



WAKE UP!! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER RECYCLED

SchNEWS

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G8 SPECIAL

G8-CRASHERS

"Imagine a country paralysed by protest, with hundreds of thousands of people blockading the highways and barricades springing up everywhere. The orders of the police, the appeals of the government and the condemnations of the media are being ignored. More people are joining the popular uprising. The cause for dissent? The policies of the G8 industrialised nations.

This is not a vision of the anti-G8 protests in Scotland. This is happening in Bolivia right now.

Bolivia has qualified for Gordon Brown's latest debt relief package, due to be ratified at next week's G8 summit. It also qualified for the previous one, the Highly Indebted Poor Countries

initiative. The remit for qualification on both occasions was not only extreme poverty and indebtedness but also "good governance". A notion that, of course, for the G8, involves the privatisation of state assets, including water, gas and oil.

In fact, it was only in return for further control over Bolivia's economy that a portion of its debt was cancelled. This is but one example of why debt relief, in many parts of the world, has become synonymous with an intensification of the neo-liberal onslaught. As businesses have profited to the detriment of the poor, resistance has become a matter of survival."

- Dissent! Network

Bolivia is Latin America's poorest country precisely because its people have been force-fed the neoliberal reform agenda for such a long time. The imposed policies of privatisation, cuts to welfare and other business friendly reforms are only designed to help the multinationals and their pals in government make shed loads of money. The poorest 20% of Bolivians own less than 2% of the nation's wealth, yet the top fifth own a whopping 62%: and these neo-liberal policies are widening this gap. The debt relief promised by G8 plc is a con. It comes laden with the same conditions as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans that got the countries into debt in the first place. One of the demands: privatise your state-owned industries until nothing's left.

With a history of over two hundred coups or revolutions since independence in 1825, the Bolivian people are, once again, sticking two fingers up at the political elite. Just under

five years ago, during the Cochabamba 'water war', a collective rebellion wrestled back control of the water supply from the grip of the Bechtel Corporation which had even managed to persuade the Bolivian Congress to introduce a law banning people from collecting rainwater! With Betchel out of the picture and a victory under their belts, protesters are now reclaiming control of their gas supply.

Back in March, demonstrators derailed a deal that would have made the Pacific LNG consortium, which includes British Gas, ten dollars for every one they invested in the country. The rich elite were keen to get the 1.5 trillion cubic metres of gas out of the ground and down to the coast, to be shipped off to California as quickly and as profitably as possible. Others, notably the indigenous majority, thought that the Bolivians should be able to use the gas for themselves. Tens of thousands protesters forced the shutdown of four oilfields and access to seven of Bolivia's nine regions, demanding that a tax of 50% be levied against the gas companies. Over the past month protesters have firmly rejected the 32% 'compromise' tax suggested by Congress and are now calling for the re-nationalisation of the gas system. Bolivians are officially "off message" and G8 leaders are non-too pleased.

Carlos Arze, an NGO worker from La Paz, says that the demonstrators are looking to "break the 20-year old neo-liberal economic model that has allowed transnational corporations to control the policies and economy of this country." And the latest victory came at last in early June when President Carlos Mesa, bowed to pressure and quit his job. The new president, Bolivia's Supreme Court head, Eduardo Rodriguez is the country's third president in less than two years.

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For filming!

Peace protester Paul Lesniowski was arrested and spent four days in Lewes Prison. His crime? Filming a security guard outside the EDO bomb factory in Brighton. EDO are Brighton's own local friendly arms dealers, making bits for bombs to drop on Iraqi cities.

Paul was on a demonstration organized by **Smash EDO**, the campaign to close down the bomb factory. The bomb-pushers recently paid their lawyers £50,000 to get an injunction against the protestors, under the Protection from Harassment Act - originally designed to protect vulnerable people from scary stalkers, not scary arms dealers from ordinary people. (isn't bombing people harassment?) Until the lawsuit is resolved, a watered down version of the injunction applies.

He wasn't even protesting at the time, but acting as a legal observer in a marked yellow jacket. At first Paul was being filmed by the director of Guardian Security, who works for EDO - and when he filmed back and promptly got arrested for breaching the injunction.

