

WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER SOMETHIN FOR NOTHIN

Weekly

SchNEWS

Printed and Published in Brighton by Justice?



Friday 19th Feb 1999

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

Issue 201 Free/Donation

MODS AND SHOCKERS

"Parliament is being besieged by them. We have our own crop of genetically modified lobbyists." Alan Simpson, Labour MP

As SchNEWS went to press New Labour were stubbornly refusing to call a five year ban on genetically modified organisms (GMO) despite the outcry against 'frankensteins food' growing louder every day. Meanwhile the bio-technology companies must be holding their collective (three) heads in their hands. Last year the biggest and baddest of them all, Monsanto, spent one million pounds on an advertising campaign, yet support for gmo's plummeted; leaked memo's from the company confirmed that just when they thought it couldn't get any worse it did, again and again and now support for gmo's has hit rock bottom.

So what do you do when you've lost the argument with the public? You take the advice of PR company Burson Marsteller, the greenwash specialists, and fast spinning cog in the propaganda machine of the new world order. Yer good ol' neighbourhood perception managers advised EuropaBio- the main lobby organization for the European BioIndustry back at its first cake-divvying session in 1997- to leave any public debate to "those charged with public trust - politicians and regulators - to assure the public that biotech products are safe". Now SchNEWS would never accuse the party of the people from being hand in glove with big business; the following list is just an uncanny co-incidence.

David Hill, one of the top media men for the Labour Party until a year ago, now works for Monsanto's PR company Bell Pottinger.

Cathy McGlynn is also employed by Bell Pottinger after six years of working as an adviser to **Jack Cunningham Labour MP** (who chairs the Cabinet committee on biotechnology and says a ban on gmo's would "not be sensible")

Lord Sainsbury, the billionaire whose supermarket empire sells unlabelled genetically modified food with abandon is **New Labour Science Minister**

The genetic food company Zeneca has an executive on the Dept of Healths Committee on the **Toxicity of Chemicals in Food**. Their Chief Executive **Peter Doyle** is also on the **Department of Trade and Industry's** Biotechnology Research Council.

Novartis, a rival of Monsanto and Zeneca, sponsored last years **Labour conference**, paid for a training session to tell new MPs how to behave and has one of its ex-employees, **Nick**

Palmer, sitting in the Commons as the **New Labour MP for Broxtowe** (Novartis gives him £5,000 a year to be its Parlimanetary adviser) And surely it can't be true that **New Labour** offered genetic engineering companies including Monsanto, millions of pounds in inducements to expand their UK operations?

Or that companies involved in GM food have met government officials and ministers **81 times** since Labour came to power. An analysis by Friends of the Earth showed **Monsanto's executives** secured 17 audiences with ministers in Blair's first year in office - **one meeting every three weeks**.

Still, even if Labour do slap on a ban, Monsanto and Zeneca have threatened to appeal to the European Union, reckoning the British authorities have no power to halt genetic research if it has been given the go-ahead by the EU.

So it's back to Tory Blair who reckons the food is healthy, tasty, heaven sent dietary bliss and will settle for nothing else, for himself or his family. He must have been drooling when on Thursday activists delivered four tons of mutant soya beans to his doorstep.

"I wouldn't eat it willingly...It is commercially driven and we are like a guinea pig generation." Dr.Mae Wan Ho, reader in biology at the Open University.

So forget the arguments that we have been genetically modifying crops for thousands of years (look mate, sticking the anti-freeze gene from an arctic fish into strawberries is a whole different ball-game from natural breeding processes which take years); that GMO's are gonna feed the world (the World Health Organisation say we already produce one and a half times what the world needs to feed itself, it's just a shame that market forces mean the poor can't afford to buy it); that genetic crops are more environmentally friendly because they use less pesticides! (get a grip - they actually need more pesticides and disturb the balance of the soil. We haven't a clue what would happen if these crops cross-breed with wild-plants, produce superweeds, create novel toxins, eradicate the wildplants that our native insects and birds depend on to survive in our countryside. In fact all over the world when non-indigenous species have been introduced into new environments they have caused long term damage.)

The fact is that this massive bio-tech experiment

REBEL ALLIANCE
Tuesday 23rd February 7 pm upstairs at
the Hobgoblin Pub, London Rd
(please note date change!)

is the only avenue left if intensive farming systems are to have any chance of survival.

The SchNEWS alternative is small-scale organic farms which would wrestle food production away from the multinationals, would create jobs, would safeguard and improve the environment, would improve health, would put a greater percentage of the population back in touch with the land.

Just take a look at the million wetland rice farmers in the far east who have shifted to sustainable agriculture, where group-based farmer-field schools have enabled farmers to learn alternatives to pesticides whilst still increasing yields. While in the USA farmers are applying sustainable technologies so well they have higher yields than conventional farmers, without relying on toxic chemicals or the lame assurances of the gene age peddlers.

