

# The Corporate Takeover of Britain

## Introduction

Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher became close friends. Both were involved in deregulation and both opened the way to corporate influence.

*"Poison Spring: The Secret History of the US EPA<sup>1</sup> documents, in devastating detail, the corruption and misuse of science and public trust that has turned the (US) EPA from a watchdog into a "polluters' protection agency." In its half-century of existence, the agency has repeatedly reinforced the chemical-industrial complex by endorsing deadly chemicals, often against the continued advice of its own scientists. It has botched field investigations, turned a blind eye to toxic disasters, and unblinkingly swallowed the self-serving claims of industry. "Rarely has our government allowed and encouraged the actions of the chemical industry so openly as it did during Reagan's tenure in Office. He opened the door wide to corporate influence throughout the government, and especially at the Environmental Protection Agency, which began a precipitous functional decline. Reagan gave corporations the reins of power at the agency and they immediately began tearing the EPA apart."*

Margaret Thatcher also opened the door to corporate influence. In particular she cut funding to Universities in order for them to make up the difference by commissioned research. Prof Jeremy Ramsden, writing in *Nanotechnology Perceptions* in 2012 lamented the loss of distinction between University Research and Commissioned Research (either from industry or from Government Departments).<sup>2</sup> *"This renunciation of unimpeachable scientific integrity could not have come at a worse time for humanity. Our technical capabilities for manipulating nature have reached unprecedented heights."*

This is an investigation of significant events between 1998 (when Bill Clinton told Tony Blair that Monsanto would object if a British scientist found something damaging about GMO crops, so Arpad Pusztai had to be sacrificed) and 2016 when EFSA, the European Commission and the British Government are preparing to approve GM Crops, despite warnings from 60 million US citizens.

## What made the Editor of *The Lancet* Richard Horton change?

In 1998, Dr Richard Horton stood up against the industry and the Royal Society in a courageous manner and refused their request to withdraw Dr Pusztai's paper. It was duly published in 1999.<sup>3</sup>

Yet in 2015, he collaborated with the Rockefeller Foundation (that funded Nazi eugenics experiments during the war <sup>4</sup>) in order to publish in *The Lancet*: Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch: Report of the Rockefeller Foundation-Lancet Commission on planetary health.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.independentsciencenews.org/health/poison-spring-the-secret-history-of-pollution-and-the-epa/>

<sup>2</sup> Ramsden, J.J. The independence of university research. *Nanotechnology Perceptions* 8 (2012) 87-90.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(98\)05860-7/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(98)05860-7/fulltext)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.sfgate.com/opinion/article/Eugenics-and-the-Nazis-the-California-2549771.php>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.thelancet.com/commissions/planetary-health>

The Rockefeller Foundation funded the initial research on genetically modified organisms in the early 1940s and founded the science of molecular biology, a highly reductionist programme aimed at “understanding” life.<sup>6</sup> The RF’s 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Agriculture website says:<sup>7</sup> *“Since the 1970s, the techniques pioneered by the RF have been criticized for their environmental impact, for their relationship with big agribusiness, and for failing to eliminate hunger completely.”* The RF also founded the ‘Green Revolution’. *“As one analyst put it, in effect, the Green Revolution was merely a chemical revolution. At no point could developing nations pay for the huge amounts of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.”*

This is illustrated by the many suicides amongst Punjabi farmers the early 2000s.<sup>8</sup> The Punjab was the first to embrace the Green Revolution in 1984. They were also first to realise that they had been trapped in a monoculture that requires chemicals and large amounts of water in a period of climate change and unprecedented drought. There is an increasing incidence of cancers in the cotton belt.<sup>9</sup> The Rockefeller Foundation gives financial support to the global spread of GMO technology; and to research on the bio-fortification of crops, the introduction of nutrients into crops by genetic engineering techniques for the supposed benefit of third world countries. I don’t know whether Richard Horton actually read the paper...but there was no mention of pesticides anywhere in the 56-page, 23-author document.

### **Why has *The Guardian/Observer* changed?**

In 2002, Alan Rusbridger and Ronan Bennett wrote a 2-part drama for the BBC: *Fields of Gold* about genetically-modified (GM) crops. They were astonished at the reactions from the Royal Society and those with vested interests.

