



wake up! wake up! It's yer on the right tracks

SchNEWS

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Friday 13th December 2002

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Issue 385

WIDE-BOYS

As protesters braved the cold last weekend to set up camp at St Catherine's Hill, Twyford Down, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the beginning of the road protest movement, the government were finalising their own plans to celebrate with the biggest road building programme in a decade. So as well as reminiscing about the good ol' times, the camp had future plans to chew over. As one protester told SchNEWS, "This government is just going back to the old model of predict-and-provide, which will see more of our countryside being trashed to make way for 'economically necessary' roads and airports"

When the Labour Government first came to power, fat controller John (two jags) Prescott blubbered "I will have failed ...if in five years there are not many more people using public transport and far fewer journeys by car. It is a tall order but I want you to hold me to it." Well Fat Boy, you've drowned in your own exhaust fumes. The new chiefs at the Department of Transport have decided that they like concrete and this week gave the green light to £5.5 billion of new transport schemes. £2 billion of which is going towards major road construction and widening schemes.

But the joke will soon be back on them, as the failure of previous road widening schemes has shown. As Professor David Begg, Chair of the government's Commission for Integrated Transport pointed out, "On the M25, when it went from three to four lanes, within one year traffic increased by one third, negating the benefits." Considering that the number of vehicles on our roads has already increased by 7% since 1997, this new roads programme is exactly the opposite of what's needed to stop total gridlock. But that doesn't appear to bother Neo Labour, whose mates at the Confederation of British Industry have given them more than a gentle push to do something about congestion, which they believe is costing the country £20 billion a year, money which instead should be lining shareholders' pockets.

NO U-TURN

"This is a binge of road building with virtually nothing safe from the bulldozer. The Government is trying to build its way out of congestion but it won't work. All that it will do is lead to bigger, wider traffic jams. It seems that the Government aims to keep the UK the most car-dependent country in Europe." Stephen Joseph, Transport 2000

So how come roads are once again on top of the agenda? Well in 1997-8 the Gov-

ernment conducted a review of transport policy. One of the results of this review was to set in motion 23 Multi-Modal Studies. These studies were designed to examine some of the key transport problems and look at a full range of solutions for the next 30 years, rather than just the road schemes previously suggested. The outcome of the studies have been varied, with most suggesting mixed packages of new roads, new/reopened railway lines, and improvements to local transport. Unfortunately, the end result of many of the studies has been that the roads get built first, with public transport improvements following well behind, if ever. This is because main roads (being an 'investment') get allocated funds from central government coffers. On the other hand, local transport improvements, such as buses and trams, are paid for by often cash-strapped local councils. And the railways (SchNEWS doesn't need to remind its readers here how well they've been performing since privatisation) only get a small amount of 'subsidy', so can't even afford to do the work they've already promised, let alone think about doing any extra improvements in the future.

So instead of more public transport, we can instead look forward to the widening or upgrading of more than a dozen motorways and trunk roads. One of the most destructive schemes given the green light is the widening of A303/A30 which runs down to the south-west ploughing through the Wiltshire Area of Outstanding National Beauty. Although the wide boys did steer clear of building the road above ground past Stonehenge, they forgot to promise to do anything about widening the rail line in this area from one to two lines, which would have helped to reduce congestion loads.

And if you think it sounds good when the government says "The World Heritage Site at Stonehenge will be enhanced and protected by putting the existing road in a bored tunnel", think again. The short tunnel they're proposing is dismissed by campaigners from the Save Stonehenge Campaign, who said, "The British government is pretending that its main concern is to do Stonehenge a favour. It isn't. The aim of this scheme is to build a new four-lane highway. Stonehenge is in the way. So the government is doing the cheapest thing it possibly can to make it politically acceptable to build a new highway through the World Heritage Site. It's pretending to go out of its way to protect Stonehenge, which has been there for 5000 years, by spending an extra £30 million pounds. But

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For being the 51st Protester!

