



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER JUST SAY NO! TO DODGY CHEMICALS

SchNEWS

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THE CORPORATIONS HAVE TAKEN OVER THE ASYLUM

"Their influence has grown so much that today, of the world's richest economies, 51 are multinational corporations, and the total sales of the top 200 firms in the world are now equivalent to nearly 30% of global gross domestic product. Indeed, corporations have gained so much power over international political and economic life that we may well be entering a "Brave New Corporate World."

Ambika Chawla ASEED

Four weeks ago the Ethyl Corporation of America, received \$13 million from the Canadian government. Well, so what? The Ethyl Corporation make a chemical called methylcyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl, MMT for short. MMT is a fuel additive, which is mixed with petrol in order to prevent engine knocking. It is also a dangerous neurotoxin. Manganese entering the body through the lungs causes nerve damage which can lead to psychosis, memory loss, and early death. In April 1997 the Canadian government decided to ban it.

Had the vote taken place three years earlier, the Ethyl Corporation would have had to abide by the decision. But, since 1994, corporations in Canada, the United States and Mexico have enjoyed a powerful new tool over elected authorities. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) allows companies to sue governments which, they believe, raise unfair barriers to trade.

"It is the butterfly's wings over North America that will cause a hurricane in Europe."

George Monbiot

Ethyl sued the Canadian government for the 'expropriation' of its 'property' (namely its anticipated profits) and the 'damage' to its 'good reputation' caused by the parliamentary debate. It took its suit to NAFTA, where a secret tribunal whose records are not disclosed and whose decisions cannot be appealed, began to assess the case. Last month, the Canadian government realising that its chances of success were approx zero, settled with Ethyl, agreed to allow the corporation to resume its sales of MMT and announced that "MMT poses no health risk."

So what has any of this got to do with us? Well, the NAFTA rules that allowed Ethyl to sue the Canadian government are almost identical to those in the Multilateral Agreement on Investment(MAI - see SchNEWS 141)

The MAI is a multinationals wet dream. Discussed in secret for the past couple of

years before activists let the cat out of the bag, it will, like NAFTA, give corporations the right to sue governments for even debating issues which may harm their profits. As SchNews predicted in October last year, the MAI 'will force governments to respond to economic pressures by abolishing worker protections, public safety regulations and measures protecting the environment.'

The Canadian 'pay the polluter' case should have alarm bells ringing in all of us. The signing of the MAI has been delayed, but the mentality of the multinationals will mean that a similar agreement will no doubt be rearing its ugly corporate head in the very near future.

Oil Barren

"Despite warnings of global warming and the alarming rate of extinction of plant and animal species, oil companies are scrambling to tap the world's remaining oil resources. With forecasts of many reserves drying up within the next few decades, the oil industry is in a race to explore the most remote areas of the world, with no regard for the fragile ecosystems they often destroy in the process."

Oilwatch

Last week BP announced a 67 billion pound move to merge with Amoco which will make them the 14th largest corporation in the world. Here are some things you might like to know about...

BP is proud of its 'miniscule' contribution to climate change from its production operations: only 1% of world CO2 - but that makes it the worlds 21st largest polluter, bigger than countries like Sauda Arabia, Indonesia and the Netherlands!

A recent Colombian government report presents a catalogue of deforestation, contamination and dumping of toxic waste. They've been fined hundreds

CRAP ARRESTS OF THE WEEK

* **The human body:** made up of tender flesh and bones that crunch. It can however still pose a hazard to the delicate contours of a car, as MoD police recently found out to their cost. After driving into activists who were blocking the passage of their vehicle at Faslane Peace Camp in Scotland., the officers displayed an unexpectedly fine sense of irony in arresting one of them for criminal damage to the car's bodywork, inflicted as it struck the protester's somewhat softer body.

* **For picking up litter:** One person collecting litter out-side the missile base asked the sentries to dispose of it. Her pleas falling on deaf ears, she dumped it back on the ground and lay in the road, at which point police moved in choosing also to nick three others who tried to clear it up

* **For possession of spoons:** Apparently the base's sophisticated sonar security sensor can't distinguish between a pair of bolt cutters and a spoon. Asfive activists set about tapping out a syncopated rhythm on the wire fence the plod moved in again, later refusing to give the spoons back.

