



# BOMBAY MIX

**"This forum will blow up the myth that there is no alternative. It will also explode the myth that this model of globalisation has universal acceptance." - Varada Rajan, Indian trade union leader.**

It was the sort of conference where you couldn't grab yourself a McDonalds and Coke or use a computer run by Microsoft. But the 100,000 people from 132 different countries representing over two and a half thousand different organizations didn't seem to mind. For this was the 4th World Social Forum (WSF) which took place at Mumbai (formerly Bombay), India, and ended on Wednesday. The WSF is the grassroots answer to the annual World Economic Forum. Western politicians, corporate bigwigs and other power brokers schmooze it up at the Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, protected from protestors by thousands of riot cops, while the Social Forum brings activist groups together to develop alternatives to the economic policies pursued by wealthy nations.

It's the first time that the WSF has been held outside Porto Alegre, Brazil, in a place described as "the most hyper-capitalist, fast-paced city in India, a grimmer version of the Bladerunner megapolis." A Forum statement said Mumbai has borne the brunt of India's economic liberalisation policies with millions losing their jobs. Glitzy shopping centres have replaced mills and factories that have been torn down over the last decade. Despite the 'benefits' of such globalisation, 300 million Indians subsist on less than a dollar a day, many living in roadside shantytowns similar to the ones outside the Forum conference grounds. 100 million Indian families live without domestic water and hundreds of thousands of children work in cottonseed production and sweatshops. The WSF catered for these children with a special conference of 2,000 children's representatives.

India has become part of globalisation's 'race to the bottom' in which corporations move around the globe looking for the lowest paid workforces. Jobs from America and Europe's call centres are being relocated here and, according to Business Week, there may now be more IT engineers in Bangalore than in the Silicon Valley. That is why the American Jobs with Justice delegation met with their Indian counterparts to organise against the new

tech outsourcing. Some 50,000 young Indians are employed in call centres in Mumbai. Stress and physiological problems are rampant among these workers, who earn a mere \$160 per month on all-night shifts.

There was also a strong Dalit presence at WSF. Dalits are India's untouchables. They make up 25% of the country's population and are usually condemned to the most boring and menial work. "This gathering gives me hope that we will be able to live our lives in dignity and peace someday," said Vidi Thillana, a Dalit woman attending the forum. "It might not happen in my lifetime, but if we continue to stand in solidarity and gain inspiration from everyone else, my children will have the opportunities that I am fighting for."

## CAN-CAN'T

The WSF is also about what one delegate called "an international alliance to battle the multinationals." Take last Sunday, when over 500 protestors marched under the banner of the People's Forum against Coca-Cola to condemn the company's operations in India. Three communities in India - Plachimada in Kerala, Wada in Maharashtra and Mehdiganj in Uttar Pradesh - are experiencing severe water shortages as a result of Coca-Cola's mining of common groundwater resources around its factories; 150 residents who live in these villages joined the rally. The Dalits and indigenous peoples are playing a key role in leading protests. Unlike top-down activism, their campaigns are primarily village-organised, with national globalisation activists providing access to press and linkages with other affected villages. "Coca-Cola's actions are symbolic of the vulgar arrogance and criminal power of corporations that are looting people of their basic needs, water in this case," said Medha Patkar, coordinator of the National Alliance of People's Movements. But people are fighting back. Last April Coca-Cola was targeted for boycott in protest against the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. As a result of that protest, sales dropped 50 percent in the state of Kerala and elsewhere.

In the Orissa region it's bauxite (aluminium ore) that the corporations are looting. The region has millions of tonnes of the stuff which is used for making missiles, bombs, planes, food packaging and, of course, Coke cans. For the past

## CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

**For having a beard!**

A journalist working in Baghdad was arrested last week for looking like an "Israeli" by Iraqi police and a "terrorist" by the US authorities! He was then taken to a police station at gunpoint, chucked in a cell, and held over night. The next day, a US appointed lawyer decided there was no evidence of any wrongdoing, but the man was still sent to see a judge, just in case he could still "be accused of anything".

[www.wildfirejo.org.uk](http://www.wildfirejo.org.uk)

decade, the people of Kashipur have been resisting, using tactics such as road blockades and sabotage, to stop one of these mines being built on their land. In December 2000, the protests came to a head when three people were killed. A Commission set up to look into the deaths published its report last weekend blaming the police. But no recommendations to prosecute were made and instead the report stated that the mine should go ahead because it would not have an adverse effect on the environment. As one of the tribal groups pointed out, "They use 'development' as a pretext to hide their real intentions. If any one is really interested in our development, why are they not proposing a sustainable package to improve our agriculture, our health, our education and our forest resources? What they are trying to promote in the name of development is in fact a manipulation, which would benefit multinational companies. The Dalits and tribals have been destined to pay a price, as if they have taken birth just to be sacrificed at the altar of modern development."

The WSF isn't of course without its problems or critics. One complaint is that some of the groups involved are just papering over the cracks. Even those inside the halls voice disquiet. Indian author Arundhati Roy told the crowds, "It is no good just saying jeetenge, bhai jeetenge ['we will win, we will win']. It is time we did something."

