

Alternative Crew Handbook



McDonalds Workers Resistance



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McDonalds Workers Resistance
Alternative Crew Handbook

**A COLLECTION OF WRITINGS FROM THE
MCDONALDS WORKERS RESISTANCE**

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McDonalds Workers Resistance

INTRODUCTION:

Greetings fellow burger slave!

This is a message from McDonald's Workers' Resistance (MWR). We are an underground army of fast food freedom fighters. We don't take shit, we make it. We are glad we have reached you and trust you will spread the message amongst your workmates.

We are fed up working our asses off while some lazy bastard sits on a yacht getting rich off our backs. We are sick of earning pissy wages doing pissy work in crappy polyester uniforms. We have had enough of being told how to look and when to smile; we have had enough of long hours with no overtime and enforced "staying on". We are no longer prepared to suffer the recurrent humiliations of our McJobs. No more will our lives be dedicated to a pursuit of profit on behalf of those who already have too much. We have stopped living our lives for the benefits of the economy, we are thinking of ourselves. We don't want to waste our lives working for McDonald's or doing any of the other shit jobs available to us.

We are greedy, but not like McDonald's shareholders. We do not want to own more than our fair share of the world's wealth, we are greedy for our freedom and happiness. We only smile when we are happy and we only hustle when we are playing pool.

We have already organised an international day of industrial action that involved workers from Moscow to Manchester and stretched from Adelaide to Aberdeen. But we need your help to increase the resistance and end our exploitation. Interested? See mwr.org.uk for more information. Welcome to the underground...

Alternatively you can ignore this message, get back on your knees and suck Ronald's cock... but you may never get this message again.

Liberation begins when we put self-respect before burgers.

AIMS AND PURPOSE

McDonalds Workers Resistance (MWR) is a loose network of McDonalds HOURLY PAID workers who agree that the workers and the company have no interests in common and who agree to help all hourly paid McDonalds workers against the company regardless of ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, etc.

MWR does not have any leaders but is a network of groups and individuals who agree with these aims and principles and who work together while remaining autonomous. MWR can never be used for party politics or to make money.

The aim of the organisation is to use solidarity and direct-action to take wealth and power from a bunch of indolent fat cats in order to redistribute it equally amongst the hourly paid workforce.

MCSUES MAGAZINE: UPDATES

Dear friends,

Firstly, there is a new issue of McSues ready. It manages to be even more offensive than the first one and is hopefully a good laugh with a serious message. So, McWorkers, please let us know if you are wanting copies to distribute around your store. As people will know, the first issue was distributed around the world, often by people who don't work for McDonalds but who want to help. This help is invaluable and is very greatly appreciated. If people who distributed Issue 1 are up for it again, then please let us know and we'll send out copies (some people have already indicated they could help with issue 2, and they'll get copies as soon as we get our act together). A text only version will appear on line, again, when we get our act together. Many thanks.

Secondly, this one is for all the mcworkers around the world who are resisting in their local area. We would like to encourage you all to set up anonymous e-mail addresses at which other local McDonalds employees can contact you directly. This will mean that everything doesn't have to go through us, and the network will be less centralised. Just set up a yahoo account or something, or if you prefer, we can set up an address at our web domain and direct it into wherever. Hopefully, if workers see a direct contact in their local area, they'll be more likely to get involved. We will publicize the local addresses on our web site which is coming soon(ish).

We are also hoping to start doing a monthly bulletin with news from round the world, so please send us anything you think should be included.

That's all, Best wishes and solidarity, Wump 4 Glasgow MWR.

February 2002

Dear friends,

Unremarkably, we did nothing over Christmas and new year except got pissed, constantly. Nevertheless, we do have a few bits of news to report.

The comically overdue website is now online at: <http://www.mwr.org.uk>

It's not very good, but it's there! So please visit us. Also, if you're going to be kind enough to link to us, then please link to www.mwr.org.uk as the hosting is temporary but that address will be permanent.

We were cut from a BBC documentary on fast food because we were apparently too politically contentious for a show being produced by Tim Henman's wife. We were really pissed off about this 'cos we'd bought loads of balaclavas especially. In the end, our ambiguous relationship with the mass media has continued, bizarrely, with an interview in March's 'Loaded' magazine, the editor apparently said there was room for a few more tits... So we're sandwiched between Carmen Electra and Helena Christensen, etc. Buy it, really! It's only £3.00 and you get advice on cunnilingus and a free sachet of conditioner... Seriously, we don't think there is much point talking to ourselves, we want to communicate with our co-workers, which is our justification for doing an interview with a low quality wank mag.

Solidarity to our comrades in Paris: since the 24th October the workers at the Strasbourg-St.Denis branch of McDonald's in Paris have been on strike for the reinstatement of five of their colleagues, who were accused of theft by the management (who have not provided any evidence for their claim). It was obviously a coincidence that the five workers sacked were candidates for the 'elections professionnelles', a kind of works council. The management ignored the strikers at first which quickly made clear to the strikers and their support committee that the movement had to be expanded. For this reason the strikers and the committee have been regularly picketing a different McDonald's branch since November. These actions have made it possible to come to a list of demands: for a 6% wage increase; better working conditions; bonuses for 'dirty work'; recognition of the right to strike and the right for trade union organisation... This has broadened out the struggle and increased the consciousness of the employees, to show that the fight is not only against the management [of one branch], but against employment without protection and workers' rights [i.e. against 'McJobs'] The five young workers who were sacked won a tribunal case against McDonald's on 25th January and the court said they have to be given their jobs back. However the fight is not over and there was a massive demo in Paris on 2nd February. Email the strikers at: soutien_macdo@yahoo.fr, and see <http://www.mcspotlight.org/media/press/mcdis/indymedia200102.html>

We should also introduce our new friends the 'McDonalds International Liberation Front' to whom we send our solidarity, even though they do insist on describing us as "pussy white boys". We've let them rant on our web site at: <http://www.mwr.org.uk/milf.htm>, and they can be e-mailed at: milf_panther@hotmail.com

Solidarity to our friends the Workers Resistance against McDonalds, they got caught by McDonalds for their activities at the end of last year. What got them was that folk knew about their internet abilities, so unlikely to be a problem for us! McDonalds quizzed all the staff in their area about who was competent on computers. Scary people. Still, their

struggle goes on, indeed it's flourishing, they have contacts in several stores. They've changed the location of their website, it's now at: www.wram.org.uk
MWR's group in Stirling (also in Scotland) is thriving, they can be e-mailed at: stirlingmwr@yahoo.co.uk
Special thanks to everyone who has done or is doing translation work for us, it's greatly appreciated.

Finally, we have to note that senior management failed to send us a Christmas card this year despite us having sent them this lovely effort last year. This is a clear snub and is really just plain ignorant. Fucking parasites.

Hope everyone had a good Christmas and new year,

Love and solidarity,

McDonalds Workers Resistance.

**Glasgow McDonalds Workers Resistance
Monthly Bulletin, March 2002**

REGIONAL CO-ORDINATORS WANTED

(The successful applicants shall have an intense dislike for their employer)

Do you want to be a regional co-ordinator/ contact/ make up your own title? Well if you work for McDonalds and agree with the general idea of MWR (i.e.. you recognise that McDonalds just wants to make money out of you, that you have no interest in common with the company and are committed to improving the conditions of all McDonalds hourly paid staff without assuming any position of leadership) then please let us know, or if you're in North America, please contact our people across the Atlantic: directaction@mwr.org.uk You don't have to do much, just act as a contact point for other McDonalds workers in your area so that we can start to build resistance locally and so that things are less centralised and less stuff has to go through us losers.

THIS MONTHS NEWS...

It's with the greatest pleasure that we announce the establishment of MWR's friends in America. We've been lucky enough to get together with a group of McWorkers based in the US who see things similarly to ourselves and who have agreed to become our North American convenors. It's hoped this development will lead to more McDonalds workers groups being established across North America, and to decentralisation of the McWorkers movement away from Glasgow. If you're based in North America and work for McDonalds or support workers organisation in McDonalds, then please get in touch with our new

North American convenors: directaction@mwr.org.uk Recently they have been working hard, campaigning to raise the minimum wage in their state. In their own words: "these are small steps, but small steps can bring great changes"

We've started an online guestbook which you can get to from:

<http://www.mwr.org.uk/home.htm> so please sign it and say something nice.

The Stirling group have a new e-mail address 'cos the old one wasnae working, it's now: mwrstirling@yahoo.co.uk So write to them and send love and kisses.

We've been doing a lot of work on the web site. We've got some of the translations up: Italian, German and Spanish. Special thanks to those responsible and those still working on translations. Can anyone translate into French? Le Francais de la MWR cest pas bon, nous sommes merde. Voudrais l'assistance sil vous plait. We are working on loads of new stuff, including a complete guide to working at McDonalds and we are also trying to put into words some of the ideas behind MWR.

<http://www.mwr.org.uk>

Bizarrely, someone complained that they don't hear enough from us (!?) So if anyone is finding the job so miserable that hearing from us could actually improve their day and would like to be informed every time the news page is updated (every few days), then please send a blank e-mail to:

newsupdate@mwr.org.uk

Or try and get out more.

THIS MONTHS SHIT THING MCDONALDS HAVE BEEN DOING

Here's an interesting story from Germany, courtesy of a group called "slaves in mutiny". McDonalds wanted to open a new outlet in Germany and so they needed labour cheap and fast. It seems the appeal of a free uniform and £4.00 an hour to work your ass off for one of the dodgiest corporations in the world led to recruitment at a rate that was neither fast enough or cheap enough. So, McDonalds (every government's favourite 'corporate citizen') worked together with the job centre/benefit agency to press gang locals into McService. The new McEmployees get about £3.40 an hour. Unemployed people are interviewed in the job centre while the dole officer is present and if they don't accept the job, they will have their benefits cut completely for three months. Work for McDonalds or starve. Exploitation in the workplace continues because employers are backed by the state, and this backing ultimately takes the form of violence. It also shows that as workers fighting our employer, our struggle is linked with that of benefit claimants. Governments spend millions trying to convince workers that claimants are 'scroungers' etc. That's fucking bullshit designed to divide us. Claimants, workers, we're all on the same side. The real scroungers are the bosses who get richer and richer at our expense.

THE AVANT-BARD

The Nation mourns

T'was with much sadness that I learned Queen Ma had passed away It meant I'd lost our sweepstake having put her down for May. They've called for several days of mourning (somebody said nine!) There's talk of a national holiday, we'll not even get double time. She never worked at McDonalds, she was never that short of wealth Which makes this less than relevant, but explains her excellent health. She could have worked for McDonalds had she stayed in Germany, Where benefit claimants are forced McJobs and given derisory pay. But she lived her life at our expense and now we're meant to cry, When an ancient royal parasite has the decency to die. One thing that was a little sad, one thing that kind of stung, It's just so much better fun when royals die young.

APOLOGY

The response to our humble web site has been great. Loads of thanks to everyone who has contacted us. However, it's meant that we had quite a lot of stuff to send out to people and we're really incompetent so it took ages. However, we have now posted everything and so it should be arriving soon. If you're waiting on something and after a while it still hasn't turned up then please get in touch with us. Sorry again and we'll try and get our arses in gear for the future.

MILF, where are you? Your e-mail address isn't working and we can't remember which is one of your personal addresses. Please get in touch, we miss you bad mother fuckers.

This month we have mostly been supporting... protesters and detainees at the Woomera detention centre in Australia: <http://www.woomera2002.com>

Finally, in case anyone saw the April 1st post on the news page about our collaboration with the UK Independence Party and 'Burger Jester' that was not an April fools joke.

<http://www.mwr.org.uk/news.htm>

libcom note: after this report their website stated:

I know this looks dead shit, like we've done fuck all in ages, but we've not given up or nothing, We still produce monthly bulletins but at present we're unable to put them online. If you would like to receive bulletins by e-mail then please join our mailing list

MCSUES MAGAZINE

This guy goes to assertiveness classes, comes home, pounds on the door and shouts at his wife "give us a cup of tea now!" Entering the house and confidently flinging his jacket down he continues, "after that you're gonna make me some dinner then suck my cock, then I want you to run me a nice warm bath and wash me. And after that can you guess who's gonna dress me and comb my hair?"

"The fuckin funeral director" says his wife.

That joke isn't very funny and has nothing to do with McDonalds. If you would like to read humour relevant to our crappy jobs (but which still isn't very funny) then you're in the right place.