As SchNEWS went to press 100 people had been nicked during the Trident Ploughshare 2000 actions outside the nuclear submarine baser ! Faslane Peace Camp 01436-850488

of thousands of pounds by the Colombians and had four rigs temporarily suspended. It also finances the Colombian military for the presence of a 3,000 brigade of soldiers to protect its installations from 'guerrilla' attacks. Since 1994 six villagers who have objected to damage caused by the oil company. have been assassinated and others falsely imprisoned and harassed by the army. Human rights lawyers investigating the killings said that BP's military brigade are out of control.

Amoco Infamous for its Amoco Cadiz oil disaster in Brittany 1978, their US refineries have been plagued by fires, explosions, injuries and deaths. In Indiana, Amoco accepts responsibility for 75,600,000 litres of spillage and an explosion at a gas plant in Kansas forced a close down, it's also had a go in Papua New Guinea, where it bought up 30% of the OK Tedi correctmine. Toxic spillage from here proceeded via local rivers to the Torres Straights and Australia's Great Barrier Reef. In 1989 it paid Burma's brutal military regime \$5 Million for a concession in the country's virgin teak forests and its 1996 proposals for a World Bank financed oil exploration of Western Siberia outraged environmental groups. Amoco is a member of the Global Climate Coalition, an industry front group that tells everybody that global warming isn't happening and tries to stop laws that reduce in fossil fuel emissions. Last year it help fund a PR company by the Nigerian dictatorship to improve the countries' image and prevent oil sanctions.

* **MAI-DAY Conference** - to help organise a co-ordinated UK campaign to stop the MAI. 19th September at Insurance Hall, 20 Aldermanbury, London EC2. To book your place ring Chris 01268 682820 email chris.keene@which.net

* **Hot Spring 98 United Action Against Corporate Rule.** Excellent booklet. Send a large SAE to A SEED Europe, PO Box 92066, 1090 AB Amsterdam, Netherlands Tel 31 20 668 2236 www.antenna.nl/aseed

Earth First!

Summer Gathering

Wednesday 9th to September 14th £10
To receive details of how to get to site send SAE toEF! Gathering c/o Cornerstone Resource Centre, 16 Sholebrooke Ave, Chapeltown, Leeds LS7 3HB 0113 262 9365
Got a vehicle? Ring SchNEWS office

SOUTH DOWNS MASS TRESSPASS THIS SUNDAY (23RD) MEET 12:00 BRIGHTON STATION

BLOCKED LINES

"The blockades will continue until the government agrees to a process to legally recognise indigenous lands." **The Indigenous Federation of the State of Bolivia** 1,000 Pemon Indians of the Imataca and Gran Sabana regions of Venezuela are blocking the only highway between Venezuela and Brazil. They are trying to stop a 120 kilometre high voltage electrical line being built through their rainforest homeland. 50 National Guard are on the scene and telephone communications from the region are being blocked. At the beginning of the month in Caracas, a coalition of environmental organisations and university students marched in solidarity with the indigenous protesters in a march timed to coincide with the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus. It was the third time in a week that the highway has been closed. The blockades began in July, protesters suspended the blockades after the government agreed to meet with indigenous leaders. But blockades began again with protesters saying, "... the government sent representatives with no real decision-making power."

In May 1997 the Venezuelan government signed a decree which opens up 40% of the Imataca Forest Reserve, an area of 3.6 million hectares of diverse tropical forest to mining. About 10,000 Indians live in the reserve but were never consulted about the decrees and are worried that their land will be targeted by mining and loggers and that their small scale cooperative mining will be affected. The Pemon live mainly from their gardens supplemented by hunting and fishing. Palm trees provide housing materials and fruit. Some villages have set up small scale tourism. The Pemon came into sustained contact with national society in the 1920's but have so far successfully kept their own language and way of life.

