



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER DEEPLY ROOTED...

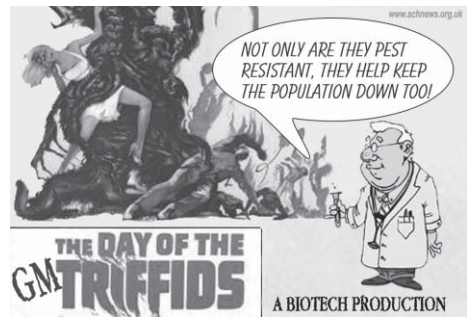
# SchNEWS

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## ASSAULT OF THE EARTH

**SchNEWS digs the dirt on resistance to the GM / Biotech takeover...**

Although a consumer boycott and loads of direct crop-trashing action has seen off genetically modified foods in the UK (for now), last year the area used for world-wide GM crops rose by more than 11%.

2004 saw the biggest increase in GM planting since 1998, with the US, Argentina, China, India and Spain leading the pack. The corporate PR has shifted slightly from the earlier spin that GM 'can feed the world'; agribusiness now flogs the idea of 'nutrigenomics' - arguing that food should be thought of like a drug offering a solution to a prescribed disease. "As basic science advances and converges with e-commerce," comments one industry leader, "new opportunities will emerge to provide consumers, whose genetic susceptibility to specific diets and diseases are known, with products tailored to individual dietary needs." Oh yes, Biotech business is booming; profits are stable and revenues increased tenfold between 1990 and 2005.

Worse still, heavyweight economies like Japan and the US have successfully stalled attempts by developing countries to wrestle back control of their indigenous genetic re-

sources, paving the way for the continued privatisation of our ecosystem.

Although UK plc is actively considering allowing crop trials for GM spuds next spring, the real cash to be made is from looting developing countries so poor they'll even borrow from loan sharks like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. The loans come with the usual strings in the tail, such as forcing borrowers to open their borders to foreign investment i.e privatise everything. Countries are then forced to export cash crops to earn hard currency needed to meet repayments on the loans. Big bucks are made in boom crops like winter greens, mainly exported to the US, which cause countries to switch from cultivating subsistence foods to these money-makers.

Argentina, for example, has increased its production of GM Roundup Ready Soya by more than 50% and exports more than 90% of the stuff. The growth of the soya bean has led to a fall in the growing of other staples, which are increasingly being imported. In what was once the 7th richest country in the world, the number of people going hungry

### CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

**For not into-furring**

Three anti-fur protesters were arrested in Gloucestershire by confused cops brandishing the SOCPA laws. These laws deal specifically with Seriously Organised Criminals, as opposed to Seriously Against Fur Coats types.

The section of SOCPA used for arrest was 145, and it took a long four hours for cops to recognise that they weren't actually "Interfering with contractual relationships so as to harm animal research organisations"...er, oops. No apology was forthcoming.

has doubled since 2001.

Now able to invest freely, the corporations are putting local farmers out of business as farmers are unable to compete with such technologically advanced (and state subsidised) multinationals. Unemployed farmers head to the cities to look for work; ironically the very people who once grew their own food are now starving. In a world of food surplus another 37 million people were added to the 'official' number of hungry during the 1990s. Whilst almost 60 percent of the population of Central Africa is undernourished, in 2004 consumers in the UK threw away

*continued over...*

## BIG BEN PIG PEN

Monday 9th of October was the much publicised 'Sack Parliament' action, an unauthorised demonstration in the heart of the new 'exclusion zone' created by the 2005 Serious and Organised Crime and Punishment (SOCPA) act, which specifically makes a no-go area of the 'Mother of all Parliaments' and seeks to ban protest and demonstration generally (See SchNEWS 483).

It was ominous from the outset. Demonstrators leaving from Brighton noticed an heavy police presence some 60 miles outside the SOCPA zone, cops armed with mugshots of known activists at Brighton station.

More cops were waiting at Victoria, pouncing on people, claiming to have 'intelligence' (not that we've never seen much evidence of it) and conducting stop and searches. Using aggressive and intimidating tactics police forcibly restrained people. Suspected troublemakers were then followed around central London on the grounds that they 'might be thinking of protesting'.

