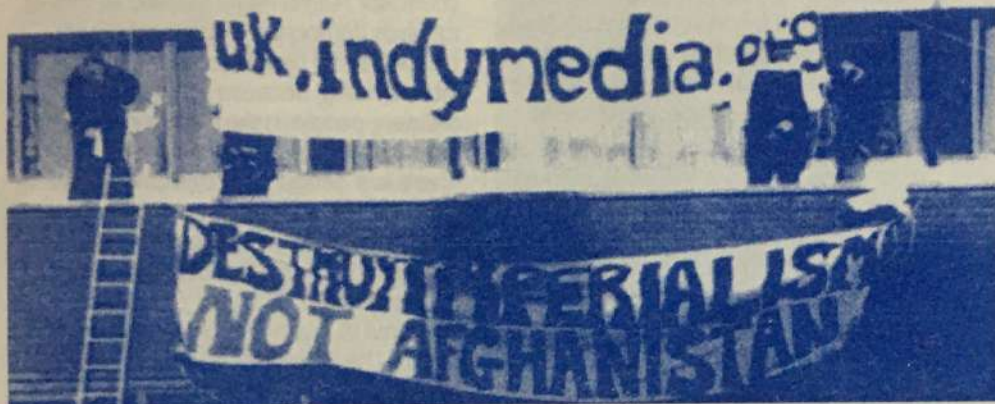




The Loombreaker

No. 23 ♦ October/November 2001 ♦ Free

NOT OUR WAR



Don't be sucked in by the media machine - tune into a different channel:

www.uk.indymedia.org/
www.fair.org/
www.schnews.org/
Direct Action in Manchester: 0161 226 6814

Friday 12th October: a group of people went to the BBC on Oxford Road in Manchester to protest about the medias manipulation of information surrounding the war and attacks on Afghanistan. Four people climbed onto the roof with the aid of a long ladder and hung... Security guards and police got onto the roof and struggled with protesters who, however, remained on the roof re-tying and holding the banners. 800 leaflets were distributed whilst a Samba La Clave band played. There was a positive response from passers by, many gathering around outside, and passing vehicles. After the police arrived one person got down and away without being grabbed, the other three had details taken down but no-one was arrested.

Rallies for Peace

Two consecutive Saturdays (22nd & 29th of September) saw public rallies against the war. Around 250 people stood around in the Peace Gardens, where various organisations spoke. The first rally ended a spontaneous march round the back of Marks and Sparks, where the local skaters joined in with chants of "Boards not Bombs" & "Mosh against the War!"

Drums not Guns

Choose your weapons: music or missiles? Before the cruise missiles were launched against Afghanistan, local activist afro bloc drumming group Samba LaClave took to Market St in Manchester to beat out a message of resistance. A thousand leaflets outlining opposition to the 'war on terrorism' rapidly disappeared as crowds gathered round the percussive grooves and rhythms.

Contact: mancef@nematode.freeseerve.co.uk or 226 6814
pnlibi@natural.freeseerve.co.uk
For info on afro bloc see: www.rhythmsofresistance.co.uk

Students against war

Students from all the three Manchester universities have set up a group imaginatively titled students against war (SAW!) So far SAW! Has been involved in local peace rallies and vigils, designed 1968-style anti-war posters and organised a teach in at Manchester union. Despite the best efforts of the union bureaucracy to fuck things up, 300 people attended. Ideas for moving forward included direct action at Menwith Hill (US spy base) and Manchester airport (which can be run under martial law by the USA should they declare a state of emergency) People also wanted to maintain a visible presence on campus by having anti-war stalls, producing a newsletter highlighting issues ignored by the mainstream media and putting on a fund-raising gig.

To get involved contact SAW! at stopworldwar3@hotmail.com or call 07816 420 391

UPCOMING ANTI-WAR ACTIVITIES

Saturday 3rd November- Regional anti-war rally in Manchester.
Saturday 18th November - national anti war demo in London, details for both from CND - 0161 273 8283

Other actions and demos likely to happen. Call 226 6814 for details

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Send your e-mail address to loombreaker@nematode.freeseerve.co.uk to get Loombreaker by e-mail before the printed version comes out!

In this month's **Loombreaker**

Defending Communities ♦ Direct Action ♦ Grassroots Resistance ♦
Earth, life and fun ♦ The news you won't find in the papers...