Contact: Survival International, 11-15 Emerald St., London, WC1N 3QL 0171 242 1441 www.survival.org.uk

Binglaroooga

"There has been a site on the proposed route of the Bingley Bypass for two years. At present it may be tatted down even though the road has just been given the go ahead, due to a lack of support. It is a beautiful site next to a river and a few people have been struggling to keep it going. They are burnt out and can't handle being there anymore. *"We are sending out a desperate plea to you, all we want is a few people to live on site. There are plenty of habitable tree houses and good skips near by. Please help so that we don't lose faith that there are still people out there willing to fight the destruction of our planet."* Ring :Lizzie, 0961 932 179 NOW

IT'S MY PARTY

"We're up for it today. we know you're just a bunch of professional anarchists"

Chief Inspector Reid

Another street party, another dollar... So Bristol Reclaim the Streets showed impeccable professionalism in throwing down the gauntlet to the police, who picked it up and wielded it with an iron fist. But the three hundred-or-so party-goers weren't about to go home empty-handed. As the 'World of Public Order' theme park opened once again on the Bristol streets the old bill struggled to retain control, while party-goers dashed past cordons, outmanoeuvring officers on horses or with dogs, alternately to seize control of two major roundabouts. There were 66 nickings during a day in which the cheery throng danced two main roads and a Shell garage into closure, leaving the thin blue line just a pale smudge all over the disgruntled pavement.

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Big shout to B.F.N. and everyone else who sent us donations last week but dig deep readers, we aint out the woods yet, all those lovely summer double issues cleaned us out!!!!

SCHNEWS IN BRIEF

*** Reclaim the Streets - the movie.** The history of RTS since 1992. The Criminal Justice Act, Castlemorton Free Festival, Claremont Road, Liverpool dock dispute and all your fave street parties. The 80 minute video is available from 72 Castlewood Rd, London N16 6DH. Costs at £6 unwaged £8 waged £10 well waged £2,000 for nasty corporations and cops! Cheques payable to Agustín Gutierrez. There's a showing this Sunday (23) at the RITZY CINEMA (15.45) Brixton tube, London - £6 waged £3 unwaged. Why not organise a showing in your home town? *** Eleven people were arrested last Sunday in another **Genetix snowball** action as they attempted to uproot genetically engineered sugar beet at Sharpe Seeds Ltd, Boothby Graffoe, 12 miles south of Lincoln. Three people managed to uproot some of the freak-beet while others were nicked as they approached the field and charged with going equipped to cause criminal damage with gardening tools. It is not known if a man on his bike coming back from his allotment with a bagful of onions and a trowel was also nicked. To contact the snowball campaign ring 0161 834 0295 ***** The **Worthing Friends of the Earth Eco-Festival** is taking place in Homefield Park, Worthing on Monday 31st August. The festival still requires more performers, campaign groups, workshop facilitators, stewards, marquees, benders, tents and banners. For more information or to offer assistance contact Worthing FoE at 2 Brunswick Cottages, Western Row, Worthing, West Sussex *** A proposed permanent traveller's site is currently seeking planning permission. **Brighton Friends, Families and Travellers** Support Group are asking for letters of support to be headed "Proposed Travellers' Site at Horsdean" and addressed to Alan McCarthy, Director of Environmental Services, Brighton and Hove Council, Bartholomew House, Bartholomew Square, Brighton.

INSIDE SchNEWS

Ben Thompson has been given a 3 month prison sentence for breaking bail conditions and for threatening behaviour during an action on Hillgrove Farm which breed cats for vivisection. Letters of solidarity to Ben: , HMP Bullingdon, PO BOX 50, Bicester, Oxon, OX6 0PR.

*The next Hillgrove demo is taking place on Sunday 6th September. Meet at 12 noon in Leys Recreation Ground, Station Lane (next to Sainsburys), Witney, Oxon. Transport is available from around the country, to offer or request lifts call 0121 632 6460.

