



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER SPECULATING

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ETHICAL CLEANSING CO-OP SHOPPED OVER 'ETHICAL BANKING'

"CIS views this as an unacceptable position for an energy company, and one that could harm long-term shareholder value." - CIS' greenwash team give ExxonMobil a firm ticking off for climate crimes then increase their investment.

Two weeks ago (See SchNEWS 537) we told you about the Co-operative Bank's decision to sneakily invest in Glaxosmithkline and Vodafone - and the mail bag was soon full of requests from readers for more info. Well, as yer ever-obliging newsheet...

Since 1992, the Bank has supposedly followed an ethical investment policy which is supposed to offer people (all increasingly being forced to use bank accounts), somewhere environmentally friendly to stash their cash. In this promotion of 'capitalism-lite', the Co-op is joined by a handful of smaller banks like the Ecology Building Society and Triodos, but its preference for larger profits has led it to compete with the real bad guys at places like Barclays and NatWest. Co-op bosses have realised that they can't make profits big enough to impress City fat cats without dancing with the devil themselves and hence their decision to invest in Glaxo Smithkline and Vodafone.

The Co-op, proud sponsors of police propaganda show 'the Bill', says that it won't invest your cash in companies up to no good. The bank says it does not deal with companies that "participate in armaments, animal testing for cosmetics, nuclear power, tobacco or companies that operate in countries where human rights are disregarded." Co-op propagandists have been careful with their words as the statement does not prevent investment in companies that perform more general tests on animals and nor does it give much mention to how corporations should behave towards the environment. Not that their investment decisions actually meet the standards that have been set by their policy, anyway.

Their latest 'tax-efficient' investment promises great returns - without harming the environment, animals or other people. According to the bank you can enjoy "strong growth and a clear conscience" by opening a CIS Sustainable Leaders Trust investment. One of the reasons for the 'great return' is the decision to allow investment in Glaxo and Vodafone, two of the world's most profitable companies. A delve into the activities of these companies, though, leaves us wondering where the 'clear conscience' bit comes in.

Bank bosses are pretty chuffed with their pals in the world's largest pharma-

ceutical company, Glaxo. Anyone suggesting that anything about this profit-hungry transnational giant is 'ethical' is having a laugh. With a bit of spin however Glaxo become a centre of benevolence because they have "invested in research into treating HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB". They've also been "supplying vaccines to prevent illness". Err, sorry if we've got this one wrong, but isn't that what pharmaceutical companies should be doing: investigating the causes of disease and ways to cure them? More cheers are offered for the company's "discounted pricing policy for developing countries" and "ensuring good conduct in animal testing".

DIRTY MONEY

According to Factory Watch (www.foe.co.uk/factorywatch), Glaxo's chemical plant in Ulverston, Cumbria, is one of the most carcinogenic polluters in the UK. Well that's the environment covered. So what about animal testing? Well, Glaxo are Huntingdon Death Science's single largest customer, so 'nuff said there too. Then there's withholding lifesaving treatments from developing countries. Glaxo was one of thirty-nine major pharma companies which tried to prosecute the South African government for passing a law that allowed easy production and importation of 'generic' drugs for HIV. They didn't back down until 300,000 people from over 130 countries

TOP ASBO OF THE WEEK

For hunting dusters...

Finally a decent use has been found for the Anti-Social Behavioural Order - use it against those other rowdy bands of Burberry-wearing trouble-makers, the fox hunters. Three senior hunt members, in Stroud, were issued with their ASBO notices by Gloucestershire Police on March 25th. This was thanks to one local resident, who researched the application of ASBO rules to this most anti-social pursuit, following the CPS's blatant refusal to do anything about local hunts' repeated law-breaking.

