



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER UNCLEAR SCIENTIST

SchNEWS

Printed and Published in Brighton by Justice?



"Harris, there's no excuse for this industrial pollution, so I want you to find one."

Friday October 8th 1999

<http://www.schnews.org.uk/>

Issue 231 Free/Donation

EAT MY ISOTOPES

"There are a lot of long faces around here...It lends strength to the argument of the industry's opponents, who say nuclear power is inherently unsafe and should be phased out."

International Atomic Energy Agency Conference participant.

The nuclear disaster in Japan last Thursday could have come straight out of *The Simpsons*. Evil Mr. Burn's type bosses suspected of using a shadow instruction manual which encouraged workers to cut corners, and a bungling Homer-style supervisor who apparently told police that seven times the permitted uranium was used because he wanted to 'go home early'. (hmmm food).

But Japan's worst atomic explosion since Nagasaki is no joke for the workers and 300,000 residents living in a 10 km radius of the plant who were told to stay indoors and shut all doors and windows.

"D'OH"

The plant operator, JCO, has been accused of failing to give decent safety training to workers, and had no back-up emergency plans. The Tokaimura site was already the scene of Japan's worst nuclear accident two years ago, when another private firm let a fire in a reprocessing plant get out of control, due to inadequate safety systems. Do we detect a pattern here?

Of course, such terrible things could never happen here, could they? British Nuclear Fuels Ltd (BNFL)* and the UK Atomic Energy Authority have been quick to reassure us that *"in-depth safety procedures ensure that chain reactions do not start accidentally."* Would they be the same procedures that allowed BNFL to fake 68 test results for MOx fuel shipped to Japan this summer, and forge 22 safety checks on the next shipment? (See SchNEWS 221) Or the procedures that were found to have 146 safety flaws at Scotland's Dounreay plant alone?

The main cause of these flaws was identified as...yep, lack of control of private contractors: so, reassuringly, the UK government now plans to flog off more of the nuclear industry to Mr Burns & Co.

The International Atomic Energy Authority, with a fine sense of irony, described the accident as *"a huge psychological blow"* Presumably the psychological effects of receiving 4000 times the 'safe' radiation are fairly serious. Not serious enough,

however, to deter the Japanese govt, which has always said nuclear power is the only option for a "resource poor nation". SchNEWS was a little suprised to learn that Japan considers itself 'resource poor', especially as it has enormous potential for wind and wave generated power seeing as it's an island part surrounded by the Pacific. In fact, the Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) told SchNEWS that ever since the Climate Summit in the Japanese city of Kyoto in Dec. 97, the Centre has had loads of interest from the Japanese. A former director of CAT was a key-note speaker in their city of Sendai; The 14,000 inhabitants of a World Heritage Site, are looking at finding out how they can produce zero emissions, while a recent half hour documentary on CAT was recently shown on prime time TV.

ITCHY 'N' SCRATCHY

It seems everyone's into alternatives, except the government and nuclear companies. SchNEWS would never suggest that the Japanese military, who have been carefully limited since WWII, rather like having tons of weapons-grade nuclear material lying around, but one thing is certain: as long as they want the possibility of death and deformity, UK plc will keep giving it to 'em.

* BNFL told a House of Commons committee last year that it was hoping for between £2 billion - £4 billion worth of business from Japan, and depends on future orders to keep its Thorp reprocessing plant going.

Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Powys, SY20 9AZ Tel 01654 702400 www.cat.org.uk/

SCHNEWS STUDENT TRAINING DAY

OK, so for our last student training day we put the wrong date in SchNEWS, had it on the same day as Freshers Fayre and locked the SchNEWS we were gonna hand out in someone's bedroom. We need some help! So come along on Wednesday 20th October at 12 noon and see how it's all done. Call to book yer place now.

* Wanna keep fit? We need someone reliable to drop SchNEWS round town at various pubs and cafes every Friday afternoon.

