

GREENWASHING

THE SOY INDUSTRY

The new offensive by corporations to consolidate their gains under the pretence of sustainability

A corporate strategy to co-opt NGOs in order to legitimise the seizure and destruction of natural resources.



An information booklet from the Rural Reflection Group (GRR, Argentina) on the Sustainable Soy proposal from WWF, an initiative in the form of an industrialists' round table, organised by Unilever, André Maggi Corporation of Brazil, COOP (Switzerland), and the NGOs and Civil Society organisations, WWF, CORDAID, and FETRAF-SUL.

The proposal signals acceptance of the global monoculture model, a model which is manipulated at every stage by the agrochemical corporations, from the production and sale of seeds, the distribution of pesticides and machinery for direct drilling, pesticide spraying and harvest, the ports of export and the domination and replacement of our food culture.

december 2004, Buenos Aires

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1. Business Round Table on the production of "Sustainable Soya"

For several years the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has been concentrating on the environmental impacts related to the production of oil palm and soy at global level. The goals of the WWF are to reduce deforestation and protect "High Conservation Value Forests" and thus ensure the protection of key species in these important Ecoregions. In March 2005, the WWF is organising a Business Round Table to promote "the sustainable cultivation of soy". Their approach is based on establishing negotiations with all the important players throughout the chain of production.

In their attempt to preserve important ecosystems, WWF considers market actors, financial investors, consumers and affiliated NGOs as the key groups to inform.

Essentially, their work agenda consists of setting up negotiations where producers, the international market, NGOs, banks, retailers (supermarkets), flour and oil mills and exporters come together. The different stages of activity involve: developing criteria for sustainable production, implementing these in pilot projects and strengthening the communication and promotion of their developments both to financiers and the general public.

In this coalition the institutions pursue their individual interests, such as trying to protect wildlife, preventing deforestation, or making a profit. However all of these are approached within a framework where Argentina continues to be a producer of GM commodities for a globalised market. Some environmental organisations will seek to establish sanctuaries within the national parks and negotiate over the remaining native forests, while acting as guides and experts helping to prevent the complete collapse of these ecosystems. The scientific and technical institutions are naively pursuing a national biotechnology project, overlooking the fact that even the most minute laboratory procedures are protected by patents, and placing the few remaining resources of the State at the service of multinational interests. At the same time, certain producers (mainly the smaller farmers) are trying to get their share, arguing about land tenure, believing that they are immune from paying royalties for their seeds, and drumming up support for so-called agrarian reform, while in reality fully complying with the soya model. GRR, on the other hand, totally disagrees on the agrarian model currently being imposed, knowing that it is not sustainable, would lead to total dependence, and would transform our land into commodity production units, where people would be treated as a disposable resource.

This means that the "Sustainable Soy" proposal of the WWF does not question the actual model of industrial agriculture implemented in South America. There is a model based on production for export, an agriculture designed for the needs of the international markets, for paying the international debt and increasing the GDP, rather than feeding the local population and strengthening food sovereignty. In this way WWF takes on the role of a promoter of "green" capitalism : never interrupting the flow of financial interests, supporting the increase of industrial production, seeking to convince transnational corporations to subtly shift towards less damaging practices and in this way ultimately helping them to legitimise their operations.

The round table on sustainable soy will develop into a private club, where corporations, with the help of environmentalists, will be able to use the label of sustainability to greenwash their industry. The goal of the process of the Round Table is that in 2007 South America will be able to provide the global market with soy that has been certified as "sustainable".

"Managing the Soy Boom: Two scenarios of soy production expansion in South America "

This report published by WWF in June 2004 reveals that the expansion of soybean cultivation threatens to destroy nearly 22 million hectares of forests and savannah in South America by 2020. The report warns that the demand for soy is expected to increase by 60 % in the next 20 years, which could lead to the loss of approximately 16 million hectares of savannahs and 6 million hectares of tropical forests in the region. Soy exports from South American countries are due to a high demand in the European Union and China, where the crop is used to feed fish, pigs, chickens and cattle. The author, M. Dros, presents a "better policies scenario", estimating that deforestation caused by agricultural expansion would be greatly reduced – to an estimated 3.7 million hectares – if soy producers made better use of soil and fodder resources by, for example, integrating soy farming with cattle ranching.

