

Friday 17th June 2005 Free/Donation Issue 502/3

There's A Lot Of It About

While the worlds eight richest leaders prepare to meet in Scotland, hundreds of thousands will be protesting in the streets. The neo-liberal model of privatisation, cut backs and corporate plunder is held up by the rich and powerful as the only way to run the world. We disagree - and last week so did the people of Bolivia, who once again showed that we don't have to take this economic model lying down.

"Will the people allow a rerun of the old story of the country's riches evaporating in foreign hands? The people demanded and continue to demand that the gas be used for Bolivia and that the country not submit again to the dictatorship of its underground resources. The right to self-determination, so often invoked, so rarely respected, begins here." - Eduardo Galeano, Uruguayan journalist

Bolivia is Latin America's poorest country precisely because its people have been force-fed the neoliberal reform agenda for such a long time. The imposed policies of privatisation, cuts to welfare and other business friendly reforms are only designed to help the multinationals and their pals in government make shed loads of money. The poorest 20% of Bolivians own less than 2% of the nation's wealth, yet the top fifth own a whopping 62%: and these neo-liberal policies are widening this gap. The debt relief promised by G8 plc is a con. It comes laden with the same conditions as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans that got the countries into debt in the first place. One of the demands: privatise your state owned industries until nothing's left. In Argentina they even sold off the state zoo!

With a history of over two hundred coups or revolutions since independence in 1825, the Bolivian people are, once again, sticking two fingers up at the political elite. Just under five years ago, during the Cochabamba 'water war', a collective rebellion wrestled back control of the water supply from the grip of the Bechtel Corporation which had even managed to persuade the Bolivian Congress to introduce a law banning people from collecting rainwater! With Betchel out of the picture and a victory under their belts, protesters are now reclaiming control of their gas supply, kicking out the likes of British Gas on their way.

Back in March, demonstrators derailed a deal that would have made the Pacific LNG consortium, which includes British Gas, ten dollars for every one they invested in the country. The rich elite were keen to get the 1.5 trillion cubic metres of gas out of the ground and down to the coast, to be shipped off to California as quickly and

as profitably as possible. Others, notably the indigenous majority, thought that the Bolivians should be able to use the gas for themselves. Tens of thousands protesters forced the shutdown of four oilfields and access to seven of Bolivia's nine regions, demanding that a tax of 50% be levied against the gas companies. Over the past month protesters have firmly rejected the 32% 'compromise' tax suggested by Congress and are now calling for the re-nationalisation of the gas system. Bolivians are officially "off message" and G8 leaders are non-too pleased.

Carlos Arze, an NGO worker from La Paz, says that the demonstrators are looking to "break the 20-year old neo-liberal economic model that has allowed transnational corporations to control the policies and economy of this country." And the latest victory came last Tuesday (7th June) when President Carlos Mesa, bowed to pressure and quit his job. The new president, Bolivia's Supreme Court head, Eduardo Rodriguez is the country's third president in less than two years.

In a country where 30% of the population lives on less than 60p a day, G8 policy has been more concerned with privatisation and profit than poverty. The current economic system, invented by US economists in the 1980s, has destroyed the country's agricultural and industrial sectors, bringing hundreds of thousands of workless but highly politicised families to live at the gates of the capital city, La Paz. It is from here that they have been able to hold the country to ransom: only one road connects La Paz with the outside world and it's been blockaded by the irate indigenous population of El Alto since May.

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For filming: Peace protester Paul Lesniowski has been arrested and put in Lewes Prison on remand for a WEEK - just for filming the antics of a security guard outside the EDO factory in Brighton. EDO are Brighton's own local friendly arms dealers, making bits for bombs to drop on Iraqi cities.

Paul was on a demonstration on June 15th organized by Smash EDO, the campaign to close down the bomb factory. The bomb-pushers recently paid their lawyers £50,000 to sue for an injunction against the protesters, under the Protection from Harassment Act - originally designed to protect vulnerable people from scary stalkers, not scary arms dealers from ordinary people. Until the lawsuit is resolved, a watered down version of the injunction applies.

Paul was arrested when not even protesting, but acting as a legal observer in a marked yellow jacket. Paul was being filmed by the director of Guardian Security, who works for EDO. He filmed back and promptly got arrested for breaching the injunction.

