



The Loombreaker

No. 20 ♦ July 2001 ♦ Free

CALL THIS APATHY?

Non voters have day of fun & action as meaningless political circus rumbles on

A festive air in Manchester prevailed on election day, though police fought valiantly to contain outbreaks of grassroots politics. The theme of the day was not so much 'don't-vote' as it's irresponsible to just vote when faced with a problems that can't be dealt with by a corporate-driven parliament. People are already fighting this powerlessness in a world of different ways.

Starting the day was 'There's No Such Thing as a Free Lunch' proving us liars as free food was given away. The message was self-reliance, however, as plants were distributed - a practical way for people to disentangle themselves from supermarket agriculture. Diners were entertained by music & street theatre - which gave the police a scare when a white-clad group entered the square ("back up! back up!...cancel that sarge, it's street theatre").



To work off some of the food, merry pranksters headed off to banks, supermarkets, bookshops, train stations, coffee shops and fast food merchants, with further uncontrolled outbreaks of popular control over consumer society. In banks that fund dictators and arms deals blood was spilled in the cashiers' trays, stopping any transactions; cash machines got 'out of order' stickers slapped on them. In a supermarket GM food solemnly defrosted in trolleys sprouting banners and leaflets. Burma

leaflets got inserted into holiday guides, and train ticket counters got besieged by people with 90% for 90% cards claiming their discount (see previous Loombreakers for details of the 90% campaign). Nestle cafes were leafletted,

Starbucks had free vegan drinks and cakes on offer outside, and a rival free veggie burger stall called

NotDonalds did a roaring trade outside you-know-where.

Now obviously these threats to the very fabric of democracy had gone too far, and with a Critical Mass bike ride threatening to end car culture as we know it, the police had had enough; it was time to protect the democratic system - pen people in and crack their heads. After they went back on the route they'd promised cyclists, they decided it was a much better ruse to pull people off their bikes, threaten, arrest and then de-arrest after taking people's details, and contain any remaining cyclists for two tense hours.

Moving off at a funereal pace was - the State Funeral. Yes, the State is dead, democracy is dead (but we're alive). Less than half of the voting public turned out to vote on June 7th - maybe they were doing something more useful instead? To the beat of a drum and a New Orleans-style jazz band, the pall-bearers followed the four horses of the Eco-pocalypse and a 12 foot grim reaper, behind a "Call this Apathy?" banner, to the headquarters of the media machine conspiracy...well, the BBC building on Oxford Road. Here, the last will and testament of the state was read out, after which a mighteous samba wake was held, before revellers went to dine in a nearby park. Two arrests (one man for fake blood in bottles found after a Section 60 search, and one woman for indecent exposure), and not a line of press coverage (despite the journos having been fed with an exceedingly large spoon...). It was a good day.

www.x21.org/uninvited 0161-226 6814

Anti-election extra!

Someone had stuck anti-election posters in their window in North Manchester - included swear words - someone complained, a copper turned up and took the posters. So the aggrieved citizen sprayed 'don't vote' on front of their house. Another complaint brought another copper, for 'ruining the ambience of the area'.

At Oldham jobcentre there was anti-election leafletting on the Monday before the election. They moved to Oldham Labour Party office but found the windows already smashed and boarded up - so they hung a banner over the building. A copper warned against going into Glodwick to leaflet (see article on racism in Oldham). Another Labour office was occupied, despite harassment and violence from party officials. The police surrounded them and ten were arrested when they later left the building. They were held all day till the Labour Party offices had closed (9pm). One person is still charged; at first with criminal damage, later changed to assault.

In this month's Loombreaker

♦ No politicians please, we're British ♦ ♦ Oldham Intifada ♦ OK Cafe ♦
Asylum seekers ♦ Gorton Tub ♦ Global resistance

Barcelona, June 2001. Another day, another mobilisation against the international forces of darkness. This time it's the World Bank, only they're not here, having shat their collective pants and pulled out of their planned conference some weeks ago. Anti capitalists prepared to celebrate resistance and a guided tour of the stock exchange ('la Borsa'). Me & 3 other Manchester drummers were with Rhythms of Resistance (RoR), the pink & silver afro bloc drumming band that first appeared in Prague last year, and we were there to form a carnival bloc aiming to participate in the celebrations. However, as usual, not everything went quite to plan.