Short Cuts to the Manchester Underground

Short Cuts Workshops

The recently formed 'Shortcuts' society encourages students from the University of Manchester, Manchester Metropolitan and UMIST to become involved in wider campaigns. It got off to a great start when it organised a day of free workshops at the Contact Theatre (Sat 29th Sep). There was a surprisingly high turn out for the workshops which included talks on non-violent direct action, permaculture, subvertising (subversion of corporate messages in advertising) as well as active political street theatre and meditation workshops. From the workshops autonomous working groups were formed within the Shortcuts network, including a collective interested in opening a squat café, a political street theatre group and a prop/costume making group. There are also plans for trips to places of environmental interest as well as plans to go around the country to national protests. If you would like to get involved or just get more information email shortcutz@yaho.co.uk

Take some Treesponsibility!

5th, 6th and 7th of October saw the Treesponsibility Gathering at Height Gate Farm, over Hebden Bridge. This local group raise awareness of Carbon emissions, and help reduce climate change by organising tree plantings. To find out more, subscribe to the newsletter or to join in Treesponsibility's efforts, contact Penny on (01422) 844710.

Shortcuts visits Shell

On Tuesday the 9th of October, we dropped in on the Shell careers conference, to give them the message: 'Get the Shell out of Nigeria'. Given the floor for five minutes, one of the activists gave an impassioned speech pleading with the students attending to wake up, and consider the alternatives. The Shell presentation was pretty hilarious (or tragic, depending on your point of view). They seem very keen to Greenwash their image; but in their words 'We're a company, and we have to make profit first'. A company with more power than most of the countries in the world must adopt a more responsible attitude than 'profit first, then people'. The environment is being severely harmed and people severely exploited. How much money do they need to take off us before they do something about these issues? Setting off a fire alarm provided a welcome relief from corporate brainwashing, and gave activists a chance to tell the people there that a wind energy company were also recruiting in Brighton.

Quote of the evening: 'And as for Kyoto, well....Bush doesn't work for Shell'

Yeah right..

In the next couple of months there will be careers presentations from, among others, BP, Nestle and the Army. To get involved email shortcutz@yaho.co.uk. People and Planet are also doing stuff at the careers presentations and have weekly meetings at Manchester Uni

Local Strategic partnerships -- a poisoned chalice for the voluntary sector

A 'Voluntary Sector Compact for Manchester' was launched in Cross St Chapel on Thursday 11th Oct. A community network would be a great help for voluntary groups...the council seems not to have given up its instinct towards control. The groups that attended were praised for being democratic and empowering, but during the later discussions over details councillor Martin Pagel blocked all moves towards democracy -- saying that you couldn't allow people to have an input into planning, because sometimes ordinary people make the wrong decisions -- like voting for hanging! There is a danger that this Compact is part of a wider strategy by government and business to give legitimacy to a process that includes 'Local Strategic Partnerships' (LSPs) and 'Best Value', and aims to involve voluntary groups in them. The government are planning to offload public services onto private companies, and to use voluntary and 'community groups as a figleaf. But we need to retain our independence -- if the community is to take over public services, then we want to do it on our terms, not those of the McLabour government and their multinational corporate buddies.

(Offensive, Patriarchal) Chocs Away!

Four women from Manchester were stunned one day when they saw that 'Thorntons,' the chocolate shop, claimed in their window displays that "1975 - women get equality" and "2001 - women finally got what they wanted - 5 new Belgium chocolates."

Outraged by this offensive propoganda, they visited two 'Thorntons' shops in central Manchester to show them what they thought and what they wanted! A letter was written to the manager; the window displays were graffitied; the shop windows had posters glued to them. Women are still discriminated against in jobs and pay, are still the subjects of domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment. 'For these reasons and lots of other

reasons we want FREEDOM, JUSTICE and EQUALITY and most of all we want to SMASH PATRIARCHY....here's to a REVOLUTION!' They got away from both shops before the police were called. A spray glue was used -- very quick drying and strong! Visit your local Thorntons and show them what you think.

"Injustice is a film about resistance." Tariq Mehmood, film director.

It's the film the Police Federation can't stop. For a second time Migrant Media have screened *Injustice* in Manchester, this time at the West Indian Cultural Centre in Longsight. 1969 was the last time any prosecution was brought against any police officer responsible for a death in custody -- since then there have been over a thousand. This film documents their families' search for justice. Film showings around the country have been cancelled after threats from the police, but after the showing this July in the OK Café (see Loombreaker No. 21), The West Indian Cultural Centre organised a second showing of this powerful and important film.

For more information see: www.injustice.co.uk
Contact Migrant Media at: (020) 7254 9701, fax: (020) 7241 2387
Email: info@injusticefilm.co.uk

TRIDENT TRASHERS WALK FREE

A Manchester jury once again could not reach a verdict on the charge against Rosie and Rachel of criminal damage to a Trident nuclear submarine. This being the second time a jury has failed to convict the two disarmers, the crown prosecutor confirmed they would not try to put them on trial again.

