

Go Dutch! Go Danish! Go bike!

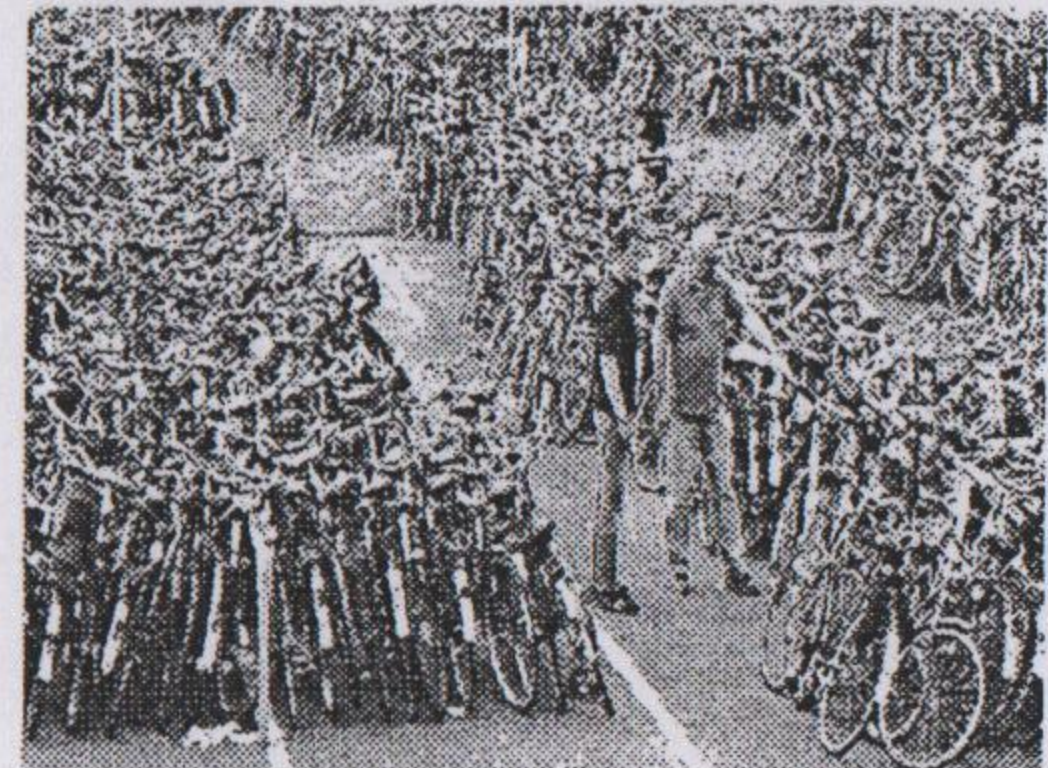
There are many reasons why we should cycle more: less noise, less pollution, less congestions, greater fitness, better health, raising quality of life in our cities. We are not there yet where Dutch, Danes, Germans, Belgians, Swiss or Swedes are, but we will get there soon. Cycling revolution has started and we are kicking cars out of our streets!



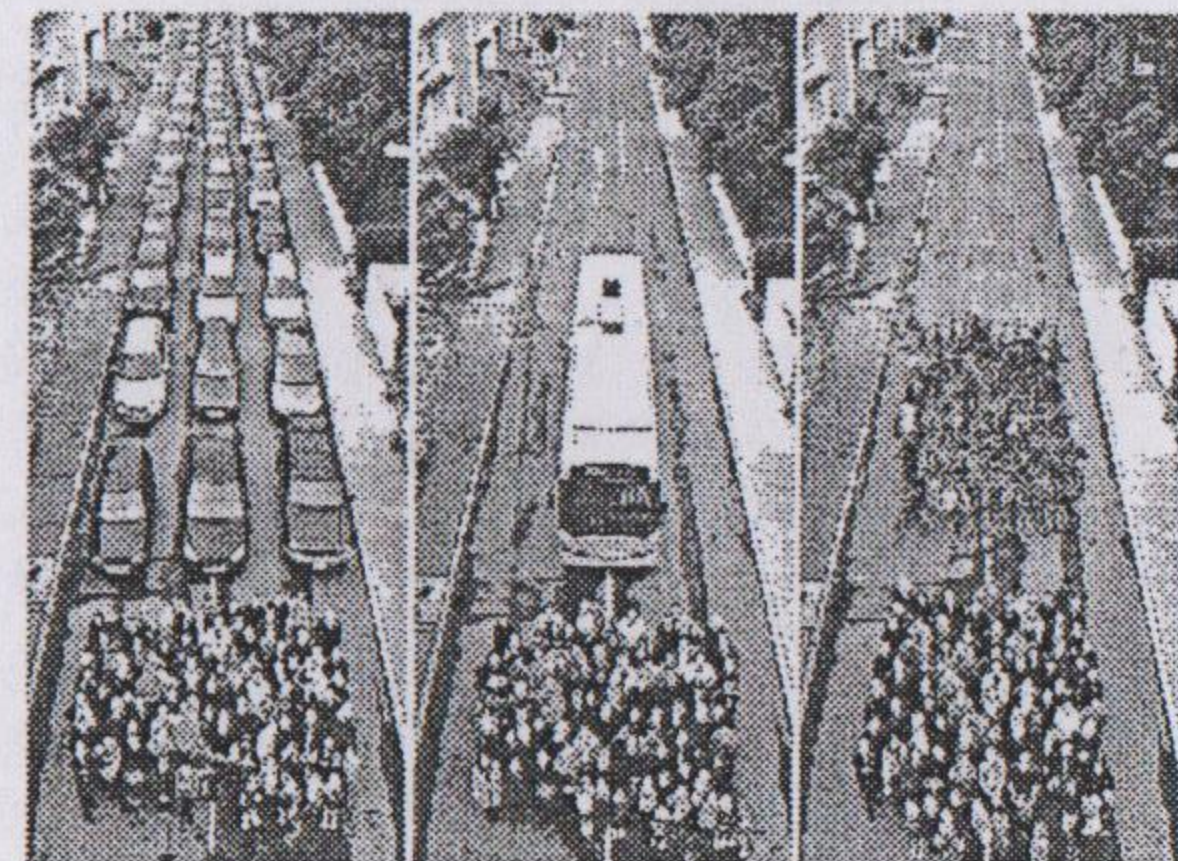
◀ tarmac bike lane separated from bus stop and a footpath with island preventing drivers from cutting corners on junction



