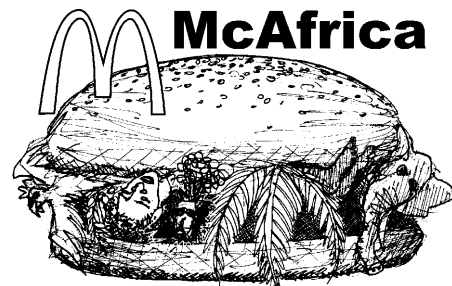




WAKE UP! IT'S YER ALWAYS AFTER SUMMIT...

SchNEWS

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McAfrica

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Because we wouldn't want you to starve

APOCALYPSE SOON?

"It should now be crystal clear that the South African government is hell-bent on smashing legitimate dissent by whatever means they deem appropriate, including attacking peaceful marchers and terrorising children. The ghosts of the South African past are returning with a vengeance." Johannesburg demonstrator, outside the Earth Summit, this week.

Tanks in townships, tooled up riot cops firing teargas and stun grenades into crowds of people, mass arrests, threats of deportation, laws against group assembly, the secret police spying on people ... South Africa ten years ago?? Try South Africa this week — just a small dose of what's in store for anyone who has the cheek to criticise the hijacking of the Earth Summit by Big Business.

And while the fat cat delegates hob nob in air-conditioned grandeur inside the summit, ignoring any and all voices of dissent outside, the world continues to melt away. Since the Earth Summit ten years ago in Rio, 10% of the earth's remaining forests have been destroyed. Over the next 18 years, carbon dioxide emissions leading to global warming are expected to rise by a third in rich countries and to double in the rest of the world. These are not facts from some loony lefty environmental organisation, but reports written by the fat cats themselves.

This week, a report from last month's Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) meeting was leaked to the press. The report had been written in preparation for the Earth Summit, to inform people going to the OECD meeting about the state of the world before going to Jo'burg to do nothing about it. A flock of suits who push for salvation through privatisation, the OECD is a group that works along the same lines as the G8 or WTO—a think-tank (wank tank) made up of 22 of the world's richest countries who like to influence world-wide economic policy. Most of the OECD's members are in the rich North, but some lucky industrialised outsiders such as Mexico and South Korea have been invited to send reps too. Their report just goes to show something we've suspected all along — heads of state and powerful corporate CEOs know how fucked the world is, their own research supports it, and yet they refuse to do anything except push more of the same thing that got us in this whole mess to begin with.

"Through the provision of subsidies on fossil fuels, governments are effectively subsidising pollution and global warming as more than 60% of all subsidies flow to oil, coal and gas." - Leaked OECD report.

For all the conventions, treaties and intergovernmental agreements of the last 30 years, little has actually changed. Warnings that air pollution has already reached crisis point in many cities, and that there is not really anything anyone can do anymore to reverse climate change are being ignored, even when these subjects are contained in corporate reports like the one written by the OECD. Other info from the report: The current demand for fresh water will continue to increase and already 40% of the world's population is short of fresh water. Tying into global warming, the report also says that the number of people affected by weather related disasters has risen by half in the last decade. But while the OECD report highlights these facts, it tends to hush up how these disasters have come about. Take Coca Cola, for instance, who are still forging into Kerala, South India sucking up all their ground water or Shell, who is still in Nigeria polluting all water supplies with their regular oil leaks. And in Brazil, the government is pushing ahead with Advance Brazil, a rain-forest development project set to destroy 42% of the forest by 2020. All the while, the OECD report tells us, more and more land, unprotected from the sun and the rain and destroyed by intensive agriculture is turning to desert or rendered unusable. Plant, insect and animal species are being made extinct at a rate never seen before as habitats are destroyed or polluted, or cooked to death by climate change.

UN Sustainable

Not only have governments and businesses seen the OECD report, they've also been given a huge UN report, the Global Environment Outlook, each presented in a fruitless attempt to make them actually do something.

