



LAST SUPPER

“That there are, today, still 815 million hungry people in the world is truly a crime. That the proposals we made nearly six years ago are now even further from being achieved is [even more] shameful.” - Sr. D. Felipe Pérez Roque, Cuban Foreign Minister.

In 1996 world leaders met at the World Food Summit to talk about how they might be able to reduce world hunger, a time when there were 800 million starving people. They made commitments to halve world hunger by 2015. Last month, nearly 6 years later, the follow on summit took place in Rome.

This year's summit was never going to get off to a good start, with the number of starving people in the world pretty much the same as at the time of the last Summit, and a massive famine looming in southern Africa. But rather than take the bull by the horns and do something for the poor, the leaders of the world's richest countries decided to stay at home and count their weapons. Only two managed to attend, and one of them Silvio Berlusconi – the Summit's host, even managed to wrap it up early so he could watch the footie.

This is in sharp contrast to the NATO-Russia Summit, also in Rome, five and a half weeks earlier, where 20 world leaders met and agreed effectively to sustain the \$800 billion a year global arms industry without a mention of the needs of the poor. In fact as Patrick Mulvany from Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) points out “Apart from Berlusconi and José Maria Aznar, the Spanish Premier, the only common link between the two Summits was the military operation of 16,000 police, carabinieri and soldiers put in place to contain the politicians and exclude the people. Many people from Civil Society were unable to enter the exclusion zone of half a kilometre around the building, which kept away the 30,000 person ‘March for Food Sovereignty: land and dignity’. [The Food Summit] became a military zone. And this emphasised the sense of oppression in the summit.”

In the absence of world leaders the summit was gobbled up by corporations, who made sure they didn't leave it empty handed. The final declaration was extremely bad news for the poor with a US imposed acceptance of genetically modified (GM) crops as a solution to world hunger, and an abandonment of any reference to the precautionary principle when it comes to GM food. The declaration also deleted any reference to a legally binding code of con-

duct on the right to food (the right to produce and consume food), and watered down the call to ratify the International Seed Treaty (ITPGFRA- see SchNEWS 329), which should stop the patenting of crops, to something that countries “should consider”.

So if you're starving from now on it seems that it's going to be the same but worse, with little hope for anything but GM food landing on your plate in the future. Food aid spiked with GM maize will now be dumped on the ravaged countries of southern Africa by Uncle Sam. This will cleverly pollute all the crops in the region, making any sustainable GM-free option a dead duck - so much for the World Summit on Sustainable Development being held in Johannesburg in August/September.

Meal Ticket

Six Hundred people took part in the Civil Society Forum for Food Sovereignty, also in Rome, at the same time as the official Food Summit This Forum was attended by many that were excluded from the main Summit: farmers, fisherfolk, pastoralists, indigenous peoples, environmentalists, women's organizations, trade unions, and NGOs. They came up with their own ‘Action Agenda’ that totally rejected the declaration made at the formal summit. Instead they called for a radical change in approach to address the real cause of hunger – international trade rules. Their agenda calls for the removal of food and agriculture from the control of the World Trade Organisation, an end to dumping of cheap food in poor countries, the total rejection of GMOs and patents on life, and investment in more sustainable locally controlled small-scale agri-ecology (sustainable agriculture).

Part of their press release read: “The 1996 Plan of Action has not failed because of a lack of political will and resources, but rather it has failed because it supports policies that lead to hunger, policies that support economic liberalisation for the South and cultural homogeneity, which are backed by military force if the first wave of prescriptive actions fail. Only fundamentally different policies, which are based on the dignity and livelihoods of our communities can end hunger. We affirm our belief that this is possible and urgently needed.”

The fact that anybody is hungry in the world today is a scandal: there is no scarcity of food overall. In fact we've never grown so much food; and food has rarely

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For stealing 3 pence worth of paper!

Three people were last week beginning a year each in jail after taking part in an action as part of the Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty campaign.

They were targeting one of Huntingdon's customers – Roche, who apparently weren't even aware anything had gone missing until it appeared on the Internet. The paper contained internal phone numbers and data on employees, the website has now been closed down.

Compare these sentences to Roche's prescribed acne drug Roaccutane. The International Roaccutane Action Group says the drug can cause depression and suicide. 15 people in Britain who were given it on prescription have committed suicide with 10 others attempting to take their life. Of course these side effects were not detected by animal testing, nobody from Roche has been prosecuted and Roaccutane is still being dished out in the UK! (Support the prisoners – see overleaf)

been so cheap. But as trade liberalisation has increased there's been increasing levels of hunger amongst growing mounds of plenty, now spiked with GMOs. The bottom line has become that if you want to eat then you've got to pay, and that goes just as much for those in Europe and the USA as in poorer countries. Unless the situation changes by 2015 it's predicted 122 million people will have died needlessly of hunger.

As Patrick Mulvany, from ITDG says “It is our Global Shame that nearly a quarter of the population goes to bed hungry in a world that has never before produced so much food. The sad reflection on the formal summit is that governments will do little to eradicate hunger and corporations will continue to be allowed to extend their control over who gets to eat. And there is little profit in providing for the poor.”

