



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! ITS YER MOULDY

SchNEWS

Printed and Published in Brighton by Justice?



Fri 26th January 2001

<http://www.schnews.org.uk/>

Issue 291 Free/Donation

LAW OF THE LAB

"Practically speaking, all animal experiments are untenable on a scientific basis, for they possess no statistical validity or reliability whatsoever. They merely perform an alibi function for pharmaceutical companies, who hope to protect themselves thereby from legal liability." Herbert and Margot Stiller, 'Vivisection and Vivisector'

Last week showed just how far governments are prepared to go to protect private business interests from campaigners who expose their unethical practices. Science Minister Lord Sainsbury stepped in to shore up the sinking vivisection agency Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS), while Tony Blair underlined the company's "right to conduct legitimate research" as the government pressured the Royal Bank of Scotland to extend the company's overdraft and forked out an extra £1 million to help the Cambridgeshire police protect the company's laboratories. If only Britain's public transport, organic farming, and alternative energy industries received such commitment.

HLS's appalling cruelty to animals has been exposed 3 times in the past ten years by undercover researchers. In 1997 the Channel 4 'Country-side Undercover' programme caught HLS staff red-handed on film punching animals and falsifying data with one worker admitting on tape "You can wipe your ass on that data."

Despite last weeks rescue from a secretive US-based financial backer (who SchNEWS predicts won't remain anonymous for very long), HLS are still in deep shit. The Daily Telegraph's less than compelling advice for anyone thinking of buying shares in the company is "One for the brave or the mad". The Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) campaigners sure ain't going to go away in a hurry, promising "If anyone is reading this and considering bailing out HLS, be warned. We are prepared for a long fight, and while our goal is HLS, we will take on anyone who gets in our way."

So why is the government so keen on backing a company widely seen as the dregs of the capitalist barrel? On the surface they talk about preventing business and jobs from being lost if HLS and similar companies are driven out of "legitimate" scientific research which will result in the medical breakthroughs needed to save lives. In reality HLS are a commercial contract laboratory who carry out experiments for big business clients from all over the world. A

A lot of this work is tests on the toxicity of new paints, detergents, adhesives, solvents and other consumer products. SchNEWS wonders just how many lives a new brand of bathroom cleaner is going to save?

Tony Blair says the government is "on the side of science" over animal research. However, much of today's medical research is directed towards treatments for 'lifestyle' diseases such as cancer or into new brands of headache tablets, anti-depressants, and appetite suppressants. Often these drugs don't actually cure patients – they just alleviate the symptoms of an illness. And while we're talking about saving lives, the drugs companies spend only a fraction of their research budgets on cures for really big killers such as malaria and sleeping sickness which infect people with no money who live in far away parts of the world.

How much effort is going into promoting low-cost traditional methods of healing which aren't based around the use of chemical drugs, such as Chinese medicine which have been applied successfully for thousands of years? As usual, Tony is talking baloney and this has nothing at all to do with saving lives – just allowing big business to carry on as usual developing new products to part the sick from their money and using junk science to hoodwink the public.

BARBARIC & USELESS

"Vivisection is barbaric, useless, and a hindrance to scientific progress," says Dr Werner Hartinger, German Chief Surgeon, which is not surprising when you consider how different humans are from laboratory animals such as cats, dogs, and marmosets. You don't need to have a PhD in applied biochemistry to be able to work out that if drugs can have different effects on different people, they will also have different effects on different species. The Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments and the RSPCA have reported that in 92% of experiments the use of animals does not provide any additional relevant information whatsoever about drug toxicity. Alternatives to animal experiments using cell cultures, artificial medical systems, and mathematical and computer models do exist, but the government would rather bale out HLS than force the medical in-

Crap Arrests of the Week

For having a piss. A young reveller was recently arrested after answering a call of nature against a bush outside a house party in America. Surely a case of over zealous cops taking the piss(er).

For Raising a Flag! A protestor at Bush's Inauguration was arrested for raising an anarchist flag at the Navy Memorial.

dustry to use more humane research methods.

Last week Mark Matfield of the Research Defence Society, the organisation that represents vivisectionists, asked: "Do you want to have a biotech industry in this country or not?" It's time to show the vivisectionists that if biotechnology means the unnecessary killing and torture of animals, the answer is simply NO.

* Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty 0121 632 6460 www.welcome.to/shac

* Demo against Huntingdon Sun, Feb 11th. Meet noon at Christ Church School, Rickmansworth Rd (A404) two mins from M25 J18

* Recommended reading: "Secret Suffering: Inside a British Laboratory" by Sarah Kite. Details 8 months undercover work in Huntingdon, available from British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection 0207 700 4888 www.HelpTheDogs.org

CLAMPING DOWN

Protests against HLS have attracted massive support, so guess what Labour's answer has been. In response to calls for action from the vivisection industry, Jack 'Boots' Straw wants to pass new laws to clamp down on troublesome campaigners. Just how many laws do they want? The police can already stop protests using the Public Order Acts, the Criminal Justice Acts, the Criminal Damage Act, the Harassment Act, the Interfering in Fat Cats Making Money Act, numerous trade union laws, and long-standing legislation outlawing obstruction, conspiracy, and breach of the peace (OK, we made one of them up). Even Ann Widdicombe has raised concerns about the human rights implications of the proposed new laws! And coming soon is the Terrorism Act (see SchNEWS 268) which one MP described as "potentially turning activist movements into terrorist movements".

* The Terrorism Act comes into force on Feb 19th. Call 01273 298192 for more info or <http://go.to/ta2000>

NO CHOKE

How would you feel if you knew that over the coming weekend your health would be seriously at risk, hospital admissions would increase and sufferers of heart and lung conditions could face premature death? You may have missed it, but these were precisely the conditions over much of Britain last weekend.

The dangerous concentration of traffic and power station pollutants, brought on by the high pressure of the previous week resulted in the worst air pollution incident since 1991. A recent study by economists at St Andrews University revealed that air pollution is responsible for up to 19,500 premature deaths a year in Britain alone.

* Climate change is high on the political agenda, following last year's failed negotiations at the Hague and the publication of a three year report by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change. The report, written by 639 authors, paints a bleak picture and serves as a harsh warning for the future of the planet. It concluded that human activity was primarily responsible for global warming and that the scale of the damage would be significantly higher than first estimated. Temperatures and sea levels will continue to rise and ice sheets will shrink for thousands of years, even when the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere has eventually been stabilised. It is hoped the report will add some strength to the implementation of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol of reducing greenhouse emissions, which is due to be discussed later this year. Apparently the US is trying to delay the talks because they are not ready yet!

* Mass destruction of the Amazon rainforest looks on the cards thanks to a huge 'regeneration' plan. 'Advance Brazil', would see the construction of roads, railways, waterways and hydroelectric dams over a seven year period. Aimed at connecting the inhabitants of the rainforest to the populated areas of Brazil, the plan would leave 28% of the forest destroyed, 28% untouched and the rest with varying degrees of destruction. "If these development plans go through, we'll lose the largest remaining wilderness on Earth...And that doesn't even consider the enormous impacts on the carbon cycle, global climate and greenhouse warming," said Scott Bergen, a scientist at Oregon State University.

* Rising Tide have called for March 21 to be a day of international action against climate change. Coinciding with the International Day Against Racism, the Season Of Carbon Action will be launched and groups and individuals are asked to organise their own actions. www.risingtide.nl

SPOR SQUATTERS

The vault emptied, doors flung wide, the un-Co-Operative Bank in Ship Street, Brighton, and Sprouting Shrooms. Spor have a community space for fun, freedom and creative explorations of solutions to global injustice.

There are art installations, videos and lots of info. This Saturday (27) has a climate change theme, with talks and action ideas from 1pm. Lots of kidz events: kids forum theatre in the morning, juggling in the afternoon and story telling later. There are also workshops on Forest Gardening (3-4pm) Alternative Education (5pm), Biodiesel (5pm), Self help housing (6.30pm). Radio 4A have a workshop at 1pm and will be broadcasting live from 8pm on 106.6FM. On Sunday there will be more videos and workshops. Details 01273 321112 www.spor.org.uk

Subscribe!

Keep SchNEWS FREE! 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

NO CHOKE TWO

Climate Change Campaigners held an 'Inauguration Day' Protest last Saturday at the U.S. Embassy, London, to protest against the U.S. wrecking the Climate Talks in the Hague and Bush's links with oil companies. Protests will continue every Saturday 1-4pm at the US Embassy. 0208 533 7274 www.goatbyte.net/climatedemo

