



WAKE UP! IT'S YER MAD, BAD AND SAD....

# SchNEWS

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DISASTER RELIEF

# SUMMIT ROTTEN

"...These people at the summit are not kind. We earn peanuts and they don't even tip us. They think they are so important, they fly around the world having meetings and getting waited on, but they know nothing of how we live. I came here from Zimbabwe because my people are very desperate there. I live in a shack in Soweto now, one room with two children, no privacy, trying to earn money to send home. For months the government has talked about cleaning up the city for the summit, but when these people go home, everything will be back like it always was. They will still be rich, we will still be poor. It's not right that they say they meet for our sake. It's all for their benefit, not ours."

- Rosemary, a Zimbabwean refugee waiting tables under the shining towers of Sandton, South Africa, where the conference was held.

SchNEWS would never snipe at the sidelines telling anyone who'd listen 'we told you so' but as the Johannesburg Earth Summit finishes, the new blueprint to save the planet is about as useful as waterproof bogroll.

Corporations hailed it a success (horray - no strings, we can carry on polluting), there was fine words from politicians (like Vice-President Blair banging on about climate change then promising to improve the people of Iraq's climate by bombing them), plenty of NGO hand wringing and muttering in Victor Meldrew 'I don't believe it' style disbelief and demonstrators being given a good kick in the privates so they don't feel left out in the new era of global partnerships. SchNEWS has sifted through the final 65 page document with its eight key commitments and come up with summit of the highlights.

\* Dropping all renewable energy targets, because oil rich nations argued that until they figure a way of charging us for the sun and wind they aren't interested in bloody solar panels and windmills.

\* Promising to increase the number of people cut off from essential services like water and electricity by privatising services immediately.

\* Getting rid of poor people, or at least making them disappear out of view, with the use of very big fences surrounded by razor wire and men with machine guns (hey, just like the Earth Summit).

\* Making people re-use envelopes and dig ponds in their back gardens to preserve fish stocks.

\* Handing out free umbrellas and suntan lotion to help lessen the effects of climate change.

\* A pledge to stop species extinction through gene transfer and cloning of profitable animal and plant crops.

\* A free market monopoly in exchange for eternal debt and gratitude plus spontaneous culling of various groups as and when necessary all done in the best possible taste. Er, that's it.

But perhaps the 'major triumph' of the Summit was the creation of "partnership agreements." Corporations promise to respect the environment and peoples' human rights, as long as they can do it voluntarily and with none of that silly red tape that spoils it for everyone. As an ecstatic spokesman for Business Action for Sustainable Development (BASD - see SchNEWS 361/2), a powerful new lobby group stuffed full of fat cats, told SchNEWS "We can't believe those suckers expect us, the very people who are destroying the planet to come up with a grand plan of how to save it!"

## BASDtardly Deeds

During one of the BASDtards Summit knees-up Shell Chairman Philip Watts reluctantly accepted a Greenwash Lifetime Achievement Award, muttering something about the good work his company has done in Nigeria and the report his company had produced which said how responsible they now were. Isaac Osuoka of Environmental Rights Action, a Nigerian group that has documented Shell's pioneering human rights and environmental work in the Niger Delta pointed out "How can we talk of partnership and trust with business leaders who do not recognise the most blatant corporate crimes?"

Other Greenwash Award winners include BP, who spent £20 million on their new sunflower logo to show the world how much they like flowers, Nestle who continue to defend the rights of mothers in the developing world to use powered milk, Enron for Best Makeup, and accountants (and we use the term in the

## CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For asking a question...

Indymedia reporter and former political prisoner Chris Plummer was arrested last month at a Conference organised by the Texas Dept. of Criminal Justices. Billed as a forum for the exchange of information between families and prison officials, he was arrested after asking the riot-inducing question, "What percent of grievances get a not guilty verdict?" Chris is still on parole for his antifascist actions in the 90's, and this arrest could be used as an excuse to revoke his parole and send him back to prison.

loosest possible manner) Arthur Andersen for Best Documentary Destruction. As author Naomi Klein puts it "Post Enron it's hard to believe that companies can be trusted to keep their own books, let alone save the world." Or as Kenny Bruno co-author of Earthsummit.biz says, "Most corporations, when left to their own devices, are attracted to irresponsible behaviour like moths to a flame." So, without wanting to become the pub bore going on and on about what's to be done, we at SchNEWS Towers repeat it's only when people get together to solve problems, offer solutions and take direct action against those who are destroying the planet, that life will ever change.

