year protesters travelled to a live freight 'depot' in Daventry. This is a place where animals being transported are left, in lorries and overnight, for a 'rest period' on their traumatic trip to be slaughter. During the protest stones were thrown through the windows of a caravan which unknown to the protesters was occupied, Although there were several vehicles present the police made arrests from only two vans, a situation which led to some confusion in court because under Section 3 the police must arrest *everyone* involved in an incident, in a total stitch up by barristers, some defendants pleaded not guilty and some were persuaded to plead guilty to the lesser charge under Section 4 of 'causing fear of or provocation of violence', but that's another story, if you want to know more and the Prisoner Addresses' read **Arcnews PO Box 339 Wolvs. WV10 7BZ Tel: 0115 958 5666** ^^ **National Demonstration 12 noon Sunday 18th January at Hillgrove Farm, Dry Lane, Witney, Oxon.** Hillgrove breed cats who suffer horrific nerve, eye and implant experiments for the Vivisection Industry

...and finally...

RUPERT MURDOCK AND RAY DISNEY [SON OF ...] HAVE BEEN GIVEN PAPAL KNIGHTHOODS BY THE VATICAN

THE ANARCHIST TEAPOT. IS BACK!

So if yer fancy a cheese toastie whilst yer plotting the revolution, get down the Teapot, its next door to McDonalds on 142 London Rd. Open 12 noon till 6 Mon - Sat. with a no alcohol policy. For details of evening talks/videos ring 01273 685 913

WE DISCLAIM EVERYTHING Honest