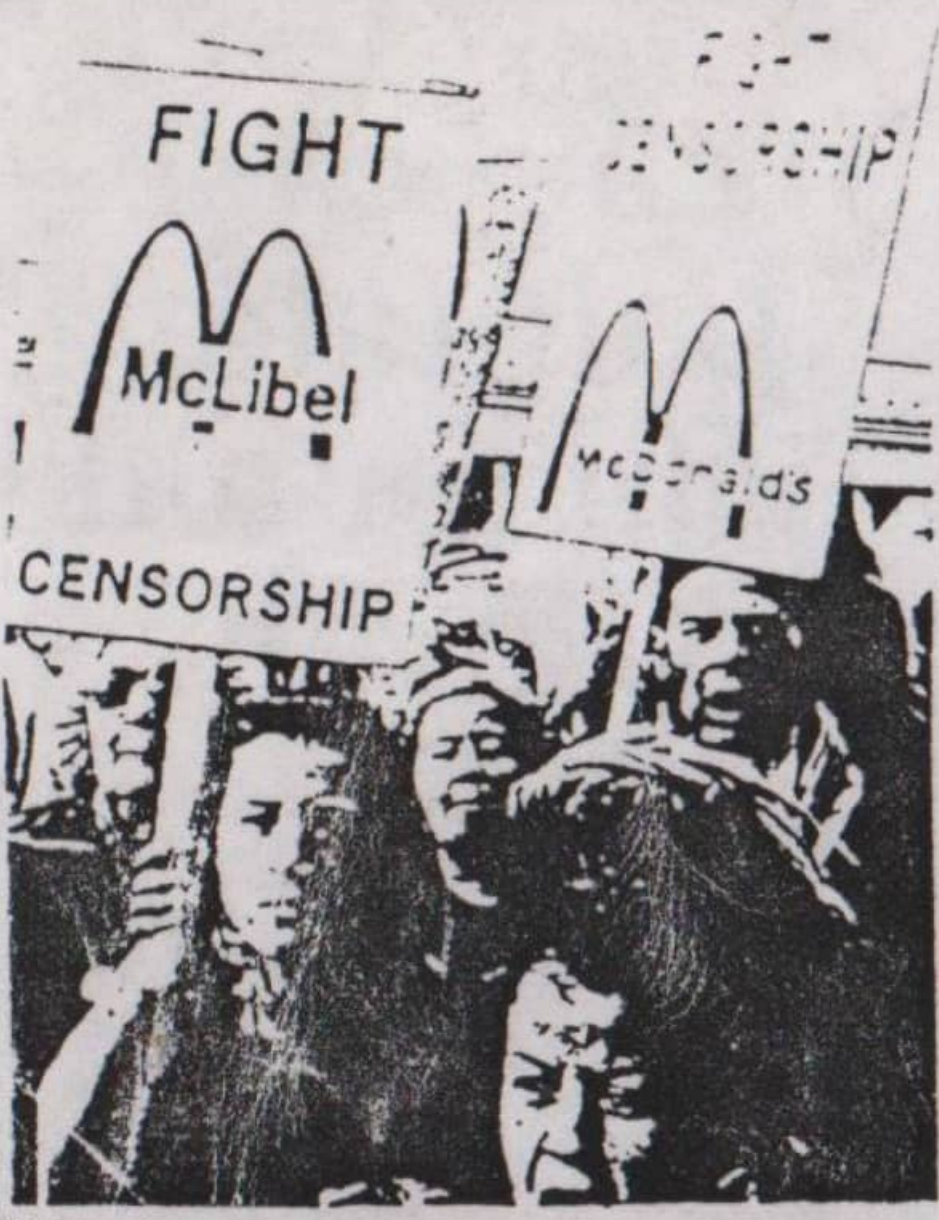




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500 PEOPLE MARCH THROUGH LONDON IN OPPOSITION TO McDONALD'S AND THEIR LIBEL WRITS



The McLibel Campaign

In order to defend free speech and the right to criticise multinationals, two supporters of London Greenpeace are taking on the McDonald's Corporation in the High Court this summer.

