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necessity breeds ingenuity oct/nov 1999

Issue 1

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THE STATE IT'S IN

A view from SQUALL Central

Indoamnesia

One December day in 1975, US President Gerald Ford and his secretary of state Henry Kissinger flew out of Indonesia just as the latest bloodbath began. According to Philip Liechty, the CIA's desk officer in Jakarta at the time: "They came and gave Suharto the green light. The invasion was delayed two days so they could get the hell out. We were ordered to give the Indonesian military everything they wanted. I saw all the hard intelligence; the place was a free-fire zone. Women and children were herded into school buildings that were set alight...and all because we didn't want some little country being neutral or leftist at the United Nations."

As a result of America's McCarthyite whims, over 200,000 East Timorese were massacred in the Indonesian government's attempt to subjugate the independent nation-state. Ever since the CIA helped Suharto assume the presidency of Indonesia in 1967, death, torture and oppression became the norm. Stepping in to facilitate this 'norm' came the United Kingdom - the second largest arms seller in the world - keen to soak up the lucrative arms deals.

David Owen sanctioned the first British

Aerospace (BAe) Hawk jet sales to Indonesia back in 1978 in a £500 million and so began an era which would see the UK arms companies sell £billions of military equipment to Suharto's regime; the UK government sometimes even loaning the regime money to make the purchases. The rhetoric coming out of the UK government since 1978 was that arms sales to Indonesia were only sanctioned on condition they were not to be used for internal oppression. What farcical obfuscation this now appears given the army backed militia's which have rampaged East Timor in recent months. Indeed, although the national media in the UK would have us believe Indonesia has only recently turned bad, this long running farce has been clumsily stomping the boards of international theatre for decades. In the grossest indication so far that Robin Cook's "human rights at the forefront of foreign policy" line was insidious nonsense the moment it was uttered, the Labour government have continued arms sales to Indonesia right up to the present day. Between May 1997 and May 1998, the UK Labour Government approved 64 export licenses for military equipment to Indonesia. One week

before UN forces went into East Timor in September '99, there were still three BAe Hawk jets on their way to Indonesia. Throughout the entire Labour administration, Indonesian military officials have accepted invitations to attend government backed arms fairs on British soil. Indeed they were due to attend the last Defence Systems Equipment International arms fair on MoD land in September; that is before the British government suggested at the 11th hour they shouldn't come for PR reasons.

Can the present government claim they did not know until recently that British military equipment was being used to massacre, torture and oppress?

The answer is clearly 'No'. Back in 1994 when Robin Cook was still trying to impress his credentials on the British political scene, he told parliament that BAe Hawk jets had been "observed on bombing runs in East Timor in most years since 1984". These words now come back to haunt the Foreign Secretary. For Cook has excused the Labour government's continued sale of arms to Indonesia on the basis that they were honouring contracts signed by the previous Tory administration. Honour? If Cook's 1994 assertion was true, the terms of the arms contract with Indonesia had already been broken and, if he had any genuine compunction to match reality with ethical rhetoric, he would of prevented further arms deliveries on the basis that Indonesia were breaking the terms of the contract. However, amnesia proved his preferred choice of action.

Earlier this year Foreign Office minister, Derek Fatchett supported his master's voice thus: "Robin Cook launched a constructive partnership on human rights with the Indonesian government in Jakarta in August 1997, including a number of initiatives on police training..."

Embarrassingly for the foreign office, Indonesian police violently quelled a public demonstration in Jakarta at the end of September 1999, when students took to the

streets to protest over a proposed new law in Indonesia allowing the government to suspend civil liberties if they deemed it necessary. Using riot control vehicles supplied by Alvis UK and water cannon supplied by Tactica UK, Indonesian police shot dead at least four students and truncheon-whipped thousands of others.

Even the British judicial system has long acknowledged Indonesia's culpability in internal oppression. In 1996, four female activists were acquitted in a Liverpool court of causing £1.5 million of damage to a BAe Hawk jet bound for Indonesia, on the basis that smashing up its cockpit with hammers could be considered a small crime necessary to prevent a greater one. It was an extraordinary legal precedent. But still the UK government took no notice. Still, troops belonging to Indonesia's notorious Kopassus special forces were receiving counter-insurgency training from a Surrey based company with the full knowledge of the UK government. It has now been proved beyond all doubt that the Kopassus forces provided direct military support to the right-wing militia which have recently raised East Timor to the ground.

National newspapers are treating the issue as if we have only just acquired the evidence proving the Indonesian government and military to be oppressive and corrupt. Even the scantiest of precis evidence proves that a selective blind eye has been turned to a bloody genocide. The moral authority cited by the UK as its reason for bombing Kosovo lies scattered in tatters.....rather like East Timor itself and the bodies of its men, women and children blown asunder with British weapons.