How many times do we have to say it, big business is only interested in profit, government is only interested in sucking up to big business.

The Monsanto Monitor

P.O. Box 92066, 1090 AB Amsterdam, Holland. Tel: +31-20-468 2616; Email: biotech@aseed.antenna.nl

Genitix Update,

PO Box 9656, London, N4 4JY Tel 0181 374 9516 - www.envirolink.org/orgs/shag/action.

GEN can also supply a list of genetic crop sites around the country

Nationwide Food Survey

Beacon House, Willow Walk, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 6UP

Produce 'How to Avoid Genetic Foods' www.wkweb4.cableinet.co.uk/pbrown/index

"The Unbottled Gene"

A week of evening talks in London from Monday 8th to Friday 12th March 1999

For details of venues ring 0171 254 6863 www.members.tripod.com/UL_Forum_on_GE.

Grow yer own!

Organic food is the only food that under EC legislation cannot contain gmo's. Unfortunately it's still pretty expensive, so why not start growing your own fruit and veg. Find out how by sending a SAE to the Henry Doubleday Research Association, Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry, CV8 3LG Tel 01203 303517

* On Wednesday Monsanto and Perryfields Holdings Ltd, were given a pathetic £17,000 fine plus costs after breaking safety regulations in Lincolnshire. A six-metre border designed to stop the escape of GM pollen was found to be inadequate. As pollen can travel for miles and bees don't know the difference the borders are a joke.

What's behind the recent wave of embassy occupations and demonstrations across the globe by Kurds, protesting at the arrest of the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Occalan? Much has been made of their 'illegal' tactics (invading foreign embassies etc) and the PKK's status as 'terrorists', but what hardships have motivated such resistance?

The Kurds are the biggest stateless people in the world, numbering 20 to 25 million spread over 200,000 square miles including parts of Iran, Iraq, Syria, but mainly Turkey, where they are a sizeable minority. The current war - going on since 1984 - in south east Turkey has seen over 22,000 Kurds killed, and forced 3 million to flee the country. Amnesty have reported numerous human rights abuses, and Turkey had the second highest expenditure in the world on conventional arms during 1992-96; over \$6 billion in 1996 alone. So why does the West turn a blind eye to these atrocities, whilst getting self-righteous about the problems in Kosova?

Could it be that Turkey has huge arms deals with the US and Germany, or that in 1997 the British company Vickers sent 800 tanks to the Turkish regime? The Campaign against the Arms Trade is calling for an arms embargo on Turkey and implementation of Robin Cooks' so-called 'ethical' foreign policy. But the West doesn't want to rock the boat in Turkey - they are an important NATO ally. Air bases in SE Turkey are used by British and US planes to police the no-fly zone over Iraq. Only last week Iraq's foreign minister Tariq Aziz met the Turkish authorities to ask them to stop the flights. They refused, but made it clear that they wanted a favour in return from the West. Could Occalan have been handed over as a thank you present? His capture is clouded in confusion. He was staying in the Greek embassy in Nairobi, and soon after leaving, mysteriously ended up in Turkish custody. It is unclear whether the Greek authorities deliberately handed him over. Greek and Turkey are old rivals, and the affair caused such an outcry in Greece that 3 cabinet ministers have had to resign. Nairobi, where Occalan was captured is also the main base for US intelligence in Africa (what a coincidence!).

As Schnews went to Press, the embassy siege in London had finished, and all the occupants had been arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Kurdish Information Centre: 10 Glasshouse Yd., London EC1A 4JN (0171 250 1315)

****Given that all schools and universities in Kosova have been closed since 1989 by the Serbian authorities, a group of students are doing a tour of the UK from the 15th to 27th March. They will be talking at universities in London, Derby, Leicester, Manchester, Bradford, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Can they talk at your University? Ring 0161 2260404 if interested.**

The Diggers Working Week

Between Saturday 20th - Sunday 28th March at a venue near Brighton All hands are needed to help out making, preparing and repairing - canvas structures (they've got an industrial sewing machine), portable compost toilets, kitchen resources, banners, defenses, etc. for a large scale land occupation. If you wanna get involved ring 0961 373 385.

Subscribe!

Keep SchNEWS FREE! Just send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 20 for next 20 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

There's a national demonstration to **defend asylum seekers** rights and protest at new legislation on asylum and immigration going through parliament. Saturday 27th February @ 12 noon, Embankment, London, (Embankment tube). Contact 101 Villa Rd., Birmingham, B21 1NH , 0121 5546947 email: cair@ncadc.demon.co.uk

