

# SchNEWS

Printed and Published in Brighton by Justice?



Friday 26th March 1999

<http://www.schnews.org.uk/>

Issue 206

Free/Donation

## FORESTS FOR THE CHOP

*"The agreement reflects an economic agenda which prioritises unsustainable corporate profit-making over the maintenance of healthy ecosystems."*

Friends Of The Earth

What would your solution be if SchNEWS told you that an area larger than Mexico had been deforested between 1980 and 1995? More forest protection? Don't be daft. Last week negotiations took place in Geneva at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to kick off a wood trade free-for-all which would effectively trash what's left of the world's forests.

So who is behind all this? Surprise, surprise, it's the good 'ole apple pie United States, strongly supported by their paper and wood product industries! They're pushing for a WTO agreement, which could strip the world's remaining natural forests of any existing protection, while boosting consumption of forest products and increasing logging. SchNEWS wasn't surprised to hear the US Trade Representative at the WTO talks in Geneva, Charlene Barshefsky, used to be a lobbyist for the Canadian Timber Industry.

This little story (and SchNEWS readers might be going all *deja vu* about these trade agreements) started in 1995 when negotiations between GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and APEC (Asian Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum) failed, and the WTO was asked to join a forest products free trade agreement. A quick look at deforestation rates in APEC countries is enough to raise a few concerned eyebrows... between 1990 and 1995 the annual deforestation rate of APEC countries was more than twice the world average. Doesn't really inspire confidence eh?

Peru, Russia and Vietnam joined APEC in 1998...worrying as Russia has the most remaining frontier forests of all the world's countries; Peru the fourth most; meanwhile, Vietnam's frontier forests are the third most threatened in the world.

The Forest Industry reckons that protection laws reduce their profits, this is reason enough for them to push the WTO to pass new laws removing such petty obstacles to their progress. WTO have been described as having 'uniquely powerful tools' and are obviously not afraid to use them! The Director General said "We are writing the constitution of a single global economy".

Minor inconveniences that may arise from this attitude include the probable importation

of destructive pests on wood products.

One such pest is the Asia long-horned beetle which has killed thousands of trees across the United States since it was imported on untreated logs and packaging material.

Another probable bummer is that the removal of tariffs will mean no distinction between wood products that are harvested by sustainable methods and the logging of old-growth and endangered trees. Basically, Joe public will have no way of knowing whether they are buying the last remaining rainforest or not.

As per usual the worlds press are falling over themselves to tell us about this charming little agreement- and it could be law by November when the WTO meet in Seattle. So what can we do about it?As the WTO obviously consider our world's forests a resource to be plundered, we can only suggest a spot of direct action-go and plant some trees!

\* Trees For Life, The Park, Findhorn Bay, Forres IV36 OTZ, Scotland. Tel:01309 691292

\* For info. on sustainable living, contact the Permaculture Assoc. BCM Permaculture Association, London, WC1N 3XX. Tel: 01654 712188 Web <http://www.btinternet.com/~permaculture.uk>

If you are interested in fighting against the WTO agreement, contact [karen@aseed.antenna.nl](mailto:karen@aseed.antenna.nl). This woman has all the information ammunition you will need!

Recommended reading: "Profit Over People" by Noam Chomsky.

### SCARY STATISTICS

\* Every hour, at least 4,500 acres of tropical forests fall to chain saws, machetes, flames or bulldozers, and another four plant or animal species become extinct.

\* Half the world's original forest is gone.

\* Only 22% remains as undisturbed 'primary' forest.

\* Less than 10% of temperate forests remain.

\* Half the world's tropical forests have been cleared.

\* Chile's native forests-one third of the world's remaining temperate rain forests-will be completely deforested in just 20 years if current practices continue.

\* At least 200 million hectares of forest were lost between 1980 and 1995 - an area larger than Mexico says the 1997 United Nations Food and Agriculture's State of the World's Forests report.

### CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

**For walking around with your hands in your pockets.** Conrad Samuels was walking along a street in East London when he was told by a police officer to take his hands out his pockets. He refused. On being where he was going, he replied " This is a free country and I can walk where I like." Oh no you can't - your nicked.

**For walking on a flower bed!** A supporter of the Movement Against the Monarchy (MA'M) was in Basildon, Essex trying to disrupt a visit by the Queen, when they were nicked. However, after the cops couldn't match the footprint, they were later released without charge.

MA'M, PO Box 14672, London E9 5UQ  
[www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/1793/Index](http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/1793/Index).

### Why do we need forests?

- \* To prevent global warming
- \* To stabilise climate change
- \* To ensure a steady source of clean water
- \* To prevent floods and serve as windbreaks (stops soil erosion and desertification)
- \* As a source of fuel, food, medicine, beauty and recreation

### MR. LIBERAL JOINS THE BANKERS

"The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. It is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians." . . . according to the world view of Dr Pat Robinson, a right wing extremist with whom the Royal Bank of Scotland has just announced a business link. Over 100 people recently demonstrated outside the Edinburgh branch. You can tell them what you think about Mr.Reasonable by ringing 0131 442 7777.

