



WAKE UP!! IT'S YER ALL GONE PEAR-SHAPED

SchNEWS

www.schnews.org.uk



Friday 2nd April 2004

Free/Donation

Issue 448

GACK ATTACK

“The triumph of the fast-food system was aided at almost every step by government subsidies, lack of proper regulation, misleading advertisements and a widespread ignorance of how fast, cheap food is actually produced. This system is not sustainable. In less than three decades it has already done extraordinary harm. When the fast food industry is made to bear the costs it is now imposing on the rest of society, it will collapse.” - Eric Schlosser, author of ‘Fast Food Nation’.

This week a survey about our junk food nation revealed that the expression ‘let them eat cake’ is being taken literally when it comes to toddlers in Britain. It seems that all those future World Cup champions are being brought up with a more-than healthy dose of good-ol’ chocolate, chips and white bread - and that the majority of all children in Britain do not eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables each day. So it’s not surprising that childhood obesity is becoming an epidemic with the Chief Medical Officer, referring to the disease as a “health time bomb.”

But while Neo Labour tries to dump the lard problem on the public for not exercising enough and not eating up all yer (genetically modified) greens, in reality it could have something to do with the selling-off of school playing fields, school dinners in the hands of profit motivated contractors, and the lashings of junk food advertising aimed at kids which the Govt refuse to do anything about.

Eat Shit & Die

Food advertising aimed at children is dominated by high-salt, sugary and fatty foods. Despite a report by 106 organisations calling for a ban, and research by the government’s own Food Standards Agency which found, would you believe, that “advertising does affect children’s food choices and behaviour, and not just which brands but the types of food they choose”, the Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell said the government would not be regulating junk food ads and instead will give us all “informed choices” and talk about partnerships (‘partnerships’ where those selling their crap get some good PR by giving away things like McDonalds vouchers for kids that are well behaved.) Partnerships where the Sports Minister, Richard Caborn, was ‘delighted’ that Cadburys were helping raise funds for sports equipment in schools. How? By persuading children to eat mountains of chocolate of course! Food and farming group, Sustain, calculated that to receive a set of volley ball net posts, school kids

would need to stuff down 1.25 million calories at a cost of £2,000.

So who do we blame? Deirdre Hutton, chair of the National Consumer Council reckons “We must move beyond the blame game and start giving parents real practical help. The majority of snacks aimed at children are packed with high levels of sugar, fat and salt. More than 95% of food advertising on children’s TV is for foods that do little to encourage healthier diets. Supermarket check-outs are stacked with sweets and other gack. It’s little wonder that parents often struggle against pester power.” The response from the food and advertising industries is of course that advertising doesn’t persuade anyone to buy anything! So why on earth do they waste \$50 billion globally a year (McDonalds alone spends \$2bn annually) - greater than the gross domestic product of 70% all the world’s countries - on advertising!?! Tim Mobsby from Kellogg’s even told Parliament that children would “stop eating breakfast” if advertisements for sugary cereals like Coco Pops were taken off children’s TV!

The Icing On The Cack

The food industry has become very good at keeping sugar out of the spotlight and in our food instead, hiding their products in everything from ‘liquid candy’ drinks to pizzas, while obscuring its dangers. Scientists from the British Nutrition Foundation and International Life Sciences Institute attacked attempts to create British and international guidelines on sugar consumption. Both bodies are paid for by corporations like Coca-cola whose drinks contain over six teaspoons of sugar per

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For wearing a baseball cap sideways!
A schoolboy in Arizona, USA, was arrested and held for several hours by police for refusing to turn his baseball cap to the front. Morgan, who is black, was having lunch when school security guards approached him about his hat. It is against school policy to wear hats sideways because it can be a sign of disrespect for authority, the police report said, but Morgan said that the rule is enforced selectively. According to a police report, he pointed to several white students whose hats were on sideways. Shortly after Morgan’s arrest, classmates staged a protest with one student being suspended for 10 days. Morgan was later released without charge.

can! As Professor Phillip James, from the committee on dietary guidelines explained: “The sugar industry has learned the tricks of the tobacco industry. Confuse the public. Produce experts who disagree, try to dilute the message, indicate that there are extremists like me involved in public health.”

