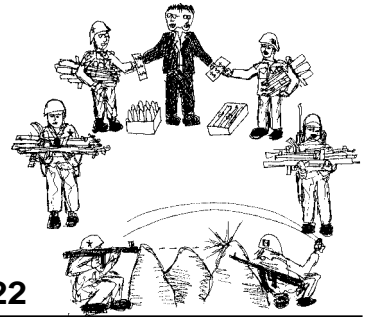




wake up! wake up! the world is under attack

SchNEWS

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VICIOUS CIRCLE

“What is the alternative? More bombs? More security? More cameras in the streets? More phone taps? More subsidy to the arms industry? ... Is that where we’re going? On a race to the bottom trapped between GW Bush and the CIA-created Osama Bin Laden? Because it seems that’s what is wanted.” Adam Porter, Year Zero magazine

While the SchNEWS crew with hundreds of other protestors were being hemmed in by police for the bare faced cheek of wanting to shut down an arms fair, news came filtering through of the attacks on the World Trade Centre towers and the Pentagon.

As always, the deaths of innocent people are terrible and harrowing but carnage happens around the world every day of the year. The difference this time is that for once it is happening in the US, on the doorstep of corporate and military power. The Archbishop of Wales, only a few blocks away when the World Trade Centre were hit said, “It’s given me a vivid sense of what people around the world live with daily.”

Adam Porter, the editor of Year Zero magazine explained the tragedy most clearly, “The loss of innocent lives is more disgusting than words can express. The office workers, the cleaners, the lift repair men, the people who jumped to their deaths perhaps hoping against hope that they would somehow survive ... those incinerated in the building by thousands of gallons of aircraft fuel ... ordinary US citizens ... just like ordinary people in Paris, Amsterdam, Bangkok, Tripoli and Baghdad. But look, and look hard, this is what men of violence do to cities, what British and American planes did to Basra in Iraq, what British and American planes did to parts of Belgrade. When I spout on about missiles slamming into the side of escaping Kosovan women, children and pensioners packed into a train I mean it. They died terrible, flesh-ripping deaths. When you fire cruise missiles into packed shelters full of women and kids in Baghdad they too died terrible deaths. When you kill 5.8 million Vietnamese, carpet bombing their rudimentary homes whilst leaving the centre of Hanoi and Saigon clear so you had somewhere nice to stay when you invaded they too died terrible deaths. When you rounded up every socialist and liberal in Indonesia and had them killed and tortured they too died terrible deaths. We can add Panama, Honduras, Guatemala, Co-

lombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Laos, Cambodia, Israel...” he wrote. (Go to www.yearzero.org for the full article).

And if the superpowers’ expensive bullets and bombs don’t get you, then their economic policies will. Just think - the income of the richest 20% of the world’s population is at least 75 times greater than the income of the poorest 20% (it was ‘only’ 30 times greater forty years ago). Third world debt, enforced by the military might of the United States, Britain and other rich countries, is simply a racket to keep this inequality entrenched. Every day £28 million flows from the poorest countries in the world to the banks of the rich countries. These are the economies of the winner-takes-all capitalist mentality where millions die in a world of plenty through hunger and disease.

America are pointing the finger at Osama Bin Laden, forgetting to mention that it was the CIA who recruited Bin Laden and other Islamic zealots from middle eastern refugee camps, gave them weapons, money and the knowledge of how to run a war of attrition that was violent and well-organized enough to help destroy Afghanistan. To do this they used the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence Agency to create a front organisation Maktab al-Khidamar (MAK). This motley crew of tooled-up CIA sponsored fanatics helped to lay Afghanistan to waste, and create one of the most repressive regimes in the world. Bin Laden split from MAK in 1988 and established a new group, al-Qaida, which included many of the more extreme MAK members he’d met in Afghanistan.

Linking Arms

We were protesting about an arms fair where a brand new Trimaran warship is docked for show, and where the latest hi-tech weaponry is being flogged to any country with a big enough national bank account or International Monetary Fund loan – and buggery the human rights record. But straight away, the police violently pushed us into a cordon and completely surrounded us, confiscating water pistols and searching people for ammo to ‘prevent a breach of the peace’, even trying to snatch musical instruments as potential weapons! Er, excuse us officer, but maybe you should take a look inside the Excel building - we’re sure a section 60 weapons search in there would result in a satisfying ‘nick’. But of course the delegates and salesmen of flesh-ripping devices are not only creating breaches of the peace for profit, they are doing it with the endorsement of governments the world over.

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

10 people were nicked for ‘conspiracy to cause criminal damage’ at the arms fair after police found one small can of yellow spray paint along with banner material in their van. All were released without charge 5 hours later, just in time to miss the fiesta.

Change of Tactics

The police weren’t going to let us get away with trying to shut down the arms fair. They’d even raided two squats in south London the Friday before where they smashed up props for the demo and nicked four people for ‘conspiracy to commit violent disorder’. The ‘evidence’? A stick with a nail in it!

