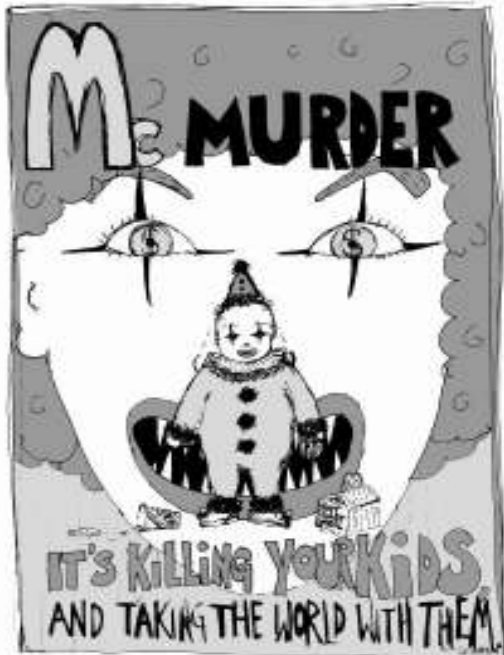


WORKING TOGETHER AGAINST McDONALD'S

The Amazon rainforest is being destroyed at an alarming rate - an area the size of six football pitches is being cleared every single minute of every day, with over 20% already lost. Much of the land is being used to grow soya, which is then fed to animals across the US and Europe. Greenpeace has traced the soya fed to poultry used in McDonald's chicken McNuggets back to the Amazon. The Amazon rainforest is home to many indigenous tribes and to many millions of species of flora and fauna. As the land is cleared, often illegally, people, animals, birds, plants and insects lose their homes. The rainforest plays an important part in keeping the climate stable, and its loss is contributing to climate chaos. Following criticism of its use of cattle reared on cleared rainforest, McDonald's now advertises that it uses British beef and chicken in its meals, but neglects to mention that these animals are still fed on soya from the Amazon.

Customers looking up from their "Happy Meals" at the Wrexham branch of McDonald's on Saturday 27th May found themselves face to face with our giant banner alerting them to the destruction of the Amazon rainforest. This impressively large banner was made at our printing workshop - see page 3; big banners are a whole lot easier to produce when you've got a large hall to work in over two days.

This protest was a collaboration between Wrexham teenagers, WPJF, Wrexham Socialist Forum and Plaid Cymru. Young people helped with the banner, printing workshop and leaflet design, and came along on the day to demonstrate and leaflet outside McDonald's. Special thanks must go to Sid for his McChicken on the banner (front page) and to Libby for her McMurder leaflet design (below).



Two of us hung the banner from the roof of the shops opposite McDonald's, while others outside the shop (restaurant isn't the right word for it) displayed placards, spoke to passers-by and handed out leaflets which explained McDonald's contribution to the destruction of the rainforest, as well as pointing out the health risks of eating fast food.



Some of the protesters outside McDonald's

As soon as they'd noticed the banner, McDonald's public-spirited staff rushed across the road to inform the manager of Primark that we were on their roof. The manager called the police and, when two bemused coppers arrived to sort things out, tried to persuade them to remove us on the rather improbable grounds that people might think we were somehow associated with Primark. The policemen looked up at us for a while scratching their heads, before deciding that we weren't doing any harm and could stay. We think that this might have been because they hadn't twigged how we'd got onto the roof and didn't relish the idea of a climbing expedition to get us down, rather than through any great desire to uphold our right to protest, but you never know.

The action got nearly a full page article in the *Daily Post*, in which we had mysteriously turned into Greenpeace protesters. The McDonald's spokesperson quoted in the report said that we may not have been aware that McD's is currently in negotiation with Greenpeace over the issue. They were quite right. I didn't believe it at first although it turned out to be true: Greenpeace had suspended its actions against McDonald's some weeks previously pending these "negotiations". We hope that Greenpeace succeeds in persuading McDonald's to stop destroying the Amazon for fast food. In the meantime, we will continue to protest, raising public awareness of the issue and doing our bit to shame McDonald's into a change of policy.

So McDonald's is a no-go zone for anyone who cares about the Amazon. But before you all rush off to KFC for your fast food fix, you need to know that they use Amazon soya too!