# ERT GO HOME

Ever heard of the the European Round Table of Industrialists(ERT)? Thought not. Well, these are the people (made up of various multinational bosses) that pushed the European Commission to adopt the Trans European Networks(TENs) project.

The aim of TENs is to expand and build new roads, high-speed railroads and airports. As you would suspect TENs gets the thumbs up from the road and industry lobby, but has been described by others interested in a rather more sustainable future, as an 'environmental nightmare'.

A SEED Europe have organised a Transport Action Day on the 27th March. This will co-incide with the official meeting of EU Transport Ministers. Actions are promised all over Europe. For a Transport action pack contact Frank van Schaik, c/o A SEED Europe, Postbus 92066, 1090 AB Amsterdam, Netherlands. Tel + 31-20-668-2236 email: frank@aseed.antenna.nl

## BUNKER MENTALITY

The eviction of the protest camp at Crystal Palace (see SchNEWS 203) ended on Monday, with two people Animal and Ken, spending 19 days in an underground bunker! The Grade II listed park could soon be home to a £56 million, 20 screen multiplex cinema with nine bars/restaurants, various retail outlets with concrete ramps leading cars up to the largest roof-top carpark in Britain. According to local papers, an extra million pounds has been spent by Bromley Council on the eviction.

One of the bunker residents, Animal, is currently in remand awaiting sentencing relating to the Manchester 2nd runway campaign. Send love letters, magazines, cards etc. to Eleanor Hutson, SX2145, HMP Newhall, Dialwood, Flockton, Wakefield, WF4 4AX

Crystal Palace campaign 0181 693 8200

## ON THE BUSES

Britain's first toll motorway came another step nearer completion this week, when the High Court refused to allow the protestors' legal challenge to go ahead. The Birmingham Northern Relief Road would be a 27 mile, 3 lane motorway bypassing Birmingham to the North, would devastate local wildlife and communities, and would do little to reduce congestion. This is all bit ironic, considering it happened around the same time that Prescott announced more incentives to increase bus use, and boasted that 15% of his weekly journeys were by bus. Well done John, you must be really roughing it, only using your chauffeur driven cars 85% of the time!

# SchNEWS in brief

Guess who? The National Year of Reading is part-sponsored by **The Sun** newspaper \*\* Demonstrate against **Hillgrove Farm's** continued breeding of cats for vivisection on Saturday April 17th from 12 noon. Transport is available from all over the UK - for details call 0121 632 6460 \*\* **EuroDusnie, Lieden**, The Netherlands . What started off as a three day counter-EU summit in April 97 has grown into an anarchist collective with four buildings squatted around the town. On the week of 27th March - 4th April a celebration of the two years is planned. For more info call 00 31 (0)71 5173019 or [www.dsl.nl/eurodusnie](http://www.dsl.nl/eurodusnie) \*\* **Med TV** the only independent Kurdish Channel in the world, has had it's licence revoked by the Independent TV Commission. Complain to the commission by ringing 0171 255 3000 or faxing 0171 306 7800 \*\* **Stop the Asylum Bill** public meeting 16th April 7.30 pm Friends Centre, Ship St., Brighton \*\* Will **alternative economic institutions** ever challenge capitalism, or are they only useful in covering up its failures? The answer to this question and more at the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester on April 24th . More details from T.Hooley, English dept., Univ. of Leicester, LE1 7RH email [caw4@le.ac.uk](mailto:caw4@le.ac.uk) \*\*

**Red South West** is a decent mag covering lots of left-wing subjects an interesting way! Wow. Send a quid + SAE to Exeter Left group c/o The Flying Post, PO Box 185, Exeter, EX4 4EW \*\* Transport is going from Brighton to the opening of the trial of the **Totness Two**, charged with trashing a genetically modified crop site. Page 0336 760424 if you want a lift! \*\*