Bennett wrote in *The Observer*:<sup>10</sup> *“...Fields of Gold, a two-part drama about genetically-modified crops, has become the centre of an ugly little conspiracy by those with a vested interest in discrediting it and personal grudges to settle. Last week The Times and Daily Telegraph ran prominent news stories in which a number of senior scientists, who appear not to have seen Fields of Gold, attacked the drama, which will be shown on BBC1 on 8 and 9 June. According to Lord May, president of the Royal Society, it is an: 'error-strewn piece of propaganda'. The Times headlined its piece: 'BBC drama peddles ludicrous lies on GM'; the Telegraph's story was billed: 'Adviser accuses BBC of being anti-GM in "ridiculous" thriller'.*

*Since the Telegraph accuses us of 'dramatically modified truth' and the Times accuses us of 'lies', it seems odd that they are not being open about the origin of the story. Nowhere did they mention it had been brought to them by a lobbying organisation, Science Media Centre. The Science Media Centre (SMC) was set up recently and, according to its website, has 'a brief to renew public trust in science'. Its funders include Dupont, Merlin Biosciences, Pfizer, PowderJect and Smith & Nephew - all biotech or pharmaceutical companies with a direct interest in the promotion of the technologies the drama explores.*

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.globalresearch.ca/doomsday-seed-vault-in-the-arctic-2/23503>

<sup>7</sup> <http://rockefeller100.org/exhibits/show/agriculture>

<sup>8</sup> <http://livingheritage.org/green-revolution.htm>

<sup>9</sup> <http://sustainablepulse.com/2015/04/09/monsanto-knew-of-glyphosate-cancer-link-35-years-ago/#.V8XjiBSFDzI>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/science/2002/jun/02/gm.comment>

*Though SMC seems keen to become a sort of Mandelsonian rapid rebuttal unit, it has yet to learn the subtler arts of black propaganda. When 'Fiona' from the centre was touting the story around last week, she finished her email with a last inducement: There will no doubt be others keen to have a pop at BBC/Guardian in one go." (Bennett noted that 'Fiona from the centre' sent it to Guardian's sister paper, *The Observer*, which is prescient. In 2014 the Editor-in-Chief of *The Observer* John Mulholland wrote an editorial saying that Britain needed GM to feed the world!)*

### **The impartiality of the BBC in 2002**

Bennett went on to say: *"Fields of Gold started life almost three years ago when Alan and I met Jane Tranter, the BBC's drama commissioner, to discuss a possible serial about genetic modification. Alan had been running a series of articles on Monsanto and other GM corporations, assessing the impact of the technology on farming, the environment and the developing world. We were all familiar with footage of environmental activists trashing GM trial sites and mounting public concern about the contamination of ordinary crops by their genetically-modified near neighbours.*

*More pertinent is the over-excited way in which a certain section of the scientific community has responded. In orchestrating their unpleasant campaign to denigrate the programme-makers, they are confirming the suspicions of those who have legitimate concerns about how and why the new technologies are being developed. Campaigners on GM are used to the smear tactics described by George Monbiot last week in *The Guardian* when he revealed how GM giant Monsanto used fake email addresses to lobby on its behalf and attack opponents."*

### **Alan Rusbridger, Bennett's co-writer, wrote a piece about it: *Fields of Ire*.<sup>11</sup>**

*"What would happen if something went seriously wrong with a GM crop trial? We have in this country a prime minister (Tony Blair, who closed down Arpad Pusztai's Department in the Rowett Institute and tossed him on the scrap heap<sup>12</sup>) who dismisses sceptics about the new technologies as Luddites and a science minister with an extensive personal and financial interest (held in trust) in biotechnology. The big biotech and pharmaceutical companies are notoriously rich and powerful and, say their critics, increasingly sophisticated in discrediting those who threaten their vested interests.*

*It explains why Monsanto secured early copies of the drama and why people at the highest levels of government are known to be anxious about the fall out. And it explains why the Science Media Centre, extensively backed by the biotech and pharmaceutical industries, mimicked some of the clumsiest spin techniques of New Labour in trying to discredit it in advance."*

## **The Government closure of wildlife organisations in Britain**

### **The Birth of Defra**

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2002/jun/07/bbc.medicalscience>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.psrast.org/pusztblair.htm>

In 2001, under Tony Blair's government, the Department of the Environment was merged with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries to become 'Defra' the Department of the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs, with obvious conflicting interests.

### **Tony Blair's speech to the Royal Society on Science<sup>13</sup>**

In May 2002 Blair gave a wide-ranging speech to the Royal Society.

