



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER OFF TO BOGNOR REGIS

# SchNEWS

Printed and Published in Brighton by Justice?

Fri 9th June 2000

<http://www.schnews.org.uk/> Issue 262 Free/Donation



## WISH YOU WEREN'T HERE

*"I hope you can come back to this country one day and see the people when they are not frightened. Burma will be here for many years, so tell your friends to visit us later. Visiting now is tantamount to condoning the regime."* Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's democratically elected leader

Where do you fancy going for your hols this year? What about Burma? This country offers the unique holiday experience of supporting one of the world's most brutal, military dictatorships. In the run up to 'Visit Myanmar\* Year' in 1996, up to 10 million people experienced forced labour and nearly 300 lives were lost so that the infrastructure (roads, railways, hotels) could meet the standard tourists expect. Still, what's a few dead foreigners when you can sell a few books. Step forward the ultra-cool essential backpackers guide to the universe, the Lonely Planet. They have just brought out its new guide, and it's all about visiting Burma, despite the democratically elected opposition asking tourists to give their country a miss until democracy is restored. The Burma Campaign and Tourism Concern are calling for a boycott of Lonely Planet's merchandise until they withdraw their latest guide. The company hit back saying they care and that they'd made a donation of £4,500 to the Burma Relief Centre in Thailand, which supports Burmese refugees fleeing the regime. But when Pippa Curwen, the director of the Relief Centre, found out the donation was being used as a publicity stunt she returned every penny of their money telling Lonely Planets "as you are aware... we believe that foreign tourism is one of the factors sustaining the regime, and prolonging the kind of misery we are witnessing daily. Thus we would prefer not to be complicit in any defence your organisation is making."

### Should I go or should I stay now?

Tourism is now the world's largest industry, employing 1 in 10 of the world's labour force. It is promoted in developing countries as an alternative to the supposedly more destructive industries such as mining or agribusiness. For the richest 20 percent of the world that can afford to travel overseas, this means that we get increasingly more choice at low prices. But in our exotic overseas holiday destinations we are leaving behind us a trail of destruction of environments, cultures and lives.

SchNEWS heard from an activist working in Goa, a coastal Indian state where fish curry is the staple food, how many locals

can no longer afford to buy fish for their families because, thanks to tourists, the prices have gone sky-high. Goa has been drastically affected by the tourist industry, economically, environmentally and socially. Hotels and resorts require massive amounts of water for western style toilets, baths and swimming pools. So while the village of Sinquerim is denied piped water daily, the nearby Taj Holiday Village has a constant 24 hour supply. Tourists leave with their fond memories of Goa, but it is suffering from droughts and severely polluted water. Now tourist numbers are declining as travellers search for less crowded and polluted beaches, and the false hopes of a few locals who benefit from the tourist industry are shattered.

Kenya has become a popular holiday destination for the socially conscious 'eco-traveller'. But what the glossy brochure doesn't tell you is that in order to make way for the parks, entire communities of indigenous Masai tribes were evicted from their lands, hunting was made illegal and no compensation was given. Outside of the reserves the Masai have been forced to overgraze their lands. Without their livestock the Masai are starving, many have left for the city. These National Parks have now become almost entirely the reserve of foreign tourists. In the meantime Kenya's wildlife has declined by nearly half. Kenya is dependant on the tourist dollar which accounts for 40 percent of it's foreign exchange earnings, so if the wildlife disappears and tourists stop visiting Kenya the impact on the economy will be immense.

Where the rich are visiting the poor, using tourist operators and airlines owned by large multinationals, the tourist industry can never be a positive means of the redistribution of global wealth, as it has been argued.

### RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

**Learn about the country:** Respect people's culture and values.

**Buy local:** Consider donating to local community projects.

**Get to know local people:** Helps to demystify stereotypes of people and cultures.

**Don't be judgemental:** Don't impose your views and culture upon theirs.

**Pay a fair price:** Remember that your bargain is another's low wages.

**Help the community:** Find out who benefits when booking local tours.

**Remember that some communities don't want visitors. If in doubt, don't go.**

### CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

Go to jail cos your kids won't go to school.

Jennifer Gibson-Washer was recently given a 3 day jail sentence because her teenage kids were bunking off school. Under a Pennsylvania law, parents face 5 days in jail for every day their child bunks off. About 100 parents are summoned to the "truancy court" every month for a spot of what one Judge admits is a form of public shaming. He barks out reprimands "take off your hat", "pull up your pants", "look at me when I talk to you" - all in the interest of 'recreating a culture of discipline' of course.

According to a study by the World Bank on average 55% of the money spent by foreign tourists in the third world returns to the West. Survival International state that "It has become increasingly clear that tourism is not a benign alternative to logging mining or agribusiness. More often than not tourism violates tribal peoples right to control their own lands, futures and development. It usually commodifies their cultures and distorts their economies".

Oh well, looks like your holier-than-thou SchNews is off to Bognor Regis again for our summer holidays.

\* The military dictatorship have changed the name of Burma to Myanmar.