This UN report looks back over the last thirty years of Earth Summits and makes some predictions for the future. Unsurprisingly, the conclusion the report reaches is that more "sustainable development," is needed. All of this while admitting that full scale emergencies already exist: water shortages hampering developing countries, land degradation reducing fertility and agricultural potential, and destruction of the tropical rainforest that, according to the report, has gone too far to be reversed.

Okay, so let's recap: The big business friendly OECD and the West obsessed UN are saying that enough is enough. And what will they do with these conclusions? Probably just make up another set of hollow pledges to "defend" the environment

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

...for hanging out in a carpark!

Two hundred and seventy three people were arrested last Saturday night in a carpark outside a 24 hour K-Mart in Houston, USA. Police swooped after complaints about drag racing but when they found that wasn't happening they were told to arrest any youngsters. So people were nicked while buying a hair band, eating ice cream, they even arrested a 10-year-old girl who was having dinner with her dad. One arrestee said "It didn't matter what you were doing; they arrested you."

13 cops have been suspended on pay with one councillor complaining "We're in the middle of the biggest police debacle in this city that did not involve a death." www.houstonchronicle.com

against themselves — missing the point that you would actually have to dismantle capitalism to do this. The fact is there are things that can be done.

Trying to link global problems with local ones is vital when governments and big businesses only care about lining their pockets. Through direct action and community-based resistance, there ARE ways that we can battle against the destruction of our environment. We can support resistance in other countries in many ways. In West Papua, local groups such as the OPM are fighting against oppressive mining companies like Rio Tinto and BP. Activists in the UK have been targeting offices owned by these companies for protests and actions; they have also made concrete links with communities in West Papua by going there and also by raising money to give directly to the OPM.

As well as supporting struggle in other countries, looking in our own backyards is still important. In the UK, people have been targeting the destructive extraction of peat from three moors, Hatfield, Thorne and Wedholme Flow. This successful direct action campaign has fought the mining of peat by the US multinational Scotts and has been instrumental in the recent agreement between Scotts and the UK Government to halt mining in Thorne and Wedholme Flow immediately. There are many more projects like these that need people's help. As one ecological activist told Schnews, "I am not going into detail about what tactics are needed in local battles. After 10 years it's pretty obvious. Community mobilising, occupations, blockades, bulldozer pledges, sabotage. Threatening destroyers with costly chaos and giving it to them if they try it on."

To find out more about direct action in your area check out the Party and Protest guide on the SchNEWS website.

Summit info: <http://southafrica.indymedia.org>
West Papua info www.eco-action.org/sst
UK Biodiversity Website: www.ukbap.org.uk

AMAIZED?

“Africa is treated as the dustbin of the world. To donate untested food and seed to Africa is not an act of kindness but an attempt to lure Africa into further dependence on foreign aid.” – *Africa’s Biowatch*.

The US has come up with a grand scheme to get rid of its excess GM crops—dumping them in Africa, while claiming to ‘save’ the starving. Last week the US told Zambia that it would have to borrow money in order to buy \$50 million worth of GM maize from the World Food Programme – or face starvation. While India has vast stocks of rice - 65 times as much as Africa needs - available at half the cost of the US maize, Zambia has been “strongly advised” by US interests not to buy it. Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mozambique and Malawi have all been offered similar threats, er, deals. Many countries have outright refused to buy the GM maize. But with the EU standing firm on the strict labelling of GM food in supermarkets, the US is getting desperate to unload its GM food somewhere a bit more label-free. The US along with the biotech firm Monsanto, claim that environmentalists and scientists opposed to giving GM food the green light stand in the way of feeding the poor. The truth is, none of the countries suffering from famine want to import subsidised GM crops or to accept GM food ‘aid’.

Four years ago every African nation – apart from South Africa - signed a statement saying “[We] strongly object that the image of the poor and hungry from our countries is being used by giant multinational corporations to push a technology that is neither safe, environmentally friendly, nor economically beneficial to us.”