He is due to appear in court again on Thursday, charged with Contempt of Court and facing a maximum sentence of five years! www.smashedo.org.uk

*** Don't forget to send us your crap arrests**

In a country where 30% of the population lives on less than 60p a day, G8 policy has been more concerned with privatisation and profit than poverty. The current economic system, invented by US economists in the 1980s, has destroyed the country's agricultural and industrial sectors, bringing hundreds of thousands of workless but highly politicised families to live at the gates of the capital city, La Paz. It is from here that they have been able to hold the country to ransom: only one road connects La Paz with the outside world and it's been blockaded by the irate indigenous population of El Alto since May.

Meanwhile, a powerful business elite - mostly of European descent - in the south-eastern city of Santa Cruz has been pushing for far greater regional autonomy and a bigger share of the region's gas and oil wealth. Leaders there, where most of the country's gas is located, have pledged to hold a referendum on increased autonomy this August - with or without the approval of central government, setting the stage for future conflicts. Despite such attempts by the rich to grind them even further into poverty, the majority of Bolivians have shown the world that there is no need to simply accept the economic agenda pushed by the G8. Resistance works and the head honchos of this system are congregating at Gleneagles this July...

☞ Recommended reading **Cochabamba - Water War In Bolivia** by Oscar Olivera (2004) South End Press.

Hillwoggo's
G8 POLICIES

Now with free golf tee!

- * Do What The Banks Want
- * Do What Business Says
- * Keep Us Rich
- * Keep 'Em Poor
- * Do Some Arms Deals
- * Er, That's It

GLENEAGLES IS GRRREAT!

MAKE CAPITALISM HISTORY

JULY ☉ **On till the 7th - Days of Dissent/Edinburgh Convergence 2005/Turning Ideas Into Action** "A free, open and autonomous space for public debates addressing the real issues behind topics such as climate change and poverty. Where thousands will converge to create, debate and question thereby celebrating that another world is not only possible - it is already living." Catch SchNEWS on the Sunday 6-8pm! 07815 973119 <http://www.dissent.org.uk/content/view/251/104/>

☉ **3rd Make Borders History** A Magical Mystery Tour of Immigration Controls and the "Chain of Deportation" in Glasgow. Visit some of the magicians who help asylum seekers "disappear". www.makebordershistory.org

☉ **3rd G8 Alternatives Summit** Counterconference "Ideas to Change the World" organised by the G8 Alternatives coalition to challenge the corrupt policies and ideology of the G8. With international speakers in eight plenary sessions and 36+ workshop/seminars. £10/£5, 0131 2281155. www.g8alternatives.org.uk

☉ **3rd Global G8 Nightmare Counter Conference** World Development Movement along with War on Want, People & Planet and Friends of the Earth are holding the 'G8 Corporate Dream... Global Nightmare' counter conference. Speakers include: George Monbiot, Trevor Ngwane, Meena Raman, Walden Bello, Caroline Lucas, Amit Srivastava (Campaign Against Coca Cola) and The Yes Men. Assembly Hall, Royal Mile, Edinburgh. FREE. 0131 557 0444 www.wdmscotland.org.uk/campaigns/g8/index.htm

☉ **4th Big Blockade at Faslane Nuclear Submarine Base.** Help snub the subs... Thousands of peace campaigners from around the world are called to non-violently blockade the base. 0845 45 88 361 www.faslaneg8.com

☉ **4th Phone in Sick and Join the Carnival for Full Enjoyment Street Party, Edinburgh.** "Life should be more fun for those of us who labour in underpaid insecure jobs, in casual and agency work, or on 'New Deal' schemes. There should be more joy for the unemployed trying to survive on a few quid a week and for those of us juggling childcare and debt." Meet 12-12.30 west end of Princes St and Shandwick Place in central Edinburgh. email dissentagainstwork@yahoo.co.uk

☉ **5th Beacons of Dissent** Beacons are to be lit on the hills south of the Gleanegles Hotel on the night of Tuesday 5th July to send a clear message that the G8 "leaders" are not welcome. Beacons to be lit in solidarity around the UK.