* Farnborough based TAG Aviation have recently secured permission for the expansion of Farnborough Airport. Previously the MOD owned airport served as a training ground for it's aviation and aerospace research body, it is set to become a large regional airport serving the European business community. The development will result in the loss of 170 acres of a SSSI, the destruction of endangered and protected species and the removal of the tops of three hills. That's not to mention the increased noise and air pollution for the residents of Farnborough. A college, old people's home and numerous houses will now be situated dangerously close to the flight path. Green MEP Caroline Lucas has lend her support to the campaign and succeeded in winning approval in European Parliament of her report on aviation with calls environmental tax on EU flights, noise pollution reduction guidelines and a tax on aviation kerosene amongst other measures. To get involved contact North Hants Green Party, 49 York Road, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 3JQ, 01252 653144

* January 30-31 will see the Amsterdam Hilton host an interesting conference entitled 'Aviation and the Environment'. Topics for discussion include 'Airlines-The Sustainable Future', 'The Control of Emissions-Finding Solutions Market-Based Options' and 'Sustaining the Air Transport Industry'. If you can't make it you can buy the documentation material for the bargain price of £330 plus VAT!

* 4-5 Feb Demo against the opening of the 2nd runway at Manchester airport. More details 0161-226-6814

SHEIK IT UP

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) got together this week to decide where they're gonna hold their next round of trade talks. Not that there was much choice as after the kicking they got in Seattle and Geneva, hardly any of their 140 member countries were actually willing to have them. Except Qatar!

Here's your quick SchNEWS guide to activities that are frowned on by the government of Qatar: political demonstrations are a no no; there are severe limits of freedom of assembly and freedom of association; political organisations critical of the Arab government are banned; private clubs must be registered with government so they can be monitored by security forces.

A spokesman for the WTO reckon however that this doesn't mean opposition will not be heard, as they're going to make sure that Qatar will allow NGO's approved by the WTO to attend. The meeting is set for the 5-9th November.

* STOP PRESS: SchNews has heard unconfirmed reports that those naughty anarchist black block who spoil things for the rest of us god-fearing protestors are 'over the moon' with the decision as they will be able to cover themselves in black veils and dress as Muslim women. Off with their heads! For advice on how to get into Qatar see SchNews 247.

SchNEWS in brief

A new Norwich collective has taken on editing the **Earth First! Action Update**, details of yer actions can be sent to: EF!AU, PO Box 487, Norwich, NR2 3AL, actionupdate@gn.apc.org.

** On 3rd March the **National Front** is having a demo at Nottingham Prison, Perry Road. There will be a counter demonstration to stop them spreading their racist bullshit. If you want to go contact Nafa@veggies.org.uk. ** **University of East London Dayschool** on political activism and social movements, Feb 3rd at the Docklands Campus. This free event focuses on South Africa, also with a speaker from International Union of Sex Workers, indigenous rights and Venezuelan constitution, Kashmiri refugees, speakers on carnival, samba bands, human revolutions. Event 10:30-4:30 bring your own grub. j.burnett@uel.ac.uk

A (mouldy) MESSAGE FROM SchNews TOWERS

There's water pouring through the roof, mould on the walls, 3 out of our 4 computers very ill, no web or email access, and mice in our bin - but somehow in the face of adversity we've got an issue of SchNEWS out this week. However, next week we are taking a break to repair the damage. If you've got any spare PC's, printers or a dehumidifier then feel free to donate them to us.

* Don't forget the SchNEWS Training Day Wednesday 7th February 12 noon onwards. To book your place and get directions ring the office (and remember its National DoughNut Week so bring a couple of jammy ones to share around)

* We're still looking for people to help put SchNEWS on the web every Thursday evening. If you want to learn how to do it, we'll teach you cos we're nice like that.

...and finally...

In their attempts to spread their brand further all over the world Nike now will personalise your shoes. So Jonah Peretti asked for the word "sweatshop" to be stitched into his shoes. However, he was told that his order was cancelled because he had used "inappropriate slang".

Jonah pointed out that sweatshop means "a shop or factory in which workers are employed for long hours at low wages and under unhealthy conditions" and its proper English, innit! And that the Nike iD program is "about freedom to choose and freedom to express who you are." Nike didn't agree and said that they may reject personifications if they just don't want that word on their products. Jonah eventually had to choose another iD but asked instead if they could send him a colour snapshot of a typical ten-year-old Vietnamese girl who makes Nike shoes? He received no reply. So if you can think of any words you'd like to have on yer Nike's go to www.nike.com, but remember kids asking for "inappropriate slang" words just isn't clever.

* No Sweat is a new UK based campaign against - sweatshops. They have already worked with Manchester United supporters around the Nike shirt deal. Actions are planned in the next couple of weeks. Contact them on 07958 556756 www.nosweat.org.uk

disclaimer

SchNews all readers not to be a cut above the rest.