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No. 9 March 2000



Is this some kinda joke?

(sadly not - it's called legislation...)

Jesters and clowns will join with fancy-dress coppers on All Fool's Day, and take to the streets of Manchester to make a mockery of the Terrorism Bill. Anyone concerned about the further threats posed to civil and social liberties by the Bill is welcome to join in. At the bat of an eyelid, the Bill has now passed unchallenged through two Parliamentary stages and a standing committee, with no ammendments reported, and next to no media comment. Little opposition is expected from either the House of

Lords or Commons. Meanwhile similar legislation is being brought through in other European countries.

Despite its name, the Terrorism Bill isn't really a bill about terrorism: all references in its central definition to causing terror, coercion and intimidation have been quietly removed by the Home Office. As a result its provisions now catch a wide range of activities that have nothing to do with terrorism.

Once passed, the Bill will introduce sweeping new powers to stop, search, and detain suspected `terrorists' with no legal representation; to ban organisations - both in the UK and overseas - and to seize money and resources. It will make it an offence to attend meetings of banned organisations or to express support for them, to hold information that `may be used for terrorist purposes', or not report suspicions of other people to the police. The Bill also reverses the onus of proof in court for a number of offences.

It will be used to target, harass and imprison those dissidents, exiles, solidarity groups, and protesters who engage in activities the Government don't like. At a time when greater numbers of people are spurning the ballot box and turning to direct action, the Bill could not have come at a better time for the powers that be. But then it is their Bill not ours, it's more about terrorising us not protecting us from terrorism. And of course it's their to help protect the interests of big business.

The campaign to stop the Bill is already underway. In the North West last month a small delegation of 14 visited Jack Straw's surgery to display a banner reading `Terror Bill Terror State'. Mr. Straw was not available to discuss the Bill. However, he was

accompanied by a heavy police presence for such a small number of protestors (about 20-30 constables), two riot vans, information/evidence gatherers (with camera), and some odd-looking blokes in gestapo style shiny black jackets... no kidding.

Next anti-terrorism bill meeting, 13th March, 7:30pm (see diary dates).

April Fool's Parade

Saturday 1st April, 1pm, Queen Victoria Statue, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester.

Suspected terrorists may be arrested on route. Bring banners, drums, whistles, costumes and disguises, toy truncheons and helmets camera's for evidence gathering, tonka riot vans, cutesy handcuffs, laughing gas, and other such tools as used by paranoid fools.

wot no books?

To celebrate the National Year of Reading and the 150th anniversary of the first free public libraries, Manchester City Council is planning a £500,000 cut in the budget of the central library. This will be achieved by cutting staff by 40%, reducing the books and materials fund, closing the fourth floor, and reducing the number of service points from 16 to 6.

Still, it doesn't matter - at least the front of the building has been cleaned.

Loombreaker staff on strike

Women's yearly unwaged contribution comes to at least \$11 trillion. Women and girls all over the world are joining in with a global strike today (March 8th) for less work and more resources for women. For example, abolishing Third World debt, protection against violence, equal pay, and wages for caring work. The local strikers are outside Ashton Town Hall and it would be nice if I was there instead of here typing in articles. "When women stop everything stops" - ha! no *Loombreaker* then!

Man of Straw

I saw these mini-posters around town saying something like "Do you hate Jack Straw? If so come to the demonstration at the Pumphouse Museum where he is opening an exhibition to commemorate 100 years of Labour Party history". Seeing that I've got a lot against him and the Labour Party, I thought I'd go along to make my protest.

Although the posters didn't say who the demo was organised by, it seemed to be entirely organised by the Socialist Workers Party who were strongly represented. However, while the event was fairly noisy I couldn't quite see what the purpose of the crowd/party was. The man didn't seem to have any real difficulty getting in. There was a lot of pushing and shoving on the ramp to the building, but nothing spectacular happened. Really I expect a lot more from "correct leadership" and a self-proclaimed Vanguard party. If we are to change society radically there will have to be much more imagination _ or at least some idea of what one is attempting to achieve.