◀ cycling with kids ▶



◀ one car parking space can be used by 20 cyclists



cars in cities waste space and cause traffic jams ▶ public transport and bicycles bring relief to busy streets



◀ soon in London: Dutch style roundabouts with cyclists' priority



▼ cycling along road with right of way ▶



no bollards needed, mild segregation with small island ▶



▶▶ Bicycle street

◀ bicycle street where car is a guest

▶▶ Car is a guest



drivers who also cycle, better traffic code and better ▶ infrastructure keep Dutch cyclists safe, not helmets and hi-vis jackets



There is a great need to improve British traffic code. For example undertaking is safer for cyclists than overtaking and should be legalised. But the main change should be to adapt the law with international traffic rule of Vienna Convention (1966) that give everyone who travels along road with right of way priority over traffic leaving such road (by turning left or right) or coming from side roads. Pedestrians also deserve greater protection and their rights should be increased too. Currently drivers turning left don't give way to cyclists travelling straight forward. For example in Germany you can fail driving test if you don't look behind you looking for cyclists before performing a turn. Any collision is considered to be driver's fault, and it's the driver who needs to prove cyclist was to blame.

Jumping red lights?

Properly designed infrastructure gives cyclists a head start with green light turning before green light for cars. This enables cyclists to enter and leave junction before cars. Currently this is not the case in the UK and cyclists' excuse for jumping red lights is their safety.

Also because cyclists use power of their muscles, properly designed infrastructure reduces need for stopping. It saves cyclists energy but also take unnecessary strain off their knee joints. Cyclists who start to move (speed of 0mph) must zigzag for the first few meters and at this time are most vulnerable for being hit by cars accelerating at the same moment. Please remember this if you are a driver and let cyclist to get in the balance before you move. It is also a very often case when drivers sharing same lane with cyclists on a junction overtake them, despite overtaking on junctions is illegal. For those who wish to participate in safer driving here are some extra tips:

- Remember, British cycling infrastructure is inadequate and therefore dangerous, many cyclists boycott bike lanes due to poor design
- When stationary, please check your mirrors and make sure your blind spot is clear of cyclists before you open the door
- Please ensure you always indicate when stationary and ready to pull out of your space, when you make a turn in either direction, when you leave a roundabout and when you are reversing
- Do not overtake cyclists just to make a quick turn, allow the cyclist travelling straight time to clear in front before you turn left or simply slow down and roll to the junction behind them
- Do not cut corners on junctions, please allow at least 3 feet gap from your vehicle and the kerb
- Do not expect cyclists to ride right next to kerb, there are many obstacles in the road that they may need to avoid, such as drains, manholes, puddles, litter and broken glass

- Accidents happen not just because of great speed and lack of due care and attention, but also because of great differences between speed of cars and cyclists; optimal speed to pass by a cyclist is 20-30mph

- Respect bike lanes on roads, they are there for a reason. Also, advanced stop lines/areas on junctions/traffic lights, this area is designed for cyclists only. Sooner or later it will be illegal for drivers to use them so why not put into good practise as from now

- Using your horn will frighten pedestrians as well as cyclists, this loud sound may throw them off their seat and cause a nasty unwanted accident

- Get on your bike and cycle your daily route to work to get the impression of difficulties cyclists face on roads; majority of cyclists are also drivers, it is time for majority of drivers to become cyclists too.

ORGANISE

wandsworth

Issue 1

June 2013



Keep rents down!

Whether renting privately, living in social housing, struggling to pay your mortgage or being homeless we all deserve a safe place to live.

What are the problems?

Everyone should be entitled to a decent, affordable, secure and local home. Instead the Government has cut the level of housing benefits. They are also pushing Councils to undermine access to Council housing, and to water down tenants' rights. Greedy landlords are allowed to charge ludicrously-high rents, to discriminate against people on benefits, to refuse to offer secure tenancies, and to regularly threaten to evict people from their homes. House prices and mortgages are unaffordable to most people, and even homeowners are struggling to pay their bills. This is all totally unacceptable.

What can we all do?

Use what you can to defend yourself! Get advice. Know your rights. Log all contacts with landlords/council etc, keep all official letters, take a friend to any official meetings. Link up with others in same boat - get support from other tenants, neighbours, residents' groups & housing campaigners. Speak out and fight back. Together we're powerful. Previous generations fought for housing rights, and tens of millions of ordinary people benefited. Now we have to do the same.

Private renting?

Secure Tenancies for all. Until 1988 most tenancies were secure / long term and rents were capped by law at affordable levels. We can all be demanding this now. A tenant who cannot afford the rent can try to negotiate a reduction. Contact the Council's Housing Advice Team - they have negotiated lower rents with many landlords. Outrageous signs like 'No DSS' (people on benefits) must be challenged. Such discrimination must be banned, just like racism and sexism. And Letting Agents fees should be scrapped. Resist evictions. If a landlord wants to evict they must first issue a valid Notice To Quit - eg. It's not valid if they've not put your deposit in an official protected scheme. Then they have to go to court. If they evict illegally, or harass a tenant, it is a criminal offence. Some tenants are arguing in court that an eviction would infringe their legally-protected human rights to family life.

Social housing and council tenancy?

