



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE...

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SMOTHER EARTH

WITH KILL-OR-CURE TECHNO-FIXES FOR CLIMATE CHANGE PLANNED...

“Let’s quit the debate about whether greenhouse gases are caused by mankind or by natural causes; let’s just focus on technologies that deal with the issue.”

– George W. Bush, May 25, 2006

So that’s it – after years of denial (crucial years when a difference could perhaps have been made) global elites are ready to admit that climate change is a reality. But now the challenge has become how to continue with the headlong consumerist rush - delivering that all important economic growth and an i-phone for every inhabitant of planet earth. Yes, the climate’s going to change and sea levels may rise, but if we just let the markets adapt and provide profit-making ‘solutions’ to the new conditions, business might still be able to carry on as normal. Alright! In fact there’s loads of scope for money-making in flogging ineffective carbon-offsetting schemes, encouraging everyone to buy a greener version of everything they’ve already got and, who knows, tourism might be boosted by a more Mediterranean climate! We could call this ‘Plan A’ - the approach as currently espoused by everyone from the UN to Western governments, charities, NGOs and pop rockers at the Gore-y Live Earth concerts last weekend.

And what if Plan A doesn’t work? You won’t hear politicians and business leaders talk about that possibility much (need to maintain market confidence, dummy!) but they’re not all entirely short-sighted. That’s why Plan B is taking shape. Corporates and government funded research projects are busy figuring out how to invoke that all powerful god of the modern age, technology, in order to keep the status quo rockin’, and ‘solve’ all our environmental problems.

While many techno-fixes also feature in Plan A - such as creating ‘Carbon sinks’ in old oil wells and under the sea to store climate-harming stuff, or genetically engineering new species of bacteria to ‘eat’ undesirable industrial by-products - there’s also a range of more ambitious ideas which can be lumped under the heading ‘geoengineering’.

This means manipulating the planet’s ecology on a massive scale in an attempt to counter or mitigate the effects that the rest of mankind’s activities are having. So instead of concentrating on the rather obvious solution of altering the way we live so as to not harm the planet, geoengineers are trying to offer sexy big-scale ‘magic bullet’ fixes (which

presumably means they view Earth’s ecology as just another moving target).

BODGE CITY

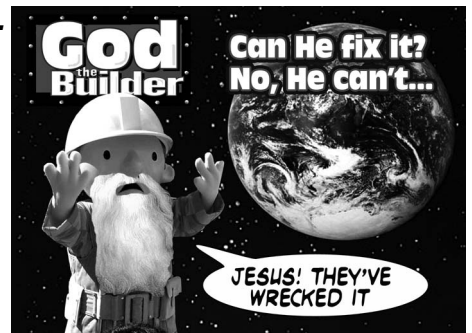
Already many bizarre and potentially dangerous schemes have been put forward by chancers, rainmakers and snake oil salesmen from the ‘scientific’ community. They include: putting thousands of mirrors into orbit or launching up to 30,000 ships to pump salt spray or sulphate-based aerosols into the atmosphere in order to try to deflect the sun; deliberately polluting the seas with vast amounts of iron nanoparticles that stimulate CO2-storing plankton; and covering entire deserts with reflective film to reflect sunlight back into space.

And instead of being confined to the obscurest corners of the internet along with ‘telepathy’ and ‘anti-gravity’ research and the like, it is in fact taken very seriously by the world’s powers. The US government is busy lobbying the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to allow stratospheric weather modification – something at least a dozen other countries are involved in. At least nine other nations and the EU have supported iron filing ‘ocean fertilisation’ experiments, usually by corporate commercial carbon ‘traders’.

Politicians predictably misinterpret theoretical hypotheses to push quick-fix solutions but the fact is that systems as complicated and chaotic as the vast nexus of cause and effect we laughably term ‘the environment’ aren’t gonna be amenable to a giant planetary elasto-plast.

Even boffin Dr Ken Caldeira, who a few years ago was punting the idea of putting a giant mirror on the moon to reflect the sun’s rays back into the cold empty vacuum of space – has now acknowledged that there are inevitable weaknesses in the kind of modelling used to promote these ideas. He now rejects geoengineering as a tempting but illusory quick fix – and has instead realised it would be far easier to just er, change our lifestyles to reduce energy consumption and CO2 emissions (well it’s not rocket science!) “I think the Earth’s system is so complicated that our interfering with it is very likely to screw things up and very unlikely to improve things... And this is the only planet we have.” Ken Caldeira, Carnegie Institution Department of Global Ecology

Unfortunately, Ken and his science-friction hasn’t convinced all his colleagues,



CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For shoddy gardening...