Paul is due to appear in court again on June 23rd, charged with Contempt of Court. Supporters have been holding solidarity demonstrations outside Lewes Prison.

www.smashedo.org.uk

Meanwhile, a powerful business elite - mostly of European descent - in the south-eastern city of Santa Cruz has been pushing for far greater regional autonomy and a bigger share of the region's gas and oil wealth. Leaders there, where most of the country's gas is located, have pledged to hold a referendum on increased autonomy this August - with or without the approval of central government, setting the stage for future conflicts. Despite such attempts by the rich to grind them even further into poverty, the majority of Bolivians have shown the world that there is no need to simply accept the economic agenda pushed by the G8. Resistance works and the head honchos of this system are congregating at Gleneagles this July...

* Recommended reading **Cochabamba - Water War In Bolivia** by Oscar Olivera (2004) South End Press.

G8 - Where To Go When You Hit Scotland

Here's several locations for accommodation, cheap food and up-to-date information:

GLASGOW:

* **Glasgow Info Point:** G42 Collective, Suite 3, 674 Pollockshaws Road, South Glasgow. (with internet access) (Take the 44, 22, 23 or 57 bus from Central Glasgow, get off at Eglington Toll), phone 0141 4239055. An info point at Glasgow central train station is also being arranged

* **Accommodation/Convergence Spaces:** after 23rd June addresses for various venues will be on Dissent Website www.dissent.org.uk or call 07875145271

EDINBURGH:

* **Edinburgh Info Point:** 10 Albert Pl, Leith Walk. 0131 477 2954

* **Teviot Building,** Edinburgh Students Union Building, Bristo Square will be open from June 30th-9th July. info-point/meeting space.

* Nearby is the **Indymedia Centre** upstairs in the Forest Café, Bristo Place opening 25th.

RURAL CONVERGENCE SPACE

* **CAMPING** has been arranged with the local Council from 1st-9th in a location in **Stirling**. 25 acres (or so) will host a capacity of 5,000 happy campers, organised by Horizone Eco-Village. The exact location will be given out on the 23rd on the dissent website

For updates check out:

www.dissent.org.uk
07913 263515 dissent-enquiries@riseup.net

A DROP OF TRUTH IN AN OCEAN OF BULLSHIT

@nti-copyright - Information For Action -
- Published In Brighton Since 1994 -

It's yer SchNEWS Summer Party & Protest Guide

JUNE

27 Cycleological 2-beyond therapy. Benefit for g8bikeride 9pm-6am RampART centre, Rampart St, London. 07050 618445 www.g8bikeride.org.uk ** **29 Protest outside 'Iraqi Petroleum Conference 2005'** The Hilton, Paddington. Meet 10.30am, Edgware Road tube. To raise awareness of the corporate plunder of Iraq and the silent takeover of Iraq's natural resources. 07931337890 www.radicalactivist.net/corporateiraq ** **30 Offline - the Urban 75 club night** Brixton's Dogstar Club, 389 Coldharbour Lane, 7pm - 2am Free. www.urban75.org/info ** **30-July 3 Fusion Festival** ex-soviet military airfield now biggest holiday camp in Germany - interesting venue! www.fusion-festival.de

JULY

1-8 Actions Against the G8 Summit "That's about all them poor people in Africa and Bob Geldof innit!" ** **2-3 Workhouse festival.** With Chumbawamba, Space Ritual and Rory Mcload. Llanfyllin, Powys £25 weekend 0845 458 8359 www.workhousefestival.co.uk ** **4 Independence from America Day,** Menwith Hill SpyBase, near Harrogate, North Yorkshire 12 noon - 4pm Guest Speaker: Scott Ritter (former US Iraqi Arms Inspector) Acoustic music by Chumbawamba. 01943 466405 www.caab.org.uk ** **8-9 Romsey Beggars Fair** www.beggarsfair.com ** **8-10 Clogfest** Dust off those beards and dancing shoes! www.clogfest.demon.co.uk ** **8-10 The Small Nations Festival** Aims to celebrate the revival of minority cultures and languages and the universal language of music in all its forms."

