



The Loombreaker

No. 10 ★ April 2000 ★ Free



Spring is here
and the sweet
scent of
Revolution is
floating in the
air...

May 1st is a traditional day of celebration. It is the pagan festival of Beltane. It is also International Workers' Day in memory of the "Haymarket Martyrs", anarchists who were wrongfully executed in 1889 in Chicago. In May 1968 revolution erupted on the streets of Paris. This year the latest in a series of global days of action against capitalism (after J18 and N30) has been called for

MayDay

Manchester is joining in the fun.

Meet at 2pm in
Piccadilly gardens (by
the Queen Vic statue)
for an afternoon of
"revolutionary
mayhem", fun and
games...

Down with Empire. Up with Spring!

Inside:

Ex-Black Panther in Manchester, April Fools Parade, Animal Rights, Womens' strike, Announcing the next "big day" - S20!, U'wa action, Defend Council housing, More on Mobile masts, Earth Day, Internet snoops, CCTV pervs and more...

Did you know we always have a big row about what to put in this bit?

Animal Rights Stuff

Recently activists from Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds have closed down 3 NatWest branches in one week (for the day!) For anyone that doesn't know NatWest are being targeted because of their £24.5m loan to notorious vivisectioners Huntingdon Life Sciences.

In Manchester an activist climbed onto the roof of a building opposite the bank and played (very loudly) a tape of HLS workers beating up beagle pups. The police were unable or unwilling to do anything and within half an hour the bank had closed. It remained so for the rest of the day.

There has also been a demonstration against the Grand National (where 4 horses died this year) on 6th April.

The campaign against Newchurch Guinea Pig Breeders continues with regular demos and night vigils. See diary.

There have been very large demos/occupations in Leeds and Southport, the latter took place after the annual Waterloo Cup harecoursing bloodbath. Actions are taking place every Saturday to keep the pressure on NatWest. To get involved or for more info contact Manchester Animal Protection on 07931 586826.

Mobile Phones Drive Campaigners Up The Wall

Campaign for Planning Sanity have launched a campaign to encourage the public to lobby local councillors, and candidates in this year's local elections to ensure that the laws relating to Telecommunication Masts are changed to ensure that masts are not located in sensitive areas.

One of the most controversial aspects of present planning laws in that telecommunication masts can be erected without full planning permission, making it very difficult for local residents to oppose them being erected in sensitive locations such as near to schools. The Campaign for Planning Sanity is calling for everyone who is concerned about these health threatening masts to start lobbying.

No one has yet suggested that people might simply bypass the lobby procedure and chop down any masts that have been erected without consultation within their local community.

A briefing sheet is available by calling CIPS on 01942-513792

Hi! Fidelity...

Activists from Manchester Earth First! finally got their act together and took action in support of the U'wa tribe in Columbia, currently under threat from the plans of Occidental to extract vast amounts of oil from underneath their tribal homeland. On Friday 17th March eight people called round on the UK northern regional offices of Fidelity Investments - the world's largest mutual investment firm and a major shareholder in Occidental - with a few choice words to put forward about the situation. Staff at the office were caught completely by surprise as a suited up rent-a-mob wandered around the office, locked on to delicate computer equipment and randomly reorganised a few filing systems.

For some reason the office manager called the police who sped around en masse, arriving within five to ten minutes. Four police vans parked up outside Ship Canal House and 16 TAG officers jumped out onto King's Street in the center of Manchester's financial district, attracting a lot of attention from passers-by. Other activists held up a banner outside the building denouncing Fidelity, and handed out Rainforest Action Network leaflets, along with some home made Fidelity shares in grief, pain, suicide, war, U'wa land, rainforest and genocide. The protestors were finally ejected from the building after about an hour and a half, with one arrest (for hiding in a stationary cupboard and wedging a rubber stop under the door) and leaving behind a dismantled computer monitor and stand.

