



WAKE UP! IT'S YER 'WE'D GO ON STRIKE IF WE HAD A JOB'

SchNEWS

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COPS QUIT!

Well for a bit anyway!

"People have to decide whether they're going to be part of maintaining this corruption or whether they're going to do something to just wipe it out. It's a more and more clear line and I think that's where we're heading, at least in Canada. We have to ask the question: are you the solution or are you the problem?"

Dave Bleakney, Canadian Union of Postal Workers

Police spontaneously joined demonstrators in several Canadian cities recently as thousands took to the streets - about 30,000 in Montreal - to protest big public sector pay cuts imposed by the Quebec government. While in Montreal police officers obeyed orders to stay put, their colleagues in Laval, Sherbrooke and elsewhere joined the action *en masse*. Soon after, firefighters blocked traffic with wailing cruisers and fire engines, causing irate Quebec cabinet ministers to threaten reprisals for 'illegal use of municipal equipment.'

The municipalities have to slash 6% off their budgets to help pay the provincial government's \$2 billion deficit - a cost they have passed directly down to employees' paychecks. Hence now the cops are finding themselves in the same boat as the rest of the underpaid - and they like it no better anyone else.

It's the first time police have joined a protest in Canada since 1919, when they joined city-wide general strike western Canada. In recent years, the country has seen a more restless and more radical rank-and file in its labour movement, increasingly thirsty for action. In the last couple of years, there's been more time lost to strikes in Canada than in the previous decade. In a two month period last year strikers occupied the offices of 40 members of parliament, and one day in December, striking postal workers shut down all trade in and out of Toronto airport.

Before that in September, in Toronto, teachers' unions almost precipitated a city-wide general strike, before being betrayed by their leadership.

"The actual survival of the government was threatened", says Dave Bleakney. "You have this chant 'general strike!' now, and a few years ago if you chanted general

strike people would look at you as though you were crazy."

This May 1st, St. Catharines is gonna be "Strike City" after the Ontario Federation of Labour announced a one day General Strike against Mike Harris' Conservative government. The Harris government has pushed through policies such as Workfare, which makes it legal to force people to work for less than the minimum wage with no breaks or holiday pay, right to start or join a union, health and safety protection, or protection from discrimination.
e-mail: caw199@computan.on.ca

SCHOOLS OUT

"This strike illustrates the frustration in Cornwall that, regardless which party is in power nothing changes here there is a complete political lack of vision" **Mebyon Kernow (Sons of Cornwall)**

It's 8.30am on Tuesday morning and the Headmaster of a Cornish school opens his office door to three pupils—and half the countries media! The students, committed to all causes Cornish, along with 300 schoolmates went on a one day strike to highlight the fact that because of the massive unemployment in Cornwall they haven't got a hope in hell of getting a job when they leave school. The Head suggested they start the strike after period three, 'Social Education', in which the Reverend Governor gave a talk on Gandhi. The Headmaster told SchNEWS he was "sympathetic"

The White Tent of Dignity outside the Argentinian Congress has been the focus of a "rolling" hunger strike since 2 April 1997. Upto fifty different teachers are refusing food each month, protesting against massive World Bank-inspired cuts in education. With the Plaza del Mayo Mothers and Grandmothers of the Disappeared among their supporters, and over 200,000 children and adults going on a two-day solidarity hunger strike, the movement is growing stronger and wider. Global "fun and games" are being planned to celebrate their first anniversary.

more info: wamani.apc.org./ctera
www.labournet.org

PAPER STRIKE

Nearly 2,000 employees of the Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press continue to be locked out following a 32 month long strike over pay. The papers are owned by Knight Ridder & Gannett, the two largest newspaper publishers in the US, who have spent £500M union-busting in the American heartland of organised labour.

Following a 100,000-strong demonstration, a US court upheld their case in a six-month trial and found the bosses guilty under International Labour Law and in a 108-page report that demanded that ALL workers be reinstated and be paid £30M in backpay. The company has lodged an appeal. There's a March Against Corporate Greed to the doors of their flagship title, USA Today, in NYC on April 2nd. Organisers told SchNEWS: "They've used club-wielding police with tear gas, an army of scabs and a huge slush fund of millions of dollars to attack the workers. We will strike back against the lies and brutality."

* Would you believe it but the workers on the communist Morning Star are on strike after the suspension of the editor John Haylett.