London Greenpeace has for eight years been a catalyst for a world-wide campaign exposing McDonalds' exploitation of workers, damage to the environment, abuse of animals, peddling of unhealthy food and use of sophisticated, child-orientated advertising techniques. This includes widespread protests annually on 16th October (U.N. 'World Food Day') -- Anti McDonald's Day.

Following a barrage of libel writs issued over the last five years by the fast food giant against a wide range of critics (including in September 1990 against the two unemployed defendants), Helen Steel and Dave Morris have resolved to challenge complex, expensive and oppressive libel laws, stacked in favour of the rich and powerful.

In December 1992 they launched a case in the European Court of Human Rights against the British Government for refusing them Legal Aid to defend libel proceedings, and are presently preparing for a protracted and highly public High Court trial this summer.

The McLibel Support Campaign has been set up to publicise the truth about the case, to raise the large amount of funds urgently needed, to help with international research, and to step up protests against McDonald's.

The case has serious implications for all campaigners as it is clear that the extension of the use of libel laws as a form of censorship must be resisted in the courts, in print and on the streets.



Big Muck

A TEENAGE McDonalds employee dumped on his bosses...by dropping a burger of his own into a tank of root beer, a court heard yesterday.

The human waste floated undetected for 19 hours. And 39 servings of the drink were sold before a horrified colleague fished the filth out.

Gary Davis, now 20, decided on his dirty

deed when he became fed up at working a 90-hour week, Birmingham magistrates were told.

He admitted failing to inform a person in authority he had contaminated the root beer syrup and was fined the maximum £2,000. Magistrate Harold Elliott told him:

"We are astonished you were not charged with a more serious offence.

"If we had the powers to send you to prison, that is where you would have gone."

Davis, of Halesowen, West Midlands, who had worked at the Northfield branch of the burger chain for a year, took a cup to the staff toilet after closing time and defecated into it.

He then slipped back into the serving area of the kitchen and slipped the cup into the beer.

Mr Barry Burlin, prosecuting, said Davis then phoned a colleague at 6.30am the next day and asked if he had had a drink.

Mr Burlin went on: "Davis told his friend to look in the root beer tank.

Sacked

"He didn't take the lid off, but instead opened the valve and smelt something terrible."

The colleague went back to the phone and asked Davis what he had done.

Davis told him: "I've shit in the root beer." Then he asked him to make sure the other employees knew.

But, said Mr Burlin, no-one told the branch manager and it wasn't until the floor manager went to top up the root beer at 6pm that day that the contamination was discovered.

The floor manager reckoned 39 servings of the drink had been sold, not enough for the contaminated syrup to have reached the pump.

When quizzed, Davis said: "I only put one in, about the size of a Smarties tube."

Davis, who was 17 at the time, was sacked immediately.

Mr Andrew Keen said in mitigation Davis wanted to get back at McDonalds after being forced to work shifts of up to 90 hours a week.

He had not intended to harm the public.

Muscovites choke on vegan pleas

1.8.92

David Hearst in Moscow

THE poster over the entrance to McDonald's was in Russian for the Russians and English for the cameras: "Tolstoy says: Forget Meat, Stick with Wheat."

Billed as the first animal rights demonstration in Russia, like everything else it was fresh off the plane from the US. The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, an American group, had come to town.

As the carnivorous natives flowed in and out of McDonald's, the clean, healthy-looking vegetarians handed out badges, 100 fresh veggieburgers and pictures of cows.

The veggieburgers went first. The message took longer to digest.

"What's all this about Tolstoy? You mean Gaidar says we should forget about meat," said one woman, referring to Russia's hated prime minister, Yegor Gaidar.

"Fools," said another, "We have not eaten meat for a

long time because we can't afford it."

"What should I do if I don't eat meat," said a woman trailing three children. "You can't get cheese, milk, yoghurt. Have you seen the price of beans in the market? Where will my children get protein from?"

Three beefcakes sporting McDonald's T-shirts materialised. One attempted to pick a grammatical hole in the Russian on the poster, held aloft by a Lev Tolstoy look-alike.

Dan Mathews, director of the Washington-based group, handed out press packs and spoke in sound bites. "Russia has enough problems without the Western meat trade. If Russia wants to conserve its grain, they should know that it takes 10 tons of grain to produce one ton of meat. Russia needs resource management of its economy."