However, the WWF study does not appear to have properly taken into account the situation on the ground in relation to soya production in Argentina. The expansion of monocultures has wiped out the green belts of large and small cities, which were composed of dairy units, poultry farms and family farms. Apart from providing local food, these farms limited the impact of large agricultural production on the urban areas. Now, soya

production reaches the outermost streets of the towns and, therefore, spraying with Glyphosphate, 2.4D, Paraquat and endosulfan are causing serious health problems, such as cancer, birth defects and spontaneous abortions. In the small towns surrounded by the green desert of soya, some of the spraying aircraft do not even switch off their fumigators when flying over urban areas, exposing the entire population to the above terrible hazards.

2. Actors in the Business Round Table on “ Sustainable Soy”

The first meeting of the Business round table on sustainable soy will take place in Foz de Iguazú 17-18 March 2005.

It is worth analysing the composition of the organising committee for the upcoming meeting in Iguazu: it consists of the Swiss supermarket chain CO-OP, the Dutch development agency CORDAID representing the Dutch coalition of NGOs on soy, the Federation of Small Family Farmers from the South of Brazil Fetraf-Sul/CUT, Amaggi or André Maggi (a Brazilian company producing and exporting soy) the Dutch multinational Unilever and WWF. The president of the meeting will be Yolanda Kakabadse, president of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature). The potential profits from this initiative are such that Syngenta also asked to participate in the organising committee. As might be expected the corporations gave them green light, but the NGOs opposed them. According to the WWF this initiative will be democratic and will represent all interests of the sector, because corporations and civil society will be equally represented and decisions will be taken by consensus.

Grupo André Maggi

The André Maggi Group is one of the six members of the organising committee of the round table on sustainable soy. Also known as Amaggi, the company is a soy producer, processor, merchant, crusher and exporter in Brazil. The company belongs to Blairo Maggi, the world's largest soy magnate and current governor of the state of Mato Grosso. In the past two years the group cultivated 190,000 hectares, an increase of 61 percent. In September 2004, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), which is part of the World Bank, approved another \$30 million loan to Amaggi. The loan will enable Amaggi to finance 900 soy planters in Mato Grosso and Rondonia states in Brazil and increase its own production capacity as well as its capacity to buy, store, transport and trade soybeans produced by other farmers. It will also allow them to build new silos in Mato Grosso.

Blairo Maggi is using public funds to ensure gains for his own company and to expand his soy plantations, which threaten to destroy biodiversity and ecosystems. By giving this loan, the IFC is ignoring critical evaluations by civil society, whose organisations argue that the IFC acted without even carrying out an environmental evaluation to consider the risks of the project and on top of that they did not comply with the time limits for public consultation that correspond with this type of project. This example adds to the evidence that both financial institutions and corporations participating in the round table on sustainable soy are indifferent to the severe impacts on the environment and local communities caused by the agricultural industrial model of GM crops and monocultures. On top of this, Maggi has publicly announced that RR soy will be planted in the 2005 season if that is the most beneficial economically.

Fernando Frydman - Coordinator of the Round Table on Sustainable soya

In order to understand more clearly for whom this initiative is designed, it is worth seeing who is working with WWF in South America. The meeting in Foz de Iguazu is being coordinated by Fernando Frydman. He has the task of organising the meeting and inviting groups and corporations. His past history gives clear indications of his orientation. He is the founder of the Social Management Center in Buenos Aires, and a member of the board and vice-president of the Fundación Compromiso. This foundation received donations in 2002 from Monsanto, Unilever, Citybank, Bank of Boston, the Clarín group, Argentina, Revista Tercer Sector (Third Sector Review), and the oil company Repsol YPF, amongst others. Frydman has studied in universities in the US and has written several books on the subjects of “Obtaining Funds” and “Cultivating Business”. He has also written a manual on the Development of funding for Social Organisations. According to Frydman, he “would like to see the seeds of a sustainable soy industry in the near future” and this can only be reached through a discussion involving constructive agreements.

