



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER EVER GROWING

SchNEWS

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Powerless, having received the gift of power, have attempted to improve upon their work.

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SEEDY BUSINESS

"Corporations want to control our food from the seed to the spoon, effectively privatising our future food security. We need to resist them and reclaim our food and our environment back into common ownership."

Joyce Hambling
Women's Environmental Network

"We are seeing an unprecedented consolidation of control of food in the hands of a tiny elite of corporate directors and senior executives."

John Madeley, UK Food Group

Activists who've been busy de-contaminating genetic crops sites will be rubbing shoulders with yer more traditional allotment growers at an alternative conference next month in Cambridge. The three day event titled 'Seeds of Resistance', will be running counter to another event, same time, same town. The counter-conference is for people to share ideas in the fight against the global agribusiness monster and the development of positive alternatives, while blowing a big raspberry at the corporate bastards down the road.

So just who is down the road?

A range of sinister lobbying organisations, like the International Seed Federation, the ISTA and various other CLFA's (that's Confusing Four Letter Acronyms...) who are getting together for the World Seed Conference, where the world's biggest seed corporations are meeting to discuss *"the globalisation of the economy, development of new techniques, regulatory evolution(!), and the increasing impact of environmental concerns."* The heavily greenwashed blurb for this corporate shindig notes that *"irrespective of technical merits, promising innovations can prompt suspicion."* No, really?

Just 10 corporations including Du Pont, Monsanto, Novartis, Astria/Zeneca and Aventis now control 32% of the commercial seed market - and the figure is rising all the time. Those very same bio-tech giants that are trying to get us all to eat genetically modified food, have been steadily buying up all your favourite garden seed companies. Because, as Alfonso Romo Garza, owner of one of those corporations'Empressa La Moderna' put it *"Seeds are software. And we have the seeds"*

Over the past hundred years a massive percentage of our food bio-diversity has been lost. In the USA, since the turn of the century, 95% of small family farms have disappeared, and along with them 90% of all fruit and vegetable varieties. On the eve of the new millennium, farming is characterised by massive farms producing crops that are designed to feed massive food processing plants, not

people. So should we be worried? Joyce Hambling of the Women's Environmental Network (WEN) clearly thinks so *"Bio-diversity is the key to future food security. We need a broad range of varieties of each kind of crop- one variety might be resistant to a certain pest, another to a certain disease. There are countless examples of whole years' crops of rice, coffee, potatoes, maize and wheat being wiped out because just one variety was grown, yet big business still hasn't learnt."*

As Bob Sherman from the UK's main organic gardening organisation the Henry Doubleday Research Association (HDRA) points out *"The risk of concentrating so much commercial power into the hands of one corporate empire is that we then become subject to the dreams and aspirations of a very few people. Do they care about biodiversity? Not as much, I suspect, as they do about profit."*

Or, as Robert Fraley from Monsanto puts it more bluntly *"What you are seeing is not just a consolidation of seed companies, it's really a consolidation of the entire food chain."* And SchNEWS reckons people should find that hard to swallow.

* **Seeds of Resistance** runs from 6 - 8th September in Cambridge. More info from WEN, 87 Worship St., London, EC2A 2BE Tel 0171 247 3327 www.gn.apc.org/wen

*One man who will be attending both conferences is the highly respected Pat Mooney, from the Rural Advancement Foundation International. A passionate defender of biodiversity, he has worked for over a decade to make big businesses accountable. Check out RAFI's excellent website www.rafi.org

*'Hungry for Power - the impact of transnational corporations on food security' is an excellent publication from the UK Food Group, PO Box 100, London, SE1 7RT Tel 0171 523 2369 www.ukfg.org.uk

Here's some people fighting the global seed-swallowing monster

There are quite a few seed exchanges around the countries offering unusual or outlawed vegetable seeds. The most well known is the **HDRA Heritage Seed Library**, Ryton Organic Gardens, Coventry, CV8 3LG Tel 01203 303517 www.hdra.org.uk. (send a large SAE and ask for a copy of their catalogue).

From Penzance to Inverness **farmers markets** have mushroomed from just one in 1997 to over eighty. Only local growers and producers can sell their own produce at the market meaning the food is fresh, has little if any packaging and fewer food miles. Check out www.soilassociation.org

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

From James Caan, Hollywood star & Godfather hard man: "Actors are full of self importance. They make a film and think they're curing cancer...We serve less purpose to the community than a garbage collector." How true.

Wot no crap arrest? Then send us some yer dodgy bastards!!

Common Ground run a campaign to safeguard and plant new Orchards. Send SAE to PO Box 25309, London, NW5 1ZA Tel 0171 267 2144 www.commonground.org.uk. They've also organised an 'Orchards and Wildlife Conference' 22/23rd September at English Nature Three Counties Office, Ledbury, Herefordshire. Also look out for 'Apple Day' events on 21st October. * **The Permaculture Association** produce an excellent magazine that provides 'solutions for sustainable living' publish an Earth Repair catalogue Hyden House Ltd., The Sustainability Centre, East Moon, Hampshire Tel 01703-823322 www.btinternet.com/~permaculture.uk/ A resource guide including the above organisations and a whole lot more will be available at Seeds of Resistance or get copies from WEN.