FEE'D OFF

Students held demonstrations round the country on Wednesday to protest against the introduction of £1,000 a year tuition fees. In Leeds and Sheffield people occupied buildings while in Southampton 10,000 joined the shutdown and 2,000 held a rally in Bristol. **The Hillingdon Hospital** workers are holding a Conference on Sunday 29 March, 11am @ Uxbridge Civic Centre, Middx. They were sacked for refusing to take pay cuts and have now been on strike for over two-and-a-half-year. An appeal against the tribunal ruling that their dismissal was 'fair', has been won, but they still receive no financial support except from supporters. Contact: 0956 135311* **The Autonomous Trade Union of Coal Workers in Bosnia and Herzegovina** have called an International workers' conference against privatisation, casual labour and unemployment, on March 14-15 in Tuzla, Bosnia

Contact 75000 TUZLA, Mije Kerosevica Guje 1, Bosnia-Herzegovina Tel: (+387) 75 282 111 extn 542

THE WORLD IS OUR PICKET LINE !

Railtrack lose the plot

Things are not looking too rosy for 10,000 odd allotmenters. Railtrack, who now own vast areas of ex-British Rail land, have decided that collecting rent on railway allotments is no longer worth the hassle, and are looking to sell off the lot. Of course, they don't put it like that. According to them many trackside allotments are no longer considered safe under new Health & Safety regulations - considering Railtrack's safety record, this is quite probably true! They have also expressed concern about hose pipes being used next to electrified lines. Don't they know about watering cans?

Basically, all this is just an excuse to evict the plot holders. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners have been trying to negotiate with Railtrack to reach some sort of compromise, with no success. Huge rent increases, designed to force people to abandon their plots, have already begun.

At a site in Devon, plotters have been informed that their rent is for site management duties and they're responsible for fencing. Railtrack get to do sod all while raking in the cash. Many allotment holders are pensioners or unemployed in no position to afford increases on this scale, left with no alternative but to give up, leaving Railtrack clear to sell off the land (estimated by N.S.A.L.G. to be worth around £500,000 an acre). It is not only railway allotments that are being targeted. Towns and city allotments are prime sites for development, they are cheaper to develop than "Brown Field" sites such as industrial land.

Since May, Prescott has approved the disposal of almost 50 allotment sites across England. Many allotments are classified as "temporary", which means that the plot holders can be evicted at will, by local councils and the land sold. Many were sold off under the Tories, but Prescott seems to be heading down the same road.

* We know this will shock our readers but according to the National Audit Office, the taxpayer lost over one billion pounds, thanks to 3 railway stock companies being sold off quickly and cheaply during privatisation. Meanwhile seven ex-British Rail bosses are set to become millionaires...

* Railtrack are trying to impose a 25 per cent cut on its track maintenance bill, despite the Health and Safety Executive declaring parts of the network unsafe.

Diminishing returns

The National Front were out in full force in Dover again last Saturday, this time promising a national mobilization. Stretching from kerb to kerb they were 30 strong, a full 40 less than last time. They've still been playing truant from English, waving the same mispelt banners as before, "Gipsies go home". For half an hour anti-fascists prevented them from marching until 17 snatch squad style arrests gave them the chance to move off. In all, over 300 police made the outing possible.

Their after-march speech included a minute's silence for Enoch Powell (a 60's Tory) "Whose Rivers of Blood speech was an inspiration to us all". Anti-fascists have promised to shit on his grave.

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To Ewan - many thanks for dealing with London traffic and a dodgy clutch.

SCHNEWS IN BRIEF

The Bloody Obvious: Researchers have concluded that road side trees improve air quality. Never! *** **The Bloody Pointless** The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council is funding an investigation, by Leeds Uni physics dept, Unilever and ICI, into 'soft stuff': Why does shaving foam and bread dough sink? Why does face cream harden when exposed to air? A bargain at £50,000 *** **Sammy the Swan** (Yes, you guessed it, he's a swan) caused a four mile tail-back on the M25 yesterday sitting in front of a lorry and refusing to budge for half an hour ***

The Anarchist Teapot who have moved (again) to ex-Donut King, 117 London Road, Bton are holding a **Father Ted 'Dermot Morgan' Wake** on Thurs nite 12th March @ 7pm. Videos of the best episodes and some live fiddleydee. Other events in March, all @ 7pm: Mon 9th - road protest film 'Life in the Fast Lane'; Weds 11th & 18th - Women's Night; Tues 17th - talk & video on East Timor; Thurs 19th - Dr Who videos!! 01273 601372.

