



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER LET'S BE 'AVIN YOU!

# SchNEWS

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Friday 24th August 2001

www.schnews.org.uk

Issue 319

# Bruised & Bartered

**"The country doesn't belong to the people, it belongs to the puppetmasters of the dictatorship in bed with the United States...The universal cry in the streets of Argentina, that the country is returned to the people, will never be fulfilled while every politician, policeman and army officer are corrupt to the core and of an immovable tendency to fascism."**

*- Alexis Daunaravicius, whose family fled Argentina years ago in desperation.*

"It would be tragic, not only for Argentina but for the global economy if it were concluded that Argentina's experience was useless and did not work." - Domingo Cavallo, Argentinian Finance minister

With the Argentinian economy in free fall, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) yesterday decided to bail the country out with yet another loan - this time \$8 billion. Not that this will help a country drowning under debts of \$128 billion (£88.4 billion), three years of recession and the prospects of defaulting on its 'debt'.

Yet this so called debt has been payed off by the Argentinian people many times over. In a ruling last year a federal judge concluded "since 1976 our country has been put under the rule of foreign creditors and under the supervision of the IMF by means of a vulgar and offensive economic policy that forced Argentina to go down on its knees in order to benefit national and foreign private firms."

Financial whizz kids and corporate loan sharks call Argentina the 'teachers pet' of the financial world. It's sold off everything it ever owned, with foreign firms taking over key sectors of the economy. (A French company for example picked up chunks of the water system and raised charges in places by 400%)

It's deregulated its markets and tried to make its workforce more 'flexible' (meaning you work longer for less pay) yet in the last couple of months has had to introduce more IMF-imposed austerity measures which will save about a billion quid and hardly put a dent in the debt. For public sector workers and pensioners however these measures will mean cuts of 13% and increased taxes. Unemployment meanwhile is booming and a third of the population live under the poverty line.

## BARTERING RAM

"We are creating something new. Argentines of all classes are coming together to say enough is enough. The government keeps telling us that there is no alternative to the recession they are imposing to free up money for the servicing of the foreign debt, yet they are doing nothing to stop the rich from taking their money out."

*- Victor de Gennaro, one of the protestors.*

The new austerity package has sparked demonstrations and direct action across the country. Meanwhile the authorities are slipping back into the bad old days of the military dictatorship with torture and worse for protestors. Anibal Veron, a 37 year old father of five, who lost his job as a bus driver with his company still owing him nine months' wages, joined the 'piqueros', the angry unemployed who blockade roads. When police cleared one of these blockades last November, the military police killed him with a bullet to the head.

## Don't Buy For Me Argentina

Remember 'Bartertown' in Mad Max - where people came out from the hinterland to the market settlement which had sprung up in a post-apocalypse world? Well it's coming to that in Argentina. This is an story of survival, and the ability of people to adapt, and create workable and sustainable solutions to the problems their government and the international money markets have imposed on them.

Bartering in Buenos Aires started in 1995 with just 20 people trading in food, textiles and handcrafts. With the signing up of a dentist the system developed into a goods and services trading scheme, and now every profession, and type of goods is available for barter. By 1999 it was handling the equivalent of \$400 million a year with the idea spreading throughout Argentina, and now there are 1200 clubs with over one million people involved.

As the system rapidly grew, and went from cashbooks to computer databases, a system of 'slips' was brought in, and the barter currency was born. Anti-fraud measures were introduced and now the system is kept highly regulated, avoiding the influence of existing power bases in Argentina such as political parties, NGOs or syndicates. Regular weekly meetings of barter clubs bring trust amongst the participants, and exchange across clubs increases diversity of the markets.

## Swap Shop

"We should underscore the concept of "prosumer" in the Argentinian Global Barter (RGT) Network: it's a word coined by tying together "producer" and "consumer", meaning that RGT members are individuals who are producers and consumers at the same time." - RGT Statement.