On 1st February 1999 Rachel and Rosie swam to and boarded the Trident nuclear weapon submarine HMS Vengeance, then docked at Barrow-in-Furness. They draped banners, painted slogans and damaged testing equipment on the conning tower. Their first trial was aborted when the prosecution failed to come up with reasonable estimates of the damage done. The second trial last year ended with acquittal for the women on the minor charge related to painting slogans and the jury was hung on the more serious criminal damage charge. It was admitted by a Crown witness at the trial that their action had delayed HMS Vengeance for a month. Their defence was that they had acted out of necessity due to the threat posed by the Trident nuclear weapon system.

Rachel said: "I feel great - this is an excellent outcome. It's good to know that at least three people - probably more - knew we were justified in our action and held out for that."

It is heartening to know that two people can have such a massive impact on Britain's nuclear weapons system, and then walk free, because Manchester people when presented with evidence about the destructive power of Trident, feel they were justified in their actions.

As the trial ended Trident Ploughshares supporters learned that the campaign had been awarded the 2001 Right Livelihood Award (also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize), to be handed over in the Swedish parliament in December. The Award honours the campaign as "a model of principled, transparent and non-violent direct action dedicated to rid the world of nuclear weapons. Their imaginative campaign highlights the illegality of these weapons."

Contact Trident Ploughshares: 0845 4588366 or e-mail tp2000@gn.apc.org
www.tridentploughshares.org/

Star Wars - Starts Wars

The next Riotous Assembly (for details see back page) will feature a video about Star Wars, Bush's new Missile Defence System which is pushing the world back into a new nuclear arms race, but this time it will be in space. Find out more, Nov 6th, 7.30pm usual location. Followed by all the usual networking and upcoming events. Contact 226 6814 for more details

When is a bypass not a bypass?

When it's a 'small road, of course! Nationwide, the government are going ahead with a new slew of road building programmes but, because we've got a *Labour* government, with an 'integrated transport policy' this road building programme will also include a few token gestures towards public transport - and never mention that word 'bypass' again. This, they hope, will forestall any of those nasty anti-road protests that scuppered the roads scheme of the last government. The 'South-East Manchester Multi-Modal Study', is one of 17 around the country announced in March 1999. Details for Manchester include bypasses round Alderley Edge, Poynton and Stockport, plus the widening of the A6 through Stockport. The A555 Manchester Airport Link Road is also included; in fact, access to the airport seems to be a bit of a priority, since one of the few public transport measures will be the extending of the Metro to the airport. This extension will, be built, of course, by a private company like Serco, the present Metro controller, who also runs the Commonwealth swimming pool and various military bases around the world...

In the government's own questionnaire more people wanted to solve congestion by cheaper bus and rail fares (29%) and by better public transport (28%) than wanted more roads (26%). But, since privatisation, the government has very little power to make public transport any better, as Stagecoach and friends pursue profits above all else. Railtrack has collapsed, but even now the government are looking to a group of banks to take it off their hands. Manchester Environmental Resource Centre initiative (MERCi) are writing a fuller report on the Manchester Multi-modal Study, contact Loukas or Gill on 0161 273 1736

The Loombreaker

DIARY

October

16th - Anti-MacDonalds Day. Info - contact Veggies - 0845 4589595

20th - Respect Festival in Oldham (see story)

Anarchist Bookfair (see story)

22nd - Blockade of Faslane - contact CND - 0161 273 8283

25th - World Development Movement Autumn Seminar - "WTO - GATS and TRIPS", Friends Meeting House, 7-9pm.

26th - Critical Mass cycle ride. Meet 8am Whitworth Art Gallery.

27th - CND Star Wars Day-School. 10-4pm, Manchester Town Hall, £4/2 concessions

29th - Health and Safety at Work 'Legal and Direct Action methods', Yard Theatre, 10am onwards.

November

3rd & 4th - Northern Anarchist Network meeting (see story).

6th - Riotous assembly (see below)

8th - World Development Movement Autumn Seminar - "World trade Organisation" - Loaded against the poor", Friends Meeting House, 7-9pm.

9th - WTO meeting in Qatar. For actions in Manchester contact 0161 226 6814

24th - Buy Nothing Day. Actions world-wide against consumerism.

30th - Critical Mass cycle ride (see above).

Anarchist Gathering in Bolton

The Northern Anarchist Network conference is being held in Bolton on the 3rd and 4th of November. The network (NAN) is an umbrella group of anarchists, and has been active around issues such as the Campaign Against the Job Seekers Allowance. They will be joined in conference by members of the Revolutionary Socialist Network. Items at the conference will include "Racism then and now", "Workers Control or Privatisation?" and gender issues. There will also be a Blues and Soul Disco on the night of the 3rd (Saturday). Anyone interested in going along, or looking for more info, can contact Harry on 01422 842 558.