The problem is not just getting people to listen - but to make sure that rather than trusting leaders who once they get in power forget all their good words, we instead work together in our communities to take control together.

\* For more on the WSF see: [www.india.indymedia.org](http://www.india.indymedia.org)

\* The Kashipur struggle [www.saanet.org/kashipur](http://www.saanet.org/kashipur)

\* For background information on Coca-Cola [www.IndiaResource.org](http://www.IndiaResource.org)  
[www.colombiasolidarity.co.uk](http://www.colombiasolidarity.co.uk)

## Flushed down the System

Not content with simply hassling people on the dole into accepting crap jobs, Neo-Labour have now decided to target single parents and the disabled. The problem you see is that, according to the government, there are too many "economically inactive" people in the country who are far too busy bringing up children and being ill. How dare they!!

It used to be the case that, as a single parent or recipient of sickness benefit, you could choose to see an advisor at the Jobcentre for help with finding work, but they couldn't force you to take any old job or go on a training course. Now, with the merging of Jobcentres and Department of Social Security Offices into Jobcentre Plus, there will be the introduction of "work focussed interviews" for single parents and the disabled. Attendance at these interviews is compulsory and if you don't attend you will lose 20% of your benefit. The good news is that although you have to talk about your situation, work history and training etc, you still can't actually be forced to take a job or go on training schemes.

The bad news, however, is that by 2006, the situation will be much worse. A 'pilot' scheme in which job applications and training scheme attendance can be enforced is currently running in six areas and will eventually be extended to the whole country. This "Pathways to Work" Scheme will force claimants into six mandatory interviews, once a month, starting from week 8 of your claim.

And while the government talks about helping people to "use their skills to find a job with a local employer", there won't actually be any more money for training, so if you're a skilled tradesperson who can't do your job anymore because of an injury, you can just fuck off and work in a call-centre for peanuts (or at least that was until they were all transferred to India).

For more information about these changes, get a copy of "Missing Links". Send an SAE or stamps for each issue to: AwOL, c/o BHUWC, 4 Crestway Parade, Brighton, BN1 7BL.

Meetings in Brighton for claimants, single parents, the unemployed and all system sufferers, 5.30pm, 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month, Cowley Club, 12 London Road.

## Inside SchNEWS

In Russia the Federal Security Service (FSB, formerly the KGB) have been harassing Krasnodar "Autonomous Action" activists. The involvement of the FSB is incredibly fishy as they have previously tried to jail many anarchists accusing them of terrorism. FSB agents have been present in the court case where two anarchists were accused with assaulting the director of the press-service of Kuban oil company "Rosneft" Mr. Dolgov. The FSB have been in court leaning on the judge and persuading him to continue with the case even though Mr Dolgov had asked for the case to be dropped. It has resulted in a six month prison sentence for Dmitry Ryabinin and a one year corrective order for Lev Sokolov. More details: [www.avtonom.org/eng](http://www.avtonom.org/eng)

Marshalls PLC (owners of Stancliff Stone quarry company) won repossession of the **Nine Ladies site** in court yesterday. They can begin eviction as soon as they get their warrant, which could be in as little as 24 hours. Their climbers and security crews are ready to move in. This information has come direct from site. **People are needed on site NOW!!** Please start your phone trees. Site number – for text messages only 0700 5942212