As globalisation destroys local markets, alternative economies are one way of opposing this. The barter system is helping Argentinian people take back control from the corporations and keep the money in their local area. Trading with your neighbour and

## CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For asking questions!

Following a demo outside a genetically modified cottonseed factory Andi Mappasomba, a representative from an Indonesian NGO, had a meeting with the local MP to discuss the GM issue. He was arrested at this meeting for his own safety - in case he offended the employees of the global giant Monsanto!

buying local produce keeps the wealth in the community, as opposed to buying from the local branch of a supermarket or chain where the profit goes back to head office - and into the pockets of shareholders. In other words drink at your local café, not Starbucks. Alternative economies make sense everywhere, and other significant examples include the "Other" Stock Exchange in Mexico, Ithaca Hours in New York State, USA, the SELs in France and LETS Systems in Canada, Europe and Australia. These systems are not just short-term solutions, they are an essential part of a sustainable world.

For many this scheme is more than just survival - it is being used as a base for social as well as economic change. The system may offer a new lease of empowerment and freedom for participants, but, just as out goes the old style of retailing as they know it, in comes many challenges: Professor Heloisa Primavera of Buenos Aires says "Freedom, autonomy and equity have been the issues; building trust and reciprocity in the network, learning how to deal with power and to accept the legitimacy of different others."

One protestor said "Argentina has sunk into 'Latin Americanisation'. It used to be the jewel in the crown, but now has all the same problems of poverty as the rest of the continent."

You wonder what Tory Blair saw from his car window when he visited Argentina proclaiming that globalisation was working. Argentina has jumped through all the capitalist hoops with promises of prosperity, yet has now hit bottom of its 'sell off' barrow and it's either default the debt, or tighten the belt even further and accept another handout. For the moment other countries are finding another forest or water company to flog, but they are sure to arrive at this point. Argentina was the seventh richest country in the world before it had contact with the IMF and World Bank.

\* To find out more about what's happening in Argentina go to (it's in Spanish) [argentina.indymedia.org/](http://argentina.indymedia.org/). For more on the barter system [www.3.plala.or.jp/mig/econ-uk.html](http://www.3.plala.or.jp/mig/econ-uk.html)  
\* Protests against the IMF/World Bank in Washington 29-30th September [www.globalizethis.org/s30](http://www.globalizethis.org/s30)

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## GENE JUNKIES

Genetically engineered "terminator" technology makes seeds sterile so farmers can't re-use harvested seed. The biotech companies responsible claimed they developed it to help prevent the escape of genes from GM crops to related plants. In reality though all they care about is money and massive profits they would make as many of the 1.4 billion people who rely on saving seeds would have to start returning to them each year to buy new seed.

Back in 1998 there was worldwide protest and two of the largest companies Monsanto and AstraZeneca vowed never to commercialise the terminator technology. Predictably though the prize was too high and many biotech companies have continued to develop the technology regardless. It is likely within a few years the first "suicide seeds" will be available after the US government announced that it has allowed the licensing of first terminator technology to Delta and Pine Land.

Biotech companies are now developing 'Genetic Use Restriction Technology' (GURTs) which includes various 'traitor' technologies that control more sophisticated traits than just fertility of the seeds. For example experiments are now being carried out that would inhibit the ability of plants to flower and ripen fruit unless certain chemicals are applied. The plants become "junkies"- unable to survive unless they get their regular chemical fix - good news for the corporations who provide the junkie seeds and the necessary chemicals.

Syngenta the world's largest agribusiness firm formed last year after a merger between AstraZeneca and Novartis are hooked on serious mega-profits and control 6 Terminator patents. They've just got the green light to test traitor oil seed rape in an open field trial at Jealotts Hill near Bracknell, Berkshire. The seeds will be planted soon, a local group Green Watch oppose the plans. Vigil Monday 10<sup>th</sup> Sept, 4.30pm outside the main gate, Jealotts Hill. Genetics Education Conference, 7<sup>th</sup> October with talks by scientists and campaigners £8/£4. More info 01344 452893.

\*More info on terminators, traitors and junkie genes can be seen at [www.rafi.org](http://www.rafi.org)

\* In Canada scientists have found strong evidence of GM superweeds. Escaped rapeseed is now Canada's 13<sup>th</sup> worst weed - "We set a gap of 800 metres between GM rapeseed and other crops but our research has shown this is not enough" says John Culley, Research Director, Ag Canada. Of serious concern for the environment in Britain is not only do we have more wild relatives of rapeseed than Canada, but GM crops are only separated by a mere 200 metres at most from other non GM crops.

