



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER BOMBSHELL...

# SchNEWS

Printed and Published in Brighton by Justice?



Friday 10th November 2000

www.schnews.org.uk

Issue 282 Free/Donation

## SHELL SUIT

**"I repeat that we all stand before history. My colleagues and I are not the only ones on trial. Shell's day will surely come for there is no doubt in my mind that the ecological war that the Company has waged in the Delta will be called to question and the crimes of that war be duly punished."**

*Ken Saro-Wiwa at his trial.*

Five years ago this week, environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa and nine others took a fatal lesson in the costs of fuel when they were hanged for their campaigning for clean air, land and water for the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta. Holding Shell Oil to be the main corporate culprit for ecological damage and human rights abuses, protesters had forced it to close the majority of its oil producing operations in Ogoniland in 1993. Now Saro-Wiwa's family have initiated a law suit against the company in New York. Shell, meanwhile, has announced that it plans to return to Ogoniland.

### JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO GO BACK TO THE DELTA...

It took five bungled attempts to hang Ken Saro-Wiwa. His final words, "What country is this? What are you doing to me?" still echo tragically in a land that remains one of the most polluted places on the planet, thanks to oil giants like Shell, Chevron and Mobil. Fountains of oil pouring into villagers' fields, contaminated water, leaking pipelines, pools of sulphur and drainage problems have been the legacy of Shell's history of collusion with the brutal former Nigerian regime.

### Greasy Palms

In October 1990, a planned protest by the Etche community of Umuechem, prompted Shell to enlist the help of the notorious Mobile Police Force. Eighty people were killed in the massacre which followed. Then in 1993, an Ogoni grassroots rebellion, led by Ken Saro-Wiwa, was put down at the cost of 2,000 lives. An estimated 80,000 were subsequently made homeless.

Despite consistently denying any links with the Nigerian military, Shell has since admitted to bankrolling them and providing support, including helicopters and boats. They even subsidised the military's brutal commander in Ogoniland, Major Okuntimo, who personally tortured Saro-Wiwa as well as shooting and raping protestors. A May 1994 memo written by Okuntimo in the days before Saro-Wiwa's arrest was flatly honest; "Shell operations [are] still impossible unless ruthless military operations are undertaken for smooth economic activities to commence".

By December '98, three years after the killing of Saro-Wiwa and his fellow activists, the neighbouring Ijaw people declared themselves "tired of gas flaring, oil spillages, blow-outs and being labelled terrorists." Deaths of "possibly over 200 people" promptly followed, as well as "torture and inhuman treatments", as recorded by Human Rights Watch. Girls as young as 12 were raped or tortured.

Then in November last year the Nigerian military destroyed Odi - a town of 15,000 - killing hundreds of civilians. "When I went back everything was burnt down. There was still the smell of rotting flesh", says Ike Okonta from Nigerian campaign group Environmental Rights Action.

### Heart Attack

Shell has, to be fair, long made clear their high degree of concern over these issues of community relations. Back in November 1995, during the Saro-Wiwa trial, the minutes of a meeting between the Nigerian High Commissioner and executives at Shell revealed their exclusive topic of discussion: how to deal with the damaging publicity.

Their response has since become known to us in the West. "None of our business? Or the Heart of our business: Human Rights" reads one piece of their PR greenwash campaign. "It's not the usual business priority. At Shell, we are committed to support fundamental human rights... We invest in the communities around us to create new opportunities and growth."

**SchNEWS**  
**6th BIRTHDAY PARTY**

**& Brighton Peace Centre**  
**PRESENT**

**THREE FLOORS OF HIP**  
**GRINDING, CANDLE BLOWING,**  
**PAMPHLET GUZZLING,**  
**RIB TICKLIN, KISS-ME-QUICK**  
**ENTERTAINMENT**

Featuring SchLIVE plus

- Timmy Wobble (As seen on TV)
- \* Marcus (Innerfield) \* Da Void (Stompafunk) \* Jude (Planet Yes) \* DJ Wah Wah \* Misti Love \* Sister G \* Bobby Dazzler
- \* Dom & Cosmo's Bottleneck
- Bluegrass Band \* And films Big Rattle In Seattle \* Revolting In Prague \* Capital Ills - DK in DC

**Thursday**  
**16th November 9 til 2**  
**@THE OCEAN ROOMS -**  
**1 MORLEY ST BRIGHTON**  
**£2.50/£2 Concession-Student**  
This is a benefit for both SchNEWS and the Peace Centre.