With a characteristically understated tone, Amnesty International's annual audit of British foreign policy, published at the end of September, expressed what has been bloodily apparent for years: "The Department of Trade and Industry in particular is not meeting its responsibility to promote trade in a manner which is not harmful to human rights."

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The SQUALL Crew is a collective of creative cultural activists dedicated to top quality edutainment. The media team investigate current cultural controversy with an attention to accuracy, whilst the events team promote events ranging from free parties to film shows. The two

teams share personnel and aspiration in a potent concoction of consciousness and culture.

All SQUALL's writers, photographers, designers, DJ's, leafleteers, decorists, drivers and general grafters are volunteers. All monies generated by the project, go back into the project.

This is a mammon free zone, with no party political affiliations or commercial sub-agenda.

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front cover photo by Ian Hunter

www.squall.co.uk

Information



Explorer

SQUANAGRAM

the truth is sometimes
spelt differently

general augusto pinochet

Hog lout nauseating creep.

A shouting petulance ogre.

Loutish repugnance to age.

Huge, unclean as to ego-trip.

Persecute gaunt hooligan.

STRAW JACKS UP SMACK FACTS

Jack Straw 'off his head' on heroin

Home Secretary, Jack Straw, took the liberty of making a drug induced exaggeration during his speech to the Labour Party conference in September. In a crime and punishment diatribe similar in content to those made by his Tory predecessor, Michael Howard, Straw told a surprised audience that 50 per cent of people arrested by police were currently testing positive for Heroin. However, according to a recently published survey commissioned by Straw's own department and conducted over two years by Cambridge University's Institute of Criminology, a national average of only 18 per cent of arrestees were found to have heroin in their bloodstream. Straw's deployment of wayward facts was thought to be a crude attempt to curry popular favour for the new mandatory drug tests which are imminently to be enforced on everyone arrested in the UK. The home office commissioned survey also found that 46% of arrestees tested positive for Cannabis, though the report noted: "Those who tested positive for Cannabis alone were not heavily involved in acquisitive crime."

MP AMISS AS PC's TAKE THE PISS

Ex-Tory minister fails new drug test

Ex-Home Office minister and Tory MP David McLean has failed a voluntary drug test he took whilst visiting the Police Superintendents' Association conference in September. McLean, who as Michael Howard's side-kick during the last Tory government once described Cannabis smokers as "inadequate weedy souls", volunteered a urine sample to demonstrate his support for new drug testing equipment. Much to the embarrassment of both himself and the police officers around him, he failed the test when traces of opiates were found in the sample. The right wing hard-liner claimed that codeine headache tablets he had taken the night before must be responsible. Police said they would be conducting a more vigorous test in an attempt to clear his name.

MORE PROTEST LOOMING WHERE BUSINESS IS KABOOMING

Activists block government-backed arms fair

Over 400 anti arms-trade activists succeeded in disrupting a government backed military hardware exhibition in Surrey on September 14. Approach roads were blocked for several hours and some of the 20,000 delegates and top ranking military officials from over 40 countries were heckled and harried as they entered the DSEI arms fair on the Ministry of Defence installation site at Chertsey. Vehicles attempting to enter the venue gates were halted by d-docked protestors and such was the level of disruption that road entry to the fair was stopped altogether over the subsequent days and all entrants were required to arrive in the venue grounds by special train. On September 15th thousands of police swamped a further 100 activists protesting at the DSEI's duel site at London Docklands, where amidst a skyline

dominated by Canary Wharf, the Millenium Dome and a McDonald's logo, eleven warships from seven European countries were moored on the Thames showing off their wares.

The government sponsored Defence Systems and Equipment International show (DSEI) was the largest of its kind ever to be held in the UK. Among those invited to attend the arms supermarket were countries with appalling human rights records including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, China and Malaysia. Officials from the Indonesian Army had also been in line to attend the fair until right at the last moment the British government deemed it too embarrassing to have them on British soil buying weapons when army-backed militia groups are slaughtering thousands in East Timor.



EXODUS IN TALKS WITH BEDFORDSHIRE LANDOWNER

In an unusual twist to a dynamic story, members of Luton's Exodus Collective have been approached by Lord Howland with a view to using some of his father's vast Bedfordshire estate for underground raves. As recently reported on SQUALL's Underground Update, Bedfordshire Police seized Exodus's sound system on the way back from a rave near Woburn Golf Course at the end of May. Both the golf course and the land on which the rave took place are owned by prominent local aristocrat, the Marquess of Tavistock.

