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Issue 2

dec 99/jan 00

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putting on the £s
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Front cover photo of J18 by Nick Cobbing

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SQUOTES

"Well it's up to the public of this country. After all you must remember, we are the employers of the police, they're public employees. But they're the only employees I know of who have more rights than their employers. They're the only people in the country at the moment who practice the right of silence. If a police officer is being investigated by the police, the police who are investigating him have to inform him beforehand. Can you imagine police in this country going round and informing villains they're going to investigate them. They're the only people in the country that if they're investigated and charges are made against them, they go on the sick

and then they retire, and they're getting eighty per cent of their salary as a pension. They tell us crime doesn't pay."

PADDY HILL, one of the Guildford Four. **SQUALL** Interview 1999.

"The North American Free Trade Agreement and other regional trade pacts, together with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, should give us additional opportunities for profitable geographic expansion." -

Philip Morris Annual Report 1993.



THE STATE IT'S IN

A view from SQUALL Central

Blanking the Organic

We kid you not....One of SQUALL's reporters was recently offered an entire flock of sheep for nothing by a Herefordshire farmer keen to off-load her worthless burden. It is now possible to buy an adult Welsh sheep for as little as ten pence. With farm incomes plummeting by 50 per cent in the year up to June 1999, conventional non-organic agriculture in the UK is in its death throes and the cries of anguish voice loud from the countryside. In an effort to assuage the swelling discontent (used as a political weapon by pro-hunting lobby groups like the Countryside Alliance), Tony Blair recently found £150 million to compensate Britain's suffering farmers. But whilst the Government publicly laments the tragedy by throwing elastoplast money at a seemingly hopeless situation, it continues, inexplicably, to ignore an agricultural salvation prospering in the wings.

For whilst chemically-injected sheep munch unprofitably on chemically-soaked pastures, sales of organic produce have doubled over the last two years. Annual consumer spending on organic food in the UK rose 40% last year to £390 million and is

expected to top £1 billion within the next two years.

So it was an announcement worthy of some incredulity when the Government said in August that finance to help farmers convert to organic had run out and that no further money will be available for at least 18 months. An exasperated National Farmer's Union slated the move as "ludicrous". In early November, the affects of the French beef ban in France forced the Government into finding a further £10 million for the organic conversion scheme as a short term palliative but such small amounts of cash are singularly failing to connect British agriculture with the organic boom.

And so it is that 70% of organic food bought in the UK is imported from abroad, with both British farmers and consumers paying the price. A recent opinion conducted by the Soil Association revealed that consumer willingness to purchase organic food - booming though it is - is still hampered by high prices. How much lower would it be if we grew it ourselves? How much more could we afford to eat organic?

According to the EU's farming commissioner, Franz Fischler, British farmers are "failing to capitalise" on the booming consumer demand for organic produce: "In some member states the success of organic farming is overwhelming. In others, like the UK, it unfortunately still lags behind." An estimated one per cent of British farmland is run organically compared with ten per cent in Germany and Austria.

The problem for British farmers is that it takes five years of non-chemical application to achieve organic status for land; a period of time which requires financial support. The conversion grants given to farmers by the UK government to facilitate such changes have always been among the lowest in Europe. Now the money has run out all together.

The major UK supermarket chains on the other hand are now hailing organic produce as the new saviour; making hasty readjustments to both retail strategy and marketing. Sainsbury's may have been trailing in the UK's supermarket profit league lately but their rapidly increasing organic sales now lead the current supermarket 'go organic' boom. It is a trend not lost on a British retailing industry bracing itself for the takeover of Asda by the world's largest retail business, Wal Mart. The American retail colossus is about to arrive on British shores with massive bulk purchase potential, aggressive marketing and wide-scale dramatic price cuts on popular supermarket products. Whilst the UK's most profit-successful supermarket chain, Tesco, are putting themselves in the ring for a price match, the other UK supermarket companies realise Wal Mart's immanent foist on British retailing is a serious and potentially terminal threat.

Iceland, Marks and Spencers and Sainsbury's are amongst those already redirecting their advertising focus to show off organic credential, undoubtedly aware that specialising in such produce may be the only sanctuary from Wal Mart's market invasion. So where does this leave the Government?

According to Helen Browning, chair of the Soil Association: "By inadequately funding the [conversion] scheme the Government has lost a crucial opportunity to revitalise the beleaguered farming industry in this country in a sector where the potential is obvious to everyone." Everyone that is except the government itself. So why the blind eye?

Lamentable differences in the Government's allocation of agricultural cash provides the clues. This year's exhausted government grants for organic conversion amounted to a paltry £6 million with just £2.2 million spent on organic farming research. In contrast, the Government shelled out £52 million agricultural biotechnology research in 1998.

Blair's US driven globalisation myopia has squandered both political attention and direct financial support on facilitating the US biotech industry's drive towards genetically-modified agriculture and away from the irrefutable potential of organic farming. Both the Soil Association and organic farming in general, stand expressively in diametric opposition to everything genetically-modified farming is about. Public concerns about genetically modified foodstuffs are now so great that both the national media and the the British supermarket industry have stepped off their usual safety fence and avowedly embraced the 'No to GM food' campaign; an issue which was only propelled into public consciousness after over a year of crop-ripping direct action back in 1997/8.

Preoccupied with facilitating big business, Tony Blair is the last to acknowledge the point. Meanwhile, the whole country is losing out on a sustainable agricultural future because of a government which fights more for the rights free-trade globalised big business than it does for its own nation's long term health. Anyone who witnessed Tony Blair in a McDonald's burger bar in Coventry last year, serving happy meals to children in front of the media camera's will of course realise this already.

