



The Loombreaker

August '99
Issue 3
FREE!

SMASH GENETICS... FOUR DOWN, THREE TO GO!

This year the Government authorised seven farm-size (i.e. BIG!) trials of genetically modified crops. The first was destroyed by the farmer, and activists have been following his example ever since!

These trials are being used to speed up the introduction of commercial GM growing into our country. During a two week spate of action, people from all walks of life took part in three actions to decontaminate these sites. Hundreds of people who converged for an anti-genetics rally in Oxfordshire spontaneously decontaminated the nearby genetically manipulated rape crop. This was followed by Greenpeace who used farm machinery to mow the third farm scale trial (situated in Norfolk). Greenpeace head Lord Melchett escaped prison because he had to go on holiday! (Ever get the feeling there is one law for the rich and another for the poor?)

The fourth farm scale trial, in "Spittle on the Street" (!?) in Lincolnshire was destroyed a week later, leaving only three sites! Anyone fancy a midnight ramble?

STOP THE CROP IN WATLINGTON

On Sunday 18th July over 500 people from around the country took the law (and several acres of GM rape) into their own hands. Coach loads of anti-GM protestors (including around 50 from Manchester) joined local organic growers, beekeepers and environmentalists at the Agrevo trial site for a rally. After listening to many speakers, the crowd dressed in white suits and went to form a human chain around the field. Overtaken by passion, the crowd entered the field and spontaneously pulled up the poisonous crops.

Despite being accompanied by a police helicopter, the field was successfully decontaminated. As the crowd withdrew, they were met with the usual police reaction - they started jumping on people and pushing them around. One person from Manchester was among six people arrested on the day, but most of us had a great day in the country.

SMASH GENETICS IN LINCOLNSHIRE

An innocuous-looking GM maize site in Lincolnshire was subject to a surprise visit by 100 folk dressed in white suits (how original!) on Saturday 31st July. Over the space of an hour the majority of the crops were snapped and pulled up in the sweltering heat. As the people walked away from a job well done, we encountered the rather surprised Lincolnshire constabulary. People attempted to



support each other, linking arms and trying to leave as a group. Unfortunately we were too late - 46 arrests were made although many people got away.

Those arrested were kept in for two nights and three days and charged with conspiracy to cause criminal damage. They were released from court on bail, with conditions of not returning to Lincolnshire (damn!) and not to associate with any of the other people arrested. I suppose this is done on the grounds that they regularly meet as a group of 46 to overthrow the state (if only...). The reality is that most of them had never met before court, and many had gone as groups of friends and close neighbours who are now not entitled to speak to each other.

The farmer claimed that the wrong crop had been pulled up, and the gullible police and media believed him. However, this site had been laboratory-tested before and after the action and is DEFINATELY GM!!!

Those arrested in Lincolnshire, including six from Manchester, are back in Lincoln Magistrates Court on the 13th September. The people arrested at Watlington have not yet been charged. Of the three who were remanded, two have now been released. Please write to the remaining one: Gary Steven Lawson, CV 6001, Lincoln Prison, Greetwell Rd, Lincolnshire.

If you are interested in being involved in a Manchester based anti-genetics campaign ring 226 6814.

FANCY A HOLIDAY?

Well, sort of...

The Earth First! national gathering is a great opportunity to find out about direct action, meet people, learn new skills and get involved. The gathering is from Thursday 19th to Sunday 22nd August in East Anglia. Transport is available from Manchester, ring 0161 226 6814. The accommodation is camping and the gathering costs £10 plus food (£3 per day). It's usually a really good few days away, so if you are free, why not come?

OKSIONAL CAFÉ 6 - MAKE IT HAPPEN!!

After the last Oxford Road café and the excellent Hacienda party, people have been wanting to see another Oksional café. There are plans afoot to open a new café in September, to greet new students and give them a chance to get involved in radical politics.

The café will hopefully have the usual mixture of good vegan food on a donation basis, kicking parties and lots of practical workshops, events and displays.

You could be part of it! Can you do anything to make the new café happen? For example:

- Cleaning and decorating
- Organising a meeting or a workshop
- Cooking, serving tea, washing up
- Organising acoustic music, gigs, parties
- Talking to people who come in about what's going on
- Make posters and leaflets
- Give out leaflets - especially at Universities and colleges
- Put up posters
- Find an empty underused building
- Sleep at the building overnight
- Stay there during the day
- Run a young people's activity

Or anything else you can think of... There is a meeting on Sunday 15th August in Hulme, and another meeting will be arranged after that. Ring 226 6814 for more info, and the date of the next meeting.

MANCHESTER ASYLUM SEEKERS

The Su family have been living in Dukinfield since they fled China in 1992. He and his family fear for their lives if they are forced to return to China. They are continuing to fight to stay in the UK and their campaign is fully supported by their children's schools. Their case is now relying on compassionate circumstances. Their next deadline is the 24 August 99, when their temporary admission runs out.

Sofia Pleskun is threatened with deportation to the Ukraine. She came to this country in 1996 and has since married Wasyl who has lived here for 50 years but the immigration service are treating her as an illegal entrant and want to remove her.