****Citizen Smith** - a new squatted Sunday afternoon veggie café has opened in North West London at 161 College Road, Kensal Green, London NW 10. Contact 07931 980534 www.members.tripod.com//citizensmith/hello.***The latest set of **Corner House** briefings are available on subjects such as racism, conflict and globalisation. Contact Corner House, PO Box 3137, Station Rd., Sturminster Newton, Dorset, DT10 1YJ Tel 01258 473795 http://www.icaap.org/Cornerhouse *****WANTED-films!** Whether it's a 90 minute feature, pop video or 30 second experimental animation. Deadline is 26th February . Send to RIL Independent Film and Video Festival, 53 Carnew St., N.C.R., Dublin 7, Tel +353 1 8681466 email:FESTIVAL@EMC23.TP *****WinVisible** (women with visible and invisible disabilities) have a number of pamphlets and leaflets available. Send SAE for a list to Crossroads Women' Centre, 230a Kentish Town Rd., London, NW5 2AB Tel 0171 482 2496 ***** Natural Selection** is a web search engine specifically designed to find and twist far right and racist sites on the net, using **ridicule as a weapon**. More details check out http://www.mongrel.org.uk/email:info@mongrel.org.uk ***** The Equality Housing collective**, based in Oxford, squats empty buildings and brings attention to housing problems . They are currently occupying a disused nursing home in north Oxford owned by the council, and with the help of local kids have made many improvements to the building. Despite recent favourable talks leading to potentially permanent occupation, the council have decided to try and repossess the building anyway. Contact 07775 700732 ***** Saturday 27** is a Day of Action for sanctions to be removed against **Iraqi**. Meet 1-3pm, Piccadilly Gardens. More info 0161 834 8301 ***** If your in Brighton**, there will be a talk about **sanctions** on 22nd Feb. 2pm at the University of Sussex, A1 lecture theatre. Speakers will be George Galloway MP, Sabah Al-Mukhtar (leading Arab voice on international law) and Mailan Rai (Voices of the Wilderness campaign)

Oi Global Capitalism - No

On Saturday 27th February from 10am there will be a gathering for people participating in actions on **June 18th** actions against globalisation. It's at the(squatted) United Reform Church, Church Street, Stoke Newington, London N16 - with a social in the evening.

Opps in SchNEWS 200 we missed out how to the June 18th list, send an email to listproc@gn.apc.org. Then type in the following request: Subscribe J18DISCUSSIONS with your email address.

* There's also a June 18th discussion in Glasgow 3-4 April. Contact-counterInformation (Autonomy) c/o 28 King Street, Glasgow G1

Stop-press: Greenpeace have occupied towers at Liverpool docks to stop gmo's coming into the port

In November last year two members of a Czech anarchist group were brutally attacked by a group of at least five neo-nazis in a Prague club. One of the two was knocked out after a short fight, while the other, Michal Patera, was injured. Fearing for his life, Michal drew his legally owned gun and fired at his attackers. One of the fascists was shot three times, and the others withdrew for a moment. Michal managed to escape, but was arrested shortly after by the police. For defending his life Michal is now charged with "attempted murder motivated by ideological conviction" and faces 25 years in prison, with at least one year in "protective custody" before his case goes to trial. None of the attacking neo-nazis faces even minor charges.

This is the fourth time in a few years that the Czech authorities have thrown a victim of fascist terror in jail on charges of murder or attempted murder for defending his life. The Czech anti-fascist movement has also had to raise large amounts of money to cover lawyer fees, and is now skint. If you can help send donations to SF International Secretariat, PO Box 1681, London, N8 7LE (cheques payable to NELSF)

Letters of solidarity to: Michal Patera (1976), PO Box 5, 14057 Praha 4, Czech Republic, or send them by email to the Defense Campaign: sam20uj@axpsu.fpf.slu.cz

...and finally...

Lambeth Council are not having an easy job with their plans to gentrify Brixton, as squatters have realised that a barricade a day keeps the bailiff at bay. The 121 centre is an 18-year old autonomous squat in the heart of Brixton, open as a bookshop, advice centre, meeting space for radical groups etc. A notice of eviction was served for last Monday, and according to the Inspector of Operations for Brixton police, the bailiffs were expecting to stroll in, remove the door and brick up the space. Oh dear! What they weren't expecting was for 70 anarchists to be dancing in the street at 6.30am to a sound system, behind barricades in the roads, with the warning cry of a WW2 air raid siren blaring from the rooftop. (In fact the fort proved so effective that a number of activists woke up on Valentines morning to find themselves barricaded inside the building asking passers by if they could borrow a ladder!) Offices in the town hall were later occupied until police came and broke up the party. While local residents were supporting 121, three other squats in the area were evicted that morning. The Lambeth evictor is ruthless, and help is needed in defending the buildings. It doesn't take much...at another squat, open for 10 years as a workshop, bailiffs were greeted by lots of locals sitting in armchairs in the street who told them the house was crammed with people (ahem!). The bailiffs left crying, *"but you promised this property would be empty this morning, you people are supposed to be peaceful types!"* Get a copy of the South London Stress! Contact 121 Railton Road, Brixton London, SE24, tel 0171 978 8214email mark261@hotmail.com

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all tomatos not to think they are artich fish. You can't swim and you will drown.