These very same forces that peddle their unhealthy crap to children are the same vast multinational food traders, processors and retailers which scour the globe to obtain the cheapest raw ingredients to turn into high-profit, long-shelf life processed foods that dominate supermarket shelf-space. The same forces that have helped close down all the small family run farms and local shops. The same lot that has helped make all our shopping centres look and feel the same, drowning us in rubbish and encouraging low paid, low skilled workforces; the same force that has encouraged the cruelty of factory farming... We could go on (we usually do). The same corporations whose mentality is a whole lot more destructive than merely just turning us into a nation of lard-arses, and one whose power Neo Labour just hasn’t got the wholemeal stomach to take on.

* To read about getting away from imported supermarket food and growing yer own see www.schnews.org.uk/sotw/digging-for-victory.htm

* A new bill in America aims to protect fast food giants from future lawsuits and instead make obesity solely the responsibility of individuals. Dubbed the “Cheeseburger Bill”, the tobacco industry must be green with envy they didn’t come up with something like this. www.sevenoaksmag.com/features/04_cheeseburger

* The report ‘How Green Is Your Supermarket?’ shows that supermarket shoppers are spending £470 a year - a sixth of their food budget - on packaging while delivery lorries travel the equivalent of two return trips to the moon every day.

* Get this months Ecologist magazine for in depth stuff on the Slow Food movement. www.theecologist.org

SchNEWS at Ten Tour

10th April: Bath The Bell Hotel, 103 Walcot Street, 3pm / **11th:** Bristol Easton Community Centre, Kilburn St, 3pm - 6pm. / **12th:** Aldermaston Peace camp. / **14th:** Gloucester 11A, off Westgate Street / **15th:** Oxford The EOCC Community Centre, Princes Street off Cowley Road, 7pm. / **16th:** Leamington Community Gallery, Avenue Road. / **17th:** Bolton. / **18th:** Liverpool. / **19th:** Lancaster LaRC-The basement, 78a Penny St. / **20th:** Glasgow. / **21st:** Faslane Peace Camp, probably. / **22nd:** Bilston Woods road protest camp, near Edinburgh. / **23rd:** Edinburgh. / **24th:** Newcastle The Cluny, under Byker Bridge 2-4pm. / **25th Leeds.** / **26th:** Sheffield. / **27th:** Nine Ladies protest camp. / **28th:** Manchester Arch Bar, Stretford Road, Hulme 7.30pm. / **29th:** Nottingham. / **30th:** Norwich The Hog In Armour, Charring X, 7-11pm. For more details 01273 685913 www.schnews.org.uk/extras/tour.htm

Chardon Hey!

This week was a massive victory for anti-GM campaigners in the UK. Bayer Cropscience announced that they were withdrawing their genetically modified Chardon LL maize, which was the only GM crop that had been licensed for growing commercially in the UK. This now means that no GM crops will be grown commercially in the UK until at least 2008.

Bayer said that it was "economically non-viable" to grow GM maize due to government restrictions on the planting regime. But Bayer wouldn't concede that it was withdrawing the maize due to public pressure, but it was only public pressure that had forced the government to delay the growing of GM crops, otherwise GM would have been introduced five years ago.

It has taken Bayer years for them to get this close to growing just one crop commercially. The reality is that Chardon LL maize is a bad, out-of-date product, it's out-of-date because of delays caused by constant pressure and direct action. There has been a concerted campaign of protests, crop trashings, blockades, supermarket pickets and lobbying. It was clear that the public didn't want GM food and many supermarkets and food producers won't touch GM food.

Tony Blair and his biotech banker, the Science Minister Lord Sainsbury must both be gutted as well. Tony Blair has criticized anyone opposed to GM foods as anti-science, but the science has consistently shown GM crops to be damaging to the environment, the only way that the GM maize got the go ahead was through flawed experiments.

For everyone involved in the fight against GM this is a massive victory and proof that direct action works. However the fight against GM crops is still not won - GM crops are still imported into the UK and most of these are fed to animals. Bayer says they "remain highly committed to the further development of plant biotechnologies in the UK." Why don't they realise they've lost and give up?

