



wake up! It's yer shopping as the bombs are dropping

SchNEWS

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DESERT STORM

Next month's World Trade Organisation (WTO) meeting takes place in the protest friendly desert of Qatar – with America and its allies using the 'war on terrorism' to try and push forward a new world trade round.

The WTO is the world's most powerful trade organisation, backed by its big business mates to eliminate 'barriers to trade' (annoying little things like environmental laws, workers rights...) and push for the privatisation of everything they can get their grubby mitts on. But since the Seattle protests two years ago (SchNEWS 240) the WTO and 'free' trade in general has been facing a bit of a P.R. crisis. Since the attacks on America however, free trade has become, like shopping, a patriotic duty. According to US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick, trade "promotes the values at the heart of this protracted struggle." Meanwhile one New York Times commentator equated freedom fighting with free trade, explaining that the traders who died were targeted as "not merely symbols but also practitioners of liberty.... They work hard, if unintentionally, to free others from constraints. This makes them, almost by default, the spiritual antithesis of the religious fundamentalist, whose business depends on a denial of personal liberty in the name of some putatively higher power." We've heard of merchant bankers being called *other* things but freedom fighters is a new one to SchNEWS!

As for the protestors that have dogged international conferences ever since Seattle...well in the eyes of some of the protestors' 'war' against capital and globalisation is no better than Bin Laden.

While dismissing the protestors, the majority of Western media has kept conspicuously silent about the stance taken by the poorest countries of the world. Tanzanian President, Benjamin Mkapa, speaking on behalf of the 41 Least Developed Countries said the group opposes a new trade round and that the "rules of the global economy and trade that end up making poor countries poorer, instead of narrowing the gap between the rich and poor, are rules that Tanzania has opposed and will continue to oppose with all its strength as co-ordinator of least developed countries." Still, what do the poor countries matter? At the end of last month, the WTO's General Council put up a draft declaration in which everything the rich countries wanted out of a new trade round was trumpeted while all demands of developing countries were ignored.

Trading Blockheads

Every day 37,000 people die from diseases such as AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Most of these deaths are in poor countries where many life-saving drugs are unaffordable as they are patented under rules set by the WTO. At a meeting last month, over fifty developing countries proposed to reinterpret these rules to guarantee the right of governments to have access to affordable medicines. This was blocked by the US and Switzerland who issued a statement which, surprise surprise, mimicked the well-rehearsed views of corporate pharmaceutical companies.

The rich nations are going all gung-ho about expanding the General Agreement on the Trades in Services (GATS - SchNEWS 286) where water, education, hospitals, etc. are sold off to the lowest bidder. In the last two years there's been massive global resistance to privatisation of these services. But as one WTO official says GATS help "overcome domestic resistance to change" meaning once a country signs up to GATS and opens a service to WTO rules, it is practically impossible to go back on any agreement whatever the protests.

Meanwhile Sri Lanka has dropped its plans to ban the import of genetically modified food after a 'request' from the WTO, telling them the ban was against free trade rules. This came after pressure from the US, worried about its 4% of agricultural goods it exports to Sri Lanka. They argued that the ban had no 'scientific basis', despite concerns about GMOs being raised by scientific bodies from the World Health Organisation, to America's own Environmental Protection Agency. Many nations also have a moral basis for setting limits on GMOs. For instance, the insertion of a human gene into the fish tilapia makes it unacceptable to practitioners of some religions in Sri Lanka. Pete Riley of Friends of the Earth said "Bush's administration have once again been shown to dance to the tune of the biotech companies in lobbying for WTO action against Sri Lanka. It is time the US government and the WTO understood that individual countries have laws which reflect their culture and environment and are not merely satellites of the USA".

