



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! MAKE YOUR BED NOT WAR!

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THE ANTI-WAR
MOVEMENT NEEDS
YOU!

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PEACE SOUP

“The fracturing of the Western alliance over Iraq and the huge anti-war demonstrations around the world this weekend are reminders that there may still be two superpowers on the planet: the United States and world public opinion.” - New York Times, February 2003.

The biggest anti-war movement the world has ever seen has only a few weeks left to stop the first world war of the 21st century. Bush and his corporate backers are intent on re-carving the map of the Middle East to ensure US dominance over world oil supplies for decades ahead. If they get their way, the peoples of the Middle East, from Palestine to Kurdistan, will face more war, more poverty, and more repression so that the unsustainable gas-guzzling of countries like the United States and Britain can continue for a few more years.

But Britain is the weak link in the attack plans. Tony Blair is acting like Bush's shiny-suited lawyer, desperately digging up pseudo-legal and very pseudo-moral justifications for an invasion of Iraq. But unfortunately for US interests, Blair has very little support in Britain for his actions and if he is toppled it would be a major blow to Bush. While Blair represents the corporations, the millions who took to the streets of cities across the world last week represent the majority of world opinion. In Britain, the majority of people oppose Blair's war, and oppose it actively - the London march was the biggest in British history and actions and protests are taking place across the country.

Weapons of Mass Dissent

But marches on their own are not enough. We need to do more. In the words of one of Saturday's speakers, we need to "turn up the heat". Civil disobedience on a vast scale, involving thousands of new activists in direct action, is the only reasonable response to Blair's war plans. We need to target high profile government events, the Labour Party's Swansea conference on the 28th of February for instance, and stop them from taking place. Government ministers should be harassed wherever they go. We need to be ready to stage mass walk-outs and stay-aways from work, blockade city centres if war starts, and culminate our actions in the already-planned massive occupation of Whitehall. We need to make sure that the police don't have a veto on what sort of protests we are going to carry out. In short, we need to stop business as usual for the government of this country

until it is forced to listen to the people and dump the warmongers.

The anti-war movement is incredibly united around the need for action - there is little room for Judean People's Front style bickering - and people are determined to be listened to. A typical example of the new unity that is taking root in the anti-war movement is Brighton-based group Sussex Action for Peace. The group includes direct action veterans, left wing activists, local union organisers and dozens of individuals from all sorts of backgrounds. Meetings are large and practical, organising everything from stalls to banner drops in shopping centres to non-violent direct action training sessions to crèches. People understand that we are not going to affect this war if we stand around slugging off each other's diverse tactics. They understand that direct action goes hand in hand with leafleting the high street - that the people breaking into air bases and the people putting posters through letterboxes are in this together.

Groups like Sussex Action for Peace exist up and down the country, so if the bombs start to drop, phone in sick and join in the mass civil disobedience planned across the country. To find out what's happening in your area see www.schnews.org.uk/stopwar/

Statutes of Liberty?

All demonstrations in Manhattan have been banned since September 11th, and unsurprisingly, a New York judge made no exception for the February 15th anti-war march planned in the city, citing supposed "security" fears. Still, half a million people turned out to voice their opinion on Bush and his quest to rule the world. The cops allowed a rally, but then helpfully closed off streets so that people couldn't get to it. At one point, 200 baton-wielding police attacked a group of 100 protestors. The provocation? Not staying on the pavement. The police claim there were only 50 arrests, but other sources, including the National Lawyers Guild, reckon that as many as 400 people were handcuffed and locked in freezing buses all day before being released without charge. Lawyers were not allowed access to their clients for up to 12 hours, during which police interrogated arrestees and asked them about their political affiliations. Congratulations Mr. Bush, Saddam would have been proud!

And yet despite all this, many New Yorkers still managed to make the most of the day, including our personal favourites, GLAMericans for Peace, who held signs bearing such only-in-America slogans as

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For looking for your girlfriend!

A Brighton man who got separated from his loved one at Saturday's anti-war demo made the grave mistake of trying to take a short cut across London to find her. He was accosted by the police who told him he would have to go the long way round. Unfortunately, when he told them to fuck off it became a very long way round. He was arrested and held in the cells all weekend for causing "Harassment, Alarm or Distress to a Police Officer", but how the hell do they think his girlfriend felt?

"Makeup Not War", "Baby, I AM the Bomb", and "War in Iraq is Wack". SchNEWS now reckons that Americans may actually have a sense of humour after all after reading about one sign addressed to Mr. Bush and painted with the message, "Eat Another Pretzel, Asshole." www.nyc.indymedia.org

