



WAKE UP! WAKE UP!! IT'S YER LYING FAKIR

# SchNEWS

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Issue 474

## INDIA FACE

**“Nothing in its [the corporation’s] legal makeup limits what it can do to others in pursuit of its selfish ends, and it is compelled to cause harm when the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs.” - Joel Bakan, author of *The Corporation*.**

Joel Bakan’s recent book and film ‘The Corporation’ have shown the inability of corporations to consider people or the environment in their actions. The film explores how the legal structure of corporations makes them responsible only to their shareholders.

At SchNEWS we’ve always had a healthy skepticism of corporations. This week we’ve got reports on some of the biggest, meanest corporate killers and the resistance to them in India, where the locals aren’t taking corporate rule lying down...

### Tamper Bayer

**“Bayer’s decision to give up the GM ghost in India isn’t surprising because the writing has been on the wall for years. Like almost everyone else, Indian people aren’t prepared to accept GM foods and Bayer realised it had to stop flogging a dead horse.” Doreen Stabinsky – Greenpeace**

Genetic pirates Bayer Crop Science announced that they are stopping trials of GM vegetables in India. The company has taken the radical and innovative decision to concentrate on conventional plant breeding. Bayer claimed that the decision was “due to changes in our global research strategy”.

SchNEWS reckons that it might have had something to do with protests at the end of September, when Greenpeace activists chained themselves to the Mumbai headquarters of Bayer to demonstrate against the crop trials. The activists spent 11 hours in chains, only releasing themselves after arranging a meeting with truth-resistant Bayer management wonks and an assurance that their questions would be answered.

This is Bayer’s third climbdown over GM crops in a year. In March they announced it would not be commercialising GM maize in the UK because its future was “economically non-viable.” Three months later the company stopped all trials of GM oilseed rape in Australia, effectively ending any chance of the crop’s widespread cultivation.

Bayer’s withdrawal from GM research is part of a global trend of companies deciding that GM food wasn’t such a good idea after all. Everybody hates it and the firms are made to look like twats when a bunch of hippies halt crop trials, and force them to admit that the science is bollocks. Earlier this year, Monsanto abandoned GM wheat research and trials of GM oilseed rape in Australia. Greenpeace Press Office: 020 7865 8255, Divya Raghunandan,

Greenpeace India:  
draghuna@dialb.greenpeace.org  
www.cbgnetwork.org

### Dow ‘N’ Out

The people of Bhopal know all about corporations’ lack of respect for anything other than the pursuit of profit; in particular Dow Chemicals who now own the infamous Union Carbide...

The 3<sup>rd</sup> December will be the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the disaster at the Union Carbide factory in Bhopal where four thousand people died after an explosion and toxic gas leak at the pesticide factory. Thousands more have been seriously ill or died since then.

Union Carbide was supposed to be responsible for cleaning up the site, but 20 years on toxic waste is still stored unsafely, poisoning the nearby town’s water supply.

A recent BBC investigation uncovered levels of contamination 500 times higher than World Health Organisation recommended limits. Local people who have to drink the water every day are exposed to the chemicals and many suffer from liver and kidney damage.

Union Carbide says that when it handed the site back in 1998 it “found no evidence of groundwater contamination”.

Perhaps they just didn’t notice the thousands of tons of toxic waste on the abandoned site, the pools of mercury lying on the ground, skips full of poisonous material and bags of highly toxic chemical waste. Rainwater washes these chemicals into puddles and streams and eventually into the ground water.

The more than 570,000 victims of the disaster have only recently started to receive compensation. From the 15<sup>th</sup> November, £188 million is being distributed to victims.