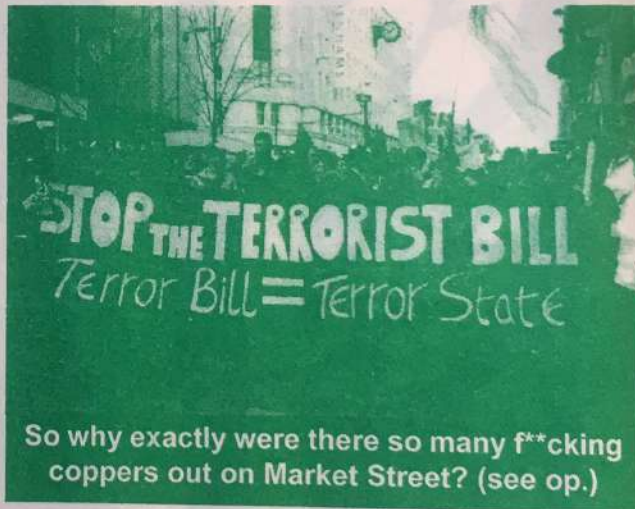
The latest news from Columbia is that a court ruling has forced a temporary halt to the drilling project, infuriating both Occidental executives and oily politicians who stand to gain a fortune should the project go ahead. The struggle is not over however, and Occidental are appealing against the decision. Currently some 2700 U'wa people, the local farmers, students and union members have rallied to support the U'wa, following a brutal attempt by the Columbian military to clear an occupation of the test drill site that lead to the death of three U'wa children. The protestors are obstructing Oxy's construction works on the Gibraltar 1 drill site in Northeast Columbia through peaceful protest, blockading the only route out to the Samore block test site. Fidelity have been subjected to a massive and co-ordinated direct action campaign, particularly in the States where U'wa leaders have now visited Fidelity executives and scores of offices have been occupied and picketed. US Vice-president and Occidental shareholder Al Gore is also being targeted on the presidential campaign trail as U'wa supporters put to the test his claim that he is the people's environmental champion. If you want to discuss the potential effect of adverse publicity on the value of your investments you can call Fidelity on (0161) 832 0446. See www.ran.org for more about the U'wa's, Occidental and Fidelity Investments, or contact 226 6814.

More Civil Liberties RIP

As if the Terrorism Bill, the Freedom of (Dis-)Information Bill and the newly enacted Asylum and Immigration Act were not enough, fresh evidence of the establishments' repressive frame of mind has come to light in the shape of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Bill. The Bill will basically provide the State with powers to covertly monitor and eavesdrop upon any form of electronic communication (fax, websites, email, phone etc), so formalising already existing practice, but also enabling the authorities to demand, on pain of severe penalty, passphrases and encryption codes that they are unable to decipher.

Once again the government is reversing the burden of proof for offences committed under the Bill (including forgetting your passphrase - guilty until proven innocent if charged, two year sentence) and so quietly suspending *habeus corpus*. For people who want to respond to the legislation, a group called Stand have set up a web gateway for you to fax your MP with your thoughts on the matter. For more details see www.stand.org.uk or contact stand@stand.org.uk

This month is the anniversary of the Poll Tax riot (and we're proud to say some of us STILL haven't paid!), the Strangeways uprising and the original Loombreakers... and it were all green fields round here ...



Security Pervert Alert!

As they say, the power of authority lies heavily in knowing and recording everything about you; name, address, date of birth, tax and insurance details, passport and national insurance numbers, fingerprints, DNA and so on. Not that this would have anything to do with the current proliferation of surveillance technology.

Have you ever noticed those large new cameras now mounted up on high in the city centre? Manchester City Council now boasts a new system of high-resolution colour CCTV, with 56 cameras planned in total to cover the whole of central Manchester. The system also appears to incorporate an automated

tracking system. According to Dave Walsh, a senior project manager "the picture quality... is exacting".

Our spies have seen the system at work in Bootle Street police station and inform us the cameras can zoom in to provide crystal-clear head shots from a distance of three hundred metres or more.

Serious criminals can be assured, however, that apart from the obvious use of protecting property, the system is mainly for tracking blaggers and discretely eyeing up young women, or is it that Manchester is now so free of crime that the operators have nothing better to do? Surely not.