www.cilycwm.com/smallnations ** **9 The Snake in the Grass Festival,** Castle Park, Colchester, Essex £20 A one day music festival, headlined by Levellers with local bands. www.snakeinthegrass.co.uk ** **9- 10 Cornbury Music Festival,** Cornbury Park, Oxfordshire. Joe Cocker, Elvis Costello and old power ballad diva Bonnie Tyler. Sponsored by Waitrose - Rock and Roll or what? www.cornburyfestival.com ** **9-10 Reggae Festival of Wales,** Haverfordwest Showground, Pembrokeshire, Wales ** **9-10 Rhythms of the World,** Hitchin. 700 performers on 8 stages. www.rhythmsoftheworld.com ** **9-10 L'Esprit Manouche** World guitar festival, Moseley Park, Birmingham 0121 249 2303 www.lespritmanouche.com ** **13-17 Buddhafield Festival.** Pay £60 to meditate in a field in Devon so all nasty things will stop. 01647 24539 www.buddhfield.com ** **13-17 Larmer Tree Festival** Jools Holland and lots of funky world music bands / DJs. All set in idyllic peacock gardens. Only one day tickets left, from £29 (+ discounts for children) www.larmerreefestival.co.uk ** **15-17 Guilfest** Pogues, Paul Weller, Status Quo, Echo And The Bunnymen - must be a time warp and we've gone back 20 years to 1985. Day ticket £35, Weekend £85. 01483 454159 www.guilfest.co.uk ** **15-17 Glade Festival.** Electronic dance music extravaganza. "We're all sorted out for Es and Whizz." www.gladefestival.com ** **15-18 Animal Rights Camp.** Workshops on issues and activities related to animal rights campaigning. With lectures and speeches from a host of speakers, including academics, doctors and activists. Leave the sausage sandwiches at home. www.ar2005.info AR2005,

BM Box 2248, London WC1N 3XX. ** **16 RISE 2005** - a free anti-racist music festival celebrating London's diversity 12noon - 8.30pm, Burgess Park, London SE5 020 7983 6554 www.risefestival.org ** **16-17 Ashton Court Festival,** Bristol. Local bands plus Lemon Jelly, Super Furry Animals. £6 per day, 0870 4444 400 www.ashtoncourtfestival.com ** **18-21 Towards Carfree Cities** Budapest, Hungary www.worldcarfree.net/conference ** **21 Ruigoord Landjuweel,** Netherlands. "Green oasis where art and life are intergrated" www.ruigoord.nl ** **21-24 Trowbridge Village Pump Festival** Folk/Roots music washed down with quite a lot of ale in picturesque village. Weekend tickets £85, day tickets £10-£38. www.trowbridgefestival.co.uk ** **22-23 Wickerman Festival** Dundernann, Scotland. Dreadzone, Alabama 3 and Stranglers. Family friendly festival. £45. www.thewickermanfestival.co.uk ** **23 The Freedom March and Rally** to oppose monkey vivisection laboratory. Meet at 12 noon, Oxpens Park, Oxpens Rd, Oxford, 07906 497 317 www.speakcampaigns.org.uk ** **23-24 Truck Festival** Fiercely independent, and still small enough to find your mates at 2am. Abingdon, South Oxfordshire. www.truckrecords.com ** **29-31 Hazards 2005** Campaigning for tougher enforcement, corporate responsibility and strong worker's organisation. University of Leeds 0161 953 4037 www.hazardscampaign.org.uk ** **29-31 Womad, Reading.** www.womad.org ** **28-31 Cambridge Folk Festival.** www.cam-folkfest.co.uk ** **28-31 Resurgence Summer Camp,** Gloucestershire. www.greenandaway.org ** **31 Ambient Picnic** 4 music stages. www.ambientpicnic.co.uk

FLEEING FROM THE GUN

With both Refugee Week and the G8 in Gleneagles fast approaching, this provides an ideal opportunity to look at the point the two converge.

Putting aside the rather bizarre idea of an unelected and undemocratic group setting the agenda for rest of the world, the self-imposed role of the G8 (US, Japan, Germany, France, the UK, Italy, Canada and Russia) is to set policy in the international financial system. Other countries can attend as spectators or sometimes as guest speakers, but nothing more. Collectively, the G8 countries control over half the votes at the two major international financial institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. A massive responsibility as demonstrated by the current debate on Africa, however the responsibility of the countries of the G8 in its creation of refugees through their sale of arms has been consistently overlooked.

The UK government wrings its hands over the refugee "problem", but its support for arms sales actually encourages overseas governments to pursue policies that make it more likely that people will be forced to flee their homes. In 2002,

Campaign Against Arms Trade calculated that the UK government subsidised arms sales to the tune of £760 million a year. The Defence Export Services Organisation (DESO), part of the Ministry of Defence, has 600 civil servants encouraging UK military exports. Such exports also account, on average, for about one-third of the export credit guarantees issued by the UK. Arms exports don't just violate human rights directly. Such sales are used by governments of supplier countries as instruments of foreign policy leverage. Military equipment is sold to "friends", and with the equipment goes a message of political approval for the recipient government.