☉ **5th Hill Walking Actions** Cross Country Rambles and Scrambles on the Ochil hills with a big day-glow banner or two. <http://silver.j12.org/call.htm>

☉ **5th Close Dungavel Detention Centre.** Outside the luxury of Gleneagles, hundreds of people - including families with children - are imprisoned behind the razor wire of Scotland's shame: Dun-

G8 RESOURCES

Protest and Action Info: The Dissent! Network co-ordinate radical resistance to the Summit. www.dissent.org.uk

Legal: Know your rights (while we've got some left) www.g8legalsupport.info

Training: It pays to be prepared. For a whole load of resources www.dissent.org.uk/content/view/66/57/ Or see the SchNEWS Diy Guide - www.schnews.org.uk/diyguide

Medical: First aid skills out on the streets www.actionmedics.org.uk

Trauma: Helping people when it all gets too much. 07962 406940 www.activist-trauma.net

gavel Immigration Removal Centre, join the No Borders demonstration. 11am to 4pm Strathaven, South Lanarkshire, ML10 6RF. Transport to Dungavel from Glasgow, George Square, shuttle bus all morning from 9:30am. Edinburgh, Waterloo Place at 9.30am and 11.30am. £5/£3 To Book 0141 946 6193 email glascamref@hotmail.com www.makebordershistory.org

☉ **6th Global Day of Action at the opening day of the G8 Summit** A day of decentralised action, in villages, towns and cities worldwide. The biggie - what are YOU going to be doing? www.agp.org www.dissent.org.uk

☉ **6th G8 Blockades** 'The Blockades Group', a part of the Dissent! network, call out to all autonomous direct action groups and individuals opposed to the G8 to carry out autonomous actions starting on the 6th July to blockade the summit. www.g8blockades.org.uk

☉ **6th Anti-G8 Demonstration** Marching from Gleneagles train station from noon, try to get as close as you can to Gleneagles, go on give it a go! 0131 220 6259 www.g8alternatives.org.uk

☉ **7th People's Open Golf Tournament** The People's Golfing Association is hosting an open golf tournament at Gleneagles. People are encouraged to begin forming autonomous golfing affinity groups. No caddies, no Masters! wrench@tao.ca and pgag8@lists.riseup.net

☉ **8th International Day of action on the root causes of climate change** Come to Scotland with your inspired ideas for action and join us on the streets and on the golf courses. Or do whatever you can, wherever you are, to resist the fossil fuel madness and make the dream of a socially just, sustainable future a reality. Stop climate chaos - flood the G8! www.cca.movingpages.org

Remember: There won't be people laying everything on for you once you get there. Bring whatever you expect to need - and take yer rubbish away with you! Don't forget yer sleeping bag, mat, eating utensils/plate/bowl, food, water etc. There will be cooked food available at the centres mentioned, but as it's impossible to tell how many people are coming so make like the Scouts and Girl Guides and **BE PREPARED!**

Convergence and Accommodation Centres

EDINBURGH - ☉ **24 Hour Info Shop**, 10 Albert place, Leith Walk. Open meetings to organise the space, café, great exchange of support and information happening between the activists and the local community. 01315611356. ☉ **Forest Café**, 3 Bristo Place. Volunteer-run café, arts space, Anti-G8 info and Indymedia Centre. ☉ **University Convergence Space** Teviot buildings, Edinburgh Students Union Building, Bristo Square. Convergence meetings, workshops etc. ☉ **Jack Kane Centre**, Hunter Hall Park, Niddrie Mains street, Craigmillar. Currently the only accommodation centre in Edinburgh, with camping for 15,000 people. There has been criticism of the site surrounded by security fencing, CCTV and watchtowers see, www.dissent.org.uk/content/view/252/104/

GLASGOW - ☉ **Convergence Centre**, 30 Dora St, Dalmarnock, Glasgow, Scotland. Phone no 0141 551 0401. Provides info, food and accommodation, be self sufficient as possible and taker yer litter home! ☉ **G42 Collective Info Point**, Suite 3, 674 Pollockshaws Road, South Glasgow. 07981 954132.