What about 'McSues' magazine ? 'Loaded' described it as "an excellent handbook for anyone who has ever had to scoop fries and slosh a mop around the latrines while still flashing a smile for the customers." And they would know, right?

But maybe your cup of tea is buttered on the side of a more practical humour? Then we strongly recommend the notorious, legendary, [Alternative Crew Handbook](#). But don't take our word for it, just listen to Bill Davies, McDonalds franchise holder and big fan of the Alternative Crew Handbook: "This is not amusing, and has consequences you have clearly not considered (...) What you have done is thoroughly obstructive to my business. You may consider this as funny, but have you considered what should happen should anyone be foolish enough to follow your suggestions? (...) I am not a man without humour but what you have done is inappropriate and I must request you remove it immediately or I shall be force to legal recourse."

Then there was a brief period when, like many naughty young boys, we enjoyed making [prank phone calls](#). Want to know what Funnywump said to Richard Branson? And finally, it's been about four years and we are still waiting for a reply to the charming [Christmas card](#) we sent to senior management in 2000. Really, manners cost nothing.

Text of a Christmas card sent to McDonalds senior management from rebel employee group McDonalds Workers Resistance, in 2000.



Dear Senior management,

Every year you send us one of your delicious frozen cakes and it occurred to us that we never get you anything back. At this special time of year, a time of good will to all people and higher than average monthly sales, we thought that the least we could do was to send you a card. Lonely, isolated, socially inadequate people often find christmas an especially difficult time. We hope this card cheers you up a bit. We also hope that this card can help us all to develop slightly more human relationships. Sometimes we feel like we're nothing more than a number- it's like being in prison (although the food's slightly better inside). One day, we'll have to work together as equals, doing something constructive, and if this vision is to become reality then we need to start getting along better today. It would be nice if, sometime, we could all go out for a drink together, we might find out that we have lots in common: we'll bet you think your bosses are wankers as well. We hope that over the festive period you find something that will touch your hearts- a smile (a real one produced voluntarily), friendship, crisp snow, a robin on your window ledge- something to remind you that there are things that matter in this world and that your burger bar isn't one of them. We'd better let you get back to whatever it is that you do all day, but first let us wish you all the very best for christmas and the new year, lots of love,

McDonalds Workers Resistance

P.S. It's nice to be important but it's more important to be nice.

McSues #1, December 2000

For workers' power, international solidarity, and less than hilarious jokes about Ronald McDonald.

Issue no. 1, dedicated to Mark Hopkins, killed by electrocution in the backroom of Arndale McDonalds, Manchester, October the 12th, 1992

**\ "I bongo the monkey every morning!!" **

admitted a senior McDonalds employee last night. Pressed on the issue he added: "yeah, waddle the penguin, call it what you like, it makes your day, well it sure keeps me satisfied till lunch time". The unprecedented outburst has been described by government officials as "deeply misguided", coming just hours after Spunky the Cocker Spaniel reported being sexually assaulted by a creepy clown. Police say they are looking for a man of medium build, wearing bright yellow breeches, stripy leggings and lots of makeup and with a deranged smile slapped across his face.

So, what's this?

This is McSues, it's produced by the McDonalds employees who form the Glasgow branch of McDonalds Workers Resistance (MWR), and it aims to provide an alternative to

that indoctrinating shite McNews. Where the resistance is not yet established, circulation is dependent on individuals (you!) making it available to as many work-mates as possible and especially to all new starts (please be careful). We desperately need contact addresses for other resistance groups (however small) and individuals who might be able to circulate future editions in their store (all correspondence is treated in confidence).

So what's McDonalds Workers Resistance?

MWR, run entirely by McDonalds employees, is a combination of several, previously isolated, pockets of resistance that have united in an attempt to create serious opposition to the company. There is no official membership and no dues (is that not a bit racist?) so please (dis)organise your store and take the initiative in spreading the resistance. Please get in touch with us (address at back) and we can exchange ideas/ experiences, plan action or just arrange to send you copies of future editions of McSues. MWR has no links with any political party or trade union baron, and is completely self funded. While we gratefully acknowledge the assistance provided by several other autonomous groups, we remain independent and committed to uniting McDonalds workers in the struggle against an exploitative company.

"I brainwashed youngsters into doing wrong. I want to say sorry to children everywhere for selling out to concerns who make millions by murdering animals" - Geoffrey Giuliano, the main Ronald McDonald actor in the 1980s.

COMPETITION! (best answer wins a fondue set.) WHY ARE EXTERNAL SALARIED MANAGERS SO FUCKING STUPID? Answers on a postcard to: M.W.R., PO Box: 3828, GLASGOW, G41 1YU

Ronald McDonald is a Fucking Tart!

Anyone who has had the frustrating experience of watching Ronald McDonald pratt about on wrap and call will know that he is an obnoxious wanker but here are ten unconfirmed rumours you may not have heard about everyone's favourite clown:

1. Ronald McDonald is a fucking tart.
2. Ronald makes his wife and kid wait outside in the car while he does a show.
3. Ronald peeks through children's windows at night time.
4. Underneath his makeup Ronald has a face like a derby runner and teeth like a row of condemned houses.
5. Ronald may have been responsible for the Glencoe massacre.
6. Ronald washes his genitals with shortening.
7. Ronald had a love child with Barry Gibb.
8. Ronald bongos the monkey.
9. Er...
10. That's it.

Why Fight McDonalds?

The most obvious reason is that they make huge amounts of money from our hard work. If the company makes \$3 Billion profit a year, and we're on the minimum wage, it doesn't take a genius to see that they are taking the piss out of us big time. Add to that unsociable hours, the company's bollocks propaganda, that fucking clown (not Nigel Dunningham, the other one), never finishing when you're meant to and then being told to fucking smile, and it is no wonder we're a bunch of degenerate alcoholics. Of course there are other reasons to hate the bastards, like how they use land in poor countries at the expense of local food needs, or rear beef where once stood rainforests, but the best way we can help the environment or the exploited abroad is to fight for our own rights in our own towns. There are many other disgusting companies but McDonalds is a bit special; it has become a symbol for capitalism, exploitation and American world domination. If workers can take on McDonalds (and we can) then none of the bosses are safe. We have the potential to be an inspiration, not just to all McDonalds workers, but to low-paid employees the world over. Our resistance shall be as global as their business!

"It was not her sex appeal but the obvious relish with which she devoured the hamburger that made my pulse begin to hammer with excitement" - Ray Kroc, McDonalds founder (and sad bastard) in his autobiography.

How We Can Fight Back...

Work-To-Rule: Bizarrely enough, one of the best weapons at our disposal is to follow every procedure exactly. The company has developed procedures for controlling quality and hygiene that are incompatible with the labour costs they expect and the speed of production/ service they require. So in kitchen, we do everything right, and soon there's no food in the bin. "Hustle, hustle" they'll say, "hustle is the efficiency gained through the safe and effective use of the three Cs, it does not involve running or rushing", we reply. Eventually they have to take people off front and put them in kitchen, less people are served, and they lose money. Soon they realise that it is cheaper to give us what we want than to keep losing custom. Simple, right? What we win could just be large fries on our break, but in a couple of weeks we do it again, and all the time we are exercising our power, increasing our unity and realising our potential to win anything we want.

Go Slow: Like the work-to-rule only you do everything at the pace of a constipated man who has dumped down with a good book.

Be Stupid: This one comes naturally to me, but you know the shit, you all pretend to be salaried.

Fuck The Food Costs: Lettuce and cheese are quite expensive so don't be shy with the condiments and its Big Cahoona burgers all round.

Local Strike: This is dangerous but we've done it in the past.

(Inter)National Strike: This is still a bit ambitious but I have a dream ..

Sabotage: Unplug equipment, misplace things, short circuit the grills, lose that bit of the breakfast cabinet, oh the possibilities.

Insubordination: "Go on fries", "nu", easy enough, yeah?

Steal, Steal, Steal: Happy toys make an easy target, I mean if we weren't commy bastards we'd be doing a nice sideline punting them.

Have Fun: Joke and laugh your way through a shift, turn their dehumanising workplace into a creative site of resistance, then all go and get minging.

On Stealing...

Theft is a big problem in McDonalds. For example, in Britain "mistakes" in paying workers for double time days over the last festive season must have cost us mugs thousands of pounds. ALWAYS KEEP A RECORD OF THE HOURS YOU HAVE WORKED AND NEVER TRUST THE BASTARDS TO PAY YOU WHAT YOU'RE DUE. On a different note, it seems some workers in Britain have decided to enforce a minimum wage of £6 an hour by helping themselves to the difference. Apparently, when a customer asks for a meal they have been entering the single sandwich on their tills, the customers don't quibble the price which appears as they know how much the meal costs (tourists and OAPs are an exception here) and the employees have been pocketing (socking) the difference, or over changing friends. Also, some employees have been keeping a few pennies lying about and if someone offers £3 for a meal, they aren't using the till at all (they sometimes don't know what to do with the coins but). Some employees claim to be making £30 a shift this way. As one of these scamps said "I don't steal off customers unless they look like they can afford it, but I steal from McDonalds all the time. They think their obsession with T-Reds will stop us, will it fuck - nothing can stop us!" Disgraceful.

(un)Happy Toy Makers

Most happy meal toys are made in Chinese factories where working conditions make McDonalds restaurants look pleasant. In 1992, 23 workers at the Chi Wah toy factory were hospitalised through benzene poisoning and 3 died. In 1997, 220 workers at Keyhinge toys became seriously ill with acetone poisoning and overwork (unsurprising giving acetone levels were 84 times the recommended US exposure limit, and in Chinese toy factories, work is an average 14-15 hours a day with no day off). In the same year some workers were earning as little as 5p an hour. In court in 1994, Paul Preston (UK McDonalds President) said he did not consider £3.10 an hour to be low pay, before

refusing to reveal his own enormous salary. What about 5p an hour Paul, is that low pay? We hear a lot about the stress of senior management and I have some sympathy; it can't be nice going to bed every night knowing your wealth is built on murder and exploitation.

"There have been several recent instances in our restaurants where members of staff have received severe shocks from faulty items of electrical equipment." - McDonalds internal memo from Northwest Region, February 1992 (just 8 months before Mark Hopkins was killed by electrocution at a store in Manchester).

OCL Questions

In a sycophantic attempt to aid training we have reproduced some of the OCL questions employees most frequently get wrong, together with the correct answers:

- 1. In the event of a fire, who leaves first?** Who ever is nearest the door.
- 2. Why must nail varnish or jewellery not be worn?** It might allow you some individuality.
- 3. Why should you always wear a glove when handling raw meat patties?** The food is fucking poisonous and this is an attempt to reduce the death toll (it's bad for business).
- 4. What would you do if you discovered a fire?** Laugh loudly and hide the petrol.
- 5. Why should you not bend your back when lifting?** Ronald McDonald is not interested in consent.
- 6. What action would you take if you saw a hypodermic needle in the D.A.?** Keep it more securely in the future.
- 7. Give three examples of tripping hazards in the kitchen?** They make this too easy.
- 8. What must you do if a customer hands you a note of high value?** Thank them and try to get your break soon.
- 9. How can you make a child's visit a happy one?** Keep them away from Ronald and warn them never to set foot in the place again.
- 10. What is the procedure for high denomination notes?** Same as all the others- in your sock.

The Workers united and that.

We all enjoy a laugh at the senior management but although these pricks occasionally provide an amusing distraction from the monotony of our jobs, when we start fighting back they can get quite scary. Example? Well in France, crew member Hassen Lamti, a trade union activist, was unsuccessfully framed for armed robbery! Before McDonalds offered him a bribe to renounce the union! (please send offers to the usual address) He kept fighting and the now established union branch has won numerous court judgements against the company to stop harassment and illegal business practices. A 16-year-old crew member, Sarah Inglis, encouraged the majority of workers at her store in Canada to join a union, so the company launched a nationally controversial, and fucking bizarre, anti-union campaign. This included intimidating pro-union staff, getting workers to lie outside in the

snow, in the shape of a "no" (to unions)! And an "anti-union slide show"? The mind boggles. Going back a while (1986) in Madrid, 4 workers who called for union elections were sacked but had to be reinstated when court ruled the dismissals illegal (ha, ha). A year earlier, in Ireland, two union activists were sacked but had to be reinstated when court ruled the dismissals illegal (ha, ha). In the same year, this is a good one, union activists in Mexico seized and occupied a McDonalds for 3 weeks and won union rights in Mexican McDonalds that still exist today. That's the way to do it! But our favourite McDonalds/ union story took place in Detroit way back in 1980. Workers at one store joined a union, so McDonalds organised a visit by a top baseball star, a staff disco and, wait for it, a "McBingo night". So join a trade union and you'll get that long overdue crew night out.