## SchNEWS VOCAB WATCH

**Greenwash:** spending millions on adverts telling the world how green you are, while behind the scenes doing everything to oppose or avoid any social or environmental law that might harm profits.

\* The Greenwash Awards did actually happen. Find out more [www.earthsummit.biz/](http://www.earthsummit.biz/)

\* During last weeks day of action against a 'Corporate UN', Dutch Earth First! used paintbombs to 'greenwash' outlets of a dozen corporations in Amsterdam. "Anyone who believes that profit making, economic growth, and sustainable development can go together is very naive." For details of other actions on the day [www.aseed.net](http://www.aseed.net)

## Recommended reading

\* Earthsummit.biz: the Corporate Takeover of Sustainable Development by Joshua Karliner and Kenny Bruno (Food First Books) [www.corpwatch.org](http://www.corpwatch.org)

\* Battling Big Business - countering greenwash, infiltration and other forms of corporate bullying. Eveline Lubbers (Green Books) 01803 863260 [www.greenbooks.co.uk](http://www.greenbooks.co.uk)

\* Check out the special Earth Summit report in this month's Ecologist magazine [www.theecologist.org](http://www.theecologist.org)

**BLAST** in association with the **SIMON JONES MEMORIAL CAMPAIGN** presents a **drum'n'bass + jungle** full-on mix-marathon at the Concorde, Brighton 12<sup>th</sup> September, 10pm-3am, £4/3

## Capita Punishment

The school year has begun with a right neo-labour cock-up. Thousands of lucky kids have been turned away from school because not all staff have been cleared by the new Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). And just who's behind this mess? Why our old friends Capita (see Schnews 335) who got control of the bureau thanks to the PFI (Private Finance Initiative).

Launched in April, the CRB is a system for checking the background of all people who work with children or vulnerable adults in schools, voluntary organisations or professional bodies. Collating information from the police and government agencies, the CRB is run by Capita, which charges £12 for each check. Initially, Capita promised to respond to 90% of high-level enquiries - those required for the teaching profession - but within three weeks this promise had slipped back to the end of the year "if yer lucky".

The problem was that poor Capita were expecting 75% of the applications to come by phone and were surprised that so many came in hand-written through the post - actually not all that surprising since applications from local authorities need to be signed by a designated officer and so can't really be phoned in. The real reason for the mess up is that Capita set up a system to scan the applications using optical character recognition which can't read handwriting so all the data had to be input manually (I don't believe it!) and they just didn't have the staff to handle such a tall order. Capita have since shipped off all the applications to India! So the education Secretary Estelle Morris was left a 'very dissatisfied customer'.

But of course unlike failing schools, Capita is under no threat of the government taking them over or even giving them a slap on the wrist. Instead, Capita, who cocked up the Individual Learning Accounts Scheme earlier this year and left £260 million of tax payers money open to fraud, have continually been fed more and more contracts - over £1 billion worth in the first half of the year alone including a 10-year contract to collect TV licence fees (which should make SchNEWS readers without licenses breath a sigh of relief) and a five-year contract to run the congestion-charging scheme in London. Maybe that's why they've had a 38% rise in profits for the first half of the year, with three of their top exec's sharing a £7.5million payoff.

Meanwhile, hospitals, care homes and social services dept's trying to recruit struggled with delays that have built up in vetting potential staff. The whole social services system had "slowed down dramatically", said one director of social services. A care worker told Schnews she'd spent 18 weeks waiting to be cleared and unable to work.

