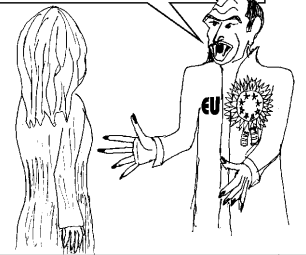




WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER BIGGA + BETTA!

Welcome to the club - Transylvania



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TRICKY TREATY

"We are being asked to give more powers to the EU commission, an unelected, secretive body that is so corrupt it was forced to resign in its entirety in March 1999. We are being asked to give our support to the pro-business agenda of the EU, where the richer farmers receive enormous subsidies under the Common Agricultural Policy, where corporation taxes are slashed while public services are cut. Is this the Europe we want?" - Libertarians Against Nice.

Big business got its way when last Sunday Ireland finally voted "Yes" to the Nice Treaty. (Ireland had voted "No" a few months earlier, but as this was not the right answer, the powers that be gave it another go with even more "Yes" propaganda.) The yes vote now paves the way for ten more countries to join the European Union. While these countries are being ordered to privatise essential services if they want to climb aboard (see SchNEWS 287), the Nice treaty is an important step in the EU's privatisation agenda for those already part of the club.

Nice will, amongst other things, bring changes to Article 133 of the Treaty of Europe. Alarm bells should always start ringing when our old mates at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) give something the thumbs up. The WTO, who help eliminate 'barriers to trade' (silly things like workers rights and environmental laws), have admitted how important the changes to Article 133 are in their 'Trade Policy Review of the European Union,' a document which SchNEWS recommends any insomniac readers to rush out and buy. But this is how the bureaucrats work: boring us to death with gobbledegook so they can drive forward their business-friendly agenda while we yawn and check the footie scores.

Changing Article 133 means that, instead of national governments, the unelected EU Council bureaucrats and the unelected European Commission will be responsible for negotiating trade deals with organisations like the WTO, "fast-tracking" their deals behind everybody's backs. Fast-tracking is described by Pascal Lamy, the EU Trade Commissioner, as "modernising decision-making." That means swift, centralised decision-making that ensures that elected EU governments don't interfere with Big Business's deals as lobby groups push business demands through an already industry-friendly European bureaucracy.

GATS Piss

"The GATS is not just something that exists between governments. It is first and foremost an instrument for the benefit of business." - European Commission (1998)

For the past few years, the WTO have been trying to expand the General Agreement on Trades in Services (GATS - see SchNEWS 286), whose "privatise everything!" small print is a wet dream for corporations. Now with the Irish ratifying the Nice treaty, it's full steam ahead. Around 20 key basic services have been named by the WTO as ripe for privatisation. Postal, finance and banking, telecommunications, hospitals, transport - you name it, it's all gotta go private because, under WTO rules, government-run public services are a subsidy that 'discriminates' against foreign businesses and are an unfair 'barrier to trade.'

The problem for the WTO has been the mass protests whenever governments try to sell off essential services. But the Nice Treaty will take care of those pesky protestors! Article 133 lets the EU Council and Commission "act by a qualified majority." This means that, when they have made a trade agreement, all member states have no choice but to go along with it. As one WTO official put it, GATS helps "overcome domestic resistance to change." Because even if a government wants to take back control of a failing private company, it won't be able to unless it is ready to face the trade sanction consequences. Take Britain's railways, for instance. Late trains, crap service, over the top prices - tough. A privatised rail network is here to stay, courtesy of agreements like GATS and Article 133.

Frights of the Round Table

It's estimated that Brussels - the home of the European Parliament - hosts some 500 industry lobby groups who employ some 10,000 professional lobbyists. Their job is to make the European Union more industry-friendly - and they do a good job. In 1999, for instance, there was a multi-million lobbying campaign by biotech companies that saw the introduction of the industry-friendly 'Patents on Life' directive.

