



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER PUMP-ACTION

SchNEWS

Printed and Published in Brighton by Justice?



Friday 15 September 2000

www.schnews.org.uk

Issue 275 Free/Donation

CARMAGEDDON

"Anyone who, at the age of 29, still uses public transport should consider themselves a failure"- Margaret Thatcher

'Avin' it anti-capitalist protestors, environmentalists and trade unionists are this week blocking oil terminals over the government's failure to act over climate change. The police stand idly by saying there is nothing they can do. Tanker drivers refuse to work saying they cannot possibly cross a picket line and they have the full support of their oil company bosses; all the while the tabloid press congratulate the demonstrators for their courage and determination - and criticise the government for not listening to the 'silent majority'.

Yes, well... you could bet yer last pint of 4-star that the coppers would not be 'standing idly by' if the nation's gas-guzzlers were forced to go thirsty over anything as silly as the environment. The reported 85% national support for the actions against fuel price rises this week serves instead to paint a sorry picture of a society addicted to unlimited fossil fuel consumption. The we-have-the-right-to-drive-anywhere-we-like-for-as-little-cost-as-possible school of motoring looks with dewy eyes to America, where petrol costs less than Coca-Cola. But even there, in a country so car-dependent that a pedestrian in Dallas is automatically classed by cops as 'suspicious', public disquiet over 'extortionate pricing' is erupting.

Despite the high fuel prices, motorists still don't pay their true cost of driving. £23 bn is raised per year from road transport taxes, but the government's own figures show that the true annual cost in deaths, health, environment, and congestion is £42 bn. Other government figures show that in real terms the cost of private motoring hasn't changed in 25 years- while train fares have gone up by 53% and bus fares by a mental 87%! 40 years ago, half Britain's freight went by rail- now it's only 7% even though each tonne carried on the road gives out 80% more carbon dioxide (CO2) pollution. Road transport accounts for 24% of Britain's CO2 emissions- the main pollutant responsible for global climate change. By 2100, the boffins reckon, CO2 levels will match those of the Eocene era 50m years ago- when London was a steaming mangrove swamp. Better watch out for the crocs, cockneys...

And now OPEC (the Oil Producing and Exporting Countries) have agreed to increase the production of oil to try to ease

prices. So, motorists, you won't have to soil those precious feet just yet. Unfortunately, those extra barrels will just happen to add another 1/2 % to the total global output of CO2 at a time when the world is committed under the 1997 Kyoto Treaty to reducing emissions by 7%...

Now you may be wondering why a force as mighty as the oil industry seems to be meekly shrugging its shoulders and saying it can do nothing about a few pissed-off bods blocking the gateway. One of the oil barons crying crocodile tears over the fact that he cannot possibly force his workers to cross picket lines because of fear of intimidation is none other than Lord Sterling. A big admirer of Thatcher, his lordship merrily bussed strike breakers through picket lines more than a decade ago during a ferry dispute in Dover, so SchNews smells something fishy here. Could this be an oil industry taking the opportunity to quietly 'remind' the government just how important it is in the run-up to the next Climate Change Conference in the Hague in November?

There's also the little matter of the Climate Change Levy, too. Britain-keen to look green- proposed it as a result of the 1997 Kyoto Climate Change Summit. Companies using loads of fossil fuels would have to pay very high tax, which predictably ain't popular with the companies. The oil industry might not be too happy either, seeing as their customers would naturally try to use less oil...

GLOBAL SHEIKH UP...

The past few weeks have seen a flurry of frightening reports on the impact of climate change. An ice-breaker taking American tourists to the North Pole got there to find that for the first time in 50 million years, there was no ice to break.

Dr Malcolm McKenna, American Mu-

Usually, yer Car/Government/Babylon-bashin' SchNews would be doing gooeey cartwheels about such paralysing direct action. So why not now? Shouldn't we support all strikes? Well, though it's cool when people discover how powerful they can be when they start to say 'No', we reckon there's more to the success of this action than meets the eye. After all, should we big up the Chilean trucker's strike of the early '70's- which turned out to be a CIA backed attempt to destabilise the lefty government, making way for General Pinochet?