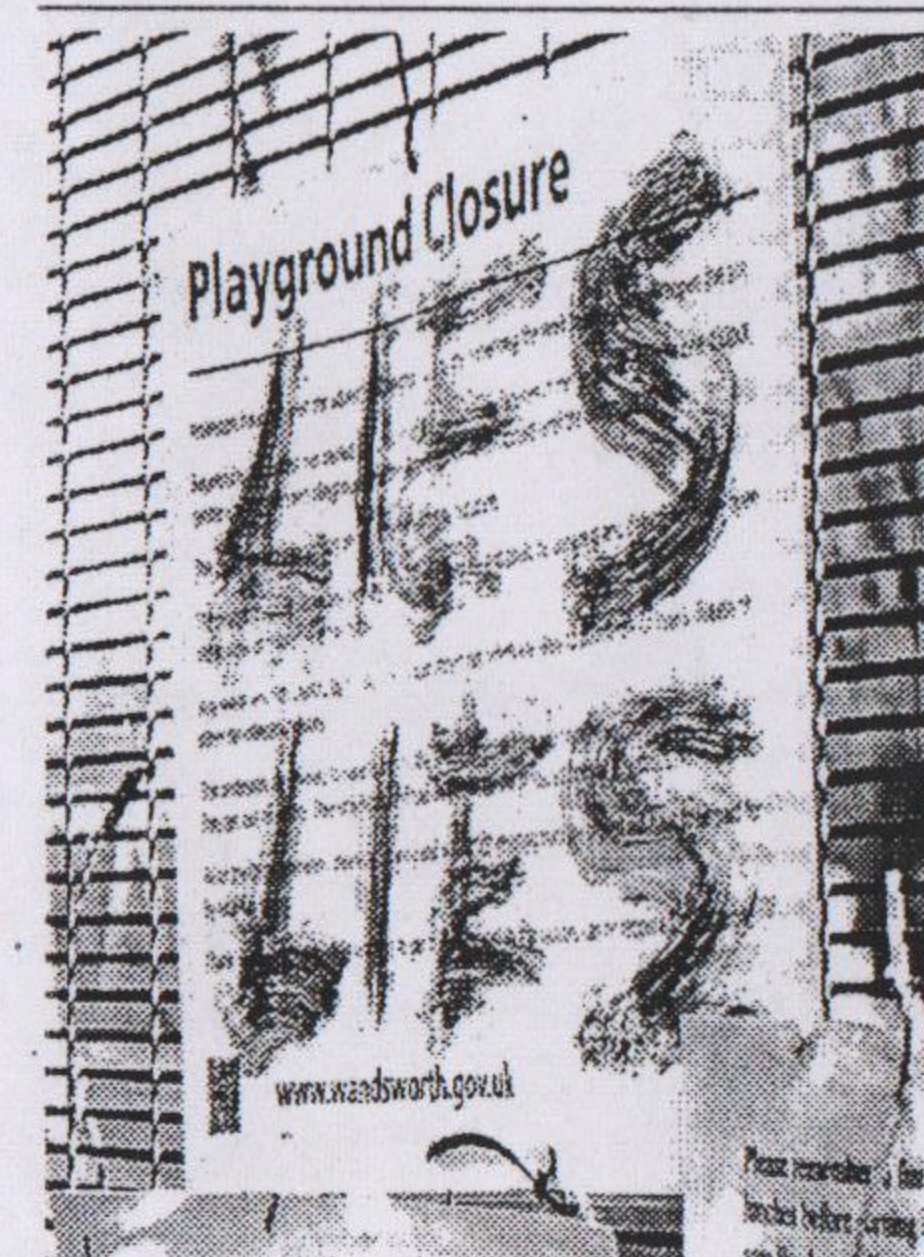
Benefits must cover all costs. No to 'Bedroom tax' cuts, caps on Housing Benefits, and the introduction in April of inadequate Universal Credit payments. Say "No" to rent rises. Social housing is the only genuinely affordable housing and we must ensure rents are kept low. Defend secure tenancies. All those in social housing are entitled to have long term secure tenancies. We must make sure these rights are not watered down. Resist evictions. It should be a last resort for the Council or Housing Association to try to evict you. They have to go to court, and the court should accept any reasonable offers to pay off a debt. Get advice. Groups around London support anyone resisting evictions or bailiffs due to inability to pay rents. Take action together. Join or set up a Residents Association in your block/area.

Homeless?

Homes for all. Families and vulnerable people who don't have their own place or are overcrowded should register as homeless. The Council may try to turn you away but you can stand up for your rights. Get advice. Many don't qualify. It is unacceptable that anyone should be homeless. Unfortunately this is a basic right that we still have to fight for. No buildings or homes to be left empty. They should be occupied by those who need them. It is legal to occupy non-residential properties. All homes being built in new developments should be genuinely affordable for local people.

LONDON PRIVATE RENTERS' GROUPS:

- Building a renters' movement. Ending bogus and opportunistic letting agent fees which are often charged on top of rent and deposits, and challenging the role of letting agents in pushing up rents. You can find out more at www.letdown.org.uk
- Brent Private Tenants Rights Group www.bptrg.org
- Camden Federation of Private Tenants www.cftpt.org.uk
- Hackney Digs www.hackneyrenters.org
- Haringey Housing Action Group www.haringeyhousingaction.org.uk
- Islington Private Tenants www.islingtonprivatetenants.org.uk
- Lambeth No group currently but if you'd like to get involved in starting one, please contact Christine at housingforthe99@gmail.com
- Lewisham Private Tenants www.facebook.com/LewishamPrivateTenants
- Southwark Private Tenants www.facebook.com/SouthwarkTenants
- Tower Hamlets Renters www.towerhamletsrenters.org



PAY TO PLAY

30th September 2012 Wandsworth Council closed the Battersea Park Adventure Playground, Kimber Road and York Gardens and these valuable play facilities were pulled down. Save Our Adventure Playgrounds (SOAS) offered the Council a Public-Private Adventure Playground Partnership which is privately funded by the surrounding community and operates in collaboration with the Council. Wandsworth Council didn't even consider this offer as a serious alternative to spending cuts and chose a private company to run the facility. The council always wanted to privatise these facilities, reduce staff and introduce charges for the access to playgrounds. For 2-3 years joint efforts of residents and Wandsworth Against Cuts (WAC) successfully prevent this but again this thread is coming back like a boomerang. The Council has ignored all attempts by a variety of different groups of people to find a sensible compromise between the Council's wish to destroy the Adventure Playground and the public's view that it should remain. The council has attempted to discredit those who occupied the

playground by posting notices that they were urinating and defecating in the playground, had built a fire hole, were destroying structures, etc. The police entered the site and confirmed this to be a lie.

The fire pit had been constructed long ago when the Adventure was in operation; the occupiers were using a sanitav and collecting rubbish in bags. Similar lies were told when protesters squatted a building on the playground and video evidence suggests that prior eviction building's interiors were in a tidy and clean condition.

To find out more about the struggle to save Adventure Playgrounds, council's hate campaign to discredit campaigners and follow future developments go to:

- www.wandsworthhagaintcuts.co.uk
- www.saveouradventureplaygrounds.com
- www.occupylondon.org.uk

Where people are organized in multiple groups covering all possible aspects of life from food supply, housing, education, health care and transport to information and safety, they control their lives fully and form a truly democratic society. Such people fulfil their everyday needs through all kinds of groups whether associations, co-operatives, credit unions, societies and clubs where all are equal, respect each other and in times of hardship show solidarity, provide support and offer help.