Genetic Engineering Network:
www.geneticsaction.org.uk 0845 456 9329

Positive SchNEWS

School dinners don't just have to be burgers and chips - and to prove it one woman who works at St Peter's Primary school in Nottingham has set about making sure school dinners are worth queuing for.

Jeanette Orrey started providing school meals on site using as many organic and locally produced ingredients as possible. And although ingredient costs have doubled, the cost of a dinner has stayed the same thanks to cutting out contract suppliers and bureaucracy. Soaring demand for school meals at St Peter's has also helped - 90% of the kids eat there now, compared to a national average of 45%.

Dinner time has also taken on an educational role - kids designing menus and learning about and the amount of pollution caused by food travelling thousands of miles. Parents can now eat at the school any day and on Wednesdays senior citizens are served by some of the older children who then sit and eat with them. She says "I'm just trying to provide decent, fresh food for the children and making sure they learn what food's good for them. It's what being a school cook should be about." www.localfoodworks.org

* The Soil Associations Cultivating Communities Project is having a 'Linking Farms, Families and Food' Conference on 15th April at Penwith Business Centre, Longrock, Penzance 0845 458 0194 www.cuco.org.uk

* 'Good Food on the Public Plate' by Sustain and East Anglia Food Link says that buying local food for use in our school, hospital and prison canteens would boost local economies by at least £5 billion. Copies: 020 7837 1228 www.sustainweb.org

SchNEWS in brief

Electronica All Dayer, 3.30pm - midnight. Easter Sunday, Club 85, Whinbush Road, Hitchin. Benefit for People's Global Action. www.agp.org ** On March 24, 1989, the **Exxon Valdez** spilled 11,000,000 gallons of crude onto Alaska's shores. 15 years later the oil companies haven't made their industry any safer. Check out this short movie online www.notanothervaldez.com ** Survivors of the **Union Carbide Bhopal disaster** which killed 20,000 people have been awarded the **2004 Goldman Environmental Prize**. They are now leading the international fight for corporate accountability from Dow Chemical, who acquired Union Carbide in 2001. www.goldmanprize.org

** **Exhibition of stencil graffiti art** from the streets of Iraq and Palestine - The Foundry, Great Eastern Street, London, Tues 6th - Sun 18th 07968 849792 warscrawls@yahoo.com ** **Al-Hawza** - the Iraqi newspaper critical of the US/UK occupation of Iraq has been shut down because articles "form a serious threat of violence against coalition forces" - this is despite no articles calling for armed attacks. It had merely said that a bomb attributed by the US to a suicide bomber was a rocket from a US Apache helicopter, and had an article titled "Bremer follows the steps of Saddam," - so much for freedom of expression ** **Radical Video Night** including the world premiere of **Porkbolter** video, featuring footage of several recent Worthing protests next Tuesday (6), 7.45pm, upstairs at The Downview pub, West Worthing. ** We are putting together a book and a film about the past decade of SchNEWS events. If you've got **photos, flyers, and video** (any format) contact the SchNEWS office. ** Fundraiser at the **Volks**, showing the **Injustice** film, Wed 7th, 9 pm followed by DJs. ** **Bristol Anarchist Network** are organising an open discussion on "**community activism, revolutionary or reformist?**" with speakers from St Pauls, and Haringay Solidarity Group a community group from London with 14 years experience Thur (8), 7.30 - 9.30pm, **Easton Community Centre**, Kilburn Rd, Easton, BS5 6AW bristolanarchistnetwork@subsection.org.uk

Protest Camp Updates

* **Blackwood** protest camp, just outside Cardiff, is still there despite more than a week of evictions. A bunker slightly off the site and on privately owned land remains occupied, and about 10 large trees on route are still there on the account of nesting birds. Other trees have been trashed, along with the treehouses in them. There will be a meeting at 3pm this Sat (3rd) at Kerry Camp to carry on the fight. 07708420446 / 07811 948764

* **Sherwood Forest Camp** has a ONE month (not 2 as reported in last weeks issue) reprieve due to the council looking into the viability of the scheme. On April 25th there will be a Spring Fair at the camp from 12pm. Performance artists, musicians, etc who wish to partake contact 07792 789803. As always, people are needed at both camps, as well as...