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For using a wheel barrow ... somebody was arrested for wheel barrowing their tat away after the council, backed up by the cops, decided it was for the bin. This follows other council attacks on the estate in Manchester which include bulldozing a kids playground and closing an underground cinema.

seum of Natural History commented "I don't know if anybody in history has ever got to 90 degrees N to be greeted by water, not ice. Some people who pooh-pooh global warming might wake up if shown that even the pole is beginning to melt." The petrol crisis has also ironically overshadowed the government's current Flood Awareness Week. And the government's own transport White Paper reckons 24,000 UK deaths each year are due to air pollution - to which road traffic was the major contributor.

Luckily, we can all go back to not thinking about it soon: SchNEWS has heard of a new law which'll deal with the rabble blocking the oil refineries. After all, as the petrol protesters are using action which:

"is designed to influence the government", "is made for the purpose of advancing a... political cause", and "creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public"- (ie. the emergency services not having enough fuel), then under Section 1 of the new Terrorism Act (see SchNEWS 268) all those decent-working-bloke truckers, farmers and cabbies can look forward to a truncheon round the chops and a spell in the nick!!

* Read 'Autogeddon' by Heathcote Williams- the whole sordid story of the motor car in one big epic poem! Great stuff.

* Next Friday (22nd) is Car Free Day and preparations in Europe seem to be coming along nicely! Tel 0208 9460912 www.eta.co.uk

OIL GO FOR THE ALTERNATIVE

*Denmark is planning to generate 50% of its energy from wind by 2050

*Most municipal buses in France run on bio-diesel made from rape seed oil.

*The Scottish island of Islay has just set up the worlds' first commercial wave power generator: the UK could generate all its power by collecting only 0.1% of the energy available around the coast!

*Visit the Centre for Alternative Technology, Machynlleth, Wales; learn sustainable solutions 01654 702400 www.cat.org.uk

Up The Doof

On the other side of the world...guess what happens when the demonstrations are anti-capitalist...

As Sydney prepares itself for protests around the Olympics, anti-corporate campaigners have been busy in Melbourne where the World Economic Forum (WEF) held its Asia Pacific Economic Summit earlier this week. The WEF is an annual corporate knees-up for political and business leaders, academics and media luvvies. (see SchNEWS 246). Their intentions are to strike up business deals, facilitate free trade and generally continue in the same vein as SchNEWS' other favourites the World Trade Organisation. In fact the idea of the WTO came out of a WEF get-together, so you get the idea of the kind of people they are.

Resistance to the conference was impressive, with umbrella group S11 organising early on and arranging counter-conferences and teach-ins. On Monday around 10,000 protestors successfully blockade all entrances to the summit. According to a conference official, an estimated 200 of the 800 delegates never made it to the summit, whilst some of them had to be flown in by helicopter and others ferried down the river Yarra in small boats getting very wet in the process!

Police – inexperienced but supposedly wary of fanning the flames of Seattle-style unrest – attempted to force protestors apart with batons and brought in horses to storm the blockade lines. There were injuries on both sides – including two New Zealand Greens MPs – and some protestors were hospitalised. Despite all this the blockades were successfully maintained, mounting a serious obstacle to the conference. Everyone's favourite billionaire Bill Gates sadly had to cancel two of his speeches outside the conference including one to local schoolchildren. Later in the day bands and speakers took to the stage, and the day ended with a doof* when a sound system on the back of a truck rolled up.

For more reports of the WEF protests check out www.melbourne.indymedia.org For info and coverage of the Olympic Games protests look at www.sydney.indymedia.org or www.realgames.org

*SchNEWS Vocab-watch: doof – Aussie word for rave. (doof doof doof doof get it?)