\* Sri Lanka has banned the import of all genetically modified foods. But the US has taken offence and is threatening to challenge the ban before the World Trade Organisation. The Sri Lankan government is now reconsidering their position [www.poptel.org.uk/panap/caravan.htm](http://www.poptel.org.uk/panap/caravan.htm)

\* Basmati rice is a traditional variety grown for centuries in India, but this didn't stop American Company Ricetec attempting to register Basmati as a trademark four years ago, it later withdrew due to massive opposition. But now they've got the patent on three hybrids: texmati, jasmati and kasmati, and also have permission to claim that its brands are "superior to basmati". GM coffee beans are being developed that can be mechanically harvested. This will give no benefits to coffee drinkers, but could mean disaster for up to 7 million small holders who'll find it increasingly harder to compete with the big plantations. [www.actionaid.org](http://www.actionaid.org)

\* Crop Trials around the country continue to be trashed by alien spacecraft. For a list of sites see [www.geneticsaction.org.uk/testsites](http://www.geneticsaction.org.uk/testsites)

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## Positive SchNEWS

Why not get with the majority of the world's gardeners and save your own seed? Around the world seed companies are being gobbled up by the very same biotech giants that are trying to get us all to eat their genetically modified greens. The Henry Doubleday Research Association has set up the Heritage Seed Library. The deal is you join the library and they 'lend' you seeds that aren't available in the shops any more thanks to the National Seed List. More info 01203-303517 [www.hdra.org.uk](http://www.hdra.org.uk) Or get a copy of 'Back Garden Seed Saving - keeping our vegetable heritage alive' by Sue Stickland (Eco-logic Books 2001).

\* Find out more about outlawed vegetables, seed saving, terminator genes etc. at a talk "The Fascination of Vegetable Seeds" by Harold Dunning. Sat 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept, 2pm 2Moulsecomb Library, Lewes Road, Brighton.

## SchNEWS in brief

A treehouse camp in Lappersfort, Belgium has been set up to stop a motorway and an industrial area going through a city green area. 0032 498 19 36 54. PO box 715, 8000 Brugge, Belgium. \*\* Media Lens is an alt media site with interviews and articles. Download 'media alerts' by subscription. [www.MediaLens.org](http://www.MediaLens.org) \*\* Uncut independent film forum at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. Palestinian filmmakers will be talking about their work before the films 1-4pm 25<sup>th</sup> August. 020-7930-3647 [www.ica.org.uk/](http://www.ica.org.uk/) \*\* Reclaim the Streets have meetings every Monday night in London. CITY ('Change It Yourself' formerly London Underground) meetings every Tuesday night in London. Come and hear report-backs from diverse anti-capitalist direct action groups throughout the capital. Venue for both meetings: 020-7281-4621.

\*\* SchNEWS recommends the book 'Restructuring and Resistance - Diverse Voices of Struggle in Western Europe'. It's 566 pages about the bureaucratic shenanigans going on in Europe, and the resistance to these new re-jigs of capitalism. From Poland to Portugal, written by grassroots activists involved in the countries themselves. Very inspiring, get yourself a copy for £11 from: AK Distribution 0131-555-5165 [www.akuk.com](http://www.akuk.com).

\*\* Environmental Racism produced by greenpepper looks at issues like power inequality created by colonialism, and the blinkered focus on 'corruption' and 'poor management' in the Third World. Contact greenpepper at [www.risingtide.nl/greenpepper](http://www.risingtide.nl/greenpepper) \*\* Uncaged are having a Diaries of Despair "Die In" on 21<sup>st</sup> September. 500 primates have died at Huntingdon Life Sciences in xenotransplantation experiments (SchNEWS 279) so bring monkey masks, face paints, costumes, banner, horns and whistles for monkey business etc. 12 noon, Parliament Sq, followed by a 'die in' at the Home Office. [www.xenodiaries.org](http://www.xenodiaries.org) \*\* Benefit for Rokpa & children of the Tibetan homeland. With folk music and SchINEMA followed by Technoshenanigans and Raggadubdisco at the Volks, Brighton next Wednesday (29) 8pm-3am.