In Parliament Square itself, hundreds of police lined the entrances to parliament and dozens more formed a kettle around the hundred or so peaceful demonstrators who waved banners and chanted slogans at parliament. The irony of such a uniformed army outside the centre of 'our democracy' was surely lost only on the police and politicians inside.

At around two o'clock a number of people futilely tried to push their way out. The police cordon then closed in, pushing and kicking - trapping the demonstrators and assembled press into an increasingly smaller circle. One card-carrying journalist was brutally hurled to the ground. He later collapsed and was taken away by an ambulance. Strangely enough his fellow NUJ members did little to publicise this attack on one of their own, preferring to talk only of 'scuffles'.

Meanwhile Superintendent Terry took great delight in broadcasting the police's shiny new SOCPA powers over a megaphone - Everyone learnt they were to be repressed "under section 132 of the Serious and Organised Crime and Police Act 2005..."

Having got the protesters where they wanted them, the police then began grabbing targets in the crowd. Police snatch squads would point out a particular person and then rush in, fists waving, faces distorted from venomous swearing as they stamped on anyone who fell to the ground, grabbed their target and retreated back to the police cordon.

Having arrested many people within the circle, they then spoke over the megaphone specifically to one member of the crowd. "Would the man with the beard and shaved head, wearing a black top, please step for-

ward and be arrested. If you do not do so we will use force to arrest you, and anyone who intervenes will be charged with obstructing the police in the conduct of their duty." The crowd responded by linking arms around this unfortunate person, who looked more surprised than anyone else, and holding for dear life. This tactic seemed to work, as the police were not able to arrest him (until later).

At 4.30pm, street parliamentarian Brian Haw started talking on his megaphone, first explaining that he was not allowed to use a megaphone to bear witness to the deaths in Iraq until after office hours (See SchNEWS 543). He gave his regular speech about peace and the suffering of innocents that seems to be the kind of dangerous talk that appears so threatening to the 21st century British State (SchNEWS wonders how long before we'll be all be notching up our trusty totalitarian-o-meters - for the uninitiated see SchNEWS 534).

Some time later, police told people they would only be let go once they'd given their name and addresses and waited for it to be verified. Letting people out in threes, people were then processed by a line of smug looking cops who kindly explained that demonstrations permits were needed because of the trouble that an unruly element could cause. If only. See www.sackparliament.org.uk

## ASSAULT OF THE EARTH *continued...*

between 30 and 40 percent of the food they bought or grew, worth up to £16bn.

And Biotech is not going away - it's the approach which can maintain the corporate stranglehold on a food production system in crisis. By the mid 1970s it was already taking one calorie of energy to produce one calorie of food. 30 years later and it can take ten times the amount of fossil fuel. And if you like to chow on cow it's gonna cost 300 calories for every one calorie of beef munched. Energy consumption is on the increase, partly because our lust for out of season exotic fare means that winter aubergine has travelled a long carbon-wasting journey to get into your ratatouille. But the real problem is the growing demand for the fertilizers and pesticides which are derived from dwindling oil supplies. And it's a pointless arms race - pests become resistant to the effects of pesticides, agribusiness develops new and more potent poisons, to which pests eventually become resistant as well... This toxic spiral degrades the soil, pollutes the water supply and is causing cancer amongst the poor farmers who spray crops and nearby downwind residents. But the fightback is scoring some victories.

### CUBA SQAURES OFF

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989, Cuba (SchNEWS' favourite police state) lost three quarters of its subsidised chemical and pesticide imports. When the oil ran dry, tractors rusted in the fields and crops went unharvested. The average Cuban lost 20lbs in weight. Local farmers responded by adopting low energy organic food production techniques more in tune with nature, such as companion planting, natural pest controls and composting on a monstrous scale. At community level there has been a boom in urban agriculture that now sees up to half of Havana's vegetable consumption grown in the city. Now Cubans are amongst the best fed in Latin America with a bigger boost in calorie consumption during the 1990s than just about any other country in the world, including the gutbustin ol' US of A.