Hip-Hop outside the cop shop

The Wrestle at Nestlé _ where anti-capitalists targetted a Nestlé chocolate factory in Halifax on the day of the WTO meeting in Seattle - has finally drawn to a close. Some of the victorious Nestlé 16 and their supporters visited Halifax police station to reclaim the stuff taxed by the pigs on the N30 action. This included the 45ft "People and Planet before Profit" banner, which was displayed for some time outside the cop shop and held up (with garden canes) for press photo opportunities. The day's fluffy happenings also included taking a photo opportunity with one of the Nestlé bosses and some police evidence gatherers outside Halifax court (with a placard pronouncing Nestlé guilty), and ambling down to the Nestlé factory for more photos. The day ended with a very pleasant lunch in Peace Hall, watched by two van loads of police.

Crass - The meeting...

The Riotous Assembly was as usual an inspiring get-together of people interested in changing things. This month's discussion focussed on the anarcho-punk movement, with many people coming because of an interest in this subject.

The first wave of British Punk was touted as being anti-system, and pro-DIY and individual creativity. Within six months the musicians had been signed up by record companies to become yet another cheap commodity.

Anarcho-punk during the eighties was different. It reinvented hippy culture and translated it into punk. It was against commercialism and created a whole culture that would get ideas across. The politics of many anarcho-punks were anarchical and pacifist, feminist (but still male dominated) and often vegetarian or vegan. Anarcho-punks were involved in Stop the City, peace camps, squatting and animal rights.

Pacifism was confronted by the state, and tensions arose. `Non-violent direct action' dogma was increasingly irrelevant as activists were easily beaten up by the state's representatives, and there was increasing decentralised sabotage. As with many other movements, problems included being inward looking, its cultural barriers, an inability to build alliances, and a tendency to not think ahead strategically, and to go `underground'. Anarcho-punk disintegrated as fast as it came together, but has many similarities with today's protest movements. The idea that has survived is one of self-motivated activism, with passion, determination and a commitment to anarchism.

Next Riotous Assembly is the usual sharing of actions and campaigns from the last month, and the following month, plus a practical session of banner, puppet etc making in time for Mayday - bring materials & fun.

Mumia

Mumia Abu Jamal has spent nearly two decades protesting his innocence, writing from death row about the continuing racism and poverty of the US and opposing the brutality and wars of its government. Huge international protests in 1985 delayed his execution but now he is threatened again. Again a massive international campaign has publicised Mumia's case and won him support, and a demo in support took place in Manchester recently. Only this kind of mass protest will force a re-trial and save Mumia's life.

Mumia said recently, *"We are all inhabitants of one world. Solidarity means connecting with others in the great web of life, and in the common struggle of all human beings on earth for freedom, self-determination, justice and dignity...Trenches are safe places to fight from, but when they become ruts, they weaken our effectiveness by isolating*

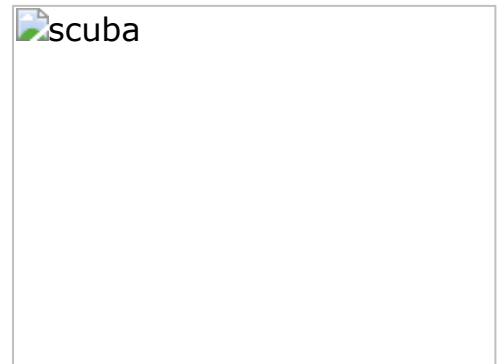
us from each other. If you truly mean to work for liberation, look for ways to stand together with others. Unite on behalf of all who fight for life, and join hands with them throughout this green and growing ball we call earth."

Stop the train I want a wee wee....

If passengers are to be attracted back on to the railways, they will have to be convinced of the safety standards. Consequently it will surprise some that Sarah Friday, a health and safety representative, has been sacked by South West Trains for going to the toilet without informing her bosses. Of course this was nothing to do with Sarah's campaign against the long hours SWT drivers are forced to work without breaks.. Info from Greg on 0171 582 2955.