*"In GM crops, I can find no serious evidence of health risks. But there are genuine and real concerns over biodiversity and gene transfer."*

*"Bad science didn't cause the spread of BSE; it was bad agriculture and poor government"*

*"We should not ignore our strengths in science education. The recent, highly respected OECD PISA study ranked British 15-year olds fourth internationally for science literacy, well ahead of most of our competitors."*

### **In 2016 the agriculture standards are dire, the government's priority is austerity and the results for OECD PISA tests have dramatically declined**

The recently part-privatised Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) Figures for 2014 show farmers have almost doubled the amount of pesticide active substances; the number of times treated have increased from 8-12 annually since 2000. Exposure of the brains of unborn and young children in the UK to chemicals is reflected in OECD PISA figures for declining educational achievement in 2013. 15-year-olds have dropped from fourth place in 2000 to 26<sup>th</sup> place for mathematics and 23<sup>rd</sup> for reading in 2013. A 2016 study also shows that in England the young have lower basic skills than their counterparts in continental Europe.

As for the Government, they have voted with EFSA and the EU Commission to re-license glyphosate despite warnings from 60 million US Citizens!

### **The restructuring of Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and closure of Wildlife Research Sites (also under Tony Blair)**

In December 2005, the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), in response to a budget deficit, announced a Consultation Plan to restructure CEH and reduce nine of their research sites to only four, which would be moved into Universities. This plan included the closure of three important, internationally renowned Wildlife Research Stations at Monks Wood in Cambridgeshire, Banchory, near Aberdeen and the new laboratory at Winfrith (Dorset). The budget cuts would include the loss of 200 scientific staff, many of who were experienced field scientists. Some of the scientific programmes would be impossible to continue. There was a massive outcry from the scientific, environmental and biological communities. English Nature, the Government's own statutory advisory body warned against the closure. In a leaked letter to Tony Blair, the junior Rural Affairs Minister said that closure of four eco-laboratories involved in Climate Change research *"does not make sense either scientifically or economically"*. He lost his job.

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/may/23/speeches.tonyblair>

The so-called “Public Consultation” by NERC elicited 1,327 ‘stakeholder’ responses to the proposal, of which 99% questioned the wisdom and expense of the closure. In a debate forced in the House of Lords, Lord Sainsbury of Turville, at that time the Parliamentary Under-secretary of State with responsibility for Science and Innovation at the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), defended the closures. He claimed that the Government believed that *“decisions about its scientific programme should be taken by NERC’s independent council.”* NERC is funded by the DTI. The Secretary of State for the DTI makes appointments to the NERC Council. Of the eighteen members of the Council, most were based in physics and physical sciences, 11 were University Professors or held senior University posts. There was one businessman, one business consultant, one administrator and a lone biologist. Lord Sainsbury praised NERC for *“grasping the nettle”*. He said that NERC had seen a fall in contract research in recent years and the Wildlife stations were not making enough money from getting private research contracts. *“In today’s multidisciplinary world, basic research increasingly should be done in a multi-disciplinary environment like universities”*. Despite massive opposition, on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2006 the Council of NERC confirmed the plans to restructure CEH. In a letter to the staff dated 13<sup>th</sup> March Professor Alan Thorpe said: *“CEH will remain a science-driven, not a site-based organisation.”* He anticipated that the cost of restructuring would be about £43 million over 4 years, but it would lower CEH operating costs by over £7 million per year. He said that the Council greatly regretted the impact on CEH staff, and made some concessions. Up to 40 of the 200 posts at risk could be saved.

The Government had signed up to a global agreement to halt biodiversity losses by 2010, yet in a mere three months they had swept away Britain’s ecological research base and squandered their experienced field scientists. Funding long-term and field-based environmental research and long-term monitoring doesn’t attract private research money. There is nothing in it for Industry. Within a matter of months, Lord Sainsbury resigned as Science Minister to focus on his business and charity work.

### **The end of nature.**

For wildlife conservationists, there was one final blow to come. In October 2006 English Nature became Natural England. Thus, over a period of 15 years, despite having signed up to all the UN Biodiversity commitments, a Conservative and a Labour government between them had finally managed to erase from their statutory environmental bodies any mention of unpalatable terms such as *“ecology”*, *“wildlife”*, *“conservancy”* and *“nature”*. From henceforth they would be able legitimately to include recreational facilities.

## **The Corporate takeover of the Royal Society**

### **The Royal Society endorses GE Crops and GE technology**

On 4 March 2015 the Organisation Beyond GM facilitated the Press Release of American public interest attorney Steven Druker’s acclaimed new book, Altered Genes, Twisted Truth: How the Venture to Genetically Engineer Our Food Has Subverted Science, Corrupted Government and Systematically Deceived the

Public.<sup>14</sup> *The book features a foreword by the renowned primatologist Dame Jane Goodall, who also spoke at the conference, hailing it as “without doubt one of the most important books of the last 50 years.”*

Steve Druker, in his role as a public interest attorney, had initiated a lawsuit that forced the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to divulge its files on genetically engineered foods. This exposed how the agency had covered up warnings of its own scientists, lied about the facts then ushered these foods onto the market in violation of federal law.