Eager cops in Utah, US, arrested and assaulted a woman for failing to water her lawn enough! Appearance being all, there are strict city laws forbidding unsightly gardens - and some patches of bare earth were sufficient motive for two officers to come down heavily on Betty Perry, aged 70. Trouble flared when Betty refused to give her name and as the cops went to arrest her she copped a faceful of handcuff. The cops insist she fell (that old chestnut) but Betty is adamant they mowed her down. While Betty had to attend hospital for cuts and bruises to her face, cops admitted no culpability of course. But at least the arresting officer will be going to seed – no, not on gardening leave but reassigned to administrative duties. We hope he’s now for-lawn...

and politicians are pushing ahead with crazy schemes to keep the ecosystem and the economy running in conflict a bit longer. Nowhere is safe from potentially catastrophic god-like tinkering. Back in May, Californian company Planktos Inc conducted their latest ‘experiment’ by dumping tens of tonnes of tiny iron particles over 10,000 square km of ocean around the Galapagos Islands – a real exercise in ‘iron’y when you consider this is where Charles Darwin originally made his observations of a pristine eco-system that led to the theory of evolution.

TECH-TONIC

If all this sounds just a little bit extremely frightening, you’re not alone. Here at SchNEWS we’re more, er, grounded and reject all the technonsense. Instead we’re fully supportive of what we’ll call Plan C – Cease Capitalism and Change our Cultures of Consumption. And we’re not the only ones – why not join others who want to take the more obvious paths out of all this madness and start living in a bit more harmony, both socially and environmentally.

UK climate activists are gathering this summer for another **Camp for Climate Action**, following their media-effective occupation of a site near Drax power station last year (not to mention actually physically disrupting the power plant itself - see SchNEWS 558). This year they plan to camp near Heathrow Airport, between 14th and 21st August, to highlight the dire Gaia consequences of rampant air travel expansion, to make a symbolic statement of resistance to the earth-killing ideologies, and to offer a working example of successful, low impact, autonomous living. Be part of it! For details see www.climatecamp.org.uk (And now for the Science: www.etcgroup.org/en/issues/geoengineering.html)

INFORMATION FOR ACTION

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Published in Brighton since 1994

NOT OVER OUR DEAD BODIES

Here's a report from a British roads campaign veteran at the Hill Of Tara protest in Ireland, protecting one of the most important archaeological sites in the world from a motorway (for background see SchNEWS 585, 593)

"We first arrived on Tara to dampened spirits due to rain and an exhausted but very determined Tara Vigil. These passionate and dedicated people have been getting up at 5am every morning and standing in front of the site gate and diggers till 7.30pm! In this way they have managed to hold off the destruction of Ireland's ancient heritage for 6 weeks, using non-violent direct action. Their numbers are few but they remain committed to the cause.

One recent discovery was an enormous wood henge (approx the size of three football pitches) near Rath Lugh - one of the most significant finds in Ireland this century. But the archaeology work going on is being rushed, because it is funded by the road company themselves. One of the archaeologists has walked out in outrage and is now living in the woods and is out stopping the diggers every day!

An ancestral burial and feasting ground has also been discovered, but the graves were desecrated, and bones put in bags and sent off without proper recording. The local school children were so moved that they went down to the site and made a mandala out of the bones, freaking out the workers so much that work was held off for two weeks. The burial grounds' topsoil has been left on the side of the field, containing human and animal bones and evidence of ancient civilizations.

The workers themselves are only people and are mostly friendly. They even staged their own protest

at one point and jokingly stood behind our car and said we weren't allowed to leave. There has been only one arrest so far, and that person was held for only 20 minutes. But the names of the 'cultural conservationists' as they are known, are being taken by the Guardia and if injunctions are passed others will be needed to take their place. At the moment the power of one person standing in their way is enough to make the workers stop, turn the machines off and get their newspapers out.

At present there are about twelve main access gates on the central section of the route, usually being manned by half that amount of people, so YOU can make a difference. Every single person can make a big difference - it's a bit like the early Newbury days with people rushing to where the machines are out to destroy ancient sites. We managed to pass on our knowledge of fluffy direct action, and exchange stories and tactics from Britain's road protests of the 90's like Twyford Down, Newbury, and Fairmile.

The Hill Of Tara desperately needs more people. All are most welcome - poets, bards, musicians, artists, mums, dads, children. Bring tents, tarpaulins, tools, food, rope, donations, warm and waterproof clothing & wellies. There is a communal kitchen run on love and donations...

If you have any time, spare resources to donate, expertise to share, please help! You don't need a passport to enter Ireland, just a form of ID. All roads lead to Tara. But hopefully not this one..."

* There will be a Lhughnasa gathering/rally/action at Tara around Aug 1st-2nd.

* For more see www.savetara.com & www.tarawatch.org

SMELT DOWN

Showing less signs of melting away than the world's glaciers, activists trying to protect Iceland's still near pristine landscape from the attempts of heavy industry, aluminium smelters and dam builders to ruin it are continuing their efforts. Having maintained protest camps, run actions and braved the cold for over two years (See SchNEWS 555, 506, 487) last weekend saw them build international solidarity with a conference attended by speakers from all over the world, including a star turn by the great Reverend Billy (see SchNEWS 570, 469).