"unions are inimical to what we stand for and how we operate. They peddle the line to their members that the boss will be forever more against their interests". Aye. - John Cooke, employed by McDonalds "to keep the unions out". "They (crew members) have no guaranteed employment rights. They do not have guaranteed employment or guaranteed conditions of employment" - Ronald Beavers, McDonalds US senior vice-president, 1995

It's your letters

Dear MWR, A group that campaigns for workers' rights is potentially quite important for good people practices, but the way you are going about this is really quite counter-productive. It is most probably not any of my business anyway, as I am dating a first assistant so am presumably part of your "class enemy" or some such similar nonsense. I think that.. whine, whine etc. FM, Newcastle.

MWR replies: not at all there's nothing wrong with fucking Management it makes a change from them fucking us. Sorry we had to edit your letter but you are a boring scab.

Dear MWR, I was encouraged a lot by the news of the resistance. I am working hard to tell people here of you. In the past some stores in France have achieved union rights and who is able to say what can happen in the future? Many of us here are very excited about our possibilities. Vive la resistance! JFL, Marseilles.

MWR replies: Nice one Franco!

Pissed bloke on Quarters

One day our store collapsed and all that was left was a big fuck off pile of rubble. The rescue folk turned up and started searching for survivors and soon everyone was accounted for except one salaried manager. They could hear her shouting through the rubble, so they called "Where are you?", and she replied "In the office".

This one's true, right. Bloke walks into our store, sits down with his mates then comes up to the counter. "May I help you please" says the salaried who had strayed out of the office and forgotten the way back. "Aye" says the guy "I'm after a wager. I'll bet you 200 quid

that I can stand 3 metres away from that regular cup, piss in it and not spill a drop". The manager doesn't hesitate, it looks impossible. So the guy whaps his dick out and precedes to piss all over the counter, all over the floor, all over the fucking manager, the roof, in fact, he's pissing everywhere except the fucking cup. When he finally finishes the manager asks for his money. The guy says he'll just be a minute and goes back over to his mates. A minute later he comes back with a big grin on his face and hands over £200. "Just one question" says the manager, "You've just lost £200, so what are you so fucking happy about?". The guy laughs again and says "well I just bet my mate £500 that I could piss on your counter, piss on your food and piss on you, and not only would you not throw me out but you would actually be happy about it". I'm telling you that's the way it happened.

Message to the workers.

We work for a company that has an annual turnover of \$30 Billion, but whose business depends on \$2 Billion dollars a year spent on a fucking clown. They make \$3 Billion profit annually, pay us the lowest they possibly can and insist on insulting us annually with those disgusting frozen cakes. They expect us to develop a "corporate identity", experience a "family feeling" (these guys must have had pretty fucked up childhoods) and genuinely think that advertising "free uniform" as a job perk will help recruitment. Most of us get through our shifts by taking the piss out of the company and the sycophantic wankers who get tearful when people don't use the scoop. And no wonder- it's fucking hilarious. Or at least it is apart from one thing; we're the fuckers that pay for it. And as long as they are stealing from us, exploiting us, and getting rich from our labour, they (the bosses) will be laughing loudest. It's up to us (me and you) to silence them.

And Finally... The Millennium Dome is probably the biggest waste of money since Duncan Shearer. It's a big ugly tent which no one wanted and no one has been to visit.

"We couldn't actually pay any lower wages without falling foul of the law" - Sid Nicholson, then UK vice president.

Shout out to- Mark, Chibs, Mike, Tommy, Dave, Pes, the F.C., the Newcastle crew, JFL, Lucy and all the posse. @ANTI-COPYRIGHT, please copy and distribute.

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The workers resistance kicks off its irregular magazine with a provocative outburst. Their organisation might be growing but with slaver like this their readership probably wont. No really, it's great, here's what the critics said:

"An outstanding accomplishment, challenging, intellectually sophisticated and yet it reads like an airport novel. A truly remarkable debut" -Buffy the Vampire Slayer

"I literally couldn't put it down" -Mr. Sticky

"I might quibble with some of the conclusions but cannot dis the central argument. The most entertaining writing since Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" -Ray Kroc's ghost

McSues Issue #2

'Cos our jobs are really shit...

- Exclusive interview with Richey Manic
- Global resistance round up
- Pissed bloke on quarters

And all the same crap we put in the first issue...

The magazine by McDonalds workers, for McDonalds workers

Hi, Welcome to issue two of McSues. The first edition was distributed around the world - from Alaska, U.S.A., to Christchurch, New Zealand, in Finland, Sweden, Denmark, the U.K., Canada and Australia, while Greek and Czech versions also appeared. McSues is written and produced entirely by the McDonalds Workers who form Glasgow McDonalds Workers Resistance (MWR). We aim to inspire other Mcworkers to start their own fights back against the company. As our movement grows stronger we hope to win higher wages, better working conditions, and a greater degree of control over our working lives. In the long term we want ordinary workers to directly control the production and distribution of wealth. That means no bosses telling us what to do and no profit mongers getting rich off our backs. In the last year we've made contact with McDonalds workers who are fighting back in towns across the UK, and with resistance groups at several stores in the U.S., a number in Australia, Canada and continental Europe. A few tales of McDonalds workers fighting back over the last year can be found further down. The trouble is, although there are lots of us around the world, we are all separated geographically, and it's easy to feel isolated. To try and overcome this, we're proposing a global day of action on October 16th 2002. It will be a day for all Mcemployees the world over, to strike and sabotage for the right to organise. You can read more about this below. Anyway, enjoy this issue, stay angry and never stop believing in our ability to change the world,

Love and solidarity,

Casper, Whybird, Funnywump, Zotard and Bouncer

XXXXX

Ever get pissed off with the same CD being played over and over again? We thought we'd come up with a few sounds more appropriate to McDonalds. So, here is MWR's...

Top 10 songs to listen to while selling burgers...

Take this job and shove it - Johnny Paycheck
Career opportunities (the one's that never knock) - The Clash
Smash the Mac - Crass

Slave to the wage – Placebo
Dancing on the ruins (of multinational corporations) - Casey Neill
Don't make me eat that shit - Weird People
Murderous employment - Slow Grind
Working for the fat man - Escape Club
Frightful restaurant - Seikima 2
Working like a slave - Lancaster Blues Band

We hope to have this compilation available as a benefit CD by some time in 2002. This will help spread some quality music (and a lot of shit we've never heard) but will also raise us some cash (badly needed since Skol pulled out of the sponsorship deal).

Q. How many salaried managers does it take to change a light bulb?

A. Don't be so fucking silly, that sounds like work.

The secret diary of Ronald McDonald, A very dirty clown!

Monday

Got pissed and spewed down my dungarees.

Tuesday

Got asked to pratt about in front of the cameras today. I couldn't be arsed because I didn't want to make a tit out of myself and waste precious drinking time, but McDonalds explained that they wanted two year olds to love me so that they would buy McDonalds shitty food. Fair enough, anything that makes kids fancy me. I was knackered after that and it was bed time. It's always bed time when the big hand touches the little hand.

Wednesday

I know I plaster my face in make up, but why the fuck have I got a yellow cock?

Thursday

Spent the day watching snuff films and eating quavers

Friday

Visited McDonalds and scared kids with a balloon puppet the shape of a giant yellow cock. Sometimes I scare myself.

Saturday

Fucked a chicken.

Ronald McDonald is walking through what little jungle he hasn't destroyed with his mate. All of a sudden, out pops a tiger. Ronnie drops his bag and, before turning to flee, puts on a pair of expensive trainers. "Do you really think you'll be able to outrun a tiger with them on?" asks his mate slightly puzzled. "I don't have to outrun the tiger," replies Ronald, "I just have to outrun you". Now this story might seem a bit unrealistic, but Ronald does have, sorry, did have one friend.

Global Day Of Action

On October the 16th 2002, McDonalds workers around the world will be taking industrial action as part of the global day of action against McDonalds. Glasgow MWR will be taking action around the following demand:

"That all those employed by McDonalds, anywhere in the world, be allowed to organise themselves as they wish and that they be allowed to conduct the business of their chosen organisations on company premises, be allowed to display notices in staff areas and generally circulate information without hindrance. That this right to organisation and free expression is not dependent on the number of people involved in the organisation and that no person shall be prejudiced against for involvement in such an organisation. This demand applies to those employed directly and indirectly by McDonalds and so includes, for example, those employed to make happy meal toys. Our lives may be very different but our struggle is the same. Finally, we ask McDonalds to make explicit that they do not own their employees and that they have no right to dictate what we can and cannot believe or express at any time."

We want you to take part too... It took generations of struggle for workers to win the right to organise, but in recent years, companies like McDonalds have taken that right away. They know that if we were organised they wouldn't get away with paying us such crap wages, to work in such crap conditions. So we're fighting back, and on October the 16th we're going to make a noticeable dent on their profits around the world. Start planning now! And remember, there's one Jack Greenberg and one and a half million of us.

Global Resistance Round Up

Since the last issue of McSues went to press, McDonalds workers have been rebelling around the globe. There have been various events in Italy, including a successful strike in Florence. The walk out was provoked when the air conditioning broke and the temperature in kitchen rose above forty degrees Celsius. Thousands of Italian Mcworkers are represented by a trade union and there are active groups of workers in Rome and other cities.

Germany

In Germany, employees are less fortunate. The workers of McDonalds Wiesbaden were forced to go to court after they got sacked for being in a union. Eighty percent of the restaurants workers were members of the union so McDonalds shut the store, leaving the building empty for seven months until it was reopened. None of the former workers were employed again. The court announced that the sackings were illegal but McDonalds have appealed to a higher court. The case continues.

Canada

That story will be all too familiar to McDonalds employees in Canada where many attempts at unionisation have been defeated by some pretty twisted campaigns by McDonalds. At one store in Montreal, two teenagers, undaunted by previous failures, took on a mission to establish better working conditions for themselves and their co-workers. According to one of the pair, Pascal McDuff, "the kids who tried [to unionise] before us were courageous. I felt called to their cause". The solidarity at the Peel Street store in Montreal was exceptional and after a long and bitter legal campaign the courts officially recognised the union. The victory was only a moral one- McDonalds had already shut down the restaurant. There have followed a number of arson attacks against McDonalds restaurants in Canada which may be related to McDonalds being one of the most anti-union employers in the world.

France

In Paris, workers occupied their store and went on strike. When the company sacked several workers a protest was called. Striking McDonalds workers were joined by Pizza Hut employees and anti-capitalist activists. Stink bombs were hurled at McDonalds restaurants as the angry crowd marched through the Latin Quarter of Paris. A spokesman for the group said: "we condemn the fast-food practices, the lack of job security, a hellish working speed and ridiculous wages".

Russia

In Russia there are few independent trade unions but one has been started in Moscow McDonalds. Natalya Grachova, one of the unions founders, says the fight goes on

"because I want people to learn to fight for their rights (...) and not simply accept everything they're given".

United Kingdom

In the UK there are several active groups of McDonalds workers including the excellent Workers Resistance Against McDonalds (WRAM). Like MWR, WRAM is developing an international network. They have a highly recommended web site at: www.wram.cjb.net Actions in UK McDonalds over the last year have included workers leafleting customers about their working conditions, a partial walk out and at one store a 'phone in sick day'. Around the world last year there were scores of attempts at organising McDonalds restaurants and dozens of court cases questioning McDonalds employment practices.

Start your own resistance group...

Be careful or you'll get sacked...Spot potential allies (people throwing things about while shouting "I hate this job, I fucking hate this job")... Spread ideas and information- Discuss, debate, type up a simple newsletter for your store.... Do something practical- It could be anything- confront racism, or get long overdue bonuses paid, ordinary workers can make a difference... Make contact with others- workers, Trade unionists, Syndicalists, us lot... Meet regularly... Help each other- One person might be good at writing letters of appeal, another might be up for confronting a bullying manager, someone else might just be a good listener. As Ray Kroc once said: "none of us is as good as all of us".