“We never want to see another Bhopal,” the survivors have said from the beginning.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> of December is a Global Day of Action when trade unions, community organizations and others will hold protests, events and actions in cities in India, including Bhopal, and around the world. Visit the campaign website to learn 20 things you can do to help make Dow face responsibility for Bhopal: [www.bhopal.net/gda/todo.htm](http://www.bhopal.net/gda/todo.htm)

### You Must Be Choking...

**“Drinking Coke is like drinking farmer’s blood in India” - Nandlal Master, of Lok Samiti and the National Alliance of People’s Movements**

In India a pattern has emerged as a result of Coca-Cola’s operations. Communities living around bottling facilities experience severe water shortages and the little remaining groundwater, along with the soil,

### CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

**For painting (bits of) the town red...**

School teacher Reta Kaur, 59, is in court on Friday 19th for, writing “The Killing has Started!” with red water-soluble paint on two marble statues outside the USA Consulate in Melbourne, when the bombing of Iraq started in March last year.

Reta offered to clean the paint off, but the police were having none of it. She now faces a fine of almost \$10,000, despite the clean-up job requiring only two buckets of water and a rag.

is polluted by Coca-Cola’s practice of dumping its wastewater into the nearby fields.

One of the worst examples was the Coca-Cola bottling plant in Plachimada, South India (SchNEWS 360). The plant was eventually shut down after an epic 600 day protest by more than 1000 families.

Coca-Cola and PepsiCo are also angrily denying allegations that their products manufactured in India contain toxins far above the permitted levels in the developed world.

India’s Centre for Science and Environment announced research in August which showed that Pepsi’s soft drink products had 36 times the level of pesticide residues permitted under EU regulations and Coca-Cola’s had 30 times the level. The pesticides residues can cause cancer and immune system breakdown. The same products in the US don’t have these added ‘extras’.

Unsurprisingly, Indian people are getting pissed off with Coca Cola. And they’re organizing...

Between the 15-24th November there’s a 250km march between two Coke factories, to bring attention to the many problems created by Coca-Cola in India. The march will end on 24<sup>th</sup> November with a rally in Mehdiganj.

The demonstrators want the government to withdraw Coca-Cola’s license to operate because of the damage to communities caused by water shortages and pollution, and the determined Indians have got the big corporations on the run...

“Coca-Cola will pay for its crimes in India and internationally,” said Amit Srivastava of the India Resource Center, a group that helps coordinate the campaign internationally. “We will take this battle to where it hurts Coca-Cola the most - the US and the EU, its largest markets.” They have also joined forces with the Colombian trade union, Sinaltrainal, who are fighting Coca-Cola over its complicity in the murder, torture and intimidation of trade union organizers in Colombia (SchNEWS 447).

[www.IndiaResource.org](http://www.IndiaResource.org)  
**Amit Srivastava** - [amit@IndiaResource.org](mailto:amit@IndiaResource.org)  
[www.killercoke.org](http://www.killercoke.org)

## Inside SchNEWS

**"You are going to remember this day for the rest of your fucking life. Do you understand me, you fucking bastard?"- arresting officer reading Babar Ahmad his rights.**

Babar Ahmad is a British citizen from Tooting, South London. In December 2003 he was arrested by Anti-Terrorist Police who broke into his house in a pre-dawn raid. He was brutally assaulted in front of his wife and sustained over 50 injuries to his body, two of which were life-threatening. During this attack Babar was placed in the Muslim prayer position and asked, "Where is your God now?" After six days of intensive investigation he was released without charge. Babar then tried to prosecute the police for his injuries, determined that no-one else should have to go through what he and his family had gone through. An independent surgeon conducted a full examination, detailing the 50 injuries, backed up by photographs and the cops' own CCTV footage. "There is clearly unequivocal evidence that he [Babar] was subjected to a harrowing physical and psychological assault by police officers", said the surgeons' report. "He was clearly badly beaten up although in a reasonably controlled manner...aimed at inflicting significant soft tissue trauma with pain, but not to cause any life-threatening injuries." Babar was also able to give the names and numbers of the officers involved. The Independent Police Complaints Commission began considering the case, along with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). But Babar's stand for justice obviously wound somebody up, because that was when the real trouble began...