WTO - you can run but you can't hide!

From November 9th -13th the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is holding its ministerial meeting in Qatar. It is unlikely to be a repeat of Seattle where 50 000 protesters managed to shut down the summit. Since we can't get out on the streets of Qatar to show our dissent to the WTO's "trade liberalisation" and plans to privatise EVERYTHING, local and regional actions have been planned instead.

Look out for action in Manchester, just because we can't get to the summit doesn't mean we have to forget about it - that's what the multinational corporations and war-mongering politicians who dominate the WTO want.

People's Global Action

A call for an international day of action against the WTO 9-13th November has been put out by Peoples' Global Action (PGA). Set up in 1998 this is a network of grassroots groups resisting 'free' trade, and includes the Zapatistas, Brazilian Landless Peasants' Movement and London Reclaimthe Streets. A local campaigner recently returned from PGA's third international conference in Cochabamba (Bolivia). Here are some of her impressions...

...The people there were organising around issues as diverse as privatisation of electricity in Soweto (one woman who went round connecting up the area as quickly as the authorities cut it off), rights to land in Indonesia (a woman who led a 100, 000 strong march when she was 7 months pregnant and who brought a whole field into the city outside the department of agriculture), street theatre in Bogota (a family who also put on street parties to prevent the building of a second runway), squatting land in Brazil (an ex-nun who occupies land all over Brazil and left the landless peasants' movement for being too hierarchical), Indymedia from all over the world, South African rights activists (one of whom broke stones with Nelson on Robben Island), Coca farmers from Bolivia, domestic workers union from Bolivia, indigenous groups from all over the world. It was a truly awe-inspiring selection of people and that's only a few of them...

For more information about upcoming actions against the WTO, and for more on PGA, contact Manchester Earth First! 0161 226 6814

Manchester Hunt Sabs Need You!

Delayed after the Foot and Mouth crisis, the new fox and hare hunting seasons will be starting soon. Hunt Saboteurs from Manchester and all over the North West will be attending hunts in Cheshire and Lancashire to prevent these hunts from killing. Hunt saboteurs take action where it

counts in the killing fields using non-violent direct action tactics to save the lives of hunted animals. From using hunting horns and voice calls to run off with the hounds at fox hunts, to standing in front of the shooting butts on the grouse moors, to wading through the rivers at mink hunts, protecting our wildlife from the "sportsmen" who get their kicks from killing. We'll be going out every Saturday and some weekdays from now until the Spring, anyone who'd be interested in coming with us and help prevent the slaughter of our wildlife would be most welcome. You can contact us at: North West Hunt Saboteurs Association, P.O. Box 239, Manchester, M14 7XB Telephone - Mobile 07960 038230 E-mail - info@nwhsa.org.uk Or see our website at www.nwhsa.org.uk which contains information on basic tactics and advice for new people.

Lack of Respect in Oldham

Once again the authorities have acted to stop an anti-racist event going ahead. The Anti-Racist festival in Oldham on Sat 20th Oct had to be cancelled due to action by the council and police. If you were cynical, you'd almost think that the government has no interest in fighting racism, wouldn't you...

Just another 'bogus asylum seeker...'

A is an asylum seeker from Algeria who is staying in Manchester. He speaks fluent French as a second language but his English is poor. The Home Office has refused his application for asylum so now he is making an appeal. According to A, the last person deported back to Algeria is now dead. Many of A's friends from Algeria are also dead, killed by cafe bombs and assassins working for the Algerian state. Before coming to the UK A had been involved in organising a demonstration which had been authorised by the state. In spite of this, the demonstration was attacked by the police, who opened fire with live rounds, killing 81 people. If A is returned to Algeria, he will probably be tortured and killed.

..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 is ©ntcopyright.

Pick it up FREE from:

- 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, offers of distribution help, or donations (cheques payable to Manchester EFI) to:

The Loombreaker

c/o Manchester EFI

Department 29,

22a, Beswick Street, Manchester M4 7HS

0161-226 6814

loombreaker@nematode.freemove.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: 06/11/01

There are plenty of others like A in Manchester, seeking refuge and living in fear for their lives. The Home Office does its best to make life as difficult as possible for them, imposing policies such as benefit vouchers, detention and forced dispersal. Legally, asylum seekers are not allowed to work. They are subject to scapegoating and stigmatising in the press, and often to racist attacks in the street. The only genuine support they receive is from grassroots organisations.

If you would like to get involved with helping people like A you can contact the National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC). The first Saturday of every month there is a meal and social for asylum seekers, 1 - 4 pm at Cross Street Chapel, Cross St., Central Manchester.

Contact: NCADC (0161) 740 8206