Returning to Africa, nearly all the G8 countries are guilty of supplying weapons, small arms or torture equipment to the African countries they depend on for supplies of fossil fuels and other raw materials. Britain and Russia are both accused of supplying weaponry and technology for oil extraction to Sudan during the recent war. In 1998 the former president of French oil giant Elf admitted that his company had supplied weapons to both main parties in the conflict in the Congo.

Ultimately, it is not some abstract process,

DISARM DSEI ARMS FAIR

13-16th September 2005 - DSEI is Britain's biggest weapons supermarket. This is where scumbags like BAE Systems can sell weapons to murdering tyrannical regimes to wage war on their own people, it is subsidised by the government. When you next hear of some atrocity committed in some far off country there's a pretty high chance the weapons used were made by British companies. Its time to Disarm DSEI! ExCeL Centre, London Docklands 07817 652029. www.dsei.org

as our leaders would have us believe, but a concrete collaboration between Western states, international financial institutions and corporations that is responsible for the collapse of so many Southern states and thus for its logical consequence: global migration. Millions of people, impoverished by skewed trade treaties, ignored by increasingly ideological aid arrangements, displaced by wars fought with Western weapons or development projects built by Western companies, feel they have no choice but to seek a life elsewhere.

The vast majority of these displaced millions live in the countries of Asia and Africa, but a small percentage do make it the West. They are usually greeted not with shame-faced embarrassment or apology but with resentment and hatred. The question not often enough asked is why our leaders conceal the reasons why refugees come here and our responsibility in their plight.

The Refugee Project 020 7250 1315 www.herefugeeproject.org

Campaign Against Arms Trade 020 7281 0297 www.caat.org.uk

Compassionate States of America

US contribution to debt relief deal over next 10 years	\$1,750,000,000
Est. Total Annual Economic Aid Budget	\$15,000,000,000
US Military spending 2004 - set to rise 4.8% next year	\$400,000,000,000
Global Arms Trade	\$1,000,000,000,000+

YOUR SHORT GUIDE TO THE TRILLION DOLLAR ARMS BUSINESS

G8 countries account for around 85% of the global arms trade - a heavily subsidised and under-regulated business. Whilst the G8 countries push 'free trade' on the global south, they are free to subsidise their own arms industries as much as they want, providing a system of corporate welfare for arms giants like Lockheed Martin and BAE Systems. This welfare is often facilitated by the guarantee of payment that companies get from their government's export credit system - in the UK this is the Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD). The underwriting of arms sales means companies pursue deals to countries which may well default on payments, safe in the knowledge that if it happens, it is up to the exporting government

to pursue the debt, and taxpayers to foot any remaining bill. Between 1997 and 2001 at least two thirds of the world's arms deals came from just five G8 countries - USA, Russia, France, Britain and Germany. In 2003 the G8 countries exported arms worth in excess of US\$24 billion. Whilst some of these exports were to other G8 or developed countries, more than half went to the developing world. In 1994 it was estimated that one fifth of the debt owed by poor countries is due to past arms sales. However, despite their heavy representation in weapons production G8 countries are the least affected by the use of arms. Of the 150 wars fought between 1945 and the mid 1990s, more than 90% were in the developing world.