Steve Druker has challenged successive Presidents of the Royal Society to read his book and debate with him. Sir Paul Nurse was President of the Rockefeller University in New York before he became President of the Royal Society. Both he and the current President Sir Venki Ramakrishnan have declined to debate the topic of GE foods with Steve Druker, because, as Druker says, the GE food venture has been chronically dependent on deception.<sup>15</sup>

Sir Venki Ramakrishnan wrote an article: GM crops already feed half of the world today: why not tomorrow's generation too?<sup>16</sup> *“The negative health effects- claims later shown to be unsubstantiated”* gave a link to the retraction by Elsevier of Séralini study in 2013, presumably provided by the UK Science Media Centre. But there was nothing about Séralini being awarded the Whistleblower of the Year in 2015<sup>17</sup> Citation: *“He was the first to publish animal test results demonstrating the toxic and carcinogenic properties of the most commonly used herbicide worldwide, the glyphosate-based “Roundup” by carrying out a two-year feeding test on rats. After the research was published, Prof Séralini was attacked by a vehement campaign by ‘interested circles’ from the chemical industry as well as the industry-financed British Science Media Centre.”*

### **Emails uncovered between Monsanto & Food and Chemical Toxicology**

*Le Monde* Journalist Stéphane Foucart examined a series of emails obtained under Freedom of Information and found that Monsanto was deeply involved in the retraction of Séralini study from *Food and Chemical Toxicology*.<sup>18</sup>

## **The BBC has been taken over by corporations**

### **The BBC changed in 2003**

In 2002, the BBC appeared to be independent, impartial and brave. Ronan Bennett co-author said: *“Fields of Gold started life almost three years ago when Alan and I met Jane Tranter, the BBC's drama commissioner, to discuss a possible serial about genetic modification. The BBC was violently attacked by the Murdoch Press and the right wing media having been briefed by the SMC. The Times*

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<sup>14</sup> <http://beyond-gm.org/new-book-exposes-systematic-government-and-scientific-fraud-over-gm-food/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.independentsciencenews.org/health/how-the-ge-food-venture-has-been-chronically-dependent-on-deception/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.cam.ac.uk/research/discussion/opinion-gm-crops-already-feed-much-of-the-world-today-why-not-tomorrows-generations-too>

<sup>17</sup> [http://neu.vdw-ev.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Presseinformation-Whistleblower-Preisverleihung-2015\\_150917\\_eng.pdf](http://neu.vdw-ev.de/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Presseinformation-Whistleblower-Preisverleihung-2015_150917_eng.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <https://gmwatch.org/news/latest-news/17121-emails-reveal-role-of-monsanto-in-seralini-study-retraction>



*headlined its piece: 'BBC drama peddles ludicrous lies on GM'; the Telegraph's story was billed: 'Adviser accuses BBC of being anti-GM in "ridiculous" thriller'."*

### **Tony Blair and weapons of mass destruction in Iraq: he, Alistair Campbell and Lord Hutton destroyed the BBC**

In May 2003, Andrew Gilligan described a British Government briefing on Iraq and weapons of mass destruction as 'sexed up'. It turned out to be so, but resulted in the suicide of weapons expert David Kelly on July 18<sup>th</sup> 2003 and the resignation of Greg Dyke, Gavyn Davies and Andrew Gilligan on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2004. The BBC was considerably weakened.

### **The Chilcot Report came out in 2016 – Tony Blair was not exonerated**

*"The Prime Minister was so convinced of the presence of the non-existent WMDs that he sent British troops into Iraq when diplomacy might still have resolved the crisis. But the secret intelligence reports he had been shown "did not justify" his certainty,"* **Sir John Chilcot** concluded.

### **The BBC's outrageous support for the agrochemical industry**

On 06/08/2012 I wrote to the BBC Complaints Unit.