The role of WWF

The vision of WWF is that the round table is a forum where civil society can present their complaints and demands to the agribusiness industry. According to WWF, to achieve their goals in these negotiations, they have

to play the game of “good cop - bad cop”. NGOs should take on different roles. Some should be more radical so that WWF can use the opportunity to persuade the agribusiness multinationals to become more flexible and sensitive. In this way, WWF presents itself as the only actor capable of changing the current situation, discounting both the struggles and the resistance of local movements and the regulatory role of State institutions. Instead, they plan to exploit the criticisms of this model by local groups in order to gain a better position in their negotiations with corporations.

When the moderators themselves doubt the role that they assume

Even before starting the round table, WWF privately assumed that it would be useless to try and change the big agricultural exporters like Bunge, ADM and Cargill. According to WWF, these companies are too big and strong to respond to environmental demands. Inevitably they impose their own interests. In addition, it is difficult to follow their product chain from start to finish.. These companies work in the big ports, which they basically own. They directly supply industry in general. Their products encompass the entire food chain but are invisible to the public eye. So what could convince them to change their drive for profit concentration and appropriation to which absolute control of the chain of production is vital?

3. Greenwashing: Green strategies used by multinationals.

The resources and deception through which transnationals create false public ecological and humanitarian images to legitimize their operations are public relations strategies known as GREENWASHING. These strategies are clearly visible in the objectives of the "Sustainable Soya" plan. When they mention the promotion of "developments between financiers and the public", in reality they are talking about public relations. They try to convince consumers that **their** products are safe, healthy and do not violate environmental or human rights. At the same time they try to reassure the international financial institutions that their industry is not vulnerable to criticisms that imply risks for investment.

There are many other points that indicate greenwashing in this initiative; for example, any agreements will merely be voluntary, that is, multinationals will only confirm an interest and show good will, and there will not be any sanctions if these corporations do not fulfil their commitments.

The reality that they don't want to reveal

WWF's desire to sit at the table and negotiate with corporations is so great that many essential issues related to the soy model are being ignored or marginalised. We refer to important facts such as :

- Over 95% of all soy production in Argentina is genetically modified, consisting of the variety of RR soy, resistant to the herbicide Roundup (glyphosate), and produced and patented by Monsanto.
- Brazil's and Paraguay's crops are contaminated by GM soy smuggled from Argentina. With the recent liberalisation of commerce in GM soy in Brazil, RR (Roundup Ready) soy may be massively used by soy producers, as the Maggi Group has suggested for the season 2005/2006 (http://www.agrolink.com.br/noticias/pg_detalhe_noticia.asp?cod=20200).
- The rural population, as well as neighbourhoods around urban areas surrounded by RRsoya fields are suffering from contamination caused by the intense use of glyphosphate, paraquat, atrazine, 2,4D (herbicides) and other pesticides, such as endosulphan (insecticide) plus fungicides applied to pesticide resistant crops
- Monocultures cause environmental problems. Since the introduction of direct drilling, new disease problems have arisen. For example, the fungus Asian rust (*Phakopsora pachyrhizi*) has recently appeared in Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. The soy monocultures are also suffering from an increasing number of other problems such as slugs, insect pests e.g the southern green stink bug (*Nezara viridula*), soyboll weevil (*Sternuchus pinguis*).
- The implementation of industrial agriculture has provoked the loss of agricultural biodiversity and the destruction of local economies.
- The implementation of a technological industrial model in agriculture has resulted in the concentration of land in the hands of landowners and anonymous corporations, resulting in the expulsion of rural workers and small and medium-sized producers.

Violence and depopulation of rural areas.

According to peasants and environmental movements and organisations in South America, the proposal from WWF ignores the seriousness of the rural situation in South America. Communities of peasants and indigenous

people are suffering violent attacks and repression because of the economic power of industrial soy. Examples include:

Paraguay: Farmers start to destroy the GM soya crops because the pesticide spraying is destroying their own farms. Police guarding the fields have shot them.

Argentina: Peasant communities are attacked and evicted from their land by private security guards. Members of organisations are arrested and falsely accused when they try to resist eviction. Spraying of surrounding RR soy plantations peasant communities destroys their crops grown for subsistence and sale in local markets, and seriously affects their animals' and their own health. Entire neighbourhoods around urban areas near RRsoya plantations are suffering from increased morbidity and mortality for the same reasons.