## The Chiapas Are Down

Things have been hotting up in Chiapas, Mexico over the last few weeks, with at least 5 Zapatistas murdered by paramilitary groups and many civilians from the autonomous zones seriously injured. The first co-ordinated assault on the communities since the brutal massacre at Acteal in 1997, Zapatistas and aid agencies are eager to find out what has sparked these recent killings. New and existing paramilitary groups, along with police have stepped up the violence. Hundreds of additional Mexican soldiers have also been deployed in the conflict zone around Monte Azules and the Lacondon jungle. Several Zapatista communities have had to flee from paramilitary violence, and human rights observers are accompanying threatened communities. Zapatistas and human rights groups are calling for action and support. [www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net](http://www.chiapaslink.ukgateway.net)

\* 'Fiesta Zapatista' benefit night next Monday (9) upstairs at the Albert pub, Brighton. Includes the film 'Storm From the Mountain' at 7pm. Money raised will go towards re-painting a mural in a Zapatista autonomous co-op.

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## SchNEWS in brief

This weekend (6-8) is **Big Blether 3**. "A weekend for those interested in direct action, environmental issues and campaigning in Scotland" at the Talamh Life Centre, Lanarkshire, Scotland. Workshops on greenwashing vs. corporate responsibility, herbal medicine, alternative technology etc. Cheap vegan food available but come as self sufficient as possible. Donations of £5-20 depending on income. 0131 557 6242, [www.jl2.org/bigblether/](http://www.jl2.org/bigblether/) \*\* Next Wednesday (11) there's a **Peace Walk**. Meet at the Peace statue in **Hove**, 12 noon. Walk silently through Brighton, no banners or placards please \*\* Film, talk and discussion with **North American Indian activist Rod Coronado** this Monday (9th) in Brighton, 7PM, Brighthelm Centre, North Road, also London Wednesday (11th) at LARC 62 Fieldgate Street. Aldgate East tube, Whitechapel. 7.30pm 020 7377 9088 [www.londonarc.org](http://www.londonarc.org) \*\* All charges against the five protesters who occupied the Shoreham docks of Euromin, the company responsible for killing **Simon Jones**, have been dropped. [www.simonjones.org.uk](http://www.simonjones.org.uk) \*\* **Reclaim the Future** 20-22 September, includes all day event on the Saturday with workshops, kids area, inspiring films, spoken word and cabaret followed by party. 07931 560 569 [rtsparty2002@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rtsparty2002@yahoo.co.uk) \*\* **INJUSTICE**, the documentary about struggles for justice by the families of people who have died in police custody, has won Best Documentary at the BFM Film and Television Awards, which will take place in London next Monday. The awards are an annual celebration of achievement in black cinema and television. Between 1969 and 1999 over one thousand people died in police custody in England, with not one officer ever being convicted. [www.injusticefilm.co.uk](http://www.injusticefilm.co.uk) \*\* In protest against the Nike "Run London" event in Richmond Park on Sept 22nd, **No Sweat**, the UK campaign against sweatshops, will be holding its own events to expose the poor working conditions in the Niketown shops, and on factory floors. Get "No to Nike Naked Greed" posters to post over Nike's ads on your local high street. 07904 431 959 [www.nosweat.org.uk](http://www.nosweat.org.uk) \*\* The radical video collective [cultureshop.org](http://cultureshop.org) are now selling **Drowned Out - The Narmada Dam Story**. The film will be showing at the Cube, Bristol next Tuesday (10) 7 pm £2 door tax \*\* Lancaster City Council have just voted through the Lancaster University / Jarvis Greenfields Expansion Plan and A6 link road. Interested in setting up a protest camp? [grandlaf@lineone.net](mailto:grandlaf@lineone.net) \*\* **Critical Mass North London Ride**, 14 September. Critical Mass is a rolling party encouraging a better deal for London's cyclists, pedestrians and public transport users. Bring a bike, roller blades, skateboard, pogo stick or any non-motorised transport. Starts 2pm Finsbury Park main gate (Seven Sisters Road).