If you would like to support these campaigns contact Tony Openshaw at NCADC on 0161 7408206 or the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit on 0161 7407722.

FIGHTING RACISM, DISCRIMINATION AND INJUSTICE

The National Civil Rights Movement was set up after the Stephen Lawrence enquiry, to fight for real change in the system. The Manchester group uses direct action to fight against injustice in policing, the legal system, education and employment. They meet every second Tuesday evening at the Kath Locke centre in Moss Side. They welcome everybody - contact 07957 777 372 or 256 1401 or 248 5190. Current activities include campaigning for Mustafa Shettima who is fighting a case against the police, supporting the parents action group against the closure of Ellen Wilkinson High School, and producing a rights card.

A national emergency helpline has also been set up - the number for this is 0800 374 618.

SEEDS OF RESISTANCE

Gardeners, activists and farmers are invited to a two day gathering to build links between activists campaigning against the corporate control of food, and farmers or growers creating an organic alternative. The gathering will be from 6th to 8th September in Cambridge. Call GEN for information on 0181 374 9516. There could be transport organised from Manchester - if you are interested, phone 226 6814.

THE FUTURE'S SHITE - THE FUTURE'S ORANGE

Parents and local people are continuing to campaign for the removal of Orange's mobile phone mast from the roof of St. Margaret's Primary School in Whalley Range. Mobile phone masts have been linked to numerous health dangers including leukaemia, infertility, brain tumours and eye problems. The microwave radiation from these masts is also believed to interfere with brain waves leading to headaches, memory loss and poor concentration. So far the campaign has collected hundreds of signatures whilst petitioning locally, outside Orange retailers and on stalls in Manchester, Chorlton and at events such as the Unity Festival. Parents also lobbied a meeting of the council's education committee at the Town Hall, as the Council were the ones who approved the construction of the mast. The campaign continues to put pressure on Orange and the Council to pull out of their deal and remove the mast *now*, before the health hazards are tragically proved right. Contact 861 9152 for more information.

NATWEST CAMPAIGN

The campaign against NatWest's involvement with animal abusers Huntingdon Life Sciences continues. Over 40 branches have now been visited in the North West. One result of this has been that hundreds of people have said that they will close their accounts, costing the bank £thousands. When the campaign starts to cost them significantly more than the interest they are earning from

the loan to HLS it is believed that NatWest will pull out. Two campaigners who were due in court on charges of causing a breach of the peace have had their charges dropped after defence solicitors demanded the personal appearance of prosecution witnesses (i.e. NatWest staff).

The demos are set to continue at a rate of 3 or 4 a week. Including stalls in Manchester every Thursday, and a big demo on Saturdays. For more information call: 07880 972502.

FRUIT LIBERATION

Reports are coming in to the Loombreaker that thousands of oranges are being imprisoned in plastic cases and labelled as "Citrus Snacks" by cruel service stations. The packs advertise a "free handwipe" and give useful information, for example "Ingredients: Orange". Fruit supporters everywhere (and people who don't like pointless packaging) are encouraged to liberate these poor fruits from their plastic prisons. Perhaps service station bosses haven't realised that oranges have a perfect packaging that keeps them fresh, clean and free of bruises - its called peel.

FREE KURDISTAN!

The Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan has been sentenced to death by a Turkish court with no jury. In the last 15 years 30 000 Kurds have been killed by Turkish troops, 3 000 Kurdish villages have been destroyed and 3 million Kurds have been driven from their homes. Trade unionists have organised a public meeting on August 25th (see diary) and are calling for support.

LIKE CHILDREN IN A SWEETSHOP...

Moulded "curvy" armour for women, handcuffs, special locks, hidden cameras, battering equipment (ahem), uniforms, extending truncheons... all available to try out and buy. Sounds like some kind of pervy S&M fetish shop? You're probably right. Manchester's GMEC centre recently played host to a trade exhibition for the Police. As well as the kinky "personal issue" equipment the fair featured guns, water cannons, movement sensors, tracking devices, computer systems (that might even be compatible with their other systems for a change) and an armoured personnel carrier that Greater Manchester Police are apparently interested in buying for the Commonwealth Games (for what event? Synchronised rioting?). So Pc Deborah Davidson, 30, had better watch out... Pc Andrew Bateson, 28, might have something a little more potent than CS gas to "discipline" you with next time you're not doing your job properly!

FANCY A SPLIFF ?

On Wednesday the 14 of July Jack Straw visited Manchester Magistrates court, so we decided to turn up and greet him in the style he's accustomed to. As his car drove into the carpark underneath the magistrates court protestors raced after it, as he got out of the car he was greeted by a protestor spliff in hand saying "here's a present for your son, Mr Straw". He entered the building to accompanying shouts of abuse but the protestors were escorted out of the carpark by security. Later on in the day as he drove around Manchester he was acosted several times, Pity we didn't get to pip him.