*** **The Natty Trust** are having a benefit @ the Concorde, Brighton, this Monday, 9th March, entry £5/£3 donation. Featuring: Tragic Roundabout, Babylon Sandwich, Allegedly + DJs *** On 21st March, 1pm @ St Clifford's Tower, York there's a demo against the **Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI)** *** The anti-Avon-Ring-Road campaign **SCRAPPIT** are staging a Spring Equinox Gathering on Sat 22nd March, 3pm till late, @ Mangotsfield Station on the Bristol and Bath railway path. 01225 481448 *** The next meeting of the **Gandalf Defendant's Campaign** is 7pm, Tues 24th March @ Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London (Holborn Tube). Meetings will be on the last Weds of every month thereafter. There's a public meeting on 17th @ Leicester Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate and **Class War** are holding a benefit gig on the 21st @ The Acton Arms, Dalston, London. A national speaking tour is planned for April, watch this space... *** **Making Waves** are a group whose mission is to implement practical measures to prevent animal and environmental abuse on both land and sea. They are constantly in need of funds and equipment and hold training days in practical marine and land-based skills. Tel 01404 811006.

Soames the Soapy State Dodger

Last weekend Mark Thomas, a Channel 4 camera crew and members of the public donned out in 'Access All Aristos' yellow jackets and showed up at Christie's for a sneaky peek at Nicholas Soames' three tiered mahogany buffet with partially slendered upright supports. Suspect white stains or not, this piece is worth £20,000, £8,000 of which state scrounger Soames, the ex-Armed Forces Minister and grandson of Winston Churchill, has just last week stumped up in cash as a result of the publicity about his sad brown tropical table.

On Saturday a hundred or more people were privileged to be perhaps the last 'ordinary' folks to see it, but Mr. Soames still has plenty more artifacts on the tax exempt heritage list; including meat dishes, salt and pepper pots, paintings of his grandad and various other kinky bits for all to see. You have already paid for the right to see these knock-knacks: it is your duty to ding your cultural dong."

Builder's Bum Rush

Last Monday morning around 30 PANSE's (Political Activists Not Seeking Employment) strode into the offices of the House Builders Federation, drawing attention to their lack of social housing and obsession with building commuter homes on the greenbelt

As we walked down the Corridors of Influence, various filing cabinets were discovered and the contents of certain documents ingested. A meeting in the Board Room was interrupted and a secretary, trying to keep protesters out, locked three of them in with Chief Exec Roger Humber. Before long, the Dopes in Dark Blue arrived to spoil the fun, whilst outside, musicians played altered versions of popular favourites, such as the Verve's 'The Plans Won't Work': "All this talk of building homes/ It's bringing me down my love / Like a flat for a prat, in a new town, upon an English down". Other excursions by this happy band of concerned citizens are planned, and the issue of Greenbelt Housing continues... watch this space... before the HBF builds on it.

*Roger 'The Council Tax Dodger' Humber and two other HBF directors, had registered the offices at Companies House as his home address despite not declaring this to Westminster Council and not paying Council Tax on the top floor flats.

House Builders Federation: 82 New Cavendish Street London W1M 4AD Tel: 0171 580 5588.Fax 0171 323 1697.

Activists wanting to get involved in this issue should ring 01865 721366.

Squat Shot

On the morning of Tuesday February 24, a masked special police unit with automatic pistols burst into a squat at Pfarrstrasse in Berlin. One squatter watched as his dog was shot three times and killed. Local authorities said the eviction proceeded "with few incidents". 260 police were called in to evict 15 people from the house. The local mayor had told police that there were not to be any squat evictions without his prior notice - however he was on holiday at the time! Berlin's right-wing Interior Minister, Joerg Schoenbohm commented: "I will see to it that there are no more squats in the future."

...and finally...

For some North Americans Gulf War II began last Friday when CBS NEWS mistakenly beamed a twenty minute dress rehearsal coverage of a U.S. bombing run on Iraq onto satellite TV! A Canadian viewer said "I watched for about 15 minutes as they went into very detailed information about the attack with excellent 3D graphics showing cruise missiles and their routes and targets, as well as live footage of attacks on Baghdad which was quite convincing." CBS defended themselves by saying the network wanted to test new graphics and theme music that would be used to cover the story. SchNEWS would like to know just what sort of 'theme' music they used for bombing - the dambusters?

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers not to strike it lucky by receiving police support for your industrial action. It never happens (well, you never read about such things), and is about as likely as the Millenium Dome being a huge success. Honest

Sarah Sausage - we love you, have a cool time