

ACTIVISTS GATHER

To Protest Bill C-6, Corporate Corruption, and the Hijacking of Our Food Supply

by Helke Ferrie

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What is wrong with the world today? I'll tell you what's wrong – short-term thinking which is the sign of a disease called arrogance. Those suffering from the disease, however, want us to believe that they are actually the world's great protectors. The feverish rush for short-term gain is as old as history. The kings, emperors, and popes of antiquity, the dictators of the 20th century, along with big business and the governments they hijacked, all do as their ancestors did: disguise their message inside protestations of safety and offers of protection. But today we have the internet, an educated distrusting public, and humanity has developed an attitude of disobedience. Besides, we are all getting very bored with this racket.

In Europe this infection with arrogance manifests as Directives from the European Parliament in Brussels which 500 million people in 27 countries are supposed to obey according to some ideal of uniformity and economic solidarity. These Directives cover everything from food and supplements to drugs and chemicals. However European people, who haven't agreed on anything much for a couple of thousand years, aren't about to do as they are told by any government body, even if it calls itself the World Trade Organization. Europeans have experienced complex historical discord over millennia; and their 'bullshit detectors' are finely tuned. (I remember my parents, of French and Polish extraction, both born in Germany, talking about the injustices their families suffered at the hands of Louis XIV in the same breath as the social reforms of Bismarck and the starvation the French occupation caused during WWI.)

In the U.S., the arrogance infection appears to be reaching a critical condition: in January 2009 the Government Accountability Office published a report urging that greater powers be given to the FDA to "improve oversight and consumer understanding of dietary supplements" based on obscure inaccurate data that only Big Pharma would swear to being the truth. In addition, the US Congress is poised to pass The Food Safety Modernization Act (H.R. 875), legislation so totalitarian it must have been written by the guys who designed Guantanamo Bay. This Act would criminalize organic farming, seed saving, and the use of manure instead of chemical fertilizer; require all food-producing animals to be treated with antibiotics and hormones; and give the government the power to "control every step in the food chain from production to home preparation" (see analysis at www.opednews.com/articles/a-solemn-walk-through-HR-875, March 16, 2009).

In Canada, this arrogance disease struck on January 29 when the Harper government introduced Bill C-6 . It is a new "Act respecting the safety of consumer products". In fact, C-6 is the new and more lethal version of last year's Bill C-52. Its objective is "protecting the public" in the "increasingly global marketplace" by

“addressing dangers to human health or safety that are posed by consumer products”.

“For the first time in Canadian history”, as lawyer Shawn Buckley explains, “Bill C-6 not only abolishes the law of trespass, but also allows warrants to be issued to search private homes without evidence of criminal wrongdoing ... in violation of Section 8 of the Charter.” Bill C-6 also makes really sure you know who is boss – in all matters, “guilt is determined by the Minister”, not by the courts, as was the case for the past thousand years or so.

Now all this would be really nice if the Minister were at least half as informed as Vitality readers and would, therefore, immediately ban most of the chemicals used in current vaccines and drugs because they actually “make the sick get sicker quicker” – to use Dr. Sherry Rogers’ famous phrase. Such a Vitality magazine-informed Minister also would immediately stop all planting and consumption of cancer-promoting and soil destroying genetically modified foods; food-producing animals would no longer be stuffed with carcinogenic and endocrine-disruption hormones and antibiotics; the mining and use of asbestos would be stopped; and our rivers and lakes would cease to be sink holes for pharmaceuticals and environmental poisons.

Instead, Bill C-6 merely increases government powers to the level of the absurd and lists a few toxic chemicals, potentially harmful baby products (strollers, soothers etc.), some hunting equipment and the like – all of which we already know about, don’t use, can’t get, or don’t want. What this proposed new Act is supposed to accomplish is a mystery.

GOVERNMENT REDEFINES ITSELF TO ESCAPE RESPONSIBILITY

Like the pronouncements of an alcoholic dead-beat father assuring his confused offspring that he has only their best interest at heart as he takes his paycheque to the next bar, the lofty paternalistic promise of Bill C-6 is followed immediately by a complete abdication of all true responsibility through the provision of a new definition of government that would have floored Sir John A. MacDonald and sent Pierre Trudeau into a holy rage.

