



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER PILL POPPING

SchNEWS

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"Your blood pressure's down.
But your bill's going up."

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HEALTH CHEQUE-UP

"The government is preaching 'modernisation' of the health service. But New Labour's first term has ended with a law which could dismantle the NHS and take the UK down the US route of healthcare"

- Fiona Campbell, Democratic Health Network

One of the last acts of the Government before setting off on its 'Bore the Nation' election tour was to pass the Health and Social Care Bill. The Act will allow corporations to get an even greater foot in the door of the NHS.

On the surface the Act sounds innocent enough, with its "creation of Care Trusts", and gently-worded intention of "Building on existing health or local authority powers to integrate care". But read between the lines and you witness the beginning of the end of free healthcare.

Healthcare on the NHS is currently free, unlike Social Services, which are means tested. For example, in England at the moment, old or disabled people using council run day centres and residential homes have to pay and are means tested. In 'integrating' NHS and Social Services, the government is paving the way for charges to be levelled for healthcare.

The government has also made charging easier, by guidelines that limit NHS care to six weeks after a hospital stay or acute illness. People who've had a stroke, have Alzheimer's disease or multiple sclerosis could find they are paying for services newly classified as "personal care". As Allyson Pollock, professor of health policy at University College London points out "the idea that the NHS is free will begin to be eroded." There is speculation that ailing train-robber Ronnie Biggs was tipped off and decided to get back before the Bill was passed!

Wealth Service

Health Minister Alan Milburn says he wants to see the Private Finance Initiative extended "beyond the hospital gates to GP surgeries, community pharmacies, health centres, intermediate and long term care facilities." Sure enough, the ironically-named 'Clause 4' of the Act will allow companies to displace the NHS by providing health services for profit, while being underwritten by the government. With the burden of risk shouldered by the tax-payer, corporations should be laughing all the way from the hospital to the bank.

The Patients' Charter has been dumped, because as Frank Dobson (re-

member him?) complained it "focused too much on patients' rights". And Clause 67 says that patients' medical records can be handed over to third parties for medical research, without your permission. Info on our DNA, Aids or mental health problems could be used without our consent and don't be surprised if the 'Prescription Fraudbusting Squad' knocks on your door. Fleur Fisher, former head of ethics at the British Medical Association, puts it bluntly "It's the death of medical privacy. It will turn doctors and other health professionals into Government informers. It breaks the bond of trust between doctor and patient".

Meanwhile, Clause 59 gives ministers unprecedented powers to stifle statistics and hamper efforts to show how individual hospitals and health authorities are performing. And if anybody tries to get an independent report, or do spot checks, they could face a fine of up to \$5,000

National Stealth

Of course, a vision of huge private healthcare companies taking over the NHS is just scare-mongering by sick SchNEWS hacks. As is the General Agreement on Trade in Services, or GATS, which is being eagerly pursued by our best mates at the World Trade Organisation (see SchNEWS 286). If GATS gets the green light, corporations will get their greedy little mitts on more of our public sector services. As one US health lobbyist grumbled, health in Europe has "largely been the responsibility of the public sector (making it) difficult for US private sector health care providers." Still, thanks to the new Health and Social Care Act those lobbyists and their corporate masters will soon be making their bank balances a whole lot healthier.

* Partnership UK, the main governments players in helping to flog off the nations silver, have themselves been partly privatised. Known by the rather appropriate acronym of P:UK (pronounced puke) buyers include Barclays, Royal Bank of Scotland and Abbey National - all of whom are already involved in the hospital privatisation stitch-ups around the country.

* Find out more about GATS: World Development Movement, 25 Beehive Place, London, SW9 7QR 0800 328 2153 www.wdm.org.uk

In the US, 50 million can't afford access to healthcare, 10 million of these are children. 40% of personal bankruptcies are due to medical bills.

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

Doing what a copper tells you! At the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment blockade one woman was arrested during a critical mass cycle ride for cycling away from the blockade after the police told her to move on, and another demonstrator was arrested for standing up and walking away from the blockade. Cops made 49 other crap arrests. www.tridentploughshares.org

TOTALLY FLUORED

Fluoride is a toxic waste product of the fertiliser industry. The safety information for it reads "Do not let this chemical enter the environment. Dispose of this product as hazardous waste". So it's surprising that the government wants to add it to our drinking water nationwide, supposedly for the benefit of our teeth. But with the added convenience of saving industry the cost of safe disposal of their waste.