Meanwhile, the millions of tons of surplus Indian rice that the Zambians are not supposed to buy is rotting in warehouses because the poor of India can’t afford to buy it either. Malawi also had non-GM surpluses until a few months ago, but was required by the International Monetary Fund to sell them to pay off its debt. As Ethiopia’s Food and Agriculture spokesman, Dr Tewolde Egziabher, put it, “this notion that genetically engineered crops will save developing countries misses the real point. The world has never grown as much food per capita as it is doing now, yet the world has also never had as many hungry. The problem is not the amount of food produced, but how it is both produced and distributed.”

Hit On Hinton

14 people were nicked last weekend after a GM rape seed oil crop site was trashed at Hinton, in Dorset. For 4 years the biotech company Aventis CropSciences (now owned by the German Chemicals giant Bayer) has been using rape seed illegally contaminated with antibiotic ‘marker’ genes. The use of antibiotic markers in crops was banned because the British Medical Association feared that the genes could possibly cross to bacteria in human or animal guts, making common diseases and infections as well as already life-threatening illnesses immune to antibiotics. Planted at twelve sites around the country, these crops are set to be harvested in September, which means now is the time they are most able to cross contaminate the soil, other plants, and animals. The government says it is ‘very annoyed’ with this activity, but plans to let Aventis leave the crops in the ground anyway!

With only paper inspections, it’s hardly surprising no one spotted the contamination earlier. As Friends of the Earth’s Adrian Bebb said: “This is yet another biotech blunder from the GM industry. How can we trust them to produce our food if they can’t even run a GM test site?” Totnes Genetics Group: 01803 868523 www.genewatch.org/Publications/Briefs/Brief3.htm

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SchNEWS in brief

‘Argentina & Venezuela: Organizing for survival and revolution’ - The truth behind the headlines’ Public meeting next Thursday (5) at Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1 (Holborn tube) 7pm. Two women from Argentina’s grassroots women’s assemblies and the highly respected housewives union will be speaking – as well as the video premiere of ‘The Global Women’s Strike & the Venezuelan Revolution.’ 020 7482 2496 <http://womenstrike8m.server101.com/> ** Speakers from the Sante Fe Neighbourhood Network in Argentina will be at the Easton Community Centre in Bristol next Wednesday (4) 7pm 0117 9399469 www.marsbard.com/kebele ** American Indian activist Rod Coronado will be kicking off a speaking tour of the UK in Brighton on Monday 9th September 7.30pm in the Hanover Room, Brighthelm Centre, North Road. From sinking Icelandic whaling ships to defending old growth forests, Rod has engaged in militant and uncompromising direct action and in 1995 was jailed for some of his actions. Recently released, he lives on the Pascua Yaqui reservation in Arizona, USA. Other confirmed dates on his speaking tour are London (11), Nottingham (12) Sheffield (16) Manchester (17) and Leeds (19). For more info 07763 552 627 ** Compassion in World Farming have released a major report proving that the introduction of industrial animal farming into developing countries will be a disaster. Crowding thousands of animals together in disease-prone sheds uses very little local labour, uses scarce water and electricity, creates reliance on imports for cereals and farming equipment, causes pollution and after all that ends with a product which the poor cannot afford! For copies 01730 233 904 www.ciwf.co.uk ** There’s a free festival this Saturday (31) in Tankerton Whitstable, Kent from 1-10pm. “One of music & resistance organised by the European Social Forum Mobilise Kent.” 07950 610257 ** Since October 2000, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian trees have been bulldozed, uprooted or set ablaze by Israeli soldiers and settlers. Many of these were olive trees. Olive trees are an important symbol to Palestinians as well as massively important economically. So this year the International Solidarity Movement are calling on people to join them for the olive harvest from October 15 – November 15. More info www.palsolidarity.org ** Anti-fascists last week attacked a shop in Burnley owned by Steve Smith, the BNP organiser for Burnley. The shop actually sells very little and is mainly used as a base for BNP organising.