*The following weekend (Saturday 12 Sept.) a demonstration is taking place at Huntingdon Life Sciences (HLS), Barrack Road, Occold, Nr Eye, Suffolk. HLS carry out animal research for the chemical, pharmaceutical and agricultural industries. They own the world's largest primates and beagle laboratories and plan on expanding. Activists have pledged to "stop this thing before it starts". Demo commences at 12 noon at the main gates. For more information call: 01394 384583 or 01379 678622.

IN PRINT

A new book **'DiY Culture'** McKay (Pub: Verso, ISBN 1-85984-260-7) Irvine Welsh (Trainspotting) calls it, *"The most uplifting and empowering book you'll read in a long time"*. In the intro McKay raises some interesting points about ideology, but for those of you who are more interested in reading what's going on as contemporary history is being lived, the book is a series of chapters written by activists involved in alternative media, early party scene, Road Protest *** For a well researched but readable copy of what's going on in the world of chemicals get **TOXCAT**. Copies are £2 + SAE from PO Box 29, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral, L66 3TX.

Puffing in Pompey

The 4th Smokey Bears Picnic got off to a slow start this time round with tokers drifting to the common. Police tried it on, attempting to search people until the more clued up pointed out they could only search outer clothing in public. A kite in the shape of a dope leaf was confiscated but as more numbers turned up the tables were finally turned and the Plod beat a hasty retreat to the edges of the common where they s(k)ulked for the rest of the day. With the way clear a two foot long Camberwell Carrot was produced and passed around the 1,000 strong crowd until the soggy roach disintegrated. There were no arrests this year despite everyone openly smoking. There will be another Smokey Bear Picnic to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the illegalisation of cannabis on September 28th, this time in Hyde Park, meet at 1 o'clock at Speakers Corner.

A DEVELOPING GREED

The first protest camp has been set up to stop a housing development in **Nantwich** near Crewe. The proposed 500 house estate and 4 mile road threatens rare Black Poplars, (only 2,000 left in the UK), an orchard and hedge rows, some of which are up to 30 foot thick! The camp already has 4 treehouses, a tunnel and a tower. There is unanimous local support with even local builders donating materials. For directions ring 01270 560645 ****Toytown Camp** is an Autonomous Free Zone now in it's forth week in leafy Cheltenham. The camp's defending a beautiful piece of woodland right in the middle of Cheltenham, under threat from another (Waitrose) supermarket, and keeping a very close eye on a nearby 3-acre playing field, the planned site for a 600ft 'leisure shed' with bowling alley, another multiplex cinema, another road - the same old Babylon bollox - with a half-a-dozen treehouses, numerous benders and tepees. "Toytown Camp" is: Just off the A40 junction of the M5, then a short bus ride into the middle of town. Ask anybody for the St James' site or the protest camp at: The Old Village Great Western Road Cheltenham Glos GL50 3QN phone box: 01242 525280 mobile: 0797 131 6597 email: toytown@stones.com.

* **URGENT!** is the newsletter of the Urban Regeneration and Greenfield Environment Network with tonnes of info on housing developments around the country. Issue 2 out now 50p + SAE Box HN, 111 Magdalen Rd., Oxford, OX4 1RQ Tel 07000 785202 email info@urgent.org.uk

...and finally...

A millionaire car dealer in a Rutland village has been rebuffed in court after attempting to sue a nearby farmer for having sheep that were too muddy. *"Mud was inevitable"* said Judge Victor Hall as he threw out Frank Sytner's application to Leciester Crown Court for a restraining order against farmer Edward Baines and his untidy flock.

While Judge Hall counselled that people living in the countryside had to expect such things, Sytner's wife Elizabeth told the court of her own rustic ordeal; "I was in my garden and heard cows making a noise in the field. It was annoying, so I went to see what was happening" When told it was normal for cows to be heard in the countryside, Mrs Sytner replied "Yes, it's unfortunate, isn't it?"

Sytner was ordered to pay his own and Mr. Baines legal costs, estimated at £35,000.

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers not to believe rather large corporations when they tell you that they only exist for the good of humanity. They are telling fibs. Rather large ones at that. And if you believe them then you are living in cloud cuckoo land. Honest.