

# The Loombreaker

Issue 6 ★ November '99 ★ Free



*operations", dozens of villages were destroyed, thousands of people massacred, tens of thousands fleeing for their lives, and key activists arrested, and later hung.*

Shell has admitted it supplied arms to the Nigerian regime to suppress the Ogoni and other people's peaceful protest. Since 1997 people have been occupying oil flow stations cutting the oil output by a third from time to time.

At a (s)wanky Shell affair - with free food to bribe the eager students to work for scumbags - the new Manchester student Earth First! group took action against Shell. We offered them 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire', with a carrot, a tenner and even £20 available for the correct answers about Shell's ethical policies! A number of people pointed out the reality of Shell activities - in order to appear awfully civilised, the head-honcho

## Get The \$hell Out of Nigeria!

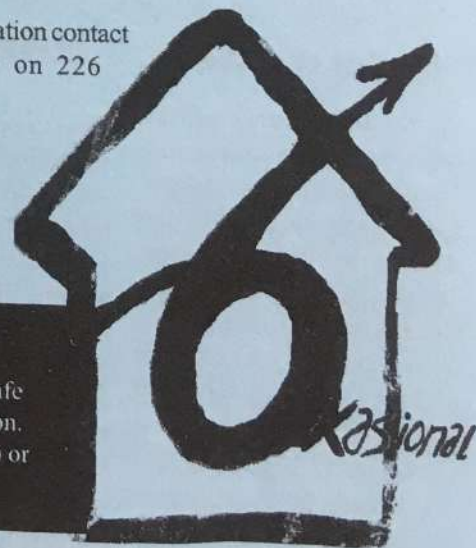
Although guilty of environmental damage throughout the world, Shell is infamous for its exploitation of the oil-rich Niger Delta. Fertile land has been destroyed, oil spills and pipelines have polluted rivers and increased respiratory diseases. The Ogoni people who live there organised themselves peacefully and virtually forced Shell out of Ogoniland in 1993. Shell makes over \$300 million from Nigeria. While these huge oil deals benefit the corrupt regime, the Nigerian people in the region remain among the poorest in Africa. On the 10<sup>th</sup> November 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni activists were murdered by the Nigerian military dictatorship. Their only crime was to speak out against Shell's exploitation and environmental destruction of the Niger Delta, the homeland of the Ogoni and other peoples.

*After a secret meeting between Shell and the Nigerian Head of Internal Security, which called for "ruthless military*

let us speak and wheeled out the token Nigerian apologist. The video lead made a break for freedom, disappearing into the night, while other students adopted the posh displays and read out a poem by Ken Saro-Wiwa!

Shell has admitted to supplying arms to the Nigerian government and continues in its exploitation of the Ogoni people. **The 10<sup>th</sup> November is the anniversary of the death of the Ogoni 9 and there will an action against Shell.**

For further information contact Manchester EF! on 226 6814.



Coming soon to an empty, disused building near you ..  
*The Okasional Cafe!*

Putting life into forgotten buildings and consumer-culture districts, the Okasional Cafe is a space where real food is mixed with politics, music, parties, art and free expression. Come and be part of the action. Meet to set it up on Sunday 7th November (see diary) or ring 226 6814 for the location.

The Loombreaker is about the action people are taking in and around Manchester to defend & create what is important to us, so reclaiming control of our lives.

## More fun in the Countryside

On Saturday 30th October, the "Northern Self-Appointed Guardians of the Environment" went to North Yorkshire for a walk in the country. Imagine their surprise when they stumbled across a test patch of Agrevo's genetically modified oil seed rape. Conveniently they had packed their white suits, dust masks, gloves, a legal observer, a journalist and some tea and biscuits. So they set to work.

Three hours later the site had been cleared of every plant. The action was done peacefully, openly and accountably. The post-action picnic on the site had to be cut short as the weather closed in, but the farmer was by the road, waiting eagerly to be converted to sustainable, organic agriculture. He seemed suitably unimpressed (apparently the whole event had put a dampener on his daughter's birthday party happening that day), but accepted leaflets on permaculture with good grace.