SHACED UP

Four people from the Shut Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) are up in court later this month on serious charges relating to the campaign to shut down the torture laboratory.

The SHAC offices were raided in August, all computers were seized and all four held for ten days before being charged with conspiracy to cause GBH, conspiracy to cause incitement, conspiracy to cause harassment and conspiracy to endanger road users. (SchNEWS wonders if the police will be charging truckers and taxi-drivers who've been blocking roads across the UK with this same thing) All charges carry seven years in prison. Another woman who used a tripod to block the A1 is still seriously ill in hospital after a motorcyclist tied a rope to the tripod and drove off. Despite this the campaign to close Huntingdon is still really strong.

SHAC, PO Box 381, Cheltenham, Glos, GL50 1UF, 0121 632 6460, www.welcome.to/shac

* There's a national demo outside Huntingdon this Saturday (16th), contact SHAC for info and transport details.

* Next Sunday (23) there's a National Protest and Rally against the New Labour's broken promises on animal rights. Meet 1pm Preston Park, Brighton.

Subscribe!

Keep SchNEWS FREE! Send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 20 for next 20 issues) or donations (payable to Justice?) Ask for "Originals" if you can make copies. Post free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o on-the-fiddle, P.O. Box 2600, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2DX.

Tel/Autofax: +44 (0)1273 685913 GET IT EVERY WEEK BY E-MAIL: schnews@brighton.co.uk

In The Spirit

Last weekend the SchNEWS mash-up massive went up the M1 to Luton-based Exodus Collective's annual Free the Spirit Festival. And had a great time. Here's a few reasons why:

1) The council saw fit to issue a cheap license. As the festival program put it, "the Free the Spirit Festival is designed to be an antidote to Babylon clubs and money-motivated events". To cover the £20,000 it cost to pay for toilets, marquees, lighting at night, bin bags etc. people shook buckets and stall holders donated a percentage of their profits.

2) Community self-policing. Unbelievably, Bedfordshire police agreed to remain off site unless there was any major incidents. And no police on site makes a big difference to the feel-good freedom vibe - as well as saving a hefty wedge of policing costs. Once we realise it's down to us to make sure everyone has a good time, we're truly creating the culture we want to be a part of.

3) Discouraging drug dealing. Yes, people do get off their mash at festies, but as the programme pointed out "one of the main causes of trouble of violence in all of our communities is money and the things people are prepared to do to acquire money. For this reason we ask those who take drugs to bring their own and not to either buy from dealers or be dealers. The aspiration which has born fruit in the Free the Spirit Festival is to provide an oasis from the money motivated society which surrounds us ... If there are no buyers at the fez then there will be no dealers, lessening the chance of muggings and dodgy drugs."

4) Free community use of land. The land used for the festie belongs to the Marquess of Tavistock. Over the last couple of years Exodus have squatted the Marquess' land for their regular parties until they established a friendly dialogue with Lord Howland, the Marquess' son. Since these people own half of Bedfordshire they've got plenty of space for people to party on.

This isn't to say there it wasn't all sweetness and light. Free The Spirit has an 'inner-city' vibe that you just don't get at most 'alternative' events. But if we are ever gonna break out of our political ghettos then the Festival points the way. As Squall magazine put it "This year a new milestone has been reached which may have a significant affect on the rejuvenation of the free festival scene around the UK." And SchNEWS will party all night to that.

* There are plans next year for regional Free the Spirit festivals, based on the template that has worked such a treat in Luton. "In this way all regions of the UK will become empowered, no one festival will crack under the strain of popularity and the free festival scene will find good health once again" (from the program). Anyone wanting to be part of this should call 01582 508936 and leave a message.

For more on the Exodus crew check out www.squall.co.uk or send £7 to P.O. Box 8959, London N19 5HW for 6 issues of Squall download.