Robin Webb, press officer for the UK ALF, was arrested last week in America at the national demonstration against Huntingdon Life Sciences. His crime? Laughably absurd he was supposedly the 51st person to enter the "50 person" protest zone at the lab! American authorities are intent on not letting this hardened criminal escape, his bail was a whopping \$10,000 and the judge in the case is holding Robin's passport so he can't escape!

www.shacamerica.net

it has £5.5 billion to spend on transport. And it spent £800 million pounds on London's Millennium Dome."

* To check out if there's a new shiny road planned in your area and how you can get involved in stopping it, go to www.roadalert.org.uk

* Countries clammering to become part of the European Union are already adopting western Europe's unsustainable transport policies, according to a report by the European Environment Agency. Read it at http://reports.eea.eu.int/environmental_issue_report_2002_24

* Last month the South East Regional Assembly gave their approval to a series of new and widened roads to form the 'South Coast Superhighway', cutting through some of the proposed South Downs National Park. Sound good? www.scar-uk.fsnet.co.uk

* For top tips on wrecking road building check out www.eco-action.org/rr/

* Give yourself a Twyford Down history lesson www.schnews.org.uk/sotw/twyford-down%2B10.htm

Insainsbury's

Neo Labour Brighton Council has approved the controversial development of the old Brighton Station goods yard site. The scheme includes just what Brighton needs more of - two posh Hotels and a Sainsbury's supermarket providing crappy low paid jobs. The only reason that this scheme is going ahead is because Sainsbury's are prepared to bribe the council with "infrastructure improvements" (i.e. roads) which will increase traffic in an already congested area. The new Sainsbury's will be nearly twice the size of its current store in London Road, and despite the council planning department saying, "There is no quantitative need for additional food retail in the area", they decided to give it the go-ahead anyway.

So a supermarket, some hotels, crap housing, no playing fields - SchNEWS just doesn't understand why Brighton Council, showing SUCH vision, failed in its bid to become city of culture!

* BUDD, who have been opposing the development, are now trying to have the development called in to a Public Enquiry. If they fail, work on the new site will begin in May. 01273 681166 www.buddbrighton.org

* Check out Corporate Watch's 'What's Wrong with Supermarkets' Send £1 + 41p SAE to 16b Cherwell Rd., Oxford, OX4 1BG www.corporatewatch.org.uk/profiles/food_supermarkets/supermarkets

Cut-Throat Politic

The topsy-turvy world of Venezuela continues. Bosses and investors are on "general strike" while the masses take action in support of the leftist government of Hugo Chavez! As Western television stations show footage of many (rich) Venezuelans out on the streets in opposition to Chavez, different stories are coming from poorer quarters. On Monday night, groups of ordinary Venezuelans took over all the main TV stations in Caracas in support of the president and the country remains in turmoil.

The US has made no secret of the fact that it would like to see a regime change in Venezuela since the CIA-backed coup in April (SchNEWS 345). This instantly failed when it became apparent that no-one but the US would recognise the new leadership and Chavez was returned to power.

As in Iraq, the motivation for US interference is oil - Venezuela is the fifth largest oil exporter in the world and its main customer is the USA.

* In London, two days of action are planned in solidarity with the first anniversary of the Argentinean popular rebellion when the Argentinean people kicked out the government (SchNEWS 350) **Night of Rage**, 20th December followed by **Day of Disobedience** chaotic mass proletarian shopping action on Oxford Street on the 21st Dress as Santa, steal from the rich & give presents to the kids. "Just nick it." www.wombles.org.uk

* The film "**Voces Argentinas**" was shot on the streets of Buenos Aires and shows how it felt to be Argentine as the country plunged quickly from the first world to the third. **Screenings: 13th**, Use Your Loaf, 227 Deptford High Street, London SE8. 7pm. **18th**, Argentine Film Night & talk about the uprising, plus food & bar. 7.30pm, Union Tavern, Camberwell New Rd, London SE5. **18th**, Junk TV Christmas party - Free showing, DJs, bar, cakes, more films. Sanctuary Cafe Cella, Brunswick St East, Hove, 8pm. **22nd**, **Film Afternoon for Argentina** - The Other Cinema, Rupert St, London W1, from 1pm