STIRLING - ☉ **Hori-Zone**. A rural autonomous, convergence camp at Borrowmeadow Farm, nr. Forth Bank Stadium, Stirling. The rural convergence space will operate around a "neighbourhood" system, similar to the "barrio" system used at some previous resistance camps. www.g8convergence2005.org



☉ **For a full list of G8 dates see:** www.dissent.org.uk/content/section/12/63/

Take me to your leader!

When Midge Ure, the co-organiser of Live8, was asked if he was worried about the event being hijacked by anarchists, he replied that Live 8 was, in fact, hijacking the anarchists' event...

The global anti-capitalist movement has done more to resist the policies that cause poverty than some yesteryear-popstar, and while any publicity is great, it's gonna take more than a pop concert to really oppose the G8's policies.

SchNEWS is a part of this movement and has been reporting on the news the mainstream media tends to ignore for over 10 years. But the anti-capitalist movement has not just been fighting against the current system but it's also trying to put the building blocks in place for a better one.

Away with the corporate media and their obsessions with material wealth and fetishisation of "celebrity". Everyone knows that staring at The Sun makes you go blind (instead look to www.indymedia.org.uk and it's regional variants for a picture of what's really going on).

To hell with being led like sheep on pointless "demo's" listening to inane politicians telling us what they think we want to hear. Change and justice will come when we get together as equals and take up the tools of direct action. This is the true meaning of democracy, not a cross in a box every four years. It's our world and we want it back.

The Dissent Network have spent the last two years organising resistance to the G8 summit, while attempting to demonstrate exactly such alternatives. Meetings have typically been open, participatory and slightly chaotic. People have sat in circles, allowing everyone present an equal voice, as opposed to sitting facing a panel of specialist speakers. Decisions have been made through a process of consensus, taking the opinions of everyone on board, rather than deferring to a central committee.

This model of working is part of the anti-capitalist movement that you will find in the self-managed factories in Argentina; the squatters of European Social Centres; the Mexican Zapatistas; or the participants in the US Direct Action Network, which shut down the World Trade Organisation meeting in Seattle. While none can offer a perfect blueprint for a future society, they each demonstrate that other worlds are possible.

To practice what they preach, Dissent have set up the Hori-Zone space, "a zone of self-organisation, horizontal decision making, ecology and autonomy in action" on the outskirts of Stirling. Based on the principle of ecological sustainability and employing, where possible, fossil fuel-free power sources and ecological toilets and water systems, it is preparing to welcome thousands of protesters from around the world.

The space will be self-run as a complex experiment in direct democratic processes. With more than a slight nod of acknowledgement towards Argentina's popular uprising in 2001, the Hori-Zone will be divided into barrios, or neighbourhoods, each of which will be responsible not only for the day-to-day running of their area of the camp (cooking, disposing of waste and so on) but also for deciding upon, and planning, the means by which they hope to resist the summit.

It's time to forget about asking the world leaders to sort out the mess they've helped create, and to join with others and do it ourselves. As Dissent put it "Who have, historically, been the agents of change? And, importantly, who has the ability to change the way in which the world works today? The answer, of course, is not Bob and Bono. But neither is it Blair and Brown. It's ordinary, everyday people. It's us. It's you. Those who have the power to not only make poverty history, but to make history itself are the same as they always have been: ordinary people who do extraordinary things."

BYPASS THE CORPORATE MEDIA
Keep in touch with the protests
<http://scotland.indymedia.org>

FIRE SALE

With Refugee Week just gone (20th-26th June) and the G8 Summit in Gleneagles this week, it's an ideal time to look at the point where the two issues converge.