One of the most important lobbying groups is the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT), made up of over 40 "European industrial leaders" from some of SchNEWS's favourite corporations. The ERT is fairly honest about the privilege it enjoys, boasting on its web page that "The ERT has contacts with the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, and the European Parliament. ...Every six months the ERT meets with the government that holds the EU presidency to discuss priorities." And it usually gets what it wants. It was the ERT that wanted revisions to Article 133 for fast tracking - and hey presto!

As Andrew Flood of Ireland's Libertarians Against Nice says, "The message is

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For being overheard...

Two brothers in Sheffield, aged 12 and 13, noticed police watching them 3 weeks ago. When one of them asked the police why they were being watched, he was told "People that dress like you are trouble causers." A bit later, one of the boys was talking to a friend and made the mistake of exclaiming "Fucking hell!" just a bit too loudly. He was promptly roughed up and arrested for the heinous crime of swearing in the presence of a police officer, even though he hadn't been speaking directly to the copper. His brother was then arrested for trying to defend him, and when a female friend of the boys' asked the police why they were being arrested and bullied, she was arrested for "obstructing a police officer from doing his duty."

clear. A substantial part of the Nice treaty, Article 133, has essentially been drafted by the European corporations to increase their profits at the expense of the people of Europe and those we trade with. The nature of these changes are things that huge numbers of Irish workers would oppose if they were presented in plain English in a referendum."

* Recommended reading: 'Diverse Voices of Struggle in Western Europe - Restructuring and Resistance' edited by Kolya Abramsky. AK Distribution 0131 555 5166 www.akuk.com

* For more on the Nice Irish Referendum, visit the Libertarians Against Nice website at: <http://struggle.ws/anarchism/nice/index.html>

* The World Development Movement is running a campaign against GATS 0800 328 2153 www.gatswatch.org

* Read all about the WTO's hidden agenda www.corpwatch.org/issues/PID.jsp?articleid=722

* With a few weeks to go till the WTO summit in Sydney (14/15 November), 3 anti-WTO websites face the prospect of being banned. Indymedia Melbourne is amongst the websites targeted by New South Wales Police Minister Michael Costa. Censoring the censorship lists? See www.melbourne.indymedia.org and www.nowto.cat.org.au

ANTI-WAR ACTIONS

There's a whole load of actions coming up on the 31st to oppose the possible war against Iraq. Here are just a couple:

London: Critical Mass Ride Against Death - meet 2pm by the peace camp at Imperial War Museum, Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park, Lambeth Road, SE1. Move off 3pm. Dress scary - www.cm-london.cjb.net And Houses of Parliament, 6pm. Dress in white, disguised as ghosts, and converge on Parliament. 020 7377-9088 disobedience@riseup.net

Brighton: Critical Mass Ride starting from Sussex University at 3pm and 3.30pm from Moulcomb Wild Park. Stop the City Stop the War demonstration. Meet 5.30pm at the War Memorial, The Old Steine. ***For your nearest action contact: Stop the War Coalition 020 7053 2155, www.stopwar.org.uk**

STRIKE A LIGHT!

Remember how great firefighters were about a year ago? When it looked like the thought of merchant bankers leaping to their deaths on 9-11 might not be tragic enough to convince us of the importance of bombing the shit out of Afghanistan, we were treated to a stream of tear-jerking speeches and articles reminding us of all the firemen who lost their lives trying to rescue victims of the WTC attacks. Firefighters were heroes and the sacrifices they made were priceless.

Erm, well now it seems that all that was a bit of a misprint. It turns out that firefighters are actually lazy, greedy, and irresponsible and the sacrifices they make aren't worth very much at all. All this according to the same papers and politicians who were kissing their arses last year.

Why? Because the firefighters are now set to go on strike. And how dare they put other people's lives at risk to get the wages they deserve? The firefighter's union is calling for a 40% increase, the cheeky gits, which would take the wage for a qualified firefighter from £21,000 to £30,000. Don't they know that the country can't afford to actually pay a decent wage to workers who risk their lives every day?