The protests that shut down the last WTO meeting in Seattle helped inspire a growing worldwide anti-capitalist movement. Now governments across the globe are using knee-jerk terrorism laws that will also come in handy to target protestors. Capitalist commentators are saying that the

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For taking pictures! A man was arrested at a recent Faslane Peace camp demo in Glasgow for having the cheek of taking pictures of a protestor being arrested. Police nicked the unhappy snapper, took his film out then smashed the camera.

time has passed for the protestors with the Financial Times suggesting (*hoping*) that the anti-globalisation bandwagon has been derailed "With America (and Britain) on the offensive, the counter capitalist movement is in retreat."

With the WTO meeting in the protest-free country of Qatar it's time to leave the world's elite to bake in the desert and take the struggle back to our communities.

* The west and WTO officials, worried about their safety since the bombing of Afghanistan, are trying to push Qatar into agreeing to move the meeting to Singapore.

* 'Free trade: trick or treat for the world's poor?' Westminster Central Hall, Storey's Gate, London. 3rd Nov. Speakers include Trevor Ngwane (Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee & Anti-Privatisation Forum, South Africa) and Kathy-Ann Brown (Trade negotiator for the Caribbean at the WTO) 6-8pm. free but to book a place contact World Development Movement 020-7737-6215 www.wdm.org.uk

* Trade Justice Parade 3rd Nov. Start at 12.30pm from Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, (Imperial War Museum), Lambeth Road, London for a march to Trafalgar Sq. 07870-823485 www.tradejusticemovement.org.uk

* Global Day of Action against the WTO, 9th Nov. "Work stoppages? Street parties? Public meetings? Squatted info-centres? What will you do?" Action ideas: Peoples Global Action www.agp.org. Manchester Earth First! 0161-2266814 manceff@nematode.freereserve.co.uk. London Reclaim the Streets, PO Box 9656, London N4 4JY; 020-7281-4261 www.reclaimthestreets.net

* Keep up to date with WTO goings on, check out Third World Network www.twinside.org.sg

EARLY CLOSING

Processions of drumming, dancing, bank-window-breaking, American-flag-burning and chanting protestors in Toronto successfully disrupted a day's trading on October 16th in the city's financial district. Despite a dozen arrests prior to the protest, and a heavy police presence, several thousand protestors from over 80 different groups gathered at five in the morning (which puts all us lazy British activists to shame) and blockaded streets in the city centre to protest against the policies of the Conservative government. Protesters went off into several different 'snake marches' after they had all met up, making it much harder for the cops to keep everyone penned in. Offices were empty at 9am, as financial workers were held up on their way to work by large slow vehicles on main routes, with many being advised by their employers not to go to work. More info: <http://ontario.indymedia.org> and www.ocap.ca

WAR AGAINST WHAT?

While the world is busy watching Afghanistan getting bombed back in to the Stone Age, another American-sponsored war has reached its 1st anniversary. In autumn 2000 Bill Clinton authorised the start of Plan Colombia, (SchNEWS 273) a war supposedly against drugs, but which has had far reaching effects on the campesinos (peasant farmers) way of life, not to mention the bio-diversity of the Amazon Basin. Plan Colombia is the US Government's term for: (a) spraying rebel held areas with an extremely poisonous pesticide called Roundup Ultra to wipe out the coca plant. (Coca is a large part of campesino culture - the equivalent to drinking tea in England. Traditionally eaten raw, it's a valuable source of vitamins A, D and E and a cure for altitude sickness), and (b) to fund the Colombian military and right wing paramilitary to the tune of \$1.3bn to fight against the rebel guerrilla army FARC who control 40% of the country. Trade unionists, human rights activists and campesinos living in the rebel held area have become victims of this dirty war, killed by death squads - decapitation by chainsaw is a common form of 'punishment' used. Because of these atrocities and the poisoning of their land, 315,000 people have been displaced in the last year.

Roundup Ultra, made by our old friends Monsanto, is a stronger version of Roundup, a cocktail of pesticides including glyphosate, cosmoflux and POEA. Normal Roundup has been shown to be hazardous to humans, the environment and animals, Roundup Ultra has even more dire effects with campesinos complaining of skin infections, hair loss, headaches, nausea, vomiting, and who knows what in the future, because this stronger version contains untested additives. Roundup was designed to be sprayed in small doses at ground level, not hundreds of gallons from the air.