DIARY

April 15th - Defend Council Housing Conference. Contact 203 5064 for more details.

April 15-16th - North West EFL training weekend. Liverpool: direct action, legal etc. Visit to Park Nook protest camp etc. 226 6814 for transport.

April 16-17th - Protest against IMF/World bank in Washington DC and Paris (see back page).

April 18th - Riotous Assembly Special about the big day in May. Yard Theatre, 41 Old Birley St., (opp. Junction Pub) Hulme.

April 22nd - Earth Day, a day of festivities in Hulme, music, pantomime, and other DIY entertainment, Royce Road and around.

April 22nd - World Day for Laboratory Animals demo at Huntingdon Life Sciences. Coach from Manc. £8, phone 07301 56626.

April 27th - former Black Panther, Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin speaks, doors 7pm (followed by DJs), Equalz, 174 Great Western Street, Moss Side (see article)

April 29th - Sheffield Mayday, actions through the day and a carnival.

April 29th National demo at Newchurch Guinea Pig Farm. Coach from Manc. Phone 07301 56626.

May 1st - Mayday! Revolutionary mayhem in Muz as part of an international Day of Celebration. Meet 2pm, Piccadilly Gardens. Contact 226 6814

May 4th - the only West Papuan to talk in Europe, & video on the oppression of the notorious Indonesian forces in his native country 7pm, Equalz (see 60205)

April Fools!

Shoppers and passers-by were taken by surprise on All Fools Day in Manchester when several hundred suspected terrorists disguised in police uniforms and riot gear attempted to intimidate and coerce a group of protesters into abandoning their demonstration.

Around 300 people gathered at Piccadilly Gardens on Saturday 1st of April for the April Fools Day parade to highlight the rapid transition through Parliament of the Terrorism Bill, which basically amounts to a blatant attempt by the government to silence organised protest and dissent. To help illustrate the point we were joined by a large police presence, including some very clichéd plain clothes officers complete with a car bootful of Indian takeaways...

All was going well as the parade progressed down Market Street, attracting much interest from passers-by who were leafleted along the way, until our friendly police escort forced us to re-direct our route away from Deansgate (and the Freemason's) and channelled us down Cross Street instead.

The tacitly agreed policy for the Parade seemed to be to exercise self-restraint in the face of any police provocation or intimidation, bearing in mind that the authorities are always looking for any kind of justification to use heavy handed tactics. The protest was aimed at publicising the Terrorism Bill in order to stop it, and it was felt by many that it was important not to play into their hands by kicking off conflict and allowing ourselves to be demonised by the media. However, this didn't mean that people were happy to go where and when we were told to.

The presence of a sound system, street performers and the celebration of a wedding made for a good party atmosphere, although the policy of self-restraint and lack of an alternative plan in the event of heavy police blockades resulted in a passive strategy as many people preferred to remain "spectators" rather than attempt to break through police lines when the opportunity presented itself.

Traffic was held up for a few hours, once on Cross Street, and then later on Oxford Road after a mad dash for freedom across Albert Square resulted in half the crowd re-gathering in St. Peter's Square. This ended in a stand-off on Oxford Road outside the Odeon cinema. The party continued as we were penned in by police who didn't seem to know what to do with us, so simply increased their numbers and divisions (fully loaded up riot police stood behind the police lines, mounted police, a dozen riot vans...) to try to intimidate us all into going home.

Eventually they decided to let us all go in dribs and drabs, obviously paranoid that we'd re-group elsewhere. So extreme was this paranoia that many of the activists from Hulme found a welcoming committee of around ten riot police waiting for them under the

Manorcan Way on the way home! All in all it was a successful action in that it managed to publicise the Anti-Terrorism Bill without too much non-glanced scorn from Joe Bloggs in the street. Thousands of leaflets were handed out and there was a lot of dialogue between the people on the march and members of the general public.

The heavy mob - sorry, law officers - were in many ways one of our greatest allies on the day(!). Their OTT presence and harassment of passing shoppers (including assaulting people attempting to photograph the police) perfectly illustrated to people what the Terrorism Bill is all about.