Shaken not stirred...

On Valentine's Day activists and campaigners from Greater Manchester & District CND and Manchester Earth First! headed north to join 500 others for a mass blockade of Faslane Naval Base, home to the UK Trident strategic nuclear weapons system. 189 people were arrested, the majority at the North Gate which was blockaded for a number of hours. With words of support from Sean Connery, the event made headline news in the Scottish press. The event was organised jointly by Trident ploughshares and CND, who once again wanted to highlight the International Court ruling that "..the use of such weapons is scarcely reconcilable with the rules of humanitarian law."



Manchester EF! teamed up with Faslane Peace Camp, who had made preparations to blockade the South Gate with a rather heavy Valentine's cake. However they were saved the trouble by Strathclyde police who set up their own road block, sending all traffic to the blockaded north gate. Nice one. Having gone to so much trouble to make a cake (in truth an oil barrel full of cement and elaborately arranged metal pieces, weighing in at a quarter tonne), it seemed a shame to waste it. So it was rolled out onto the main road running past the base, two brave souls locked on in pissing rain, and soon we had a six mile tailback. The barrel was removed several hours later in a very risky and cavalier manner. Using a forklift truck, with both activists still locked on, twenty coppers lifted bodies, held the barrel steady-ish, and the forklift juddered it's way to a nearby layby.

Trident has cost us about £30 billion, and adds to a world wide armoury of 36,000 stockpiled nuclear missiles. It has nothing to do with `deterrence' and everything to do with global hegemony by powerful states, and their self-appointed licence to kill. Plans to develop the strategic defensive initiative are being pushed ahead, with the promise of huge profits for the likes of Lockheed, BAE Systems and Rolls Royce. Tensions in international politics remain. Sleeping comfortably?

Footnote: A few days after the loss of the Solway Harvester in the Irish Sea, a Trident submarine was seen surfacing in Loch Gareloch draped in large amounts of netting or tarpaulin. MoD boats were sent out to look for signs of any sunken vessels. Trident subs travel through the Irish Sea *en route* from the Atlantic to Faslane naval yard. Draw your own conclusions.

Contact Greater Manchester & District CND at the One World Centre, Basement, 6 Mount Street, Manchester. (0161) 834 8301, email gmdcnd@gn.apc.org

Irwell Valley Earth First!

IVEF! is a new Earth First! group being set up in and around Salford University, so if you study, live or work in Salford and fancy a bit of "no compromise in defence of the earth" style action, get in touch....

Irwell Valley EF!, c/o Dept 29, 255 Wilmslow Rd, Manchester M14 5LW.
ivef@nematode.freeseve.co.uk

Save the Road! (& footpaths)

Back in December, several local residents turned up to the Magistrate's Court to formally object to the permanent closure of 3 footpaths, a slip road & the access ramp to Dunsop Walk pedestrian footbridge on Birley Fields, in Hulme. The Moss Side & Hulme Dictatorship, Manchester Science Park, the City Council and the Commonwealth Games Organisers want the Birley Fields site turned into 1388 car parking spaces, a science park, 2 call centres and a massive hotel. They have already had a Asda killer-market petrol station built on part of it.

Steve Redfurn & Brian Kerrid in the corridor, tried to persuade people not to go into court & object, after already doing the rounds at 'Homes for Change' & the 'Hulme Alliance' buying people off. The clerk of the court got pissed off when this was reported & told objectors that the matter should go to a contested hearing. The date of battle was set for June 2000.

Ouch! Rumour had it that the funding money needed to be started being spent by the start of the Millennium. To get around the court-imposed delay, the Council slapped a temporary closure order on the footbridge approach & started digging things up. The 'Partnership' also went back to court to get the date moved forward to mid-February.