Rural depopulation: The use of genetic engineering packages plus direct drilling requires less manual labour and results in an increase of unemployment and the destruction of local markets, which brings about migration to cities and rural depopulation.

Food Apartheid and health: In Argentina food apartheid has been established: the more advantaged social classes still have access to a diverse and nutrient rich diet. However, health problems linked to the massive distribution of GM soy amongst the marginalised part of the population are increasing. Their monotonous diet is based on transgenic soybeans containing high residues of agrochemicals, without any kind of control of pesticide residues. The soya also contains high levels of anti-nutrients and oestrogens. The massive intake of soy promotes malnutrition and can cause severe hormonal irregularities.

The intense deforestation in the Yungas region caused by the expansion of soy monocultures, has provoked an increase in cases of leishmaniasis, a parasitic infection transmitted by sandflies that were increasingly brought into contact with human populations because of deforestation.

The WWF proposal focuses only on stopping deforestation and on preserving the biodiversity in threatened ecosystems. By applying some mitigating measures, the industrial production of soy could become sustainable exploitation. But the situation in reality is much more complex than that presented by WWF...

4. Greenwashing at a national level : The harvest of 100 million tonnes: “Transforming threats into solutions”

Only in Argentina could the president of a nature conservation institution like the FVSA (Foundation for the Life of the Forest, the Argentinean branch of WWF) be at the same time president of the Argentinean Association of Agrobusiness (AIMA) and the vice-president of Pioneer® Overseas Corporation, part of the Transnational Dupont. These corporations are some of the world's biggest producers of hybrid and GM seeds.

We are talking about Hector Laurence, and it is not too difficult for him to make his different interests coincide in his leadership on the different panels of “the harvest of a 100 million : transforming threats into solutions”: the Argentine version of the greenwashing of agribusiness.

According to FVSA “the initiative of the Round Table on ‘Sustainable Soy’ represents a historic opportunity for the different players in this market to come together proactively to define a policy for sustainability, before the global discussion on agriculture and sustainable development becomes confrontational and combative, as has happened in other areas like those of energy or industrial production”.

An analysis of the academic and environmental institutes that promote sustainable soya production reveals how the discourse of sustainability is being co-opted by agribusiness. The participation of well known environmental NGOs legitimizes the expansion of GM industrial agriculture and confuses civil society about the risks and impacts of these operations.

According to the minutes of the panel held on the 27th of April of this year, the executive committee of the “Panel of the Harvest of 100 Million tonnes” consists only of FVSA and AIMA members, that is, employees of Mr. Hector Laurence. The Assessment Committee of the environmental section is formed by Fundapaz, Greenpeace, the Foundation for Environment and Natural Resources (FARN: Fundación Ambiente y Recursos Naturales) and the Foundation Pro-Yungas. The production section of the committee is formed by The Argentine Association for Direct Drilling Producers (AAPRESID: Asociación Argentina de Productores de Siembra Directa), The Argentine Association of Partnerships for Agricultural Experimentation (AACREA: Asociación Argentina de Consorcios Regionales de Experimentación Agrícola) the Cereal Stockmarket of Buenos Aires and

Conservation Production (Producir Conservando). The scientific section is represented by the University of Buenos Aires, the National Institute of Cattle Farming Technology (INTA) and the National Council of Scientific and Technical Research (CONICET: Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas) and the governmental section is formed by Secretariat for Agriculture, Cattle-farming, Fisheries and Food (SAGPyA: Secretaría de Agricultura, Ganadería, Pesca y Alimentos) and The Secretariat for the Environment and Sustainable Development (SADyS: Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable). Once again, vague objectives are presented for mitigating social and environmental impacts. It is worth noting that all the points coincide with the interests of industrial agriculture:

- Defining the geographical area and characteristics of pilot projects for the critical zones in the Yungas, the Parana forests and the Pampas region.
- Putting into effect environmental norms for sustainable agriculture.
- Establishing the sustainability of agriculture on the basis of its economic, environmental, social and technical impacts (direct drilling).
- Identifying the geographical location of the 5 to 12 million hectares of agricultural land needed for the extension of agricultural production from the current 70 million tonnes to 100 million tonnes of oilseeds and other grains aimed at by the Panel.
- Exploring the role of agricultural systems in the absorption of carbon dioxide in conventional agriculture, no till/direct drill agriculture, natural forests and tree plantations in Argentina.