McGreed

McDonalds has been dubbed McGreed in Mpumalanga, South Africa, after refusing to supply anti-AIDS drugs to a staff member who was gang raped after working a late shift. The crime rate in South Africa is one of the highest in the world but McDonalds refuses to supply transport for staff finishing after midnight even though they are regularly ambushed by criminals. Even after the attack McDonalds did not offer her the chance to work during the day, nor any transport home or trauma counselling. As a result, the employee was so afraid that after finishing her shift at the Nelspruit branch, she would spend the night hiding in the local mall only leaving after sunrise. She commented after the attack: "my HIV test has come back negative but there is a window period. If I do end up getting HIV McDonalds will have helped sign my death warrant". McDonalds makes over \$3billion every year. 'It's a team', 'it's a family' and yet it looks so much like a racket set up to make money.

Richey Manic

The legendary dead lyricist, one time inspiration behind the Manic Street Preachers, is definitely still manic, but a manic still prepared to talk about McDonalds...

Richey is leaning back in his chair looking mildly bored. He lights a fag and glances out the window. Grimsby is grey, it's drizzling slightly, it's a strange setting. He tells me he

thinks the last two Manics' albums stank, adding that James Dean Bradfield is "overweight and out of date". I bring up the subject of McDonalds and Richey looks at me sternly for a second before laughing "big Mac: smack" and punching his palm. Richey never was a fan of the golden arched corporation, "Europe freed by McDonalds and Levi's - born to end. Can't afford it so I hate it all", he muses. I start to ask his opinion of McDonalds food but he interrupts me- "pass the prozac", I look surprised, "heroin is just too trendy" he mutters. When I finish the question he just shrugs and mumbles "worms in the garden more real than McDonalds". There's an awkward pause, I look at the rain. When I glance back Richey is casually carving '4 real' into his arm. I ask if he's ever read McNews: "sterile like a line of piss" he tells me matter of factly. Is McSues any better? I ask tentatively. "I can lick your face, I can bite it too, my teeth got rabies, I'm gonna give it to you". I figure it's time to leave but not before one last question: is he really dead? Richey rolls back in his chair with a, well, manic laugh, "nah, I work in a chip shop in Grimsby..."

We were more than a little surprised by the number of responses we received for last issues competition. We asked "why are salaried managers so fucking stupid?" and we got a wonderful array of replies commenting on: psychological problems, imploding heads, the need to make Andy Taylor look bright, the effects of McDonalds food, the effects of inbreeding, the effects of sexual relations with farmyard animals and much, much more. Thanks to everyone who entered, we got a good laugh.

However, it would be wrong to choose a winner, basically because we don't actually have a fondue set to give away. So, this issue, instead of a competition, we're making an appeal... Last Christmas we sent senior management a card. Christmas can be a very difficult time for lonely socially inadequate people and we have a great deal of sympathy for those who have so totally lost sight of what matters in life that a burger bar seems important. They didn't reply but no doubt we're on their list for this year. This Christmas we want to send mass festive greetings to Greenberg's office in Chicago and Andy Taylor's home in Bedfordshire, and we want a comment from you! What do you want to say to these goons at this special time? Please make up a pseudonym and send us your message, we'll type them all up and pass them on to these two modern day scrooges. If they read the card on Christmas morning they'll have less time to steal their relatives chocolate money. To be included messages must reach us by December 10th .

Have you heard about the new 'Ronald McDonald burger'? It's a 35 year old piece of meat stuck between some 5 year old buns.

Pissed bloke on quarters

Onward the parade of badly lifted jokes but first a true story. Last month I was on the night shift, the shift runner was away stripping his carrot or something and the phone starts ringing. Being a team player I've left the quarter station, made to the office and answered the phone. "Right you", shouts a voice down the line, "nip out and see if the car park is busy". I've wandered out and returned to an impatient "well?" "Nah, just one big car, looks like that overpaid shit head Andy Taylor's Bentley", I said. "Do you know who you're talking to?" booms the voice on the other end, "this is Andrew Taylor". But I stayed calm: "do you know who you're talking to?" "No" answered Taylor. "Well fuck off then you overpaid shit head".

Right, this one's true. McDonalds had been accused of being ageist, 'cos they employed so few older people, so Andy Taylor sets off looking for an older worker who would say something nice about the company on the telly. First store he gets to he finds this old geezer cleaning the car park, "what do you think of your job?" asks Andy. "Bollocks" says the bloke. This happens a few times but eventually he finds this really ancient guy clearing tables in Dundee. "What do you think of your job?" asks Andy without much hope, "Oh it's great I love it". Andy is delighted and they talk for a while during which time the guy explains how happy he is at work, how much he likes the food, how fair he thinks the wage is, and what an ethical company he thinks McDonalds is. Andy says, "listen my good man, you're absolutely perfect, but there was just one thing I was wondering; what's that fucking lump on your leg?" The old guy looks a bit embarrassed then says "well you see Mr. Taylor, I'm incontinent and I need this bag to take the piss out of me, a bit like what I've been doing to you for the last five minutes". I'm telling you, that's the way it happened.

It's your letters

Thanks to everyone who has contacted us. Unfortunately, there isn't enough space to print everything we receive, but here are a couple of letters that raise some interesting issues.

Dear MWR,

Hi, I used to work at McDonalds in England but left on maternity leave to have my baby girl in July last year. when I first started at McDonalds I was constantly told that it wouldn't be long before I was promoted because I worked so hard and was always taking on extra responsibility. But then, lo-and-behold, as soon as I fell pregnant, I wasn't given a look in, being passed over while people who had been there for just weeks were given promotion. Then, these people came to me for information on how they were supposed to do their jobs. And of course, it is needless to say that these people getting promotion didn't have children. Now at this particular restaurant there is only one manager with children and, perhaps unsurprisingly, he is male. This of course is because he will not need to take time off work to tend to a sick child at any time or take the allowed 13 weeks unpaid leave for mothers in this country. there is one manager who is pregnant, but she was promoted before and can hardly be stripped of her position. I believe McDonalds are

parent-phobic and resent their staff having other concerns outside of work. They disgust me and many of my ex-colleagues.

C., England

MWR Replies: Thanks very much for getting in touch about this. It's very true what you say. McDonalds seems to either discriminate against people with kids or have totally unreasonable expectations of them. For example, at our store there once was a mother, who was a manager, and she had to take her littlest one to hospital and the area supervisor was shouting "fucking, fuck off with her kids any time she feels like it", it was unbelievable. McDonalds spends so long saying how it's a 'flexible work place', it's flexible for them because they can cut our hours whenever they feel like it, but if something unexpected, like sick kids, suddenly comes up then suddenly they are not so flexible. It's true that it is different for blokes, this sort of 'parentphobia' is also totally sexist, it rests on traditional assumptions that women should and will accept full time, unpaid caring responsibilities. It's good these issues are brought to our attention, we sometimes over look them in dealing with all the other ways McD's shits on its staff. So, thanks for writing and stay angry!

Dear MWR,

I was a floor manager at McDonald's Camberwell Green at S.E.5 and I became a trade union member, the name of the union is USDAW trade union. The franchise owner's gang broke into my flat and there stole documents regarding the case. The franchise owner and his friends in the police helped set up the burglaries and at the same time I was harassed by his friends who are police officers. I want to know whether you could publicise my story, it was just like the McDonalds libel case,

J., London.

MWR Replies: We are delighted to publicise your account of what happened. Regrettably, we hear many similar stories. At first they sounded far fetched, but by now we have heard so many similar accounts of harassment and intimidation of trade unionists by those associated with McDonalds that it would appear the company considers discrimination, harassment, and dismissal of trade unionists to be acceptable practise. In courts around the world, McDonalds have been found guilty of mistreating trade unionists numerous times and we can only assume they have got away with it on hundreds, maybe thousands of other occasions. We know how low McDonalds are prepared to go from evidence produced at the 'Mlibel' trial. They admitted paying people to break into an office, steal mail, etc. Before we requested the Post Office tighten security, all our mail went missing from our PO Box. It is because of McDonalds infamous record that we do things anonymously. The truth is they're scared shitless, terrified that their massive workforce will organise itself and no longer put up with the exploitation that keeps the dollars rolling into McDonalds profit bank. We really very strongly believe that over the last couple of years McDonalds workers in many different organisations around the world have taken

huge steps towards developing the kind of international resistance that will finally allow all Mcworkers to stand together and fight back. We will see on October 16th how far we have come. As to your description of the police's behaviour, that also sounds entirely in character. Over the years there has been a very close and totally illegal collaboration between the police force and McDonalds. This resulted in the Metropolitan police paying the Mclibel defendants £10,000 compensation in July, 2000. The collaboration between the police and a multinational corporation against members of the public exposes the political role of the police in ensuring the wheels of big business keep turning. As Sid Nicholson said, McDonalds security "are all ex-policemen". Sid, who was UK vice president at the time, was formerly a cop in apartheid South Africa. Not very nice people.

That's it, don't be a stranger.

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"A dynamic rebellion (...) changing workplace politics for ever" Agora magazine

"the global fast food chain faces a rebellion from its most powerful detractors yet: its own employees (...) Issue one seethes with vitriolic bile against the golden arches corporation" The Face

"Your disgusting offensive rubbish(...) I was disgusted (...) You could be making a serious argument to persuade others of your views but all the foul mouthed totally unnecessary swearing shows what you really are. You are fucking idiots, what if kids picked this up, or don't they matter? (...) you think you are so cool but you are typical burger flippers. You should go back to flipping burgers or get an education before you go talking about things you can't understand (...) you are scum and you don't deserve minimum wage. If everyone was like you there would be no economy." Some bloke

PHONE PRANK

The other week Webel phoned McDonald's customer services: "I got some fucking menu but then I got through to a very pleasant sounding woman:

McWoman: Hi, how can I help?

Webel: [in aged, exasperated, snobby voice] Yes, I am wondering that myself. I visit McDonalds a lot, sometimes six or seven times a week, I spend hours there, and recently I became very dissatisfied.

McWoman: Yes...

Webel: I was at your store on @*!£\$£# Street in Glasgow.

McWoman: Hang on, I'll just enter that (...) is that *%£\$## ?

Webel: Yes.

McWoman: And can I ask when you visited?
Webel: Well I seem to be there half my waking life [laughs]
McWoman: [Laughs]
Webel: But I want to talk particularly about my time at the store yesterday.
McWoman: Yes, can you remember what time yesterday?
Webel: Really as soon as I entered the place, about 11:00
McWoman: Okay, so what happened?
Webel: Well I was shouted at by a manager.
McWoman: [pause] Shouted at?
Webel: Yes, by a manger.
McWoman: Like... spoken to aggressively? Unpleasantly?
Webel: Yes.
McWoman: [furious typing noise]
Webel: And I was told that I couldn't have the food I wanted. I had requested a vegetable burger without mayonnaise, but I was informed that I had to eat something that had already been made!
McWoman: [Laughs politely] Oh dear. [Furious typing]
Webel: I'm a vegan.
McWoman: Pardon?
Webel: A vegan.
McWoman: Oh, a vegan, right I see [furious typing]
Webel: I asked for a drink of water...
McWoman: Yes
Webel: But I was told it was too busy.
McWoman: Too busy?
Webel: Yes!
McWoman: [long pause] Dear, it sounds like you've really had a bad experience.
Webel: Yes, but to add insult to it all, the manager made derogatory comments about my appearance.
McWoman: [pause] comments about your appearance?
Webel: Yes, because I wasn't clean shaven.
McWoman: [furious typing] is this the same manager who spoke to you aggressively?
Webel: Yes.
McWoman: What was his name?
Webel: I don't know, he didn't introduce himself, he spoke to me like I was a machine.
McWoman: Right, yes. Can you give me a description?
Webel: Big, sour, not pretty.
McWoman: [furious typing] Big as in tall?
Webel: Yes. And I saw in the kitchen and a number of elementary hygiene procedures were not being followed.
McWoman: er... can you give me an example?
Webel: I saw people picking food off the ground.
McWoman: [long pause] OK, you definitely saw that in the kitchen?

Webel: yes!

McWoman: I mean certainly that is something we take extremely seriously, I really, em, yes everything you've mentioned we take very seriously, and we will certainly look into your complaint and attempt to verify it. Er... I mean, if verified...

Webel: I just feel you don't really care...

McWoman: [pause] No, this, if verified, you know it does sound very serious if verified. We take all customer feed back very seriously.

Webel: Customer? No you misunderstand me, I was working there...