For the Schnews reader's benefit, here's a short list of things the Labour government can afford:

* **A 40% pay increase for the Prime Minister:** 2 weeks after winning the last election, Blair congratulated himself with a £47,000 pay increase, taking his salary to £173,000.

* **A £20,000 pay increase for cabinet ministers:** Not wanting to be tight, Blair also handed out pay increases to Prescott and his mates, taking the cabinet minister's salary to £120,000. Cha-ching!

* **£3.4 billion** to underwrite arms exports in 2001 through the Export Credit Guarantee Scheme.

* **Approximately £1 billion** for 'low-intensity' bombing raids on Iraq since 1997.

...and remember, now we've really got to tighten those purse strings, cos we've got a proper war on the way.

WALK ON THE WOODSIDE

Tired of the powers-that-be yanking them about, a community of 200 Romany travellers and their supporters intend to resist eviction from Woodside caravan park in Bedfordshire on November 1st.

After years of being told to buy their own land and stop trespassing on other people's land twenty-seven Gypsy families purchased Woodside, a 17-acre touring caravan park with full planning permission, for £300,000 in 1997. But when the families moved to the park, Mid-Bedfordshire council claimed they did not have permission for permanent occupation. The council have been trying to oust them from their land ever since, even allocating £230,000 of council money to finance clearance of the community!! After a long court battle, the council has been given the go ahead to evict the community.

Help and support is urgently needed!! There will be a protest outside the council offices (Dunstable St., Ampthill, Bedford) at 6:30 p.m. Thursday 31st during a meeting about the planned eviction. Demonstrators are then invited to camp at Woodside (at Hatch, near Sandy, off A1) and help defend the site on Friday 1st, when the council is scheduled to try to force the 52 families from their homes. The Gypsy Council is asking people to donate tents, bales of hay or straw, scrap wood and rope for the action. The travellers also are working on a last-minute legal appeal. More info: 01206 523528.

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SchNEWS in brief

The Porkbolter, Worthing's 'radical local newspaper with a historically vindicated pig obsession' has a 5th birthday bash 7.45-midnight, Nov 1st at Vintners Parrot, Warwick St, Worthing, with live band Becomes The Water of Death, Attila the Stockbroker, and various DJs. Donations on door ** Planning meeting for protests against next year's **DSEi arms fair**, 30th Oct, 7pm at St. Ann's Church Hall, Berwick Rd, Canning Town, London Info 0781 7652 029. Join the e-mail discussion at DSEi2003-subscribe@yahoo.com. www.dsei.org ** Where to next with the **Anarchist Bookfair**? Anyone with feedback/ideas for how it can be developed get y'erself along to an open meeting, 17th Nov, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, London WC1R 4RL 6pm-9pm or e-mail comments to mail@anarchistbookfair.org ** **Protest against custody deaths** - Remembrance Procession organised by United Families and Friends Campaign. Sat 26th Oct, Trafalgar Sq 1pm. Please wear black. 07770 432 439 ** **Burger King** in Bristol found their locks glued and their windows repainted last week. The action was done as a protest against Burger King's continued profiteering from the stores they have opened in the Israeli occupied regions of Palestine ** Meeting about the **Baku-Ceyhan BP backed oil pipeline**. Thursday 31st with a speaker from Georgia, 7.30pm, Manchester University Student Union Main Hall, 1st Floor. ** The trial of **five antimilitarist activists** concludes in Watford today. The protestors are charged under the 1908 Public Meeting Act for "disrupting a public meeting", although the army presentation they disrupted was private invitation only. Two are also charged with criminal damage, although the Army has yet to say what was damaged. www.northwood.cjb.net/ ** Pickets are taking place outside supermarkets in Brighton, in support of the **BIG (Boycott Israeli Goods)** campaign. Saturday mornings 11 - 1 p.m. Currently at Sainsbury's, London Road ** **The Iraq Journal** website features reports of independent journalists Jeremy Scahill and Jacqueline Soohen, providing a forum for the distribution of independent information and views from Iraq. www.iraqjournal.org ** In New York this week 19 activists from the **No Blood for Oil Campaign** were arrested after occupying the UN General Assembly and demanding that the UN at no time give its support for the invasion of Iraq www.PeaceNoWar.net** **Work & Welfare, not Weapons Conference** organised by Greater Manchester and District Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Campaign Against Arms Trade @ Manchester Town Hall on 2nd November. Will look at diversification from military production and the creation of a non-military economy. 0161 273 8283 www.gmdcnd.org.uk/worknotweapons

SQU'ART ATTACK!