On 24th June a Unity march of 15-20,000 people, organised by trade unions, NGO's (non-governmental organisations) and anti-capitalists came to rest in Placa Catalunya. The RoR drums had gone walkabout so the band had to leave the demo to fetch them. As we were fishing them out of a bus we heard news that everything had gone totally mental — the police had started attacking the crowd and forced everyone down the famous boulevard La Rambla, which at the time was heaving with tourists who were not spared by the rampaging mob of filth. Neither were mainstream journalists, who were so incensed about being attacked themselves that they decided to grass up the police for using agent provocateurs.

GOTHENBURG, MORE THAN JUST A RIOT

The mainstream press came out with its usual bias and lies about Gothenburg EU Summit. Despite police firing live ammunition, seriously injuring a teenager, the media persisted in telling the world that it was the protesters who were violent. Despite there being some 50 or so different protests in the city over three days, BBC news show a few seconds worth of rioting and someone with a mask throwing a stone at a poor defenceless

McDonalds... The fact that police shot at kids trying to enjoy a street party was conveniently and swiftly swept under the carpet. *But there was far more to GBG2001 as it was called, than riots. We were united in our fight for a different Europe.* There was anger about GATS and privatisation, racism and George W Bush coming to the summit to sell his Son of Star Wars scheme to Europe. And outrage about the fact the EU was welcoming the "Toxic Texan" with open arms. In the days before the protests a whole series

This had been blatant as masked up 'black bloc anarchists' were videoed piling out of a police van and heading into the crowd, and others were seen smashing windows whilst still wearing their ear pieces. So the next day the media headlines covered the police instigating fights and property damage and using them as a pretext for dispersing the crowd.

The action planned for the 25th had to be replaced with a demo against police repression. RoR mobilised some 400-500 people on to the streets and along two blocks followed by riot cop scumbags before ducking down into the Metro. It was an incredible moment as we all collectively bunked the train to the rhythms and sounds of drums, dance and cheering that bounced around the station walls. The smile on the face of the driver of the train as he pulled into the station said it all. Eventually we arrived at a police station where 19 people were being held following the Unity march, and the party continued there all night.

The following day RoR led a carnival procession from the University to the stock

of meetings and seminars took place. The Forum was set up in the city centre with about 10 marquees providing food, entertainment, information, access to independent media and space for meetings. It was a huge convergence centre with a festival feel to it. No-one thought Gothenburg would be such a huge show of resistance to capitalism, but each day more and more people took to the streets to demand a different Europe. From 25000 people on Thursday to 40000 on Saturday everyone who protested in Gothenburg showed that we are not going to give up.

exchange, followed by el Tutti Blanca ('the white overalls'). Riot police were again out in force, facing about 1500 protestors. After stopping outside la Borsa we moved on, keeping the street party atmosphere going, pausing to dive into a fountain and eventually stopping at the magistrates court to wait for the release of the arrestees before winding down.

From Spain to Italy...we will fight them on the beaches!

Well not quite the beaches, but resistance to the powers that be is certainly going all Mediterranean this summer, with the next big protest due to happen in Genoa in Italy 21st - 23rd July. This time it's the G8 summit, where the heads of state of the most powerful eight countries in the world meet to carve up our future. The G8 summit was target of the first ever global street party in Birmingham in 1998, and was followed the next year by the hugely inspiring June 18th events in the City of London and in Cologne where the summit was held. And they are certainly gluttons for punishment, choosing to have their 2001 summit in Italy, the home of many a feisty anarchist plus the bastion of Ya Basta! the group famous for dressing like michelin men to break through police lines.

Loombreaker's foreign correspondents will be making sure the spirit of Manchester resistance is felt by the world's leaders so watch this space for reports back.