* **Nine Ladies Camp**. No imminent eviction yet. The company responsible for the planned destruction, Marshalls (01484 438900) have had a busy week. Last Thursday 25 people stormed and occupied their Yorkshire offices, and the next day, their depot at Mansfield Woodhouse was blockaded and occupied.

* Meanwhile, a new tree occupation has begun against the proposed F5 road scheme, planned for the A1159 **Priory Crescent north, Southend on Sea**, Essex. priory_parklife@yahoo.co.uk

* **Bilston Glen Protest Site**, 8 miles outside Edinburgh, has a free café on Saturday 4th April. 07986 632429 www.bilstonglen-abs.org.uk

All these camps need more people, tat, inspiration and energy. Now that the weather's getting better there's no excuse.

Poll Boycott

On Monday 5th April people across Indonesia will be forced to vote in the latest round of parliamentary elections. The rather dubious list of politicians they will be able to choose from include Wiranto, the former defence minister and retired general indicted on charges of crimes against humanity in East Timor, "Sister Tutut" the daughter of ex-military dictator Suharto and Prabowo Subianto, Suharto's former son-in-law accused of kidnapping student activists. Transparency International this month put the Suharto family at the top of its list of all-time corrupt leaders estimating the family had stashed away \$35bn in 32 years of rule.

It comes then as no surprise to hear that mass boycotts of these elections are planned in the country's most oppressed regions. For the first time ever, people in Aceh, Mollucas and West Papua will act together in resistance to the Indonesian state by refusing to vote and blockading polling stations. But this is no small act. Voting is obligatory in Indonesia and heavily enforced by violent police. The last time West Papuans refused to vote was in 1977 and in response Suharto unleashed a massacre, bombing highland villages, forcing thousands to starve in the jungles and slaughtering any that remained. People still talk of watching their families being thrown alive into mass graves and how the Baliem River "ran red with blood".

* There will be a demonstration at the Indonesian embassy in London in solidarity with the boycotts aiming to reduce the ferocity of a backlash. Meet midday at Green Park underground station on Mon 5th April. Those further a field can phone the embassy on 0207 4996661 or fax 4914993. Simultaneous demonstrations are also planned in the Netherlands and the US.

* TAPOL, Indonesia human rights campaign: <http://tapol.gn.apc.org/home.htm>

* Human Rights Watch: <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2003/12/31/indone7005.htm>

...and finally...

David Blunkett leads the Charge of the Tight Brigade once again. On Tuesday, Blunkett will fight in the Royal Courts of Justice in London for the right to charge victims of miscarriages of justice more than £3000 for every year they spent in jail while wrongly convicted! The logic is that the innocent man shouldn't have been in prison eating free porridge and sleeping for nothing under regulation grey blankets. His spokesmen in the Home Office says it's a completely "reasonable course of action" as the innocent men and women would have spent the money anyway on food and lodgings if they weren't in prison. The government calls it 'Saved Living Expenses'.

Paddy Hill, of the Birmingham 6, spent 16 years behind bars for a crime he didn't commit. Paddy has now been presented with a bill for £50,000 for "living expenses" incurred while wrongly convicted. "The establishment hates me and people like me as we proved them wrong," he said. "They either want to ignore us or hurt us."

Vincent Hickey, one of the Bridgewater Four, wrongly convicted for killing a paperboy, was charged £60,000 for the 17 years he spent in jail. He said: "If I had known this I would have stayed on hunger-strike longer, that way I would have had a smaller bill."

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all readers that there's nothing better than a good Ronnie 'n' Reggie stew followed by a homemade Kevin Keegan chocolate cake.

No SchNEWS next week cos we'll be busy eating our organic, fair trade Easter eggs made out of lentils (and also cos we need a rest). But don't forget our training day next Wednesday (7th).

Subscribe!

Keep SchNEWS FREE! Send 1st Class stamps (e.g. 10 for next 9 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 0EF. Tel +44 (0)1273 685913 Email schnews@brighton.co.uk Download a PDF of this issue or subscribe at www.schnews.org.uk