### How Do They Manage?

When SchNEWS heard these sorry figures about our underprivileged corporations we thought of having a whip round in the office. **This is what the oil companies rake in EVERY DAY:**

Profit per day	2000	% increase PA
Exxon Mobil	£32.5m	94%
BP Amoco	£28.8m	94%
Shell	£24.6m	79%
Chevron	£12.5m	135%
Texaco	£6.2m	84%

New Labour have done their bit too...oil companies pay £2 billion per year less in tax than they did under the Tories.

Shell's commitment to the well-being of the local communities includes generous assistance to the well-appointed Gokana Hospital in Ogoniland. It lacks running and hot water, electricity and mattresses, its kitchen is a single hob with a blackened pot, and they have fewer drugs there than many folks over here would consume on an average Saturday night. Meanwhile up the road is the Shell workers' hospital, a picture of air-conditioned efficiency.

### Foreign Body

While the Saro-Wiwa family's law suit goes forward in the US, the Nigerian Government still refuses to release Ken's body, despite permission from the president. An observer from the UK Bar Human Rights Counsel tell us that the two chief prosecution witnesses at Saro-Wiwa's trial signed affidavits, saying that they had been bribed by Shell to testify against him. To hand over the body could be interpreted as official acknowledgement of Saro-Wiwa's innocence. A symbolic burial, according to Ogoni tradition, took place this April attended by 10,000 mourners.

The government has instead given the Ogoni a different body, this time called the Niger Delta Development Commission, appointed to oversee the Ogoni situation. Says Okonta, "The people of the Niger Delta had very high hopes for an independent agency which would deal with the problems of environmental devastation and lack of facilities such as roads and electricity."

What they didn't expect, however, was for ex-Managing Director of Shell in Nigeria, Mr. Godwin Omene, to be at the helm. If, as looks likely, Omene's appointment is approved, it will be a slick two fingers to the communities who had thought some independent scrutiny might assist their plight. Instead, says Okonta, they are getting "the same man who raped them for so long. The Government and Shell are not serious about bringing the Delta back to environmental health".

For more information about greenwashing see Andy Rowell's book Green Backlash (Routledge).

## Don't Fuel Climate Change

**Monday 13<sup>th</sup>** Meet 7 am **Brighton Train Station** – bring a bike if you can, or if that's too early 12 noon at Churchill Square for mass leafleting 01273 298192 (help needed with costumes to take to The Hague 07719 530784)

**13th** Rising Tide of Resistance action against climate criminals. Meet 11.30 am at Liverpool Street station, **London**

**13th** Critical Mass bike ride Meet 7.45 am Devonshire Green, **Sheffield** criticalsheffield@yahoo.com

**18th** Meet 12 noon Barbican, **York** 07946 264655 subvertiser@yahoo.com  
\* To keep in touch with what's happening at the **Climate Change Conference** in The Hague keep your eyes peeled on [www.climateconference.org](http://www.climateconference.org)  
\* Keep up to date with demonstrations against the truckers Jarrow to London march at [www.realfuelcrisis.co.uk](http://www.realfuelcrisis.co.uk)

\* Also on the Monday at the ICA there will be a public meeting all about the fuel protests. Speakers include Observer journo' Nick Cohen, and the people's hero David Handley, chair of the People's Fuel Lobby and leader of Farmers for Action. 7.30pm. 0207 930 3647