**Tourism Concern** have recently published 'The Community Tourism Guide' by Mark Mann which lists tourism projects that benefit local communities Tel 02077533330. [www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)

**The Goa Foundation** are a voluntary organisation who are resisting tourist development in the region. They are currently looking for English speaking volunteers to work on an eco-tourism project at The Other India Bookstore, Above Mapusa Clinic 403507, Goa, India email [oib@goal.dot.net.in](mailto:oib@goal.dot.net.in)

**The Burma Campaign UK**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Bickerton House, 25/27 Bickerton Rd., London, N19 5JT Tel 0207 281 7377 [www.burmacampaign.org.uk](http://www.burmacampaign.org.uk)

**Recommended Reading** "Ancient Futures - Learning from Ladakh" by Helena Norberg-Hodge

"Fish, Curry, Rice" by Claude Alvares

\* Scientists have recently predicted that by 2015, half of the annual destruction of the ozone layer and 15 percent of greenhouse gas emissions will be caused by air traffic. A single transatlantic return flight emits half the yearly carbon dioxide admissions of an average person, or put another way the same used by an average African in a lifetime.

## NATIONAL AFFRONT

**"Bring along the family, wife, kids, we want this march to be our CARNIVAL, and show the media the NF are the party for the family. The sun will shine on the NF on Saturday."**

National Front circular

**"While the NF remains a poor cousin to the BNP, it is becoming an increasingly active political organisation. Under [Eddie] Morrison's political direction and [Terry] Blackham's street organisation, the NF is becoming a far more effective and dangerous operation".** Searchlight magazine

Last Saturday the National Front held another march in Margate in an attempt to whip up more hatred against refugees. The NF have eagerly seized upon the prejudice around asylum seekers created by the media and major political parties, and are now exploiting it for all it is worth in an attempt to reassert the nationalist message. Around 80 NF members enjoying the protection of 200 police along with dogs, were met by only a handful of anti-fascists who still managed to prevent them from completing the full route of their march. Unfortunately they did succeed in holding a rally on the seafront where they had considerable local support. Seven arrests were made for public order offences, 5 of them anti-fascists and 2 NF members. Later in the day a fascist gang returned to Margate and attempted to attack anti-fascists who were in a pub waiting for friends to be released from custody.

The NF took this march to be a victory for their cause and are now threatening to return again in Margate on June 17<sup>th</sup> - and every fortnight after that. As one fascist stated, "We will not let the people of Margate down and we will get these criminal Asylum Seekers out! No surrender!" It is essential that they are met with strong opposition, last Saturday's march could perhaps have been prevented if more had turned out. One anti-fascist complained "The tragedy is that if only 300 people had turned up, the march could have been halted and if 500 people had turned up they would have been trashed."

\* For an excellent read on how fascists were stopped in the mid 1940's in Britain by being physically kicked off the streets read "The 43 Group" by Morris Beckman

## Positive SchNEWS

Sustrans (Sustainable transport) is an organisation that works on practical projects to encourage people to cycle and walk more. Their flagship project the National Cycle Network officially opens in June with an initial 5,000 miles completed. There are plans to expand this to 10,000 miles by 2005. The Network consists of on-road and traffic free routes covering all parts of the country: from the blossom of Kent's fruit orchards, the brooding Trossach Hills of Scotland, fields of buttercups alongside the delightfully quiet lanes that cross the Lake District and smoggy road rage cities. Maps are available covering different routes and an official guide book has been produced. Cyclists can join in the opening of the Network by joining the World's Largest Cyclethon: a huge series of events countrywide from 22-25 June. To find out further details of the Network contact: 0117 9290888 [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

\* The network has so far cost £207 million, with the Highways Agency coughing up a mere £11 million, about one-tenth of what they spent on building the Newbury Bypass.