Where people are not organized, but politically passive and atomised, politely obey the law, even most unjust, without questioning its ethics, they give away control over their lives to government and corporations who reduce them with help of more and more powerful police into obedient workers and faithful consumers of goods flashing on the TV screen. Such people rely on system completely, are on its mercy. They open their door wide and invite the modern hi-tech fascist police state right into the front room.

If you are worried with the state your freedoms and your civil rights are, and believe people should do more to protect this precious treasure, it is time to organise now, in your community, at work, or even with your friends and family. It is a natural and instinctive behaviour to help each other and search for solutions to problems worrying us.

Contact: organisewandsworth@riseup.net

TAXATION IS ROBBERY!

As long as you are being forced to pay taxes and have no say how the monies are spend it is wise to call such system a robbery.

Imagine something different. Voluntary taxation. As we all may agree there is a need

for a common budget to provide us with necessary protection from violence and theft, basic health care or a guarantee for a fire brigade coming to our rescue, it is not so clear whether we should pay for ideas we don't like i.e. wars for oil, MPs' diets and their second homes, subsidies either to fossil fuel energy (the Big 6) or renewables etc.

Imagine every April you fill a form ticking boxes on a list of i.e. 100 most needed spendings in the country ordering the government to spend your money the way you wish and in the amount you find suitable. If you want to fund pensioners and elderly people you should be free to do so or simply support your grandparents directly. If you are a religious person you would give some cash to your church but not to activities you find "sinful". On the other hand an atheist will never sponsor Church of England but for example scientific studies into dark matter. Pacifists wouldn't give a penny for nuclear energy or the army, but those calling themselves patriots would be generous in that field. Vegetarians wouldn't fund farmers producing meat but only horticulture. If you don't have children why should you pay for others' children education and if your health is good you may not wish to fund NHS. But in case you do need to see a doctor you probably could afford it because you kept 100% of your salary in the pocket. Some people are more generous and have greater empathy than others. In such system we could even give some powers to government to make some corrections in the spending but only with our written permission. In the same way we could save for our pension that could work also as an insurance against unemployment. If we choose to pay money every month throughout many years of employment and suddenly made redundant we could reach for our money without applications to bureaucrats from Job Centre or any other agency, simply because it is our money. The role of the state could be then reduced to only prevent us from spending it all at once, letting us to use, say, only 10% of savings per year. This is of course a rough idea how we could live without forced taxation and move towards more just system. As to current situation some may say how can we call on defending JSA or other benefits when we call taxation a robbery. If you match numbers correctly you will see clearly there is more money missing due tax avoidance by big corporations than saved by current spending cuts. If you add to this the fact we also fund two wars, MPs' travel costs, their second homes and the food they eat despite they could afford it all from their salaries; plus the fat bonuses of top bankers engaged in criminal activity not just in the UK, then the only thing that could be done in real terms is to oppose bogus reforms where money is being taken away from poor and given to the rich.

Organising in the community

We publish this non-exhaustive list of local initiatives in order to encourage public to join and take control over what's happening in Wandsworth and across London. We simply believe democracy is not about voting for this or another party, because in majority of so-called "democratic countries" people have almost no control of what the elected are doing. They can steal public money, lie in our faces, push through harmful policies and on a local level pretend they consult matters with us but at the end do what they want anyway. You do not need to personally agree with everything what we say, we are not missionaries, but do strongly advise everybody to engage in local life for your own sake.

LOCAL CAMPAIGNS:

- Wandsworth Against Cuts www.wandsworthagaincuts.co.uk
- Save Clapham Fire Station www.saveclapham.com
- Save Our Adventure Playgrounds www.saveouradventureplaygrounds.com
- Keep Our NHS Public www.keepournhspublic.com
- Wandsworth Cyclists www.wandsworthcyclists.org.uk
- Friends of the Earth Wandsworth www.foe.co.uk/groups/wandsworth
- No to third runway at Heathrow Airport www.planestupid.com
- OTHER:
- Women's Library Occupation www.reclaimit2013.wordpress.com
- The Edge Fund - Grassroots Fund For Social Justice www.edgefund.org.uk
- Uncut UK www.uncutuk.org.uk
- Disabled People Against The Cuts www.dpac.uk.net
- Occupy London www.occupylondon.org.uk
- Fuel Poverty Action www.fuelpovertyaction.org.uk
- Million Women Rise www.millionwomenrise.com
- Diggers2012 Runnymede Eco-Village www.diggers2012.wordpress.com
- An avalanche of people's power www.38degrees.org.uk