* Check out the Forum for Food Sovereignty Action Agenda: www.forumfoodsovereignty.org

* For analysis of the summit and information on sustainable agriculture check out www.ukabc.org/wfs5+.htm or www.itdg.org

* For the low down on aid and food dumping check out www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Poverty/FoodDumping.asp

* An Andean root crop has become the latest victim of biopiracy by a US corporation. Extracts of the Maca, a crop that has been grown for centuries by indigenous people in the Puna highlands in Peru, have been patented for their viagra like (sexual potency) and natural fertility properties. Indigenous people's and farmers organisations are vowing to ignore the patent, and last month held a protest outside the offices of the Ecological Forum in Lima denouncing the biopiracy. Full story at www.etcgroup.org

* The 18 sites that will be used for the last 3 years of farm scale GM trials have just been announced. Check them out at www.geneticsaction.org.uk/testsites.

GHOSTBUSTERS

Gabriel Nkwelle, a human rights activist and asylum seeker will be starting his appeal against his deportation on Monday 29th July at Bromley Magistrates Court, he is urging people to turn up and show some support. Gabriel arrived in Britain in May 2000 to claim asylum after exposing massive electoral fraud in his native Cameroon, but was promptly thrown in jail. Since then he has been 'ghosted' (moved) from prison to prison and detention centre to detention centre a total of ten times. While inside he was a tireless campaigner for other asylum seekers, a lot of whom couldn't speak very good English, and was a thorn in the side of the establishment, before being released late last year. So get down to Bromley at 10am on 29th July in the Immigration Appellate Authority Section, First Floor, 1 London Road, Bromley, Kent and make some noise.

*For the past 16 days the inmates at Woomera detention/concentration camp in the outback of Australia have been on hunger strike in protest at the appalling conditions they have to endure. In solidarity people have been fasting all over the world - Mexico, India, the U.S. and Israel outside their Australian embassies. On Wednesday in London around 100 people turned up for a rally in support of the detainees.

STOP PRESS -The hunger strike has now been called off because the authorities at Woomera stopped all medical treatment for the inmates and because of this all the solidarity fasts have now finished. For more info check out <http://autonomous.org/refugee/> or www.ran.dhs.org

BLITZED

Blitz promises to be "a kick-ass anti-corporate extravaganza" to coincide with the Commonwealth Games being held in Manchester later this month.

Organised by NATO - that's Northern Arts Tactical Offensive, the festival covers a week of shows, actions and events kicking off on Sat 20th July with an open air music event, and the opening of two exhibitions. One is AgiTATE being held in a spanking new shopping mall who failed in their bid to ban it once they realised what was happening! Throughout the week there will be film and multimedia events organised by Beyond TV. The week will end with a skate attack and critical mass plus political street theatre on Saturday 27th. NATO has also produced a spoof guide to the city to guide tourists to their events.

During that week there will also be a GM trashing nearby, Manchester People's open seminar for the Anti Commonwealth Games Coalition and lots of anti sweatshop actions. For a full programme see www.nato.uk.net

Direct action magazine Loombreaker reports "the Commonwealth Games are being used to launch a new Corporate Manchester - a posh apartment playground for coke-sniffing yuppies, ... The cost of the games are astronomical - the stadium alone accounts for a cool £120 million - but you won't hear too much about £80m of public money the council has committed to paying... So if you're wondering why there are cutbacks in schools and housing, or where your local swimming pools and other public amenities have all gone when your council rents and tax are rising, there's not much need to look any further really."

Inside SchNEWS

The 3p three (See Crap Arrest)

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BARON BOOKBURNER

A man who targeted a radical bookshop because it didn't like the material they stocked walked away from the High Court last week with just £14 in damages - but the case leaves two of London's last remaining radical bookshops facing potentially crippling legal bills.

The case was brought nearly 2 years ago against Housmans Bookshop by Alexander Baron, a right-wing anti-gay litigant who had been referred to as a plagiarist in one sentence in a 136-page pamphlet stocked in the shop. Baron decided not to sue the author or publisher, but the shop, at one point asking them to pay him £50,000 to drop the case.

This case is the first time the defence of "innocent dissemination" has been used, where it was argued that it is impossible for bookshops, particularly small independents, to check - and take responsibility - for the content of the thousands of publications in stock at any one time. As Albert Beale from Housmans said "We feel it is important to try to take a stand, otherwise there might be no end to this sort of legal intimidation."