*"Under the BBC's charter, it is committed to achieving accuracy of reporting, impartiality and to declare conflicts of interest. The Countryfile investigation of GM crops on 15/07/2012 was inaccurate, lacked impartiality and failed to declare conflicts of interest of some of the people interviewed. The whole presentation was an outrageous travesty of the truth, presumably fed to your journalist by the government and the agrochemical industry."* The conflicts of interest of Professor Jonathan Jones weren't revealed (he worked with Monsanto and his declaration is on the BBC website<sup>19</sup>) and the BBC failed to say that there was no consensus amongst scientists about the safety of GM crops.<sup>20,21</sup> Thus began a three month correspondence with the BBC Complaints Unit. BBC complaints are dealt with in three stages. At each stage, my complaints yielded different explanations. On 15/11/2012 Tim Davie (BBC Marketing Manager and Acting Director General) finally terminated the correspondence. He rejected my claim, but said: *"If you are able to provide clear and specific examples when you believe a journalist has inappropriately conveyed messages from the pesticides industry..."*

**Trust Me I'm a Doctor** on BBC 2 is a very influential programme. So when Dr Michael Mosely asked the question: Is organic food better for your health?<sup>22</sup>

I tuned in. He concluded on the basis of analysis of three vegetables: carrots, apples and tomatoes for pesticides that it was not worth paying for organic. I had no reply to my challenge about pesticides in cereals.

**BBC Panorama: GM Food – Cultivating Fear**<sup>23</sup> drew these comments from Lawrence Woodward and Pat Thomas. Cultivating Myths – The Pro-GMO Bias of

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.powerbase.info/index.php/File:jbio190710.jpg>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.ensser.org/increasing-public-information/no-scientific-consensus-on-gmo-safety/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://enveurope.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s12302-014-0034-1>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b0647r8c/trust-me-im-a-doctor-series-3-episode-3>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6KruFQ2uCqk>

the BBC: *"The pro-GM bias of the BBC was plain to see during Monday's (8 June 2015) Panorama programme.*

*Blinkered and narrow rather than panoramic, selective and prejudicial rather than investigative, this sorry display set a new low for a programme that was once a flagship of investigative journalism. It had no more veracity and insight than the most clichéd corporate press release and the result was that a mix of myths, deceptive assertions and inaccurate statements by pro-GM lobbyists – including those masquerading as independent scientists – were given a free ride and promotional slot on prime time television. It's tempting to say that you couldn't make this stuff up – except Panorama has proven with its latest fiction that actually you can – and that you can even get the BBC (and thus the licence fee payer) to pay for it."*<sup>24</sup>

### **GM Watch revealed that the BBC Panorama came from Cornell University**<sup>25</sup>

Claire Robinson says: *"Cornell University is home to the controversial Cornell Alliance for Science, which is publicizing the Bangladesh Bt brinjal project. The Alliance was launched last year with a \$5.6 million grant from the Gates Foundation to "depolarize the charged debate around agricultural biotechnology and genetically modified organisms (GMOs)." Its partners include the GMO industry group ISAAA, which is funded by Monsanto, CropLife, and Bayer. Cornell gave Mark Lynas a Visiting Fellowship and a platform to voice his pro-GMO views. Lynas now promotes GMOs "to the exclusion of almost everything else". Cornell paid his travel expenses to the Philippines to write a pro-GMO article."*

### **Cornell University student describes its deep ties with GMO agriculture**<sup>26</sup>

*"My name is Robert, and I am a Cornell University undergraduate student. However, I'm not sure if I want to be one any more. Allow me to explain. Cornell, as an institution, appears to be complicit in a shocking amount of ecologically destructive, academically unethical, and scientifically deceitful behavior. Perhaps the most potent example is Cornell's deep ties to industrial GMO agriculture, and the affiliated corporations such as Monsanto. I'd like to share how I became aware of this troubling state of affairs."*

### **Professor T. Colin Campbell's epidemiological research on nutrition and human disease**

*"Instead, I began to self-study nutrition out of pure necessity. Luckily, I found Cornell Professor Emeritus T. Colin Campbell's legendary epidemiological research on nutrition and human disease. His evidence was so clear that I quickly transitioned to a plant-based diet. This personal dietary shift had profound benefits, dispelled my depression, and led me to a deep fascination with the precursor to nutrition: agriculture. I became particularly interested in agro-ecology. I was astonished to learn that there existed alternatives to chemical-intensive, corporate-controlled models of agriculture, and that they were far safer, more effective, and more sustainable. During my time away from Cornell, I participated in three unique seasons of agro-ecological crop production, with*

<sup>24</sup> <http://beyond-gm.org/cultivating-myths-the-bbc-pro-gmo-bias/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://gmwatch.org/news/latest-news/16320-bt-brinjal-plants>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.independentsciencenews.org/health/the-gmo-debate-one-students-experience-of-pro-gmo-propaganda-at-cornell-university/>



*incredible results. I am immensely grateful for these experiences.*

*The GMO Debate course, which ran in the fall of 2015, was a blatant display of unscientific propaganda in an academic setting. There were a total of four active professors in the course, and several guest speakers. They took turns each session defending industrial agriculture and biotechnology with exactly zero critical examination of GMOs. In spite of the course's name, there was a complete lack of actual 'debate'."*

### **Review by the BBC Trust Editorial Standard Committee dismissed**

The complaints about the outrageous Panorama Programme on GM Crops were reviewed by the BBC Trust and were dismissed outright.<sup>27</sup> The Trust Editorial Standards Committee (ESC) Richard Ayre, Mark Damazer, Sonita Alleyne, Bill Matthews and Nicholas Prettejohn, actually apologised to Monsanto.