RENTAMOB INVADE CITY

Pro-hunt group threatens J18-type violence

The chairman of a pro-hunting lobby group has threatened to riot if its demands are not heard and responded to by Tony Blair.

John Jackson told the first annual Countryside Alliance conference: "That nasty little riot in the City of London some months ago showed us all the organising potential in what can now be done. That was for a bad purpose. The Alliance will realise that potential for a good purpose."

The Countryside Alliance - whose members include Lord McAlpine, Andrew Loyd-Webber and the Duke of Westminster - was formed in 1997 as an amalgamation of the Countryside Movement, The British Field Sports Society and the Country Business Group. The conference held in London at the end of October was attended by around 300 people.

John Jackson's invocation of the disturbances which followed the 'Carnival

Against Capitalism' in the City of London on June 18 was another in a series of rhetorical references to public outrage which have populated the Alliance's press campaign. Despite being a minority pursuit to which 80% of the UK are antipathetic, the Countryside Alliance has consistently portrayed the pro-hunt campaign as being the stuff of popular uprising. Andrew Lloyd-Webber was amongst a host of big landowners who bussed their workforce to London for the big Countryside March in 1998. The event solicited profuse quantities of publicity from the Daily Telegraph, who displayed an unusual zeal for street demonstration with the headline "Vive La Revolution!"; probably the only cause for which the newspaper's avowedly pro-hunt editor, Charles Moore, would sanction such a rabble rousing rally cry.

IS THIS YOUR CARD SIR?

New driving licences form first step to ID cards.

Drivers may have to produce their new photo-licence cards whenever police demand to see them if proposals under consideration by the Home Office get the go ahead. Paper driving licences have now been fully replaced by new photo-licence cards with magnetic strips holding details about the driver.

A recent report from a government action team on the issue reveals that police are pressing strongly for powers to check the new photo-licences at the roadside after recently being granted immediate access to the database at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and to computerised MoT records. The move signals the first major step towards requiring all UK citizen's to carry ID cards, a project which the previous Tory government failed to achieve but which has been enthusiastically picked up by Jack Straw.

EXERCISE LEADS TO OPEN EYES

Scientists say activity is good for the mind.

According to a scientific paper recently published in the journal 'Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences', exercise does improve your mind. Given the voluntary option, laboratory mice ran five kilometres a night on their wheel but their ability to memorise and learn deteriorated if they had no access to the wheel.

The scientists who carried out the study believe the findings show that it may be possible for people to prevent mental deterioration in old age but making sure they exercise. The research group, based at the Salk Institute in California, say there is now growing evidence implicating inactivity with brain degeneration.

NIGHT MAYOR KEPT NEIGHBOURS AWAKE

*Noise pollution squad collars Mayor
and committee chairman*

The Mayor of Crewkerne in Somerset was among the guests at a party visited by the local council's environmental pollution department in October. The council's anti-noise squad received a complaint about a raucous party at 1.15 am on Sunday morning and set out to break it up. Upon arriving at the party location, however, they discovered Mike Best the town's mayor and Hilary Leamon, chairman of the council's noise abatement committee, celebrating the 50th birthday of one of the councillors' husband with three live bands and several barrels of beer.

An exasperated Jacqui Sevell, Crewkerne's town clerk, quit after claiming the party didn't even have an alcohol licence. "I took this job to try to make things happen in this town," she complained. "It is obviously a complete waste of time. I have had enough."

PORTILLO CRUISE GIVES CHELSEA BLUES

*Council estate gets spring clean for
Portillo's electioneering visit*

"I think it's disgraceful. We were told that it was because a very important person was about to visit. I think we are all as important as him. Why can't they keep it this clean all the time." So said 53 year old Helen Morris, resident of the World's End housing estate, after her tower block received a spring clean prior to a 'meet the people' electioneering visit by Michael Portillo. Mrs Morris's council estate is an anomaly in the Chelsea area; a run down council block situated amid the millionaires' houses. Following Portillo's October election in as Tory candidate for the forthcoming Kensington and Chelsea by-election, the former minister toured the cold shoulders of World's End in the company of Anne Widdicombe in October.

"He swans in an out of here and that's it," said Mrs Morris. "All MPs are aliens, you never see them here apart from election time. Makes you sick."

CODPIECE COULD BE DANGEROUS

Warning from dietary body over contaminated UK fish

Healthy adults have been advised by the British Dietetic Association (BDA) to eat only one oily fish a week after recent government research found traces of dioxin and PCBs in fish caught in British waters.

The BDA's recommendation states that unless an adult is at high risk of heart disease, they should regulate fish consumption to one a week due to "potential problems of contamination of fish and fish oils with PCB and dioxin".

The two pollutants are associated with cancer and hormonal disfunction in humans. Traces were found to be the highest in oily fish like mackerel, herring, sardines and salmon. The increase in Salmon farming in

the UK has produced a dramatic drop in price for a fish once sold as an expensive luxury. Some chip shops in the UK now sell battered salmon cheaper than cod following dramatic price drops subsequent to the UK's growing intensive salmon farming industry. Salmon reared in such a way are treated with antibiotics and pest control chemicals as well as being kept in underwater pens sluiced with water from seas contaminated with Dioxin and PCBs.

The latest research compounds a series of recent public outcries over impact of chemical farming and livestock anti-biotics on the quality of food.