The pow-wow was held to kick off another summer of dissent, emanating from the current camp near to Reykjavik. While there was not much history of direct action in Iceland, the multiple threats to their environment and a few helpful visitors from abroad have certainly warmed up the locals in this regard. There have already been several actions including demos in the largest shopping mall, the main Reykjavik high street, parliament, a critical mass and street theatre by the PM's office. This Saturday (14th) sees Iceland's first ever Reclaim The Streets and more mayhem is planned.

If you're up for an trip to one of the most amazing and beautiful environments on earth, with a little direct action against climate criminals like Alcan, Bechtel, Impreglio amongst others thrown in, all visitors to the camp are warmly welcomed although you'll want to take yer longjohns...

* For more see www.savingiceland.org and check www.youtube.com/user/octoplasm

...and finally...

Its official - Holloway Road is the most spied-upon street in the most spied-upon country in Europe. The two-mile stretch of North London hosts 102 CCTV cameras and 7 speed cameras, each one a supposed deterrent to crime. But some deterrent - Holloway Road is not some rose-scented boulevard of happiness and tranquillity - police records show 430 offences, including 29 serious assaults, over a six month period.

According to campaign group Watching Them Watching Us, "Politicians like cameras because they are seen to be doing something but, just like you see birds perched on scarecrows, the dealers come back once the novelty has worn off. Having so many cameras in one place actually makes police investigations harder because they have to divert so much manpower into checking footage from every single camera."

The UK currently has 4.2 million CCTV cameras - one for every 14 of us, and more than the rest of Europe put together, but shows no sign of slowing the big brother culture. The government now plan to install cameras into cops' helmets, although we understand many police are less than keen on this development and are trying to have the plug pulled on it - now we wonder why that could be...?!

For more on ID cards and surveillance Britain see www.no2id.net



Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers - don't end up characters in a reality television show. Honest!

MONU-MENTAL

Of course, anything Ireland can do... Over here, Herefordshire council are planning to tarmac over their own recently discovered henge, the Rotherwas Ribbon. Cue a predictable story about a new road, a secretive decision process and dodgy arguments...

The bronze age serpent-shaped ribbon of stones on a hillside, uncovered in the last few weeks by road-building construction workers is unlike anything discovered anywhere in Europe and something the council's own archaeologist has described as having international significance.

The council themselves have come up with a whole new line in eco-preservation arguments and are ridiculously attempting to claim they want to protect the site for future generations, and the best way to do this is... by completely concreting it over. It would then just be a handy coincidence that this new pile of concrete would be perfectly located for a £12.5 million relief road to be built across it, largely for the benefit of lorries wanting to pound their way to a nearby industrial park. Genius! Once climate change has destroyed industrial society, future generations can chip away at all the concrete with pick axes until the ancient monument is revealed perfectly preserved for their enjoyment.

Campaigners are calling for an immediate halt to work on the road to allow time for proper consideration of its importance and a campaign to get English Heritage to designate it a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The council still seem hellbent on paving the way for the road, being funded by a consortium of regional development quango 'Advantage West Midlands' and housing developers. Have backhanders and conflicts of interest been oiling the wheels by any chance?

Local opposition is growing and there is even talk of digger-blocking actions. For more see www.rotherwasribbon.com

SchNEWS in brief

JULY: 14 - Starbucks Workers film night, talk and social raising awareness of Starbucks workers organising against crap pay and conditions, and anti-union repression. Featuring the film 'Coffee Sirens' about US Starbucks union activists, followed by bar and a friendly atmosphere at Camberwell Squat Centre, 192 Warham Street, London, SE5. Free entry. www.56a.org.uk/warham.html ** **16 - Climate Camp - South Coast neighbourhood meeting** at Cowley Club, Brighton. 6.30pm www.brightonactivist.net ** **18-22 - Earth First Summer Gathering.** Five days of low-impact eco-living, playing and plotting to avert the destruction of Earth. Somewhere in East Anglia. £15 per adult. www.earthfirstgathering.org.uk ** **19 - Brighton No Borders meeting** working in support of migrants and against racism. 6pm, back building, Cowley Club, 12 London Road, Brighton. email brightonnoborders@riseup.net web www.noborder.org.uk ** **The Camberwell Squatted Centre is under threat.** This Tuesday owners were granted a Possession Order to regain the property, and it's been on bailiff alert since. Meanwhile, there's film screenings, talks and events on every evening... come along and support the centre www.56a.org.uk/warham.html

HAVING A FIELD DAY

The threat of mutant genetically modified spuds has diminished for now as protesters destroyed the last trial crop of GM potatoes in the UK on July 6th. Having already recently helped stop BASF planting in Hull, activists targeted the last remaining trial site near Cambridge. Although the field was surrounded by security fences, it couldn't be protected 24/7 by the scores of cops who'd come out to intimidate campaigners the week before, arresting two. The sneaky activists just bided their time and then chipped over the fence on the next Fry-day night before completely mashing up the unnaturally modified crop, which was already flowering. That's done for that attempt, but we need to remain veg-ilant. See www.mutatoes.com

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