All of a sudden the cops discovered they had enough evidence for Babar to be re-arrested. On 5th August 2004, he was unceremoniously nicked outside his workplace, and his sister's and mother's homes were turned upside down by the boys in blue. Babar is once again behind bars thanks to an extradition warrant from the US who allege that he used the Internet to raise funds for terrorist activities. Claims have also been made that a floppy disc was found in December 2003 with US naval battleship plans. But as Dr Adnan Siddiqui of the Stop Political Terror Campaign said, "Are we to believe that the police massively cocked up in December and released al-Qaida's naval operations commander on to the streets of Tooting? Babar's house had already been searched from top to bottom in December. Samples of his DNA were sent across the world. If there had been even a shred of suspicion about his activities this surely would have come to light then. It took 9 months for the UK to create a story with the USA to silence him once and for all." It's also claimed that Babar was plotting something against the Empire State Building. The "evidence"? Er, a 1970's travel brochure of the building that his dad had visited in 1973.

In September, the CPS announced, unbelievably, that there was 'not enough evidence' to take any action against any of the officers who beat Babar up.

Despite not being formally charged, Babar's details were fed by the cops to the press - ever hungry for a "terrorists nailed" story; conveniently just 3 days before a conference was scheduled to take place highlighting Babar's case and the authorities' refusal to do anything about the officers who assaulted him.

Under the Extradition Agreement 2003, all the US needs to get someone deported there is a statement of accusation, with no need to produce evidence in court. So although Babar may appear in a British court to hear the allegations against him, he will not be able to defend himself and could be sent to the US to face charges.

## Subscribe!

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Other European countries have refused to sign up to this agreement (and US citizens can't be extradited to the UK under this new Treaty!).

"Someone who can lie to the whole nation about Weapons of Mass Destruction can lie about me."- Belmarsh 'terrorist' detainee

Along with Belmarsh, Woodhill Prison is also holding people under the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, where for the past three years, nine foreign nationals who have never been charged, tried or even questioned have been held.

Join the demonstration on 28th Nov at Woodhill Prison, Milton Keynes 12.30PM [www.freebabarahmad.com](http://www.freebabarahmad.com)

\* Send letters of support to Babar Ahmad MX5383, HMP Woodhill, Tattenhoe Street, Milton Keynes, MK4 4DA

## SchNEWS in brief

The US election was free and fair? We don't believe it!- check out the stories at [www.portland.indymedia.org](http://www.portland.indymedia.org) and [www.gregpalast.com](http://www.gregpalast.com) \*\* According to the Red Cross at least 800 civilians have been killed during the siege of Fallujah although this figure is likely "to be too low." The situation is grim; if help does not reach people soon, the Red Cross say "the children who are trapped will most likely die." The US won't let aid convoys in. [www.dahrjamailiraq.com](http://www.dahrjamailiraq.com) \*\* Swedish weapon manufacturers Aimpoint had their premises attacked this week and kids dolls left to remind the staff of how the red dot sighting technology used by US snipers is causing terror in Falluja \*\* **'Stop the War Profiteers'** demo in Worthing this Saturday (20) Meet 2pm in Montague Place, Worthing \*\* Talks at Brighton's Cowley Club next week. Monday (22) **Marhaba European Tour** with a Palestinian refugee from the International Solidarity Movement, an Israeli rebel, an activist from the new social movements in Lebanon and a European activist with lots of direct experience in the Middle East. 6.30 pm \*\* Thursday (25) **Rough Guide to the UK Farming Crisis.** Isn't it globalisation and the corporate takeover of food that are to blame for the mess? 6pm \*\* Friday (26) Talk by **Café Libertad Cooperative**, producers of "Zapatista coffee" 6.30pm \*\* Last Friday there was an action against **Nanotechnology Convergence** at the Royal Armouries in Leeds using stinkbombs and propaganda to get the message across. Nanotechnology is poised to become the next stage for corporate control of industrial manufacturing, food, agriculture and health. [www.etcgroup.org](http://www.etcgroup.org) \*\* **The London Hacklabs Collective** are now open for business every Saturday at the Freedom Press bookshop in Whitechapel [www.hacklab.org.uk](http://www.hacklab.org.uk) \*\* **Benefit gig for Dissent** this Saturday (20) 'half day of electronica' at Club 85, Whinbush Rd, Hitchin, Herts. 5pm-midnight £4.50 \*\* **Campfield in Oxford** has been holding immigration detainees for 11 years. Demo next Saturday (27) 12 - 2pm 01865 558145 [www.closecampfield.org.uk](http://www.closecampfield.org.uk) \*\* The two protesters nicked at the Iraq Procurement Conference in April (SchNEWS 473) have had their case dropped by the CPS. The two want the case brought back to court to make the point that the conference was illegal under international law. They're in court on Tues (23); there's a press conference weds 24th [www.indymedia.org](http://www.indymedia.org) \*\* Thoughts go out to Simon, who had his head & legs stamped on by the cops who came uninvited to a squat party in Brighton last week. Any witnesses to this assault or other acts of brutality by the boys in blue on the night, please contact the SchNEWS office 01273 685913. Don't let 'em get away with it. Together we'll crack it!!

