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END OF THE WORLDSFICIAL

'The continued poverty of the majority of the planet's inhabitants and excessive consumption by the minority are the two major causes of environmental degradation. The present course is unsustainable and postponing action is no longer an option.'

Land degradation, rainforest destruction, species extinction - are we going to find the planet dies of all this before depression at the thought of it drives us all to suicide? Not necessarily, says the UN Environment Program in a handy new report on the state of the Earth's natural environment, entitled *Global Environment Outlook 2000*. But the report identifies world water shortage, destruction of coral reefs and global warming as full-scale emergencies, as well as identifying a new threat - nitrogen pollution.

Hold on to your hats - we were so stirred by the urgency of this major new UN report, we cancelled our annual SchNEWS staff whaling trip. So, is it possible to encapsulate next millenium's prospects for the whole of humanity and the global environment into one mediafriendly soundbite? Apparently not, the UN would have us believe. GEO 2000 amounts to perhaps the most thorough-going, wide-ranging and (it says) authoritative stocktake ever of the state of the Earth's natural environment - but don't drop it on your foot.

More dense than David Bellamy's beard, this weighty tome is based on contributions from UN agencies, 850 individuals and more than 30 environmental institutes institutes - all of whom, we trust, faithfully use recycled toilet roll. In terms sometimes as dry as Brazil's growing desert, it reads as a roll-call of the the world's top emergent ecological nightmares:

*Hose-pipe bans will be the least of our worries as the water cycle fails to cope with demand.

*City-dwellers are choking as urban air pollution is reaching crisis dimensions, especially in the megacities of the southern hemisphereland degradation has reduced fertility and agricultural potential.

*More than half the world's coral reefs are threatened by human activities.

*With global warming upon us, things are hotting up - 1998 was the hottest year on record, and extreme weather events had left 3 million people dead in the last five years.

*Many marine fisheries have been grossly overexploited.

*The planet's species are still being wiped out; one quarter of the world's mammal species are now at significant risk of extinction.

Cheer up! We're assured that the report was not sponsored by the makers of prozac. In fact, the report's author's are at great pains to take a balanced tone - stressing the successes to date of environmental policy, and that further change is achievable. So will it be enough to use a CFC-free fridge in which to store your giant panda steaks?

Not quite. As excessive consumtion in rich countries is one of the main causes of environmental degradation, 'A tenfold reduction in resource consumption in the industrialized countries is a necessary long-term target", the report says, cutting boldly to the chase. That's radical stuff; though the report takes a carefully non-combative tone, saying; 'Ideally, such measures must simultaneously maintain the living standards of the wealthy, [as well as] upgrade the living standards of the disadvantaged'. Hmn.

The UN - that idealists' graveyard - may have greater resources of optimism to draw on than political power. Still, Klaus Töpfer, the executive director of the UNEP holds it 'essential to force multinational companies to be accountable for their actions'. Yet while the US continues to punish French local industry, waging a trade war on behalf of the multinational corporate players it champions, it has been forgetting to keep up with its contributions to UN funding . For the real power lies elsewhere: though sadly, corporate boardrooms and governement trade departments are not so easy to catch a glimpse of as the GEO 2000 report, even if the latter lists some of their effects on the rest of us. Such is the nature of global power elites

Fortunately, GEO 2000 finds further cause for optimism a bit closer to the ground, lauding a "public....now much more concerned about environmental issues. Popular movements in many countries are forcing authorities to make changes." As those in France attacking McD's in opposition the US trade sanctions know well. So what if we can't all be so determined in our resistance?....Pass the Prozac.

SchNews fave mag, **The Ecologist** 01403 786 726 sgc@mag-subs.demon.co.uk

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For having a house party!

12 people chilling out in the afternnon after a house parrty in St.Pauls, Bristol were told by police to vacate the premises. When they refused 30 cops forcefully evicted everyone including the tenant, who was arrestedand held for 25 hours. She appeared in court the next day and was bound over to keep the peace.

JACKSON'S FIVERS

SchNEWS can't resist having another pop at Sir Ken Jackson, top dog at the AEEU engineering union, who told the TUC last week his workers didn't want to strike - they want to work...so Ford workers from the AEEU prompltly went on strike. On Tuesday it got even better, with a 24 hour unoffical walk-out at the Millennium Dome, the Royal Opera House, the Jubilee Line extension plus sites in Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Newcastle, Hull and Sandwich in Kent. Sir Ken told workers they could except no pay rises - and anyway some of them where earning a fortune already. We wonder if he let them know his annual pay is over £62,000 a year-plus car, mobile phone and £15,000 bridging loan thrown in for good measure.