BOWING TO THE BROTHERHOOD

Deputy Prime minister , John Prescott, has over-ruled a government ban on Freemasons holding jobs in the planning inspectorate after pressure from former Tory planning officer and leading Freemason, Tony Baldry. Environment minister, Nick Raynsford stated in July that “membership of a secret society such as the Freemasons may be incompatible with the requirement that planning inspectors should be fair open and impartial.” The government ban came in response to concerns expressed by the Home Affairs Select Committee that secret Freemasonic membership was inconsistent with accountable public positions. Planning has traditionally been an area with a high concentration of Freemasons, and the granting of planning permission was deemed too subjective an area to allow secret networks of influence. However, in a written answer to a parliamentary question from Tony Baldry at the end of October, John Prescott stated that “the policy was incorrect and has been withdrawn”. The latest government backdown in the face of co-ordinated and well connected pressure from British freemasonry, suggest the Labour government are keen not to upset the UK 350,000 exclusively male Freemasons.

Over the last three years, the Home Affairs Select Committee - latterly under the chairmanship of the vociferous Chris Mullin MP - has been strongly recommending a public register

Government back-down on Freemasons

of freemasonry membership, saying that public office was inconsistent with secret societies (SQUALL Download No. 1). The Home Office have prevaricated on implementing the select committee’s recommendations encapsulated in two committee reports, saying it prefers the option of waiting to see if Freemasons in the police, judiciary and criminal justice system would voluntarily declare their membership. However, after two years of waiting, voluntary declaration has not taken place on any significant scale and the Home Office has been in no hurry to force the issue. John Prescott’s latest U-turn now suggests that the issue is being buried and forgotten about. Chris Mullin MP, who was made chairman of the Home Affairs select committee since the Labour government assumed power, was the main protagonist behind establishing a public register of Freemasons in public office. However, earlier this year Mullin was moved out of the post and made an environment minister with no brief to continue his work on Freemasonry. Despite strong recommendations from the Home Affairs Select Committee and initial promises from Home Secretary, Jack Straw, the issue now lies where the United Grand Lodge of Freemasonry always wanted it to go....without a political champion, in limbo gathering moss.

MCTWO SUE MAN IN BLUE

The two co-defendants in the McLibel trial are suing the Metropolitan Police Commissioner following revelations that McDonald’s security department received confidential information from officers in his force. Sid Nicholson, an ex-Met officer and former Head of Security for McDonald’s UK, revealed in the witness box that McDonald’s security department were all ex-policemen with “many, many contacts with the police service” and that they could obtain information

McLibel Two sue Met Commissioner

from the police easily. He also revealed that his staff had traded confidential information about Steel and Morris with Special Branch officers. In proceedings launched in the middle of September, Steel and Morris are suing the Met Commissioner for misfeasance in public office, breach of confidence and breach of their right to privacy.

For a review of the latest McLibel goings on check out “Still getting grilled” on page 18.

DRUG CZAR REBUFFED AS DUTCH CALL BLUFF

US drugs czar chased out of London college

General Barry McCaffrey, the US drugs czar was given a rough ride by protestors on what was supposed to be a safe visit to London in October. As a hard liner with draconian views on how to deal with the issue of drugs, the ex-US army general's fire and brimstone method involves demonising all drugs and imposing maximum punishments. On a short tour of London he was chased out of Goldsmith's College in South London after accompanying Keith Hallawell, the unpopular UK drug czar, on a visit there to launch a website on drug misuse.

According to protesters on site, McCaffrey and his policies are of no use to the UK. "The US drugs policy is the most repressive, least effective and most expensive any where in the world," Shane Collins told SQUALL. "He was over here trying to push these policies on the UK. We want harm reduction not prohibition and punishment."

McCaffrey recently incurred the wrath of the Dutch government by issuing a stream of erroneous statements about how liberal drug laws in Holland had led to increases in murder, drug abuse and other crimes. However, much to McCaffrey's embarrassment the Dutch government responded by juxtaposing social statistics on their Embassy's website in the US revealing that in every category the United States was worse than the Netherlands. Heroin addiction per 100,000 is 160 in the Netherlands compared to 430 in the US. The Murder rate per 100,000 is 1.8 in the Netherlands compared to 8.22 in the US. The incarceration rate per 100,000 is 73 in the Netherlands compared with 645 in the US. The per capita spending on drug-related law enforcement is \$27 in the Netherlands compared with \$81 in the US.

TRUST GOES GREENER TO MAKE FARMS CLEANER

National Trust insists on more organic approach to farming

The National Trust will be insisting that farmers working on its land pay more attention to "green" farming practices following the publication of a policy document in early November. In 'Agriculture - 2000 and beyond', the Trust states: "Our objective for the 21st century is to provide benefits to the nation through the sustainable production of a wide range of goods from our land. These include biodiversity, scenic beauty, historic features, cultural and social benefits, environmental quality as well as wholesome, marketable food. Agriculture must embrace the responsible stewardship of soils, air and water in order to move towards sustainability."

The new initiative includes an encouragement towards organic farming and more conservation-friendly farming practices

which, the Trust say, will benefit cash strapped farmers as well as the environment by broadening their range of incomes.

"We believe there is a way out of the current crisis in agriculture founded on a more integrated approach to farming, the environment and the public benefits provided by our countryside," said David Riddle, the head of the National Trust's land agency.

The move is an acknowledgement that organic farming and produce sales are booming whilst the rest of British agriculture is in the worst crisis of living memory. The National Trust runs Britain's largest agricultural estate, with 700 tenant farmers occupying 367,000 acres of land under its stewardship.