* 21st is **McGo-Slow As Fuck! Day** - McDonalds workers are being encouraged to work slowly in solidarity with the Argentinean popular rebellion <http://mwr.org.uk>

WAR BRIEFS

Members of **Voices in the Wilderness** in the US have been fined a total of \$50,000 for having the cheek to send medicine to Iraq without a permit. Since 1996, members have broken sanctions with over fifty delegations to Iraq, travelling on humanitarian, fact-finding, and rebuilding missions, and refusing to see the people of Iraq as enemies. The group aim to collect money for the fine - then use it to buy more medicine to send to Iraq! Don't they understand that if they had sent a bomb they would have got a pat on the back?? www.nonviolence.org/vitw/ ** **Disobedience** hold a Day School to discuss ways of uniting different London-based groups opposed to the war. Sat 18th Jan: 10am-6pm, London Action Resource Centre, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1 www.disobedience.org.uk ** Anti-war meeting followed by some peaceful protest and **civil disobedience in Brighton**, Saturday 21st, meet noon at Brighton Unemployed Centre, 6 Tilbury Place, just off Carlton Hill. ** Benefit in aid of **Hastings CND & Medical Aid for Palestine** this Sunday (15th) 2.30pm onwards at The Carlisle Pub, Hastings. ** The **United States are about to sell weapons to the Algerian government**, one American official said Washington "has much to learn from Algeria on ways to fight terrorism." According to Amnesty International around 4,000 people have "disappeared" in Algeria since 1993 after being arrested by the security forces.

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Keep SchNEWS FREE! Send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 10 for next 9 issues) or donations (payable to Justice?) Ask for "Originals" if you can make copies. Post free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o on-the-fiddle, P.O. Box 2600, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 0EF. Tel +44 (0)1273 685913 Email schnews@brighton.co.uk Download a PDF of this issue or subscribe at www.schnews.org.uk

Inside SchNEWS

American Earth Liberation prisoner Jeff "Free" Luers, sentenced to 22 years (longer than most rapists and murderers get) for setting fire to three cars, is to appeal against his conviction and sentence. Write to Hardy Myers, the Oregon State Attorney, calling for a lesser sentence. Sample letter at: www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk under the Urgent Updates section.

* Chain Reaction's "**Unshackling Captive Minds**" is an anarchist zine produced by current and former Texas prisoners. Issue 9 is just out and is available free to prisoners and \$2 for others. CR Collective, P.O. Box 501, Whiteface, USA TX 79379-0501. Texarchist1@wmconnect.com.

SchNEWS in brief

The **SchNEWS of the World** book is now available at the Punker Bunker (under Immediate clothes shop), Sydney Street, Brighton and in City Bookshop, Western Road, Hove. ** Doh! Last week **SchNEWS fell for a spoof Dow Chemicals announcement** that it basically didn't give a shit about the Bhopal gas leak in India which has killed 20,000 people and left thousands more ill. "Our responsibility is to our shareholders." etc. etc. We should have realised that a corporation would never be so honest! ** Tune in to **Radio 4A** in the Brighton area this weekend on 107.8FM or worldwide at www.piratetv.net ** **Injustice**, the film about black deaths in custody, Monday 16th, Brunei Gallery, 10 Thornhaugh Street, London, WC1H. 7pm. The police will even be there to take part in a Q&A session after the film! 020 8709 9777 www.injusticefilm.co.uk ** Don't forget the **Housmans 2003 Peace Diary** - now in its 50th year of printing. Listing nearly 2000 peace, human rights, and environmental organisations, covering 150 countries. To order one, send £7.95 (incl. P&P to any address in the world) to Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London N1 9DX 020 7837 4473 www.apoogee.com/Housmans ** **Sustainable Christmas** evening social, Saturday 14th 7.30-10pm. Phoenix Community Centre, Brighton. 07811 443038 alex@cogs.susx.ac.uk ** Actions continue at the factory in **Ozarow, Poland** to stop it being closed (SchNEWS 384). With temperatures at minus 20, sacked workers have been pouring water on the roads, turning them to ice and making it impossible for trucks to take out any equipment! www.fko.prv.pl ** **The Advisory Service for Squatters** now has a new local rate phone number. 0845 644 5814, 2-6pm Monday to Friday. ** The **Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences** (the hot shots who hand out Oscar awards) has refused to allow a Palestinian-made film to enter its foreign film category because it does not accept Palestine as a 'nation'. Tell the Academy what you think of their decision email: ampas@oscars.org ** Tuesday 17th **Cardiff Anarchist Network** hold a public meeting to discuss new forms of direct action. Cathays Community Centre, Cathays Terrace, Cardiff, 8pm. bolshybo@yahoo.co.uk ** **Thames Valley Anarchos** hope to establish a local network of activists in the region. First meeting this Sunday (15th) at the Herschel Arms Pub, Herschel Street, Slough, 7pm. ** **SCHWOOPS!** Two weeks ago, we printed a story about a raid at **Cornerstone Housing Co-op** in Leeds. The info was only a few hours old and we got a bit muddled. The facts: at 8:45am on Nov. 28th, Cornerstone houses were raided by Lincolnshire cops. The door was smashed in and after an hour or so of fruitless searching, the police arrested everyone who had slept in the houses that night and anyone who came home during the search (13 people in all) for burglary!