*"The programme had achieved due accuracy and due impartiality in the way it reflected the role of Monsanto (an agricultural company). In accurately stating Monsanto's direct interest in the project and in reflecting the reporter's professional judgement that the exercise could sway the public argument over GM, Panorama gave the audience sufficient information to reach an informed view on the issue."*

Richard Ayre the Chairman of the Editorial Standards Committee of the BBC Trust was founder of the UK Food Standards Agency. He had conflicts of interest having previously worked with Monsanto.

### **BBC Farming Today 18 March 2016: Brett Begemann, President of Monsanto was interviewed<sup>28</sup>**

Asked by the interviewer about the carcinogenicity of glyphosate, the President dismissed as nonsense the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) statement that glyphosate is probably carcinogenic in humans. He said: *"I trust the science."* Why did the BBC not reveal the massive dispute between IARC and the German Rapporteur Member State Federal Institute for Pesticide Risk Assessment (BfR) and EFSA's risk assessment of glyphosate? Why was Prof Christopher Portier not asked to speak on behalf of IARC?

### **Celebrity culture encouraged by the BBC and US Television Channels**

BBC News Magazine: *"Did our brains evolve to foolishly follow celebrities? Our obsession with celebrity culture is a result of our poorly adapted brains"*, argues social anthropologist Jamie Tehrani.<sup>29</sup>

Huffington Post: *Americans have an unhealthy obsession with celebrities.*<sup>30</sup>

### **The Government wants BBC support: from time to time it gently reminds the BBC of the consequences of not getting Government support**

In 2011 in *Nature: World View*, Colin Macilwain, a science policy writer from Edinburgh who has worked as a reporter and an editor from both sides of the

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<sup>27</sup> [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/appeals/esc\\_bulletins/2016/feb.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/appeals/esc_bulletins/2016/feb.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0739w6g>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-23046602>

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/30/liz-smith-jo-piazza-unhealthy-obsession-with-celebrity\\_n\\_1389734.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/30/liz-smith-jo-piazza-unhealthy-obsession-with-celebrity_n_1389734.html)

Atlantic,<sup>31</sup> wrote about plans to replicate Britain's Science Media Centre (SMC) in the United States, which he said was "fraught with danger."

Extracts: "The London SMC was set up because UK scientific leaders were upset that environmentalists had successfully fought the introduction of genetically modified food; they felt that the UK media were too susceptible to environmental scare stories about new technologies.

*Despite the fears of the SMC founders, the British press — led by the BBC, which treats the Confederation of British Industry with the deference the Vatican gets in Rome — is overwhelmingly conservative and pro-business in its outlook. It is quite unperturbed by the fact that SMC sponsors include AstraZeneca, BP, Coca-Cola, L'Oreal, Monsanto, Syngenta (as well as Nature Publishing Group) but not a single environmental non-governmental organization (NGO) or trade union.*

*Fiona Fox, the SMC's director, says that the centre operates independently of its sponsors and points out that none (except its host, the Wellcome Trust) accounts individually for more than 5% of its income."* (However, examination of the Funding for 2014,<sup>32</sup> the total funding from industry and trade bodies (27% from 29 Organizations) exceeds any other source of funding apart from the Government & the Wellcome Trust).

*She adds that no NGOs are involved because it was their public-relations skills that the founders of the SMC sought to match."*

Macilwain goes on to say: "But the perception that the environmental group Friends of the Earth constitutes a bigger threat to scientific truth-telling than some of the corporate names on the SMC's sponsorship list is not one the US media would accept. Some of those considering a US centre share these concerns. They think that their funding model will have to rely on charitable trusts, not companies or government agencies."