Don't forget the Global Days of Action against **Monsanto** and **genetically modified foods** on April 15-30. Info- [www.jps.net/dcasner](http://www.jps.net/dcasner) Tel 0181-374-9516, Genetix update, c/o PO Box 9659, London, N4 4JY \*\* **McBurger Off!** Anti McDonalds benefit gig featuring special guests Chanter (Folk-Rock) at the Royal Standard Music Venue, Blackhorse Lane - directly opposite Blackhorse Lane (Victoria Line) tube station - Walthamstow E.17. 29th April 8pm \*\* Shout out for more people to get down to the squatted **121 Centre** in Brixton which has now been in occupation, behind barricades, for eight weeks. They are expecting eviction any time soon, so why not pledge a three hour shift? Events are still happening daily. 121 Raitlon Road, Brixton, London SE24 Tel 0171-274-6655 \*\* Last week more than a million people demonstrated in **Mexico City** including electricity workers fighting privatisation and students protesting against the introduction of fees \*\* Last week one of the **Southdowns Hunt Sabs** received a broken arm in five places at the very last meet of the West Kent Fox Hunt (they are folding and will now be taken over the Old Surrey and Burstow hunt). Sabs arrived to find the place swarming with red coats and about 150 riders - some of whom decided to ride at sabs and broke a woman's arm. Despite a four wheel drive full of cops less than 10 yards away they saw nothing. As for the press always portraying hunt sabs as violent, in the last season about 15 hunt supporters were found guilty and convicted in the courts - only one hunt sab. Contact Hunt Sab Association 01273 622827 \*\* On the 27th March the Tameside care-workers will have been out on strike for a year. 250 of them were sacked by a Labour Council after they refused to accept worsening pay and conditions. There will be a demo and rally from Astley Rd., Stalybridge. Contact 0161- 308-2452 \*\* Looking ahead to June 18th an internet broadcast is being set to coincide with the Global day of action. Contributions are needed Tel: 07788-491899/e-mail, [Capitalism\\_sux@hotmail.com](mailto:Capitalism_sux@hotmail.com). or write to Box 6, Greenleaf Bookshop, 82 Colston St, Bristol, B51 5BB.

# Inside SchNEWS

"What I realised after the end of this case is that I never, or almost never, have been involved in a trial which has ended in a conviction where I am certain, or almost certain, that the defendants are wholly innocent, and are wholly wrongly convicted." - defence solicitor Gareth Peirce.

Samar Ali and Jawad Botmeh, two Palestinians accused of bombing the Israeli Embassy and Balfour House in London in 1994, are still protesting their innocence. Both are being held as Class A (highest security) prisoners on twenty year sentences, after which they will face deportation.

The two were convicted in 1996 on circumstantial evidence only. Since their conviction more evidence showing the unfairness of the trial has come to light. In November 1997 it was revealed in the Mail on Sunday that MI5 had received a warning prior to the bombing which was ignored. The source of the warning pointed in a different direction to Samar and Jawad but this evidence has never been made public. In 1998 Paul Foot revealed in Private Eye that another MI5 official had cast more doubt on their convictions. There is also evidence that the jury were exposed to biased journalism and TV documentaries.

An appeal date has now been set but the defence is being refused access to even more important evidence which could be important to the outcome of the case. A campaign for justice for the two was launched in 1997 and are calling people to picket the appeal on 29th March at the Royal Court of Justice, Strand, London WC2 .

Contact BM FOSA, London WC1N 3XX or [www.freesaj.org.uk](http://www.freesaj.org.uk)

## SQUATS GOING ON

**Hackney Squat Evictions** are continuing without court orders. Using the electricity board and the police, the council has been evicting people on suspicion of having illegally supplied electricity and smashing meters and toilets to make buildings uninhabitable. Protesters who occupied the Estates Management offices last Friday were told they couldn't speak to the man responsible for the evictions, as no-one knew which of his TWO houses he was at! When they did get to speak to someone they were told that the council would do 'everything legal' to keep squatters out of Hackney's thousands of empty properties, as part of their 'zero tolerance' policy. No-one could tell the protesters whether the council also had a 'zero tolerance' policy on homelessness.

## ...and finally...

Thanks to increasing work hours and the 24 hour society Britain is becoming a nation of 'border line retards' - according to the British Sleep Foundation.

So SchNEWS reckons this is as good a call as any, for people to get involved in the World Phone in Sick Day on April 6th. For this action, all you have to do is get on the blower, give some excuse for not turning up for work.

The brains behind the day, Decadent Action - the consumer terrorist organisation - are out to bring down capitalism by feeding it until it bursts. This involves a campaign of luxury living funded by shoplifting, credit and the DSS, all intended to push the country into hyper-inflation. According to the Decadent ones, phoning in sick is fast becoming "a genuine alternative to the organised strike."

Check 'em out at BM Decadence, London WC1N 3XX. England.

[www.underbelly.demon.co.uk/decadent/](http://www.underbelly.demon.co.uk/decadent/)

### disclaimer

SchNEWS apologises to all our readers for going on about those nasty people at World Trade Organisation and their dirty little free trade agreements. Hey, we know sarcasm is more our style. We won't let it happen again. Honest

**Benefit Night**  
For "June 18th"  
films from  
**RECLAIM THE STREETS**  
**UNDERCURRENTS**  
**BANGIN' TECHNO AND JUNGLE**  
@ **Cuba Club, Brighton**  
Tues 6th April from 7pm-2am.

What's June 18th 1999? An International day of direct action aimed at the heart of the global economy - the financial and banking centres across the globe

Info @ 0171 281 4621 - [rts@gn.apc.org](mailto:rts@gn.apc.org)

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