The £25,000 police operation broke a long period of peace between the Collective and Bedfordshire Police, and was attributed specifically to strong complaints from the Marquess. Exodus secured the release of their trucks and sound system the following week.

Tavistock's Woburn Golf Course currently hosts two annual international golf tournaments and both the Marquess and his son Lord Howland are keen these prestigious and profitable events will not be disrupted by Exodus's community dances. Until Lord Howland's unexpected telephone call, Exodus had held around

dozen raves on Tavistock's land since the Collective began in 1992.

Several weeks after the large scale but fruitless police operation, the Marquess of Tavistock's son, Lord Howland, contacted Exodus with an offer to loan the Collective corners of his father's 13,000 acre Bedfordshire estate. In July, three members of Exodus duly toured Tavistock's estate in the company of Lord Howland, viewing prospective corners of the estate for potential dance events. They have yet to agree a suitable site but according to both parties, the negotiations are unusually amicable. Lord Howland visited the annual 'Free the Spirit' free festival on Exodus's Long Meadow Community Free Farm over August bank holiday weekend. This year's festival was the third held at the farm. Due to the increasing size of the event and the fact that Exodus's farm is to converted to permaculture beds this year mean next year's 'Free the Spirit' will have to take place elsewhere. Talks with Lord Howland are also in progress over suitable sites for this event.

Photo: Lord Howland visits Free The Spirit Festival. By Ian Hunter.

WESTERN WASTE FUELS EASTERN EXPLOSION

Japan receives UK nuclear fuel a week before worst nuclear power accident.

A consignment of nuclear fuel produced at Sellafield in Cumbria finally completed it's controversial 20,000 mile sea-journey to Japan just one week before the worst nuclear accident in Japanese history. The 32 MOX fuel units - enough to make 60 atomic bombs - were transported on a lightly armed cargo ship from the UK to the Fukushima Nuclear plant on Japan's pacific coast. It was accompanied by a second cargo vessel carrying MOX units produced in France.

Braving high winds and driving rain, Japanese anti-nuclear protestors gathered at Fukushima harbour for the arrival of the uranium/reprocessed plutonium fuel, whilst a helicopter and dinghies from Greenpeace's "MV Artic Sunrise" played cat and mouse with Japanese Maritime Safety Command's out at sea. The protests was further inflamed by the sudden revelation and subsequent admission by British Nuclear Fuels Ltd that they had faked 22 nuclear safety checks on more MOX fuel units destined for Japan at a future date. Greenpeace spearheaded the international protest campaign against the shipment, rais-

ing considerable public awareness about a highly dangerous cargo, relatively undefended against piracy or accident. The consignment was the first of up to 80 nuclear shipments which are due to be made from the UK to Japan over the next ten years.

A survey commissioned by Japan's Prime Ministers Office and published in August, revealed two thirds of the Japanese population were concerned at the possibility of nuclear accidents in the country. One month after the survey and just one week after the arrival of the Sellafield manufactured MOX units, an uncontrolled chain reaction at the Tokaimura nuclear reprocessing plant 70 miles north of Tokyo blew the roof off. The accident was graded as level four contamination by the International Atomic Energy Assessment, making it the worst nuclear accident in the world since Chernobyl (Chernobyl was graded seven, Long Island graded five).

A communique from one of SQUALL's photographers who was aboard the Greenpeace ship as the nuclear fuel was docking at Fukushima Nuclear Power plant is on page 12.

HAVE YOU BEEN FFRAMED

Police forces throughout the UK have been passed a photobank of people wanted by police in connection with the J18 Carnival Against Capitalism protest in London's Square Mile. The move comes as part of Operation Enterprise, a post protest attempt by City of London police to recover some of their dented public image. Following the June 18 event, high level criticism from the likes of Eddie George (Governor of the Bank of England) over the police's failure to protect one of the world's busiest financial districts from anti-capitalists led to calls for the City of London force to be amalgamated with the Metropolitan Police. Anyone keen to know whether they are on the wanted list should check out 72 photographs posted on the net at www.cityoflondon.gov.uk.

DECKS APPEAL

The pair of Technics 1210 vinyl decks which have facilitated free party conscious edutainment at SQUALL events for over two years were stolen from the SQUALL van in June. We are currently having to borrow a set. A second hand replacement pair weighs in at £550.

Please help by sending donations to Decks Appeal, SQUALL.
PO Box 8959, London N19 5HW.
Cheques payable to SQUALL.

