



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER CUT THE CRAP!

# SchNEWS

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## JUST SAY KNOW

**"It's a bad day for accountability and a bad day for freedom of expression" - Dan Lyons, Uncaged.**

Yesterday the High Court decided that the rights of companies to make money by any means, no matter how horrible the animal experiments or threats to human health, were more important than the public's right to know.

Imutran applied for an injunction to prevent the public from having access to details of horrific pig-to-primate organ transplant experiments, which were leaked to the anti-vivisection group Uncaged (see SchNEWS 279).

The huge volume of confidential documents - the largest set of data on animal experiments ever leaked - suggests that the company, a subsidiary of bio-tech giants Novartis, has not been frank with the public and the scientific community. In addition, the documents also starkly reveal failures in Home Office regulations and the Government's bias in favour of commercial researchers. However, the judge decided that commercial confidentiality was more important than human health risks, animal welfare or the fact that Imutran 'falsified' results. Uncaged has been given the right to appeal.

### TRUE LIES

Hiding behind corporate confidentiality is nothing new, and neither is the Government's continued protection of big business. In the field of vivisection this looks set to continue, as under commercial confidentiality clauses, animal experiments are not included in the Freedom of Information Act that became law last November (blink and you missed it, we did).

The National Anti Vivisection Society (NAVS) launched a legal challenge to the blanket confidentiality clause in animal experiments Licence Application Forms. The Home Office changed the clause, but then advised all applicants to request that everything on their application form be treated as confidential!

NAVS want Freedom of Information to apply to animal experiments: access to the technical details (no names or addresses) of proposed experiments would enable those interested in animal welfare to challenge unnecessary and repetitive experiments and suggest non-animal methods. Most of what occurs in animal laboratories is never published, and what is, is selected by the person responsible. If an experiment proves fruitless, or fails, its oc-

currence is unlikely to see the light of day. Yet this is the research that probably needs the most scrutiny.

Vivisectionists claim that if animal experiments were included in Freedom of Information legislation they would be under threat of attack from the animal rights movement. But that's a bit of a red herring as disclosure of names and addresses are not needed. However, vivisectionists aren't shy about publishing their names and what they did with puppies and electrodes in Journals like 'Cutting up Little Fluffy Animals Weekly' (OK, we made that name up, but you get the picture).

It isn't just animal experiments that are not covered in the Freedom of Information Act. You'd think such an Act would give us the right to er...get information. How naive! There are so many 'exemptions' that the Government can restrict a whole load of information if they think it would 'prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs'. Whose affairs they're talking about aren't made clear, but you can probably hazard a guess. They don't even have to admit whether such information exists!

### MAD BILL DISEASE

The report into the BSE crisis criticised the secrecy involved, citing "a clear policy of restricting the disclosure of information about BSE" and that "had there been a policy of openness rather than secrecy" this would have led "to remedial measures being taken sooner than they were". You might think that Freedom of Information might have prevented the BSE crisis, but it wouldn't have made any difference, since the Government admitted that "Under the Bill, reports about BSE given to Ministers would be covered by the exemption in Clause 33 but it would then be for the Minister or the relevant public authority to decide whether the balance of public interest lay in disclosure or maintaining the exemption". And we know what the Government's priorities are...

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- \*From 23<sup>rd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> January, SPOR are
- back in Brighton in a **Community**
- **Space**, featuring daily events, perform-
- ances and installations, food every
- evening, a kid's space, sounds, etc. To
- get involved and contribute:
- spor23@yahoo.com or 01273 321112
- 
- \*The Rebel Alliance is happening
- there on Weds. 24<sup>th</sup> @ 7 pm. Venue to
- be announced nearer the time, watch
- this space...
- 

### CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

**For Playing Spoons...** Two Dutch activists were arrested for "public violence" after "slamming" a spoon on the gate of a police station where three fellow activists were being held. After a wild chase by the coppers, which included nearly getting run over, the two were detained for 24 hours and fined about £250 and £300 each.

The Act contains a clause on safety information that would mean all official reports on transport accidents, nuclear incidents, chemical spills, etc. would be kept secret if it wasn't in the public interest. For example we are assumed to have no right to know about problems like British Nuclear Fuels lying about its nuclear quality control data, or trains that ignore warning signals. Whether something is in the public interest will ultimately be determined by the Information Commissioner, who can ask for disclosure of exempt information where there is an overriding public interest. However, the Authorities can reject the Commissioner's requests and keep the information secret!

So you might well ask, what will be the point of the Freedom of Information Act when it finally comes into force in April 2002? As the old proverb goes, "To tell you the truth, we're lying".