AUGUST

1-14 Ekotopia Alternative technologies festival. Moldova. www.eyfa.org ** **3-7 Big Green Gathering** Five days of hippy nonsense in a field near Cheddar, Somerset. Like the green fields at Glastonbury without Babylon next door £90. 01458 834629 www.big-green-gathering.com ** **3-7 Stockton International Riverside festival.** Street Theatre on the streets (funny that) of Stockton. 01642 526473 www.stockton.gov.uk/events/sirf05 ** **5-7 The Big Chill** For 30-something Guardian readers too tired to go clubbing. Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire. £112. 020 7684 2020 www.bigchill.net ** **6 Pride in Brighton & Hove** The biggest gay festival in the UK - Free! 01273 775939 www.brightonpride.org ** **8-14 National Allotment Week** You dig? 01536 266576 www.nsalg.org ** **8-14 One World Summer Festival.** Hampshire. Holistic Health, Macrobiotics, Tofu Welding, Music, Dance and Yogurt Weaving. www.macrobios.com ** **11-13 Cropredy Festival.** Oxfordshire. "A mix of 1960s-style pop festival and village fete" www.fairportconvention.com/crop/cropmenu.htm ** **17-21 Earth First! Summer Gathering.** Peak District. Dust off those bolt croppers... 0845 355 0111 www.earthfirstgathering.org.uk ** **18-21 Earthwise Festival** www.earthwise-uk.com ** **19-21 Green Man Festival.** Clun, Shropshire. The Green Man is "The look o' that face saying so many different things only no words to say 'em with. Never seen that face before yet it wer a face I know..." If you know what that means then maybe this is the festival for you. www.clun.org.uk/greenman/gfestival.htm ** **19-21 Rockinbeerfest** with Dr.Feelgood, Eddie and the Hotrods and Caravan. Cambridgeshire. www.rockinbeerfest.co.uk ** **20-21 V Festival.** Take an effigy of Richard Branson and burn it! www.vfestival.com ** **20-21 Beautiful Days.** Escot Park, Devon. Music festival organised by The Levellers. £75 01392 425309 www.beautifuldays.org ** **24-30 WIT Music Festival for Women and Girls.** nr Lampeter, West Wales. www.womenintune.org.uk ** **26-28 Reading Festival** Load of corporate crap - overpriced shit beer, overpriced consumer crap and security thugs. If you wanna go - jump the fence (and get beaten up by security). www.readingfestival.com ** **26-28 Leeds Festival** See Reading Festival. ** **27-29 Westcountry Storytelling Festival.** Once upon a time yarn-spinners met at Aller Park, Dartington, Devon. Tickets (including camping): Adult £60/Child £30/Family (2+2) £125 01803 863790 info@weststoryfest.co.uk www.weststoryfest.co.uk ** **28-29 Notting Hill Carnival** - You and a million or two others dancing in the streets for free.

and don't forget

22 October London Anarchist Bookfair. The 24th A-Bookfair moves to a bigger venue. Wide range of anarchist leaflets, books, magazines, t-shirts, etc. Lots of meetings and discussions. Creche and hot food. The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London N7. 10am-6pm Free/Donation. <http://freespace.virgin.net/anarchist.bookfair/> ** **23 October Freedom To Protest Conference** "It is your democratic right to protest" - Yeah right... A conference to share experiences, promote mutual aid between protestors threatened by repressive laws and develop effective strategies against injustice and oppression. Central London 11am-5pm www.freedomtoprotest.org.uk

JAMMY DODGERS

The proposed M74 monster motorway to be built through the middle of Glasgow is to be shelved until 2007. The news came on the same day the Cre8 Summit started, a week of events taking place on land in the path of the road, against the road and the G8 summit. This comes after JAM74 and Friends Of Earth began an appeal against the Scottish Executive's decision to go ahead with the road despite the fact that an inquiry came out at the same time which said 'don't build it'. The ensuing court case has meant that contracts to build the road can't be awarded until 2007 and hopefully never. (For more see SchNEWS 501) www.jam74.org

MAKE CAPITALISM HISTORY ACTIONS AGAINST THE G8

JULY: 1st Edinburgh Critical Mass ** **2nd Make Poverty History March.** With an anti-capitalist bloc, cos after all capitalism causes poverty. Edinburgh. www.makepovertyhistory.org ** **3rd Make Borders History** A Magical Mystery Tour of Immigration Controls and the "Chain of Deportation" in Glasgow. Visit some of the magicians who help asylum seekers "disappear". www.makebordershistory.org ** **3 Dissent Conference.** Teviot Building, Edinburgh University Student Union, Bristo Square 12 noon-10pm ** **3 Global G8 Nightmare Counter Conference** World Development Movement, War on Want, People & Planet and Friends of the Earth are holding the 'G8 Corporate Dream... Global Nightmare' counter conference. Assembly Hall, Royal Mile, Edinburgh. FREE. 0131 5570444 www.wdmscotland.org.uk/campaigns/g8 ** **3 G8 Alternatives Summit** Aims to present a serious ideological challenge to the corrupt policies and ideology of the G8. Prominent speakers from around the world and 36+ workshop/seminars. Edinburgh. Tickets: £10/£5, 0131 2281155. www.g8alternatives.org.uk ** **4 Big Blockade at Faslane Nuclear Submarine Base.** Near Glasgow Help snub the subs... 0845 4588361 www.faslaneg8.com ** **4 Carnival for Full Enjoyment Street Party.** Edinburgh. Noon around the West End of Princes St. www.nodeal.org.uk ** **5 Close Dungavel Detention Centre.** Hundreds of people, including families with children,

