



FSF NEWS: Declan Hill, author of *The Fix: Soccer and Organized Crime*, to speak at Football Supporters' Federation's annual conference [IMMEDIATE RELEASE 08-06-10]

National fans' organisation the Football Supporters' Federation (FSF) has announced that this year's main speaker at Fans' Parliament, their annual conference which takes place at Wembley Stadium on Saturday, July 24th, will be award-winning Canadian investigative journalist and academic Dr. Declan Hill.

He alleges that not only will match-fixers be in attendance at the World Cup in South Africa but that they have attended every senior and junior major international tournament of the past 20 years. Hill interviewed dozens of players, coaches and sporting officials who claim that the fixers have approached many different teams and players. The gateway to corruption? Poor financial mismanagement and non-payment of the players.

"It is astounding at the world's biggest sporting event that there will be players running on to the pitch who do not know how much they will get paid or even if they will be paid at all. It is this that is the gateway for corruption," says Hill.

Over the course of four years Hill immersed himself in the murky world of the multi-billion dollar illegal Asian gambling market and organised crime. Travelling across four continents Hill interviewed more than 220 people including professional gamblers, Mafia hitmen, undercover police, players and match officials.

The result is Hill's astonishing international best-seller *The Fix: Soccer and Organized Crime*. In it Hill claims that some of the most high-profile games in world football may have been fixed - right up to the Champions League and World Cup.

Despite the evidence outlined in *The Fix*, Fifa has refused to introduce an "integrity unit" tasked with tackling and eliminating match-fixing. Integrity units are standard practise across North American sports, tennis, and cricket and Uefa's Michel Platini launched one in September 2008 following the publication of *The Fix*.

While those in Fifa's highest echelons might not have taken heed Hill's argument has certainly caught the attention of those who have played the game at the highest level. "This book explains the fight between good and evil that exists in international football today," argues Emmanuel Petit, World Cup and Arsenal double winner.

Steven Powell, director of policy at the FSF, says, "Declan is a fantastic speaker, a real showman, and the tales behind *The Fix* must be heard to be believed. There is not a single football fan in the country who will not be, in equal parts, enthralled by Declan's storytelling and stunned by his central argument - the game we love is corrupt. *The Fix* should be a wake-up call for those in authority in football, and a call to arms for all of us who love the beautiful game.

"Declan first addressed the FSF national council back in February during a visit to

Britain. What he had to say was so important we've persuaded him to fly back over from Canada specially to speak at Fans' Parliament."

Hundreds of football fans are expected to attend Fans' Parliament from across the UK and beyond. Along with Declan Hill's speech fans can expect workshops and debates on unsustainable debts and club governance, lack of safe standing, policing and stewarding, and England's 2018 World Cup bid.

Representatives from the Football Association, Football League, Premier League, Professional Footballers' Association, and Uefa will all be in attendance along with many more high-profile speakers who are to be confirmed in the coming weeks.

The event is open to FSF members and non-members alike and is entirely free to attend. For further information, registration, and accommodation details visit: www.fsf.org.uk/fans-parliament/2010

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

- Media are welcome to attend and should contact the FSF for accreditation.
- All interested parties welcome.
- The FSF is the national supporters' organisation for all football fans from England and Wales comprising more than 180,000 individual fans and members of local supporters' organisations from every club in the professional structure and beyond. For more info <http://www.fsf.org.uk/about-the-fsf.php>
- Fans can join the FSF free of charge and it only takes a few minutes, simply visit: <http://www.fsf.org.uk/join.php>
- Declan Hill is a multi-award winning investigative journalist, documentary maker and academic. He specialises in studying organised crime and international issues. Before writing The Fix he made documentaries on the killing of the head of the Canadian mafia, blood feuds in Kosovo and ethnic cleansing in Iraq. He has also created documentaries in Kurdistan, India, Bolivia, Mexico, and Turkey. He has worked for CBC Radio and Television and PBS Frontline. His shows and articles have appeared on BBC Radio World Service and BBC Radio 4, the Guardian and the Sunday Telegraph. Recently, Declan was a Chevening Scholar at Green College, Oxford where he obtained his doctorate on match-fixing in professional football. Visit Declan's website www.howtofixasoccergame.com for more.
- Interviews requests for Declan can be sent to Michael Brunskill (see below).

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