McWoman: [silence]

Webel: Thanks for your time [hangs up]

So that achieved nothing but was a bit of a laugh. In particular we hope that the nice woman got a break from the indescribable monotony of listening to people droning on about their burger experiences. Working in call centres is always shit, we can only imagine what it must be like to work in a call centre run by McDonalds. Solidarity with our comrades on the phones! And Webel says that if the nice woman ever reads this, could she get in touch?

ALTERNATIVE CREW HANDBOOK

The notorious 'alternative crew handbook' produced by rebel McDonalds employees, containing everything a disgruntled worker and needs to know to get on in the job. This is the document management do NOT want you to read...

Remember at all times that the company is your enemy, it exists only to make money and only cares about you in so far as it can make a few more dollars off your back.

Liberation begins when we put self-respect before burgers!

"This is not amusing, and has consequences you have clearly not considered (...) What you've done is thoroughly

obstructive to my business. You may consider this as funny, but have you considered what should happen should

anyone be foolish enough to follow your suggestions? (...) I am not a man without humour but what you have done is inappropriate and I must request you remove it immediately or I shall be forced to legal recourse."

-Bill Davies, McDonalds franchise holder

Get paid your full wages!

McDonalds already pay us the least they possibly can, but if they can get away with it, they'll pay us even less. Here are a few thoughts on how to try and make sure you receive the pitiful wage you're legally entitled to.

Firstly, and most importantly, never assume that just because you have clocked in for a shift this means you will be paid for all the hours you work. Theft of wages is rife, we keep hearing about this, it really can't be emphasised enough. Managers alter clock card entries to save on labour costs, i.e. they might clock you out a couple of hours before you actually stopped working. This practice has been exposed at our store twice and we have heard of it occurring on numerous other occasions. We have NEVER heard of a manager being dismissed for this offence. Widespread fraudulent theft of employees' wages in order to save the company money is not a cause for dismissal, taking a drink without permission potentially is. The managers do it because they are under so much pressure from their bosses to keep costs down, but there can be few clearer indications of the depravity of the system and the degeneracy that it breeds that servile, two faced, pathetic managers are prepared to steal from minimum wage workers, not even for themselves, but for a \$35 Billion a year corporation. **DON'T LET THEM GET AWAY WITH IT!** Record the hours you have worked and check you get paid properly. If needs be make the shift running manager sign a piece of paper every shift indicating the hours you have worked and the length of your break. **NEVER TRUST THE BASTARDS TO PAY YOU WHAT YOU'RE DUE!**

Also, managers sometimes say a day is double time when it isn't really in order to get you to work. If you're in any doubt then it's worth checking with the human resources department or getting signed confirmation from the shift running manager.

If you attend a staff meeting (crew/ training squad meeting, safety circle, rap session, etc.) then you are entitled to payment at your full hourly rate for the duration of the meeting. So clock in! Managers will probably tell you not to clock in and will say that they'll sort your money out later, complying with this means you will almost certainly not get paid, either because of deliberate fraud or just because of incompetence. The UK crew handbook states "it is your responsibility to clock in and out when you start and finish work". For once do as it says.

If you are doing a short shift and are only entitled to a 15 minute break then you don't have to clock out for your break (EU). If one day you have to go to work at another store then you are entitled to payment for time spent travelling between your store and the other store and any costs incurred. Do not accept any deductions from your wages (for lateness, breakages, cash shortages, new uniform, etc.) as this practice is illegal.

Getting sick pay/ maternity pay if you work for McDonalds is not easy and the regulations vary from country to country, but do not assume it's impossible. Your entitlement will, of course, depend on statutory provisions in the country where you work.

During your period of employment you will accrue HOLIDAY PAY. A lot of this gets kept by McDonalds. If you're thinking of quitting suddenly and not working your two weeks notice then make sure you get any holiday pay you're due put through first. Insist

on collecting your holiday pay every year (you're not supposed to get the money in lieu of holidays not taken). You're legally entitled to this money but McDonalds are very adept at stealing it.

If you're offered a bonus, insist the manager puts it through before you do the extra work, get written confirmation and check your wage slip to make sure you have indeed received it.

You should also try and make sure that you're not paying too much tax. Especially if you started the job part way through the current financial year, it's possible you will be on the wrong tax code. For example, in the UK, you are allowed to earn some £4000 without paying any tax (you are still liable for National Insurance contributions). If you think you have been over taxed then take a recent wage slip to a tax office and hopefully they will give you a cheque (it takes a few weeks), and the government will have a bit less cash to spend on killing Iraqis.

Finally, don't forget to take advantage of McDonalds great generosity and concern for its employees. In the event of a death in your immediate family, you may be entitled to receive paid leave so you can nip along to the funeral.

And remember kids...

"Our competitors can try to copy many of our secrets, but they cannot duplicate our pride, our enthusiasm and our dedication for this business. There is no single factor more important than the dedication and effort of McDonald's employees. The McDonald's spirit is exclusively ours and yours." Andrew Taylor, President and CEO of McDonalds UK

Everything you ever wanted to know about 'stealing' from McDonalds!

('Stealing' in inverted commas because you can't steal what already belongs to you)

McDonalds steals the wealth we produce in the form of profits every shift we work, so it's totally ethical for us to try and take the profit back through whatever means we can. Unfortunately, legal systems across the world exist to preserve the capitalist system. As Noam Chomsky put it "the country was founded on the principle that the primary role of government is to protect property from the majority, and so it remains". Therefore, this article is included purely for entertainment purposes....

The most obvious way to take back what belongs to us is through taking money from the tills. McDonalds knows that most crew members despise the company and it has taken precautions to try and reduce the amount of money 'stolen'. These include uniforms without pockets, the T-reds obsession from a couple of years back (that lasted a few weeks), cameras and fairly rigorously controlled cash handling procedures. Nevertheless, it's fairly easy to more than double your wage.

You could try taking a stack of notes in a one off spectacular, but this is more of a parting shot than a steady income. As long as you don't take too much, and don't make it too obvious, then such actions tend not to result in prosecution (best to split on your break and never come back, oh and make sure that what you take is considerably more than the holiday pay you're due or it's pretty pointless).

You could just take a bit now and again and then play innocent when your till is down. However, if your till is down more than £20/ \$30 then it should be immediately obvious to all but the stupidest managers that you (or someone else with access to your till) has been stealing. If you keep 'losing' smaller amounts of money then sooner or later you will wither be sacked or banished to kitchen (years ago one of our gang was banned from ever using tills when management became convinced he was stealing but couldn't prove it).

When managers get rushed they may insist you take over someone else's till without it being cashed up, or order you to share a till with someone else. Christmas has come early! As long as you don't get caught on camera with a bag of loot, then they have no way of determining which of you is an honest serf and which of you is an evil criminal genius. If it's a lot of money then they will pursue the matter further but if it's not that much then the manager will just be left red faced in the office while you and the other crew member are splitting the money in the local boozier.

However, it is normally a much better idea to make sure that when your till is cashed up everything tallies... and you've got a few notes tucked in your sock. There are a number of ways this can be achieved.

The old way was to enter the order into your till, receive the money then delete most of the order before ringing it through. The difference between the correct cost of the order paid by the customer and the cost of the one item you finally entered, would then be yours to take. This is why McDonalds started going on about T-reds. T-reds appear when you delete an item without having it cleared by a manager, some till systems block this action, others show it up on your till report and this can lead to cash retraining slips. This hasn't totally stopped this method being used- at busy times managers will hand over till keys/ swipe cards so that crew can do their own deletions, not to mention refunds... Christmas has come early! I don't exactly understand this one never having worked at a drive thru restaurant, but we've heard of people working together where the person taking orders has till keys (or a swipe card, whatever). The order taker enters the correct order and collects

the money, then once the person gathering the order has collected it the order taker deletes the order. Apparently, you can make £15 on one big order this way.

However, the attention paid to T-reds has led to a search for improved tactics and there are a number of possibilities. Perhaps the most reliable technique is to enter a single sandwich on the till when a customer purchases a meal. If the customer eats there fairly regularly (and is not a tourist or an OAP) then it is exceedingly unlikely they will question why you're charging them more than appears on the till and even if they do you can just correct your 'mistake' (one of the delights of this scam is that it can so easily be passed off as a mistake, whoever takes an interest in what you're doing). Most customers know off by heart how much a meal costs, as long as they're paying the right price they don't care what the till says. You then simply repeat this action, adding up the discrepancy between the total amount entered in the till and the total amount in the till drawer until it approximates a round number (i.e. £10 or \$20, it doesn't need to be exact), and then you take the difference. Disco.

Alternatively, if some prices where you work are exact (i.e. \$5) or just off it (i.e. £2.99) then just keep a few pennies, cents, centimes (if prices are exact you don't even need to do this) and don't ring the orders through the till at all if someone gives you exact money. If someone gives you £3.00 for a £2.99 meal, then just give them one of the pennies you have by your till and keep the £3.00. You don't want piles of money around your till and coins are difficult to smuggle from the scene, so take the next order properly and stick the coins in the till (again remove a note or two later on). If you do end up with coins lying about it's worth remembering that you can fit seven pound coins in an empty creamer portion!

Once you have a positive balance in your till you enter stage two- smuggle your ill gotten gains to safety. The classic is simply to slip notes into your sock when you pause to tie your laces, but there are various alternatives. Some people devise ingenious cash stashes, for example, in the lining of your tie. Whatever you do, at the first opportunity go to the crew room and get the money into your wallet, avoid taking money with you when you get your till cashed up. The safest way to get rid of money is to get a mate to come in late on your shift and impersonate a customer. You simply overchange her/ him by however much your balance is positive.

Thus far we've talked only about money. This is, of course, only a fraction of the potential swag present in a McDonalds. Everything is up for grabs- happy toys, cheese, chocolate flakes, lettuce, wedges, sauce portions, cleaning substances, strip lights, sticky tape, cooking equipment, salt, pepper, sugar, pancake mix, plants, tea bags, rubbish bags, balloons, ladders, toilet roll, fire extinguishers... You need never shop again! All your worldly needs can be met by McDonalds (except alcohol and class A drugs which you can get by selling McDonalds stock), they are delighted to help.

Obviously closes, and opens to a lesser extent, are the best times to make off with larger items, but try and nick things when you might reasonably be carrying them about, so if you want to nick hash browns, don't do it at dinner time. Normally the best way is to be totally blatant. If you say that you need to check the schedule and you just happen to be carrying a sleeve of cheese at the time then normally everyone is too busy to notice whether you come back with the cheese or whether everyone you know eats toasties that week. Bring in a spare bag and then if you arouse suspicion you can safely show your bag with nothing but personal possessions, if they look in the spare bag then just deny it's yours, if they don't then at the end of the day, when all's clear, stick the spare bag in your bag and get out of Dodge.

But far and away the best way to smuggle stock out is, if you work at a drive thru store, get a mate to drive through and at the first window you quickly pass out all sorts of shit, she/ he stashes it under a blanket and drives on to collect their regular fries with half the store in the back of their car.

If this sort of stuff is happening on a grand scale (as it often is) they'll start trying to keep stock areas locked. No problem, just throw the keys in the main bin when nobody's looking. This will seriously fuck up the shift- soon there's nothing to sell, they have to get hold of the manager who has got the spare keys, they get dragged out of the house, they'll probably want new keys cut, it's a fucking nightmare and they certainly won't lock the stock areas again in a hurry.

There is plenty that is of value- happy meal toys make nice presents for young relatives. We used to know someone who swapped hash browns for hash, you can keep friends and family supplied with tea bags, household equipment, sauces, etc. Get stuck into the black economy. McDonalds owes us, we could be robbing them blind for years and not get back half of what they've stolen from us.

We hope you enjoyed this humorous, just for entertainment article. Please remember that theft is a criminal offence.

John Wayne's bumper guide to the job

Kitchen

Obviously in kitchen the priority is to cook what food you have to with as little effort as possible. The golden rule in all instances is therefore, "more food less often". Always cook in the highest runs possible. So, depending on your store, you should cook big macs in runs of 6 or 12, regulars in runs of 9 or 18, etc.