!!! OK Cafe Genoa Weekend Special !!!

Meanwhile, on the homefront, the Okasional Cafe will be open over the weekend for up to date information from Genoa, films, workshops and trainings on a wide range of topics. 1930's Vaudeville Cabaret is planned for Saturday evening entertainment too. Exact line ups and opening times are still to be arranged, but guaranteed inspiration or your money back. Call 226 6814 for info, or call by the OK Cafe on Charles St, off Oxford Rd.

"It sure ain't Starbucks"

Okasional Cafe update

After 2 months of hectic occupation, the 8th Okasional Cafe in Manchester has been closed for a few weeks. It's been a hotbed of activity: art, drama, music & political workshops, taco & open mic nights, bands, cabaret, cult & political film evenings, meetings and a visit from the NY Surveillance Camera Players, a Flash Gordon disco and various benefits for asylum seekers, the Nine Ladies protest camp and Australian forest campaigns.

It's also seen it's fair share of Wo/Men behaving badly, and as a result, the squatters decided to rest up. The leaseholders took us to court, but hadn't read their own paperwork as closely as we did, so it was chucked straight out. Their 2nd attempt at gaining possession in court was successful however, but there should be at least a few more weeks before any eviction takes place. Negotiations have begun to try and set a date in the future when the OK caff will leave the building. Meetings are still underway to decide how best to use the remaining time.

The cafe will re-open on 7th July for a 'Renaissance' laid-back party - 9pm - 6am - a benefit for direct action in Manchester. Also hoping to open over the Genoa weekend (see above). Call 226 6814 (regularly for updates) or pop in (on Charles St off Oxford Rd) and see what's happening for yourself - help out and make the next phase happen brighter and better than the first!

Mayday

Our on-the-hoof Mayday proved to be much fun, when without anything having been planned, a 'spontaneous' loose and large mass of people wandered round the town centre, instrument banging, distributing leaflets, and generally giving the police the run-around (hmm - how to follow protestors up escalators into a shopping centre, on horseback...). What prevented the police containing the dynamic crowd till late in the day was simply that, as no-one knew where they were going, the march was too spread out to surround!

Racism, police power and the anger of the oppressed.

Oldham and Burnley explode.

Since last Loombreaker, events in Oldham and Burnley have deteriorated. The everyday racism of many locals, combined with extreme-Right organising and provocation resulted in a worryingly high vote for the British National Party in both towns. Months of National Front 'rallies' in Oldham town centre, councillors consenting with their silence, fascist attacks (including arson and fire-bombing) and police inaction – in effect no-one listening to the Asian communities — led to an uprising in Glodwick, Oldham.

Oldham – do the right thing.

The week after the election the NF were allowed by the cops to leaflet a 100% white (Asian no-go) estate. There was then a racist attack on a school, where white residents and kids expelled from the school for racism came and attacked Asian kids there. When the police eventually turned up, they roughly treated and then arrested the targets of the attacks! (although ultimately arresting the attackers). The following Saturday, the NF turned up to the area adjacent to Glodwick, and attacked Asian homes. No protection from this was offered by the police or anyone else, and when young people came out to defend their homes they were of course arrested, instead of the fascists. The BNP leafletted (white) pubs, then come closing time tanked-up tossers shout racist taunts. Some some pubs act as fascist sanctuaries, that is why they were bricked in the uprising. The NF and Combat 18 kept returning and returning, and the police did nothing, so eventually the racists in uniform were given a taste of their own medicine while Asians rose up to protect their areas. Police attitudes were forced to change by this *intifada* and the next time the fash turned up they were heavy with them and polite to local residents. The fash were identified and prosecuted. The council only came out with platitudes, burying their heads in the sand, with a white-only delegation visiting the Home Office, and a

Belfast-style "peace line" (ie fence between white and Asian areas) going up.

Burnley. Mississipi burning

The BNP have been working away in Burnley for two years, worsening the already long-existing institutional racism and segregation. In Burnley there are whites even more racist and aggressive than in Oldham. When an Asian taxi-driver was attacked, the police again sat on their hands — the ambulance took half an hour to turn up, and rumours were flying of fascists coming from all over the country. People took matters into their own hands.