are imprisoned at Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre, join the No Borders demonstration. 11am to 4pm Strathaven, South Lanarkshire. Transport from Glasgow and Edinburgh, call 0141 946 6193 or email glascamref@hotmail.com to book a place. www.makebordershistory.org ** **6 GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST THE G8 SUMMIT** On the opening day of the G8 Summit - A day of decentralised action, in villages, towns and cities worldwide. The biggie - what are YOU going to be doing? www.agp.org www.dissent.org.uk ** **6 G8 Blockades** 'The Blockades Group', a part of the Dissent! Network, call out to all autonomous direct action groups and individuals ** **6 Anti-G8 Demonstration** Marching from Gleneagles train station from noon, try to get as close as you can to Gleneagles, try and see the whites of Tony's eyes. Go on give it a go! 0131 220 6259 www.g8alternatives.org.uk ** **6-8 Hill Walking Actions** Cross Country Rambles and Scrambles on the Ochil hills with a big day-glow banner or two. ** **7 People's Open Golf Tournament** The People's Golfing Association is hosting an open golf tournament at Gleneagles. No caddies, no Masters! www.dissent.org.uk/pgg.html ** **8 Climate Change International Day of Action** Stop climate chaos - flood the G8! www.cca.movingpages.org www.dissent.org.uk/g8climateaction Full list of dates see: www.dissent.org.uk/content/section/12/63/

RESOURCES

Here's a load of useful stuff for you to get clued up about before you go to the G8...

Protest and Action Info: The Dissent! Network co-ordinate radical resistance to the Summit. www.dissent.org.uk

Legal: Get clued up, know your rights. Check out: www.g8legalsupport.info

Training: It pays to be prepared... Check out: www.dissent.org.uk/content/view/full/66/57/ for a whole load of resources, or see the SchNEWS Diy Guide - www.schnews.org.uk/diyguide

Medical: Need first aid skills see www.actionmedics.org.uk

Trauma: Helping people when it's all too much. www.activist-trauma.net 07962406940

G8 Briefs

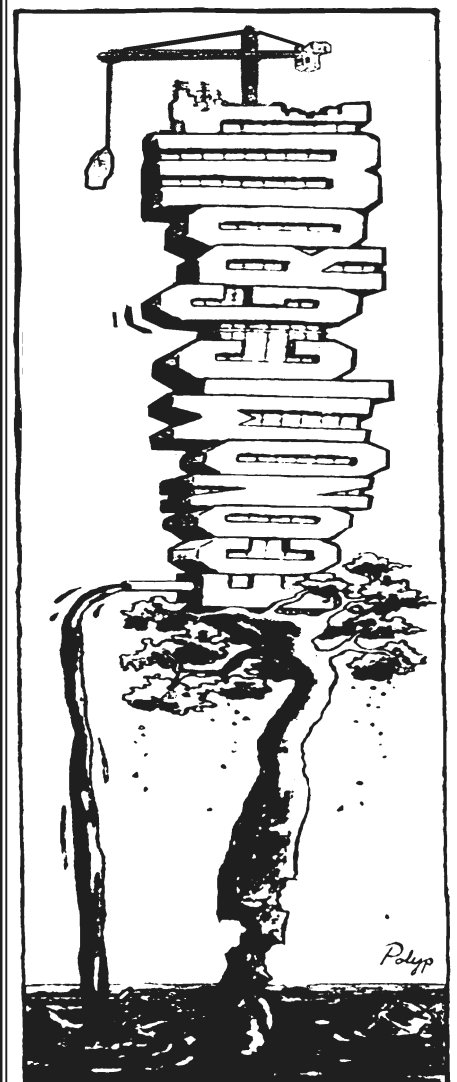
* Want to join the 70 crazy cyclists who will be peddling to Scotland to join the protests? www.g8bikeride.org.uk Or check out the daily blog www.g8bikeride.blogspot.com

* Check out the latest **Corporate Watch** newsletter which reveals how many of the corporations that have involved themselves with the G8 summit are responsible for the destruction both of our climate and African society. 01865 791 391 www.corporatewatch.org.uk

* Not convinced - check out the short film 'Why Close the G8?' www.camcorderguerillas.net/g8_view.htm

* **Bypass the corporate media** - keep up to date with the protests www.indymedia.org.uk

TOP TIPS: Remember - there won't be people laying everything on for you once you get there. Bring whatever you expect to need - and take yer rubbish away with you! Don't forget yer sleeping bag, mat, eating utensils/plate/bowl, food, water etc. There will be cooked food available at the centres mentioned, but as it's impossible to tell how many people are coming **COME PREPARED!**



Guitar Politics - with strings attached

"The poor are financing the rich. If we are serious about ending poverty, we have to be serious about ending the unjust and violent systems for wealth creation which create poverty by robbing the poor of their resources, livelihoods and incomes." - Vandana Shiva, campaigner and author.

