



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER CZECH IT OUT NOW

SchNEWS

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CZECHPOINT CHARLIES

Playing the nervous host at the moment is the historic city of Prague, venue next month for the annual autumn meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). This pair of institutions is not as well known to most of us as the banks on the high street, and they won't be able to cash your pay cheque. But for years they've been prizing open the poor countries of the world to the turbulent winds of international commerce. Now half the world seems to be heading in the Prague direction, and they're kicking up a storm.

Remember the scene in Seattle last November, when a conference of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) was effectively de-railed by 50,000 uninvited guests who turned up to give them stick? The WTO is still at it, trying to usher us all into its global marketplace, a level playing field on which multinational corporations can kick the rest of us around. But the fiasco at Seattle was a major blow for them, and they're not the only ones who were a little rattled. Next in the spotlight... bring on those globetrotting bureaucrats from the IMF and World Bank.

Large Westerns

As they'd have it, their job is to help out the world's poor and needy. That was the plan when they were set up back in 1944, at a meeting of hot-shot economists in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, USA. But it's not how everyone sees it. If you're a poor nation with a largely destitute peasant population, you might like to apply for a loan - just don't forget to read the small print. Far from having no-strings-attached, the IMF has demanded countries open their doors to large western corporations. And those corporations have never been slow to move in, taking good advantage of all the desperate people down there, prepared to work for peanuts.

The World Bank, meanwhile, has a long tradition of funding large projects - such as dams, roads and power stations - aimed at developing the infrastructure of the countries it tries to help. Fair enough - unless you're one of the 25 million Indian villagers threatened with flooding by the colossal Narmada Dam. The World Bank has (eventually) now pulled out of that particular scheme, such was the scale of the outcry, but they've always displayed that preference for projects that give juicy contracts to construction firms based in the North. In fact, the Bank has never denied that the

main people to benefit from their hair-brained schemes are - er - large western corporations. If you're a rich country, returns like that are a better reason to put your money in the bank than the promise of a flash credit card and a few money-off vouchers for HMV.

Armed with their crystal-clear economic vision, for two decades or more the two institutions have been following the righteous path to a global free market. Michael Chossudovsky, economics professor at the University of Ottawa, explains it thus; 'they are simply two tools used by the Western elite to destroy nations, to turn them into territories.' The results have not been pretty. Says David Korten of the People Centred Development Forum; 'Between them the IMF and World Bank have caused more harm to people than any other non-military institutions in human history.'

Cracks

But the cracks are beginning to show. Three years ago, economic crisis swept through east Asia, and the IMF responded with its usual prescription; further squeezing the amount of government spending on health and education, and smashing down trade barriers. Predictably, this didn't help matters. Now even the US Congress is taking the hint. 'As we have painfully discovered', observes California Representative Maxine Walters, 'the way the IMF works causes children to starve.'

In preparation for next month's Prague shindig, the World Bank have been putting together their annual World Development Report. But after the first draft was published, Ravi Kanbur, its lead author, resigned. Having been brought in from outside the Bank, he'd been stressing the need for their economists to work closely with local populations in poor countries, rather than entertain themselves in front of their calculators. But he said he experienced too much pressure from the World Bank chiefs wanting him to change his tune. Appar-

ently sections of his report are now being written by Lawrence Summers, the US Treasury Secretary. He should know what he's doing, as he used to be ex-vice president of the Bank. An enlightened bloke, then? Take a look at what he wrote while doing that job back in 1991, in a (leaked) secret memo (this is not a joke): 'I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that.'

With such sympathetic appraisals of world inequality coming from the besuited bankers, it's hardly surprising that so many people are heading to Prague next month. Imagine if Myra Hindley, having carried out her serial murders, afterward set up a public meeting about it to discuss her future plans. You might expect a few hecklers.

Feathers

The events in Seattle last autumn certainly ruffled a few feathers amongst the world's financial elite. A recent, high-level seminar entitled 'After Seattle: Restoring Momentum to the WTO' brought out some anguish that grassroots groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had been having so much effect. One former White House budget official suggested diverting their attention from where the real power lies; 'can't we give the NGOs other sandboxes to play in and have them take their concerns to groups like the International Labor Organization?'

While the Czech police force gets tooled up, President Vaclav Havel is playing it cool. 'The media attention given to security issues "pains me," he said. "It seems as if we are preparing for civil war. We should take this more positively."

* 20th Sept. Anti-capitalist film night Two showings : 8pm and 10pm at Cinematique, 9-12 Middle St., Brighton £2/1.50 01273 384300

* 4th Sept i-Contact Video Network will be holding an evening of groovy grassroots activist films at the Hat & Feather pub, Walcot Street, Bath. All the films centre on The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation. 8pm, £1 www.videonetwork.org

*Big Rattle in Seattle and Capitals ill -the A16 videos are both available from SchNEWS priced £5 and £6 plus a SAE with 80p postage.