'War against drugs' is a smoke screen to hide the real intentions. The U.S. imports more oil from Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador than from the entire Persian Gulf and 80% of Colombia's oil reserves remain unexplored. As Stan Goff, a former U.S. special forces intelligence sergeant put it "The purpose of Plan Colombia is defending the operations of Occidental, BP and Texas Petrol and securing control of future oil fields...the main interest of the U.S. is oil." So it's no surprise that oil companies were pushing hard for the U.S. to provide military 'aid' to protect their interests in this country. Colombia has always had a history of strong grassroots resistance to neo-liberalism and that's what Plan Colombia is out to stop. For more info: www.narconews.com

Pull The Other One Up

Sometimes the law works on our side, especially for cases of people who trash GM crops. Since Greenpeace GM crop-pullers were found 'not guilty' of theft and criminal damage by a jury, the police and Crown Prosecution Service have been pursuing charges of Aggravated Trespass instead. This can only be tried by a Magistrate, and they tend to ignore "public interest defences", (e.g. GM crops cause pollution - so it's in the public interest to pull them up). But a High Court judge has ruled that there can't be any aggravation if no-one is working in the field. There are about 20 other crop-pullers awaiting charges, SchNEWS wonders what the Crown Prosecution Service will pick to do next. To find out where your nearest GM test site is - www.geneticsaction.org.uk/testsites or contact Genetic Engineering Network 020-7272-1586.

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CARBON COPY

Pssst! Wanna buy some pollution? At the upcoming climate talks in Marrakech, Morocco (Oct. 29th - Nov. 9th), world leaders, big business and NGOS will create a new market of 'carbon credits' in global warming pollution. The smokescreen behind this is that it will enable more cost-effective market driven measures to be developed to combat global warming. But with the trade in credits worth US\$13 trillion a year, its just another piece in the global capitalist babylon jigsaw. Countries with the greatest economic power will protect their own gas-guzzling ways, while cash-strapped poor countries will sell their credits. In future these countries may not be able to develop their industries without buying up pollution credits from the rich guys - reinforcing economic inequalities. It's not just all the work of the oil companies - international accountancy firms are rubbing their greasy palms in anticipation at facilitating the trade in emissions.

What about the environment? This seems to have been forgotten. A cut of 60-90% in greenhouse gas emissions is needed to stave off climate change, the pathetic 5.2% cut agreed at the last meeting will not be changed.

It is important to show resistance to this privatisation of our atmosphere. Rising Tide are calling for local actions to highlight climate change: street theatre, car-free-zones, paint cycle lanes, target your local gas guzzler firm, airline or branch of international accountancy firms like PricewaterhouseCoopers and Arthur Andersons, and demonstrate the effects of flooding. Info and ideas see www.risingtide.nl, UK contacts: www.risingtide.org.uk, 0113-262-9365.

* Changes to the way electricity is bought and sold in the UK have led to the withdrawal of a number of Combined Heat and Power plants (where excess heat from power plants is used to heat industrial areas, leading to a reduction in pollution). Also wind-farms have had their income cut by up to 60%, this is affecting the government's own target of producing 10% of electricity from renewable sources, it is currently a pathetic 2%.

* Reclaim the Streets have produced an excellent spoof leaflet about BP, called Beyond Petroleum? For a copy send an SAE to Reclaim the Streets.