\*Uncaged, 14 Ridgeway Road, Sheffield, S12 2SS. 0114 272 2220, www.xenodiaries.org

\*National Anti Vivisection Society 020-8846-9777 www.navs.org.uk

\*The Campaign for Freedom of Information are producing a guide on the Act that will be out soon, 020-7831-7477 www.cfoi.org.uk

### BURNING DOWN THE HOUSE

Free party organisers have complained that Sussex Police thwarted their dastardly plans after stopping 3 free parties on New Year's Eve. One party organiser told SchNEWS, "After fleecing our mates on the door for all their cash and forcing drugs down their necks, we had just bolted shut all the fire exit doors so we could burn them all to death to the sound of a lovely acid trance soundtrack, when the bloody cops stepped in"

A spokesperson for the Webb-Kirby/Zel sponsored police said, "If people want to party then they will have to pay through the nose at one of our corporate clubs rather than trying to do it on the cheap." Accusing the free party organisers of being 'arrogant' the spokesperson added, "How the fuck are we meant to fleece people if these bastards keep putting on free events?"

## FULL ON INFILL

We can't believe it either – but it's five years this Sunday since work started on the Newbury bypass, kicking off the biggest anti-roads protest this country has ever seen.

Some of the south east's most beautiful countryside was trashed to build the nine mile £101 million road, which even the Dept of Transport and local council admitted wouldn't solve Newbury's traffic congestion. Still, the road has meant that developers get their greedy mits on a lot of previously inaccessible land. So let the infill begin!

\* The town's biggest employers Vodaphone threatened to leave if they weren't given the green light to build a massive new HQ on a greenfield site. The company, who helped finance the pro-bypass lobby, refused to move to Greenham Common because it 'wasn't prestigious enough' and because of the threat of the peace women - two women in an old caravan.

\* Trencherwood Homes Ltd. have the council's support in building 1700 houses on land originally laid out by Capability Brown, and which opponents calculate will generate an extra 4,000 car journeys a day. During a Local Plan enquiry it emerged that Trencherwood were one of four building companies who had contributed towards the council's legal fees – which of course has nothing to do with why the council supported the new village.

\* Sandleford Park is to be built on a new greenfield site that will get a new college – and possibly a 3-storey Conference Centre.

\* Sutton Estates is currently testing the water to get permission to build 750 houses on part of the old battlesite. Local resident Janet Griffen told SchNEWS that the questionnaires Suttons had sent out were so 'loaded' that "people have crossed out all three options!"

\* Sunday 14th January. Newbury Bypass 5th anniversary reunion picnic Meet 12 noon Northcroft Park, bottom of Northcroft Lane Tel 07000785201 www.geocities.com/newburybypass/

## The Real Petrol Price

January 16th is the tenth anniversary of the start of "Desert Storm", the land invasion of Iraq in the Gulf War, when after a massive bombing campaign using depleted uranium. Western tanks rolled into Iraq blasting anything that moved. When the war was all but over thousands of Iraqis, Palestinians, Bangladeshis and Sudanese tried to escape along the road to Basra, back to southern Iraq. These people were spotted by American jets who incinerated the whole convoy using napalm B, cluster bombs and rockets. Another incident that wasn't widely reported was the deliberate burying alive of thousands of Iraqi troops in trenches, using snow ploughs attached to tanks and combat earth movers. These troops were not given the option of surrendering. Other massacres include the carpet bombing of civilian areas, seven times more explosives were dropped on Iraq than were dropped on Hiroshima, and the deliberate bombing of the Al-Amiriya civilian bunker in which up to 400 women and children burned to death.

There have been crippling sanctions imposed on Iraq in which hundreds of thousands of children have died of starvation and disease. Two former UN Humanitarian Coordinators for Iraq have since resigned in protest stating, "We are in the process of destroying an entire society. It is as simple and as terrifying as that. It is illegal and immoral." Both have called for the sanctions to be lifted.

\* 16<sup>th</sup> Jan: day of action against sanctions meeting outside Westminster Abbey at 1pm. 0117 9141873 www.welcome.to/voicesuk

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## SchNEWS in brief

This Friday (12) there's a **London Underground** meeting at the Button Factory, Hardess Street off Herne Hill Road, (Nearest tube Brixton). 7pm followed by discussion on actions for the forthcoming May Day. Tel 07989 451 096. www.freespeech.org/mayday2k \*\* Also at the Button Factory on Saturday (13) Short'n'Curlys, Intensivecare, PAIN, Runnin' Riot and Blakelock are all playing a benefit for **No Platform** anti-fascist network this 9 pm until late. £3.50/£2.50 concs. www.antifa.net/noplatform \*\* Still on the anti-fash tip the Kate Sharpley Library have released an inspiring new booklet called **Bash The Fascist**. Its a recollection of battles against the nazis between the mid 80s to mid 90s. Just send £1.50 to the Kate Sharpley Library, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX\*\* Couple of actions against the inauguration of George W. next Saturday (20). There will be a picket in support of **Mumia Abu-Jamal**, the African American Journalist on death row in the USA for 19 years. It's outside the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, London 11am – 1pm, while **The Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases** will be stepping up their campaign following Bush's recently announced star wars plans. They will be outside Menwith Hill spy base, near Harrogate, Yorkshire. 01943 466405 www.gn.apc.org/cndyorks/caab/ \*\* Help is urgently needed to save 74 mature trees in **Wembley** from the chop. They're going to make way for... you guessed it housing! 020 8902 3530 zerinetata@hotmail.com\*\* **SCHWOOPS**. The web address for Kent Against a Radioactive Environment (K.A.R.E) in the last SchNEWS should have read http://kare.enviroweb.org/ \*\* **Bloody Sunday- Let the Truth be Told March** from Victoria Embankment, Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1pm, followed by rally at University of London and a social in the evening 020 8442 8778 \*\* Brighton's pirate **Radio4A** takes to the airwaves this weekend, 106.6FM, www.freespeech.org/radio4a\*\*There will be no **Glastonbury Festival** this year following fears over overcrowding at the event due to all you naughty people jumping the fence \*\* Regular SchNEWS readers will be delighted Vincent Bethell has escaped custody by the skin of his teeth, though his claim in his defence that Subbutto has naked streakers is a bit much!