The UK government likes to wring its hands over the refugee "problem", but its support for arms sales actually encourages overseas governments to pursue policies that make it more likely that people will be forced to flee their homes. In 2002, Campaign Against the Arms Trade calculated that the UK government subsidises arms sales to the tune of £760 million a year. The Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO), part of the Ministry of Defence, has 600 civil servants promoting UK military exports. Such exports also account for about one-third of the export credit



guarantees issued by the UK plc. Arms exports don't just violate human rights directly; such sales are used by governments of supplier countries as instruments of foreign policy leverage. Military equipment is sold to "friends", and with the equipment goes a message of political approval for the recipient government.

But it's not just the UK who pursues this policy, with the exception of Japan all the G8 countries are in the top ten of arms exporters and more than half the arms exports of G8 countries end up in developing countries - places they depend on for fossil fuels and other raw materials. Britain and Russia stand accused of supplying weaponry and technology for oil extraction to Sudan during the recent war. In 1998 the former president of French oil giant Elf admitted that his company had supplied weapons to both main parties in the conflict in the Congo.

Ultimately, it is not some

DISARM DSEI ARMS FAIR
 13-16th September 2005 - DSEi is Britain's biggest weapons supermarket. This is where utter scumfucks like BAE Systems can sell weapons to murdering tyrannical regimes to wage war on their own people, all subsidised by the you and me via the Credit Export Guarantee system. Next time you hear of some atrocity committed in some far off country there's a good chance the weapons used were made by British companies. Its time to Disarm DSEi! ExCeL Centre, London Docklands. More info: 07817 652029. www.dsei.org

abstract process, as our leaders would have us believe, but a concrete collaboration between Western states, international financial institutions and corporations that is responsible for the collapse of so many Southern states and thus for its logical consequence: global migration. Millions of people, impoverished by skewed trade treaties, ignored by increasingly ideological aid arrangements, displaced by wars fought with Western weapons or development projects built by Western companies, feel they have no choice but to seek a life elsewhere.

The vast majority of these displaced millions live in the countries of Asia and Africa, but a small percentage do make it the West. They are usually greeted not with shame-faced embarrassment or apology but with resentment and hatred. The question not often enough asked is why our leaders conceal the reasons why refugees come here in the first place and our responsibility in their plight.

- ☉ The Refugee Project 020 7250 1315 www.herefugeeproject.org
- ☉ Campaign Against Arms Trade 020 7281 0297 www.caat.org.uk

Compassionate States of America

US contribution to debt relief deal over next 10 years	\$1,750,000,000
Est. Total Annual Economic Aid Budget	\$15,000,000,000
US Military spending 2004 - set to rise 4.8% next year	\$400,000,000,000
Global Arms Trade	\$1,000,000,000,000+

YOUR SHORT GUIDE TO THE TRILLION DOLLAR ARMS BUSINESS

G8 countries account for around 85% of the global arms trade – a heavily subsidised and under-regulated business. Whilst the G8 countries push 'free trade' on the global south, they are free to subsidise their own arms industries as much as they want, propping up arms giants like Lockheed Martin and BAE Systems. This welfare for warfare is often facilitated by the guarantee of payment that companies get from their government's export credit system - in the UK this is the Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD). The underwriting of arms sales means companies pursue deals to countries which may well default on payments, safe in the knowledge that if it happens, it is up to the exporting government to pursue the debt, and taxpayers to foot any remaining bill. ECA Watch, an export credit agency research NGO, claim "Arms sales take up a disproportionate amount of export credits. Military exports ac-

count for around 2% of UK visible exports yet, over the last five years, it has absorbed 30% of ECGD support" (www.eca-watch.org) – and this means literally billions of taxpayers' hard earned cash is funding the proliferation of guns and misery around the world.

Between 1997 and 2001 at least two thirds of the world's arms deals came from just five G8 countries – USA, Russia, France, Britain and Germany. In 2003 the G8 countries exported arms worth in excess of US\$24 billion. While some of these exports were to other G8 or developed countries, more than half went to the developing world. In 1994 it was estimated that one fifth of the debt owed by poor countries is due to past arms sales. However, despite their heavy representation in weapons production G8 countries are the least affected by the use of arms. Of the 150 wars fought between 1945 and the mid 1990s, more than 90% were in the developing world.