Outraged Senior Hunt Master, Bob Cooper, explained how everyone's got it all wrong: "We run a trail hunt where we impregnate a piece of duster with live fox scent and trail that (quick moving those dusters!)... but every now and again the scent of a real fox is far stronger and the hounds come off the trail. When that happens we have to go like hell to get the hounds back..." (And smear themselves in the warm blood of another unintended kill, presumably). Mmm, that explains it...! SchNEWS wonders if sabs could train dogs to attack red coats and then go out in hunt areas and run 'trails', where they put the scent of upper-class twats on to dusters...

signed a petition against the action. Glaxo have also been at the forefront of legal attempts to enforce their patent rights under the World Trade Organisation's 'Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights' (TRIPS - see SchNEWS 420) laws. Despite the Indian government's attempts to control the spread of diseases, such as

continued overleaf...

LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, PRECARITÉ

As the French government clings onto the CPE employment laws which sparked national protests, the demonstrations are still in full swing, with continued blockades and occupations of campuses, roads, railways, shopping and town centres, and government offices across the country again each day this week. (see SchNEWS 537, 538).

This Tuesday saw another three million out on the streets nationally - following on from the same last week. There were big official marches as well as autonomous protests - where the unions and police joined forces to catch those who refused to disperse at the end - with hundreds arrested.

On Thursday there were national transport blockades with Paris train stations Saint-Lazare and Gare du Nord stopped, while in Caen high school pupils and students occupied rail tracks. Meanwhile high school kids paralysed the centre of Laval and in Brest the Chamber of Commerce was stormed by students, who closed entrances and threw eggs at police from the roof. In other words a typical day in today's France.

The CPE law may not go ahead, or be modified, but as Alternative Libertaire say "The strug-

gle against the CPE is only one element of the general struggle against precarity*." The government, media and unions will be doing everything to manipulate the protests so they don't broaden focus beyond the employment law (and quietly go home at 5pm), so fingers crossed that the countless autonomous groups who make up the protests will continue to 'be realistic and demand the impossible'. Momentum is high, and many groups have agreed to continue next week.

Our writer in Paris says "They aim at choking the whole national economy and target railways, post offices and factories."

Friday April 7th (today) is a national day of action in support of protesters arrested in March as well as making links with those arrested in the November the Paris banlieue riots (see SchNEWS 520).

* Detailed coverage at <http://libcom.org/blog/>
* SchNEWS Vocabwatch: **PRECARITY**: A condition of late capitalism where lack of job security and receding welfare has people living precarious lives financially and socially. See also www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precarity

ETHICAL CLEANSING *continued...*

AIDS by creating copy or 'generic' (i.e. cheaper) versions of commercially available drugs, TRIPS has encouraged corporations to call India a 'centre of commercial piracy', simply for trying to cure disease amongst its poverty stricken population.

People in developing countries represent 80% of the world's population yet they only account for 20% of worldwide medicine sales. "Of all annual health related research" says an Oxfam report on Glaxo from 2001, "only 0.2 per cent is spent on pneumonia, diarrhoea, and tuberculosis-three poverty related ailments which account for 18 per cent of the global disease burden."

And then there's Glaxo's interest in the weaponry biz... at least Chief Executive J.P. Garnier's, anyway. This £2.5 million-a-year corporate lackey also happens to sit on the board of arms manufacturer United Technologies, the maker of the Blackhawk helicopter and other assorted killing machines.

Vodafone, though, doesn't invest in the arms trade. The company 'only' supplies telephones to the British military and, after all, a quick glance over to Iraq tells us that British forces are a force for democracy and justice - and if they want to make a phone call to help them co-ordinate a bombing run targeted against a local water supply, or some civilian 'insurgency hotbed' then why not?

Vodafone also receives a co-operative pat on the back for "Investigating the impact of mobile phones on society and the environment." So now we know that we can't sll anymr and changing your phone once a year creates a bit of a rub-

bish problem. Nice one. Maybe Co-op bankers missed the bit about not investing in companies that trade in countries with poor human rights records, because Vodafone's nice little earner in Kuwait seems to have passed the ethical test. Despite the bank offering an "Amnesty International 'affinity' credit", bankers obviously haven't read the Kuwait section of AI's website. A whole range of human rights abuses are cited there, from arbitrary detention through to institutionalised sexism and curbs on freedom of expression.