Contacts:

* S26, PO Box 30594, London SW16 2WD, www.s26.org

* <http://inpeg.ucn.cz>

* www.lobsterparty.org

* www.whirledbank.org

Party for Simon

The 1st September would have been Simon Jone's 27th birthday if he hadn't been killed by the profits-before-everything economy he hated. Simon always enjoyed a good party, so let's give him one. Meet 1pm steps of St.Paul's Cathedral, London. Transport from Brighton, tickets from the Peace Centre. 01273 685913 www.simonjones.org.uk

FORTRESS EUROPE

After a four year struggle for asylum in 6 EU countries and a 7 month battle in the UK, Kurdish asylum seeker Amanj Gafor was removed to Germany by boat. Tired of the endless cycle of removal, confusion and inhumane treatment, the final decision to go was his. "I will not beg those who do not want me anymore, the solicitors, the governments. I know it is not people's wish, but I want to go back and fight," he said. The removal of Amanj by boat came after airlines refused to take part in his deportation, fearing for their public image after successful actions against British Airways and Lufthansa halted previous attempts to remove him by plane. He is currently being held in a refugee camp in rural Germany pending removal back to Kurdistan, from which he fled in 1996.

*On 31st July the government spent over £30,000 deporting Patience Sapani-Awnobi back to Ghana on a private jet after commercial airlines refused to leave when she became too distressed.

*On May 1st 1999, Nigerian asylum seeker Marcus Omofuma was killed during a forced deportation to Austria. After being handcuffed, chained and having his mouth closed with tape he suffocated.

*On 22nd September 1998 Belgian police suffocated 20 year old Semira Adamu from Nigeria with a pillow whilst trying to silence her.

*When commercial airlines refuse to take part in enforced deportations there are other options open to officials. These include military flights, group deportation flights and ultimately the drugging of asylum seekers.

National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns, 110 Hamstead Road, Birmingham, B20 2QS 0121 554 6947 www.ncadc.demon.co.uk/

MARCHING ORDERS

Next Wednesday (30th) there's a picket outside the US Embassy, Grosvenor Square, W1 (nearest tube Bond Street) 4 - 7pm to coincide with President Clinton's visit to Colombia and to protest against the US 'Plan Colombia'. The 'Plan' - pushed for by US Defence contractors and oil companies - is that \$1.3 billion of 'aid' is going to fight the war on drugs. And what a war it is, already being described by some as 'the new Vietnam' with planes spraying areas growing cocoa, killing *everything* in its path, and funds going to the paramilitaries, who according to one human rights group were last year responsible for nearly 80% of Colombia's human rights abuses.

More on this story next week. email: lasocollective@hotmail.com

MARCHING ORDERS II

The National Front are set to take to the streets again on Saturday 26th August. They are planning to march through Nottingham, this time exploiting the media generated tensions around paedophiles claiming a link between homosexuality and paedophilia. A counter demonstration called by Nottingham Anti Fascist Alliance will begin at 11 am in Nottingham Market Square.

*A new supermarket is set to open. Nothing new there, you may think, yet this is a development with a difference. It is to be situated on the site of Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz. Yes, that's right, the site will now play host to a snack bar, restaurant, post-office, bank, large car park and a gift shop. German-Polish MAJA group had been keen to develop the site since 1996 yet had been stopped by the state governor, but thanks to legal tricks and lots of money it looks as though it may yet go ahead.