Three people were arrested, with no pretence of observing arrest procedure and all were bailed to re-appear without charge. One of these was indeed one time deputy leader of Manchester City Council, now active within Greater Manchester Socialist Alliances. Our friend states that he was jumped by 8 coppers and then "arrested" without warning. In his opinion the protestors were unjustifiably attacked on a peaceful protest, and he says he finds it quite ironic that the police adopted a policy of intimidation on a protest that was about protecting the right to protest.

At least one person is planning to sue the police as their arresting officer could later not be found. Other police antics included a brand new megaphone being stolen from one activist by a copper who had no ID tags.

As usual, the media coverage amounted to censorship and fabrication of events, as those news items about the action failed to mention the Terrorism Bill at all, and one even speculated that it had been organised by RTS.

Elsewhere opposition to the Terrorism Bill is gathering momentum. In Morpeth,



Special Branch hard at work 01/04/00

Northumberland, a band of dissenters - including an East Timorese refugee, anti-GM protestors, an NUM activist and Socrates - gathered in costume at the grave of suffragette Emily Wilding Davison. They then made their way to the statue of Joseph Cowen, the Nineteenth Century radical newspaper editor and supporter of revolutions, some 15 miles away in Newcastle.

In London a diverse group have taken out a half-page ad in the Guardian and the TerrorBill campaign is planning a press launch and statement. In Brighton campaigners organised a two week squatted social center to highlight and provide a focus for activity and resistance to the Bill, and a weekend national conference was recently held there to discuss strategic opposition to the Bill. In Worthing a public information room has been set up and public meetings are reported to be happening in Leicester. Upcoming events include the 'Class of 2000' photograph of dissenters in Highbury Park, London on April 30th (see <http://drink.to/dissent>) and Liverpool Earth First! have suggested a 'national hand yourself in to the police' day on the 29th (hmm...).

The Bill may have been ignored in the mainstream media, but not in the alternative radical press where it has received a lot of attention. The blagged website continues to be updated

Meanwhile the Home Office has got hot under the collar about a web site set up to highlight the Bill, threatening legal action over 'dishonest' statements about the legislation. If you want to know what the unscrupulous mischief makers have been saying you can look it up on www.new-labour.com. See also www.blagged.freemove.co.uk

Earth Day in Hulme

Imagine a world without government or national borders, where all have secure access to land, where property is strictly for personal use rather than private trade and money is not needed, where society is organised on a local base, with communities and workers in control, making decisions on a participatory and consensual basis, eradicating the conditions that create poverty, war and pollution.

Well, some of these ideas are being put into practice in Hulme, Manchester, where the local community is getting it together to put on a festival for Earth Day on the 22nd April. In the pipeline is a day of anarchy, in the real meaning of the word; music and bands, picnics in the park, pantomime, an election for the mayor of Hulme and general DIY entertainment, all laid on without any 'assistance' from the council, private sponsors or other dodgy outfits. All are welcome to get involved, so if you want to put on your own show, set up a stall or a coconut shy, then get yourself ready and make your way to Royce Road on the day. For more information contact 232 7058.

Classified Advert (geddit?)

For Sale

Laptop, unwanted "gift", slightly soiled. Complete with pre-installed "espionage" software worth £1000s.....

Manchester - A Nuclear Free City for Twenty Years

Well one thing we suppose could be said for the Council is that Manchester remains a nuclear free city. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of Manchester's 'nuclear free' policy. Manchester became the UK's first Nuclear Free City in 1980 and a display has been commissioned to commemorate the event. Images depict significant events from the past two decades including a huge protest in Albert Square (see if you can spot any of your friends there), transport of nuclear waste and the famous dome of the Windscale nuclear reactor at Sellafield. The display is available for groups who would like to put it up. Contact: Clare Frisby - Nuclear Free Local Authorities 0161 234 3244

N30 Seattle; A16 DC; S20 Prague!

Some 20,000 representatives of global capital (world bankers, economists and financiers) are expected to come to Prague on 25-28th September to attend the 55th annual summit of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. This is the first meeting of the world economic elite to be held in Central and Eastern Europe.