FEDS 'FESS UP TO FLAMING FANATICS

FBI admit pyrotechnics at Waco

Six years after the Branch Davidian compound at Waco, Texas was burnt to the ground with the loss of eighty lives, the FBI have admitted they did after all throw fire flammable tear-gas canisters at the building. The US government have always maintained that the occupants of compound had set fire to the building themselves, an official line now considerably weakened by the belated discovery of a video tape showing an FBI boss giving permission for at least two pyrotechnic gas canisters to be fired into the compound. The FBI had previously denied they had used any incendiary devices but were forced into admitting they had mislead the public when the video was released in September.

The Exodus Story

**Rhythmic rebels
with a cause.**

**A two part musical
radio documentary
charting the history of
Luton's irrepressible
rhythmic revolutionaries.**

C60 chrome cassette available for
£3 plus 60p from Exodus Story.

**SQUALL. PO Box 8959,
London N19 5HW.**

Cheques payable to SQUALL.

COPPER CHOPPER HELPS HUNT STOPPERS

Hunt sabs prevent first Essex Mink Hunt

Around 50 activists drawn from six regional Hunt Saboteur groups successfully thwarted the first hunt meeting of the newly formed East Counties Mink Hounds in September. Members of groups from Essex, North London, East London, Cambridge, Croyden and Kent travelled to Essex in a collaborative effort to prevent the new hunt get started.

Mink hunting is an increasingly prevalent pursuit amongst the blood sports fraternity, accompanying hounds on foot whilst beaters walk ahead flushing out any wildlife along the banks.

Confrontations between Essex hunters and hunt sabs have been profuse over the last five years. Essex Police have particularly active in attempts to thwart the Hunt Sabs. Last year alone, Essex Police made two out of court settlements with maliciously prosecuted Hunt Sabs. The money has been used to fund further direct actions.

During the successful operation to prevent the East Counties Mink Hounds Hunt in September, one Hunt Sab was arrested for possession of a hunting whip by an Essex officer who had slipped and fallen into the river whilst running toward the activists. Police efforts to obtain convictions on this charge have never succeeded in the past and it is expected the charge will be dropped when the drenched Essex police has recovered his composure.

Tim Notech, a North London Hunt Sab and veteran of several Essex campaigns, told SQUALL: "The good thing about the police helicopter which Essex police always send out is that, if we can't find the hunt, we just go over to where the chopper is hovering. The noise of the thing scares the fuck out of any animals in the area anyway so the hunt can never find any furies to mutilate."

AORTA ATTACK

Ministerial confusion as Britain heads fast-food guzzler league

British people now eat more fast food than anyone else in Europe. according to a recent survey conducted by market analysts Mintel. Annual UK consumption of burgers and pizzas amounts to £2.7 billion says the report; topping the Germans on £2 billion, the French on £1.6 billion, the Spanish on £700 million and the restrained Italians on £310 million. More alarming still for the sclerotic British aorta is the fact that these figures do not include fish and chips.

In April, the Department of Health responded to rising obesity levels in the UK by announcing a new taxpayer-funded Healthy Schools Programme designed to encourage school children to have higher nutritional standards. However, government ministers are seemingly confused about whether to encourage or discourage fast-food use in children. Secretary of State for Trade and Industry,

Stephen Byers and new Labour MP, Hilary Benn, became the latest political endorsees of fast food when they appeared before press cameras in June, serving McDonald's happy meals to customers in Leeds. Their fast food endorsements followed similar media stunts by Tony Blair (Coventry McDonald's), Margaret Thatcher and Michael Portillo (London McDonald's) As Lord Justice Pill said whilst issuing his verdict on the McLibel appeal case in May: "It was true to say that McDonald's exploit children by using them as more susceptible subjects of advertising to pressurise their parents into going to McDonald's.....If one eats enough McDonald's food, one's diet may well become high in fat with the very real risk of heart disease."

McDonald's have an exclusive marketing association with Walt Disney which helps capture the loyalty of children. Both McDonald's and Burger King have announced they plan to open 200 new burger bars in the UK within the next two years.

GUIDELINES ON HERB HAILE CONTROVERSIAL

Judge ye not the rasta and the herb

Cannabis took a step further towards legal recognition as a sacred herb when an advice book for judges was published by the Lord Chancellor's department at the end of September. The Equal Treatment Bench Book was distributed to the British judiciary in an attempt to keep them up to date with ethnic and religious minorities and so prevent embarrassing racist statements slipping out the mouths of the less with-it judges. Amongst a list of 'get with-it' advice, the new guide book acknowledges the legitimacy of Rastafarianism and further informs judges that a Rasta's use of Cannabis is sacramental. The lord chancellor, Lord Irwin, has 'disciplined' five judges for offensive racial comments since taking office in May 1997. The guide book also details research carried out in 1992 revealing that black defendants had a higher chance of receiving an immediate custodial sentence than a white person especially in cases where judges had more discretion.