Meanwhile the NF and other scum are doing their usual tricks round the country, going into towns and stirring things up. They will be met by a mix of police bans and anti-fascist mobilisations, but remember that any measure taken against them by the State only makes the police more powerful – and everyone knows how racist cops and politicians are. People organising at the grassroots can defend themselves without the police. Take control of our own lives.

Now the work of anti-racists in Oldham is to prevent a fascist councillor getting elected next May. Leaflets are being distributed to the estates telling people the truth – remember, most white people did *not* vote for the BNP — and come the Autumn there will be a booklet outlining the real story of what's been going on, and a uniting celebratory event.

Contact Oldham United against Racism c/o Oldham Law Centre, Archway House, 3 Bridge Street, Oldham OL1 1ED

The next Riotous Assembly (see back page) will have an anti-racist theme – phone 226 6814 to check details.

Guinness - not going down so smooth

Members of Homes for Change Co-op in Hulme are less than thrilled with Guinness Trust, the co-op's development partners. After an overlong construction process where 25 new flats and workspaces have been built, the Trust might not now sell the building to the co-op. The co-op is planning a 3 phase negotiation / protest against Guinness, getting progressively more militant if Guinness do not make the decision in their favour. Contact Homes for Change (office), 41 Old Birley St, Hulme - www.homes4change.org

Better news

Is the thriving Hulme Garden Centre, just opposite Homes for Change, which had a very successful open day recently. Open times are Wed, Sat & Sun, 10am - 5pm

DIARY

July

- 2 anti-deportation campaign meeting, 7:30, Friends Meeting House, Mount Street; info 0161-740 8206
- 3 Riotous Assembly (see back page)
- 7 Unity anti-racist festival, 1-5, Chorlton Park
- 7 Northern Anarchist Network conference, 10:30-5:30, Salem Community Centre, Salem Street, Hebden Bridge; info 0161-724 1923
- 7 national march for the recognition of British Sign Language,
- 7 'Renaissance' - benefit night for direct action in Manchester -laid-back party at the OK Cafe (see inside for details)
- 7-8 Earth First! summer gathering working weekend, 0161-226 6814 for transport
- 14 GM-free Wales rally, Flintshire, 0161-226 6814 for transport/details
- 14 Drop the Debt rally, 2-3, St. Ann's Square, 0161-832 5253/273 3647 for what placards & costumes to bring
- 14- Edinburgh Foot & Mouth - 1st leg of a 2 weekend resistance celebration. Street party. Contact 226 6814 for info
- 14-21 climate change week of actions, any info will be on 226 6814
- 16 '90% for 90%' national day of action, 0161-226 6814 for Manchester plans
- 19-22 resist Campsfield refugee Detention Centre, see under Asylum seekers article
- 21 - 23rd - G8 Summit protests in Genoa - OK Cafe info/films/trainings Genoa weekend Special (see inside)
- 21 Moss Side carnival
- 28 Hulme Park festival
- 28-29 Animal Rights GATHERING in Kent - phone 0845 458 0630 for info

AUGUST

- 1-5 Earth First! Summer Gathering, Peak District; 0161-226 6814 for transport/info, or www.eco-action.org/gathering
- 7 Riotous Assembly (see back page)
- 12 East Feast community festival, Phillips Park
- 16-19 Welsh Green Gathering, tbc as police block it; updates from 01267-267500, wgg2001@ukonline.co.uk
- 23-27 Green Up North: climate change focus, Yorkshire; info 0113-224 9885, GreenUpNorth@purpleturtle.com

Regulars:

Last Wednesday of the month: Libertarian Socialist Discussion Group, The Vine Pub, Kennedy St. 8pm. Ring (0161) 707 9652. MAP meets 1st Wednesday of month at the Friends Meeting house, Mount St, city centre 7.30 pm. Contact (07951) 228981.