## Positive SchNEWS

Meanwhile Gardens in West London is a project aimed at helping people who have severe or enduring mental health problems learn about gardening and allotments. Originally set up in the early 1970s when a group of local residents managed to save it from developers, Meanwhile Gardens is a half acre site on a small strip of land between the canal and the A40 Westway and tower-blocks. Its achievements include ponds, a bog garden, a meadow area, herb garden and the promotion of a variety of species such as alder, hazel, birch, oak and beech. The success of the project has enabled it to thrive and currently to challenge yet more encroachment on the land by potential developers. "Experience gained at the Gardens can boost the confidence of trainees who may have been out of work for a long time, and show both them and potential employers that they can commit to a project, interact with a group of people and gain nationally recognised qualifications in the process." Contact: Kensington and Chelsea Mind, 020 8960 6336

## Suit Up!

In America, the land where obese people recently sued the inventors of burgers and fries, now it's the environmentally disadvantaged suing the inventors of global warming....

Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace and the City of Boulder, Colorado are filing a lawsuit on behalf of their members who are victims of global warming. The suit has been filed against two US government agencies - the Export Import Bank (ExIm) and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) - who use taxpayers' money to fund loans to US corporations for overseas projects that other banks have deemed too dodgy. In partnership with the Bush Administration, virtually every major energy, oil and gas company has received subsidisation by these two in the last ten years. Edison, Citicorp, ExxonMobil, Enron, Westinghouse, GE, Chase Manhattan, Bank of America and many others receive billions in taxpayer support from them. The lawsuit claims that through this subsidisation, OPIC and Ex-Im have illegally provided over \$32 billion in financing and insurance for oil fields, pipelines and coal-fired power plants over the past ten years "without assessing their contribution to global warming and their impact on the U.S. environment." Or, more to the point, without giving a toss.

The lawsuit website goes on to say that, "OPIC and Ex-Im are using taxpayer dollars to support fossil fuel extraction projects around the world, primarily to take oil from developing countries and bring it back to the United States. 56% of U.S. oil consumed comes from other countries like Nigeria, Venezuela, the Middle East and Mexico. Chapter 8 of the Bush/Cheney Energy Plan seeks to expand that even further. OPIC and Ex-Im are involved in virtually every major fossil fuel extraction project in the world. Despite requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act to assess the climate change impacts of these projects, the Bush Administration is not in compliance and U.S.-caused greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. Private citizens, environmental organizations, states and cities in the U.S. are being harmed by climate change and therefore are bringing this legal action."

Which all sounds well and good, but becomes a bit disappointing when you learn what the plaintiff's hope to accomplish through their lawsuit — they want OPIC and Ex-Im to simply fill out more paperwork, believing this will make them into better environmental stewards. The lawsuit pushes for, "Environmental Assessments to see if an action will significantly affect the environment and if the answer is affirmative to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) detailing the effects and options for alternative actions." More red-tape and bureaucratic greenwash anyone?

And while attacks on meanies like OPIC and Ex-Im are never a completely bad thing, one has to wonder when the rest of world's population (i.e. those of us who can't afford costly lawyers but are still affected by climate change) will get our day in court. Maybe OPIC will lend us some money for a lawsuit.... [www.climatelawsuit.org](http://www.climatelawsuit.org)

## ...and finally...

Most wanted fugitive found in New York. No it's not that bin liner bloke, but international fugitive Warren Anderson, the former Chief Executive of Union Carbide responsible for the deaths of thousands of people after the Bhopal poison gas disaster (see Schnews 371). Apparently the US law enforcement agencies couldn't track him down so instead it was left to a team of crack commandos from Greenpeace to go to his house. Anderson is now facing extradition to India to face charges of culpable homicide. Not having a good time of it really are they?

## Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers we'll give yer summit for nothing not nothing for something. Honest.