<http://www.yenys.com.ar/servinfo/download/Acta-4-Foro-100%20MS.pdf> <http://www.vidasilvestre.org.ar/>

5. Analysis by Robin Maynard

Summary of published letters in *The Ecologist*, issue November 2004.

It's clear that Europe doesn't understand the reality of mixed farming in Latin America, just as South America has an "ideal" vision of European agriculture and its "multifunctionality".

Robin Maynard is a co-founder of an organisation of independent farmers in the UK and an ecologist and agricultural activist for more than 15 years. He feels that the rural sectors of the UK, Europe and South America present two irreconcilable positions. In the letters he analyses the evolution of European agriculture following the two World Wars, in which an agro-industrial path was followed and labour on the land was replaced by agrochemicals, machinery and the use of drugs in animal production. The result was a swift increase in yields, and a corresponding decline in the diversity, health and quality of the land, forest, soil and water. The rise of agro-industry has brought prosperous times for many farmers, who increased production and gained from a seemingly limitless flow of subsidies, raised from the tax payer. However, the impacts on the environment, wild life and water were not taken into account. In the UK, by the end of the Second World War, there were 500,000 agricultural enterprises; by 1998 mixed farming had declined to 12,000 of a total of 240,000 viable agricultural enterprises, and stands today at less than 11,000.

Mixed agriculture with rotation of crops and livestock, allowing for fallow periods, maintains fertility, and prevents the spread of disease. It also produces diversity of habitats and provides the food that sustains wildlife. Robin Maynard affirms that in the post-war period, politicians, pushed by the lobby for agro-chemicals and machinery, instead of recognizing the benefits of mixed farming and putting their efforts into developing such systems, opted for production on an industrial scale. Civil servants declared that "more than half the farmers of the UK have to quit farming" adding that agricultural companies should grow and that this was a positive development. To this day, the British government still believes that the US model of agriculture is the only viable one. This means that anything less than 1500 – 2000 hectares, for each crop, is considered inefficient. On the basis of studies carried out by North Americans themselves, Robin Maynard affirms that where agribusiness dominates, villages die, increased mechanisation means there is less work, and the profits from big agricultural enterprises are "channelled" direct to the headquarters of corporations and banks in the distant cities.

In the last of his eight letters, the British ecologist points out that the incomes of farmers in the UK have fallen by 59% in the last 25 years, and in this context one cannot blame farmers for being so obsessed with prices. However, subsidies conceal the costs that the current model of agriculture no longer covers. A small number of enormous enterprises that produce and sell agrochemicals and processed food dominate the sector, charging farmers high prices for inputs and paying them low prices for their produce, relying on the taxpayer to fund the difference. The current situation is therefore that only the biggest and most efficient enterprises can compete without the help of subsidies. In the world of the "free market", if food can be produced more cheaply overseas,

this is what must be done. Organic producers can only survive by supplying niche markets. The others have to abandon the production of food and turn to providing “environmental services”, maintaining the land in exchange for an annual payment, for as long as the tax authorities and taxpayers will accept the farmer as a kind of "park ranger"

After reading this summary of the real European agriculture, it will be clear to South Americans that we are living a version “without subsidies” of the same model.

6. Animal Feed : A key Common Agricultural Policy issue

This short history from Via Campesina Europe clearly shows how the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) has always been an instrument to transform European agriculture into an industrial agriculture model with intensive production that benefits the interest of big economic groups. This industrial agriculture is based on a commercial, neoliberal and globalised model; a vicious circle that only feeds the corporate financial market. Through these policies Europe increases its consumption of fodder and its agriculture becomes dependent on imported fodder, which favours the rise of an intensive meat and milk industry. The surplus production is dumped on the South, destabilising local markets and causing rural desertification, which in turn benefits the expansion of an export oriented industrial agriculture in Europe.

1962- The origin of the Common Agricultural Policy

The Common Agricultural Policy, CAP, was founded in 1962. In this agreement, protection for European production of cereals, milk, meat and sugar was established. Animal feed was omitted from import duties due to pressure from the European animal feed lobby and the USA within the Marshall Plan. The new policy resulted in the increase in production of products favoured by the CAP and dependence on cheap imported fodder. Thus, the CAP of 1962 reinforced a change in agriculture towards a more intensive and industrialised livestock production, like the maize/soybean model that was developed in the USA.