DIARY

Sat 14th Aug Hillgrove cat farm night vigil, 0121 632 6460

Sunday 15th Aug Oksional Café / squat meeting, ring 226 6814

Monday 16th Aug Hacienda arrestees court case. Meet at 9.45am outside magistrates court to support people

Wed 18th Aug Manchester Animal Protection meeting 7.30pm, Vine pub, Kennedy St (nr Manchester Town Hall)

Wed 25th Aug Earth First meeting, ring 226 6814

Wed 25th Aug Free Ocalan, Free Kurdistan! Public Meeting, Friends Meeting House, Mount Street, 7.30pm

Sat 28th Aug North of England and Wales regional demo at Hillgrove cat farm, 0121 632 6460

14th and 15th September Campaign Against the Arms Trade actions against UK Arms Supermarket (0171) 2810297

18th Sept National Hillgrove Cat Farm demo 0121 632 6460

ANYTHING TO DECLARE...

After staying in a squat in Sheffield every one got up at 4am to go to occupy a Tarmac quarry in Derbyshire. We got in our vehicles only to discover we had all parked on a one way street and thus had to drive straight into the open arms of the police. All the vans were stopped and given producers and checked for road worthiness. Our van got stopped and the sniffer dog was brought out because they said they smelt drugs in the building. After being harrassed for 2 hours we were let go only to be stopped and searched again when we got near the quarry. All the vans which went on the action were searched 2 or 3 times for an hour each time (they must think we're hippie wasters with nothing better to do.). The whole of Derbyshire was covered by an exclusion zone under the CJA 1994. Then about 40 people went off to the site of Manchester's 2nd runway. A cement making plant was occupied and various machines were stopped for over two hours, then every one went to visit the camps.

NATIONAL TRAVISTY

Arthurs Wood and Cedars Wood camp are part of the continued resistance to the 2nd runway at manchester airport, protecting woods that the airport want to cut down. The legal case has been to the house of lords and was lost. Cedars Wood camp has been to court and now has an eviction order against it. But pressure is still

being put on the national trust who own the land the camps are on. Campaigners visited their headquarters in London and hung a banner off the building and have also leafleted and hung banners at the national trust site at Styal mill. Campaigners also occupied manchester council's planning department and hung a banner off the town hall. Work is still going on at the camps with treehouses and tunnels progressing daily. The eviction could be any day now so visit the camps cause they need your support. Ring (07931)931850 or (01565)873551.

HACIENDA DEFENCE CAMPAIGN (FA(21))

A defence campaign has been set up to support those arrested at the Manchester RTS and the Hacienda. If you saw any of the arrests or can support those arrested in any way please contact 226 2814.

The people arrested at the Hac are in court on Aug 16 and those arrested at the RTS are in court on Sept 13. Come along and support those who were arrested.

NETWORKING NEWSLETTER

We have been asked to mention the Networking Newsletter, which covers campaigns in Manchester and includes the famous clash avoidance calendar. If you want to subscribe write to Networking Newsletter, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS (charges vary) or email networking.newsletter@dial.pipex.com

AGENT ORANGE OF THE 90S?

Depleted Uranium is what is left when enriched uranium is seperated from natural uranium. It is conveniently disposed of in deadly weapons. The US government admitted it used DU weaponry in the bombing campaign in the Balkans. We must demand a full clean up operation in Kosova and Serbia. The Campaign Against Depleted Uranium was launched this year to fight for a global ban on the manufacture, export and use of DU weapons. Get in touch at: Campaign Against Depleted Uranium, One World Centre, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS, tel. 834 8301, email gmdcnd@gn.apc.org

INTERESTED IN TAKING ACTION?

Come along to the "Riotous Assembly" (formerly the Activist Networking meetings) - a networking event for Manchester activists involved in non-hierarchical groups or interested in taking direct action - taking on the bosses, grassroots resistance, defending communities, earth, animals, fun! A chance to meet activists from other campaigns, to share information about events, actions, fundraisers, and to join in with people from all sorts of political perspectives. Bring ideas, news of your campaigns and events. A different topic with different facilitators / speakers each month. The next one is on Tuesday September 7th at the Yard theatre, opposite Junction pub on Royce Rd, Hulme at 7.30pm.

WHAT IS THE LOOMBREAKER?

The Loombreaker is a newsletter for activists in Manchester. The idea came out of the Riotous Assembly, a monthly event for activists which tries to get people together who work on different issues:- environmental, social, animal rights, anti-racist, anti-sexist, disability issues, tenants actions, strikes, etc. "The Loombreakers" were Lancashire activists who smashed the machines that destroyed their livelihoods in 1826.

The Loombreaker will come out at the beginning of each month. Pick it up FREE at the following places:-Frontline Books, One World Centre, Yellow Brick Café, Mistys Café, Café Pop, Unicorn Grocery, Paakhurst Centre. To find out which one is closest to you ring 2266814.

If you live outside Manchester send us a stamp for each issue you want, and your address. Prisoners and local action camps get it free!!

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Please send us your reports of actions or campaigns (a couple of lines or a few paragraphs) and especially pictures and cartoons. . Otherwise we will only write about the actions we have been on and it could get a bit boring. Deadline for next issue:- End of August.