Two people were arrested on suspicion of criminal damage. The suspicions of the police may have been alerted when they were handed bags full of GM plants marked "biohazard". Personal statements were handed in, and when the police realised they were actually holding Self-Appointed Guardians of the Environment, the two were released without charge.

All round, a successful and satisfying day was had by all. Oh, except Agrevo.

## Parents Action is Working!

In the South of the city, parents opposed to the merger of three high schools have taken direct action to improve their children's chances of a good education. The three Catholic schools were merged after repeated promises that it wouldn't happen until a new school was built. Going back on this promise, the Education Committee instead made two of the schools into a new school, St Peters. Parents of children at St Albans in Gorton are particularly unhappy as the move means that some pupils will have to move school four times between the ages of 11 and 16. There are also issues of bullying, safety, teaching and transport – the new upper school is over two miles from the lower school.

Taking the advice of Governments by exercising "parental choice", many parents took their children out of school this September and set up a community-led school, Albans Independent. The new school has over 50 pupils, all doing their GCSEs. Parents donate towards costs, and qualified tutors offer their services. The class sizes are much smaller than at mainstream school, and the young people are all reportedly doing a lot better!

### Merci moves in

"After three years of slog Manchester Environmental Resource Initiative (MERCi) has bought the building that was chosen by our supporters. The building on the Ashton Canal is a twelve minute walk from Piccadilly Gardens and we have moved in! Give us a ring for information: our new number is 273 1736." MERCi is a Centre for Sustainable Development, and will have businesses, a cafe, exhibition space, voluntary groups....

### Arthurs Wood

The last person came out of the tunnel on the 16<sup>th</sup> October after the tunnel started to collapse while bailiffs worked on it. He was taken to hospital for shock, then to the nick. Scottish Andy was given 3 weeks in prison and should be out at the beginning of November. Trees only supposed to have their crowns removed were felled completely, the airport proved again to be liars.

### Labour Behind the Label

Campaigners urged Manchester shoppers to support their campaign for a living wage on Saturday 23rd October. Passers-by signed postcards to pressurise retailers over garment workers' wages both here and abroad. Next month LBL will target Disney, which makes huge profits at the expense of workers' basic rights. Contact 247 1760 or [jessmock@yahoo.com](mailto:jessmock@yahoo.com)

Do you have any comments on the Loombreaker? Any criticism, praise or suggestions? Do you even want to get involved?

If so, why not come to an informal discussion, food and social event. Anyone is invited – just bring money for drinks. The event will be on Friday 26th November at 6pm at the OKasional Café. Ring 226 6814 for address nearer the time.

WHAT KIND OF INSIDIOUS SOCIAL PROGRAMMING IS THIS? NO WONDER THE WORLD'S SUCH A MESS! I DEMAND POLITICALLY CORRECT, MORALLY UPLIFTING ROLE MODELS IN THE FUNNIES!



## Frontline Books

Frontline Books is currently a workers co-op, which means the shop is run and owned by the workers. Frontline is changing into a community co-op, which will be owned and run by its members. By expanding the membership it hopes that more resources and skills can be poured into the project. Anyone can be a member provided they: support Frontline's aims, abide by the equal opportunities policy, are committed to working co-operatively and annually contribute a minimum of £120 or 24 hours labour, or a combination of both. If you want to join, you can call the shop on 249 0202.

# DIARY

## Sunday November 7<sup>th</sup>

Help set up OKasional Café 6. Meet at the Costume Museum, Plattfields Park, Wilmslow Road, Rusholme at 1pm.

## Tuesday November 9<sup>th</sup>

Careers fair action 226 6814.

## Wednesday November 10<sup>th</sup>

Shell action to mark death of Ogoni 9. Ring 226 6814.

## Wednesday November 10<sup>th</sup>,

7:30pm. Earth First! mtg, OK Cafe? - ring 226 6814.

## Tuesday November 16<sup>th</sup>

Public meeting about road traffic reduction. 7pm at Town Hall. Info: 834 8221

## Wednesday November 17<sup>th</sup>,

7pm. Manchester Animal Protection meeting, Friends Meeting House, Mount St, behind Manchester library.