War Briefs

If you think you were cold at London's anti-war march... this Valentine's Day, 150 people braved temperatures of -35°C in Ottawa, Canada at a 5 hour mass sit-down outside the Ottawa War department. **** Fairford airbase** in Gloucestershire is the biggest bomber base in Europe and can house US Stealth bombers which will drop depleted uranium bombs on Iraq. On Monday, a peace camp set up outside the base. They need tat, food and more people; it's at Kempford, just south of the base. This Sunday (23rd) there's a 'No Basis for War, No Bases for War' action against the base. Meet noon in Fairford village. Camp Mobiles 07905 131020 or 07947 614941 www.gwi.org.uk **** WAR Against War** meeting for folks who live or work in West London to discuss local action against the war. Mon 24th 7.30pm, West 12 Bar (Basement), 74 Askew Road, London W12. **** Special meeting of Working Against War**, Tues 25th, 7.45pm, upstairs at The Downview, West Worthing. **** Weds 26th 'Question Time'** style debate on the War. 7-9pm at the Bricthelm Centre, North Rd, Brighton **** Also on 26th, Sussex Action for Peace get involved benefit night.** £3. Bands and DJ's, 9pm-2am at the Hanbury Ballroom, Brighton. **** The war-mongering 'Christian' Tony Blair is due to attend the enthronement of the new Archbishop of Canterbury**, Thurs 27th, 3pm, Canterbury Cathedral. An anti-war demo is planned, meet 1.30pm, The Burgate, Canterbury. mobilisekent@hotmail.com 07950 610257. **** Fri 28th is the Labour Party Welsh Conference.** An anti-war demo is planned. Meet 12 noon at the Guildhall, Swansea. www.geocities.com/swanseacoalition/ **** ARROW Resistance Gathering** to organise non-violent direct action against war, 1st March, 10.30am-5pm, 62 Fieldgate Street, London E1. www.j-n-v.org **** And finally...** In North Carolina, the owner of a restaurant has renamed his French fries "**freedom fries**" in protest over France's disgusting anti-war policy towards Iraq. "It's our way of showing our patriotic pride," says the owner.

I CAN'T BOLIVIA IT'S A RIOT

Bolivia is in the grip of a massive urban uprising after high school students and the working class of La Paz and El Alto erupted in the streets on February the 12th. In the capital city of La Paz, high school students attacked the Presidential Palace with stones as crowds burned the headquarters of the major neo-liberal parties, a private television station, and various government buildings. In El Alto, rioters burned and looted the water company and the power company and later on occupied the Coke and Pepsi bottling plants. All of this happened after the military opened fire on a group of police who were marching to the Presidential Palace to protest tax increases that would reduce their already low wages. The unpopular tax increases were an attempt by the repressive de Lozado regime to follow IMF directives to reduce the government deficit. But tax increases are just the tip of the iceberg. Coca is also on de Lozado's black list, but Coca growers and indigenous Indians have been blockading roads since January to protest against the criminalisation of coca growing and the unequal distribution of land. The de Lozado regime has also provoked opposition because of its support for the neo-liberal Free Trade Area of the Americas and its complicity in the US's dirty War on Drugs.

Finally, on February the 12th, the people of Bolivia had had enough. After a day of riots, most of the working class neighbourhoods in El Alto and La Paz had blockaded their areas and groups of several hundred were meeting in the carnage of their streets to discuss tactics. Unfortunately, military tanks, tear gas and snipers quickly dispersed a 10 000-strong demonstration held in La Paz the following day. By early afternoon, eight were dead and ten wounded. But the anger still rages in the streets as protestors continue to blockade roads, chanting the anti-de Lozado slogan 'Gringo go home' (as the President reputedly has the annoying tendency of talking with a North American accent when speaking Spanish)

Parallels have been drawn with Argentina's social rebellion, but in Bolivia the rebellion is (unfortunately) under the control of the political party MAS (Movement Towards Socialism.) But perhaps it is too soon to express cynicism. The MAS, together with the peasants' trade unions, has formed the Joint Chiefs of the People to spearhead the rebellion and has called for a mass blockade in the rural areas. Under this unbearable pressure, de Lozado has withdrawn the tax increases and dissolved his entire cabinet but the rebellious Bolivians aren't through with him yet.
www.zmag.org/lam/boliviawatch.htm

DRUGS AND THUGS

"The Pharmaceuticals lobby is running the show in Washington," said a development activist at talks in Geneva last Monday, where unelected President Bush, apparently under the influence of drugs (companies), blocked a World Trade Organisation ruling that would have allowed developing countries access to drugs at affordable prices.

After the long battle between drugs companies and the South African government last year, it was decided that governments of poorer countries could ignore international patent laws in order to prevent further deaths from curable diseases (SchNEWS 290 & 328). The drug companies see this as a massive threat to their profits and with a little help from their friends in high places they're trying to stop the deal going through.

www.who.int/hiv/aboutdept/en/

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NOT A LAME CLAIM

The government is in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights - and that's official.

Mr Justice Collins pulled no punches when he handed down a ruling in the High Court recently on the draconian Section 55 of the 2002 Asylum Bill. He said there was "a real risk" of death or injury for refugees who, under Section 55, are refused support because they didn't apply for asylum the minute they arrived in the UK. He went on to state that Section 55 violates asylum seekers' human rights.

The test case was brought on behalf of 6 asylum seekers but there are 150 more just like it in the pipeline! Justice Collins ordered that previous decisions made by the Home Office in respect to the 6 "must be quashed and re-considered" and that they should be given emergency support.