Chemistry Set-up

A court in the city of Bhopal, India has rejected an appeal made by the Indian government to reduce charges against the former CEO of Union Carbide. Warren Anderson if convicted faces 20 years in prison – that’s if they can find him. Nearly 18 years after the fact, the disaster at the Union Carbide pesticide factory is still a nightmare for the people of Bhopal. More than 3,000 people died on the day of the actual disaster, when a storage tank in the factory burst, sending tonnes of poison gas over the city. Now more than 100,000 people continue to get ill as a result, including babies born to survivors.

Meanwhile, CEO Anderson hasn’t been turning up to court for some reason and is classified as an ‘absconder’ under Indian Law. Apparently he’s been photographed in the US, although Law enforcement agencies there say they have not been able to locate him. SchNEWS wonders if that would be the case if thousands of Americans had died? www.bhopal.net

**Yesterday Greenpeace put the spotlight on Dow Chemicals, who bought Union Carbide, by fencing off an open discharge pipe for toxic waste at the company’s manufacturing facility in South Africa. www.greenpeace.org

Positive SchNEWS

While SchNEWS doesn’t hold out much hope of the Earth Summit coming up with the goods, it does seem to be inspiring some people to think about the state of the planet. RioKids is one such group. Children from four primary schools in Bristol who were born in 1992, the year of the first Earth Summit, spent time recently researching some of the issues raised by the Summit, issues such as recycling, protecting coastal environments, and caring for natural habitats. They then went on to make pictures, writing and photography expressing how they felt about the issues and how they thought the issues to affected them personally and in their own locality. Check it out at www.riokids.net

Inside SchNEWS

17 supporters of Ahmed Meguini, who was jailed for eight months last week after taking part in the No Borders protest in Strasbourg (SchNEWS 366), were nicked last Friday during an occupation of the local Ministry of Justice the day after his trial. They were demanding Ahmed be taken out of solitary confinement and allowed visitors. They have all been charged with ‘kidnapping’ after three members of the Ministry of Justice staff refused to leave the building. Now Meguini’s supporters could be facing prison sentences of up to five years themselves. Find out how to support them at www.noborder.org

Landside Victory

With the Countryside Alliance promising the biggest demonstration London has seen since the Poll Tax Riots of 1381, a group of people have decided while the aristocracy are in the Capital on September 22nd they’ll target one of the Alliance’s prime movers. In their own words, they plan to “Move onto his estate... (and) establish an autonomous community in the spirit of Winstanley and the Diggers.”

They are calling on other groups to organise as well, with the aim of reoccupying stolen common heritage. “If you really want to stop the Alliance,” the squatters say, “Don’t go to London to yah-boo them, get out into the countryside and hit them where it really hurts - in their own back yard!”

...and finally...

While 12 million people starve to death in Africa, McDonald’s has just dreamed up a stunningly sensitive new product—the McAfrica burger. With no apparent sense of irony, these burgers are currently on sale at McShit branches in one of the most expensive and comfortable countries in the West, Norway. Aid agencies are understandably a bit wound up with this bit of McMarketing. As Linn Aas-Hansen of Norwegian Church Aid says “It’s inappropriate and distasteful to launch a hamburger called McAfrica when large portions of Southern Africa are on the verge of starvation.” Initially, McTosser’s spokeswoman Margaret Brusletto said the company would consider sharing the proceeds of its sale with aid agencies(!) but a meeting with Norwegian Red Cross came to no agreement. Instead, after getting loads of protests about this McScam, McDonald’s have agreed to place collection boxes for Africa in the participating stores while the promotion lasts—but no longer. We wonder if stuffing the boxes with McAfrica burgers would help to fill the stomachs of Africa’s starving.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all governments “Oi! Come on then if yer wanna make summit out of it.” Honest.

Catch up with everyone’s direct action summer adventures at the **REBEL ALLIANCE** next Wednesday (4th) 7.30pm upstairs at the Albert Pub, Trafalgar St. Brighton. Followed by SchNEWS of the World Book Launch at the Volks, Madeira Drive, Brighton. Donations on the door