LET THEM EAT CAKE

The council of the Nord Pas de Calais region have some quaint old traditions for dealing with debtors - if you can't pay yer taxes, or even for your kids' school meals, the bailiffs pin the details of your poverty outside the town hall, and then come round and nick ver furniture. These medieval-style repomen work for the tax office, which has wide powers to dish out fines and repossessions for any debts. Interestingly, as a hangover from France's more leftie past, the tax office also has powers to reschedule or even cancel debts, though they haven't used these much of late, preferring to send out the bailiffs to reinforce social exclusion in the world's fourth richest nation. In April this year 40 activists occupied the St Omer council offices, duped two bailiffs into entering the building, and then held them hostage while their victims related the effects of repossessions on their lives. Things have got pretty bad in St Omer: when an unemployed family recently failed to pay their £50 telly license, the diligent tax office spent £1000 sending the goon squad 'round to their gaff. This time, however, they were welcomed by members of AC and ADEPA, local direct action groups, who dully stopped them carting off the familly's possessions. Naturally, five of them were nicked and are up on trial on Oct 19 - send letters/faxes of support to: ADEPA, 29 Rue Gambetta, 62500, St Omer, France. Fax: 0033-321-886789.

"SHOOT THE FUCKER"

On 23 September 1996, Diarmuid O'Neill was shot and killed by cops in house in West London. As he lay bleeding to death a cop stood on his head and then dragged him down two flights of steps out of the house, leaving him on the ground outside and denying him life saving medical treatment for 1/2 an hour. Not surprisingly Diarmuid died. Initial media coverage claimed there had been a gun battle in a house that was being used as a bomb factory and an "IRA suspect " had been shot. The mainstream press had a field day, The Daily Mirror's headline, which carried a picture of the bloody steps, was "Don't cry for him. He was going to blow up the Channel Tunnel Tomorrow." The Met Police enthusiastically supported all this misinformation, until they conceded that Diarmuid O'Neill was unarmed, no weapons or explosives were found in the house and the only shots fired were by the cops. So what happened then? Lets start with the briefing just before the raid, when cops were shown a film of the aftermath of the Canary Wharf bombing and a video of an alleged cache of weapons. They were whipped into frenzy, given guns, CS gas and then let loose in the house in Hammersmith. A transcript of the surveillance tape of the raid reveals that the police fired massive quantities of CS gas into the house (so much so that four days after the killing forensic cops still had to wear gas masks), all the men inside the house had surrendered and Diarmuid was struggling to open a door when he was initially shot. As Diarmuid lay bleeding on the floor one of the cops can be heard clearly to order an officer to "shoot the fucker", which he duly obeyed. No wonder the cops preferred the media version of events that day.

The shooting was referred to the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) who then took 2 1/2 years to complete their inquiry and then a further 6 months for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to conclude that despite police lying about the events of that day there is insufficient evidence to prosecute! The O'Neill family and the Justice for Diarmuid O'Neill campaign are in disbelief that the PCA & CPS have reached this decision despite a post-mortem clearly showing "that Diarmuid was shot when he was seen and known to be unarmed repeatedly" and are calling for Jack Straw to set up an Independent public enquiry. Help change Jack Straws mind by faxing him direct on 0171-273-2190 or for more info; Justice for Diarmuid O'Neill Campaign, BM Box D. WC1 O'Neill, London 3XX justicedoneill@btintrnet.com Tel; 0181 749 2588/ 0411 784 110

COPS CATCHNAKED FUNGUS

Zoe "Fungus" Weir decided to strip against the Strip at Cedar's Wood, a protest camp at the construction site of Manchester Airport's second runway. Zoe took off all her clothes (save her boots) and attached her head to a treehouse with a bicycle lock. Zoe's action delayed the eviction of the camp by five hours, and three bailiffs had to climb the tree and cut the lock with hydraulic cutters. The runway's completion is now 18 months behind schedule due to wet weather, the protests, and mysterious breakages of construction equipment. The woods are National Trust land, that are facing the chop because they apparently interfere with radar transmission. As SchNEWS went to press the second protest camp at nearby Arthur's Wood still has approximatley 40 people in treetops and tunnels. The protesters anticipate eviction in the next few days, and are asking for supporters to come up for the weekend and for a solidarity action on Monday morning. They also need food and climbing gear. Call Vanessa at 0797 480 3732.

SchNEWS in brief

After 2 asylum seekers were seriously hurt trying to bust out of Campsfield Detention Centre, Group 4 guards told detainees that their injuries would "stop others escaping." Maybe if a Group 4 guard was horribly maimed it would stop other psychos from joining the firm...** Don't forget Anti-McDonald's Day happening all over the globe on Saturday October 16th. For leaflets contact McLibel Support Campaign: Tel 0171 713 1269. www.mcspotlight.org. For the Birmingham event - meet 12 noon outside M&S in the High St. 0961 810 356.** Disabled Action Network will be demonstrating outside the Royal National Hospital, Bedford Way, London (nearest tube Euston) on 27 and 28th Sept as part of the 'Free our People' campaign. They want to stop disabled people being sent to nursing homes and institutions, and instead be able to live in the community with adequate support. Meet each day outside the hospital 9.30 am ** Campaign Against the Arms Trade is celebrating its 25th anniversary with a party at Union Chapel, Compton Terrace, London N1 (Angel Tube). Guests include comedian Mark Thomas, John Pilger, Jeremy Hardy and lots more. It's on Saturday 9th October, doors open 7.30 pm £10/7.50 conc. More details and tickets in advance 0171281 0297 ** Talking of Mark Thomas, he's got a new show on Channel 4 every Tuesday 11.05 pm. Essential. ** SchNEWS' favourite mass-murderer Gen Pinochet is back in court on Sept 27 - meet 10am at Bow St magistrates to let him know what you think of him, or 7-9pm Parliament Sq every Tues & Thurs to find out what's going on. Contact: Chile Cmte Against Impunity 0171-261-9578.** Protest against the genocide of Arizona's Navajo Indians, forced off their land to make way for coal mining and 'resettled' in the world's 2nd most radioactive site (after Chernobyl...). Meet 12 noon Oct 2nd outside US Embassy, Grosvenor Sq.**