JOIN US IN FUTURE PROTESTS AGAINST McDONALD'S AND OTHER DODGY FAST FOOD CORPORATIONS

If you would like to take part in actions like this in or around Wrexham, please let us know using the contact details on the back page. More actions are planned for the summer and early autumn. Come and help us plan the actions and make the banners, placards and leaflets as well as campaigning on the day.

PALESTINE - IT'S TIME TO ACT

Imagine 60% unemployment (not a misprint).

Imagine a 400-bed hotel in a world-famous tourist destination with just nine guests (I counted them: me and eight others).

Imagine children being held at gunpoint while the house their family has lived in for a hundred years is torn down before their eyes.

But it's not imaginary. It's a glimpse of what I witnessed two years ago in Bethlehem, Hebron and around the West Bank.

And – this is hard to believe, but it's true – it's getting worse.

DOWN WITH DEMOCRACY!

The recent elections in Palestine were widely agreed to be free and fair, with a 78% turnout that must have turned Tony Blair green with envy. Hamas gained 74 seats; Fatah – notoriously corrupt, demonstrably impotent and no longer able to rely on the loyalty of many Palestinians to the late Yasser Arafat – won only 45.

And surprise, surprise: Bush, Blair and their gaggle of European supporters suddenly discovered a fastidious objection to dealing with a government "led by terrorists". (Their finer feelings didn't seem to have been offended by dealing with the Israeli government, led until nature intervened by the war criminal Sharon, in breach of countless UN resolutions and guilty of horrendous human rights violations). Happy to shake hands with Sinn Fein, basking in a photo-opportunity with Nelson Mandela, but swift to punish the voters of Palestine by withdrawing vital assistance to the most vulnerable, they acted in our name.

AN UNACCEPTABLE BARBARITY

Children in Gaza, consequently, are now approaching levels of malnutrition similar to those of sub-Saharan Africa. The Palestinian Ministry of Health cannot afford to supply syringes, surgical gloves, adhesive tape, antibiotics... Some hospitals have run out of food. 11,000 health workers and 38,000 teachers face losing their jobs because of the economic measures taken by Israel and the EU, while the Israeli blockade of the sole point of entry into Gaza has led to severe shortages of food and other essentials.

This is a collective punishment. It contravenes the Geneva Convention. It is barbaric.

ARE WE GOING TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

It's easy to feel powerless and apathetic, to make the excuse that it's too far away from our back yard. But that's wrong. While Israeli produce is on our dinner plates, the tragedy is very close indeed to home.

No-one concerned about peace and justice should fail to boycott personally **all** Israeli produce. Agricultural products account for 80% of all Israeli exports and 60% of these are consumed in Britain. These are not essentials – we can easily manage without out-of-season fruit and salads, or get them from somewhere else.

No student or academic concerned about peace and justice should fail to promote the cultural and academic boycott of Israeli institutions. Does **your** college or university participate in joint research projects or funding arrangements? Find out. Tell them what you think.

No football supporter concerned about peace and justice should fail to protest to FIFA about Israel's inclusion in the European Championship this autumn. And if you support Arsenal (you might), have you protested to the club about the deal to promote Israeli tourism at their new stadium? You should.

No-one concerned about peace and justice should invest in Israeli companies, or in firms like Caterpillar (which produces the specially equipped bulldozers used in house demolitions like the one where Rachel Corrie was killed). Not an investor? What about your Church, your trade union, your pension fund, your WI, your Co-op? What are they doing with your money? Do they know what you think about human rights in Palestine?

And Members of Parliament: I know that writing to MsP often seems like a waste of ink, but they really should be encouraged to sign Early Day Motion 2303 on Aid to the Palestinian Authority, tabled by Michael Moore MP. After all, they want votes, don't they?

When I was in Palestine, people asked over and over again for help to support them in their struggle to live in peace and dignity – help that as an individual I was unable to provide. But collectively we **can** make a difference, just as we did against apartheid in its South African version.



Boycott Israeli goods

So I would like to make two proposals to members of WPJF:

Firstly, if you would like to do a little more than signing the online petition at: **www.palestinecampaign.org** and giving up Jaffa, Carmel and Dead Sea Magic, then join me in Wrexham town centre one Saturday to support the Palestinian people through the **Boycott Israeli Goods Campaign**. I can be contacted on **01978 844107** or by email on **sfortune@safe-mail.net**.

Secondly, let's come up with ideas for a fund-raising event in support of the Emergency Appeal from *Medical Aid for Palestinians*: **www.map-uk.org**.