ALL 'BEEF' PATTIES MAKE BRITS EURO FATTIES

*National Audit Office reveal
record UK obesity*

A leaked government report has revealed that the British are now the fattest people in Europe. The National Audit Office report, due to be officially published next year, states that health spending on weight problems now outstrips smoking-related diseases. Including time taken off work, the national bill for treating weight-related illnesses such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and some cancers is almost £5 billion a year. According to the report, there is now a recognition that the increasing problem of obesity - defined as being 30 per cent over an optimum body weight - has "significant implications for government finance".

The leaked report confirms the implications suggested by a recent survey of European fast food trends published by Mintel market analysts (see SQUALL Download No1). Mintel's report revealed that British people spend £2.7 million a year on fast food, more than anyone else in Europe. More alarming still was the fact that the European-wide survey did not include fish and chips - a British favourite.

In response to the growing problem, the Department of Health began a publicly-funded Healthy School's Programme last April, aimed at encouraging children to think twice about the food they consume. However, such efforts sit incongruously with recent ministerial endorsements. Trade and Industry Secretary, Stephen Byers, and prime minister, Tony Blair, are amongst a host of top political figures who

have visited McDonald's burger bars and served happy meals to children in front of media cameras. However, in the McLibel Trial verdict delivered in June 1997, Mr Justice Bell declared that McDonald's marketing has "pretended towards a positive nutritional benefit which their food (high in fat&salt etc.) did not match", and that the company "exploit children" with their advertising. Furthermore in the McLibel appeal verdict delivered earlier this year, Lord Justices Pill, May and Keane deemed it to be true that "if one eats enough McDonald's food, one's diet may well become high in fat etc., with the very real risk of heart disease."

According to Gaynor Russel of the British Dietetic Association: "It seems certain we're going the way of America." The US has the highest levels of obesity in the world and spends £158 billion a year dealing with the problem. A recent study carried out by researchers at the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention and published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, says that obesity in the US is increasing in "epidemic" proportions. The researchers found that there had been a 50% increase in obesity in the US over the last seven years, increasing from 12 per cent of the population in 1991 to 17.9 per cent in 1998. McDonald's, part sponsors of the Millenium Experience, will be opening their 1000th UK store at the end of the year.....in the Millenium Dome.

TP THREE GO SCOT FREE

Ploughshares women force another extraordinary court precedent

Three women from the Trident Ploughshares 2000 direct action group have established another extraordinary legal precedent after being cleared of causing £80,000 of damage to a Trident nuclear base despite admitting they had done it. "I have heard nothing which would make it seem to me that the accused acted with criminal intent", summed up the Scottish Sheriff presiding over an extraordinary four and half week trial which ended in October.

Angie Zelter, Ellen Moxley and Bodil Ulla Roder have been held in prison on remand since sabotaging a floating laboratory at Faslane naval base on June 6. The jury at their trial at Greenock Sheriff's Court heard how the three women had thrown computer equipment into Loch Goil before waiting nearly three hours to be arrested by Ministry of Defence Police. The three women successfully argued that they had carried out the act to highlight the fact that the UK was breaking international law with its deployment of nuclear weapons. They cited a ruling issued by the International Court of Justice in 1996 rendering the threat of nuclear weapon usage as illegal.

In a remarkable decision which sets an astonishing new legal precedent, Sheriff Margaret Gimblett ruled that the three women's action had been carried out was "justified" under international law. Sheriff Gimblett instructed the jury to acquit the women.

This latest case is another triumph of unusual legal precedents achieved by Ploughshares' activists. In 1996, Angie Zelter was among the four Seeds of Hope activists (an all female Ploughshares sub-group) acquitted by Liverpool Crown court of causing £1.5 million damage to a BAe Hawk jet fighter bound for Indonesia. Once again despite admitting culpability, they argued that their criminal damage had been perpetrated to prevent the bigger crime of genocide and therefore had full legal justification. To the shock of the legal establishment, both the jury and the judge agreed.

The Ploughshares direct action movement -which spreads its wings across arms sales, nuclear weapons and genetically modified foods - is now one of the UK's most successful campaign groups. Their open accountability, exhaustive preparation and irrefutable principled arguments are proving too formidable to be obstructed by the usual legal means. Ploughshare activists working under the group's principles of direct action, are avowedly non-violent, never wear masks and actually wait around to be arrested following actions in the belief that the subsequent legal process will provide further opportunity to get the Government and big business to be accountable for their actions.

A first hand account the three women's action, written by Ellen Moxley whilst on remand in prison, can be found on SQUALL's Frontline Communique page.

US GLITZ STEALS A MARCH ON UK

Americana to flood London streets

Half the people due to perform in London's millenium parade on January 1 will be Americans. Of the 12,000 performers who will depart from Parliament Square at noon, 6000 of them will be cheer-leaders and other assorted americana flown over in 30

transport planes. With other nationalities dispersed amongst the other 6000 participants, the United States will have more representation on the parade than any other country in the world including the UK.



UNCIVIL VERDICT FAVOURS MONSANTO

Appeal judges overule right to full trial for injuncted activists

Three high court appeal judges have ruled in favour of Monsanto's legal attempt to prevent a full civil trial of anti-GM food activists in a verdict delivered on Nov 25. The Genetix Snowball campaigners had been granted the right to a full trial by the High Court, after arguing that uprooting genetically-modified crops is justified in the public interest. Monsanto, who have obtained a permanent injunction against the activists, were keen to prevent the case from going to a full civil trial in order to avoid adverse media coverage. The biotech corporation had originally sort a permanent injunction against five female activists from anti-GM food campaign, Genetix Snowball, after they uprooted genetic crops at Model Farm near Watlington in Oxfordshire in July 1998. Genetix Snowball's press officer, Andrew Wood, was joined to the action as a sixth defendant at a later date, despite taking no part in uprooting GM crops. In April 1999, Justice Klevan ruled the defendants had the

right to have their case fully argued and that their defence of justification in the public interest should be heard in a full civil court trial. However, the three appeal court judges - Justices Pill, Mummery and Stuart-Smith - overuled Justice Klevan's decision, maintaining that the defence of justification in civil law is only available in circumstances of "emergency" in the event of "serious danger" and that GM crop trials were not "an immediate and serious danger" to the general public.