Kitchen should function as a team, it should be non-hierarchical and based on direct democracy. If the person on wrap and call is being a dick then the others should vote to replace him or her. If the person doesn't comply then immediately everyone should go on a go slow. At busy periods a five minute go slow can lead to production being completely lost. Our collective strength is never more obvious than when a group of friends work together in kitchen. Here are a few specific notes:

Wrap and Call

This position, if occupied by a penis, can fuck up everyone's day. When you're on wrap and call your main objective is to make sure that everyone in kitchen has as easy a day as possible. So, "two sandwiches please" isn't going to make any friends is it? Also, don't tell people what to do, make suggestions. Don't turn into a petty tyrant burger boy. In order to perform your role to the best of your ability you will need to cheat with time cards- when the food goes out of time, replace the time card, when the new card is out of time, replace it again. Keep this going until all the food is either sold or grows legs and runs away of its own accord. If you want this to go unnoticed then a good trick is to ask managers to throw token bits of food out from time to time- "could you throw out the first quarter please" makes it sound like you give a fuck and the manager doesn't know the quarter she throws out (and all the others in the bin) saw action in Vietnam. The food tastes like shit whether it's fresh or has just got its bus pass.

Grill

It's pretty self-explanatory, you slap down meat when you can be fucked. One little thing, if you're using a damaged Teflon and it's ripping all the meat but you can't be bothered changing it, just sprinkle salt liberally on the frozen patties before latching the grill. The meat will come up in one piece and the customers will eventually die of heart attacks which means there will be less of the bastards to serve. If you have to clean a grill, then don't worry about the top platen, just change the Teflon round and claim you're helping the openers. This saves a lot of time and has the added advantage that over time it can lead to carbon build up which can warp a grill causing McDonalds considerable expense.

Bonus!

Dressing

The pickle just gets thrown on the ground anyway so don't bother with it. There's probably no need to use mustard either. Also, you know how your hands end up stinking of onion, pickle, mustard, all sorts of shit? Well especially if you're going out later, wear plastic gloves so you don't smell so bad when you're trying to pull someone.

Buns

Be creative, Mac crowns can go in the regular toaster, regular buns in the Mac toaster, use your imagination.

Chicken

Keep your holding levels very high and cook everything in big runs.

DPSC

Everyone else just copies it from a couple of days..

Filtering

The equipment will almost certainly not all be present in a useable condition. So refuse to do it. If they complain then ignore human resources and go straight to the health and safety executive (UK- 0171 717 6000) or the equivalent organisation where you work. If you do, do the filtering, a good trick is to get a metal jug and (very carefully!) scoop hot oil from other vats and pour it down the sides of the vat you're filtering clearing any debris.

Front counter

Your other main concern here is the customers. It seems that all the scum on earth eat at McDonalds from time to time- don't take shit, never apologise and above all else, never, ever smile unless YOU feel like it.

You should work out with kitchen staff signals to deal with objectionable customers. For example, 'extra bacon' as a grill order might mean the order is for a police officer. It's then up to kitchen to do their worst. Or, a 'big Mac extra cheese, extra milk', might mean 'an abusive customer has ordered a big Mac extra cheese, please spit in it'. Abusive customers very often order grills because being awkward is their raison d'être.

However, you should never, ever encourage people to do horrible things to burgers randomly. This is because lots of customers are actually really nice people. Give free food to anyone who is pleasant or looks like they are short of cash. Be careful giving free stuff to middle aged, middle class people because they just don't get it and will stand there saying "I don't think you charged me for this". If you make a habit of giving free stuff to regular customers who work in local shops, pubs, etc. then you will hopefully find that visiting their workplaces soon results in the favour being reciprocated. Workers solidarity against the bosses!

Unlike in kitchen, there is usually no point trying to do things quickly on front counter- it rarely buys you a break but just means more punters want served. Remember- if the queue gets long enough then people are less inclined to wait which ultimately means less people to serve. Try to leave your till whenever possible, go to the toilet, wash your hands excessively, claim your trousers are falling down, anything to break the tedium. Try talking to customers (!?), instead of "can I take your order here please?", try "all right

there, just finished work?” “er... yeah” “Looks like it’s been a rough day...etc.” Just serving food robotically is dehumanising for you and the customers.

Oh, and never use the ice scoop!

Backroom etc.

Remember: never wear decent shoes to work as they will just rot with all the grease and skank that floods about the floor.

Backroom

If you have to move heavy stuff and you don’t have a trolley then improvise with bun wheels and a bun crate (for bringing out boxes of fries, for example). Don’t put yourself out for McDonalds.

Delivery

As long as it’s not your regular job then you won’t need to rotate stock properly. Just put a few older boxes on top to make things look right. By the time anyone notices it’s all fucked nobody will remember who did the last delivery. Nick a few boxes of stuff and claim they were never delivered (just joking, that might be illegal!). When you’ve chucked everything away slap a bit of ‘do not use’ tape about randomly to make it look like you’ve tried. Drag the whole thing out as long as possible. If anyone does notice how badly you’ve done it then hopefully they won’t ask you again.

Pulling stations

Think what can be seen when the station’s back in place (sometimes just the floor) and clean it. Do the floor with a litre of APC (or local equivalent) and a damp mop. Some people like to pour salt on grease spills, I’ve never thought this was very useful but I suppose it wastes lots of salt. When you’re ‘finished’ quickly push the station back into place really fucking tightly so that no one will pull it out and see that you’ve actually done fuck all.

Cleaning

If you have to clean a greasy surface, don’t try and clean it properly with soapy water, just wipe it with a DRY grill cloth.

If you get sent to lobby to clean walls or something similar then make a big show of filling up a bucket of clean water then take a couple of cloths and a newspaper round to the wall. Splash the clean water about a bit then look for a plant (almost every McDonalds will have real or fake plants somewhere). Scoop some of the earth out of the plant pot and mix it well with your water. Sit back with your newspaper. After a while take your bucket and cloths back and make a big show of having to change this very dirty water- “fucking

hell, when were those walls last cleaned?”. The manager will feel like a good burger slave and will ask if they’re scrubbing up all right, “yeah but it’s a lot of work” and with that you go back to your paper. Keep this going until you’ve at least read the sport, the cartoons and have had a go at the crossword. This really works!

Dining Area

Skive, read the paper, talk to random members of the public, it’s boring as fuck out here but it should be a bit of skive. If you get really bored then go to the shift runner with a really disruptive request from an imaginary customer- someone wants to check a rule from a now closed promotion or something. After the manager’s pissed about for a while, found the relevant file, searched and been unable to resolve the enquiry, looked up the number where the customer should direct enquiries, noted it down and took it out to the customer, you go “fuck- they were sitting right there, they’ve just left, that was so rude, etc.”

Trash Walks

Trash walks are great- empty one external bin and leave that bag somewhere you can find it, then compress the rubbish down in all the other bins and go to the pub, do your shopping, whatever. Come back and carry the bag you left earlier around to the front of the store and in full view of management chuck a few things in the bag. A manager (who had probably forgotten you were out there) will come to ask why you’ve taken so long. Look frustrated and ask when the last trash walk was done. “Just an hour ago” “Fucking hell, messy bastards today, this is the second bag I’ve filled, I mean it’s still not great but you should have seen the mess before, etc.”. If anyone was out looking for you while you were in the pub, just claim you were along the street picking up litter in line with McDonalds community friendly policies.

The heavy stuff

One day our manager pulled us into the office and told us “you need to have a long hard think about why you’re here”. Well we did, and it wasn’t an easy question to answer.

It certainly wasn’t for fun- the work was repetitive and monotonous, robotic and likely to cause minor injury. The pay was piss and the uniforms were far from chic. It certainly wasn’t to contribute to the general well being of the world since our principal functions were cooking and serving slabs of dead cow, raised on deforested land in order to be sold to the impoverished parents of emotionally manipulated two year olds. The obvious answer, that we needed money to pay the rent, didn’t explain why we were working at McDonalds as opposed to doing something vaguely useful that might afford us a shred of dignity. In fact, the only reason we could see why we, or anyone else, worked at McDonalds, was because in doing so we made some rich guys we had never met even richer. Well, ‘bollocks to that’, we thought, ‘we’re not prostituting our lives to an idiotic pursuit of wealth on behalf of those who already have too much’.

Well people wrote to us, they said, “damn it boys, why don’t y’all stop moaning you damn commie faggots, if you don’t like it why don’t y’all quit?” Well we still needed to pay the rent and when we looked at our options, none of them seemed a great improvement; we could work for Burger King, or in a call centre, or in a branch of Wetherspoons... We started to wonder why all the jobs available to us were so piss and pointless. We listened to the capitalists, they explained about job creation and investment, and we learned that under their system jobs were created when rich people invested and rich people only invested when they thought they were going to make profit. In other words jobs are created, not because they serve any discernible function, or provide any tangible increase in human pleasure, but because they make rich guys richer. It wasn’t just McDonalds that was the problem, the whole thing was starting to seem a bit fucked.

People wrote to us, they said, “god damn it, why don’t you make something of your lives instead of moaning? There are winners and losers in this world boys, it’s your own fault y’all did so bad at school.” Well, that was true, but it didn’t change the fact that for every ‘winner’ there needs to be a hell of a lot of losers stitching clothes in their sweatshops and flipping burgers in their McDonalds. “It’s not the most noble use of one’s powers to crawl ashore deaf to the cries of drowning companions” as some geezer once said, and if the whole world was educated until they could explain the theory of relativity while deconstructing Hegel, most of us would still be stitching clothes, flipping burgers, or doing some other menial task in order to make rich guys richer.

Well we listened to the politicians- “we’re going to get tough on immigration”
“We’re going to get tougher on immigration”
“We’re the toughest anti-immigrants money can buy”

“We’re going to jail them”

“We’re going to send them home and steal their kids”

Well, they weren’t really dealing with our priorities. In fact, it seemed to us that we could vote labour to work in McDonalds for £4.20 an hour, vote Tory to work in McDonalds for £4.10 an hour, vote Scottish National Party to work in McDonalds and wear a kilt, or vote Liberal Democrat to work in McDonalds and wear a woolly jumper.

We listened to the capitalists some more (we were desperate); they said that everyone gets richer when rich guys get richer. We didn’t really follow this because McDonalds had been making billions over decades but the people who work in their toy factories were still earning a few pence an hour and after we had bought three litres of extra strong white cider, we had £2.47 to last until pay day between us. They said it was all about economic growth, if people didn’t spend their lives doing stupid things to make rich guys richer, there would be no investment, no growth, there would be unemployment, recession, plagues of locusts... Well, that seemed a fair point, but out with the self-referential terms of their theology, what was the point of all this growth? “Well, for the world to be free of poverty by the year 2050, the global economy has to quadruple”. But there is no shortage of food, nor of labour power and material to build good houses, there is more power than we could want in the sun, the wind and the waves, more creativity than we could imagine in those who flip burgers and stitch clothes, why don’t we just share our bounty of resources equally and for the benefit of humanity? They smiled at us amused by our naivety and explained with generous condescension, “well that’s a very nice idea, but we can’t just share things equally, why there would be no economic growth and for the world to be free of poverty...”

It became apparent that the world was being consumed by a circular logic that served no function other than to perpetuate exploitative class relations and ensure the continued servitude of the majority. Having surrendered humanity to the buccaneering vicissitudes of the logic of profit, we had lost all control of our lives, no matter how much technology we invented we ended up working more, until some people were stressed and overworked, while others became depressed and suicidal because they were broke and unemployed. Individuals owned personal fortunes greater than small countries’ GDPs while the majority of the world’s population lived on less than two dollars a day. It was screwed. We had to do something about it!

Well, we listened to the Socialists (we were getting really desperate); they wanted to take over the state and rule in our name- like that worked before. We figured that the last thing we needed was another set of bosses. We thought it was time for people to start to take control of their own lives, to control production and distribution from the bottom up, to produce for need and want not profit, to stop doing stupid things to make people rich, to start looking after our own interests, to find a new way of living based on co-operation not competition, to live without dead time and enjoy without restraint

THE TRADE UNION QUESTION

McDonalds Workers Resistance on the trade unions and their relevance for McDonalds workers.