## Country Pursuits

Veterans of the protest camp opposing the construction of a housing development in Ashington, Kent are due to appear at Southend Magistrates Court this coming Monday (17th). 10 campaigners will face charges under Section 10 of the Criminal Law Act 1977, relating to obstructing an officer or sheriff in their duty. Turn up and give them some support 0207 4503599 email [teo@saltire.org](mailto:teo@saltire.org) \*\* The public hearings to decide whether **Aventis' GM Maize** will be put on the National seed list, allowing it to be sold commercially, begins in Manchester from November 13th for 4 weeks. This will be taking place in UMIST, meet outside at 10.30am on the first day. Contact Manchester FoE on 0161 834 8221 \*\* Also on the 13<sup>th</sup>, the trial of 5 Manchester anti-GM activists begins. Charged with causing £200 worth of damage, this is the first time in a GM trial that the defence will be allowed expert witnesses \*\* On Tuesday ten genetiX activists shut down Exeters **BOCM Pauls animal feed mill**. Some locked-on to lorries at the main gate with D-locks round their necks, others locked on to a stationary lorry in a loading bay and got onto the roof forcing the manager to close the mill for the rest of the day. [genetixupdate@togg.org.uk](mailto:genetixupdate@togg.org.uk) \*\* **The Harris superquarry** was last week rejected by the Scottish Office. [www.foe-scotland.org.uk/nation/superquarry.htm](http://www.foe-scotland.org.uk/nation/superquarry.htm) \*\* For a baseball cap that reads "You Fly You Die" and other pleasures of countryside living, SchNEWS readers should checkout [www.countrymansweekly.co.uk](http://www.countrymansweekly.co.uk) \*\* If low impact dwellings get you all excited get along to a meeting and slide show at the **Phoenix Community Centre** (near the Free Butt Pub), Brighton next Thursday (16) at 7.30pm Suggested contribution £3 01273 501304 – but make sure you come to our birthday party later!

## Puffed Out

Mendocino County voters approved a measure to decriminalise personal use of marijuana, allowing up to 25 pot plants for personal use, a first in the United States. Supporters were jubilant but coppers have warned they will enforce state and federal marijuana laws which still make possession illegal!

**Radio 4A** Brighton's premier pirate radio station, returns to the airwaves this weekend. Tune into 106.6FM on Saturday 4PM-1AM for music of allsorts then a techno party all night long. Sunday 12-7PM topical chat followed by local/experimental music 7-12PM.

## Subscribe!

Keep SchNEWS FREE! Send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 10 for next 9 issues) or donations (payable to Justice?) Ask for "Originals" if you can make copies. Post free to all prisoners. SchNEWS, c/o on-the-fiddle, P.O. Box 2600, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2DX.

Tel/Autofax: +44 (0)1273 685913 GET IT EVERY WEEK BY E-MAIL: [schnews@brighton.co.uk](mailto:schnews@brighton.co.uk)

## SchNEWS in brief

Last week illegal clearance work began on the route of the **Tunstall North Bypass near Stoke**. This took campaigners by surprise as there is an injunction against the road waiting to be heard in the High Court. More info on 07977 765465 \*\* The second national march in London, for the recognition of **British Sign Language** as an official language attracted more than 9,000 protesters. For more info contact Federation of Deaf People, FDP, PO Box 11, Darwen, Lancs BB3 3GH [www.fdp.org.uk](http://www.fdp.org.uk) \*\* **National day of action to scrap the voucher scheme**, Saturday 11th November, to find out what you can do contact National Coalition of Deportation Campaigns 0121 554 6947 [www.ncadc.org.uk](http://www.ncadc.org.uk) \*\* **Young Free and Cuban?** A series of talks with a young woman from Havana kicks off in Bristol on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 3pm, Art Room, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Students Union, Queens Road, Clifton. info: [ra7270@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:ra7270@bristol.ac.uk). Then London on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 6pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square WC1 Holborn tube. Info: 020 7837 1688. And finally, Brighton on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> November, 7.30pm, The Branch Tavern, London Road. 01273 685913 \*\* In protest at the formation of the Worlds largest Agrochemical company, through the merger of Novartis and AstraZeneca, the **People's Caravan** will be touring India, Bangladesh and S.E Asia from 13-30 November. Follow their progress at [www.poptel.org.uk/panap/caravan.htm](http://www.poptel.org.uk/panap/caravan.htm) \*\* Meanwhile in Brighton this Monday there's a **Pro-GM Crop Conference** at the Metropole Hotel in Brighton. All yer favourites are there such as Novartis, Monsanto, Huntingdon Life Sciences... you get the picture. Demo outside 12.30pm \*\* **Satpal Ram Campaign National Picket**, 16<sup>th</sup> November, 12-4pm, Downing Street, London. Followed by a benefit gig on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> at the Scala Club (near Kings Cross Tube), 9pm- 5am. Contact the Campaign on 07947 595367\* **Two Brazilian Indians** are visiting London this month to help launch a new report of Brazil's tribal people. There will be a public meeting, 7pm on 21st November, Abbey Community Centre, 34 Great Smith Street, London SW1P. For tickets call 020 7733 7900 free but book early \*\* **Tripods, Trees and Trident** a weekend of actions, parties and fun at Kinning Park Complex, Glasgow 11-13 November, for details contact Faslane Peace Camp, 01436 820901 \*\* **Global Problems, Green Solutions** a conference organised by Leicester Radical Alliance, on 18-19<sup>th</sup> Nov, £20 for the weekend, tickets from 07718 629651 \*\* **Cities for a Small Country** lecture, 'Sustainable solutions for the urban environment: are they possible?', 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov, 6pm. Free. Old Theatre, Old Building, London School of Economics 0207 955 7417.