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For carrying a portrait of the New York City mayor!

So, ok it was one showing 'zero tolerance' Giuliani wide-eyed and grimacing with a large piece of dung attached to his forehead. And the man holding the painting was Robert Lederman, President of the First Amendment rights group, outside the Brooklyn Museum of Art where there's been a big stink over the Sensations exhibition. This is the 40th time Robert has been falsely arrested since Mayor Giuliani was sworn into office. He has never been found guilty on any charge.

Seems like Giuliani doesn't like being portrayed as a shit-head.

THE PRICE OF LIFE

"We do not scrimp on spending money where it is necessary to deal with safety on the railways."

Great Western Trains

After the Clapham crash, there was a lot of talk about the Automatic Train Protection system, which would have prevented the accident, oh, and the Southall and Paddington crashes. After privatisation the new rail companies' "cost benefit analyses" calculated that each (preventable) train death would cost them £2.76m, and each life saved through ATP would cost £14m, so ATP wasn't good value.

P.S. Last year the rail operators got £1.2 billion in govt subsidies, and made £1.6 billion profit. Railtrack made a profit of £442 million. Train drivers start at £8 an hour - guess who'll get the blame.

AN APPLE A DAY

Biting into another tasteless supermarket apple, you'd never guess that over the centuries Britain has bred up to 6,000 varieties of the fruit, and that thanks to the climate can grow the best apples in the world (SchNEWS come's over all patriotic like). To celebrate this, Common Ground is holding the 10th Apple Day at Covent Garden's old apple market.

Unfortunately old orchards are being grubbed up like they're going out of fashion. Until the 1950s almost every farm had one, but in the last 30 years the total orchard area has declined by two thirds - that's 150,000 acres gone. As Common Ground point out "Our culture is diminished as the local varieties, the recipes, cider, songs, stories, knowledge of planting, grafting and pruning, wassailing (avin a piss-up - SchNEWS vocabwatch) and a great richness of wildlife are lost"

But it's not all bad news - in 10yrs 100 Community Orchards have been created. Apple Day is 21st October - for a list of events in your area send SAE to Common Ground, PO Box 25309, London, NW5 1ZA Tel 0171 267 2144 www.commonground.org.uk/appledayevents

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY OF ACTION OCT 12th

"Our armed path is not against skin colour but against the colour of money"

Zapatista proverb

MEXICO

On January 1st 1994 - the first day of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), people from the Chiapas region of Mexico calling themselves the Zapatistas, rose up against their government and the policies of corporate free trade. They have been fighting ever since and have called for a day of action on October 12th - the day after Columbus 'discovered the Americas'.

In the last few months the Mexican army has occupied key towns and the Zapatista's army bases in an attempt to cut off the rebels from the outside world. As links are being made between the Zapatistas, the radical electrical workers union and striking students, the Mexican govt and the international investment community is starting to get jumpy. They're squeezing the rebels enclaves with an extensive road building programme, which is violently defended by the army. The roads will serve as army access to Zapatistan strongholds in the forests and as a propaganda weapon for the govt, who claim they're bringing 'development' to the poor Indian region. Standing between the multinationals and their profits are a group of indigenous peoples whose cry of Ya Basta! (enough is enough!), inspires millions around the globe.

Contact: 'Zapatista Update' newsletter Box 19, 82 Colston St, Bristol BS1 5BB, Email kebele@marsbard.com. www.ezln.org, or www.mexicosolidarity.org

COLUMBIA

On September 21st Columbia granted a permit for U.S company Occidental Petroleum to begin exploratory drilling on the indigenous U'wa people's sacred ancestral homelands. The U'wa have denounced this decision as cultural and environmental genocide, and it will push them closer to their last resort - committing mass suicide. The U'wa have stood their ground despite intimidation, assault and murder of three of their supporters. We need to show Occidental and the Colombian government that activists around the world will stand with the U'wa. Contact: www.RAN.ORG email rags@ran.org or Nativenews@mLists.net