Positive SchNEWS

Did you know that £6.5 billion worth of energy is wasted annually in the UK - £110 for every person in the country. To try and sort this out next week is Energy Awareness Week (27th-31st). For some hot energy saving tips and a free home energy action pack, call the Energy Efficiency hotline 0845 727 7200 or check out www.saveenergy.co.uk

Brighton Briefs

Anarcho Feminist Brighton Health Collective's first ever **Herbal Co-op** stall, at the Unemployed Centre, Tilbury Place, Fri 26th Oct 10.30-1.00, then every Friday after. www.geocities.com/anarchofeministhealth** **SchWhoops!** BUDD's meeting about the **Sainsbury's** development at the **Brighton Station site** will be in the Brighthelm Centre, North Road (not Church Street), 24th Oct. 7.30pm. ** **Education for the 21st Century** - Democratic approaches in education, with Yaacov Hecht (founder of democratic school in Hadera, Israel, & now runs the Institute for Democratic Education. Linked to proposals for a democratic school in Brighton. 7-9pm, 22nd Oct., Academy for Creative Training, 8-10 Rock Place, Kemp Town, Brighton, Tickets: Ian Cunningham 01273-703691, cunning@pavilion.co.uk

SchNEWS in brief

London RTS want contributions for a free newspaper about the 'war on terrorism' the West's lust for oil, racism, the repression of our movement and how people are trying to come up with a radical response. Send ideas, comments, material, cash etc. to them (details on front page) shells@gn.apc.org ** **Sunday (21) Mass Sit-down for Afghan aid/against U.S. bombing.** Meet Temple Place, London, 1p.m. 07947839992 ** Check out and distribute the excellent '**Against War and Terrorism**' at www.struggle.ws/issues/war/pamOCT01.html ** **COPEX** have their annual British arms fair selling Internal Security, Riot Control and 'Less Than Lethal Munitions', Sandown Racecourse, Oct. 30th - Nov 1st, Campaign Against the Arms Trade will protest against this, meet 30th Oct. 10am, Esher Train Station. Contact 020-7281-0297, www.caat.org.uk ** An old London Greenpeace leaflet '**Why the Media Sucks**' has been updated and is hot off the press at this Saturday's **Anarchist Bookfair** (10am-7pm Camden Centre, Euston Road, London). Donations wanted to help print '**Verbal Abuse**' about government and media abuse of the words 'terrorism' and 'democracy'. Offers of help to hamsters@talk.to *** **March: Saturday 27th, Gloucester** "to demand a full enquiry before we are all wiped out by large faceless conglomerates who are rapidly claiming our land and heritage." Meet 12:30 pm. at The Park.

...and finally...

After Seattle, Prague and Genoa, watch out for the 'Walk for Capitalism,' apparently happening in cities all around the world on December 2nd, or D2, as they've it called. The pin-stripe brigade will take to the streets to proclaim their love for the free market economy. Probably. Fat cats will carry coloured ribbons to symbolise different strands of the 'get rich quick' theory: Navy blue - the rule of law, justice and the ideas of the American founding fathers; sky blue (get this) - creativity, benevolence and happiness!!! Since when did capitalism promote this stuff? We reckon somebody's pulling our plonkers but check it out for yourselves at <http://walkforcapitalism.org>

Meanwhile, U.S. corporations are telling people to march out to the stores and buy to take their minds off the war. An advert for gym equipment has a woman dressed in a leotard solemnly saying that America should be strong in this time of crisis... and what better way to keep strong than to buy one of our wonderful work out machines at only \$399.95.

General Motors have brought out an advert showing an endless open road. "C'mon America, buy some wheels and burn some gas...Forget about free speech and the freedom of religion. The greatest freedom is the freedom to drive...the freedom to escape...the freedom to just get up and go." But it's not all going their way. On the 23rd November there's going to be another 'Buy Nothing Day.' As Adbusters say "This year celebrants in more than 50 countries will opt not to spend any money for 24 hours, but instead to enjoy pranks, parades, street parties, credit card cut-ups - and some quality time with friends and family. Why not join us?" SchNEWS asks how long before this unpatriotic bunch are locked up for good. <http://adbusters.org/campaigns/bnd/>

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all wannabe terrorists who wanna take a walk on the wild side come to our Training Day next Wednesday* Learn how to dodge vegan biscuits, avoid exploding puns, risk viral infections, death by a thousand licked stamps and even RSI (Repetitive SchNEWS Injury). It'll make an activist of you. Honest. * (To book your place call the office now.)