On Saturday 12th October Russian police illegally evicted Moscow's only political squat giving one man a broken skull and hospitalising 3 others. The squat started out as a studio given to artist Evgeni Schetov two and a half years ago by the Moscow Union of Artists. Since then the space has become an important base for ecological activism. Not liking this turn of events, city officials and bureaucrats from the Union of Artists threatened to evict Schetov. In retaliation, Schetov stopped paying his rent - making the space the first political squat in Moscow since 1997. On the morning of Saturday the 12th, the police and members of the Union of Artists managed to smash the door down with axes and then violently attacked squatters inside. Everyone was arrested and all their property was thrown into the street. The squatters are launching a campaign against the eviction. Info: dikobrazi@lists.tao.ca

TUNNEL VISION

Europe's increasingly racist immigration policies have brought tighter border controls, higher surveillance, and more people being detained and deported.

Detention centres have been a focus of actions against these policies and last Saturday (19) people demonstrated outside the Dover removals centre. Later that day, they crossed the channel to join up with French activists at the Sangatte camp. Sangatte is a humanitarian Red Cross camp which is home to 1,500 people who are hoping to apply for asylum in Europe. Both the French and English governments have schemed together to close the camp by March 2003 because sheltering and feeding migrants was seen as far too liberal. The UN has very kindly offered to help sort the 'genuine' from the 'non-genuine' refugees and will be giving the 'non-genuine' the option of being sent back home with a bit of cash or living on the streets of Calais now that Sangatte will be shut down. On Saturday, many of the refugees came out of Sangatte to talk to the protesters. One protester told Schnews, "The hardest thing was meeting children who were telling us that England was their dream country when we really know the truth of what will happen to them when they come here."

For more information about the actions visit www.noborder.org, www.barbedwirebritain.org.uk and www.campsfield.org.uk

* Next demo at Sangatte is on Friday November 15th - the day that Sangatte closes its doors to newcomers. Info: goldfish1967@hotmail.com

* There will be a Brighton No Borders Meeting, 28th October, 7.30pm Tilbury Place. Unemployed Centre off Carlton Street.

DIRTY MAC

October 16th was the annual worldwide anti-McDonalds day, where crappy fast food outlets the world over were picketed and free veggie burgers given away. But this year a load of workers got involved too: Workers at six McDonalds in France went on strike, there was a strike in Norfolk, attempts at strikes in three London stores and a walkout in Nottingham. McTrash was dumped back into stores in Australia, locks glued and stores painted in Austria, freezers and toasters sabotaged in Chicago, a mass resignation in Toronto... the list goes on: www.geocities.com/globaldayofaction

Unfortunately, there are serious repercussions for anti-Macs in Mexico: 94 protesters were arrested and detained following complaints from McDonalds. They were accused of damage to an umbrella and window and carrying explosives - i.e. fireworks. The state has set a bond of \$14,000 for each protester, a fee which could buy untold numbers of replacement umbrellas. Financial help is now desperately needed. http://mexico.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=3486&group=webcast (In Spanish)

...and finally...

Only weeks after announcing (then quickly retracting) that the solution to the annual 'fallen leaves' problem would be to fell all trees on the banks of their rail lines, it looks like Rail Track now have a new enemy. Taking the form of a giant inflatable hamburger, the new menace disrupted services from Newport to London on Tuesday. Rail Track have since announced a national cull of large inflatable hamburgers and of any giant inflatable clowns that might be making them. http://uk.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=44217&group=webcast

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers Bognor Regis is not Nice. Honest.