In 2004, Bayer Crop Sciences finally pulled out of India. US farmers launched an action against the same company in August for failing to prevent its GM rice, which has not been approved for human consumption, from entering the food chain. Similar class actions are taking place in Australia against secret GM trials that threaten to contaminate non-GM crops. Ethiopia has been making

## IT'S A GAS!

Despite their dead-pan sponsorship of the Natural History Museum's 'Wildlife photographer of the year'\*, Shell's been showing its true colours in County Mayo, Ireland this week. Always glad of a helping fist, they must have been delighted when cops came steaming in to support the toxic multinational as it seeks to build a new gas pipeline (See SchNEWS 549).

Since last Monday, police have begun to forcibly assist the construction workers through the blockade at Ballinaboy site. The media have been doing their bit by trying to link the blockaders with the IRA, despite the latter's disbandment. There have been a number of arrests and injuries, as daily confrontations with the protesters continues. The gettin-heavy approach has done nothing to break spirits or determination, and pickets and blockades have been organised by regional 'Shell to Sea' groups in Dublin, Cork, Derry, Limerick and Galway all last week.

Solidarity actions took place all over the UK and Ireland on Wednesday 11th. Activists in Dublin occupied the rooftop of Shell's national HQ. Petrol stations were occupied in Manchester, Leeds, London and Bristol. The afternoon in Brighton saw four of the usual riff-raff occupying the roof of a Shell-hole near Preston Park. Cover-

real progress on tackling hunger, not thanks to the antics of Gob Beldof and Bono Inc., but because of the boom in small localised self-sufficient production. Zambia, meanwhile, has declared itself to be a GM free zone, as have municipalities in Costa Rica, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia.

Such successes would not have been possible if it were not for local communities ability and determination to resist agribusiness. Perhaps this is why there is such a fight going on within the World Trade Organisation to prevent the greedy multinationals extending their grip even further. For some time farmers in poorer countries have been arguing that agreements on Trade Related aspects of Intellectual property (TRIPS see SchNEWS 420) should not interfere with their right to grow whatever food they want and need.

Responding to complaints about multinationals 'bioprospecting' around the globe, the UN introduced the Convention on Biological Diversity. This meant there had to be 'prior informed consent' and benefit-sharing when a multinational tried to exploit local genetic resources. But the US and Japan disagree. They've been busy opposing the plan, and at the most recent Convention meeting managed to stall proposals to regulate the patenting of natural resources - persuading delegates that the most pressing issue worthy of discussion was "how to proceed with the negotiations" which won't now start until gone 2010.

Turning the screw a little tighter, US Trade Representative Susan Schwab declared in August that the US would also be reviewing its trade-incentive scheme and is considering cutting the benefits for a list of countries; a list that curiously reads like a who's who of the larger economies that have been battling US negotiators at the WTO.

The consequences of not keeping informed are clear; in the US, according to a 2003 study by Food Policy Institute, only half of respondents were aware that GM foods were on sale and almost two thirds didn't really know what biotechnology was. The US grows 50m hectares of GM crops, three times more than the next biggest grower, Argentina. keep up with the latest info at [www.geneticsaction.org.uk](http://www.geneticsaction.org.uk) and [www.grain.org](http://www.grain.org)

\* Check the Soil Association's Green Directory at [www.soilassociation.org](http://www.soilassociation.org) for how to eat locally. Tim Lang's and Michael Heasman's "Food Wars" is good on Biotech philosophy and the green fight-back (Earthscan press, 2005) and Angus Wright's classic exposure of pesticide misuse, "The Death of Ramón González" was re-released last year by the University of Texas Press.

### IRISH RESISTANCE TO SHELL CONTINUES...AND SPREADS

ing the S in 'Shell' to reveal the true nature of the beast, around 20 people shut down the station's pumps whilst the attendant tried in vain to figure out how to turn them back on again! Drivers turning up for a fill-up were leafleted about Shell's dodgy antics and after an hour and a half on the roof protesters came down and left without being arrested. Up in the north-east meanwhile, a solidarity action successfully blockaded Shell's Jarrow Distribution depot in Tyneside for an hour, before the protesters got bored and went off to spend the day causing merry mischief at stations all over Newcastle.