EU awareness of its political mistake

The European Commission became increasingly aware of its mistake in becoming dependent on imported animal feed. So it tried to introduce an oilseed levy several times, but these efforts were thwarted by the USA and the European oilseeds lobby. In 1973 the USA seriously damaged Europe by declaring an embargo on soybean exports due to a bad harvest. This crisis led to a plan for the promotion of oilseeds production in Europe and from that year to 1990 European oilseed production increased from 0.6 million tonnes to 5.3 million tonnes. However, the USA appealed to the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) and in 1990 the plan was ruled incompatible with GATT rules.

1992: The EU reforms the CAP, but increases its plant protein dependency

In 1992 the EU reformed the CAP and finally abandoned its strategy for oilseeds production. It decided to gradually dismantle the community preference for cereals through a reduction in European prices and direct compensatory payments. One of the objectives of this strategy was to revitalise the internal market in fodder cereals thanks to lower prices.

However, through lowering the subsidies for the production of cereals, oilseeds and maize and neglecting grassland and other green fodder, the EU actually encouraged intensive livestock production, penalising the use of grazing pastures and local fodder crops and accelerating the demand for vegetable proteins.

November 1992- US/EU agreement under the GATT

At the end of 1992 the EU Commissioner McSharry negotiated an agreement under the GATT with the USA, which enabled the EU to continue to compensate farmers and at the same time reduce prices. In return, the USA forced a 5 million hectare ceiling for oilseed production by the 15 member states and a limit of 1 million tonnes for non-food oilseeds. Consequently, protein dependency and industrial livestock farming increased significantly. However, the EU decided in 1999 to prolong the 1992 CAP reform, reducing premiums for oil and protein crops, further decreasing cereals prices and maintaining the premium for maize silage.

Scandals related to intensive production

Because the CAP had encouraged the animal feed industry to seek out the cheapest supplies, there were scandals such as mad cow disease, the dioxin crisis, the abuse of antibiotics and growth promoters, and the foot and mouth and swine fever epidemics; all accentuated by intensive practices and geographical concentration.

GMOs

The first genetically modified products imported into Europe were feed crops (maize, rapeseed, and soybean) from the US. This was no coincidence, because as the EU imports these crops in huge quantities. The industry also hoped that since these products were not for immediate human consumption, but were nevertheless extensively used in the agri-food industry, GMOs would soon be ubiquitous enough for consumers to be forced to accept them without any real discussion having taken place. However, the BSE (mad cow) scandal changed all that and helped to cause a strong rejection of GMOs by European consumers.

Animal feed leads to EU production surplus

In the year 2000, the EU industry imported approximately 50 million tonnes of animal feed, including 29 million tonnes of soybeans. This led to production levels far in excess of Europe's needs, eg: 201% of its total requirements in milk powder, 132% of its requirements in skimmed milk powder, 108% in pork, 111% poultry, 105% beef and 115% cereals. At the same time its dependency on imported plant proteins increased by 70%.

Dumping of EU surpluses destroys agriculture in developing countries

The export of these surpluses cost European citizens 4.4 billion euros in taxes in 1999 alone. Essentially, such dumping destroys production capacity and ruins farmers in developing countries, unable to compete with the prices of European products. The US also dumps food in countries of the Southern hemisphere, including food aid consisting increasingly of GM crops that cannot be exported commercially. Dumping is the practice developing countries most strongly criticise in their discussions with the EU, US and WTO (World Trade Organisation).

Crisis of the agricultural model in Europe

In the past 40 years much European livestock production has been moved to the areas closest to the dozen or so main ports of entry for animal feed, so abandoning extensive areas in the interior which were ideal for agriculture and which often had rich traditions of livestock production.

This production has been brutally industrialised; farmers generally work on a contract basis for the industry; have less rights than an industrial employee and are much more vulnerable. The mountains of excrement produced in these production factories cause serious problems of contamination, affecting water quality and human health, and provoking wide-spread eutrophication (a process whereby water bodies receive excess nutrients that stimulate excessive plant growth).