## Positive SchNEWS

As SchNEWS celebrated our official 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Wednesday, we've also got to say happy 10<sup>th</sup> to Word Power - Edinburgh's radical bookshop. "Word Power supports trade unions and workers' struggles for fundamental social change - our world-wide online service is an alternative to corporate bookshops that refuse to allow their workers to join trade unions. Unlike Amazon, recipient of £1.6 million taxpayers' money from the Scottish Executive, we receive no state funding."

Party next Tuesday (23) 7.30pm, Assembly Rooms, George Street, Edinburgh £5/3.50 0131 662 9112 [www.word-power.co.uk](http://www.word-power.co.uk)

## Bit of Agrexco

Seven people were nicked after blocking the gates to Agrexco, Israel's national exporter of fruit and vegetables last Thursday morning, as part of the International week of action against the Apartheid wall. Agrexco which is based in Hayes, Middlesex was targeted because it is 50% owned by the Israeli state government, which has persisted in building the Apartheid Wall on Palestinian land, despite a ruling by the International Court of Justice in the Hague, that it was "contrary to international law"

The company claimed the disruption cost them up to £40,000. [www.stophthewall.org](http://www.stophthewall.org)

## Anarchist Book Fair

Yep, it's that time of year again! Stock up on yer bedtime reads & count the beards. ULU, Malet St, London 10am-7pm. Stalls, workshops & the world premiere of the SchNEWS at 10 film (1pm)!

## SchNEWS in plea

Full of Christmas spirit? Looking for a way to avoid the glassy eyed crowds wandering the streets, trying to fill the void and their shopping baskets? Then look no further. SchNEWS is looking for help in putting together the nation's favorite Blair-baiting weekly. If you can donate some spare time please give the office a ring or drop us an email at the address at the bottom of the page.

## ...and finally...

So, you wanna end poverty & suffering, but don't know where to start? Well, thankfully, those selfless defenders of the poor - the British Government - have teamed up with the Rough Guide people to publish a handy book telling you how! Don't worry, it doesn't need a life-changing shift of perspective either - as the Rough Guide To A Better World spells it out, you can save the poor by shopping. And if you find such talk hard to swallow from the likes of bomb-happy Blair & co, well, they've roped in noted political experts Ronan from Boyzone & Fran Healy from Travis to back them up. So there. Choose a holiday from a responsible operator, open an 'ethical' bank account, buy fair trade, all the usual guff. "There is so much interest in people wanting to make a difference and we wanted to set out the easy ways to do that" says Gareth Thomas, the International Development minister. Odd, but we can't seem to find the chapter pointing the way to a better world by forcing regime change, flogging weapons systems to tinpot dictators and shooting unarmed people in mosques. Must be in there somewhere...

## Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all plod carrying out cruel social experiments on party animals - "Oi, up yer Khyber Pass... Honest!