There is little tradition of animal rights in Russia, but undaunted, Mr Mathews was planning his next battle: an anti-fur protest outside the Bolshoi Ballet...in winter.

Libel case pair take fight for aid to Europe

By Terence Shaw
Legal Correspondent

TWO ANIMAL rights campaigners who have been unable to obtain legal aid to defend a libel action brought against them by McDonald's, the fast food chain, have lodged a claim with the European Commission of Human Rights that their human rights are being infringed.

In the libel action launched in 1990 and still pending in the High Court in London, McDonald's is suing over alleged defamation contained in a leaflet entitled What's Wrong With McDonald's, which criticised aspects of its business and trading policies.

Legal aid is not available in libel cases and Helen Steel, 27, and David Morris, 38, from north London, say they cannot afford to defend themselves in the action.

In their claim against the Government, lodged on their behalf in Strasbourg by Liberty, the former National Council for Civil Liberties, they say that unavailability of legal aid in libel cases is a denial of their right to a fair trial under Article 6 of the European Human Rights Convention.

They also claim that their inability to defend themselves properly makes it impossible for them to exercise their right to freedom of expression under Article 10 of the Convention.

If their claim before the Commission and the European Court of Human Rights succeeded it would be a serious embarrassment for the Government which is seeking to contain the soaring legal aid budget.

It has consistently resisted pressure for legal aid to be extended to libel and slander cases.

But both claimants still have to overcome the first hurdle of the Strasbourg machinery of having their claim declared admissible by the Commission. Many cases fail at this stage.

Mr John Wadham, the legal officer for Liberty, said "equality of arms" had long been recognised as an "essential prerequisite of justice. Without legal aid it is impossible for individuals to defend themselves against libel actions brought by large corporations with almost unlimited resources."

Bomb hoax woman spared jail

A McDONALD'S waitress whose hoax bomb call shut down a rival hamburger restaurant escaped a jail sentence yesterday. Magistrates in Newcastle upon Tyne gave Helen Calderwood, 20, a lenient sentence after deciding she had been put under pressure by her bosses.

There's nothing quite like a McDonald's....

Long Island, USA

'Eric Schneider, 35, took a bite from a McRib in a McDonald's restaurant.

Instead of pork covered in barbecue sauce, this particular snack was a 'McMouse'.

He checked the filling because of its vile taste and found two back legs. He had eaten the rest of the mouse. He threw up and had to wrestle the bun away from the restaurant staff.

He is suing for over \$1 million, claiming the meal made him a nervous wreck.'

London, England

A young woman went with a friend into a McDonald's restaurant and ordered some Chicken McNuggets. After biting into one, she spat it out and threw them in the bin. She then walked out of the restaurant, collapsed and was rushed to hospital.

The doctors then had to go back to the restaurant and find out what she had eaten. They found the McNuggets and identified in them a cyst which had grown on a chicken. The woman was very ill from the effects of the poison from the cyst.

McDonald's gave the woman £5,000 in an out of court settlement.

A sample of reports we've received
- send us your news!

Ongoing

PHILADELPHIA, USA - Campaign for Fair Wages over McDonald's policy of paying a lower hourly rate to inner city workers than suburban employees

HASTINGS, ENGLAND - Monthly demos outside McDonald's

At least 5 - 10 pickets in Britain each week.

August

BELFAST, N.IRELAND - McDonald's sponsors Government/Private initiative replanting trees in Irish forest - pricked conscience, perhaps

SALISBURY, ENGLAND - Salisbury Cathedral involved in marketing promotion with Big Mac vouchers. Promotion agreed without the permission of the Bishop (an animal rights defender)

September

LONDON, ENGLAND - McDonald's site in Hampstead squatted and turned into One World Rainbow Centre - McDonald's have been trying to put a site here for 12 years

October

SALISBURY, ENGLAND - After 100 people demonstrated outside Salisbury cathedral, and opposition from the Bishop, the Cathedral agreed not to repeat any promotions with McDonald's

LONDON, ENGLAND - As part of national Anti McDonald's Day, around 80 protesters mount a 2 hour picket protest outside the European McDonald's HQ in Finchley

There were dozens of similar protests at local branches, notably 4 branches in Manchester and a 13 hour picket in Maidstone, Kent