VENEZUELA

Calling themselves "Rainbow Warriors," the Pemón Indians from Venezuela's Amazon area knocked down an electricity tower and blocked a key highway linking the country to Brazil to protest construction of a high-voltage power line in Canaima National Park, which will permanently damage the fragile park and Indian communities. The Pemón have promised to knock down one tower a day until they reach an agreement with the authorities. For more info: gholz85@yahoo.com or forest-americas@igc.org

PERU

Mobil are about to decide whether to drill for natural gas in the isolated Candamo Valley. Mobil found the gas in one of the most unspoiled and biodiverse valleys left in the Amazon, and has until the end of February to do more exploration before deciding whether it'll release its claim on the valley - or go for future destructive 'development'. "I think it is one of the most pristine ecosystems around," says biologist Carol Mitchell. Daniel Winitzky, who made a film on the Candamo says "what is so incredible about this situation is that the decision is in the hands of a multinational corporation." Info: gholz85@yahoo.com

For more on indigenous struggles write to Dark Night Field Notes, PO Box 3629, Chicago, IL 60690-3629 email: darknight@igc.apc.org (Send £6/\$10 for a sample issue.)

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"JUST LEAVE US ALONE PLEASE"

Solidarity actions with the indigenous people of West Papua (also known as Irian Jaya) took place around the UK on Monday, targeting companies involved in exploiting the country's massive natural resources. Around Britain, the offices of Rio Tinto, ARCO (US oil co), British Gas were occupied, and three people got nicked. West Papua has been occupied by Indonesia since 1963 where it has unleashed one of the least known genocides of the 20th Century. Massacres, rape, torture, disappearances, the seizure of land - the usual. Result? Perhaps a sixth of the population (300,000 people) killed.

See the latest Do or Die zine. OPM Support Group, c/o 43 Gardner Street, BN1 1UN, www.eco-action.org/opm/

SchNEWS in brief

It's that time of the year again - the annual **Anarchist Bookfair** is taking place on Sat 16th October at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1, (Holborn tube) 10am till late with loads of stalls in the main foyer plus debates, meetings and video screenings throughout the day. For a copy of the programme send an SAE to 84b Whitechapel High St., London, E1 Tel 0181 533 6936 www.freespace.virgin.net/anarchistbookfair ** Well known festie burger crew **VEGGIES** will be celebrating their 15th Anniversary on Monday 18th October. Catch them at the bookfair on the Saturday, have a picnic with them in Nottingham on Sunday, followed by another party at their HQ The Rainbow Centre on Monday. Ring 0115 958 5666 or email: party@veggies.org.uk ** Following the recent High Court decision to grant a judicial review over the killing at work of **Simon Jones** (See SchNEWS 182), the Memorial Campaign are having a meeting on Tuesday 12th October 8pm at the London Unity Pub, Islington Rd., Brighton ** The second **Big Brother Awards** (See SchNEWS189) takes place at the London School of Economics on the 18th of this month. If you'd like an invite email simon@privacy.org or give SchNEWS a ring and we'll see if we can get you on the guest list mate.