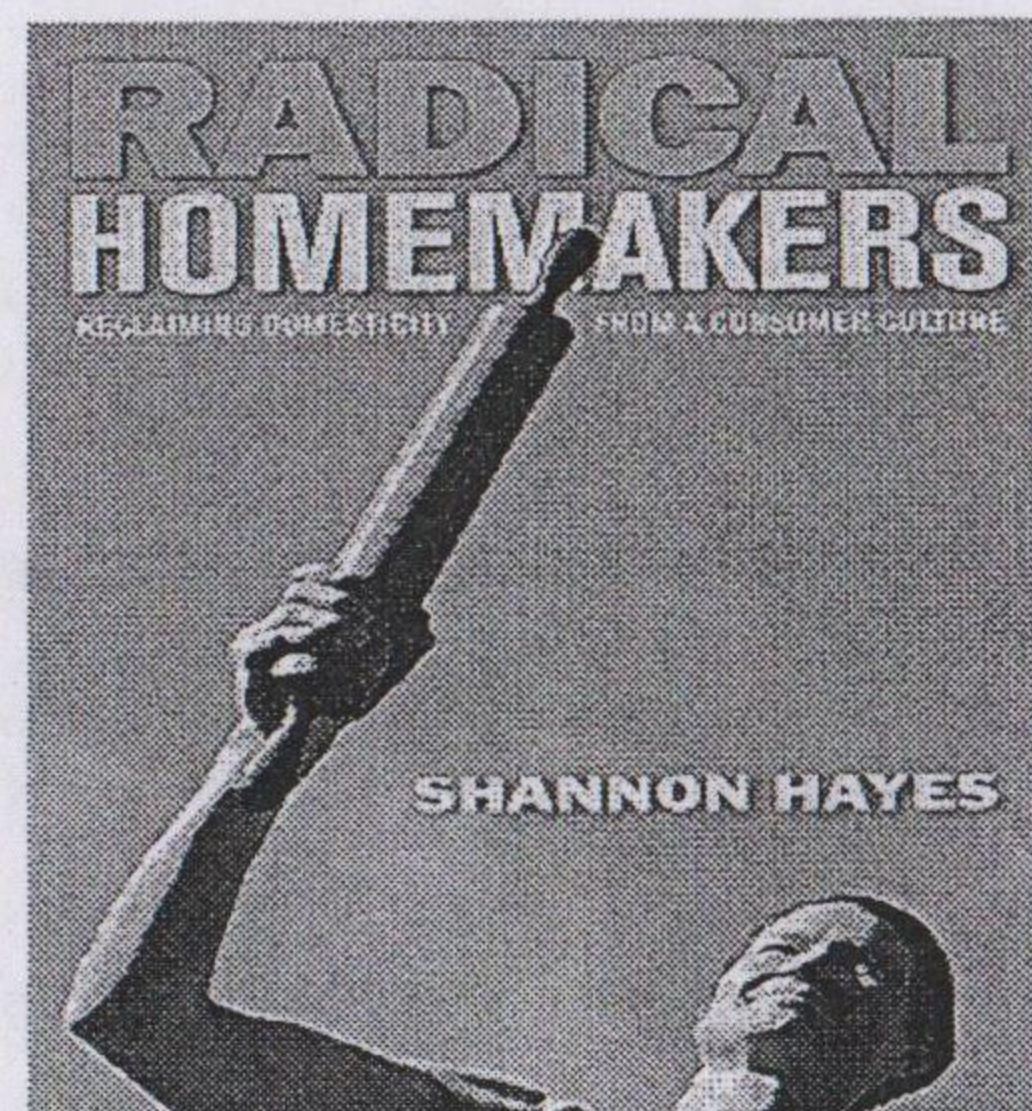
WORKERS' CO-OP

Workers' co-ops are part of the co-operative family – democratic, member-owned enterprises set up for the benefit of the members and the wider community. In a workers' co-op only people working in the organisation can be members, so it's the people doing the work who have the say. Co-operatives and are run to profit employees not some shareholders in Asia or America who simply don't care about your frozen or reduced pay, worsening conditions of work, or managers who bully you into not claiming overtime. Read more on: www.redpepper.org.uk/starting-a-workers-co-op or download a booklet for free: www.seedsforchange.org.uk

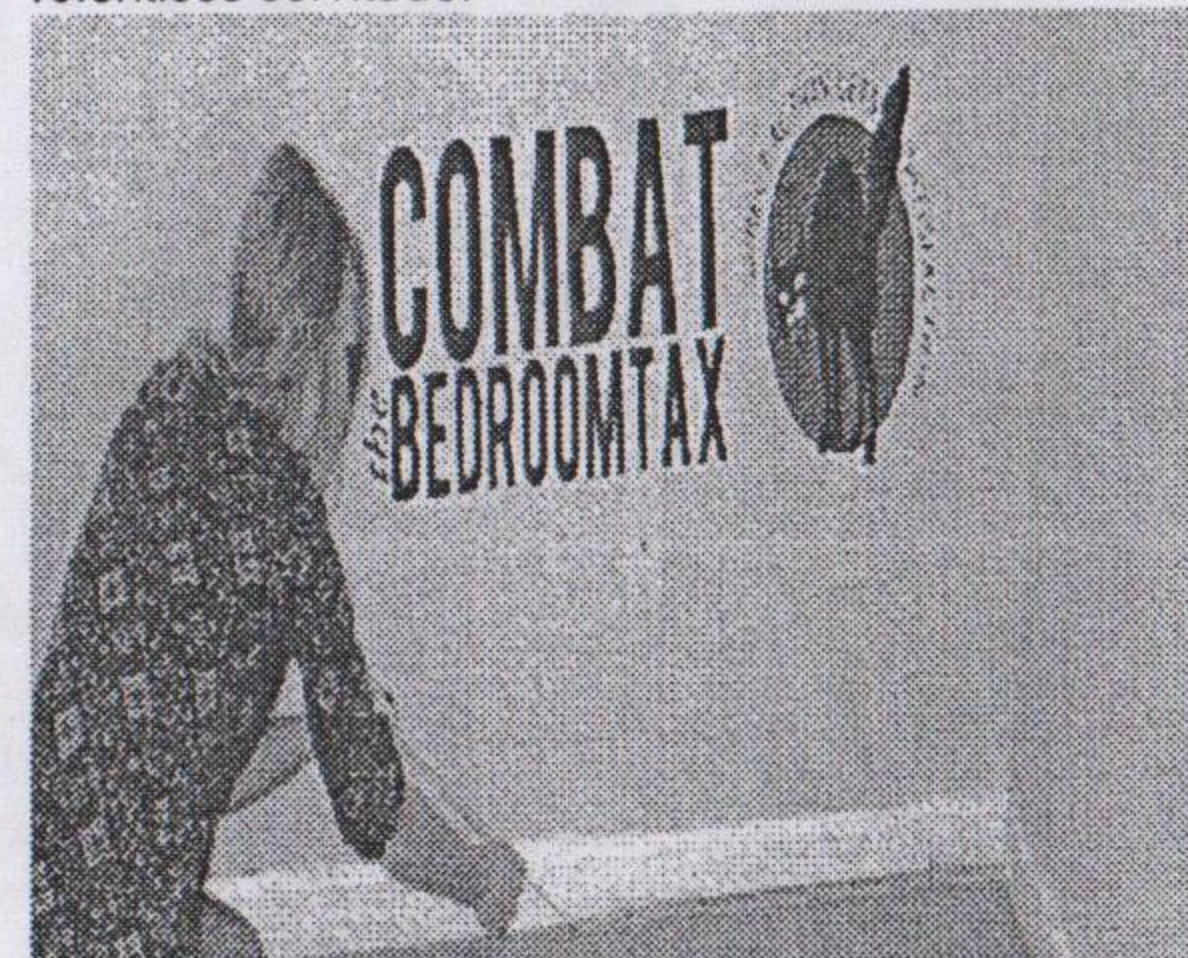
Or buy one for £7 (including p&p) from: www.radicalroutes.org.uk

RADICAL HOMEMAKERS: Reclaiming Domesticity From a Consumer Culture

Although this book is written by an American don't be discouraged to read it. Shannon Hayes understands the fundamental steps necessary to solve our global crises - drive less, consume less, increase self-reliance, buy locally, eat locally, rebuild our local communities. *Radical Homemakers* is about men and women across the U.S. who focus on home and hearth as a political and ecological act, and who have centred their lives around family and community for personal fulfilment and cultural change. It explores what domesticity looks like in an era that has benefited from feminism, where domination and oppression are cast aside and



where the choice to stay home is no longer equated with mind-numbing drudgery, economic insecurity, or relentless servitude.