2003- The EU maintains its policy

The reforms proposed for January 2003 and the EU position in the WTO negotiations show that the EU is still not prepared to change its animal feed policy. Despite the reports of the European Commission regarding the environment, rural development and animal welfare, no measures have been proposed to reform agro-industrial development. The strategy continues to be the production of agricultural commodities at very low prices, falling global price levels due to subsidies in the EU and the USA, continued export of cheap products to other countries (low internal prices + direct subsidies replacing export subsidies). In this way, dumping continues, but now supported by other instruments.

Relocation of livestock production outside the EU?

The logical conclusion of the failure of these policies would be to import animal products rather than animal feed. This tendency could be observed in the poultry sector in 2002. Companies like Doux (France) realised that they could increase profits by producing in countries like Brazil, with cheap labour and more flexible environmental regulations. The WTO is a big promoter of these kinds of policies. The dismantling of import tariffs and the obligation to import an increasing percentage of the EU's internal consumption benefits Northern companies which relocate their meat production. These companies must also maintain consumer preference in order to be able to "repatriate" their products to the European markets. Outside the EU, small Southern producers will be unable to compete with the low global prices that these policies impose. It is logical that the meat industry should follow the example of the textile industry (relocation to sweat-shops/maquiladoras in the South) If the EU maintains this political direction, Europe will soon export its contaminating agro-industry to the South and from there it will supply its supermarket chains and food processing industries in the Northern hemisphere.

7. Extracts from the GRR Position Paper published on 11-10-2004 in opposition to the proposal to implement a "Sustainable Soya" model

The GRR absolutely rejects the document issued in September by WWF, Gland, Switzerland, with the title *The soya boom: curse or gift for the forests and savannahs of South America*, in which they propose a so-called Sustainable Soya model because:

- it accepts the globalised soya model, according to which all stages of production and trade are managed by agribusiness> This control extends from the production and sale of seeds, the distribution of the machinery to plant the crop, apply the pesticides and harvest the crop, to the control of the ports of export. For Europe, the use of imported soya for animal feed means the loss of nutritional quality, industrial meat production with genetically modified feed and further deterioration of rural life. For the countries of South America, it represents desertification of the soil, collapse of agrarian ecosystems and hunger for our people.
- it ignores the social problems brought by soya, which has never been part of the Argentines' diet, and whose monocultures have caused job losses and displacement of rural populations towards the slums of the large cities, on a massive scale. The report also ignores the fact that soya has displaced cattle farming to marginal areas and flood plains, and worse, to livestock feed lots, where rather than feeding in pastures, the cattle are fattened with grains, especially soya, plus antibiotics and hormones.
- It further ignores the fact that, before the introduction of commodities based on agrochemicals and genetic engineering, Argentina was one of the countries with the highest level of certified organic production. Organic crops like maize can no longer be produced, due to contamination, while Argentinean honey has been downgraded in the market, as a result of chemical residues.

Our country used to be the breadbasket of the world and thanks to Soya we have become the Soya Republic.

It is naïve to imagine that it would be possible to reduce the risks of desertification by rotation with cattle grazing. Throughout millions of hectares of monocultures, the soya barons have removed fences, drinking wells for cattle, and windmills. The soya monoculture is driven only by cost reduction and profits, at the expense of natural resources.

This model, which has installed an agriculture without farmers, the concentration of land ownership and mass depopulation of rural areas, cannot be reversed in the manner proposed in the document. In reality, the policy of WWF is not to challenge the soya model, but to facilitate its implementation within the areas currently cultivated, while avoiding the social upheavals that are feared.

Furthermore, WWF is guilty of double standards when it states that the demand for exported soya, used mainly in animal feed, will more than double within the next 20 years. By accepting the reality drawn up by the multinationals, WWF is condemning the southern part of our continent to the role of feed producers, with no means of defending our food sovereignty and food security. The needs of the North are paramount in the policy of WWF and there is no thought for the growth of poverty and hunger in Argentina. Their reasoning is to multiply the capacity feed production in our countries, whilst preserving only a fraction of our forests and natural ecosystems. The pretence of making the growing soya production sustainable is at best naïve and at worst cynical.