SQUOTES

"We want to encourage debate on this issue and should examine the evidence that has existed for a long time, rather than people leaping to prejudice. There is much more damage done by smoking and alcohol than by cannabis. That is the issue."

Dr George Venters -
Chairman of the British Medical Association's Scottish Committee for Public Health.



SELECT COMMITTEE SLAMS SECRET SOCIETY

Freemasons drag heels on public declaration.



The Home Affairs Select Committee has strongly criticised the United Grand Lodge of Freemasonry for being unco-operative with a parliamentary examination on the influence of masonry on public life.

In its 2nd report, published in May 1999, the Committee states: "We particularly regret that it was only possible for this Committee to obtain the co-operation of the Grand Lodge by compulsion. We did not do so lightly, but only after being faced with months of prevarication and obfuscation."

The Select Committee had asked the United Grand Lodge - representing 350,000 exclusively male UK freemasons - to provide a list of its members involved in infamous cases of corruption including that involving the West Midlands Serious Crime Squad (disbanded 1989). According to the Committee's

2nd report published in May: "The West Midlands Crime Squad was arguably the most complained about unit in what was the most complained about police force in the country." However, when Committee chairman, Chris Mullins MP provided the Grand Lodge with a list of those involved, the Grand Lodge dragged its heels on confirming their masonic status. The Committee report notes: "We regret that it has taken the Grand Lodge five attempts to arrive at a definitive - if it is definitive - list of masons in the Serious Crime Squad." Doubts over the accuracy of the Grand Lodge's reluctantly given information were further exacerbated when the Committee discovered that one of the names not confirmed by the United Lodge was subsequently discovered by the Committee's chairman to be a mason.

The Select Committee's first report, published in 1997, called for a publicly available register of all masons working in the police and judicial system. Home Secretary, Jack Straw, accepted the Committee's recommendation but only confirmed a voluntary declaration scheme which has since proven to be a farce. Ernie Hanrahan, head of the Police Federation representing rank and file police officers, has already publicly urged his members not to co-operate.

From the scant compliance with voluntary questionnaires, the Select Committee estimates that between 5-10% of professional judiciary (judges etc), 5-20% of magistrates, and as much as 48% of the Crown Prosecution Service are masons. There are no breakdowns for the police as yet.

The Select Committee report concludes: "Progress has been slow, particularly with the police.....We call on the government to speed up the process of establishing the registers of masonic status among the police and other parts of the criminal justice system, and to announce a firm timetable for completion of the exercise..... Additionally the names of all those who have failed to indicate whether or not they are masons should be published; such persons should not be allowed to exempt themselves entirely from the process simply by declining to co-operate."



**United Grand Lodge, London, Freemason's HQ.
Photos by Nick Cobbing.**

Responding to indications from Jack Straw that the final register of names might be limited in its public accessibility, the Select Committee also states: "In the absence of any compelling reason to the contrary, we support full public access....Finally we look forward to the extension of such disclosure into other

areas of public life such as local authorities and Parliament."

Full background investigative articles on Freemasonry and the Home Affairs Select Committee investigation are available in the SQUALL website features section.

FRONTLINE COMMUNIQUE

Japanese Maritime Safety Commandos were briefed to expect terrorists. Instead they were faced with Greenpeace's MV Arctic Sunrise and a team determined not to let British-made nuclear fuel dock in Japan without a fuss. After four weeks at sea, photographer **Nick Cobbing** jumped into a Greenpeace dinghy for the final cat and mouse with the Japanese riot squad. He sent this e-mail by ISDN satellite phone from aboard the MV Arctic Sunrise



At last stuff is happening - Woken at 3.30am yesterday morning by Dave, the action coordinator, asked to get shit together and be ready to go, arrive on deck half dressed with cameras. Greeted by sight of nine coastguard ships and motor-launches surrounding us with searchlights bouncing in all directions through the darkness, loads of engine noise and lights flashing on the horizon. Bit like an eviction but on the water and more scary.

Can see riot police behind shields on the bows of all the nearest ones, shouting inaudible stuff up at us through a loud hailer. Some of them are right up close to the ship, it's clear that they

are trying to stop us from reaching the harbour where it's confirmed the plutonium ships are going to dock.

A coordinator says that me and the video guy are first to go in the water in an inflatable with him as planned, looks like we're gonna get nicked as soon as we hit the water.