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## SchNEWS in brief

**Martin Shaw**, the climber injured by Swiss police at the G8 summit in Evian last June, is on a video and speaking tour: 27th Nottingham, 28th Derby, 29th Manchester, Feb 3rd Sheffield, 4th Leeds EF!, 5th Bradford Uni. Call Martin 07762 252932 for more details \*\* **Sussex Action For Peace** meeting to organise for the anniversary of the start of the Iraq War. Everyone welcome. Community Base South Wing, 113 Queens Road, Brighton. 4.30pm, Sat 31, [mail@safp.org.uk](mailto:mail@safp.org.uk) \*\* **Bristol Indymedia** are showing 'Fourth World War' plus some shorter community films on Monday (26) at Cube Cinema, 7.30pm £3/2 <http://bristol.indymedia.org> \*\* **Zapatista Anniversary** screening next Thursday (29) at the Other Cinema, 11 Rupert Street, London W1 020 7437 0757 £7/5 \*\* The '**Hijacking Green Energy**' workshop information is now online at [www.fraw.org.uk/rangers/frwe/19/index.shtml](http://www.fraw.org.uk/rangers/frwe/19/index.shtml) \*\* Next weekend (30-31) is the **European Days of Action against Refugee Detention and for Migrant Rights**. In the UK, actions are happening in London, Liverpool, Oxford and Lindholme Detention Centre. 0121 554 6947 [www.ncadc.org.uk](http://www.ncadc.org.uk) \*\* **A hunt sab has been deliberately run down** by a huntsman in Sussex and was taken to hospital unconscious with severe bruising. The police arrested the huntsman. 0845 4500727 [www.huntsabs.org.uk](http://www.huntsabs.org.uk) \*\* **Gill Emerson**, who was arrested for sitting on a wall and had her nose broken by police during Prince Big Ear's visit to Gravesend (SchNEWS 178), has five years later been awarded £3,500 in damages and £100,000 legal costs. Nice one, shame it took so long. \*\* A man who was arrested at protests against the **DSEi arms fair** last year has been found not guilty of aggravated trespass. He was arrested for sitting and meditating on the raised footbridge entrance to the Excel centre. The judges ruled that someone sitting quietly could not be "aggravating" and criticised the police for handcuffing him! More police payouts on the way... \*\* If you fancy getting involved in a bit of **street theatre** exposing the reality of **Guantanamo Bay and the War on Terror**, Romany Blythe is holding workshops on Wednesday evenings in London, 07866 474408 [RomanyRomany@Hotmail.com](mailto:RomanyRomany@Hotmail.com) \*\* **The Truth and Justice Campaign** are holding a meeting – 'Remembering 1984: India's Hidden Genocide'. It's on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb 6pm at Hounslow Singh Sabha Gurdwara, Alice Way, off Hanworth Road [www.hrw.org/reports/2002/india](http://www.hrw.org/reports/2002/india) \*\* **The Bar End protest camp** near Winchester has called it a day. The protestors were trying to stop the council building a park and ride scheme on meadowland set aside by the Conservative government to compensate for the destruction of Twyford Down. The protestors have added £760,000 to the cost of the £3.5m park and ride scheme, but, unfortunately, have not stopped yet another beautiful site being covered by concrete. \*\* Prepare for the **Battle of Weymouth** following Dept of Transport approval of a bypass that will cut through the ancient woodland Two Mile Coppice and destroy the breeding grounds of bats and voles. [www.roadalert.org.uk](http://www.roadalert.org.uk) \*\* Following the '**Battle of Bulkington**' last week (SchNEWS 437), in which a Traveller community near Coventry fought off eviction, another site has sent calls for help to save their homes at Meadowlands Caravan Park, Cranham Rd, Little Waltham (near A130). Travellers from Essex and Bedfordshire have already agreed to help resist the eviction but more support is needed. Get to the site this Sunday (25) and stay overnight. Call 07721081000 for transport from Chelmsford station. To be added to an alert phone tree please email [nooneisillegal2003@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nooneisillegal2003@yahoo.co.uk)

## PERCY AND PERKY

The Canadian Supreme Court is deciding on a case concerning patents, genetic contamination, Monsanto and 73 year-old farmer Percy Schmeiser (SchNEWS 300). Percy's home-grown canola (rapeseed) was contaminated by Monsanto's own genetically modified rapeseed. Monsanto then had the cheek to accuse him of stealing it.

Other farmers whose land have been contaminated by wind born pollen, which spreads up to 16 miles per plant, have also been forced to pay Monsanto for the honour. Percy's costs so far are \$370,000 and judgement is not expected for several months. [www.percyschmeiser.com](http://www.percyschmeiser.com)

## Positive SchNEWS

Fancy a Seedy Sunday in Brighton? Then do your bit for guerrilla gardening and get along to a community seed swap next Sunday (1 February). The UK has lost 97% of its vegetable varieties in the past 100 years and just three corporations now control a quarter of the world's entire seed market. As well as the seed swap there will be talks on everything from supermarkets to saving your own seeds, organic seed potatoes on sale, community gardening groups to chat too, seed doctors, and a café, bar and crêche. All this for £1 at the Old Market, Upper Market St., Hove. 10am – 5pm. Programmes available around town or check out [www.seedysunday.org](http://www.seedysunday.org)

\* There's also a Seedy Sunday on the same day at Tapeley Park, Instow, Nr Bideford, Devon. 01237 424029 <http://seedswap.mysite.freemove.com/>

## NUKED OUT?

Israeli whistleblower Mordechai Vanunu has been imprisoned since 1986. His crime? Revealing to the world the existence of Israeli nuclear weapons. Israel had illegally created more than 200 nuclear warheads at its Dimona centre. Soon after the story broke, Mordechai was kidnapped by Mossad in Rome, smuggled to Israel, and convicted of treason, espionage and revealing state secrets. The campaign to free him expects him to be released on April 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Weapons of Mass Destruction, like nukes, exist in many dodgy regimes such as Britain, the US, and Israel. So while Iraq gets bombed, Libya gets to cut a deal for tourist dollars, and Israel gets mega-bucks and gets told to keep schtum about its military programme.

For more on the Campaign to Free Vanunu and for a Nuclear-Free Middle East 020 7378 9324 [www.vanunu.freemove.co.uk/](http://www.vanunu.freemove.co.uk/)

## ...and finally...

And the prize for the most counter productive idea of the year goes to... Slough Council. They are about to hold an anti-litter competition in their town. And what's the matter with that we hear you ask? Well nothing, until you find out that the first prize is a years worth of McDonalds meals! Seeing as fast food wrappers constitute most of the litter on our streets, it's more than a bit ironic that the winner will have to dispose of another 1068 burger wrappers, chip bags and drink cartons – and that's not even counting all the disgusting "food" that comes along with the rubbish!

## Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers we don't just print any old Mumbai-Jumbo. Honest!