** **Permaculture** conference at the Centre for Alternative Technology on Oct 29-31, Contact: steve.jones@cat.org.uk or 01654 702400. ... ** Procure the latest in warfare technology at the **AFCEA arms fair 27th - 29th Oct**, now at the Renaissance Hotel, Heathrow, after Belgium booted 'em out for being "politically and ethically undesirable". Details of actions from Campaign Against Arms Trade 0171 281 0297 ** Transport will be going from Brighton to the House of Lords next Monday (11th) where the **Welfare Reform Bill** is being discussed. Ring 01273 540717 to book your place ** **Anti-Fascist Action** are having an afternoon of discussion and film, including the recent 'Up to their knees in Fenian blood', at the Lux Cinema, 2-4 Hoxton Square, London, N1 6NU. 2.30-6pm 10th Oct ** **If Cloning is the Answer, What was the Question?** We're not sure either- so get this well informed briefing paper from: The CornerHouse, PO Box 3137, Station Road, Sturminster, Newton, Dorset, DT10 1YJ or cornerhouse@gn.apc.org ** There's a benefit gig for Mordechai Vanunu, the imprisoned Israeli anti nuke activist (in solitary confinement for the past twelve and a half years) on 23rd Oct at Conway Hall, London Tickets £8/4, contact the campaign to book Tel. 0171 378 9324, or email campaignq@vanunu.freemove.co.uk ** **Gathering Visions, Gathering Strength III** takes place on 15-17th October in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, and is a chance to make links and share campaigning skills for non violent direct action Tel 07971 302412 ** Apparently the **dog unit** of the Essex Police, recently on trial for cruelty to dogs, is looking for sponsorship for a new van, if you can help, ring 01245 223 616 **

J18th - THE SAGA CONTINUES

Seen the mugshots in the Daily Mail? Checked out the City of Londons 'rogues gallery' web-site? Well, this is a warning to any mischevious readers out there thinking of ringing up the SHOP-A-THUG hotline from a call box with wrong information. You'd be wasting police time, and that is a criminal offence you know, unlike working in the City and fucking over the planet and its inhabitants to make a fast buck. Hotline 0207 601 2222 www.cityoflondon.gov.uk

Y2K BOLLOCKS OF THE WEEK

SchNEWS usually has a no-poetry policy, but this one 'Y2K is coming' by Russell D Hoffman brought tears to our eyes.

"Y2K is coming of that you can be sure, and the tune that some are humming is "we haven't found a cure".

"Lies may come and lies may go, but the truth remains forever, Y2K could be quite a show — and it's more certain than the weather.

"Low Level Radiation kills as well as does the big stuff. Anyone who says different fills You with useless lies and kids' stuff"

Sorry readers, that's enough.

SMOKEY BANDIT

The May Day Cannabis Festival at Clapham Common, part of a global event that took place in 38 cities and was enjoyed by over 15,000 people and held peacefully with no arrests, no sound level violations and no complaints from local residents. Despite this, organiser Shane Collins is being prosecuted for the heinous crime of permitting dancing and music (without license) and may receive 6 months in prison and a £20,000 fine. Shane told SchNEWS, "Lambeth is wasting Council Taxpayers' money to prosecute me for arranging for the community to have a good time. These proceedings are an attempt to criminalise low key music and dancing at community events and I believe that it is possibly politically motivated." He will be pleading not guilty at Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton at 2.00pm on 5/11/99. To join the petition or give funds to support his defence, send to: International Cannabis Coalition, c/o Green Party, 1A Waterlow Rd, London, N19 5 NJ

...and finally...

Sometimes it DOES take a Rocket Scientist

You all know the story about pesky birds that keep colluding with aircraft, well Scientists at NASA have come up with a cunning plan. They built a gun specifically to launch dead chickens at the windshields of airliners, military jets and the space shuttle, all travelling at maximum velocity, to test the strength of the windshields.

British engineers heard about the gun and were eager to test it on the windshields of their new high speed trains. Arrangements were made, and a gun was sent to the British engineers. When the gun was fired, the engineers stood shocked as the chicken hurtled out of the barrel, crashed into the shatterproof shield, smashed it to smithereens, blasted through the control console, snapped the engineer's backrest in two and embedded itself in the back wall of the cabin, like an arrow shot from a bow.

The horrified Britons sent NASA the disastrous results of the experiment, along with the designs of the windshield, and begged the US scientists for suggestions. NASA responded with a one-line memo: "Defrost the chicken."

disclaimer

Schnews warns all nuclear scientists if they're gonna put it about with their uranium rods behind closed lead-lined doors they'll be glowing. Honest.