BEDROOM TAX SONG

Set to the tune of 1960's folk song "The Jeely Piece Song", by Scottish singer-songwriter Adam McNaughton.

I'm a welfare state wean, we live on the bottom floor

But we're no allowed to even live there any mair.

They say we've got too many rooms, in our social rented flat

We've an eight by ten foot boxroom where you cannae swing a cat

Chorus:

*Oh ye canna have a spare room in a pokey council flat
Ian Duncan-Smith and Co have put an end tae that*

They say "live in a smaller house", they say that is their plan

When the odds against you finding one are ninety-nine to one

Noo ma auntie's in a wheelchair, but these Tories dinna care

They say they have a deficit, she got to pay her share

£60 a month they'll take, then leave her tae her fate

Whilst gieing millionaires a tax cut, cause they say they're due a break

Noo that Buckingham Palace looks a pretty roomy gaff

And the ludger there gets benefits at rates that make me laugh

A civil list, plus perks, worth nearly ninety million pounds

With her other dozen mansions lying empty a year round

Noo those MPs doon in Westminster must think that we're 'a dense

Wi their second home apartments, where the public pays their rent

They're even get a food allowance, two hundred quid a week

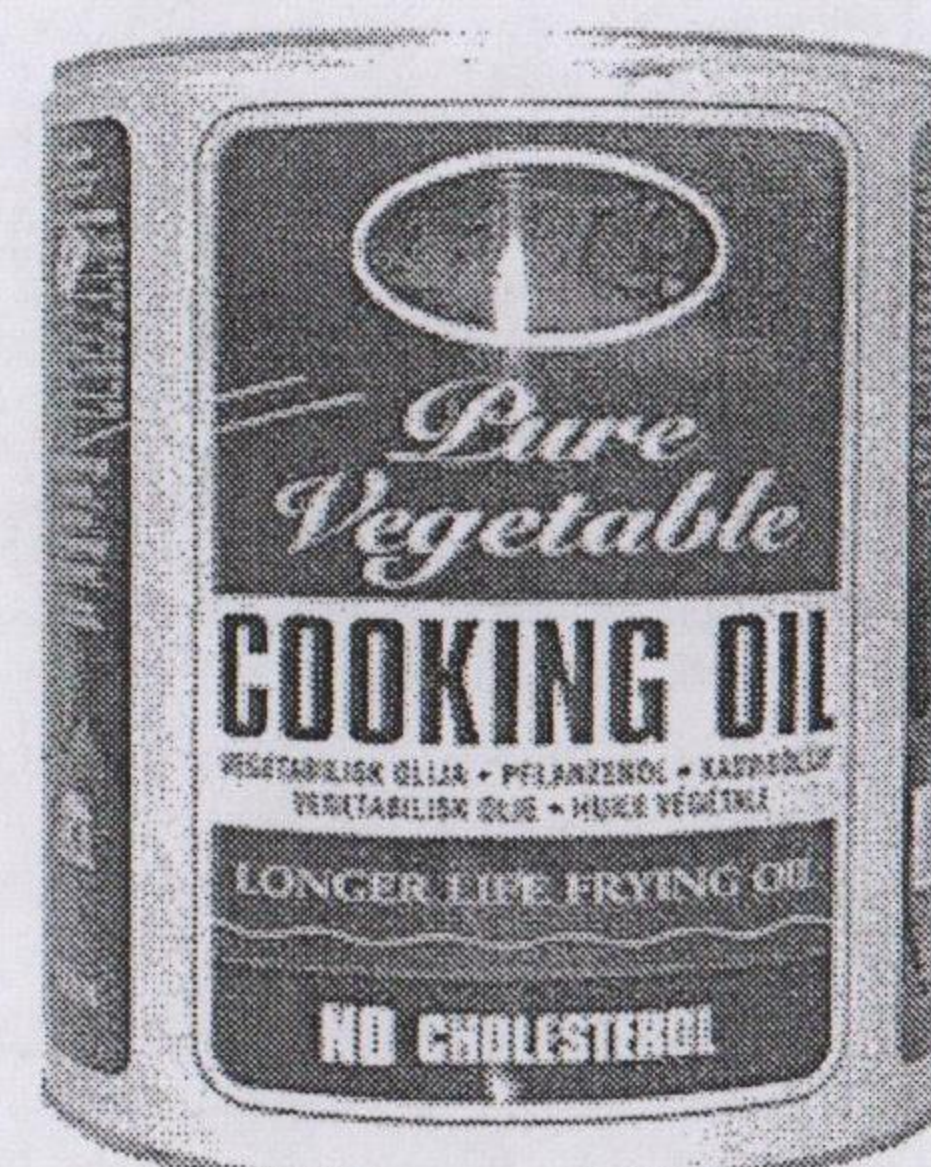
But they're claiming we're the scroungers, is their arse up in their cheeks?