## Friday November 19<sup>th</sup>

Ceilidh for Merci and CND at 7pm, Birch Community Centre, Birch Grove, Rusholme.

## November 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>

Women activist's gathering, London. 01422 844932.

## Wednesday November 24<sup>th</sup>

Earth First! Mtg, as Nov 10<sup>th</sup>.

## Saturday November 27<sup>th</sup>

No Shop Day - anti-consumerism antics. Contact 226 6668.

## Saturday November 27<sup>th</sup>

Action against Campsfield refugee prison. Transport from Manchester - 226 6814.

## Monday 29<sup>th</sup>-Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November.

'Doing it up North' action against globalisation. Meet people from around the North of England. Transport available - ring 226 6814 if you want a space.

# SABBING NEWS

Worried about the future of hunt sabotage if Labour come good on their word to ban hunting (what'll we do with our Saturdays then?), North West hunt sabs have been cramming in both the Cheshire Forest Foxhounds and the Holcombe Harriers each week.

Diplomatic relations with the Cheshire Forest huntsman, Puffa (his actual name) are again good after he stopped talking to us at the end of last season. He even complimented that our sabbing skills have improved over last year. The autumn ritual of trying to get new young hounds to kill foxcubs is over, and the official foxhunting season (started November 1st) has begun. We'll be with them all the way. All are invited.

The Holcombe Harriers have yet to kill a hare whilst we've been out with them this season. Not able to take all the credit, this is largely due to their own ineptitude. But when they get close, we're there to stop them. Or at least the fit sabs are, the rest of us are panting half a mile away across Lancashire moorland (read "strategically placed for when the hare circles around").

Good news is abundant with the imminent arrival of an already semi-mythical van (CD player, comfy seats, exhaust that doesn't trail along the ground) and the improving skills of a number of hunting horn blowers. We go sabbing every Saturday morning - phone 0961-113084 to book a place.

## "Wanted: Mass Murderers"

British Aerospace held a careers seminar at Manchester University, where they hoped to attract young people to join the company which manufactures weapons of mass destruction. BAe makes the Hawk fighter jets that were sold to Indonesia and then used for years in repressing the people of East Timor.

Four people heard about the careers seminar the previous day, and decided to let the students know what BAe is responsible for. Two came to the door holding a banner and leaflets, but were refused entry by security guards. Luckily the other two were already inside, so one woman held the door open while another explained their reasons for being there. BAe panicked and shut down the seminar - allowing the four people to discuss BAe's practices with attendees. Meanwhile about 20 people from the student Socialist Worker Party turned up to support the protest.

The seminar was eventually cancelled, after much time for exchange of views. This seems to be for a combination of reasons - more of the people present were opposed to the seminar than wanted it; the police failed to turn up, obviously having better things to do; also a video projector cable had mysteriously disappeared (not another one...). In general it was a good way to spend an evening - let's hope BAe realise they are not wanted in Manchester.

The Loombreaker

## Coming soon - another victory for animal rights?

After the successful closure of Consort Beagle Kennels and Hillgrove Cat Farm due to the action of thousands of people, the animal rights movement turns its attention to Shamrock monkey farm in Sussex and Newchurch Guinea Pig Farm in the Midlands. Those of us in the North will find it easier to get to Newchurch.

Darley Oaks Farm in Newchurch breeds animals solely for painful and cruel experiments. In September, 600 guinea pigs were saved by the Animal Liberation Front, but 1000s are still imprisoned in the overcrowded sheds.

There will be a national demo on the 7<sup>th</sup> November, and further demos will be arranged. Ring 07931-586826 for information on transport from Manchester, or 01902-564734 to be sent information about the campaign.

## The Fake Revolution

A lively and friendly discussion on how our rulers subvert resistance. 7pm Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November at the Okasional Cafe. Donation for food.

## Sharston Green

Residents who campaigned to save an open space have been given new hope. The building currently going on at Sharston Green could be illegal, due to a government mistake. Residents are trying again to protect the area as an official village green, and Ringway (the airport developers) could be in trouble!