Individuals and affinity groups that broke away from the main demo had slightly more success. Some valiantly tried time and again to get through security whilst wandering delegates were told just how much their work was really appreciated. Local support was excellent - people lapped up SchNEWS and slagged off the rozzers: some, once aware of the arms fair, also decided to join in with hounding delegates. Later, kids picked up all the discarded white overalls and pink accessories and had a pop at the old bill themselves!

But we need to seriously reassess our tactics. Firstly, why didn’t *thousands* of people want to come and protest about the arms trade? – do people think, after Mayday, that big London demos aren’t worth it, or was the publicity poor? Secondly, if we can’t get the numbers and if we continue with the same tactics we’ll become increasingly demoralised as we find ourselves in ‘the kettle’, surrounded by the police. The cops are now used to this style of protest: they can see how events will unfold so they act swiftly and crush them. Thirdly, don’t expect a single group or organisation to take the lead. The more successful actions on September 11th seemed to be by smaller affinity groups who used their initiative, and seized opportunities. It’s a lot harder for the cops to keep track of lots of small groups, and they’re a lot more mobile, so even if one group gets surrounded there are still plenty more on the loose. Get together, use your imagination and creativity, and - most importantly - take responsibility for yourselves.

* Just what sort of a disgusting world these arms companies live in showed itself pointedly the next day, after the bombing when BAE systems shares went up at the prospect of America tooling up even more. While in true capitalist style computer company Cisco Systems said “This is a good opportunity to sell kit to accommodate these financial institutions needs.”

Copwatch

The Police now have new guidelines for dealing with the threat of animal rights protesters, nuclear protests and Reclaim The Streets type actions. SchNEWS hacks have read snippets of the reports, which contain groundbreaking comments like "Animal rights protesters are different from other groups as their sole interest is to prevent testing on animals." They also worryingly link nuisance faxes in the same league of terrorism as letter bombs! Copies of the guidelines are available from the National Operations Faculty helpline on 01256 602777. www.training.police.uk/news/insider/insider_12/police.html

*The Dutch police are organising an international police knees-up to swap methods used to combat activism at global summits. It will take place from 3 to 5 October 2001 in The Hague. The official program can be found at: www.burojansen.nl/orde/engels/ineng.htm

*Scotland Yard's detection rate fell to 15% last year (Evening Standard, 19th July 2001). Police are only succeeding in prosecuting 1 in 20 muggers and fewer than 1 in 10 burglary suspects. Hardly surprising given how much effort they put into hassling anti-arms trade activists!

Inside SchNEWS

This week sees the start of the last trials for activists involved in actions in Gothenburg in July. In all, 37 activists have been labelled the 'communications group' and are charged with being the 'leaders' of all the actions/demos in Gothenberg, (the idea of 'DIY' still seems to be escaping those that can't live without someone telling them what to do). Most of the accused are appealing against sentences of up to 4 years for 'rioting', with some non-Norwegians, including German, Italian and English citizens, facing expulsions of up to 10 years. Local prison support is being provided through solidaritetsgruppen@hotmail.com, and they still need help to provide money for those awaiting trial. Please contact the group first and they will advise you of the best way to do this. They also need books, mostly in Swedish but also in German, Danish and English, to take in to prisoners to relieve that terminal boredom. Books etc can be sent to Solidaritygroup GBG, c/o Syndikalistiskt Forum, Box 7267, 402 35 Gothenburg, Sweden. For more info see www.motkraft.net.

Positive SchNEWS

The reforestation action group Treesresponsibility have been up and planting for only four years, and have already had a positive impact on their local area. They reforested the hills of Calderdale, built their own tree nursery and have pledged to plant 20,000 more trees in the near future. They are plotting various projects and actions such as a boycott Esso tree week. "Lets plant trees in our communities, while getting the word out about who really cares for the planet and who is paying lip service while raking in profits made from destroying our planet." And they want to see people planting trees in BP and Shell forecourts too cos they're just as bad as Esso. If you're interested in tree planting, debating climate issues and organising local actions then there's a Treesresponsibility gathering happening at Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire, on the 5th-7th Oct. There will be workshops on wild food, ecology, and woodland economy as well as plenty of kids stuff, food, fire & party, cost £8/£5 low/unwaged per day. Contact 01422 843222, 10 Broughton Street, Hebden Bridge, HX7 8JY. Pick up provided from Hebden train station. Childcare available if requested. No dogs.

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Unsound Asylum

"I was tortured psychologically and physically. I was beaten up, sometimes with cables, sometimes for an hour they would beat me. They're going to kill me, I know what they're like. I won't let them kill me, I'll kill myself." - Ali Namik, Kurdish asylum seeker persecuted before coming to Britain for owning a video shop stocking western films.

As SchNEWS goes to press there are over 40 armed conflicts happening around the world. The arms traders and western governments who subsidise some of the dodgiest regimes around help them to maintain these conflicts and dish out human rights abuses. Countries invited to this years arms fair included Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Pakistan and Israel who are all at war to some degree. The governments of rich countries such as ours promote the arms trade, yet turn their backs on those fleeing the wars that they helped to create. And the more weapons that are sold, the more unstable the world becomes - good if you're a fat-cat arms trader who makes money from conflict generation. Given this, it's unsurprising that 1 out of every 115 people alive today is a refugee or displaced person.