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## SchNEWS in brief

Two hundred cheeky people dropped their kecks at the weekend, outside Buckingham Palace to show their respect to the Royals. Meanwhile the Scottish Separatist Group are planning to demonstrate when the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh have a public walk-about in Inverness High Street on the morning of Monday July 3<sup>rd</sup> [www.angelfire.com/sc2/ssgscotland/index.html](http://www.angelfire.com/sc2/ssgscotland/index.html) \*\*Action against the Toll Motorway who are campaigning against the **Birmingham Northern Relief Road** are now holding weekly protests outside the office of the company heading the project. Every Thursday at Midland ExpressWay Ltd, 737 Warwick Road, Solihull, B91 3DG. Also picnics every Saturday on the route of the proposed road at Public Playing Field, Hednesford Road, Brownhills West. Contact ATOM 07818 687742. \*\* The Campaign Against the **Rochford Outer Bypass** has been relaunched as the new Tory Council are reopening discussions on the road, which will pass through acres of green belt and ancient woodlands near Southend, contact them at [campaignsd@hotmail.com](mailto:campaignsd@hotmail.com) \*\* **Big Blether** is a gathering to 'inspire, encourage and bring together' those involved in direct action, peace issues and campaigning for social justice and generally find out what's going on in Scotland. It's on June 30-July 2<sup>nd</sup> at Talamh, Lanarkshire (sorry - no dogs) 0131 557 6242 [bigblether@j12.org](mailto:bigblether@j12.org) \*\* **Stonehenge 2000 Free Festival** Yep folks, not only are we 'allowed' access to the Stones this year, [Schnews 261] there will also be a free festival 20 miles from the Stones from Friday 16<sup>th</sup> up until the Solstice. Details phone 07931 131233 for directions on the 16<sup>th</sup> onwards. [Summer Solstice 2.45am BST Sunrise 4.59am] \*\* **Undercurrents** will be putting on a film show on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> June @ Friends Meeting House, 43 St Giles, Oxford. Films include J18, Big Rattle In Seattle, A16 [Washington] and MayDay. This will be followed by a talk and discussion on the planned demos in Prague on 26 Sept. Tel. 01865 203622 for more info \*\* **John Brock**, jailed for four years for being in charge of a homeless centre where drugs were secretly traded, [Schnews 242] will be spending his 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday in the clink. Send cards and stuff to John Brook 3M 4946, HM Bedford, St Loyes Street, MK40 18G \*\* **The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)** have set up a new e-mail discussion list. Join the list by sending a blank e-mail to the following address: [IWW-UK-subscribe@egroups.com](mailto:IWW-UK-subscribe@egroups.com). To find out a bit more about them check out [www.iww.org](http://www.iww.org). \*\* **Newcastle GeneNo!**, the anti-genetics group have an excellent new booklet out telling the truth behind the newly opened International Centre for Life, a genetics showcase inviting the public to absorb the lies. For copies send an SAE to GeneNo!, PO Box 1 TA, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 1TA. \*\*

Stop The Arms Trade Week takes place from the 10<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> June, and later in the month, the **Eurosatory Arms Fair Exhibition** at Le Bourget, Paris is happening - promising to be the biggest European arms exhibition of its type ever. Campaign If you fancy some direct action there's transport from London leaving Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June, returning Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>. Estimated costs £60 per person which includes basic accommodation. For details of both events ring Campaign Against Arms Trade 020 7281 0297 [enquiries@caat.demon.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@caat.demon.co.uk) \*\***Help!** We need someone to distribute SchNEWS for one month.

\*\* For an updated list to help you party and protest throughout the summer and beyond, check out our website

## RADIO RENTAL

Do you live in constant fear of the TV Licensing inspectors? Well panic no more, in fact sit back, relax and tune into your favourite programmes - you're perfectly safe! Thanks to a 1987 House of Lords ruling, the licensing officers' powers are not so great as they appear to be. The ruling was brought in following the case of Jeremy Judd, a pirate radio DJ who was fined under the 1949 Wireless Telegraphy Act. Judd appealed against the confiscation of his equipment and the case ended up in the House of Lords. During the summing up, the Lords challenged the 1949 law which makes it an offence to "use" a radio or TV without a license, stating that the word 'use' had to be taken in its literal sense. This means that licensing officers have to find you actually watching a television that does not have a license, simply having a television on in the house does not constitute using it. Not surprisingly, this ruling is relatively unknown. Also, they need to have a warrant to enter a house where they suspect an unlicensed television is in use. So there we have it, feel free to watch your TV, just make sure that you walk away from it if a licensing officer happens to pop round for tea!

## LANDLESS

A member of the Brazilian Landless Movement, Mr. Jorge Neri, will be visiting England from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> this month - trying to get international support for a trial where police are up on charges of murder.

On April 1996 19 people were murdered and were mutilated when police opened fire and beat protesters at Eldorado dos Carajas, Brazil. The 1,500 protesters had been blocking a road in protest against delays in land reforms. Currently 1 percent of the population own 46 percent of the land. Last year, three police officers were initially found innocent of any crimes in a court of law. But, after international and national outrage, the trial was suspended. The next session of the trial will commence in July of this year. However, the newly nominated judge who specifically asked to take on the case has ruled against the movement in many other cases. To find out where Jorge is talking ring 01865 773411 [goodman@pobox.com](mailto:goodman@pobox.com)

## ...and finally...

News just in tells us that the dull and dreary game of golf could be set to become the next big revolutionary activity. So gone are the days of the sport being purely an executive's favourite way of winding down - the game is back, but with political clout. Last week saw the Anarchist Golfing Association take up their clubs and head for the Pure Seed Testing research facilities, USA for their first nocturnal golfing tournament. The game certainly went with a swing and in a mere 16 strokes large areas of a genetic experiment site were torn up. Pure Seed Testing breed and develop genetically modified grasses designed for use in golf courses, putting greens and croquet lawns which rather defeats the biotech industry's claim that their work is helping to feed the world. "These crops are grown for profit and the pleasure of the rich and have no social value" said one golfer, "We see them as a destroyer of all things wild." The tournament came to a spectacular finish as golfers reached the 18<sup>th</sup> hole by invading two research greenhouses to halt work and spread the anti-GM message!

## disclaimer

SchnNEWS warns all trippers to give us a break. Honest.