This definition of government is not what you might think, namely the sum total of federal and provincial governments because we elect their members. For Prime Minister Harper, “government” includes “a corporation” [e.g. Big Pharma, Big Agri, Big Mining, Big Weapons, Big Psychopath-With-Big-Bucks, as portrayed in Joel Bakan’s documentary film “The Corporation”]. Furthermore, the definition of the Canadian government now also includes “a government of a foreign state or of a subdivision of a foreign state”, and “an international organization of states”. To make sure this definition really sticks when it gets down to the practical stuff, under Section 36 (2) (a) “any regulation made under this Act may be incorporated by [not just us voters, but by]... a person or body other than the [Canadian, elected MP] Minister, including by an organization established for the purpose of writing standards [how about Codex?] ... an industrial or trade organization [on whose boards we don’t sit], or a government [which, if it isn’t Canadian, we didn’t elect and which is not answerable to us]”.

ACTIVISTS JOINING TOGETHER IN APRIL

Is there a cure? Oh yes! And you and I can be part of the therapy. It is very unlikely that commonsense, science-based, spin-proof enlightenment will appear any time soon in Ottawa. Never mind, we are fortunate to be able to turn to those who are not suffering from the feverish dreams of power, control, and “those corporate practices ... described as ‘a race to the bottom’” which Gar Woodworth observes is the “inevitable outcome of the single-minded pursuit of profits” that depletes everything – natural resources, human values, and the quality of our lives. (CCPA Monitor, February 2009).

From April 17 to 19, Toronto’s Total Health Show will feature Robert Bateman, the great artist and environmentalist; Vandana Shiva, internationally renowned activist against genetically modified foods and leader in environmental justice campaigns; Dr. Shiv Chopra, the Health Canada whistleblower whose twenty-year work against bovine growth hormone stopped its use in Canada and the EU; Dr. Robert Verkerk, head of Europe’s Alliance for Natural Health and Codex warrior extraordinaire; health law and constitutional expert Shawn Buckley, the president of Canada’s Natural Health Products Protection Association; and Sally Fallon, the nutritionist with a deep historical view on food. All have helped to build barricades against the diseased public policies in their own countries – policies that, in Canada, are embodied in the absurdities of bill C-6. The cure to such diseased governments is an educated electorate that insists on the long-term, communal approach first – and always.

What all these people have in common is captured in the title of Bateman’s recent book: *Thinking Like A Mountain*. They experience themselves as part of a planet that is very old, very large, of priceless value and immense future duration regardless of our self-destructive behaviour. Mountains think in millions of years and their concerns include the bacteria in the soil and the clouds in the sky above them. The quick fix is antithetical to the way mountains think.

“Creation is long and difficult; destruction is quick”, Robert Bateman wrote in a *Globe and Mail* article on December 13, 2003, in which he expressed his deep resentment for “neo-conservatives who are not conservatives at all. They are the opposite: radicals who are destroying cherished institutions and wreaking havoc on our human heritage as well as our natural heritage.”

Vandana Shiva, a winner of Sweden’s alternate Nobel prize, the Right Livelihood Award, obtained her PhD in physics from Waterloo University in the 70’s. In her native India she later emerged as a formidable force against the World Trade Organization’s attempt to patent India’s most important crops, including Basmati rice. “Globalization is, in effect, the globalization of energy-intensive, resource-wasteful, fossil fuel-driven industrialization of our production and consumption patterns,” she writes in her latest book, *Soil not Oil*. “The players are neither individual citizens nor individual countries. The players are global corporations who move production of goods around the globe to where they can obtain the highest profit margins by bearing the lowest costs.... I call this path eco-imperialism.”

“The age of oil has symbolized a rule of capital, of centralized control and coercive government, of pollution and non-sustainability, of injustice and inequity,

of violence and war. The age of soil symbolizes the age of Gaia, of the flowering of diversity and democracy, of justice, sustainability and peace.”