More than any other corporation on earth McDonalds is notorious for its obsessive, determined and frequently illegal attempts at obstructing trade union activity within its workforce. After the legendary McLibel trial, the high court determined that McDonalds was “antipathetic” towards trade unions. No shit. Tactics used to fight trade unions have included, in France, framing crew member Hassen Lamti for armed robbery, before offering him a bribe to renounce the union. Around the world McDonalds has been responsible for a mass of illegal dismissals of trade union activists. In Canada they made workers lie outside in the snow in the shape of a “no” (to unions). Other anti-union campaigns have involved an “anti-union slide show”, a visit from a top baseball player, a bingo night... They are prepared to engage in lengthy, obstructive legal battles, and frequently shut down whole stores should trade union recognition become unavoidable, in Puerto Rico they pulled out of the whole country following a dispute and opened some years later with non-unionised labour. In the past they have used lengthy polygraph tests (lie detectors) to screen for union sympathisers. They employed John Cooke to “keep the unions out”, he stated in an internal memo that “we do used polygraph tests in a Gestapo type manner”. According to Cooke, “unions are inimical to what we stand for and how we operate. They peddle the line to their members that the boss will be forever more against their interests”.

Clearly, if trade unions did not offer a very real opportunity for workers to improve their conditions, McDonalds would not have opposed them so obsessively. We strongly support all attempts by McDonalds workers to win trade union recognition and warmly extend solidarity to all McWorkers who are trade union members. Workers in unionised stores (for example in Scandinavia, Italy, Mexico) usually experience higher pay and marginally better conditions. If you are familiar with our ambitions then you will know that a marginal pay increase is very far short of what we desire. It is like setting off from Glasgow on a journey to New York and getting as far as Stirling.

However, there is more to a trade union than an extra few pence an hour and a pension scheme. The trade union makes explicit the oppositional relationship between the workers and the bosses, it also provides the structures through which workers can carry on the class struggle. If we worked somewhere there was an established trade union I think most of us would certainly join and work within the union arguing for a radical agenda.

However, unlike the Workers Resistance Against McDonalds, our programme is not focused on unionisation. There are a number of reasons for this.

Most of the unions McDonalds workers might be expected to join are, at present, conservative institutions intent on feeding money to the loathsome Labour Party, run by

bloated overpaid bureaucrats, and are more interested in providing financial services to their members than reversing social injustice. Looking at the state of the bureaucratic labour movement reinforces our conviction that workers must control our own struggles. The trade union leaders, like politicians, quickly become distanced from those they claim to represent and come to establish a separate interest group. It is well documented how trade unions have let down workers on numerous occasions over the past two decades. Sometimes this has been a result of the spineless, crawling, spoiled leadership, and sometimes a consequence of the institutionalisation of the unions themselves- fear of losing assets for sanctioning secondary picketing, for example.

The senior trade union bureaucrats have no interest in challenging capitalism- they owe their wealth and power to the status quo- while the union institution itself requires the continuation of the wage system for its preservation.

Where workers are already organised in trade unions there may be a case for trying to radicalise the union, and certainly for workers to use the structures of the union to advance the class struggle. However, this is very different from proposing that new workers organisations should stick to the deficient format of the traditional trade union- a format that has proved unable to challenge capitalism and largely unable, or unwilling, to operate in McDonaldized workplaces. The traditional trade union movement has had several decades now to respond to casualisation- today only one in five casual workers and 6% of all workers under 20 are in a trade union. Every other trade unionist is a professional and over a third have a degree. A middle aged manager with a mortgage and a private pension is more likely to be in a union than workers like us. We're certainly not against unions (or middle aged people with mortgages and private pensions!), we just recognise that we need something more.

It is exceedingly difficult to unionise a McDonalds restaurant (in some situations it is completely impossible where a successful vote will just lead to the branch being shut down), partly because of McDonalds extreme hostility towards unions, but largely because of the exceptionally high turnover. Our first attempt at organisation was an attempt to unionise. We collected signatures from 70% of crew members at our store but so great was the turnover that five weeks later we had signatures from only a minority of employees. Some of the new employees we hadn't even met. In these conditions we think the loose non-membership approach of MWR is more effective.

There is some cause for optimism. The McDonaldization of employment may have proved a crisis for the labour movement and for workers, but for workers it may yet prove an opportunity- an opportunity to develop new, more effective, more radical organisations, organisations capable of transforming society.

McDonalds, Not Just Another Company

McDonalds doesn't just take advantage of a world that exists for the benefit of business, but, more than most other corporations, is active in constructing and enforcing that world. McDonalds targets its advertising at children as young as two, the importance, not just to McDonalds, but to the economy generally, of nurturing emotional identification with corporate imagery, cannot be underestimated. Two year olds have little chance of differentiating between family and friends with whom it may be constructive to develop a reciprocal emotional solidarity, and an imaginary clown that exists only to increase McDonalds profit margins. The relentless targeting of Ronald McDonald images at young children is a form of abuse, extremely manipulative, McDonalds (and other advertising) prepares children for a lifetime of cultural meaning determined by capital.

McDonalds increasingly enjoys a mutually beneficial relationship with state education systems. This can involve advertising, corporate talks, 'career advice' and McDonalds also provides an increasing number of school meals, with the benefit to the company of developing in young people a taste for McDonalds characterless food.

15% of Americans (and loads of people from the rest of the world), will then experience their first employment with the company. 'First jobs' at places like McDonalds have replaced national service as an often temporary stage of disciplining and preparation for a lifetime of subservience to capitalism. These jobs now continue a process developed in schools of socialising young people into the productive process. In other workplaces, working conditions that might otherwise be refused are tolerated because employees have experienced much worse in McJobs. The work is designed to completely strip employees of their humanity, it is reminiscent of army boot camps where soldiers have to be turned into 'fighting machines'. In both institutions 'why?' is a forbidden question- procedures and orders are their own justification. McDonalds is very proud that other employers like to employ people who have had successful periods of employment with McDonalds. This is actually true. Employers know that if someone comes from McDonalds with a good reference then they have been through the boot camp. It is like a badge that simply says 'I will put up with shit', it's a certificate that indicates your spirit has been repressed, that you have shown obedience. These are the sort of workers capitalism requires in the greatest number and these are the sort of workers the McDonalds experience is designed to produce. Fortunately, it very often fails.

Again working in cosy partnership with state bureaucracies, McDonalds and similar employers have been invaluable in creating a casualised labour market supported by unemployment. The unemployment has been essential for breaking the strength of workers organisations and supports casualised labour where people can be hired and then fired if they're not sufficiently compliant. A few employers totally committed to using cheap, non-unionised 'flexible' labour, supported wholeheartedly by governments, have

been enormously influential in creating the contemporary 'flexible' labour market with its consequences for the old workers organisations. McDonalds doesn't just benefit from the contemporary labour market, it has helped to create it.

Similarly, the sort of work people do today is increasingly rationalised, never 'McDonaldized'. McDonalds has set an example, enthusiastically adopted by bureaucratic organisations everywhere of how to regulate procedures to ridiculous degrees, of how to ensure that there is no human input required for efficient functioning. It is Fordism taken to another level, it is scientific management taken to extremes. McDonaldization represents a new level of alienation, the total war on human creativity is McDonalds great gift to the economy.

But the influence of the company extends to all wage labourers. Workers are taking shorter and shorter lunch breaks, devoting ever more of their lives to the productive process. McDonalds supports this trend perfectly- race to McDonalds, get served some shit straight away (OK, not quite), gobble it down on the way back to the office. Speed is emphasised over quality in everything McDonalds does (it is not surprising that McDonalds has struggled in Italy and some other areas with strong culinary traditions). The food is served quickly, but also the customer is supposed to eat it quickly- this is why many McDonalds chairs are designed to become uncomfortable if sat on for any length of time. This way of living is a consequence of the logic of production, time away from the productive process is presented as lost time. Of course, the opposite is true and in taking lunch breaks at McDonalds we lose an opportunity for socialising and pleasure. McDonalds entire philosophy is produced by, and supports and reinforces, the idea that time out from the economy is 'wasted'. To this understanding, taking time to cook a meal, then slowly eating it with a few friends or family, is 'time consuming'. Or in other words, it occupies time that could otherwise be devoted to the economy- either to the productive or consumptive process. The whole idea of 'time consuming' activities only makes sense in a world defined by the economy, and out with this world, McDonalds philosophy is completely meaningless.

Within this world, however, McDonalds has sufficient influence to actually change established dietary practices across whole regions. For example, according to 'Behind the Arches' (a book authorised by McDonalds in 1987), McDonalds in Japan faced "a fundamental challenge of establishing beef as a common food". Their president Den Fujita stated "the reason Japanese people are so short and have yellow skins is because they have eaten nothing but fish and rice for two thousand years", "if we eat McDonalds hamburgers and potatoes for a thousand years we will become taller, our skin become white and our hair blonde". McDonalds also changed eating habits in Australia, Peter Ritchie (at the time McDonalds Australian president) has stated he attributes "that change to the influence McDonalds has on children". 'Behind the Arches' concludes that rather than adapt to local tastes and preferences, "McDonalds' foreign partners made major changes in marketing in order to sell the American system". Indeed, McDonalds is

prepared to support such means as are necessary to “sell the American system”, the company supplies symbolic practical support and important ideological support to the military imperialism necessary for the onward march of mono-culture. For example, they provided food to US troops as a token of support for the genocide about to be perpetrated against the people of Iraq.

See also: [McDonalds, US foreign policy and September the 11th](#)

McDonalds- Just Another Company

We think McDonalds is just another company and it does exactly the same thing, has exactly the same motivation, as companies all over the world- it aims to make money. There is no room for emotions because the agenda of profit is absolutely total. McDonalds is happy to try running hotels or selling veggie burgers, there is no reason why they wouldn't be prepared to run a chain of organic vegan restaurants, cannabis cafes, folk clubs or anything else they thought would be profitable.

It happens that, at present, McDonalds believes that in order to make their maximum profit they have to (or rather are able to) exploit their workers to a special degree, devastate the environment, kill loads of animals, exploit children and displace people from their land. But this is just what McDonalds business happens to entail, there is nothing here that another corporation is not capable of. The logic that drives McDonalds is exactly the same as the logic that drives the local organic food store.

It's obvious that shutting down McDonalds would only open up new market space to other corporations acting on exactly the same principle. One of the regions where McDonalds has been less successful in recent times is in the United States, but McDonalds problems have certainly not coincided with a decline in burger culture and all which it entails. Moving from a profit driven, exploitative and ecologically destructive economy to a society of co-operation, equality and sustainability requires us to attack not just individual corporations but the profit system itself. It requires people everywhere to develop different political, economic and social structures.

*“There are a thousand hacking at the branches of evil to one who is striking at the root.”
(David Thoreau)*

McDonalds Workers Resistance FAQs

Workplace group McDonalds Workers Resistance answer frequent questions "cos some of the questions we get asked are really shit...".

Here are the MWR Frequently Asked questions. Hopefully these will clarify a few recurrent points and be of general interest. If you're thinking of e-mailing us to shatter our illusions through brilliantly, not to mention smugly, observing that if McDonalds 'is as

bad as you say then why do people work there? Ha, got you there!' then please read some of the stuff below before making a tit out of yourself (not the first one, it shouldn't be there).

Q. If a good cook could cook cookies how many cookies could a good cook cook?

A. If McDonalds cooked cookies and got a good cook cooking them then the good cook could cook a lot of cookies but at the end of the day neither the cook nor the cookies would be very good.

Q. Is McDonalds really such a bad job?

A. Yes. Even compared to other shitty capitalist employment “opportunities” it is dispicable. It is totally degrading and dehumanising, there is a ‘procedure’ for every tiny action to make our role almost completely robotic. The pay is infamously poor, bad enough, according to the high court, to depress wages throughout the catering sector. Management is frequently very autocratic, the company likes to employ ex-military personnel because they bring “a sense of discipline”. There are no overtime payments or any rights beyond those legally constituted. Hours are often unsociable. The work is sometimes relentless and employees are expected to ‘hustle’ - basically run about like fuck for 8 hours (or 10, or 12...). Because of the pace of the work cuts and burns are very common, most people who have worked there for a few years will have at least one permanent scar. We are bombarded with inane company propoganda and are expected to comply with company stipulated ‘appearance requirements’. Theft of wages (clock card entries being altered by managers to save on labour expenses) is rife and is tolerated by the company- widespread frauding of employees wages to save the company money is NOT an offence that leads to dismissal, taking a drink without permission potentially is. Hours can be cut (completely) with just 10 days notice (often, in practice, much less). Even when your shift finishes, incredibly, you are not free to go and are obliged to stay on should management demand it, which they almost inevitably will. The UK crew handbook states “due to the nature of our business, on occasions you may be asked to continue working past your normal finishing time; you will be released (sic!!) as soon as the need for your services has past.” You can’t even go to the toilet with out first obtaining permission. If a shift is unexpectedly quiet and staff are not totally rushed then some staff will be told to go home, if they insist on working their full shift they will often be assigned the most unpleasant cleaning tasks to encourage them to rethink. At other times every day off will be disrupted by a phone call from a stressed, sometimes even tearful, manager begging you to come in and work. The obsessive cost cutting and incessant prioritisation of profit has enormous human costs.