This action against Housmans was one of a series, dating back to 1996, brought against them, Bookmarks (also in London) and others, by people criticised in Searchlight magazine. The next case is due in court this autumn and the bookshops need donations for legal costs. Send cheques (payable to the "Bookshop Libel Fund"), 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1 9DX, 020 7278 4474 On-line donations at www.apoogee.com/Housmans

SchNEWS in brief

Albion Community Arts Trust have a two day festival fundraiser for a Norwich Free festival. Norwich Playhouse 19-20th July. 01603-717074 www.albionarts.org ** Benefit for **Walthamstow Anarchist Group** featuring Thatcher's Children plus others. 19th upstairs, Chestnut Tree, 757 Lea Bridge Rd, London E17. £3 info@walthamstowanarchy.org.uk ** If you've ever worked with **Veggies** catering campaign (even if it was just once) they want to speak to you for a book. Write to PO Box 2284, London, W1 5HU Or ronny.garlic@blueyonder.co.uk

** **Want some SchNEWS stickers?** Send the office an SAE to help spread the word. ** **Reclaim the Beach 9** - more urban free-party-in-posh-looking-venue-nonsense, Saturday 13th 8pm, Royal Festival Hall Beach south bank www.swarming.org.uk ** **No War But Class War** political discussion Saturday 13th 2-5pm Rutland Arms, Brown St, Sheffield (nr. Sheffield Railway Station) SheffieldNWBCW@aol.com

** **Interested in development of alternative education?** Meeting at the Brighthelm Centre, North Rd., Brighton 23rd July 7pm ** Campaign Against Arms Trade protest against **Farnborough Air Show**, 22nd-28th July. "Whilst the public days are championed as fun days out for all the family, the reality is very different. Farnborough is an arms fair and a very important date in the defence industry calendar." 020 7281 0297 www.caat.org.uk ** Brighton's **Radio4A** is back on the airwaves this weekend on 107.8 FM and www.piratetv.net ** **A protest camp has been set up near Edinburgh** to stop a bypass destroying an SSSI. Help urgently needed. 07753808709 ** **Woodside Traveller Site latest:** The Romany travellers at Woodside caravan park in Bedfordshire (see SchNEWS 360) have been given their eviction date, its 1st November, they want people to come down to resist. Tents, campfires, cups of tea and music will be provided. More info: Clifford Codona 01206 523528 (mornings only) ** **Protest against Working Links** exploitation of unemployed people. Meet 10am Wednesday 17th Pavillion Gardens Cafe, New Road, Brighton.

PIPING HOT NEWS

A consortium of oil companies led by BP has big plans to build a 1,777km long oil pipeline from Baku in Azerbaijan, to Ceyhan, Turkey via Georgia, so that Caspian Sea oil can be exported to the US. BP, the world's third largest oil company, are begging the World Bank and other national export credit departments to provide them with credit for this environmentally disastrous scheme.

Campaigners against the pipeline are pressing these institutions to refuse credit, cos' apart from the obvious pollution the oil will cause when burned, they believe the pipeline may well exacerbate tension in a region recovering from conflict, and will provide no benefit to local people. The pipeline passes through several Kurdish regions in Turkey, according to Kerim Yildiz of the Kurdish Human Rights Project "This pipeline would militarise a corridor running from the Caspian to the Mediterranean. This could threaten the fragile cease fire in the Kurdish region through which the pipeline will pass." For more information see www.bankwatch.org

* Rising Tide weekend summer school on climate change 26-28th July. Booking a space essential: 01865 554331 george@risingtide.org.uk

* Climate Criminals Critical Mass will pay a visit to the perpetrators of the pipeline on 15th July. Meet 2pm outside the National Film Theatre, South Bank, London.

* The Ecotopia Biketour is coming to the UK this summer along their route they will be doing actions and giving workshops. www.thebiketour.net

Positive SchNEWS

Vegan-organic gardening is organic gardening, which avoids the use of any animal products, such as manure and animal remains, which many people use to fertilise the soil. The advantage of this type of gardening is that there's no animal exploitation at all, instead you can enjoy piling your vegetable beds high with home made vegetable compost.

If you're interested in learning vegan-organic skills the Vegan Organic Network have a training weekend, 20-21st July in Bolton. Only £15 for a day, £25 for the whole weekend. Contact Jenny Hall, 20 Hawthorn Ave, Orrell, Wigan, WN5 8NQ. Phone 07855 392037 jennymosscentre@hotmail.com www.veganorganic.net

...and finally...

"This is the first-ever in-depth research into the health risks of anorak wearing," Professor Philip Murray announced at a press conference at Birmingham City Hospital, "and the results are remarkable. Campaigns to reduce road traffic accidents have hitherto paid little attention to the subject, but our findings prove what many people have long suspected. Put simply, the wearing of anoraks can be dangerous, and injurious to health.

"Our researchers measured the binocular visual field of healthy volunteers while they were wearing four different styles of anorak. Most wearers habitually pull the hood over their head, and our ophthalmologists discovered that, with the hood up, the field of vision is more than halved. The biggest danger comes when an anorak wearer tries to cross the road, because their vision is severely impaired, and they simply cannot see as well as other people. Our results prove beyond doubt that people need to be far more careful in their choice of headgear. And quite apart from that, they look ridiculous." (*Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 2002.) Shamelessly stolen from Private Eye.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all greedy pigs we'll huff and puff on puff till yer Tower of Babylon falls down. Honest.