The events in Seattle at the WTO meeting last November showed that a huge wave of global resistance is rising against the expanding power of global capital. The IMF/WB summit in Prague will be our next big opportunity to express our demands for global justice. A series of events will culminate in ten days of activities starting on 20th September such as non-violent demonstrations, info campaigns, a Festival of Art and Resistance and a counter-summit.

We will be demonstrating our solidarity with the global resistance movement and your moral and material support is needed. Financial contributions are particularly crucial.

More information:
<http://imf2000.webjump.com>
Email: Prague2000_cz@hotmail.com.

On the 16th April there will be demonstrations in Paris as part of the international 'Mobilisation for Global Justice'. The particular focus of this event is on Washington DC as we approach the run-up to the World Bank and IMF meetings in Washington on 16-17th April. If you would like to go Eurostar (0990 186 186) run frequent journeys from London and can usually offer a fare of between £69 and £89.

Ex-Black Panther in Manchester

Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin was a Black Panther activist in the States. He was targeted by the government's COINTELPRO counter-intelligence operation, in common with many black, indigenous and ecological activists. He fled to Cuba in 1969 following the FBI issuing a 'shoot to kill' order on him, by hijacking a plane, for which he later served 15 years inside. In prison, he stayed active, acting as a lawyer and unionist. Since his release, he's been a community activist, fighting against police brutality, and continuing to be an advocate of black consciousness and anarchism. He currently faces another prison sentence, after being beaten and arrested by police in a council meeting when he tried to speak up about police brutality. Come here him speak at Equalz, 174, Great Western Street, Moss Side. Doors open at 7pm, and after Lorenzo speaks, stay around for an evening of entertainment.

Strike While the Iron is Hot

We have a couple of reports of events laid on for International Women's Week, and the Women's Global Strike on 8th March. In Manchester events focussed largely around the Pankhurst Centre, with a networking day, a discussion of economic blockades (we assume that are faced by women) and a health and well-being day. On the 8th itself there was a day of having fun with computers and a women's film night. Friday night was show night, with poetry and a performance from the fabulous singer Helen Watson.

In Tameside sisters invited men and women alike to add their demands to a list of ways to make life better for women and "a continuous stream of people" stopped to do just that according to an event organiser. There was also champagne, refreshments and creche facilities.

No We Don't Want Any More Private Landlords...

There is to be the biggest turnout of tenants representatives and trade unionists for the Defend Council Housing conference on the 15th April in Manchester. We can then start to look at organising a joint campaign against the proposed sell offs. Can you make it? See diary dates for contact details. For detailed information on the issue see www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk

..IT'S THE EDITORIAL
- LISTEN TO THIS!



The Loombreakers were Lancashire weavers who, in 1826, smashed the machines that were destroying their livelihoods and communities.

The Loombreaker comes from the Free Information Network tradition, spreading news the mainstream media won't print.

Big Thanks to all who sent us articles, send us your stuff by the end of the month for inclusion in the next Loombreaker.

Pick it up FREE from: Frontline Books, 255 Wilmslow Road, Rusholme; One World Centre, Central Street, near Central Library; Mistys Café, Longsight District Centre, Stockport Road; Café Pop, Oldham Street, Piccadilly; Unicorn Grocery, 89 Albany Road, Chorlton; Pankhurst Centre, Nelson Street, near MRI; Withington Wholefoods, Wilmslow Road; Wesley Cafe, Royce Road, Hulme; University Precinct Centre, Oxford Road; Salford Uni Campus.

If you live outside Manchester, send us a stamp for each issue you want. Prisoners and local action camps get it free - just send us your address.

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Interested in taking action?

Come to the Riotous Assembly for direct action, campaigns, taking on the bosses, grassroots resistance, defending communities, earth, animals, and fun! It's a chance to meet & chat. Bring ideas & events each first Tuesday of the month, 7:30 pm. Yard Theatre (opposite Junction pub) 41, Old Birley Street, Hulme. Next date: 2.5.00