## Positive SchNEWS

Terre de Semences have produced the gardening seed catalogue equivalent of the *Tatler*. A whopping 170 pages long, nearly 50 of them are coloured photographs where you can go all gooey at the pictures of the unusual looking vegetable varieties. Where else would you find tomatoes called Banana Legs, Brandywine or Gold Dust? Pink Banana Jumbo courgettes, Purple Beauty Peppers or Lemon Moon Sunflowers? As well as lots of plant information and cultivation tips, there's also articles such as who really controls the international seed trade and the history of maize. Its quite expensive at £5 (inc.postage) but well worth it and a top prezzie for all those wannabe Charlie Dimmocks out there. Cheques payable to Terre de Semences, Ripple Farm, Crundale, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 7EB 01227 731815 [www.terredesemences.com](http://www.terredesemences.com)

## Inside SchNEWS

**Vincent Bethell** from the Freedom-To-Be-Yourself Campaign (famous for their naked protests) has now been in the segregation unit of Brixton prison for two months after continually refusing to cover himself up. Prison officials believe that his nakedness will cause offence to other prisoners and so he is not allowed to the visitors centre or canteen. Letters of support would be appreciated. DN9542, HMP Brixton, London, SW2 5XF \* Vincent is in court this coming Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> to set a date for his trial. There will be a naked protest at 2PM outside Southwark Crown Court.

**Mark Barnsley** has been moved again. Write to him: WA289, 7- HMP Frankland, Brasside, Durham, DH1 5YD.

**Michael Collins** a May Day prisoners mentioned in last week's SchNews has been sentenced to two years, which was less than he expected, but still a long time! Write to him FR6303, HMP Wandsworth Prison, PO Box 757, Heathfield Rd, London, SW18 3HS.

## Hacked Off In Hackney

Angry workers and residents of the London Borough of Hackney took to the streets on Monday, to disrupt a council meeting where massive 'book-balancing' cutbacks were being plotted (See SchNews 281). In the morning 40 council trucks and vans blocked the road, causing massive disruption. At lunchtime workers walked out to join a 700-strong protest outside the Town Hall. Councillors, however, were protected by 300 riot cops and so still managed to make moves towards axing 500 jobs and privatising loads of services, aimed at saving £18 million. One small victory on the day was the re-opening of two nurseries that have been occupied by parents and toddlers for over two weeks. Later in the day about 1000 people attended an evening rally. More demonstrations are planned and council workers will soon be voting on strike action.

To keep up-to-date contact: 07979 823597.

## Buy Nothing Day

As the annual Buy Nothing Day looms once again this November 25, we at SchNEWS are planning to launch our own brand new, rival anti-shopping event, called Try Not to Purchase Anything Day, in the interests of consumer choice. At the centre of the campaign is the long-awaited launch promise of their Credibility Card – useless in-store, it's said to up one's street cred exponentially. Buy Nothing Day has adopted the slogan 'Participate by not participating'. Just trying to move in on the clever paradox market, we say. Contact Enough! 0161 226 6668 [www.buynothingday.co.uk](http://www.buynothingday.co.uk)

## ...and finally...

Students! What would you like to do after you leave university? Leafing through job adverts for banks and multi-nationals in the *Oxford and Cambridge Careers Handbook*, we found some alternative (un)employment advice; "Involvement in the radical ecological movement is a truly refreshing alternative to other 'careers'". Sure, this guide has been produced by students themselves, so it adopts a more enlightened perspective than those of the official careers services of either institution. Regarding salary, the book admits there is "none, but..." it counsels, "most people, once out of the rat-race of endless consumption, find they can live okay on bits and pieces of work/dole/busking/donations." SchNEWS scribes can but concur that the financial rewards are meagre - but that every globally warmed cloud has a silver lining!

## Stop Press

UN election observers to be flown into Florida to monitor voting to make sure 'democracy' is maintained in these 'developing' countries.