SEEDS OF DOPE!

September is Free Cannabis Month and events have been lined-up and down the country SchNEWS highlights include **Cannabis Prisoners Day**.(9th): National Cannabis Action Conference at Norwich.(10/11) **'Living with the Enemy'** BBC 2, 9pm Watch the shadow conservative minister for the family (he's twenty two and still lives with his mum) freak out about the Exodus Collective (Weds 15th). **'Healer of the Nations'** march and one day cannabis festival at Stockwood Park, Luton. Organised by the 'Campaign Against Narcotic Abuse Because of Ignorance in Society' (C.A.N.A.B.I.S.), (Sat 18th) **Smokey Bears Picnic**, Speakers Corner, Hyde Park, London. High noon onwards. (Sat 25) **Smokey Bears Picnic**, Norwich. Chapelfield Gardens, Norwich. High noon.(Sun 26) **Free Cannabis Month** Info Lines: 0171 637 7467 / 01605 625 780 Listings update www.schmoo.co.uk/free99.htm **PS** Cannabis Prohibition costs the British tax payers £1 billion a year to enforce

SchWOOPS Last week we said 80 arrests were made at the Smokey Bears Picnic in Portsmouth. In fact there were only 30. Okay, so sorry - now leave me alone the fax was all blurred, honest!!

PULP FRICTION

"Commercial logging poses by far the greatest danger to frontier forests" The World Resources Institute

If you think activists in Britain get a hard time then check out the prospects for activists in Mexico. Mexico's vast forest resources came up for grabs when the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) removed restrictions on foreign investment in communal land, which contain 80% of the country's forests. Within eighteen months, 15 U.S. logging companies moved in. In May 1995, Boise Cascade joined the party, targeting the state of Guerrero where the local Governor was eventually forced to resign after the state police ambushed and killed 17 small farmers who had protested against logging. When the logging in the Guerrero region started to affect water supplies, local farmers, led by a poor *campesino*, Rodolfo Montiel, set up Ecologistas de la Sierra de Petatln. The activists blocked roads, hijacked trucks, unloaded logs and returned them to the communities.

In early 1998, Boise Cascade suspended its contracts. *"An incredible victory for the campesinos against one of the world's largest transnational timber corporations, who was blatantly colluding with a repressive government."* said an American Lands Alliance spokesperson. However, local beneficiaries of Boise started to show up at meetings armed and threatening Rodolfo. Eventually, on May 2nd, Mexican soldiers entered the village, shooting and killing one unarmed campesino. Rodolfo was arrested and subsequently beaten, tortured with electric shock and put in prison. Immediately after Rodolfo's arrest (on trumped up drugs n' guns charges), Boise Cascade tried to start logging again, but activists once again stopped them. Rodolfo is now in solitary confinement Coyucade Catalan prison, Guerrero.

There is a national campaign in Mexico to free Rodolfo and the other defenders of the forest jailed with him. *"Not only is Rodolfo Montiel innocent, but his being denied adequate medical treatment, food, and water is a violation of his basic human rights and he should be freed immediately."* Sign on to the letter by emailing Pat Rasmussen prasmussen@igc.org Donations to: RodolfoMontiel Defense Fund c/o American Lands Alliance, 726 7th St. SE Washington DC.

Boise Cascade are one of the largest US wood companies, who've been busy closing down their sawmills in Idaho, and looking south to where labour is cheap and environmental laws weak. * In Brazil, they are merging with Klabin, the largest producer of wood pulp products in Latin America, so they can get their hands on over 200,000 hectares of pine and eucalyptus forests. * In Ilque, Chile, Boise intend to produce one million cubic metres of woodchip annually, using native forests. They are currently being sued after they trashed Conchales de Ilque, an archaeological monument. Despite Ilque being a traditional fishing town, Cascade has constructed a port on the town's cleanest bay. Cascade's president kindly reassured locals that the plant would provide Ilque with telephones, jobs and better roads - ample compensation for the loss of their livelihood and environment!