## MUMIA MUST LIVE!



Mumia Abu-Jamal is a black revolutionary who has been on death row in Philadelphia for sixteen years for a crime he did not commit. The date for his execution is the 2<sup>nd</sup> December. He has come close to being executed in the past but each time international pressure helped to save his life. On the 25<sup>th</sup> November there will be a demonstration and rally in Liverpool. For more info contact 861 8390.

### Kingswater Development Update

The outlook is hopeful for Reddish area residents as, strong opposition to the Kingswater Development (destroying open space) is shown at the public inquiry. This started on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October and is now into it's fifth week even though it was only meant to last for 3 weeks.

### Cheadle Royle Development

A public inquiry into the Cheadle Royle development starts on the 30<sup>th</sup> November at 10am in Stockport town hall. The plan is to knock down an old hospital wing and some woodland so they can build houses and other assorted planning disasters.

### November's Riotous Assembly:

Many people from a diverse range of groups attended this month's Riotous Assembly. People came to hear the talk by a group of Basque activists from a group called *Solidarios con Itoiz* who are fighting against the construction of 2 dams in the Itoiz valley.

People had been campaigning against the project for over 10 years, finally in 1993 the construction work began. Even though the project was declared illegal by the Spanish court it was allowed to proceed. *Solidarios con Itoiz* was then born to look at different ways of continuing the fight.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> April 1996 several members of this group cut the cables holding up a crane which was being used to transport cement to the construction site. They succeeded and this delayed the project for a year. They have just been sentenced to 5 years in prison, and thus decided it was time to leave Spain and begin a tour around Europe to make people aware of the 15 year old struggle against the Itoiz reservoir. The campaign against the dams goes on - a couple of months ago 2 women were arrested after breaking over 30 machines on the construction site.

We watched a video about their campaign and then talked about how we could support the campaign. There are various British companies involved in this construction project including British Steel and Laing Construction - if you would like to get involved in organising a solidarity action, come to the next Riotous Assembly or ring 226 6814.

In the break we ate delicious food and socialised. Next was the networking half of the meeting where people talked about actions that had taken place in the last month and upcoming actions and events.

Next month will see a talk about the Millenium Bug and how it will affect us, and how we can use the occasion.

The next Riotous Assembly is on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> December at 7:30pm at the Yard Theatre, 41, Old Birley Street, Hulme - don't miss it.

### Training....

There will be an activists training day and a fun day at Bellvedere Farm, Hindley Green 7 miles south of Wigan. Events will include climbing, abseiling, a sponsored tree climb and other fun activities. This event is being organised by local residents who are fighting a proposed housing development on 9.5 hectares of countryside. The scheme has outline planning permission but the locals are appealing against this. Wigan Council want to sell the land to a house builder so they can use the money to build a link road to an industrial estate and then later onto the M6. People are needed to run climbing workshops etc. Anyone who's interested can ring 226 6814 or 01942 513792.

..IT'S THE EDITORIAL  
- LISTEN TO THIS!



The Loombreakers were Lancashire weavers who, in 1826, smashed the machines that were destroying their livelihoods and communities.

Pick it up **FREE** from: **Frontline Books**, 255 Wilmslow Road, Rusholme; **One World Centre**, Mount Street, near Central Library; **Yellow Brick Café**, 47 Old Birley Street, Hulme; **Mistys Café**, Longsight District Centre, Stockport Road; **Café Pop**, Oldham Street, Piccadilly; **Unicorn Grocery**, 89 Albany Road, Chorlton; **Pankhurst Centre**, Nelson Street, near MRI.

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

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The Loombreaker comes out at the beginning of each month, so get any news to us by the end of November. We would particularly like photos, cartoons and alcohol. Come to our social event if you want to slag us off or give us vegan chocolate - see p2.

The Loombreaker comes from the Free Information Network tradition, spreading news the mainstream media won't print.

### Interested in taking action?

Come to the *Riotous Assembly* for direct action, campaigns, taking on the bosses, grassroots resistance, defending communities, earth, animals, and fun! It's a chance to meet & chat. Bring ideas & events each first Tuesday of the month, 7:30 pm, Yard Theatre (opposite Junction pub) 41, Old Birley Street, Hulme. Next date: 7.12.99