CLIMATE CHAOS

HOT POTATOES OFF THE MENU AT GLENEAGLES

With the whole media world (not to mention SchNEWS) awash with stuff about poverty and debt relief, there is one topic that is danger of fading from view:

Using the tools of colonialism, slavery and exploitation, the immense gap between rich and poor has been built on ecological abuse which is paid for not just by the world's poorest, but everyone else too. Climate Change is likely to visit on the poor of the world a level of destitution and hunger that will swamp any progress on debt secured at Gleneagles. Africa will suffer both more frequent droughts and more serious floods. But instead of any meaningful action, politicians talk of technical fixes but carry on business-as-normal in the search for a little more shareholder profit. These policies are on a crash course with the one entity we eventually won't be able to bully or negotiate with – Mother Nature.

So what's wrong with a bit of Global Warming, eh? No more long bleak winters and soaking up the rays on the Costa-del-Southend in a long hot summer? Well don't take our word for it, even the government recently admitted "Temperatures have risen by 0.6 deg C in the past century; the 10 hottest years on record have occurred since 1991; The number of people affected by floods worldwide has already risen from 7 million in the 1960s to 150 million today; In Europe alone, the severe floods in 2002 caused 37 deaths and an economic cost of \$16 billion; 2003's heat-wave was linked to 26,000 premature deaths." It's not so much climate change, but climate chaos – as

the global temperature gets hotter all the extra energy causes more extreme weather.

Considering that Tony Blair thinks climate change is "probably, long-term the single most important issue we face as a global community" will we face the agenda of radical action required at the G8 shindig? Do you really need to answer that one? UK Plc. says that its "prime objective for 2005 is to raise the profile of climate change as a matter deserving the urgent attention of Heads of Government in the G8" Hmm "raise the profile". What could that mean. More talking? Some advertising? Maybe a telly programme? What are they actually gonna DO about it? Er... we'll get back to you with that.

WAFFLES FOR BREAKFAST

Two leaked G8 reports confirm that more talking is on the agenda. There's going to be a "dialogue on climate change, clean energy and sustainable development". But the Gleneagles Plan of Action is full of spin and uses open-ended words like "encourage, seek, invite, promote, develop", the aim of which is more "reviews, assessments, studies, analyses, workshops", to "look forward to a report at future summits". Anyone for the seminar on "Aiming for a Better Understanding on the Relationship Between Hot Air and Global Warming"?

The crisis of Global Warming - Climate Change/Chaos is best summed up by Matthew Robbins from direct action group Rising Tide, "When a million species face extinction by 2050, 150,000 people die every year directly from the effects

of climate change and thousands more become environmental refugees, it's time to take action".

The blatant obvious truth is that while 'our' leaders are out trying to sell the 'developed world' dream to everyone, it is completely impossible that the earth could sustain everyone consuming like we do. And until we accept that it is our living standards and practices that will have to change, all these initiatives to improve the poor's short-term lot are not going to count for sod all. It's gonna take a lot more than pop tunes and wristbands to sort out this one.

July 8th has been called as an **International Day of Action Against the Root Causes of Climate Change**, and people from around the world will be taking action to tackle climate change. Actions will happen in Scotland - including a 'Ceildh on the Clyde' to oppose the planned M74 extension that will cut through the heart of Glasgow and increase carbon-spewing traffic - as well as in London, Reading, and other cities globally. 07708 794665 www.risingtide.org.uk

☉ Read Sharon Beder's 'Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism', Green Books

☉ 'The Final Energy Crisis' Edited by Andrew McKillop with Sheila Newman, Pluto Press 2005 www.plutobooks.com

The above book will be reviewed in the forthcoming SchNEWS Reviews section (website only). If you have read, heard or seen anything you'd like to review, send it into us at schnews@brighton.co.uk. 500 words maximum.

THE GREAT DEBT RELIEF SWINDLE

GUITAR POLITICS - with strings attached

"The poor are financing the rich. If we are serious about ending poverty, we have to be serious about ending the unjust and violent systems for wealth creation which create poverty by robbing the poor of their resources, livelihoods and incomes."

- Vandana Shiva, campaigner and author.