This week, protests in Rosspport have continued, with police checkpoints being set up to take campers' details and generally intimidate. There was a sit down protest on the road to the refinery site and a march to the gates, which ended up in a scrum with a large squad of cops and three residents nicked. There is to be a national day of action at Ballinaboy on Friday 20th October. For updates and more see [www.indymedia.ie](http://www.indymedia.ie) and [www.shelltosea.com](http://www.shelltosea.com)

\*A counter-exhibition of Shell-inspired artwork will be held at the London Action Resource Centre (LARC), 62 Fieldgate St, London E1 1ES (Whitechapel tube) on Monday, Oct 16th at 7pm. See [www.artnotoil.org.uk](http://www.artnotoil.org.uk)

## Not Available in Cannes

Cinema's are packin 'em in to see the new Children of Men movie, a portrayal of resistance against a super-heavy authoritarian near-future Britain with zero tolerance for immigrants.

Meanwhile back on this side of the silver screen, refugee communities in Glasgow have been under attack over the last few weeks with unprecedented numbers of violent dawn raids, as cops seek to round up the non-desirables for deportation. But communities have been putting up fierce resistance and on Tuesday 10th up to 100 local residents of Kingsway Court in west Glasgow helped prevent a raid on one refugee family living in the high rise.

This week children in Cardonald were throwing themselves in front of a police van after a Kurdish refugee from Turkey was arrested for threatening to kill himself when the snatch squad came. A woman pushed over by police was knocked unconscious and taken to hospital. A crowd gathered, one local Glaswegian was arrested for shouting racial abuse and the Scottish press labelled it all as an "asylum seeker riot". Art imitating life anyone? For more see [www.openborders.org.uk](http://www.openborders.org.uk) plus [www.ncadc.org.uk](http://www.ncadc.org.uk) and [www.barbedwirebritain.org.uk](http://www.barbedwirebritain.org.uk)

### SchNEWS in brief

Protest against the death of Lisa Ann Woodhall, who died on 8 October 2006 while in the 'care' of Eastwood Park Prison, Gloucestershire. Demo from 1pm on Weds 18th October outside HMP and YO1 Eastwood Park, Gloucestershire. \*\* 21st Oct is the annual London Anarchist Bookfair. 25 years of all things anarchistic including books, pamphlets, t-shirts and other paraphernalia. We'll be there! 10am-7pm, at the Voluntary Sector Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Rd, London, N7 6PA. (Tube - Holloway Road). [www.anarchistbookfair.org](http://www.anarchistbookfair.org) \*\* The 21st is also Stop The Oxford Animal Lab National March And Rally. 12pm, Oxpens park, Oxpens rd, Oxford Call 0845 330 7985 or see [www.speakcampaigns.org.uk/diary.php#national](http://www.speakcampaigns.org.uk/diary.php#national)

### NEWS WHITEOUT

One story that didn't blow up in the mainstream media this week was, on 6th October, the discovery of the largest amount of chemical explosives of its type ever found in the country. Normally this would be the cue for screaming tabloid front pages about the enemy within, wild allegations about those arrested and the appearance of the Home Secretary to warn us all of the need for further crackdowns in the 'War on Terror'. However, unluckily for the government propaganda machine, this time round it's white supremacists with BNP links. In other words when we're supposed to be focussing on the 'clash of civilisations' with Islam - damn, it's the wrong kind of bombers. Robert Cottage, 49, of Talbot Street, Colne, appeared before Burnley magistrates charged with possession of an explosive substance and was remanded in custody. Inexplicably the story didn't even make the national news. For more [www.pickledpolitics.com/archives/828](http://www.pickledpolitics.com/archives/828)

### ...and finally...

One would be sacker of Parliament got nicked on Monday for throwing what? Rocks? Bricks? Empty brew cans? No.. bottles of chocolate soya milk. This particular gack attack saw our hero under arrest for violent disorder. In fact he was just trying to roll the bottles in to feed the crowd trapped in a police pen, but the Met showed the usual short shrift for the (soya) milk of human kindness.

### Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers... understand that agriculture will always be a growth industry. Honest!

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