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SchNEWS in brief

This Saturday (28th) it's on yer bikes Brighton for a Critical Mass. Fed up of abuse from car drivers, pedestrians and the Evening Anus? Then join the wheels for a leisurely pedal through our town for a picnic lunch somewhere. meet 12 noon, Montpelier Cresc, by the bottle bank. bring fizzy pop and sarnies, dress as fancy as yer like. ** Fancy building some sustainable conomies? Then get along to a Conference at the Centre for Alternative Technology **Sept 3-5th**; Info: 01654-702400 ATA@cleanslate.force9.co.uk. ** **Worthing Green Fair Sat 4th Sept** Field of Hope, Beach House Green, Worthing Seafront. Music & meriment until 11pm inc. healing garden, café area and stalls including good old SchNEWS so come and buy our books and have a chat. ** **Sept 8th, The Right to Protest Legal Forum Legal Observer Steering Group**. Interested in developing a legal observation group? Then turn up and get involved. Artist's Room, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Sq, London. 6.30-8pm. ** **Sat 11th Reclaim the Streets Norwich**, Norfolk, 1pm Bus Station Entrance, Queens Road. "Holding up the Traffic to Liberate the Streets" ** **Sept 11-12th Working Class Politics Conference**. A weekend of ideas and discussion, such as, Solidarity Through Football, Drugs and working class. £3 / £1.50. @ Crown Inn, Bridgewater, Somerset. Info: 01278-450562. ** Sept 12 - 18 **Green Front! (Green Front!) ACTION CAMP Action week against Trans European Network (TEN's) railfreight 'Betuveline'**, through the deepest (if that exists!) and greenest part of Holland. e-mail grgroenfr@dds.nl ** **Sept 22nd The Land Is Ours Autumn Gathering 99** at The Reddings (AKA Flying Pig Farm), Stockend Lane, Edge NR, Stroud, Gloucestershire. **Land Occupation after Gathering**. 01865 722016/0961 460171. www.oneworld.org

PSSTT! WANNA SHOOTER?

Any arms dealers out there should get down to the **Defence Systems & Equipment International** exhibition on September 14 - 17th. All paid for by the taxpayer to the tune of £1/4 million. Luvverly. The UK is the world's second largest arms exporter and just loves being generous little dictators. Recently 500,000 H&K assault rifles were sold to Turkey to repress the Kurds. While the international community calls for restraint in the increasing violence between Pakistan and India, the Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) has revealed that the UK has been supplying arms to both sides for years. Despite, and contrary, to Robin Cook's ethical foreign policy pledge over 500 arms export licences were signed to India and 128 licences to Pakistan in 'New' Labours first year of power. *"When will this government start to match its rhetoric with actions?"* asks Rachel Harford from CAAT *"It is guilty of fuelling the very conflicts and repression it condemns"*. The sale of arms to "developing countries" also contradicts the government's goal of reducing poverty, by diverting poor countries scarce national resources from luxuries like clean drinking water to necessities like guns.

The exhibition is being held on two sites, Chertsy in Surrey and London Docklands. CAAT will be protesting throughout starting with a "peace train" from Waterloo to Virginia Waters's station in Chertsy followed by a march to the gates of the exhibition on the 14th. On the 15th there will be protest at the Docklands site. Campaign Against Arms Trade, 11 Goodwin St., Finsbury Park, London, N4 3HQ Tel 0171 281 0297 www.caat.demon.co.uk

'The Arms Trade, Debt and Development' by Susan Willett available from the above address

WHAT A LOAD OF HUNTS !

Making what some felt to be a less-than-convincing bid for a prize in the 'statistician of the year' awards, was wishful-thinking Sam Butler, chair of the Countryside Alliance. When results of a poll commissioned by his organisation showed that 52% of the public strongly supported a ban on foxhunting, with a further 11% 'tending to support' a ban, he was robust in his observation; *"This poll gives the lie to the idea that there is any majority public enthusiasm or support for outlawing hunting."*

Anyone for early mornings?

Those with a better head for elementary maths than Sam may like to get on the case of the beleaguered hunting community, as we once again reach one of the most crucial times of the year for their sport. Cubhunting (now often renamed 'autumn hunting' in PR-aware hunting circles) goes on from late August until November, and trains the new intake of foxhounds by letting them loose on litters of young foxes.

Hunt Saboteurs Association, PO Box 2786, Brighton, BN2 2AX Tel 01273 622827.

The **Countryside Alliance** are planning to march in Bournemouth during the New Labour conference on September 28th! A Carnival Against Bloodsports is also expected to be heading in the same direction. How's that for balanced reporting

Ever wished you could get SchNEWS off the web and print it out so it looks like the *real thing*? You can mate. All you need is an internet connection, web browser, Acrobat reader and any old printer. Check out our web site for more info.

...and finally...

While it's oft been said that Americans lack any sense of irony, the US military have been doing little to explode the idea. The Pentagon is investing in research to develop a cleaner alternative to lead bullets, which, says the spokeswoman for their armament research centre, will be a 'safer bullet with the...same lethality as its lead counterpart'. Of course, she means safer to the *environment*; such that of any of the hundreds of firing ranges the US army has been forced to close due to lead pollution, now leaving them with a clean-up bill of £9 billion (dwarfing the mere \$12 million pledged to the green ammunition research). SchNEWS had to charge up its cynicism drive to full power to deal with this one. The new material that promises to save the US military so much money in future is called tungsten, a dense white metal they rejected in the 70's for use in a new generation of armour-piercing shells, when in this instance they found they could save money by using depleted uranium instead. So now American soldiers will be able to fire on teenage conscripts in far-off lands, freed from the crippling guilt that made their fingers quiver at the trigger of a gun loaded with eco-unfriendly lead rounds. On the other hand, as many as one in twenty Iraqi children continue to be born with serious birth defects, thought to be caused by pollution from the uranium-tipped shells UN fired there during the Persian Gulf war.

disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers that if you've got any budding ideas go sit in a compost bin or flower bed with someone swop seeds& get germinating then you'll be germinating, honest!!!!