Inside SchNEWS

Mordechai Vanunu is now serving his 14th year of an 18 year prison sentence for spilling the beans on Israel's nuclear weapons. Recently Vanunu was sent to isolation for a week after a spot of misbehaviour. What did he do? Whilst out in the exercise yard he spotted a patch of sunshine, unfortunately in order to reach it he had to cross a red line which apparently was against the rules. Campaign to free Vanunu, 185 New Kent Road, London, SE1 4AG, 0207 378 9324, www.vanunu.freeserve.co.uk

There will be a 12 hour vigil for Vanunu on Sat 30 September to mark the day when he was captured. It will be at the Israeli embassy from 10am to 10pm. Please come and show your support.

SchNEWS in brief

Jose Bove, the French anti-globalisation campaigner, was sentenced to three months in prison on Wednesday for vandalising a half-built McDonald's last year. Bove said "The attack on McDonald's was justified and if I have to go to jail, that's not a problem for me". Three other protesters also in court received two month suspended sentences.** Get the appetite for Prague with an Anti-capitalist film night next Wednesday (20) showing MayDay, June 18th, Big Rattle in Seattle and Capitals III – protests at the World Bank in Washington. 8pm at Cinematique, 9-12 Middle St., Brighton £2/1.50 01273 384300 ** The benefit by the **Mutiny Collective** in Edinburgh, due take place on the 16th has been cancelled **The **Civil Rights Caravan** will be coming to Brighton on 23rd-24th. Call 01273 540717 for more info** On Monday 25th there's an Introductory meeting and social for **home educated** families and people interested in alternative methods of education. 1pm-5pm, Friends Meeting House, St Helen's Street, Derby. Tel 01332 200655 ** Some events happening on Saturday 30 September: **Northern Anarchist Network** Autumn festival and conference, 12:30pm, Bury Unemployed Centre, 12 Tithebarn Street ** **Heaven on Earth: is utopia possible?** A study of two utopian communities. A talk by Bryn Purdy at Scarthin Books Café, The Promenade, Cromford, Derbyshire 7:30pm, £2. Info 01629 823272 ** Demonstration and Rally in support and solidarity with **asylum seekers** and **refugees** Meet 11am, Wesley Square, Newcastle Quayside ** **Sustainable Land use for Britain and Zimbabwe:** An event for activists and researchers interested in land use campaigns including workshops and children's events, Easton Community Centre, Kilburn Street, Bristol £8/2** And don't forget the **Carnival Against Capitalism** in Chelmsford town centre, 7 October from 1pm. "Individuals and families come together for a no hassle celebration of the growing opposition to capitalism." Bring carnival gear, donations, help welcomed. 01245 420178 ** Get your hands on the new **Activist Media Toolkit** for info on writing press releases and creating alternative media, available for £2.50 from Oxyacetylene, 16B Cherwell St, Oxford OX4 1BA Tel: 07970 343486**

Plus, Dumping the Pumps for Good Mass Cycle Rides, October 2, 7.30am from North London: Highbury Fields (near Highbury Corner); East London: London Fields, Hackney (by Hackney Town Hall); South East London: Peckham High Street, opposite northern end of Peckham Rye; South West London: Clapham Common (south side, next to Windmill Inn); West London: Shepherds Bush Green. Convergence on Trafalgar Square 8.15-8.30am <http://come.to/londoncm/>

...and finally...

Scientists have been hearing this week of the chaos of Anarchic Hand Syndrome, one of neurology's most puzzling phenomena. Some cases of brain damage result in a hand doing the opposite of what its owner intended. One sufferer could only watch in dismay as her 'anarchist' hand picked up fish bones and stuffed them into her mouth; another couldn't watch telly cos no sooner had his right hand selected a station, the left hand would choose another. A third could only control her autonomous limb by yelling at it and hitting it. Unbelievable, aint it? Anarchists? Left hand not knowing what the right is doing? Surely not in the same paragraph...

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all those driven to take direct action to pump it up.