THOUGHT CRIMINALS

"It's clear that not only those who materially took part in the devastation should be prosecuted, but also those who facilitated the acts or gave strength to their purpose. These people should be prosecuted even if they didn't conduct any material act." - Italian judge, Elena D'Alosio.

Yep, you guessed it, Berlusconi's government have gone from bad to worse with reasons to arrest activists: two weeks ago it was for "subversive association" (SchNEWS 382) and now a new wave of arrests have occurred for "mental participation" in the Genoa demonstrations.

On the morning of 4th December, investigations against 23 people were started by magistrates and 45 houses were raided. The accusations range from devastation and depredation (crimes punishable with 8-15 years imprisonment) to possession of illegal weapons to, SchNEWS' favourite, "mental participation" and "psychological support" in the Genoa actions. The judge, D'Alosio, ordered preventative arrests for 9 of the 23 under investigation, four are under house arrest, six are obliged to remain at home and the remaining four have to present themselves at the police station. Interestingly, all of these arrests have been ordered one and a half years after the relevant events.

'Thoughtcrime' is now a punishable offence in Berlusconi's and Big Business' Italy as some of the No Global activists under investigation but not in custody are suspected of having offered psychological support to violent demonstrations. The judge has said that those who must respond to the charges of 'devastation' are not just those who participated physically but those who encouraged the crime and whose mere presence in demonstrations provides moral support to the more violent demonstrators. In the wise words of D'Alosio "The behaviour of those who were on the scene of the riots, together with the most violent ones, gave strength to these people by their very presence. Their acts were not crimes in themselves, but aided the criminal intentions of the others with their moral support." So basically Italian activists can now be legally nicked for being at a demo that turns violent or being part of an anti-capitalist collective. And even though the judge has admitted that such acts are not "fundamentally criminal" the activists are still under investigation.

The whole legal circus has seen arrests and detentions in over twenty Italian towns and this G8-related drive for justice coincides with an interesting case: magistrates are attempting to close the case against the carabinieri accused of shooting Carlo Giuliani during the G8 protests. It seems likely the carabinieri, Placanica, will be acquitted as Giuliani's killing was 'legitimate self-defence.' So the murderers run free while the thinkers get nicked.

...and finally...

If you're going to go on a consumer spending spree this Christmas, then it wouldn't be such a bad idea to make sure that some capitalist scum-bag is picking up the tab.

Which is just what a group calling themselves the Guinea Pig Avengers managed to do. When the group stumbled across the credit card details of two vivisectionists associated with the Newchurch Guinea Pig farm, they decided to make this the best Christmas ever, running up bills of £15,000 - not bad for an after-noon's work!

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers driven up the wall to enjoy this detour to major improvements ahead. Honest.