Thousands of scientific papers have shown that fluoride is harmful to all life forms. Nearly half the 6 million people that already have fluoride in their water in this country suffer from tooth mottling, caused only by fluoride, and recognised as the first sign of fluoride poisoning. Studies have revealed other problems include cot deaths, mental retardation in children and heart attacks. In India 6 million children are unable to walk because of high levels of fluoride in their environment. Water fluoridation has been banned in all other countries in continental Europe.

Due to concerns the government commissioned research into the issue in 1999 to justify going ahead with their programme. The research was carried out by York University and was called the 'York Review'. Most of the research was, according to research gradings, "poor quality with a risk of bias", and conveniently excluded the fact that there are loads of other sources of fluoride that we all take in apart from in drinking water. The World Health Organisation warned in 1994 "dental and public health authorities should be aware of the total fluoride exposure in the population before introducing any additional fluoride programme".

The National Pure Water Association who've been campaigning against fluoridation for over 40 years have slated the York Review and are calling for a full independent public enquiry. More info 01924 254433 www.npwa.freeserve.co.uk

TEKNO TROUBLE

Last weekend, the hottest of the year, saw the party posse out in full effect with the Hardcore Conspiracy Teknival. Late last summer there was a massive Teknival involving 6000 people in Kingston, Surrey, leaving the cops none too chuffed, so they didn't want to get caught with their pants down again.

Panik, United Systems, Underground Sound, Skirmish, Random Sound, Headfuk, Negusa Negast and other assorted rigs were out entertaining the kids all over the South East. Unfortunately our old sparring partners, the cops, were also out, trying as ever, to spoil the fun. The wacky races started on the Friday night near the Hampshire/Surrey border with an attempted party on old M.O.D. land. This was evicted under the Criminal Justice Act on Saturday morning but the sound system was allowed to leave and the free party people moved onto Guildford, where they tried to set up but again the forces of darkness put a stop to it. The next place people went to was a few miles up the road, near Cobham where about 500 danced until about midnight. This time about 150 tooled up riot cops complete with helicopters and dog units gatecrashed, with one woman beaten unconscious and needing hospital treatment. On the way out all of the systems were confiscated and so people headed towards the coast. But as ever the sound crews are still up for it telling SchNEWS "The struggle continues. They will never kill the music. Expect us back soon."

Meanwhile down in sunny Brighton two big parties were also taking place put on by local sound systems. One was on a legal traveller site and because of the numbers living there already, ie. the travellers, the cops left it alone and the party continued for two nights. The other was at Woodingdean, where up to 1000 people were enjoying a pleasant night on the South Downs. The cops, who didn't even hear about the party till about 4am left two cars on the track leading up to the site. However, they hadn't been paying attention to their own adverts telling people to lock up their valuables and left their car doors unlocked. Unfortunately one of the hand brakes mysteriously released itself and the car slid down into a ditch, while the other flipped itself over and ended up on its roof in the same ditch. The cops weren't best pleased with this and came on to site at about 10am when most people had left and nicked the sound system, the owner, his van and his records.

* Were you at Cobham when the cops steamed on? Witnesses are needed to bring a prosecution against the police for their violent behaviour. Contact Emma on 07774 405368

SchNEWS & SQUALL YEARBOOK 2001

SchNEWS and SQUALL's YEARBOOK 2001 is out soon. 280 pages of adventures from the direct action frontline. With issues 251-300 of SchNEWS, the best of SQUALL, lots of photos, cartoons, subverts and a comprehensive contacts database.

Copies of Yearbook 2001 can be ordered from SchNEWS for £7 + £1.50 p&p. You can order the book from a bookshop or your library, quote the ISBN 09529748 4 3.

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PARKLIFE

South London residents received a breath of fresh air this week, with news that Crystal Palace Park may be spared the £56 million cinema multiplex development that was planned for it. Left looking like twats, then, are Bromley council, who two years ago waded in to evict the protest camp there at great expense (see SchNEWS 203). It seems the council have fallen out with their firm of developers, London and Regional Properties (L&R), who they say 'have failed to complete the Lease within the prescribed period.' Since 1997, residents and activists have fought a bitter battle against the council's modest proposal. As councillor John Lewis, a keen supporter of the development, observed; "People don't want change and will find any excuse to hinder progress." Apparently people found that taking back the park to resist the development was more exciting and interactive than anything offered by the proposed, soulless wasteland of leisure.