\*\* The IMF & World Bank Wanted for Fraud Campaign is having a demo against UK gov't refusal to recognise slavery and colonialism as crimes against humanity at the UN Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa. 12-2pm, 1<sup>st</sup> September, Downing Street, Whitehall. 020-8749-7179. \*\* SchWOOPS In last week's Tanzanian air traffic story, we thought BAE Systems needed an Export Credit Guarantee (ECG), but they need an Export LICENCE. Schwoops! However - the info about both Tanzania and Export Credit (Yawn) Guarantees is correct, and one pleasant little Department backed scheme we'll be hearing a lot more about is the Yusefeli Dam. UK company AMEC is lining up for an ECG of £68 million which could displace 15,000 Georgians from their homeland. Contact Ilisu Dam Campaign 01865-200550.

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## Inside SchNEWS

\* Jeffrey Luers (aka Free) sentenced to an outrageous 22 years for setting fire to several jeeps in a car lot (SchNEWS 308/309) recently received a 42-day sentence in solitary after being attacked by two other inmates. While in solitary he can only receive letters, so get scribbling. Jeffrey Luers #13797671, TRCI, 82911 Beach Access Rd, Umatilla, OR. 97882, USA

\* In a desperate attempt to get SchNEWS free Sean (first ever Inside SchNEWS prisoner) is in jail again. This time for violent disorder at Mayday 2000. Write to Sea - FR8832, HMP Wandsworth, P.O.Box 757, Heathfield Road, London, SW18 3HS.

\* Mark Barnsley has been moved yet again. From Wakefield Prison to HMP Leeds segregation unit for refusing to do prison work for private companies (SchNEWS 317). Mark Barnsley WA 2897, HMP Leeds, 2 Gloucester Terrace, Armley, Leeds, LS12 2TJ

\* Mark Cullinane has been in a Moroccan jail for 5 years for smuggling cannabis. If £2,000 can be raised before the end of the year Mark will be released a year early and rejoin his family. Benefit gig 5<sup>th</sup> November at the Concorde2, Brighton. Donations are welcome <http://potwow.20m.com>. Write to: Mark Cullinane 21486,Chambre 7, Cartier C, Prison Civil, Tangiers, Morocco

Witnesses Needed: 20<sup>th</sup> May Hackney Town Hall was stormed by 50 angry residents protesting about council cuts (SchNEWS 306). Stephen Doyle (a drummer with Rhythms of Resistance who were outside the hall) was assaulted, sprayed with CS gas and arrested by police. He now faces a charge of threatening and assaulting a cop. And May Day this year, Nick Gray was arrested on the Critical Mass bike ride for wearing a baseball cap and sunglasses about 2pm on Malton Street, Euston.

Witnesses for either case contact Andy Katzen at Moss & Co solicitors 020-8986-8336, [andrew@mosslaw.co.uk](mailto:andrew@mosslaw.co.uk)

## Pool The Other One

We've received more info about the Govanhill swimming pool protest (SchNEWS 317). We've received reports of how a woman was taken to hospital with a suspected broken leg and an 11 year old boy was kicked by the police. Another woman was beaten up by police in a lane. When she made a formal complaint the police visited her at 3 in the morning in a blatant show of intimidation. Police on the demo were racist calling Asians "black bastards" and four officers beat an Asian man unconscious who was running away from a police horse charge. A daytime picket outside the swimming pool continues along with a police presence.

More info: 07000 752752 [www.saveourpool.co.uk](http://www.saveourpool.co.uk).

## ...and finally...

If you've ever been confused by all the jargon surrounding the global capitalist system here's a few definitions from The Devil's Dictionary of Free-Trade:

*conquest*: The means by which wealthy, powerful nations formerly subjugated weak, impoverished nations; since replaced by *debt*.

*debt*: A form of subjugation, formerly achieved by *conquest*.

*fair trade*: A soft-headed neo-socialist fancy.

*International Monetary Fund*: (IMF) The Third World's primary creditor and owner.

*level playing field*: Conditions favouring our exporters

See it in full at: [www.seattleweekly.com/features/9947/features-beers.shtml](http://www.seattleweekly.com/features/9947/features-beers.shtml)

## disclaimer

Would you credit it but we're bankrupt of warnings. Gotcha!