So we've formed a Federation and we're gonna have our say

The Bedroom Tax it has to go, and we ain't gonna pay

We're gonna march to George's Square to demand our civil rights

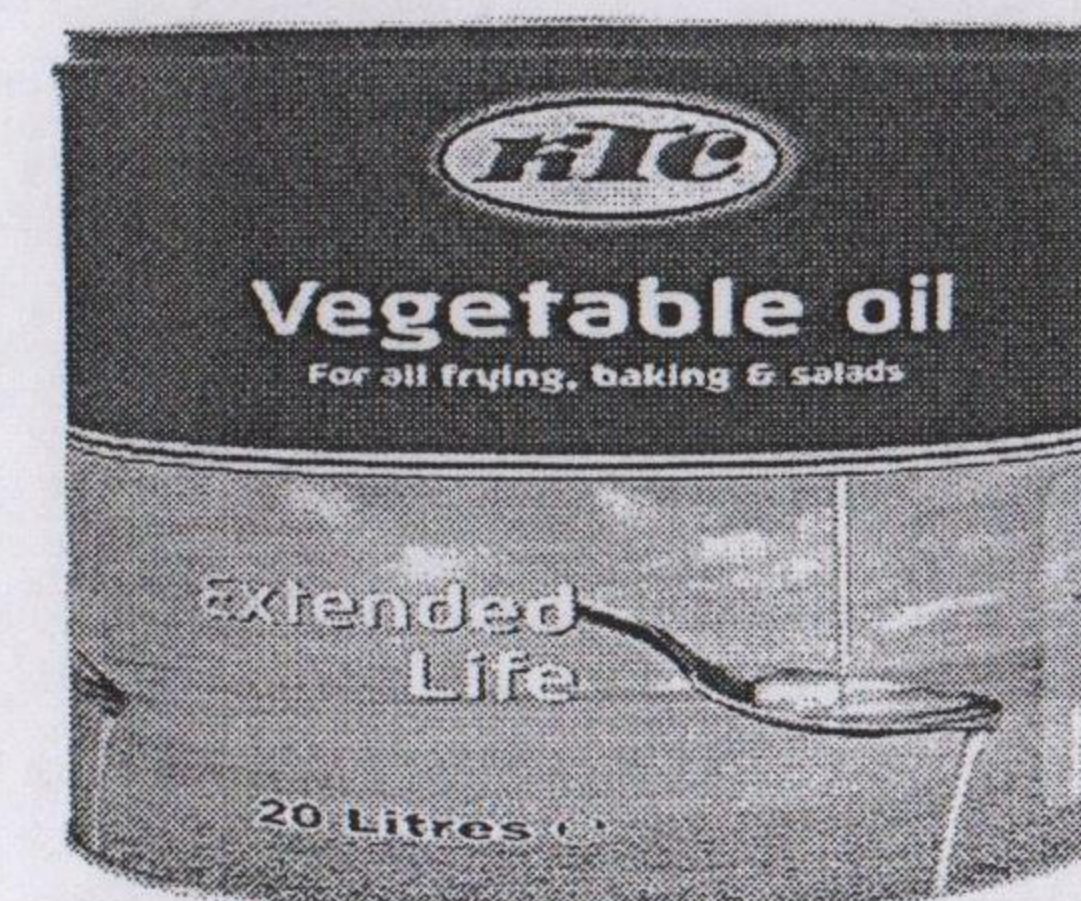
Like nae mair Tories and that Liberal shite



Under the Genetically Modified Food (England) Regulations 2004 and Regulation (EC)1829/2003 for genetically modified food and feed labelling, it is a legal requirement that food containing genetically modified ingredients or are cooked in genetically modified oil must be labelled for the consumer. These rules apply to meals sold in restaurants and other catering establishments, and food sold loose or packed on the premises where it is sold. Failure to comply with these labelling requirements is a criminal offence. The maximum penalty on summary conviction in a magistrates' court is a fine of £5,000

Organise Wandsworth is running an investigation to identify which local take away bars and restaurants use this oil without fulfilling a legal requirement to inform people that genetically modified (GM) product is used in their food.

If you run a bar or restaurant you should label each meal containing GM product, but we are urging you to **stop using any GM products in your menu** immediately. There are many alternatives and using GM cooking oil isn't necessary to run your business. We want to drive GM products out our food chain not just this or other bar. Anyone who has information on any place that hides the presence of GM products in food sold to the public may wish to contact Organise Wandsworth on: organisewandsworth@riseup.net



Genetically modified soy bean oil

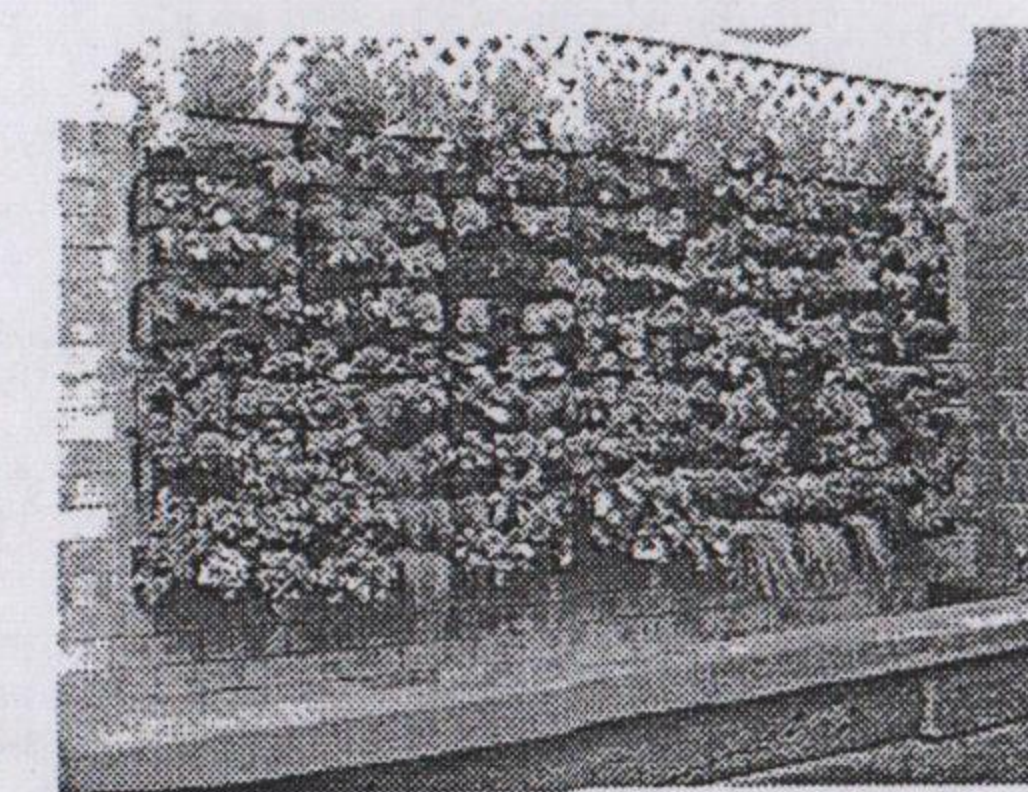
The public should be also aware that recently Sainsbury's, the Co-operative and Marks & Spencer have joined Tesco, Asda and Morrisons and no longer prohibit GM animal feed for chickens held for eggs and poultry. This move came after continuous lobby from National Farmers Union and British Poultry Council claiming non-GM feed is in short supply. Just like French, German or Austrian, the British supermarkets should stand up for their customers and secure long-term contracts for non-GM feed, not just soy beans but other grains and seeds too, or let animals graze free range.