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SchNEWS in brief

Workers in India's eastern Calcutta port have held up a ship from the military regime of **Burma**. The ship, M.V. Pagan was delayed for 24 hours, triggered by a letter from the International Transport Workers' Federation. The Federation are demanding an end to the regime, better working conditions for Burmese sailors and trade union rights ** A 5th World Conference on **Bioethics** is taking place 21st - 24th September as part of the 'Creating Sparks' exhibition/conference in London ; sponsored by the usual - Novartis, AstraZeneca, GlaxoWellcome etc. The exhibition will use loads of lovely artwork as a cover for biotech talks with lectures like "How is the 3rd world to benefit from new Information technology?" (er, half the world's population hasn't even got electricity so probably not a lot). Wellcome are also hoping to get you drunk so you'll believe they're doing a good job monopolising the world drugs market 0117 928 9843 www.creatingsparks.co.uk ** This Sunday (27) there's a techno benefit night to help subsidise **Glasgow-Prague** transport at the 13th Note Club, Clyde St, Glasgow. 10 pm till 3 am. £4/£3 (followed by another benefit night on the 17th September globalactionsotland@egroups.com ** And on the 5th September local bands and poets will be raising funds for a **Colchester-Prague** minibus at the Oliver Twist, 8pm £3 (Anybody wanting to go to Prague from Ipswich, Colchester, Chelmsford Area should contact boundforglory@hotmail.com. Tickets are £70) ** Next weekend (1-3 Sep) "somewhere in Norfolk" (we know it's a big place but that's all the info we've got) there's a "No K Limits" **Tecknival** bring-a-sound- system Party! ** A **street carnival** is being organised in Norwich on the 16 September, meet 1:30pm outside city hall. The organisers are really looking for more people to help out so contact them at onrandombods@hotmail.com www.gn.apc.org/rts ** And therewill be a benefit for the **Street Party** on Friday 8th September at the Hog in Armour, St Andrews Street. DJ's from ReadyBreak, Suspect Sound System, Millenium Bug, Loose Booty, E-Flex, Rebel Lion and Backroom Beats. Tax on the door - donation ** **National Speakout Week**, 11-18 September, helping to tackle homelessness and poverty. Contact Groundswell for a Speakout recipe book and video everything you need to organise your own event. Tel: 020 77132880 www.oneworld.org/groundswell/events.htm ** Did you **witness an arrest** of a man at last years N30 demonstration? The man was 6ft with shoulder length brown hair and a black beard, he was wearing a green parka and blue jeans. If you think you can help contact his Solicitor Lindsey Rattenberger on 020 7697 9977** Don't miss this years bigger than ever **Worthing Green Fair** 10am Saturday 2 September, Beach House Green (Worthing Seafront), with live music on 2 pedal-powered stages, kids activities, , swarm info/chill space, healing area, and circus. There are still a few stall spaces left if anyone is interested. Give 'em a call on 01903 210351** **Barbed Wire Europe** Conference Against Immigration Detention, organised by the Close Down Campsfield Campaign, at Ruskin College, Oxford, 15th -17th September. £80/40 with accommodation, £25/15 without, Free to asylum seekers. To book a place contact Suke Wolton, 40 Richmond Road, Oxford OX1 2JJ 01865 557282 (suke.wolton@stx.ox.ac.uk) before 8th September ** One for all you **wombles** - 3rd annual litterpick 16-17 September. Meet 12 noon, Red Hill car park, Devil's Dyke Rd., Brighton. Gloves, bins and refreshments provided **For even **more party and protest** dates check out our website

Positive SchNEWS

Energy 2000 is a 3-day festival celebrating er, renewable energy! It's taking place in Leicester from 8 to 10 September and is totally free. Find out how we can use renewable energy in our homes; displays of the latest electric vehicles, live music, and a pedal powered live radio broadcast. There will be workshops on kite making and circus skills, and if you need relaxation there will be a solar heated spa and showers and a solar powered cinema. The event takes place from 10am-6pm each day in Western Park, Leicester. There will be secure bike parking at the event and free buses from Leicester City centre. For directions and more information contact: Ruth Stockdale at Environ, Parkfield, Western Park, Hinckley Road, Leicester, LE3 6HX Tel: 0116 222 0254 www.environ.org.uk

GOREY DETAILS

The American cops were reported to be pleased with themselves after last weeks Democratic Conference in Los Angeles for "having allowed citizens to exercise their First Amendment right to protest". Protesters however had a different story to tell. There were 198 arrests over the week - bystanders and even conference delegates were greeted with batons and rubber bullets. A concert by Rage Against The Machine on Monday night became violent as the cops shot high pressure water and pepper spray pellets at protesters, while the LA Indymedia Centre was closed down after an alleged bomb threat. This didn't stop the protests though, on Thursday anarchist groups were joined by several thousand local people from a wide variety of backgrounds, marching against sweatshops and for immigrant rights. The march began in the garment district and made its way past downtown sweatshops where garment workers waved and cheered as they poked their heads out of upper-storey factory windows. Across the street from the convention centre they were joined by another large march, against U.S. Navy bombing on the island of Vieques in Puerto Rico. For more on the weeks events check out www.la.indymedia.org

HUNTINGDOWN

Police in Cambridgeshire were busy last week as an operation launched to combat Cambridge In August activities reached a head. Four people from the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty campaign had their offices raided two days before the event and had their computers, literature, merchandise and information confiscated. They were subsequently arrested, remanded in custody and charged with conspiracy to incite criminal damage, GBH and conspiracy to disrupt traffic on the A1 into Cambridge!

* Saturday 19th also saw 100 people demonstrating outside Oakington Detention Centre. Toys and clothes were able to be taken into the centre along with messages of support. www.indymedia.org.uk

...and finally...

Talk about using a sledge hammer to crack a nut, well this is more like using a ten ton block of concrete to crush a grape. The S.A.S, the British army's elite, are being used to train benefit agency fraud squad to catch those heinous terrorist's who sign on while working. Now there is a cease fire in Northern Ireland it seems that the next biggest threat are people who supplement their meagre dole money by taking a normally crap paid job. SchNEWS wonders if the benefits fraud squad will also be trained in that other S.A.S. speciality "shoot to kill". That'll teach the scrounging beggars.

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers if you're gonna checkout Prague have a czech mate with you as you'll be treated like a pawn in a game. Honest.