For some reason, I'll never know why, we get into the water and away to the harbour without them jumping on us. They chase us around and drive in front of

us blocking our path whenever we try to cut through, meanwhile the two other boats are launched on the other side taking four people with flags and stuff towards the Mox ship that is now approaching the harbour. The captain keeps the Sunrise going in spite of the protestations of the authorities swarming around us. It's starting to get light, but barely enough to take decent pictures. Boats and helicopters everywhere.

Three or Four boats concentrate on us, probably 'cos they can see that we've got cameras, making it impossible to get through their line, they come up close as if trying to grab us but don't seem to know what they are doing. They seem



Photos: Greenpeace/Cobbing

surprised that we ignore their orders to stop.

This chase continues for half an hour and we eventually get hoisted up the 20ft or so to safety, the others safely back on board too after reaching the P. Teal and buzzing around below it's bows with 'Stop Plu. flags', enough for pictures.

Then darkroom, chemicals, scanning, sending stuff out whilst the

ship heads away from the port towards international waters. locked in our 'media' container in the hold, expecting a knock on the door as we get boarded by the coastguard police who are still outside asking the ship to stop.

The other TV/Stills crew in our helicopter got pics of the smaller inflatables right up near the Pacific Teal as it was docking in front of the power station.

We sent back a reasonable set of pics, a couple of mine and several that the other guy took from the helicopter.

They were syndicated via Reuters, AFP, AP internationally and some of them should be up on the website if you get time to look GPI picdesk and the GPI nuclear site.

Everyone is made up both here and back in Amsterdam, seems it was a big success media wise, the campaigner is over the moon, says it was one of the most successful actions he's ever seen.

JUXTAPOSING

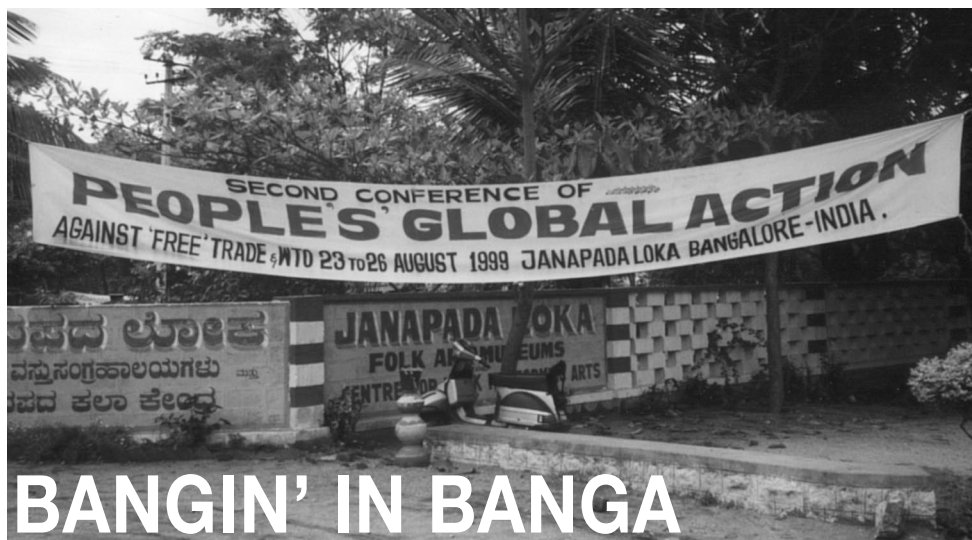
"Ask the good people of Newbury. Having lived in congestion hell for years, the recent opening of the much-maligned by-pass there solved their pollution and congestion problem overnight."

Lord Hanson. Sunday Business 18/7/99

with

"It can be seen that there is no consistent pattern of traffic change over the Newbury network as a whole. In many cases local factors are responsible for discrete changes to traffic flows, with the by-pass and pedestrianisation [of Newbury town centre] only having a marginal influence in some cases."

West Berkshire Council Report on affects of By-pass pub. July 1999



BANGIN' IN BANGA

*With transnational corporations and the World Trade Organisation becoming ever more strategic in their drive to facilitate market dominance, the official line is "resistance is futile". However, a network of activists has now evolved to help co-ordinate resistance movements across the world. **Jon Towne** reports on the triumphs, tribulations and remarkable encounters resulting from the second conference of People's Global Action.*

The hosts for this year's People's Global Action (PGA) encounter were India's mighty Karnataka State Farmers Association; the so-called 'laughing arsonists' renowned for the recent torching of genetically modified test sites, the dismantling of a local office belonging to seed giant Cargill and the burning down of a KFC outlet in India. Our host's credentials were definitely in tact.

The conference was called in the main to plan actions against the looming 'millenium round' talks of the World Trade Organisation in Seattle from November 29th to December 3rd 1999. PGA distinguishes itself from the predominantly reformist NGO agenda on the WTO, by calling for its death, or - as they say in India - 'Kill the WTO before it kills us'.