## **Corporate takeover of regulatory committees in Britain**

### **Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) became the Expert Committee on Pesticides (ECP)**

The farmers needed Bayer and Syngenta to plead on their behalf on lifting of the European neonicotinoid moratorium on oilseed rape, so in May 2015 for the first meeting of the ECP, the Committee invited Syngenta and Bayer to provide input to the NFU's request to discuss the "emergency lifting of the EU moratorium on systemic neonicotinoid insecticides for oil seed rape." There was a delay on publication of these minutes to avoid a public outcry.<sup>33</sup> Industry representatives explained to the ECP meeting "that 79% of the oilseed rape crop was under threat or severe risk from cabbage stem flea beetle and aphids. They explained that failure to control these pests could result in significant impacts on yields. For example a significant presence of Turnip Yellow Virus could reduce yields by 6-12%. 'High levels' of infestation were being reported. They also outlined how the difficulty of bringing new products to the EU market meant it was unlikely that alternative pesticides would be available."

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.nature.com/news/two-nations-divided-by-a-common-purpose-1.10224>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.sciencemediacentre.org/about-us/funding/>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jul/29/bee-harming-pesticide-firms-took-part-key-meeting-ban>

### **Post-Brexit funding gap: 'will threaten the impartiality of University research': Greenpeace reveals current funding by the chemical industry<sup>34</sup>**

Greenpeace says: *'You wouldn't want lung cancer studies to be heavily reliant on funds from tobacco firms, nor research on pesticides to be dependent on the companies making them'*

The firms, Bayer and Syngenta, which both sell neonicotinoid insecticides linked to harmful effects on bees, gave a combined total of £16.1m to 70 British Universities to fund a range of research projects between 2011 and 2016, according to figures obtained under Freedom of Information Act by Greenpeace. Of this, about £2.6m was spent on plant sciences, including research into pesticides. According to [Bayer's website](#), academics who reviewed 15 years of research found *"no adverse effects to bee colonies were ever observed in field studies"*. And [Syngenta says](#): *"Many years of independent monitoring prove that when used properly – as they consistently are – neonicotinoids do not damage the health of bee populations."*

Dr Julian Little, of Bayer, said he did not have the total figure for the firm's spending on research in the UK, but said it had given more than £1m to fund research into neonicotinoids' effects on bees by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) in Oxfordshire. Dr Little, who said the CEH research would be published later this year, stressed they were only interested in the best science – even if it found evidence that might cause the company a problem.

*"The people we work with are the best people and they are fiercely independent. I cannot believe for a moment any one of them would go 'oh I better not say that, just in case the company doesn't like it'."*

### **Le Monde: Syngenta exposed for funding neonicotinoid research in Britain**

The French newspaper *Le Monde* has, over the years, provided little 'gems' about the activities of the pesticides industry in Britain and Germany. On 23/09/2012, once again in the *Le Monde*, Stéphane Foucart revealed that Dr James Cresswell a bee researcher at Exeter, who denied that neonicotinoids caused colony collapse in honeybees, was receiving funding from Syngenta, but had not revealed conflicts of interest.<sup>35</sup> Foucart said it didn't really matter for France because the French Government had already made a decision to ban Cruiser® (Thiamethoxam, made by Syngenta). A study (using mathematical models, statistics and computer simulations) published in the journal *Science* by Dr Helen Thompson of Britain's Food and Environment Agency together with Dr James Cresswell, University of Exeter (both of whom are supported by industry) claimed that the results of the research from nine eminent bee scientists at the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA)<sup>36</sup> was flawed.

## **Is the Scott Trust on the verge of a corporate takeover?**

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/science-research-brexit-bee-pesticides-bayer-syngenta-universities-a7213936.html>

<sup>35</sup> [http://www.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2012/09/23/le-chercheur-l-agrochimiste-et-les-abeilles\\_1764022\\_3244.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/planete/article/2012/09/23/le-chercheur-l-agrochimiste-et-les-abeilles_1764022_3244.html)

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.sciencemag.org/content/336/6079/348.abstract> Cresswell and Thompson comments on *A Common Pesticide Decreases Foraging Success and Survival in Honey Bees*

## Observer Editorial 14<sup>th</sup> March 2014: We must have GM crops <sup>37</sup>

**The UK Food Group Chair Patrick Mulvany asks if *The Observer/Guardian* is now joining the quislings, collaborating with powerful industrial interests (Monsanto etc.)** March 17 2014<sup>38</sup>

*"John Mulholland's hackneyed article strings together a series of 'feed the world' myths 'busted' a thousand times by reputable academics."*

Mulvany says: *"It is a double affront to the shade of David Astor, as editor of The Observer, who set up the trust which now owns the paper and – above all – as founder of the Organic Research Centre Elm Farm.*

*The scourge of hunger has almost nothing to do with food production per se – it's a problem of redistribution, rights and reduction of waste. So, on what basis can your editor assert that GM crops will solve the problem of hunger?*