The Genetix Snowball activists had argued that they had a right to full trial under Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights (the right to a fair trial) and that, had the case been a criminal proceeding, they would have had an arguable defence of "lawful justice".

Kathryn Tulip, a trained solicitor and one of the Genetix Snowball defendants said: "The court failed to take into account Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights. In effect they have maintained that our rights

under the civil law are not equivalent to those under criminal law. We hope to change that."

In a fictional case with remarkable similarities, a character from the Radio 4 soap, 'The Archers', was ruled to have been justified in uprooting genetic crops next to his organic farm in a much hyped series of episodes broadcast in mid-November. Tommy Archer's fictional trial was criminal rather than civil, where the legal argument of "lawful excuse" had real life court precedence. The script writers had interviewed anti-GM activists and examined the case of the Ploughshare activists who, in 1996, were deemed by Liverpool Crown Court to have been justified in damaging a hawk fighter aircraft bound for Indonesia. The denial of a right for a full trial to the real life anti-GM activists means that the legal issues have only received a fictional airing.

The latest Appeal Court ruling will be watched keenly by the Crown Prosecution Service, who pulled out of a criminal prosecution against two GM food activists in a separate case earlier this year. It was widely acknowledged that the Government ordered the case to be dropped after realising that a jury might reflect the British public's rejection of GM food and acquit the activists; so setting a legal precedent of justification for direct action against genetically modified crops. The six defendants are now taking the case to the House of Lords and say they will proceed to the European Court of Human Rights if necessary.

Picture: L to R Jo Hamilton, Zoe Elford, Melanie Jarman, Kathryn Tulip and Rowan Tilly from Genetix Snowball prepare to uproot genetically modified crops at Model Farm, Watlington in Oxfordshire. July 4 1998.

Taken by Nick Cobbing.

SQUOTES

"An open-ended commitment to testing achieves nothing. It is not cost-effective in manpower terms and would prove disruptive in the twin aims of reducing unlawful use of drugs and reducing crime."

Malcolm George, Chief constable of Greater Manchester responding to a new Criminal Justice Bill which will introduce drug testing for everyone arrested for any misdemeanor.

Do or Die

Voices from the
Ecological Resistance



Do or Die No. 8 is 350 A5 pages crammed with reports and analysis from the world-wide ecological frontlines. From tribal resistance against bulldozers to the festive attack on the financial heart of London on June 18th these are the voices, not of outsiders, journalists or academics, but of those involved in the struggles themselves. In these times of concrete alienation these voices shine hope from movements that aim to defend nature, create revolution and re-wild humanity.

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Back issues have sold out but are on the web at:
<http://www.eco-action.org/dod/>



HALF STEPPERS SAYEED STEP WITH DOORSTEP

Exodus Collective defeat last minute attempt to evict farm.

After door-stepping a junior environment minister outside his London home, Luton's Exodus Collective have managed to defeat a hair-raising last minute attempt to evict them from a farmstead they have occupied since 1992.

With a TV camera in tow, members of Exodus collared Lord Larry Whitty as he headed off to work at 7.45am on November 1 and managed to explain the case details to the minister. During the course of a cordial exchange, Exodus informed him that his department was about to commit a gross injustice and asked him to take a personal interest in the case given that local right wing politicians in Bedfordshire were playing with

the truth in their attempt to have the Collective forcibly removed. Lord Whitty gave Exodus's spokesperson, Glenn Jenkins, the opportunity to explain the Collective's predicament before personally taking charge of the case. Within a day of looking more closely at the details, Lord Whitty decided that Exodus should, after all, be allowed to purchase the property as previously agreed. The contracts were signed on November 3.

The eviction notice had been entirely unexpected given that Exodus had successfully pitched for the property in a sealed bid auction in 1998. However, with no legal binding on completion of sale until contracts and deposits had been exchanged,

the Department decided to pull out of the deal after extensive lobbying from Tory MP Jonathan Sayeed (Mid Beds).

The attempted eviction of Long Meadow Community Free Farm was subsequently planned for the morning of November 5th and hundreds of activists from as far away as Manchester were preparing for an emergency mobilisation after news of the threat had swept round the country via e-mail networks.

Along with Liz Ledster, a Lib Dem South Beds District Councillor, Tory MP Jonathan Sayeed had been vociferously campaigning against Exodus for some time, using the 3rd Free the Spirit Festival which took place at the farm this summer, as an added excuse to seek their eviction. Following the event, described by all participants as the best festival of the year, Cllr Ledster had circulated a questionnaire to local residents in an effort to solicit local antagonism towards Exodus. The questionnaire led with the headline: "Are you scared? I know I am". Sayeed had subsequently persuaded the local Department of Environment office to pull out of the deal and to recommend to Lord Whitty that he consent to their immediate eviction. Trusting the advice of his department's local office, Whitty had given the go ahead unaware of the details of the case.