THE REBEL ALLIANCE

Brighton's forum for direct action groups meets upstairs at The Hobgoblin, London Rd, Wednesday 29th Sept, 7pm. PLUS Screening of June 18 film.

LUMBERHACKS LOG-ON

Among the various horrors on the agenda for the Seattle WTO bash, is the Global Free Logging Agreement - a plot to scrap all controls on the environmental disaster that is the logging industry. Logging companies really aren't very nice to people either just ask any of the 'displaced'indigenous peoples of the Amazon, or for that matter, greenies in Canada. Activists in British Columbia have been camping out in the woods trying to stop the Interfor logging co from destroying the local rainforests - so the firm sent around 100 psychotic lumberjacks who burnt down the peace camp, smashed all the equipment, and attacked the 7 protestors there, hospitalising 3 of them. Clearly, the Free Logging Agreement needs attention, so come along to Seattle for the festi. Contact: No to WTO 2343 NW 100th Seattle WA 98177 USA www.tradewatch.org or ssoriano@igc.org

* Nasty logging company Boise Cascade (see SchNEWS 225) haS been banned from any further logging of the Boise Forest. OK, so the case was brought by the Idaho Sportsmans Congress, which was worried about "severely reduced hunting and fishing opportunities." After the ruling, ISC boss Ron Mitchell said "sporting folks of Idaho can breathe a sigh of relief." OK, the wildlife is probably less chuffed, but then, as Hunter Ron sez, "The real issue is, should we allow private corporations like Boise Cascade to continue trashing our public forests at taxpayer expense?"

Inside SchNEWS

John Bowden is a life-sentence prisoner who, since his conviction in the early 1980s, has campaigned vociferously for the rights of all prisoners. In the early 1990s he was one of the main organisers of a series of radical debates at Long Lartin. He has also been involved in direct action protests of many kinds, including a workstrike at Perth prison and a high-profile seige at Parkhurst . John is currently in the segregation unit at Long Lartin prison. On 6 September, John joined another prisoner who was already on dirty protest. He and between two and four others have been on it ever since, and is now on hunger strike as well. The water in the cells has been turned off. There have been no routine visits by doctors, Boards of Visitors or governors. John has been repeatedly threatened by prison officers and is denied sleep by them hammering on his door and turning the lights on and off. He has no access to the telephone and none of his letters are being sent out, although letters do appear to reach him. All supporters of prisoners' rights reading this are therefore urged to send cards andmessages of solidarity to John Bowden B41173, HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evasham, Worcs, WR11 5 TZ. Send letters of protest to the governor at the same address or fax them on 01386 832834. Or tel: 01386 830101.

more briefs

Any **pregnant mums** will be pleased to hear of Green Baby, a new Islington shop with a wide range of green kiddie stuff, including "everything to take the millennium baby sustainably into the next century, from real nappies, to organic toys" and, no doubt, tie-dye babygrows and junior yogurt-weaving kits...**
If you're worried about **fluoride** in the water coming to a town near you, get along to a public meeting on Wed 6th October 8pm at Willesden Library, 95 High Rd., Willesden Green Tel 0181 902 5949

...and finally... This weeks Greenwash Award goes to...

By using solar energy to drive the petrol pumps in 15 new service stations, BP/Amoco recently received an award (not for irony, but the Millennium Products award). After buying up many alternative energy companies, the oil giant is now the worlds largest investor in solar power. The Centre for Alternative Energy told SchNews, 'we can't imagine the global and political agendas involved in their (BP's) investment in solar energy'. Neither can we. Interestingly, last year, worldwide revenues from oil and gas producing activities fell by 24% (to \$124.6bn) so you might naively assume these companies are switching their focus to sustainable energy. Er, not quite - capital spending on oil exploration and development in the same year increased by 5% (to \$83bn) making the money invested in buying up a few (or even several) sustainable energy companies look like small beer. The burning (oil) question is - will BP/Amoco endanger the price of a barrel of oil by bringing in competing sustainable energy sources that are environmentally friendly, or keep them suppressed until oil is less abundant and profitable? Just ask the government, who recently approved oil contracts for developments off St Kilda- Britains only natural World Heritage Site, 100 miles off the Scotish coast, ranked alongside the Galapagos Island and the Great Barrier Reef. St Kilda's marine life is one of the most diverse ecosystems known whilst puffins, fulmars and gannets are among around a million breeding seebirds nesting in the island's cliffs. We're anticipating another greenwash award after they stick a duck-pond on top of the oil rig. disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers to get down the pub for last orders before last rites. Mine's a double. Honest

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