## POSITIVE SchNEWS

This year's **Pedal Power Convention** will again take place at the RISC centre in Reading on Sunday 4th February from midday until 6pm. There will be pedal powered music, Children's Pedal Generators and all sorts of DIY energy generators from Campaign for Real Events, Coltech, CREAT and others. Now is the time to start building your rig for this year's festivals - come and talk to the experts first. Details on www.c-realevents.demon.co.uk

## International Briefs

On January 1<sup>st</sup>. Czech TV workers for the state-owned channel went on strike, occupying the TV studios in protest at the appointment of an ultra-right wing director. People showed their support, when an amazing 100,000 people turned out to protest in Prague. STOP PRESS: the director has resigned, the strike continues... \*\*15,000 striking bank workers in South Korea took to the streets in protest at their government's unpopular financial reforms. Their protest was met with a violent response from 6,000 police. www.labournet.org \*\* People of the **Narmada Valley**, India, were celebrating last month at the news that US based Ogdan Corporation are to withdraw their funding from the Maheshwar Dam. www.narmada.org

## Inside SchNEWS

\*Mayday prisoner Michael Collins has been moved, his new address is Michael Collins FR303, HMP Elmley, Church Road, Eastchurch, Sheerness, Kent, ME12 4AY. Apparently he can't receive any subversive material including SchNEWS!

\*Marcellos Gallegos is a MayDay Prisoner who came to this country from Ecuador a year ago to seek asylum. He is due to be released soon but may face deportation as the authorities probably won't appreciate his conviction. Letters (in Spanish) would be appreciated, Marcellos Gallegos DN8220, HMP Wandsworth, PO Box 757 Heathfield Road, London, SW18 3HS.

\* Protest outside Home Office Minister Paul Boateng's Surgery to publicise the case of **Mark Barnsley**, on the 20<sup>th</sup>, 9.15am, Harlesden Library, London. Mark was imprisoned for 12 years after being beaten up by a gang of students.

## Away in a Manger

Unlike us lazy British activists who hang up our black clothes for the festive season, Belgian activists managed to stay right on the ball. A group calling themselves "Operation Jesus 2000" kidnapped nineteen statues of baby Jesus, from right under the nose of the onlooking Mary. The stunt was designed to show how Jesus would be greeted by the Belgian authorities if he arrived today, after fleeing persecution from the nasty King Herod. The Belgian authorities have now scrapped direct cash payments to asylum seekers, to try and stop what they see as a flood of immigrants into the country. All the statues have now been resurrected. www.jesus2000.be

## RHUBARB DAY OF ACTION

There are more national awareness days than there are slots in the calendar – 460 at the last count. So, to help out all those poor public relations companies SchNEWS brings you a new column to give more exposure to some of the best ones. And we start off with **National Rhubarb Day** (Sunday 14). And no, we're not making this up.

## ...and finally...

SchNEWS thought it was surely a piss-take when we saw an advert for the annual WorldAware Business Awards where businesses compete for the prestigious "Shell Award for Sustainable Development", and "The Rio Tinto Award for Long-term Commitment". But the awards are real, which saves us the job of making stuff up- though we couldn't come up with anything grimmer if we tried. This year's SchNEWS awards for Corporate hypocrisy, though, has to go to Tesco's, (that well known friendly local shop) who funded a meeting at the Labour Party Conference called "Renewing Democracy, Rebuilding Communities". Cor blimley what ever will they think of next? McDonald's sponsoring Keep Britain Tidy Week (oh they already do!!).

\* Congratulations to the winners of the WorldAware's Innovation Award, Roke Manor Research, who have produced a low cost, life saving landmine detector. www.worldaware.org.uk

\* For more on this sort of stuff read the meticulously researched 'Captive State' by George Monbiot (Macmillan)

## disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers if they try and get hold of our organ we'll just say know. Hon-est