However, following Exodus's personal appeal to Lord Whitty, Sayeed's campaign to evict the farm faltered just two days before the planned arrival of bailiffs. Appearing on BBC Three Counties Radio the following day, Sayeed said that he was "furious" by Exodus's canny victory and that he had personally spoken to ex-Tory ministers, John Redwood and Tim Yeo, in a further effort to harness right wing support on a national basis. Sayeed also described his attempts to match Exodus's personal approach by waiting three hours for Lord Whitty to emerge from a committee room in the Houses of Parliament. Upon emerging from the room, however, Lord Whitty blanked Sayeed, refusing to entertain his pro-eviction appeal. Despite his fury, there is now nothing

that Sayeed can do to alter Exodus's legal possession of the 17 acre farm.

"We're as happy as Larry at having Sayeed stepped the right wing attempt to evict us," a jubilant Glenn Jenkins told SQUALL.

Extensive background articles on the Exodus Collective can be found on SQUALL's features page.

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FRONTLINE COMMUNIQUE

Trident Computers Go Overboard in Loch Goil

Establishing an extraordinary legal precedent, three female Trident Ploughshares activists were recently acquitted by Greenock Sheriff's Court of causing criminal damage to a laboratory at Faslane nuclear naval base. After a four and half week trial, the Sheriff ruled that the three women had been justified in dismantling the laboratory after arguing that Britain's nuclear arsenal was illegal under International law. Writing whilst on remand at Cornton Vale Prison, Ellen Moxley, tells the story of how the three women, calling themselves the Pheasant's Union, lobbed the contents of the Faslane laboratory into Loch Gail and hung around waiting to be arrested.

Over eight months in the planning, the Pheasants' Union action finally took place on June 8th in brilliant weather on Loch Goil.

Ellen Moxley, Ulla Roder and Angie Zelter were really nervous. During the previous two reconnoitres, there had been a lot of police boat/car presence; our small battery operated angle grinder had died; the unreliable inflatable dinghy had a dicey engine. Yet it turned into the perfect action. Ulla was at the spot 4 hours before the start time and phoned with the message:

"Beautiful weather." Then the boat, Angie and Ellen arrived in a rented van. We launched on time (7 p.m.), and in spite of some heart-stopping moments with the engine, soon arrived at "Maytime" -the large floating laboratory complex which tests the sonar signals from Trident. We know now that the Chinese Defence Department can track Trident's movements through geo-magnetic fluctuations and the laboratory on Maytime is more essential than ever to Trident's operation. We had tools with us to open padlocks but fortunately we

didn't have to use them for that. One window into the laboratory was able to be unbolted and in a flash Angie squeezed through. Ellen and Ulla hung a huge black banner, saying: "TP 2000: STOP NUCLEAR DEATH RESEARCH/D.E.R.A.= DEADLY EFFICIENT RESEARCH FOR ANNIHILATION".

Helen Steven's beautiful banner had rainbow people pushing Trident into the sunlight and said: "BRINGING CRIME INTO THE LIGHT". Banners made by other Horties said: "CONSTRUCTIVE DECONSTRUCTION" and "TP 2000 OPPOSES RESEARCH FOR GENOCIDE". Angie and Ulla handed Ellen load after load of computers, printers, monitors, fax machines, telephones, computer disks, papers, manuals etc.

Everything went overboard into the drink! Inside the laboratory there was an almost impenetrable cage which housed the mechanism for the model submarine which is used for many of the tests. Angie cut her way in and destroyed (by cutting the electric wires and hammering the circuit boards) the three control

panels for the winch and model submarine. Ulla found a sign saying "MOD No Mooring, No Boarding" and propped it up beside the cage! We carefully cleaned up the lot, arranged on the table our police statement, video, Tridenting -it handbook and several photos of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and the victims -a good finale to our housework.

Having exhausted the possibilities in the laboratory, we three went up on top of the barge and tried getting into the control room for the vessel. It was protected by hardened perspex/ glass. We tried glass cutter, hammer and cold chisels, and a drill with several bits and almost got through. Above the control room we cut the aerial antenna and superglued/liquid-metalled the moving parts of an outside winch. We then settled down for a picnic.

"Newt", a moveable platform, was a few hundred yards away and we thought we might inspect that with a life-raft (as our own boat was now beyond use and we had untied it in the hope it might wash ashore and be retrieved by our supporters). We let down one life-raft which opened in a spectacular manner. We were unsure whether it was right side up, or if it had paddles inside. So we released the second one which fell into the water, its capsule still intact. By this time 3 hours had gone by and the internal radio started hailing us. We did not want to be caught ineptly trying to control a life-raft halfway to Newt so we agreed to be satisfied with the disarmament work already accomplished. It was an excellent time to have done this work, for the laboratory was between experiments.

Before damage was done to any component we made sure the power was off. When the police arrived they were friendly, having had previous experience talking to TP 2000 people. Throwing out these components felt to Ellen as if she were getting rid of the building blocks of oppression: Trident; the "free " market; the exploitation of children; unbridled militarism; the all-prevailing violence of society; third world debt. This was an amazingly liberating experience. The fact that we three are now on remand for 110 days and will face a protracted trial, we hope with a jury, is a small price to pay for having actually disarmed a Trident-related facility.

We send our best wishes to all our fellow pledgers and look forward to reading of their experiences disarming Trident. Together we can change the system!

SQUOTES

"Big festivals are now covered with advertising which leads people to think it's ours not theirs."

Sean Pillot de Chenencey, corporate marketing consultant. Sunday Business 19/9/99

"However, some now fear that the few companies that have been able to exploit dance music and club culture successfully, may end up killing the golden goose."