At the pre-trial Review hearing in January, we pointed out that the big boys with big toys had smashed up part of the footbridge approach & also closed an overgrown footpath, turning it into mud with their toys.

The show rolled into court again in mid-February, with a healthy entourage of notice pinner, council legal observers, a barrister & Steve 'I am raping the community' Redfurn. After 2 days of battle the courts ran out of time. We return to spill more blood on Thursday the 6th April at 9.45am for the final performance.

In the mean time we have turned our attention to lots of wider issues such as the illegal closure of 3 footpaths the other side of the bridge, where they are trying to build the Landrover garage and the attempted closure of the sub-way under the Mancurian way **before** a new bridge is built. Also questions are being asked as to what happened to the £200,000 for a pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Rockdove Avenue & why the bridge over the Mancurian way was £200,000 over budget.

Since the last issue of the Loombreaker, 4 footpaths have been re-opened & the sub-way closure has been sent to have a feasibility study done on it. The next date for your Magistrates Court diary is Thursday 30th March at 2pm for the 2nd instalment of the sub-way closure.

Read those crap white notices on the lampposts, turn up to court with friends from your community & throw a spanner in the works if you don't like what you hear!

At last! some letters.....

The article in the last *Loombreaker* about the the Socialist Workers Party has provoked quite a response, whilst we don't intend using up any more space on the issue, here are a couple of our readers' responses....

"Do the Socialist Workers Party really understand and know the meaning of DIRECT ACTION? Do they want to involve themselves in the DIRECT ACTION MOVEMENT and make a valid contribution?"

To both these questions I would answer no.

The SWP's existence and point of existence is to sell papers and build their `Party'. This is not direct action - which aims to further itself only by challenging a particular issue physically (as well as in literature) either peacefully or non peacefully. This does not make our politics inferior - rather, I would say superior, to that of the methods used by the leftist groups.[... ...]

As an active participant of Anti Fascist Action in both Manchester and Cardiff I have had to deal with the SWP on several occasions. Whilst dealing with the fash in Cardiff a leading "comrade" saw us. The following day we were told that next time the SWP would have no hesitation in both reporting us and identifying us to the police and if necessary to the fash as well. This is not an extreme example.

*So, SWP, Stop feeding off our movement, and making it dull and boring, sucking the life out of us. Leave us alone, I AM NOT YOUR F*****G COMRADE". - Anon*

"The article "Newsagents Provocateurs" makes several important points - that politics needs to be fun, celebratory, open, inspiring; that we don't want to replace one oppression by another - we don't need anyone controlling our lives; and that groups like the SWP who try to hijack campaigns to boost their own recruitment do more harm than good. No-one can liberate us except ourselves, through autonomous and democratic direct action groups who are prepared to seize the power back from the state and that participating in this can be the most tremendous buzz ever. I don't agree with your tarring all `communists' and `socialists' with the same stinking mess that some (OK many) of them have represented - (totalitarian, authoritarian, lifeless bores that they are), I think it's important not to do the bourgeois's job for them - according to them `anarchists' and `environmentalists' are scruffy, smelly terrorists who want to blow up the Queen or some similar nonsense.

Rather than excluding people these autonomous direct action groups should be as welcoming as possible to anyone who isn't trying to take it over - we have to be democratic, `cos no-one else will do it for us. To me, `communism' means a society where people directly rule their own affairs in freely forming, freely dissolving communes, without a state apparatus, and where we decide to delegate responsibilities to others it is done on a temporary, immediately recallable and democratic basis. I don't believe in violence - certainly, not the violence of the oppressor and only the minimum necessary force to liberate ourselves `by any means necessary'. ,

- "J" of Coalition Against War and Sanctions on Iraq

and finally

"Excellent new newsletter. We love your headlines, you lot should get a job with SchNEWS/Sun.