November

PARIS, FRANCE - Farmers protesting at reductions in the number of farms and farmers over 'imported' beef, start fires outside McDonald's restaurants

December

IRELAND - Green Action distribute their own 'The Real McFacts' leaflet

LONDON, ENGLAND - Endorsements received from Trade Union Councils in Lambeth and Peterborough and 7 other towns

LONDON, ENGLAND - LIBERTY (Civil Rights organisation) takes Dave and Helen's case to the European Court of Human Rights - press coverage in many national and local newspapers

McToxic Victory - "National Boycott News" Winter '92/'93

Elementary and High School students in America launched a boycott campaign against McDonald's as they were the nation's largest users of polystyrene food packaging, producing enough styro trash each day to fill a football stadium 40 feet deep. The 2 groups campaigning against them began pickets at local McDonald's and produced boycott bumperstickers which were mailed to concerned youths across the country.

McDonald's announced a packaging change and started using HCFC's. They produced fact cards about it but failed to mention the impact HCFC's have on the environment. About five years ago McDonald's announced the start of a limited plastics recycling program. This was not received well by environmental groups who saw it as an attempt to scuttle the growing debate over the environmental impact of polystyrene. As part of "Operation Send-it-Back" kids started to inundate the Company's corporate Headquarters with giant boxes of styro trash. They also mailed trash to McDonald's offices in Illinois and to the home of Joan Kroc, the heiress to the McDonald's fortune.

McDonald's counteracted the criticism they were getting by sponsoring a World Wildlife fund publication for children. The publication of course mentioned McDonald's in a good light. This didn't have any effects on the protesting kids. The students were even filmed by the BBC. Finally McDonald's announced a switch to paper-based wrap and an end to its use of plastic foam. Although Britain still uses the polystyrene packing and US restaurants still use it for their breakfast service the sudden turnabout was a victory for the students. This particular anti McDonald's campaign was led by the people who ate at McDonald's all the time.

Greens set to march on McDonald's

THE environmental group which attempted to storm a Kent paper mill is planning a demonstration outside a McDonald's in Kent.

Earth First leaders are summoning their ecological flock to the Monument, Branchley Gardens, Maidstone, at 11am, next Friday.

From there they will march on the burger restaurant with anti-meat banners and hand out pro-vegetarian leaflets to customers outside.

A spokesman for the group said: "The eating of meat is cruel to every farm animal involved."

"It is unnecessary and unhealthy. We're focusing on McDonald's because they sell meat on a massive scale."

In August, 12 Earth First members were arrested as they scaled an iron fence at Scott Mill, Northfleet.

A McDonald's spokeswoman said: "If people wish to demonstrate, it's a free country, it's entirely up to them."

"If they gather outside our restaurants we have literature to give out too. We don't want confrontation. We just let our customers make their own minds up."

ADOPT-A-MCDONALD'S

No, not in the manner of a caring parent, but as part of an international anti-beef campaign called, quite simply, Beyond Beef.

Beyond Beef is the brainchild of Jeremy Rifkin (interviewed in the genetic engineering feature, page 42). The idea behind it is to cut beef consumption in the West by at least 50 per cent and to encourage people to eat more grains, fruit and vegetables from organic, sustainable agriculture instead.

The Adopt-a-McDonald's scheme, due to start in April in the States, will involve thousands of four-person teams talking to McDonald's customers. "This is going to scare the living daylights out of McDonald's," Jeremy said. "When customers come out of McDonald's they're going to get a

second receipt. The first receipt they got inside. The second receipt is going to show the actual cost of that beefburger in terms of desertification, global warming, the loss of our grasslands, the loss of species, water pollution and water scarcity, food that could have been fed to people rather than cows, the health costs, the inhumane treatment of the animals - it's all going to be on that receipt."



BEYOND BEEF

The campaign will also urge McDonald's to serve vegetarian options and to devote 25 per cent of its advertising budget to promoting meatless alternatives.

For further information contact Parents For Safe Food, 5-11 Worship Street, London EC2A 2BH. ☎ 071-628 2442.

WHY NOT LEAFLET YOUR LOCAL BRANCH?
ORDER LEAFLETS FROM 'VEGGIES',
180 Mansfield Rd, Nottingham. 0602 585666
(£10 per 1000, + postage)

WE ARE CALLING FOR A WEEK OF PROTESTS IN THE WEEK BEFORE THE TRIAL IN 1993
- WITH A DEMONSTRATION AT THE HIGH COURT ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE TRIAL.