Springing from the Zapatista-inspired 'Encuentro' held in Spain in 1997, PGA was really christened at a huge, chaotic and fan-

tastically inspiring conference in Geneva in February 1998, where 400 or so activists from a huge variety of movements and backgrounds came together to "turn the fingers of resistance into a fist". It was in Geneva that the key PGA 'hallmarks' were formulated. Key amongst these is a call to direct action with a non-hierarchical structure, no office, no employees and no HQ; relying instead on regional 'convenors' who would attempt to facilitate activity in their respective areas. With regional convenors changing at every conference, the new Western European convenor following this conference is the Milan 'branch' of the Zapatista solidarity movement 'Ya Basta'. London RTS - who were the previous Western European convenors - will form part of a support network who'll attempt to make Ya Basta's job a little less daunting. The other regions are Eastern

Europe, Africa, Latin America, North America, South-East Asia and the Pacific Rim (Australasia & the Far East.) Activists in the Middle East have been hard to tap into, and the region represents one of the holes in the latticework of resistance.

An immediate result of the Geneva conference were the worldwide actions which took place in May 1998, with hundreds of thousands on the streets from Hyderabad in India to Brazil, not to mention a Global Street Party which found a home in over 20 countries. In the UK this took the form of a street party at the Bullring in Birmingham during the G8 summit.. And it was the Global Street Party which provided the template for the autonomous delights of June 18th this year.

In a conference about a quarter of the size of Geneva, 100 people from over 25 countries as diverse as Nicaragua and Indonesia gathered for the four day conference (six days if you included roundtable discussions, and two weeks including 'exposure trips' to some very inspiring local struggles). Western Europe, South Asia and Latin America were most strongly represented, with Africa and Eastern Europe sadly absent. (The Chikoko Movement of Nigeria, who pulled off a massive demonstration of over 50,000 people on June 18th, had hoped to come but had to pull out at the last minute due to administrative problems in Bangalore.)

The general consensus of the group was that while there had been impressive worldwide actions both in May 1998 and on June 18th earlier this year, these were spectacular which hadn't been followed up with a concerted bout of global networking and communication.

Many who went to Bangalore might well argue that the really useful networking stuff took place over plates of coconut curry or



late into the night whilst nursing preciously acquired bottles of beer. This rendered the 'plenary' discussions as empty in comparison, with lasting cross-border/ocean relationships being formed informally and fused by friendship. But interminable plenary sessions have their uses. After all, a certain amount of bureaucratic chat had to take place, and it certainly sent a shiver down the spine of this correspondent to hear the angry and eloquent speech to all the gathered tribes of resistance of an Indian activist pledging all in the battle against the hugely destructive Narmada River dam project.

The shadow of this extraordinarily inspiring campaign to save local lives and villages from the western-backed dam was ever-present during the week. Many anti-dam activists were unable to be present because of their promise to stay in their villages even as the water level rose to waist height and threatened to take their lives. Many European activists travelled to the soon-to-be-submerged valley either before or after the conference, some no doubt returning to these shores in the early autumn with a strong desire to act in solidarity with the Adivasis (indigenous people) of the region.

After a few sessions were lost to rain and wild local folk drummers, a determined desire to get things sorted out emerged, especially with the diminishing amount of time available.

There will be a regular bulletin, customised to suit each region, and a more dynamic, useful and regularly updated website. There was strong support for a move away from elitist e-communication, a view especially vehement in India, where such resources are thin on the ground and only available to those often at the top of steep hierarchies. The next conference was pencilled in for 2001 in Latin America.

The final vibe of the conference was positive, with plenty of energy set aside to make November 30th a powerful global day of action against the WTO (even if the UK contingent warned that their input wouldn't be on the scale of J18.) There was widespread support for decentralised actions a la J18, with more of a thumbs down for centralised affairs like the Inter-Continental Caravan. (Having said that, there are plans for a much smaller North American caravan leading up to Seattle, starting fairly soon.) There was also growing enthusiasm for a big day out on May

1st 2000 in a 'Reclaim Mayday' style. One final heartening sight: the Vice-President of the Karnataka State Farmer's Association (KRRS) leaving Bangalore for a 12 hour bus ride to a marathon of weddings with only his green plastic PGA wallet containing the SchNEWS Survival Handbook for company.

Full account at www.squall.co.uk
 More about PGA, e-mail: info@agp.org
 or e-mail new Western European convenors at patham@iol.it
 or contact the new PGA secretariat: Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW), 377 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada;
dbleakney@cupw-sttp.org (
 There are plans for a UK PGA get-together sometime in October, possibly in London.
 Contact RTS for more details:
 0171 281 4621; rts@gn.apc.org
 PO Box 9656, London N4 4JY.