- Cheers, SchNEWS crew"

Freepost Frenzy

This month has seen bags of junk-mail being returned whence they came. The Royal Navy's been putting their murdering rubbish in the free postcard slots at the cinema. Thankfully we've heard reports of people leaving these dark movie dens with bulging pockets, only to deposit the cards, a few at a time, in different letterboxes. Sometimes the Navy even gets sent a present too, say, a wrapped up half-brick. Brian Souter is big boss-man of Stagecoach, known for their aggressive attitudes to other bus companies, not to mention their own workers, as well as their smashing of financially precarious bus routes on which communities depend.

Now he's decided to pick on some more people who've done nothing to deserve his attention. He's supported the Keep Clause 28 campaign (which fosters homophobia) to the tune of half a mil. A Stagecoach doubledecker in London was recently stopped ("in the name of love", as the banner said) and painted pink in protest. In Manchester, people have so far stuck to sending them big bags of rubbish. Have fun:

The Royal Navy, Career Service, Freepost GL 672, Cirencester, Gloucester GL7 1BR

Keep the Clause, Freepost SCO 5219, Perth PH2 8BR

Resistance & Revolution

Make a date for the 1st of May, a traditional holiday for workers, the pagan celebration of Beltane and now an international date of protest for people opposing the unrelenting growth of capitalism around the globe. In Manchester, plans for Mayday are around the theme of a celebration of resistance. Find out about Manchester's radical past while reclaiming our future. This will be a positive show of our strength, solidarity, creativity and spirit.

If you want to get involved you are welcome to:

- 1) People and protest meeting, 20th March, Friends Meeting House, Mount Road (behind central library) at 7pm.
- 2) Riotous Assembly, 4th April, 7.30pm at the Yard Theatre, Old Birley St, Hulme to make banners and flags and other practical items for the day.
- 3) Teach-in on the afternoon of 8th April at the Friends Meeting House, with different talks and skills sharing opportunities.

If you need any more information about these events, ring 226 6814.

Future not so bright for Orange

When workmen arrived at midnight to erect a mobile phone mast in Burnage, furious residents hung on to the mast making it too heavy to lift. The local people are worried about risks of radiation from the mast, which will be yards from people's homes. Campaigners have given their phone numbers to neighbours so people can call them if

the contractors move in. Residents have vowed to keep a 24 hour vigil. Work has been put on hold, and Orange say they are reviewing the situation!

No Judges! No Police! Hacienda latest

The Hacienda 14 finally met the twisted might of the British Justice System recently. All were charged with minor public order offences such as disorderly behaviour or obstruction, but one defendant who also had 2 police assault charges levelled against him decided to fight his case seperately. The result of three days in court was scandalous, as despite his innocence, he was found guilty on all 4 counts and now faces a possible prison sentence. The prosecution was full of holes, with an inhumanely weasel-like barrister and police witnesses who farcically couldn't remember important details; added information to their statements that did not appear in their notebooks at the time and who, when asked if their statements were fabricated defensively shouted in court and become very red-faced. There was a great deal of video evidence highlighting the innocence of those involved, and the shocking brutality of the police that night but the magistrates obviously weren't bothered about justice. It's now hoped that the one defendant found guilty will win on appeal.

Liberty Hall

A few Manchester EF!ers recently went up to Liverpool to see the Merseyside `version' of the Riotous Assembly, do a Terrorism Bill talk & strengthen the North West EF! network. It was a special event, with extra effort put into wide publicity, a good venue, food & drink, stalls, talks & performances, & a gobby 100-strong audience. It had echoes of Club 68, a social & cultural politico get together which existed in Manchester many years ago. Get in touch with Manchester EF! (226 6814) if you're interested in a training weekend in Liverpool 15-16th April, doing more joint actions, or know radical but isolated individuals or eco-groups who might want a workshop or other kind of training and support.

and finally....

a papal contender writes: the antichrist is walking the earth, a vegetarian, supporting animal rights, the environment and pacifism, and probably indulging in the sexual revolution, and unparalleled vulgarity and shamelessness, that the Italian Cardinal is also worried about - you have been damned.

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