This is not just fine poetry, but the stuff of quantifiable science. In the October 9, 2008, issue of Nature, the importance of soil was estimated as providing “free services from soil biota equivalent to an estimated US \$1.5 trillion annually.” Those biota consist of bacteria, worms, etc., so diverse that on average about 4,000 different bacterial genomes are represented in one gram of soil which, additionally, also stockpiles about 1,500 gigatonnes of carbon every year. Current (quick-fix, get rich quick methods) farming practices degrade soils everywhere through fertilizers, pesticides and mono-culture planting. That degradation is then further accelerated by business practices which cause starvation because of the quick wealth promised by the highly inefficient biofuels causing a worldwide food shortage. Between 2005-2008 the price of wheat and maize tripled, rice went up five fold, and the number of chronically undernourished people increased by almost 100 million.

Dr. Robert Verkerk has been singularly successful in stopping (time and again) the juggernaut of the European Directives on foods, drugs, and dietary supplements through legal action in European and international courts. Last June, Ireland voted ‘No’ to the EU Constitution, primarily because its citizens objected to the harmonization of food and dietary supplements. Since then, 11 countries have voted against allowing any type of genetically engineered foods to be consumed by its citizens, and the EU Parliament is currently trying to deal with this unforeseen insurrection. Dr. Verkerk’s Alliance for Natural Health is not only vigorously supporting the Irish, but has started a Europe-wide campaign against GMOs and the EU’s attempt to enforce universal vaccination programs. Because of various international trade treaties, whatever happens in Europe will have an impact on policies in North America, and we must learn how best to assist the Europeans.

VICTORIES FROM THE BATTLEFRONT

Some of the finest work that the Alliance for Natural Health has recently done involves exposing what Dr. Shiv Chopra used to call “tobacco science” – the industry-sponsored twisting of data and doctoring of medical trial results to favour their phony foods or toxic drugs over the real thing. When the mainstream press reports on some study that supposedly shows that folic acid increases cancer or vitamins shorten your life span, be sure to go to anh.org and find out the real story behind the research. Everything the crooks didn’t want you to know will be laid out there in verifiable detail.

The battle for truly safe food (uncontaminated by government policy) and for freedom of choice in health care is not only being won, bit by bit, and in strange and unexpected ways all over the world, but recently has been supported in court decisions with vast implications. The Supreme Court of Canada extended liability decisively in favour of the injured party by ruling last November that even when a company obeys current government regulations, if its activities pollute the environment and create excessive annoyance, they may be sued successfully because they are liable for the damages created, regardless of existing regulations (see Ecojustice.org).

In early March, the US Supreme Court ruled that drug companies are liable for the harm their products may cause, even if some FDA warnings exist. Wyeth, on the brink of bankruptcy due to legal actions from victims of hormone replacement drugs and the anti-inflammatory Vioxx, attempted to obtain a shield against liability generally, and failed. This ruling will undoubtedly impact on the arrogance of all of Big Pharma as well as Big Agri.

The ancient Chinese are credited with that famous curse, "May you live in interesting times!" They surely assumed that it would apply equally to everybody, the just and the unjust alike. So, let us make these times interesting to those who oppress us and nature.

SOURCES & RESOURCES

On bill C-6: www.NHPPA.org and www.shivchopra.com. Meet Robert Bateman, Vandana Shiva, Shawn Buckley, Dr. Robert Verkerk at the KOS Publishing booth at Total Health, April 17 – 19.

Lawyer Shawn Buckley will discuss C-6 at the Aurora Howard Johnson Hotel Thursday, April 16. Seating by reservation only: 905-727-2199

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L. Armstrong et al. *Cancer – 101 Solutions to a Preventable Epidemic*, New Society Publisher, 2007

S. Chopra. *Corrupt to the Core – Memoirs of A Health Canada, Whistleblower*, Kos, 2009.

S. Fallon. *Nourishing Traditions – The Cookbook that Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition and the Diet Dictocrats*, New Trends Publishing, 1999

H. Ferrie. *What Part of No! Don't They Understand? Rescuing Medicine and Food from Government Abuse*, Kos 2008 (download for **free from www.kospublishing.com** - everything in this book about the 2008 bills C-51 and C-52 applies to the current bill C-6; the reasons for resisting such legislation have not changed)

T. Healy ed. *The Harper Record*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2008

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V. Shiva. *Stolen Harvest – The Hijacking of the Global Food Supply*, South End Press, 2004

G. Tansey & T.Rajotte. *The Future Control of Food – A Guide to the International Negotiations and Rules on Intellectual Property, Biodiversity, and Food Security*. Earthscan, 2009.