The Co-op's not alone on this one though. Standard Life is proud to show off its ethical investment funds, even though they account for less than 1% of the company's business. Their UK Ethical account includes shares in Tesco, Vodafone, The Royal Bank of Scotland and (oil scumpany), Cairn Energy. Meanwhile, both Standard Life and Co-op's CIS throw cash at the big oil firms such as Shell, ExxonMobil, and Burma sanction-busting Total Oil (See SchNEWS 488).

But the Co-Op aren't just into damaging the Global South over here in the UK, Co-op customers have to pay £30 every time they go more than £1 overdraw which must do its bit for their annual £96m profit. Not forgetting the range of lovely services which could help you get your giro paid into a nice tax-exempt offshore account in the Channel Islands. If you're with the Co-op, have a look on their website under 'sustainable investing', read their 'investment criteria' and have a word with one of their financial advisers on 0845 850 0168. (Or maybe explore the ethical possibility of keeping your cash in a tin up the chimney)

BAA-HUMBUG

Unbridled joy as Heathrow Airport reaches its 60th birthday this month. To celebrate, a group of protesters from activist group 'Plane Stupid' crash-landed and blockaded the Heathrow Headquarters of the British Airports Authority (BAA). They locked on to the main office entrance, preventing employees from getting into work, generally disrupting the whole operation until the plod moved in to make a few arrests. Although Heathrow has reached retirement age, instead of being booted out of work and sent off home with a small pension and a bus pass, there are plans for yet more expansion. There'll be a new runway and extra use of existing ones which will raise flight levels from a mere 450,000 at the moment to over 700,000 in a few years time. BAA have issued a few homespun denials over the extent of the plans and promise a series of 'discussion forums'. BAA's commitment to consultation and open decision making becomes a little harder to swallow if we look at the recent history of collusion and deception by the company and various governments.

In 1980, the Tories approved Terminal 4 on the understanding that there would be a cap of 260,000 flights a year. The deal also stipulated that it would be the last development on the site. Later, in 1995, as BAA was seeking permission to build another terminal, they ruled out a third runway, writing in their company newspaper, Heathrow News, that they have "repeatedly said that 'There will be no third runway'." In 2001, Terminal 5 was given the go-ahead (See SchNEWS 322) on the condition that flight numbers at the airport did not exceed 480,000 a year. Within two years, the government proposed a third runway...

As 'Plane Stupid' spokesman, Joss Garman, explained, "Heathrow has grown from being a small local airport into a climate change factory. BAA's plan to expand the airport further puts them in the premier league of climate change criminals. BAA can be assured; today's action is just the start of our direct action campaign to stop airport expansion". More at www.planestupid.com and www.hacan.org.uk - a lobby group representing residents under the Heathrow flight paths.

* Live near Brighton? Find out more about the plans to expand Shoreham (sorry, Brighton City) airport in Rough Music www.roughmusic.org.uk/rm07.html#eight

There's no SchNEWS next week cos we're in solidarity with our French comrades and going on strike!

...and finally...

A group of anarchic golfers played around at Tracey Park golf club nr Bristol last week - and left the course a little under par. On the evening of Thursday 30th March, persons unknown dug up and knackered greens. Coincidentally, the next day other gentleman-only clubs for posh twats received letters from an anonymous group warning them they should cut their water use by 25%, return 10% of their greens to nature, and reverse any policies of wildlife control, such as poison or trapping. The sabotage was apparently committed as incentive to bring out the course managers' greener sides. Whilst we hope the action has gone a fair-way to bringing some attention to this pointlessly wasteful and destructive game, we but aren't holding our breath - golfers will presumably retreat to their secret bunkers... To pacify teed-off club owners, Police have responded by pledging more patrols. Apparently all eighteen holes of local courses are to be regularly walked by detectives, armed with non-lethal vigilante projectile devices, cunningly disguised as golf clubs and balls.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers... However you dress it up, merchant banking makes you blind. Honest!