APPEAL Money. We need thousands of pounds to be able to do the basic work.

Legal News

LEGAL UPDATE...MCDONALD'S RELUCTANT TO GO TO TRIAL

No date has yet been set for the trial, which is expected in the summer 1993, to be between two and five weeks long. Since the writs were issued (September 1990) Helen and Dave have attended six High Court hearings, and have prepared and presented many papers detailing the case against McDonald's. The Corporations solicitors have been dragging their heels, hoping that the defendants would become exhausted or broke, or just take the easy option and submit to the dictates of a biased legal system (as has happened in all previous cases). However, realising the defendants' determination to stand up to this legal thuggery, McDonald's are now having to risk the bad publicity and damage of a full public trial.

SCARED OF A JURY

In January 1993, they issued a summons for a 'directions' hearing, in which they hope to set the programme for the pre-trial period (exchange of documents, witness statements etc) and also for the trial itself. **THEY ARE APPLYING FOR A TRIAL WITHOUT A JURY !** Are they afraid of the public they have conned and ripped off for so long ? This move will be fiercely resisted, and the next edition of MCLIBEL NEWS will carry the latest legal developments.

There's an enormous amount of research and preparation needed over the next three months and all offers of help are appreciated !!

STOP PRESS... Pre Trial Hearing now set for 2 February!!

Burger bar 'bomber' jailed

AN animal rights Christopher Tucker, 29, greenhouse fumigator, campaigner who a painter, sent terrified Southwark Crown Court threw a smoking cover at McDonald's in wood Road, Hounslow, package in a crowded Kensington High Street, West London, who denied causing an affray yesterday. The device was a was given 15 months.

If you want to write to Chris, his address is:
C. Tucker No. PR 1914
H.M. Prison Brixton,
Jebb Avenue, London SW2 5XF

Campaigns & Campaigners

January 1993. Colin Denchfield, an activist from Staines, Middlesex was 'bound over' to keep the peace for 1 year after being arrested for 'obstruction', for leafletting outside his local McDonald's. The police lied in court to get this result. However, everyone has the right to distribute leaflets to the public, wherever and whenever they wish.

In early 1992, Jean Williamson, an animal rights activist from Enfield leafletted outside her local McDonald's, holding up a Vegetarian Society poster with a photo of a slaughtered cow and the wording 'THE SIDE OF BEEF THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO SEE'. Following more police lies in court she was found guilty of displaying an 'obscene sign'. This ludicrous and sinister decision was appealed against and thrown out. As she stated to the court, 'if such a photo is obscene, why aren't all butchers shops boarded up ?'

Jean continues to leaflet weekly, donating proceeds to the McLibel Support Campaign.

FUR INDUSTRY BANKRUPTS ANTI FUR ORGANISATION

Lynx, the anti fur campaign stood up to libel writs from fur farmers it had exposed. The High Court took the side of those who profit from animal exploitation, and Lynx were landed with £150,000 costs. Unable to raise this amount, the Lynx campaign closed down in January of this year.

GREENHAM WOMAN BEATS THE SUN

Katrina Howse, an artist who lives at the Greenham Peace Camp, was personally and viciously attacked in The Sun newspaper as being a professional scrounger. This was part of an ongoing campaign in the media to discredit Greenham's effective and inspiring opposition to militarism.

Katrina and her friends, despite lack of money or experience, took The Sun to court for libel, representing herself and surmounting many legal obstacles from the High Court. On the 23rd November 1992 she forced The Sun to publicly apologise and pay her substantial costs. She aims to produce a pamphlet so that other campaigners can do the same.

I/We back the McLibel Support Campaign

Name..... Name of Group.....

Address..... Phone.....

I/We can help with: fundraising___, translations___, research___, writing articles___, organising protests___, free/cheap printing___, phone/fax___

I/We enclose a donation £_____ (Cheques made payable to McLibel Support Campaign)

RETURN TO: MCLIBEL SC, LONDON GREENPEACE, 5 CALEDONIAN RD, LONDON N1

+ FAX
(071) 233 3553