"The basic fact is that Britain under Blair and Brown is one of the world's leading champions of the neo-liberal economic model that is essentially being imposed on much of the rest of the world, and which is generally increasing poverty and inequality." - Mark Curtis, author.

SchNEWS doesn't doubt Bob Geldof's sincerity in wanting to end world hunger. With twenty four thousand people dying of starvation every day he's right to be fucking angry and right to want the world to act. But unfortunately Bob Geldof, and the Africa Commission of which he is a member, is committed to 'solving' poverty through a neo-liberal agenda - relying on the very forces of international capital that have created Africa's poverty in the first place. In fact asking the gangsters that run the G8 to sort out world poverty and climate change is a bit like asking paedophiles to take charge of a playgroup.

Take the latest G8 fanfare on debt cancellation which comes with sets of conditions. Paragraph 2 of the finance ministers' statement says that to qualify for debt relief, developing countries must "tackle corruption, boost private sector development" and eliminate "impediments to private investment, both domestic and foreign."

As journalist George Monbiot points out *"The G8's plan for saving Africa is little better than an extortion racket. Do you still believe our newly-sanctified leaders have earned their halos? If so, you have swallowed a truckload of nonsense. Yes, they should cancel the debt. But they should cancel it unconditionally."*

Up To Their Necks

All the countries now receiving full debt relief are doing so because they are part of the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) programme. This means they have been forced to commit to the usual IMF and World Bank neo-liberal market reforms - which, in reality, enforces handovers of power and resources to Western corporate interests for structurally-guaranteed profit making. This includes privatising essential supplies like water into foreign control, as Tanzania found out recently to its cost. Having booted out a UK / German consortium for being crap - having not even installed a single new pipe for the £2.5m already bagged for increasing water access - the company are now threatening to sue for breach of contract (see SchNEWS 499 for more online). Privatisation has also been a condition attached to British aid for Mozambique, Uganda and Ghana.

So, are these "reforms" good for making poverty history? As Mark Curtis (historian and author) reports, *"Zambia, for example, is a country not simply harmed by this model, but virtually destroyed by it...forced by the World Bank and IMF to promote sweeping trade liberalization and massive privatization, and dismantle the public sector. These reforms together with HIV/AIDS have increased poverty and destroyed key industries. Zambia now has the lowest life expectancy in the world: at 33 years"* Another success story then. All this without mentioning some of the many other countries (Like Peru, Guyana, Nigeria and Haiti) in desperate need of debt cancellation but excluded for not yet playing neo-liberal ball sufficiently... So whilst we will all soon be awash in media coverage of guilt-cleansing-poptastic-debt-relief-euphoria, remember not to get too carried away with excitement.

DOING THE BUSINESS

"Business is arriving at the G8 summit more organised than it has ever been."

- Corporate Watch

Last July Chancellor Gordon Brown and Reuter's chairman, Niall FitzGerald, set up a Business Contact Group explicitly to provide private sector input to the African Commission. Its 16 or so corporate members read like a role call of the most exploitative and despised companies currently operating on the continent - including Anglo American, Shell, De Beers, Rio Tinto and... Diageo, who also er, own the Gleneagles hotel where the G8 Summit will take place.

This group had plenty of input into the African Commission report that called for more public-private partnerships (PPPs). PPPs are when the private sector is contracted to build and operate infrastructure like roads or provide basic services like water, health and electricity - basically privatisation by the back door. In fact these sorts of 'partnerships' have been such an expensive cock up in the UK why not export the idea to the rest of the world?

A report by the South African Institute of International Affairs assessing PPPs across Africa over the last 15 years found that: the private sector is not always more efficient, service provision is often more expensive and big government contracts are complex, demanding and open to corruption, and energy and water have been the least successful examples of PPPs. Most importantly, PPPs do not help the poor.