In April last year New Labour's Asylum Bill came into force. It paved the way for the locking up and dispersal of asylum seekers and for benefits (a mere 70 percent of the pittance everyone else receives) to be paid in vouchers rather than cash. New arrivals in this country now have a 1 in 8 chance of being detained on arrival and locked up in a detention centre. They've committed no crime, have never been tried, and there is no limit to the time they can be held.

Last week a high court judge agreed that this policy was completely dodgy when he ruled that four Iraqi Kurds held at Oakington detention centre were detained illegally. This could seriously affect government plans - and they could now face bills for damages running into millions, as more than 11,000 people have been held in the camp since it was opened.

Inspired by the high court ruling, asylum seekers have been on hunger strikes and sit-ins at Haslar and Campsfield detention centres. They're demanding immediate release and an end to no-time-limit detention. The protest at Haslar, near Portsmouth, was brought to an end on Monday when prison staff dressed in riot gear raided the compound and shifted many of the protesters to Winchester prison (so no change in conditions, then). A similar protest at Campsfield, where 100 detainees had been refusing food, ended peacefully on Wednesday night.

* National weekend of action against detention Sept. 22nd-23rd Info: www.closecampsfield.org.uk
* 'Barbed Wire Europe' report on asylum/detention £5 inc. p&p from 40 Richmond Terrace, Oxford OX1 2JJ. (Cheques to Campaign Against Immigration Detention.) www.barbedwirebritain.org.uk

* In Iraq, new tortures and punishments - including amputation of the tongue and beheading - have been introduced and reportedly used on scores of political prisoners. Iraqi Kurds constitute the largest percentage of asylum seekers in the UK, but they're routinely booted out cos, as Jack Straw pointed out, they've nothing to fear and nothing to complain about back home.

SchNEWS in brief

September 25th, fifteen Greenpeace volunteers and two freelance journalists are on trial in Los Angeles for conspiracy after delaying the Star Wars missile test launch at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. www.greenpeace.org

** The **Brazilian Commission** recently overturned a Brazilian law protecting the country's forest, mangrove, and grasslands ecosystems. But it still has to pass through the full Congress and be approved by the president. More info and a protest email at www.codigoflorestal.com.br/english/

** **Sri Lanka** has cancelled its ban on genetically engineered food designed to protect human health, after pressure from the World Trade Organisation who say it is against trade rules.
** Cyberactions for **Satpal Ram's** release are being co-ordinated over the next few weeks by **Miscarriages of Justice UK** - see www.appleonline.net/justiceuk/jus or 0121-554-6947
** **FLAN** (Flintshire Action Network) will be holding a non-violent protest outside **The GAP in Chester**, 12 noon, Saturday 22 September, flandooobie@yahoo.com
** Those pleasant people at the **National Front** have set up a website www.redwatch.org.uk putting up pictures, names etc of people who gone to Anti-fascist demo's. Sabotage the site if you know how, or give false information to debunk the site (do it through www.safeweb.com and/or hotmail address to avoid comeback)
** 27 activists were arrested at a successful blockade of **Shell's Stanlow refinery** in Cheshire in protest at its links with **Huntingdon Life Sciences**.
** The public were excluded from a **'Public' inquiry** into a greenfield development in **Coleridge** near Rushmoor. One villager decided to go anyway and stopped the enquiry after threatening action under the Human Rights Acts. The government are pressing ahead with changes to the planning system to make it harder to make objections to controversial projects at public enquiries. www.onlincam.freemove.co.uk

Not so smart

Wal-Mart (owners of Asda in this Country) are now the world's largest retailer and the largest employer in the USA, and they surely ain't got to that position by being nice. They've now officially earned themselves the title of the world's most sued corporation, with a new lawsuit being filed against them every 2 hours. You name it and they've been found guilty of it - that's if they haven't destroyed the evidence first. In three states in the US judges have found Wal-Mart guilty of destroying and withholding evidence. www.sprawl-busters.com, www.walmartsucks.com

...and finally...

The advertising game is all about doing what ever it takes - gimmicks and pulling the wool - to get us all to go out and spend, spend, spend. But marketing brand consultants Lambie-Nairn - whose approach is 'creative strategies and strategic creativity' have been pulling the wool on the advertisers themselves, charging big money for virtually the same logo.

Their logo for the renaming of BT Cellnet as O2 is a circle with a two next to it. Which must have used up a lot of brainpower because their new logo for Digital TV channel Music Choice is the words Music Choice next to a large circle. Phew! And for BAE System's the logo is... a circle with their name next to it. And for Friends of the Earth... you get the picture. Let's just say they're paying money for a big fat zero ...

disclaimer

"People almost feel guilty to want to trade for profit in circumstances like these."

A right London banker. Almost...