SQUARING OFF

Protesters proved there is safety in numbers last weekend when between two and four thousand turned up for a "Naming the Dead" event in Parliament Square. Holding a four-hour "unauthorized" demonstration, in Parliament Square, and reading the names of 1,000 Iraqis who have died as a result of the invasion and occupation, demonstrators carried hundreds of placards and signs, giant puppets and banners. Despite the clear breach of Section 132 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (SOCPA), the police were unwilling, or unable, to make any arrests. This was the first mass act of civil disobedience against the occupation to take place in the UK since the 2003 invasion.

* **Helen John and Silvia Boyes** are the first known arrests in England, under Section 128 of SOPCA. This clause makes trespass at a few handpicked military sites (mainly US military and nuclear sites in the UK) a criminal offence, potentially carrying a 51 week prison sentence. The two women were arrested on Saturday 1st April 2006, after allegedly trespassing at NSA Menwith Hill. This was within hours of the new Act being brought into force, by the Ministry of Defence.

* **NSA Menwith Hill**, the United States spy base, near Harrogate in Yorkshire, illegally monitors telecommunications traffic, to and from Europe. Communications passing through Britain are intercepted by the base, including private telephone calls, faxes, emails and other communications

DAM SHAME

Medha Patkar, a leading campaigner to stop the Narmada Dam in India - who was eight days into a hunger strike - was arrested, this Wednesday night, for 'attempting to commit suicide', and taken to hospital to be forcibly treated, without her consent. Police clashed with protesters, stopping them from getting in, and arresting some on charges of rioting. Ms Patkar, who is the founder of the campaign against the building of the Narmada Dam in India, began the hunger strike in protest of the decision to further raise the height of the Sardar Sarovar Dam. The damming of the Narmada river involves over 3000 separate dams, and will displace millions of people.

* For more see www.narmada.org

SchNEWS in brief

London Anti-war Action Forum this Saturday 8th, 2-5pm, London Action Resource Centre, 62 Fieldgate Street, Whitechapel, London E1 1ES (nearest tube Aldgate East). ** **Iran: Secrets and Lies** - public meeting with Emily Johns & Milan Rai. 7.30pm, Tuesday 4 April, St Vincent's Centre, Carlisle Place, Victoria, SW1P 1NL. There's also a launch for Milan Rai's new book "7/7: The London Bombings, Islam and the Iraq War" 7-9pm, Wednesday 12 April, Friends Meeting House, 173 Euston Road, NW1 2BJ. ** **Castlemill boatyard** (See SchNEWS 527) is under imminent eviction alert. The campaign to save the Oxford canal's last boatyard, from the developers, is making a call out for help and equipment - See www.portmeadow.org for full 'wish list'. Contact boatyardeviction@yahoo.co.uk or phone the site office on 01865 55948. ** **Brighton Animal Action** are holding demos every Saturday and Sunday at 1pm - throughout April - outside Brighton Sealife Centre - protesting against plans to incarcerate seals and penguins. There will also be a big demo on Sat 15th April at the centre. For more, call 07787 953347. For more animal rights events see www.veggies.org.uk/arc.php ** **Bristle #21 is out.** Bristol's spikiest magazine has a new issue out focusing, this time, on the environment, with features about nuclear and renewable energy and how we're gonna keep the planet inhabitable. To get yours, send a cheque for £1.50 to Bristle c/o Kebele, 14 Robertson Rd, Bristol, BS5 6JY or see www.bristle.org.uk

NO OIL PAINTING

The Greenwash Guerillas paid a visit to the British Museum, on March 23rd, to join in with the celebrations accompanying the opening of the British Petroleum sponsored 'Michelangelo Drawings' exhibition. The day also happened to be the first anniversary of an explosion at BP's Texas City refinery, in which 15 people were killed. Demonstrators outfitted security guards, unfurled a banner reading 'BP sponsors climate chaos' across the front steps of the building's entrance, and later set up camp outside the main gates, warning the gathered public of the threat to truth that is BP's propaganda machine.

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