For more background see...
www.corporatewatch.org.uk/?lid=1232

WE'VE GOT IT COMING...

With the whole media world (not to mention SchNEWS) awash with stuff about poverty and debt relief, there is one topic that has strangely faded from the picture...

The biggest problem the planet faces over the next few decades will not be whether the poorest countries can achieve a decent credit rating but the small matter of **global climate change**. Using colonialism, slavery and exploitation as resources, the cavernous gap between rich and poor was built on ecological abuse which is now being paid for by the World's poorest and in the not to distant future, everyone. Climate change will visit on the poor of the world a level of destitution and hunger that will swamp any progress on debt secured at Gleneagles. Africa will suffer both more frequent droughts and more serious floods.

But instead of any meaningful action politicians talk of technical fixes but carry on business-as-normal in the search for a little more shareholder profit. These policies are on a crash course with the one entity we eventually won't be able to bully or negotiate with - Mother Nature.

Let's remind ourselves of some facts - average global temperature increased by about 0.6C in the 20th Century. Sea levels have risen 10 - 20cm. Most of the world's glaciers are in retreat and Arctic sea-ice has thinned by 40% in recent decades. Regardless of the usual corporate-sponsored stooge scientists and dodgy industry-funded front groups rubbish the main scientific consensus (see the history of tobacco, mobile phones, pesticides companies etc to get the picture of how corporations bullshit so they can carry on polluting), current climate models predict a global temperature increase of 1.4 - 5.8°C by 2100. To put this in context, global temperatures are estimated to have only varied by one degree Celsius since the dawn of human civilisation. Major crises loom: from droughts, floods and other abnormal weather catastrophes, to crop failures and shortages of water, natural resources and indeed populations - of animals and fish as well as people. And it's taken only a few percent of the global population to achieve this in just 150 years - nice work!

IF THE MONEY'S RIGHT

Ethiopia is one of the 18 highly indebted countries that has recently been granted debt relief, heralded as a country adhering to the sets of conditions that allow this privilege. One condition is economic, the other relates to transparency and accountability. So, is the Ethiopian regime transparent and accountable? Well the population seem to think not, and have been expressing this in recent protests against vote rigging in last months disputed elections. The protest in the countries capital, Addis Ababa, led to dozens of students being killed, wounded, and sent to labour camps.

The pre-election crackdown involved a campaign of terror, and included the house arrest of the leader of the main opposition group, the Coalition for Unity and Democracy. These oppressive actions of the Ethiopian regime came just days before Ethiopia was awarded debt relief, with the likes of Tony Blair patting him on the back, blatantly more concerned that the economic conditions for debt relief were being met rather than any adherence to human rights or accountability.

See also - www.allafrica.com

MAFIA STYLE MONEYLENDING?

Debt package agreed on Jun 11 th	\$40bn
Total African debt since 1970	\$833.4bn
Total African repayments since 1970	\$817.4bn
Total debt still outstanding	\$506bn

The blatant obvious truth is that while "our" leaders are out trying to sell the 'developed world' dream to everyone, it is completely impossible that the earth could sustain everyone acting like we do. What's more the hypocrites in power know this - which is why globalisation is actually set up to sustain our status quo for as long as possible whilst promising that riches will eventually 'trickle down', honest! Until we accept that it is our living standards and practices that will have to change, all these well meant initiatives to improve the poor's short-term lot are not going to count for feck'all. It's gonna take a lot more than pop tunes and wristbands to sort out this one.

See also: www.risingtide.org.uk

Read Sharon Beder's *Global Spin: The Corporate Assault on Environmentalism*, Green Books

...and finally...

Who would you put in charge of a 'Renewable Energy Task Force'? An ex oil baron? Well that's who the G8 decided in their wisdom to appoint - none other than Sir Mark Moody Stuart, who used to be in charge of oil company Shell. While the G8 leaders are up in Gleneagles next month playing golf, Moody-boy will be chairing a meeting between senior business leaders and African Heads of State at the G8 Business Summit in London.

Our mate Mark is most infamous for attempts to wreck UN environment summits and preventing the regulation of business, insisting instead on promoting voluntary action through his leadership of the Business Action for Sustainable Development (BASD). BASD's proposed 'sustainable development' projects for Africa included er, several nuclear energy projects and an oil and gas pipeline!

The summit will end with a "declaration and message to the G8 leaders"- presumably 'renewing' the same old message: don't let trifles like the planet and its people get in the way of business making bigger bucks.

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