Matthias Diemer, head of the WWF's forest Conservation Initiative said, "The study shows that it is possible to achieve higher production of soya without destroying nature". The WWF document states that a more intensive and efficient use of land along the existing roads and close to large population centres will reduce the need to destroy virgin habitats. However the study indicates that "for this scenario to function it is necessary that producers, investors, buyers, and regulators adopt and promote more sustainable practices and promote local governments to force compliance with land use laws and regulations effectively."

We offer the thought that a sovereign and socially just State is achievable

The only way that our countries can come out of this impasse, apart from a major social upheaval caused by hunger and extreme poverty, is by the people deciding to reconstruct the mechanisms of the State that were destroyed during the neoliberal economic phase. The reconstructed state would regulate exports (presently in the grip of multinationals), set prices for basic foods relevant to the indigenous diet, promote the production of seeds and the repopulation of empty territories, in conjunction with integrated local development.

The "Sustainable Soya" proposal of WWF that we reject, is a shameful attempt on the part of environmental groups and NGOs of the first world (as well as their local offices and representatives), to collaborate with

agribusiness at our expense. If these companies seek such collaboration, it is because they realise that their future is in jeopardy and that the people's consciousness is awakening to the threat posed by the patenting and appropriation of seeds as well as the loss of their traditional food culture.

WWF and other large NGOs, both in Europe and Latin America, intend to continue the model, adjusting the rules to reduce the impacts and so mitigate its inevitable consequences. GRR, on the other hand, declares war on the agrarian model currently being imposed, knowing that it is not sustainable, would lead to total dependence, and would transform our land into commodity production units, where people would be treated as a dispensable resource.

We are a mass biotechnology experiment, a laboratory country for the Biotechnology multinationals, a colonial Argentina. We need to return to the production of seeds, to recover our genetic patrimony, and create the basis for a different agrarian model, with food sovereignty and local development as national objectives.

The Argentinean successes with exports are also its most abject failure, because they deny our tradition as a country able to produce healthy foods and also because, through them, the country condemns itself to hunger and misery. Just as our country fails, when it does not protect the interests of its people, so Europe fails, when it imposes a regime of forced commodity production on another continent. Globalised Europe, by attempting to maintain a standard of living close to that of the US, and forcing us into the role of commodity providers to pay our External Debt, has nothing to do with a European Union for prosperity and peace, but is a sad and perverse expression of the Europe of the colonial past. Let us also remember that the External Debt mentioned above was imposed upon us during a military dictatorship, at the cost of widespread terror and thirty thousand lives.

8. Epilogue

Argentina has adjusted to the interests of Global Capitalism, thanks to the treachery and inexcusable ignorance of a political class that still bears the scars of the social uprising of the 19/20th of December 2001, but still persists in serving the new colonial model in the era of globalisation.

Once we were the breadbasket of the world, today we are becoming a Soya Republic of animal feed, with half of the population living below the poverty line and six million hungry people. The Soya Republic is also a huge genetic engineering experiment with unpredictable consequences. These technologies are tested on millions of hectares and also on starving people through a campaign called Soya Solidarity. This campaign is the work of a leadership that is complicit with the multinationals, no matter whether they bear the label of Rotary, CARITAS, INTA or CONICET, have seats in the Parliament of the Republic or are Ministers of Economic Affairs whose private consultations include Monsanto, amongst others, as one of their most important clients.

The world envisioned by neoliberal globalisation requires more and more animal feed and there are not many places left on Earth where it can be produced. So Argentina is meant to sacrifice another 10 million hectares of its fertile lands, its forests and its peasant population, to satisfy the industrial production of meat in the West and now in China. But, without any doubt, the incorporation of 10 million hectares of new monocultures will provoke heavy resistance, and may result in severe social conflicts with the rural populations that will have to be displaced. Possibly there will be still more hunger and insecurity in the overpopulated cities of Argentina, worse plus further ecological disasters...

Transnational companies and their local affiliates know this and do not want to enter this new stage alone. So they have brought national and international NGOs and environmental institutions to work with them to devise rules for the production of soya. They pretend that it is possible to impose environmental and social rules on an agro-export model based on 25 million hectares of monocultures!! And the worst of it is that some of these organisations have taken on the sad role of supporters of the role assigned to Argentina as a colonial supplier of feed.

**GRR Rural Reflection Group
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