In tandem with numerous legal actions, that campaign of direct action seems to have played a crucial part in the council's downfall, by holding up work in the park for a whole year during a critical period. Still, people at the Crystal Palace Campaign are remaining vigilant, as planning permission for the development lasts until March 2002. And ominously, the council is trying to remove Metropolitan Open Land (akin to Green Belt) status from the site - leaving it unprotected from further development plans. For the moment, as local people celebrate, the frustrated city-planners turn on each other. Bromley are considering legal action against L&R, probably to try and recover some of the money they've thrown down the drain over the last few years. In the meantime, this patch of green space continues to be enclosed by 24-hour guard, though residents are hopeful that the fences will come down in a couple of weeks.

www.crystal.dircon.co.uk

Inside SchNEWS

* Three people with Householders Against The Service Charges (HASC) are currently in Cork Prison for 'littering' outside Cork's City Hall. The offences are bogus and are an attempt by Cork Corporation to intimidate HASC's successful fight against the unfair "Bin Tax". E-mail objections to the Lord Mayor (lord_mayor@corkcorp.ie) and the City Manager (manager@corkcorp.ie). More info: <http://struggle.ws/wsm/bins.html>

* Garfield Gabbard, nicked during last year's anti World Trade Organisation protests in London, has recently been moved. His new address is: Garfield Marcus Gabbard, Political Prisoner, FT9062, HMP Camp Hill, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5PB. Garfield always likes it when his supporters write "Political Prisoner" on the envelope as it really pisses off the Screws.

* For more details of prisoners check out the Brighton Anarchist Black Cross pages on the SchNEWS website - www.schnews.org.uk/prisoners

SchNEWS in brief

To find out about all corporate lobby groups and their dirty little goings on behind the European Parliament scene check out the latest issue of the excellent **Corporate Europe Observatory** www.xs4all.nl/~ceo ** The **Lamberhurst Bypass** is due to be built this autumn through an area of outstanding natural beauty, alongside a SSSI and through National Trust land at Scotney Castle. www.lamberhurstbypass.com** The **Earth Liberation Front** has produced a 31 page booklet about the ELF. It costs \$6 in the U.S. and \$7 elsewhere, cheques and money orders to: "Resistance", c/o North American ELF Press Office, P.O. BOX 4783, Portland, OR 97208, USA. ** **SchWhoops!** The website for the free party posse is www.thefreeparty.org.uk. For a simple case for spoiling yer ballot check out www.votenobody.org.uk ** He's had a bucket of water tipped over his head, been hit by water and eggs; All we need now is some flour bombs and some sultanas and **Mr. Prescott** will become a fruitcake. Literally... ** Help build a Hospital in Sheffield, send a brick, at the Labour Party's expense to, Sheffield Labour Party, Freepost SF 1446, S2 1ZZ. Don't delay rummage through your local skips, knock out those dividing walls you've always been meaning to and send yer bricks! ** Dave Morris, one of the **McLibel Two** is facing eviction (which is also the McLibel office) from his home in Haringey. Protest this Saturday (19) 10.15am outside the Council Leaders surgery, George Lansbury House, Progress Way, N22. Or go to an all-day anti-eviction party next Tuesday (22) more info 020-77131269, www.mcspotlight.org ** **'Re-contextualise the fuel protests'**(eh?) Members of Climate Action Direct will try to broaden the British publics understanding of climate change at a fuel protest outside a BP distribution depot. May 23, Coryton, near Basildon. Phone 020-85307577 for more details. Mobile 07930-255233 on the day.

Positive SchNEWS

Permaculture is a word bandied around a lot, but what does it actually mean? A booklet *Permaculture, A Beginner's Guide* has been produced claiming to provide some answers, with loads of information and it encourages you to practice permaculture principles. We're not sure of one of the definitions as "Revolution disguised as organic gardening", but it is full cartoons which makes it an easy read. It costs £5 incl. post from Land and Liberty, 35 Rayleigh Avenue, Westcliff on Sea, Essex, SS0 7DS.

...and finally...

On a recent trip to Australia, the chair of the National Farmers Union Ben Gill, told a Conference "There's no doubt foot-and-mouth spread to the UK illegally and, unfortunately, we cannot rule out eco-terrorism... The pressures of the green groups are intense in Europe, and what I understand, building here in Australia."

As far back as 1945, Sir Albert Howard who carried out 20 years of research on the disease wrote in his book that foot and mouth comes solely from poor diet and intensive farming methods. But no - it's those bleedin' eco-terrorist animal rights fanatics who are busy bringing the countryside to its knees. Even as we type SchNEWS scientists are busy at our secret urban HQ, ready to unleash egg-on-face disease to afflict all politicians.

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all coppers attending illegal raves to park up safely with due care and consideration for others and don't be a push-over at the party.