Wandsworth residents take action!

Driving GM industry out of our plates

Grow your own food

It may take a few years of repetitive (but important) mistakes to learn how to grow substantial amounts of food to become independent from supermarkets but it is worth trying. Even darkest and dampest places can burst with an abundance of life and reduce your need for shopping. Zero food miles lettuce and salad greens are a must. Tomatoes and potatoes can grow in a bucket or a rubbish bin, and there's always your window sill waiting for your favourite herbs. If you lack space go up! Vertical gardens are a new trend. Grow what you like to eat most. Educate yourself on permaculture, be self sufficient in your own fertilisers (nettle and comfrey teas), ditch all petrochemicals (Roundup!) using seaweed or herbal sprays to tackle diseases and pests, put up physical barriers against slugs and snails and most importantly avoid F1 hybrid seeds (they won't let you reproduce your plants). Choose seeds of organic and open pollinating plants instead. This will enable you to do something GM industry would wish to ban you from one day – to **produce, save and exchange seeds** with others!



Localize the enemy

Nearly all shops and supermarkets sell KTC vegetable cooking oil made from GM soy beans. If it is the place you shop in speak to a member of staff, a manager or owner and ask politely to take it off the shelves. This is one of the very few GM products on the market and it is simply **not vital to any business** to keep it in stock. There are many cheap alternatives. In case you know a restaurant or a bar serving food prepared with this oil, please inform us. Especially if the owners do not disclose this fact to their costumers. Be inventive and run your own investigation if necessary. You can also show your disapproval to the fact the major supermarkets now use GM feed in raising chickens for eggs and poultry. A question is yet to be asked how much grass is in your milk!

Fight back

Reconsider how much food you really need to buy, as about 50% of food bought in Britain rots in our fridges. Stop shopping with businesses selling GM food. As this may be difficult to implement immediately, even a small step is a good start. For example switch to buying your fruit and vegetables from local farmers' market even as seldom as once a month or try to use organic deliveries to your door. As this may be costly for some people, growing own food may be a better long term alternative. *Organise Wandsworth* is keen to start a local campaign for food independence and you are welcome to join.

Monsanto: no food shall be grown that we don't own

Multinational companies like Monsanto, Syngenta, Novartis or Ciba Geigy to name but a few are pushing their technology into our food chain. Monsanto are shameful inventors of such poisons like DDT (that in the 1950s gave a wave of deformed childbirths around the world), **Agent Orange** (a chemical weapon of Vietnam War decades later causing cancer in Vietnam population and among American war veterans) or a bee-killer **Roundup**, a pesticide used widely by gardeners and farmers.

GM technology does not feed hungry people in the Third World. GM crops aren't any better or stronger than traditional varieties. Instead GM industry makes poor farmers to pay for a licence to grow GM crops, which has to be renewed – paid for – each year as GM seeds are meant to be sterile (although trials on Austrian fields have shown that GM rape seeds germinate even after 9 years of intensive burning). India has already seen a wave of farmers suicides, reaching 200 000 people, caused by their financial ruin.

GM technology is dangerous to wildlife. GM crops are herbicide and pesticide resistant, some GM plants also create their own pesticides that target also beneficial insects like bees. Bees' Colony Collapse Disorder may be caused by GM plants pollen and nicotine-based pesticides. Just like bacteria develop resistance to antibiotics so do weeds and pests become resistant to chemicals. This force farmers to use more and more sprays killing off entire wildlife (photo: Monsanto pesticide).

It is harmful to both humans and animals. There is mounting evidence GM food causes cancer, infertility and birth defects. Introducing this new technology into human food chain so quickly is very risky. **It would had to be tried for a few generations to determine whether GM food is really safe.** Instead Monsanto and other GM companies treat people like guinea pigs and their actions are simply a live experiment on us all.

GM pollen contaminates non-GM crops. Organic farmers in Canada know it very well. Their crops have been contaminated with Monsanto's GM pollen. Monsanto sued them and courts ruled out the farmers illegally grow Monsanto's property breaking patent laws and forced them to pay hefty fines which made many of these farmers bankrupt. Open air trials or commercial cultivations therefore are dangerous, bringing risk of cross contamination. In Switzerland for example it is GM companies who pay to keep GM crops away from traditional farm to prevent this.

Many EU countries banned GM crops and food. In fact it should never be called "food" and bosses of Monsanto should face multiple trials for destruction of environment, poverty of farmers hooked on their contracts, for contaminating non-GM crops, for back door corrupted lobbying and buying politicians, for lying to human population on real effects of their technology.

US Food and Drug Administration employs ex-Monsanto executives who actively engaged in wording the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013 called by the public **Monsanto Protection Act**. In March 2013 the American Congress, then Senate and finally President Barack Obama approved this law which lets biotech companies that experiment with genetically engineered and genetically modified crops test and sell lab-made products even if legal action is taken against them.

Bringing down the food monopolists

World wide Monsanto boycott

Cadbury's, Campbell's, Capri Sun, Coca Cola, Frito Lay, Green Giant, Heinz, Hellman's, Hershey's, Nestle, Jiffy, Kellogg's, Knorr, Kraft, Phillip Morris, Lipton, Nature Valley, Ocean Spray, Pepsi, Pringles, Quaker, Sweppes, Uncle Ben's, Unilever... are just some of companies that either use GM ingredients provided by Monsanto or are owned by them (this may vary depending on country). Feel free to leave their products on shelves. It's mostly salt, sugar and fat rich sweets, fizzy drinks and processed junk food anyway.