"The illusion of an anti establishment crusade led by pop stars - a cultivated, controlling image of rebellion - serves to dilute a great political movement of anger. In summit after summit, not a single significant "promise" of the G8 has been kept, and the "victory for millions" is no different. It is a fraud - actually a setback to reducing poverty in Africa. Entirely conditional on vicious, discredited economic programmes imposed by the World Bank and the IMF, the "package" will ensure that the "chosen" countries slip deeper into poverty. Is it any surprise that this is backed by Blair and his treasurer, Gordon Brown, and George Bush; even the White House calls it a "milestone"? For them, it is an important facade, held up by the famous and the naive and the inane."

- John Pilger, journalist

SchNEWS doesn't doubt Bob Geldof's sincerity in wanting to end world hunger. With twenty four thousand people dying of starvation every day he's right to be focking angry and right to want the world to act. But unfortunately Bob, and the Africa Commission of which he is a member, is committed to 'solving' poverty through a neo-liberal agenda - relying on the very forces of international capital that have created Africa's poverty in the first place. Doh! Asking the gangsters that run the G8 to sort out world poverty and climate change is a bit like asking paedophiles to look after a playgroup.

Take the latest G8 fanfare on debt cancellation: it's laden with conditions. Paragraph 2 of the finance ministers' statement says that to qualify for debt relief, developing countries must "tackle corruption, boost private sector development" and eliminate "impediments to private investment, both domestic and foreign."

This aid scam is a back-door route for the richest countries to force their free-market agenda on the poorest nations. As journalist George Monbiot points out "The G8's plan for saving Africa is little better than an extortion racket. Do you still believe our newly-sanctified leaders have earned their halos? If so, you have swallowed a truckload of nonsense. Yes, they should cancel the debt. But they should cancel it unconditionally."

ORGANISED CRIME INC.
"Business is arriving at the G8 summit more organised than it has ever been."

- Corporate Watch

Last July Chancellor Gordon Brown and Reuter's chairman, Niall FitzGerald, set up a Business Contact Group explicitly to provide private sector input to the African Commission. Its 16 or so corporate members read like a role call of the most exploitative and despised companies currently operating on the continent - including Anglo American, Shell, De Beers, Rio Tinto and... Diageo, who also er, own the Gleneagles hotel where the G8 Summit will take place. Mate's rates for the room, Tony?

This group had plenty of input into the African Commission report that called for more public-private partnerships (PPPs). PPPs are when the private sector is contracted to build and operate infrastructure like roads or provide basic services like water, health and electricity - basically privatisation by the back door. In fact these sorts of 'partnerships' have been such an expensive

cock up in the UK why not export the idea to the rest of the world?

A report by the South African Institute of International Affairs assessing PPPs across Africa over the last 15 years found that: the private sector is not always more efficient, service provision is often more expensive and big government contracts are complex, demanding and open to corruption. It also found that energy and water have been the least successful examples of PPPs, and concluded that PPPs do not help the poor.

For more background see: www.corporatewatch.org.uk/?lid=1232

DANGLING CARROTS

All the countries now receiving full debt relief are doing so because they are part of the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) programme. This means they have been forced to commit to the usual IMF and World Bank neo-liberal market reforms - which, in reality, enforce handovers of power and resources to Western corporate interests.

One of the main demands is for more privatization. It was the condition attached to all British aid for Mozambique, Uganda and Ghana - including forcing the sell off of essential services, like water. You only need to look at the world's 15th poorest country, Tanzania, to find out how great that can be. Over the past seven years the UK Department for International Development has bunged Margaret Thatcher's fave think tank - the Adam Smith Institute - £36 million to come up with 'market' solutions to global poverty. (Note, by the way, that the World Bank has admitted that consultants are creaming off a staggering \$20 billion (40%) from global aid budgets.) Of the half million that went their way for the Tanzania water privatisation plan, how did they spend £277,000 of this money? On a really useful pro-privatisation pop video which featured catchy lyrics like "Our old industries are dry like crops and privatisation brings the rain!" Not that the song will be making it on to MTV in a country where only one in a hundred people have got a video player...