Q. If you don’t like it then why don’t you quit?

A. We need the money. Of course, we could quit and try Burger King, KFC, GAP, a BT call center, Wetherspoons, but none of them would represent a great improvement. Some of us have quit but others have chosen to stay and fight to change things. None of us plan to work for McDonalds for ever, but at present the alternatives are also shit. Over the last

few years there has been a great increase in ‘McJobs’ - low paid, unskilled, short-term work in the service sector. If you don’t have many qualifications, or if you can’t work full time, then it can be difficult to avoid these jobs. One of the reasons workplace exploitation continues is because we are encouraged to think our frustration is a personal issue- don’t like McDonalds? Quit and try Burger King. Still shit? Quit, work in a pub. Don’t like that? Try a call centre. Try another call centre, work in an office... This can go on indefinitely until we recognise collectively that our frustration is not a personal issue, is not even a question of a particular job, but is an effect of a social system that exists in opposition to our pursuit of happiness.

Q. If McD’s is so bad, why do people work there?

A. Perhaps because they’ve a ‘poor employment record’, no qualifications, or they can only work at particular times because they’re studying or have kids. And McDonalds probably isn’t the very worst job in the world- you can get some great banter with your co-workers and it can SOMETIMES fit around other commitments. But just because we can think of a few examples of worse exploitation doesn’t make McDonalds exploitation okay! To say a job is okay because you know of a worse one is like saying having your hand scalded is okay because having your fingernails pulled out is much worse!

Q. I worked at X and it was just as bad. So, why McDonalds?

A. Because that is where we happen to work. Had we worked in Burger King, on a building site, in a call centre, a hospital or an office, we would probably have done something similar. The problem is not just McDonalds or even McJobs, we are against the very idea of wage labour- of having to sell yourself to survive in order to make other people rich. All workers in all industries should organise against their bosses.

Q. So, why don’t you join a trade union?

A. More than any other corporation on earth McDonalds is notorious for its obsessive, determined and frequently illegal attempts at obstructing trade union activity within its workforce. After the legendary McLibel trial, the high court determined that McDonalds was “antipathetic” towards trade unions. No shit. Tactics used to fight trade unions have included, in France, framing crew member Hassen Lamti for armed robbery, before offering him a bribe to renounce the union. Around the world McDonalds has been responsible for a mass of illegal dismissals of trade union activists. In Canada they made workers lie outside in the snow in the shape of a “no” (to unions). Other anti-union campaigns have involved an “anti-union slide show”, a visit from a top baseball player, a bingo night... They are prepared to engage in lengthy, obstructive legal battles, and frequently shut down whole stores should trade union recognition become unavoidable, in Puerto Rico they pulled out of the whole country following a dispute and opened some years later with non-unionised labour. In the past they have used lengthy polygraph tests (lie detectors) to screen for union sympathisers. They employed John Cooke to “keep the unions out”, he stated in an internal memo that “we do use polygraph tests in a Gestapo type manner”. According to Cooke, “unions are inimical to what we stand for and how we

operate. They peddle the line to their members that the boss will be forever more against their interests”. Read the rest of this article with our reasons for preferring loose non-membership organisation to traditional trade unionism.

Q. What’s this “wage labour” you’re always going on about?

A. We use ‘wage labour’ to talk about the system of employment where most people have to do work, usually for a company, in exchange for pay. In this system, capitalism, we have to do things, not because we think they are useful, because they help ourselves or others, or because they are enjoyable, but simply because they are profitable. The system of wage labour is supported by governments who make great efforts training people for work, trying to force benefit claimants into employment and sometimes using violence (the police) to break up strikes and ensure the system continues. So, we recognise that our interests are opposed to the corporations that need us to work for them and the bosses that we are supposed to obey, but also the governments and politicians that try to ensure the whole thing keeps running.

Q. You people don’t even want to work, do you?

A. No, we do seem to have a strange aversion to wasting our lives doing useless things just so that some shareholder can get one of those garage doors that opens as he drives towards it. But we have no problem doing things that we think are useful. None of us grudge the huge amount of time we put into MWR because we think it’s worthwhile. We’re not lazy (well maybe a bit), but we’re not stupid either.

Q. But if everyone had your attitude surely the economy would fall apart?

A. Thankyou, our point exactly.

Q. Capitalism’s not great, but was the Soviet Union any better?

A. Fuck no, that’s not what we want!

Q. So, what do you want?

A. A diverse pluralistic society based on co-operation. Where work is performed because it is useful, not because it makes money. A society that is ecological and sustainable, is communist in the sense of sharing and working together, and anarchist in refusing hierarchies and grand bureaucratic orders. A world where everything we do, every minute of our lives, will be valuable.

Q. But it will never happen will it?

A. Sure it will. It may seem absurd to talk about revolution but all the alternatives assume the continuation of the present system... which is even more absurd. See [ten reasons to expect revolution...](#)

Q. I’m a McDonalds manager, my job’s shit as well, why are you having a go at me?

A. We’re not really and it’s good you recognise that your job is shit as well. You are a

skivvy, a totally expendable slave. You are exploited and you have to sell yourself just to make a profit for McDonalds. Fair enough, we understand that. However, sometimes some of the things your job requires you to do (if you're a salaried manager, hourly paid managers are usually just crew members who wear shirts) will bring us into conflict. You have to try and ensure that we make as much money for the company as possible, obviously this is not in our interest. If you're fucking about and not doing your job properly then perhaps we are on the same side, if you're going to the lengths of fucking about with our clock card entries to save on labour costs then you deserve a kicking. Ultimately all McDonalds low level employees have the same interest because we would all benefit from destroying the economy, but in everyday incidents this is not always apparent.

Q. If you did your jobs properly, wouldn't you get promoted?

A. Yes... but no thanks. Floor managers get even more shit than crew members, still get abysmal pay and still have to work their asses off to make people they never meet rich. Salaried managers have also got really shit jobs, the work is simultaneously stressful and mindless, and worst of all it can require people to be actively involved in enforcing the exploitation of workers.

Q. Why didn't you work harder at school?

A. This whole argument is idiotic. People do crap jobs, not because of their personal deficiencies, but because capitalism requires these jobs be performed. If everyone doubled their performance at school then people would still work for McDonalds. Open your eyes, break with your individualistic conditioning and learn to see things as social rather than purely individual problems. And of course, lots of people work at McDonalds while they're at school/ college/ university.

Q. Do you really think students working part time are going to care about any of this?

A. Well plenty do. Students working at McDonalds tend not to be studying economics at Harvard. The students involved with MWR recognise that although they will end up doing different jobs these too will probably be tedious, pointless and exploitative. Students actually have a bit of a history of rebelling... And obviously only a fraction of McDonalds employees are students.

Q. Aren't McDonalds workers just kids, wont they all get other jobs soon?

A. Well all sorts of people work for McDonalds, older people, people with families, as well as 'kids'. Most McDonalds workers are young and then they get other jobs, often different versions of the same shit (for example, we know lots of workers who've left to work in a call center). Few jobs are for life these days so observing that McWorkers will probably get other jobs later is pretty irrelevant. For many young workers McDonalds is an introduction to a lifetime of wage labour. And just because something doesn't go on forever doesn't mean that it should be tolerated- prisoners? Most of them get out eventually.

Pensioners? They all die eventually. There are so many excuses to justify exploitation and wasting your life - 'it's only for a bit', 'it could be worse' - and it's possible to accept these excuses until it's too late. And McDonalds and similar employers provide a function, started in school, of training young workers to accept discipline, to subordinate their lives to the economy.

Q. The turnover at McDonalds is so high and the company is so militantly opposed to workers organisation, isn't it just impossible to organise in McDonalds?

A. That's just a cop out. Sure it's difficult, we know that only too well, but it's not impossible, we're proving it's not impossible. And when we see that garment workers in Bangladesh, sex workers, even prisoners, manage to organise then we know that we can certainly go from strength to strength.

Q. Why do you do things anonymously?

A. So as not to get sacked and especially so as not to endanger the jobs of friends who have more at stake than us (ie families to support). McDonalds has a long, really incredible, history of doing really wierd things when people oppose them. Like in France they framed a crew member who was a trade union activist, Hassen Lamti, for armed robbery and then offered him a bribe to renounce the union. They have been found guilty of illegally dismissing trade union activists on numerous occasions. And we've had letters about really scary stuff, like someone claimed they had their flat broken into, someone else reported serious threats of physical violence. For a long time all our mail was going missing. There was no mail at our PO box even when we sent it ourselves. Normally you would think there was some problem at the post office or something, but here there is a precedent. Indeed, stealing other peoples' mail would be behaviour entirely in character for McDonalds. It emerged during the McLibel trial that McDonalds had paid 7 "enquiry agents" to infiltrate London Greenpeace. Two of these agents, Mr. Bishop and Mr. Allan Clare, admitted, in court, to stealing mail belonging to London Greenpeace. Mr. Clare also admitted to breaking into London Greenpeace by swiping the locks with a phone card. While Mr. Roy Pocklington followed members of the group home to find out their address and in an especially distasteful incident, he provided a parcel of baby clothes for Mr. Morris' (one of the eventual McLibel two) son, in "an attempt to discover Mr. Morris' address". All this information comes from the McLibel support campaign's "Trial News 3" (August 1996, p-10) which quotes the court transcripts. So, when our mail started to go missing McDonalds dirty tricks seemed the most plausible explanation. McDonalds is a completely manic criminal organisation and we mustn't forget that. Anyway, we had great fun sending them made up names and addresses, fictitious meeting places, etc. The Newcastle lot even sent them stuff written in a combination of Greek and Russian letters. It didn't say anything but it would have needed a translator to work that out. McDonalds is very easy to take the piss out of. So, we don't know if they got all that stuff but someone's sitting with a weird pile of mail.

Q. I agree with you but all my co-workers are indoctrinated, what can I do?

A. Well, you'll have to change their minds, which shouldn't be too hard. McDonalds propaganda is so idiotic that it doesn't stand up to much scrutiny. And in every store there are bound to be some potential allies, we'd be delighted to send you resources that may help you encourage others to see sense, or you could produce your own. And, of course, you could become a regional co-ordinator. See also, get involved and tips on starting your own resistance group.

Q. Why do you swear so much?

Fuck knows man.

Q. Why don't you sign on?

A. We know loads of folk who sign on because they don't want to work. That's great, good luck to them, we have nothing against folk blagging the dole, recognise the refusal of wage labour as a radical political act and have made statements expressing our solidarity with benefit claimants. However, we are also only too aware of the severe, even tragic, consequences of unemployment, consequences reflected in rates of suicide and depression. The suggestion that everyone can choose to live happily on the dole is idiotic. Personally, I want to be able to get my round in (occasionally!), I don't want to get kicked out of my house, I want a bit of cash to spend on luxuries... these things require money. Of course, we would prefer that, to give one example, fashion wasn't defined on the terms of capital, we would prefer that all social meaning was created by ordinary people, on our terms.

Q. Why do you go on about Ronald McDonald being a paedophile?

A. Ronald McDonald is a fictional character and so he can't literally be a kiddy fiddler. However, the clown is used to perpetuate child abuse. That is the only appropriate description for profit motivated emotional manipulation of two year olds. McDonalds have invested \$Billions on the clowns image, and the image they've created is perilously close to appearing paedophilic (for example, the advert where he comes to a little girls window at night time and takes her away). What we do is to launch a violent symbolic assault on the image, we use connotations of paedophilia, bestiality, 'spewing down dungarees', to subvert McDonalds corporate imagery at its weakest point, to permanently influence how people perceive the images, to detract from the power of McDonalds advertising and to metaphorically expose the violence hiding behind the clown's mask. Our attacks are against the corporate image and we don't mean any disrespect to the poor minimum wage guys that have to play the part.



McDonalds Workers Resistance

A collection of writings from MWR

Greetings fellow burger slave!

This is a message from McDonald's Workers' Resistance (MWR). We are an underground army of fast food freedom fighters. We don't take shit, we make it. We are glad we have reached you and trust you will spread the message amongst your workmates.