SQUOTES

"They haven't got a fucking clue. They never have done. I used to go to these awful boring meetings at Labour party headquarters when we were doing Red Wedge and just sit there at this big King Arthur table and just talk shit really. I don't know if any of them ever were youths, were they? They were born middle-aged. We need a few more drug-takers, party goers and ravers in there. Maybe in another 10 or 20 years time you'll get this generation through. But most of them now seem to come from that Oxbridge background. All the people I used to meet were all public school-boys. It's fucking wrong."

Paul Weller - Musician.

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DEATH INC: WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY FOR THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

*Despite government rhetoric suggesting more stringent controls over British arms sales, MoD military research may soon be privatised. **Si Mitchell** delves behind the scenes to expose moves towards even greater unaccountability for the UK arms industry. Photos from CAAT.*

The shipments of assault rifles, cluster bombs and electric shock batons are already winging their way to Angola, Turkey and both sides of the India/Pakistan border dispute. The Defence Systems Equipment International (DSEI) arms fair in September - the largest government-backed arms fair on British soil - has done its business despite the 400 tenacious anti-arms trade activists who blocked the gates.

The DSEI arms fair was hosted by the Defence Evaluation Research Agency (DERA), the research and development arm of the Ministry of Defence. It is DERA's responsibility to develop new and ever more marketable weapons to maintain Britain's position as the world's second largest arms dealer. It presently fulfils this function with an annual budget of £2.1 billion. Though DERA's future has been

under discussion for some years now we haven't heard much about it, primarily because the UK government wants to begin privatising its operation.

Britain's expenditure on military research and development (R&D) far outstrips any civil research. In 1995 it took 38.9 per cent of the total government's R&D budget; industrial development receiving 9.6 per cent, health 7.6 per cent and environmental protection just 2.3 per cent. DERA employs 12,000 of the keenest scientific and engineering minds in the country. This elite workforce is given by far and away the best budget in the land and told to invent weapons technology.

The proposal on the table since mid 1997 is the creation of a Public Private Partnership (PPP), where a significant part of the agency would be sold into private hands. The exact form



of the PPP is undecided, or even whether it will go through at all, but the big arms companies are salivating at the prospect of cornering the largest defence research agency in Europe. "It will make DERA more vital, commercial and efficient," says DERA's Helen Craven.

DERA's 'Agency' status means it is officially classed as a 'trading fund' That is they "sell" their research to the MoD and other government departments and are not therefore officially subsidised by the MoD. The ninety per cent of their work carried out for the MoD, would most likely continue post sell off, resulting in taxpayers effectively subsidising a private corporation whose sole purpose is to make money for its shareholders from the production of weapons. Opposition has come in various forms. The Pentagon has voiced concerns over joint research carried out between the British and US militaries falling into private hands whilst the Association of Independent Research Organisations has described the plan as "unworkable". According to Fiona Draper, from the Institute of Professional Management Specialists (IPMS), DERA's leading trade union, the majority of the Agency's workforce are also opposed to the PPP plan.

"DERA has to advise the MoD on the usefulness of equipment. If they themselves are owned by a company who had an interest in manufacturing that equipment, they may no longer be in a position to give totally impartial advice." Draper also points out that, as a public body, DERA is accountable to Parliament and through Parliament to the public. As

a private company, this would no longer be the case.

When asked what control the government could maintain over who owns a private DERA, the MoD's Marcus Deville dismissed the danger of military technology falling into the hands of less than ethical regimes because, he says, the new organisation "would still be subject to Strategic Export Controls". However, many arms traders have become quite adept at circumventing these controls, and the growing tide of 'free trade', corporate protecting, legislation such as GATT, NAFTA and the soon to be reappearing Multilateral Agreement on Investment, is likely to mean any Government veto over the dealings of the proposed conglomerate would be little at best.

It is worth noting here that when SQUALL approached Deville for a press pass for the DSEI arms fair, his response was effectively: Sorry but the exhibition is being run by a private company and we don't have any say over who gets allowed in or not. It appears the MoD claim to 'have control' when it suits them, but 'have none' when it doesn't. Even the partial privatisation of DERA would increase the ability of the UK government to avoid ethical embarrassment by proclaiming: "We have none."

*** The annual COPEX arms fair will take place 2-4 November at Sandown Park, Esher. Campaign Against the Arms Trade are coordinating protests (including Non Violent Direct Action) check their web-site at www.real-world.org.uk/caat or ring: 0171 281 0297.**

Information



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