Jeremy Hunt, Sunday Business 19/9/99



GRILLED

*With the McLibel Two launching further legal volleys, anti-McDonald's campaigns across the world are attracting more popular support than ever. **Jim Carey** reviews the latest twists and turns of an incredible saga.*

“Why, oh why did we ever throw a pebble at a hornet's nest” must be a fair approximation of the words muttering on the lips of McDonald's executive hierarchy. For they must surely rue the day their notorious litigation department sent out their agents to throw libel writs at the feet of Helen Steel and Dave Morris in 1990. Nearly a decade later the longest trial in English legal history, and the worst ever self-imposed corporate PR disaster, is still ongoing. In fact the griddle is hotter than ever and it's more than just McDonald's fingers which are getting burned.

Any hopes harboured by McDonald's executives that the thorough roasting would

end with Mr Justice Bell's verdict after the initial 314 day trial (1997) were scotched when the McLibel Two appealed, and the appeal court judge's verdict increased the strength of the critics' position.

Now, more frowns are furrowing the corporate brow as Helen Steel and Dave Morris have followed up their appeal court gains by lodging a petition to the House of Lords concerning the sections of the case they have still not yet won.

In a nutshell, the basic premise of their 43 point submission runs as follows. Firstly, that UK libel laws weigh unjustly in favour of transnational corporations and against the

public's right to criticise corporate strategies which profoundly influence our environment and social fabric. Secondly, that libel case procedures are oppressive and unfair. And thirdly, the appeal court additions to the original trial verdict now mean the McLibel Two have won the bulk of the issues involved in the case and so damages should now be dropped against the defendants and placed on McDonald's. Their leave to appeal to the House of Lords is to be decided sometime in November.

In a separate case, the tenacious McLibel Two are now suing the Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, claiming damages for misfeasance in public office, breach of confidence and breach of their right to privacy. The actionable case came to light during the full McLibel trial when Sid Nicholson, McDonald's ex-head of security in the UK and a former Met officer, admitted in court that McDonald's security team were all ex-policemen who still had easy access to police records. During his cross examination in court, it came to light that McDonald's security department had obtained specific information about Dave Morris and Helen Steel from currently serving Met officers. It is a case of national significance given that a proliferation of corporate security departments and private investigation firms are heavily populated with ex-policemen. Pending further prevarication, this case is to be heard towards the end of 1999.

Meanwhile, in France, the leader of the small french farmer's union Confederation Paysanne, was released from prison on bail in September. Jose Bove's crime was to lead a mass attack on a McDonald's burger bar in Millau, in the southern French region of Aveyron as a protest against US trade imperialism. Released on bail as a national hero, even Lionel Jospin, the French prime minister remarked in public that "Mr Bove's cause is just.". The Confederation is continuing to organise widespread pickets and protests at McDonald's stores across France.

Over the other side of the world the film "McLibel - Two worlds collide" - an independently produced documentary directed by Franny Armstrong - is receiving rave reviews on its current tour of Australian cinema's and film-houses. "An often hilarious expose of big business arrogance," commented The Sydney Morning Herald, whilst Australia's Sunday Telegraph trumpeted its praises with a four out of five star rating.

Meanwhile in the US, the animal welfare group PETA have organised a visually shocking nation-wide billboard poster campaign following McDonald's refusal to improve its record on animal cruelty. During his delivery of the McLibel verdict, Mr Justice Bell held McDonald's to be "culpably responsible for cruelty" to animals. Citing the verdict, PETA demanded an immediate improvement in McDonald's animal rearing practices. The national advertising campaign was instigated following the burger giant's refusal to entertain any of the demands. The Advertising Standard's Authority in the UK, however, have banned the adverts even before they were submitted by PETA for UK publication.

How ironic then, given the roasting continuing to be meated out to the biggest fast food corp in the world, that the British Advertising Industry awarded last year's Advertiser of the Year Award to Mike Love, Communications director for McDonald's UK. A case of protecting their own? According to Channel Four News, the McLibel trial has proved "The most disastrous PR exercise ever mounted by a multinational company".

Copies of the high quality 53 minute "McLibel - two world's collide" are available on video by calling 0171 375 3181.

The McSpotlight website which presents all the latest McLibel news plus transcripts from the entire trial, attracted 2.2 million visits in the week of the trial verdict and now reports a staggering total hit rate of 75 million and rising.

TRADE OFFISH

*Activists are achieving unprecedented success in redefining globalisation as a dirty word. As the World Trade Organisation attempts to improve its public image, **Si Mitchell** speaks to some of the dissenting voices before packing his bags for the millenium global-trade talks in Seattle.*

“Our relentless pursuit of growth is accelerating the breakdown of the planet’s life support systems,” says president of the People-Centred Development Forum, David Korten. “It’s intensifying resource competition, widening the gap between rich and poor, and undermining the values and relationships of family and community. The growing concentration of power in global corporations and financial institutions is stripping governments - democratic and otherwise - of their ability to set economic, social and environmental priorities in the larger common interest.”

As the dust settled on a bloodied planet, the victors of WWII met with the aim of creating an unshakable global stability. The World Trade Organisation was empowered, ostensibly, to create ‘a level playing field’ of trade between the planet’s richest and poorest nations. Fifty years on the organisation has become its own nemesis.

Trade agreements, such as GATT and NAFTA, drafted in secret by the WTO, have systematically undermined national laws and elected governments in the name of trade “freedom”.

“In my view,” Korten told SQUALL. “The WTO should be closed while we establish much needed mechanisms under the United Nations to regulate transnational finance and trade.”

Founder of US democracy group Public Citizen, Ralph Nader says: “NAFTA and GATT

have institutionalised an economic and political situation that places every government in a virtual hostage situation, at the mercy of a global financial and commercial system run by empowered corporations.”