*As many of your readers will know, UK plc's AgriTech business strategy, pushed by BIS and implemented by the BBSRC (the UK's biotech science funder), is to export proprietary British technology that will deliver returns through patents and the sale of scientific know-how with biotechnological and chemical input packages of benefit to the UK – the only technologies that the UK now has expertise in, having lost most of its capacity to do research that supports real food production. To achieve their strategy, government, the scientific establishment and agro-biotech industry need to have a test-bed in a UK that permits the release of GM crops, for which, as government and retailers well know, there is no consumer demand. From where I am here in Cuzco, Peru, [a region that has legally rejected GM crops](#) in favour of supporting local campesinos' production of biodiverse foods produced ecologically, your editorial appears insular – the views of a little Englander – and rather farcical if there were not a darker side to it.*

*Is The Observer/Guardian now joining the quislings who are collaborating with powerful industrial interests, which are set to undermine and contaminate the world's efficient, effective, biodiverse and ecological food systems, so that their proprietary technologies dominate globally?"*

On 1 June 2015, John Mulholland additionally became an assistant editor of *The Guardian* in one of the first appointments made by [Katharine Viner](#), the new editor-in-chief of Guardian News and Media.

Katharine Viner, Editor-in-Chief of *The Guardian* and David Pemsel the new Chief Executive of the Guardian Media Trust blocked Alan Rusbridger from returning to Chair the Scott Trust, which he was expected to do.

**Katherine Viner: The Long Read: How technology has disrupted the truth**  
**12 July 2016**<sup>39</sup>

She quotes several people: Emily Bell, one of the Board members of the Scott Trust: *"The future of publishing is being put into the "hands of the few, who now*

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<sup>37</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/mar/16/gm-crops-world-food-famine-starvation>

<sup>38</sup> <https://politicalcleanup.wordpress.com/2014/03/17/uk-food-group-chair-asks-if-the-observerguardian-is-now-joining-the-quislings-collaborating-with-powerful-industrial-interests-monsanto-etc/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/jul/12/how-technology-disrupted-the-truth>

*control the destiny of the many” As Bell notes: “There is a far greater concentration of power in this respect than there has ever been in the past.”*

*Another quote: “As the pioneering Iranian blogger Hossein Derakhshan, who was imprisoned in Tehran for six years for his online activity, [wrote in the Guardian](#) earlier this year, the “diversity that the world wide web had originally envisioned” has given way to the centralisation of information” inside a select few social networks – and the end result is “making us all less powerful in relation to government and corporations”.*

**This is Katharine Viner herself speaking:** *“The truth is a struggle. It takes hard graft. But the struggle is worth it: traditional news values are important and they matter and they are worth defending. The digital revolution has meant that journalists – rightly, in my view – are more accountable to their audience. That means engaging with people as civic actors, citizens, equals. It is about holding power to account, fighting for a public space, and taking responsibility for creating the kind of world we want to live in.”*

**She was told that her Health Editor was quoting from the Science Media Centre, endorsing the fact that alcohol was the cause of seven cancers**  
If the Editor-in-Chief is such an upholder of the truth, and believes in engagement with people as citizens and equals, why did she not fire him and expose the government for collaborating with the Agrochemical industry.

**Monsanto is experimenting with a new RNA technology in the US** <sup>40</sup>  
JP Sottile is a freelance journalist, published historian, radio co-host and documentary filmmaker (*The Warning*, 2008). “It’s called the “*BioDirect*” initiative and it will eliminate costly resistance to glyphosate, eradicate vexingly resilient insects with “biopesticides” and even modify the genetic code of a plant by simply spritzing it with an RNA-infused *surfactant* spray. The technology is called “*RNA interference*” (RNAi) and it heralds a brave new world of profitability for agrochemical corporations. It also opens a *Pandora’s box* full of as-yet unanswered ethical questions about genetic drift, patenting plants on the fly and, most ominously, whether RNAi can, should or will be weaponized like another Monsanto product -- Agent Orange. RNAi technology *hijacks* DNA’s messenger system -- the *ribonucleic acid* (RNA) that carries out DNA’s instructions.” Antonio Regalado *pointed out* in MIT Technology Review, “RNA may be natural ... but introducing large amounts of targeted RNA molecules into the environment is not.

**Isn’t time that journalists and the public are told the truth about this matter? British citizens are being used as LAB RATS**

Rosemary Mason  
South Wales  
UK

1<sup>st</sup> September 2016

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/35517-monsanto-s-willing-executioners>