For latest & more dates, visit the Networking Newsletter website at dialspace.dial.pipex.com/town/terrace/gdn22/NNP/

Aruga! Bingley Relief Road

The struggle continues against the new government's intensified road construction programme.

Bingley is just across the pennines in Yorkshire, and the proposed new road has been the subject of long protests (over 30 years), including a protest camp. The contract to build the Bingley 'Relief' Road was let to AMEC on 22/3/01. Construction work was scheduled to start on Monday 2 July. BETA (Bingley Environmental Transport Association) organised a protest march on 1st July, and asks for continued support

For more information email:
a.j.plumbe@bradford.ac.uk

ASYLUM SEEKERS Welcome here!

Manchester celebrated national Refugee Week with a Refugee Cultural Festival, and other educational events around Greater Manchester. Again, the festival was a vibrant, diverse and positive celebration of the many refugee communities resident in Manchester. There were art exhibitions, films, music, poetry, dancing and other performances, and a meal from around the world. *"From the inventor of the contraceptive pill and the designer of the Mini, to the founder of Marks & Spencer and the first governor of the Bank of England, UK society has been and continues to be greatly enriched by the skills and talents of refugees."*

Manchester Refugee Support Network - 232 7420 or email manchester@defend-asylum.org Write to Manchester Committee to Defend Asylum Seekers c/o Immigration Aid Unit, 400 Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester M8 9LE:

Meanwhile, in other parts of the country, there have been protest camps and days of action outside refugee 'jails'. Reports in next month's Loombreaker. Also, July 19-22 - resist G8 & Campfield Detention Centre, protest camp & actions. Details from the WOMBLES on 07900-653990, or g8campfield@hotmail.com

Pool protesters fight council sharks

The campaign to save the popular Neptune's Kingdom swimming pool, known locally as Gorton Tub, has so far managed to prevent Manchester City Council closing the pool. It is the only pool in Manchester with beach access ideal for those with mobility problems.

Campaigners held a "Hug The Tub" protest on 19th June. 50 people linked hands round the tub and released balloons. It was reported in a half-page article in the Manchester Evening News

On Thursday 21st June there was a lobby of the council 'scrutiny meeting.' The protesters' presence meant that whole meeting was taken up with the tub, and several campaigners got to speak. The committee decided that it needed more information, and again delayed closure until its questions are answered.

Campaigners say the council are the sharks threatening their pool, but warn that they have a shark of their own...

For background info about the pool and campaign, see the campaign web site at: www.savegortontub.freereserve.co.uk Tub address and details available at: www.manchester.gov.uk/leisure/lmap/gortonno/iignorth.htm

Contact details:
info@savegortontub.freereserve.co.uk; Ian Allinson 0161 231 5827; Lynda Shentall 0161 223 9814;

NEWS FLASH NEWS FLASH
Miles Platting pool also under threat - letters to your local councillors please

Riotous Assembly goes all summer-y

August's event on the 7th, will be a fun packed social event - a time to get together with all those like minded people in Manchester, have a drink and a chat. The night will kick off with a film or music on the theme of racism in Britain today, with an eye to sparking informal discussion around how best to tackle the problems in Oldham, Burnley and other northern towns. See right for venue, but be warned - this is no meeting, this is about the revolutionary idea of pleasure!

..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. It is ©nticopyright.

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- Bridge 5 Mill, Beswick St., Ancoats;
- Mistys Café, Longsight District Centre, Stockport Road;
- Café Pop, Oldham Street, Piccadilly;
- Unicorn Grocery, 89 Albany Road, Chorlton;
- 8th Day Cafe, Oxford Road & Old Birley Street;
- Withington Wholefoods, Wilmslow Road;

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. Please send your contributions, comments, campaign info, cartoons & photos or donations (cheques payable to Mcr EFI) to:

The Loombreaker
c/o Manchester EF!

Department 29,
22a, Beswick Street, Manchester M4 7HS
0161-226 6814

loombreaker@nematode.freereserve.co.uk

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: 07/08/01

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