Keir Starmer QC, representing the asylum seekers, told the court how one Iraqi man had been forced to spend nights in a telephone box due to Section 55. Starmer emphasized that the hardships victims of this brutal new legislation are forced to endure - no money, no food, no home - substantially lower their ability to effectively pursue their asylum applications due to rapid physical and mental deterioration.

Liza Schuster, an expert on asylum from LSE commented: "What does the government expect people to do - patiently starve to death?" Er, yes.

Even though today's ruling means that the Home Office now has a duty to ensure people who apply for asylum are not left without food or shelter, Blunkett ain't having it. He was outside immediately after the hearing ended, telling the Press: "We will be appealing against this decision, with the Attorney General taking the appeal on behalf of the government."

*** Don't let the lunatics take over Asylum!**
Find out what you can do at 0121 554 6947
www.ncadc.org.uk

*** Monday 24th there will another pre-trial hearing for those accused of taking part in the disturbance at Yarl's Wood detention centre.**
Meet 9am Harrow Crown Court. 07867-690332. lizscott@fish.co.uk

*** Stop the War on Asylum Seekers Public Meeting.** Hanover Room, Brighthelm Centre, North Road, Brighton. 3rd March, 7.30pm

*** There's leafleting of Saltdean this Sunday** in defence of refugees who may be housed there soon (see SchNEWS 390). Meet 12 noon at the Saltdean Tavern (next to the Lido).

Positive SchNEWS

If the revolution is gonna be televised then make sure you're the one with the videocam and get yourself down to the Indymedia camcorder guerrillas' weekend. Featuring screenings of radical underground films and workshops by the filmmakers giving practical and technical inspiration to activists. 7th-9th March mainly at Glasgow Film Theatre, with a party to celebrate the launch of Indymedia Scotland on the Saturday. For the workshops (£10/£20) and party (£3/£5), book with the Glasgow Media Access Centre, Camcorder Guerrillas, 34 Albion St, Glasgow. 0141 553 2620. For the screenings ring 0141 332 8128

PRAWNOGRAPHY

Next time you tuck into your prawn and mayo sandwich, spare a thought for the other fish that never made it to your stomach. For every 1kg of prawns caught, 10-20kg of 'bycatch' is caught. These are then discarded overboard dead or dying. 150,000 sea turtles are killed by prawn trawlers every year. Prawn trawling is also thought to be the greatest threat to seahorses. This luxury product and other factory fishing methods are destroying the world's fisheries, undermining the sustainable use of the oceans.
www.ejfoundation.org/trawling.html

NU-CLEAR WAY OUT

Reports commissioned by Greenpeace over a year ago reveal that a terrorist attack on a nuclear power station in the UK could release 25 times as much radiation as was released by the Chernobyl disaster. The reports, which conclude Britain's nuclear plants are "almost totally ill-prepared" for an airborne terrorist attack, also estimate that such an attack could kill between 1.1 - 3.6 million people. So what do you think Greenpeace and the UK government want to do with this information? Sit on it, of course. Both Greenpeace and Neo Labour have actively sought to suppress any publishing of the findings, supposedly because of their "seriously alarming nature".

So while the government babbles on about a possible ricin attack or deploys tanks to Heathrow, there might actually be something much worse round the corner that no one is bothering to tell you about...

Maybe this has to do with Tony Blair's love of nuclear power. He had recently proposed to build six new nuclear power stations, but luckily for us, other ministers stood up to him and rejected the plan. But like a spoilt brat who didn't get his way, he is now insisting that if he can't have what he wants, green energy backers can't either. Blair is now insisting that a newly proposed target of producing 20% of Britain's power from renewable energy sources by 2020 also be scrapped!

* Greenpeace is mounting a legal challenge to the £650m bail out package the Government gave British Energy (who run the old Magnox nuclear power stations). If the suit is successful, British Energy would go bankrupt and perhaps have to shut all of their power stations.
www.greenpeace.org.uk

Inside SchNEWS

A protester from Shannon airport was this week found guilty of spray painting a US airplane which was at the base last September. The punishment was a 1,000 euro fine and a six month suspended prison sentence. The protester is appealing—donations to the appeal fund would be greatly appreciated: Cheques payable to Eoin Dubsky, Whitewalls, Ballymoney, Gorey, Co. Wexford, Ireland.

* Five catholic workers who were arrested doing a ploughshares action at Shannon airport at the beginning of the month are still on remand. Letters of support can be sent to them c/o Br. Anthony, Glenstal Abbey, Murroe, Co. Limerick. <http://slack.redbrick.dcu.ie>

...and finally...

All Coked up

A South African businessman has accused World Cup organisers of assault after he was thrown out of Saturday's match between Australia and India - for drinking a can of Coca-Cola!

The World Cup organising committee, in an effort to protect the interests of official sponsors like Pepsi, has placed arch-rivals Coca Cola on the list of items that are banned at all World Cup matches.

"Within minutes of opening our cans, we were accosted by security officials and told to stop drinking," said Arthur Williamson, the hassled Coke drinker. "They also demanded that we surrender any remaining unopened Cokes in our possession." When he refused, he and his family were chucked out! Nothing like the "Real thing", eh?!

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all politicians flirting with danger, Make Out, Not War. Honest!