In 1994 ‘the Uruguay round’ of GATT was only narrowly adopted by politicians who, on the whole, knew little about it or its implications. In 1997, just weeks before the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) was due to be rubber stamped by the UK government, Jack Straw told a questioner that he had never heard of it. The MAI would have given unprecedented powers to the richest oil-producing nations on earth. Had it gone through, we would not be discussing the import of US hormone injected beef. We would be eating it.

The latest “round” of trade talks begins on November 29 in Seattle. Clinton’s American contingent have focused their energy on securing agricultural and intellectual property dominance for the corporations they represent. If successful the transfer of ‘green’ or beneficial technologies to the third world will stop, while majority opposition to biotechnology will become illegal. Microsoft, Nextel, Ford and General Motors have all paid over \$250,000 to the Seattle Host Organisation for ‘Emerald’ level access to the front line players. (Yet the poorest of the WTO’s 135 member countries will have little or no representation in the conference centre at all.)

In a scenario that would put Tony Blair’s

posturing in Northern Ireland to shame, the CIA are orchestrating events within the conference centre. Every delegate will be well aware when and how he should vote.

Still reeling from the MAI's untimely demise, the European WTO posse are out to reinstall its aims in full. However Gordon Brown and Clare Short will not be the only ones in Silicon valley with an axe to grind. Tens of thousands of human rights activists, environmentalists, civil libertarians, trade unionists and generally pissed off people are heading to Washington State with a very different agenda. Buoyed by stalling the MAI once, they intend to see it off again and this time they are better prepared. WTO director general, Michael Moore, warns that these talks will be dominated by activists: "During the

Uruguay Round, we complained about apathy. In Seattle we'll be complaining about activists." Moore described the thousands of activists converging on Seattle as "good kids".

Let there be no confusion. World trade has increased eleven-fold since 1950, yet poverty, unemployment, environmental destruction and social disintegration have all witnessed unprecedented growth. This is not another cause for concern, another agenda for the great unwashed. If you have a widespread political, social or economic problem you can be assured it is being caused or exacerbated by growth and globalisation. As Ralph Nader says: It's not the immigrants, the welfare system or greedy farmers that cause these problems. "Citizens divide against each other to the benefit of the corporate agenda."



Anti-arms trade campaigners severely disrupt the Armed Forces Communication & Electronics Association (AFCEA) arms fair at the Renaissance Hotel, London Heathrow from the 27th - 29th October '99. The exhibition deemed "politically and ethically undesirable in

the European Union" by the Belgian parliament, played host to human rights abusing companies including BAe and Racal Communications, and torturing states such as Turkey. Photo by Richard Andrew.

TARMAC DISSENTERS ATTACK HACK 'INVENTORS'



RTS submit complaint about Sunday Times arms allegation

Reclaim the Streets (RTS) have submitted a complaint to the Press Complaints' Commission following claims made in the Sunday Times that the campaign group are amassing weapons.

Under the headline 'City anarchists stockpile arms' (17/10/99), The Sunday Times stated that RTS are "stockpiling illegal weapons including tear gas and stun guns for a planned riot in the City of London on November 30". The allegations were repeated both in the Evening Standard (20/10/99) and in the Daily Telegraph (21/10/99).

The premise of Reclaim the Streets' complaint is two fold. Firstly that allegations of arms stockpiling are a deliberate media fiction motivated by political mal-intent and secondly that there is no planned demonstration for November 30th. City of London Police have said there is no evidence or intelligence to support allegations of arms purchases by RTS or indeed that the group have any intention of organising a demonstration in the UK on November 30th.

Despite being unable to offer the police any evidence, The Sunday Times claimed that "In two separate transactions in the past six weeks, at least 34 containers of CS gas and four stun guns capable of delivering a 50,000 volt electric shock were purchased by Reclaim the Streets." According to Det Chief Inspector Kieron Sharp: "June 18 was organised with all the fliers, things on the Internet, information about who was going to be there and what different groups were planning. But there is nothing out there at all for Nov 30".

However, despite Det Chief Insp Sharp's

refutation of the existence of any evidence or intelligence to back up the Sunday Times' allegations, he still offered the Daily Telegraph an extraordinary prognosis: "I would think if such stockpiling is going on, it would be for a much larger event on a date as yet unknown in the future." It is highly unusual for a senior policeman to make such projections without the backing of either evidence or intelligence.

Media coverage of the June 18th demonstration - particularly that presented in the Sunday Times - has brought British journalism into serious disrepute. On the two Sunday's following the event the Sunday Times 'Insight' team ran full page articles which they referred to as 'Investigative'. One article was based round the subject of demonstrators smearing themselves with tomato ketchup to exacerbate claims of police brutality. The other article claimed that demonstrators had been paid both a wage and travelling expenses to attend the event. Examination of both articles reveals the only sources for the 'investigations' were anonymous city traders. Hardly reliable sources for such high profile 'investigative' journalism.

The bylines for this profuse spate of Sunday Times articles about Reclaim the Streets and J18 have always included Mark Macaskill, a new boy at the paper. Insiders at the Sunday Times have told SQUALL that Macaskill has been given a brief to "dig the dirt". During the course of his brief journalistic career at newspaper, Macaskill has intimated in his articles that he is party to anonymously sourced information from MI5.

[from Underground Update on www.squall.co.uk]

SQUALL Back issues

Issue 8: ACT UP (56pp A4) A Major investigative introduction to the Exodus Collective/ Full report on the Westminster Council scandal/ Land ownership/ Housing quangoes/ International squatters/ Road Wars/ News of the skewes/ letters, regulars and more.

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