So as part of a World Bank and UK funded programme to increase access to drinking water in the capital, Dar es Salaam, in 2003 a 10-year contract to run the water industry was handed to a consortium of UK and German firms, "City Water".

Unfortunately for Tanzania, City Water have failed to install any water pipes yet, having so far invested £2.5m less than was specified in the contract. Supplies of water for the people of the city have not improved. But if the locals aren't gaining from the deal, who is? Not City Water. "We've only declared a 10% profit" says UK Chief Executive Cliff Stone, "we can't make super-profits here". Whether 10% profit is 'super' or not, the company were recently booted out of the country for being so crap. But of course, that doesn't mean that the Tanzanian government actually has any say in the running of its own country! As a result of being shown the door, company bosses are suing them for breach of contract! In May, an English High Court issued an injunction banning the local Tanzanian water authority from terminating the contract until an arbitration panel meet in London to pass their own divine judgment!

So, is linking aid and debt cancellation to these neo-liberal "reforms" good for making poverty



"This time all the coke backstage will be fockin' fair trade... Honest."

history? As historian and author Mark Curtis reports, "Zambia, for example, is a country not simply harmed by this model, but virtually destroyed by it... forced by the World Bank and IMF to promote sweeping trade liberalization and massive privatization, and dismantle the public sector. These reforms together with HIV/AIDS have increased poverty and destroyed key industries. Zambia now has the lowest life expectancy in the world: at 33 years" Another success story then.

All this without mentioning some of the many other poorest countries (Like Peru, Guyana, Nigeria and Haiti) in desperate need of debt cancellation but excluded from the HIPC party for not yet playing neo-liberal ball sufficiently... Whilst we will all soon be awash in media coverage of guilt-cleansing-poptastic-debt-relief-euphoria, remember not to get too carried away with excitement.

...and finally...

We in the West have sat by and watched as Africa's share of the global economy has halved in the last 20 years - thanks to globalisation. Despite the optimism of Live Aid, since 1985 Africa has got poorer and poorer - due to free trade and the rigging of world commodity markets. This is now a continent with 15% of the world's population and 28% of world poverty - poverty which has made the effects of AIDS much worse than it might have been, and 26 million are now living with the virus. Well, some of us have had enough...

On the twentieth anniversary year of that Live Aid concert, Sir Bob Geldof, Bono and their pals, Elton John, Chris Martin, Phil Collins and Paul McCartney are leading a project which goes further than just "Drop 3rd World Debt" - they're actually going to start paying the debts from their own pockets! Launching the campaign, called "Sponsor A Third World country", Geldof said, "How else do you stop focking global poverty from your Surrey mansion? It's a win-win situation because the poor are helped, and global capitalism can carry on too. And we'll sell a few records on the back of it." Paul McCartney has already helped by chipping in to cover Tanzania's \$130million yearly debt payment, Rod Stewart is offering to pick up the tab on Swaziland's overdraft, and Elton John will be moving to a new palatial residence in newly acquired Botswana as soon as the cheque clears. Sting has said that he "wants to help countries which love music - like the people in the Amazon who stick a CD through their bottom lip". The record companies are apparently happy to tap into the burgeoning 'anti-poverty-rock' market.

But all this generosity could soon be dwarfed by a tsunami of relief if this latest celeb trend crosses the Atlantic. Hollywood insiders suggest left-leaning actors may be about to lead a star-studded stampede on the poorest nations, as they race each other to acquire the hottest status symbol accessory going - the role of 'saviour' to a whole country. Big names are in talks to include free AIDS drugs on new DVD releases in Africa, and George Clooney was (allegedly) recently seen stepping off a plane in Chad. African styled clothing is tipped to make a big splash on America's catwalks this coming season. Watch this space. Not.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers... don't invade Gleneagles and start a golf war. Honest!

IF THE MONEY'S RIGHT...

Debt package agreed on Jun 11 th	\$40bn
Total African debt since 1970	\$833.4bn
Total African repayments since 1970	\$817.4bn
Total debt still outstanding	\$506bn

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