



The Loombreaker

www.loombreaker.org.uk

No. 33 ♦ December 2002 ♦ Free

CBI stormed

The attempt by Manchester City Council to attract all kinds of corporate criminals to locate in Manchester was sabotaged by peace, environmental and workers rights protests. Having persuaded the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) to hold its prestigious annual conference in Manchester, they must have been deeply pissed off to find it disrupted so severely by protests.

First off on the Sunday was the AMICUS union demanding equal pay for women. This was closely followed by a big anti-war demo, which saw banners draped across the entrance, and speakers with full PA system. But not content with gathering outside, the militant crowd decided to storm the entrance, rushing past shocked security guards and employees. The 40 or so people who managed to get inside before shutters came down were buzzing, and marched round and round the exhibition with banners and shouting slogans. A couple of others left the group and managed to set off a fire alarm (which never sounded), throw corporate literature in bins, and generally cause more havoc. The only disappointing thing was that more people in that main group didn't also use their initiative in this way. Meanwhile outside the crowd that remained outside were more revved up, shouting angrily at police who had batons out. Unfortunately the group inside agreed to leave the exhibition, and even more unfortunately, once they were out, the SWP led everyone off in a march round the building. Even worse, they effectively did the cops job for them by dispersing everyone shortly after the march. This was awful because the fat cats were having their welcome receptions and dinner only shortly after this. If the



group inside had refused to leave, and if the SWP hadn't marched everyone off, this dinner would have been seriously disrupted. Oh well.

On Monday, a smaller group of anti-war protesters had stalls alongside Friends of the Earth, and joined with the 150 or so firefighters who had gathered to 'welcome' Gordon Brown to Manchester. You could hardly hear yourself speak due to their noisy airhorns and whistles. It's a shame none of the speakers linked the dispute to the anti-war protests (fund the firefighters, not the war?), but many of the strikers expressed solidarity with us individually. After posing for a few media shots, they left.

Despite stepped up security, two environmental and anti-war activists got into the exhibition the following morning, spraying fake blood on the BP stall. BP are a prime target because of their involvement in the Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline (see last loombreaker) and their blatant war-mongering. Lord Browne, Chief Exec of BP is vying to have a cut in the carve-up of Iraqi oil reserves even before a war has started. "We have let it be known that the thing we would like to make sure, if Iraq changes regime, is that there should be a level playing field for the selection of oil companies to go in there if they're needed to do the work there".

Browne said BP should be allowed to operate in a post-Saddam Iraq because it was responsible for discovering much of the country's oil reserves before being thrown out in the 1970's. Impending war with Iraq has given a financial boost to BP and other oil companies by driving up the price of oil. The CBI were hopping mad by the time this action happened and it warranted a special mention by Digby Jones, Director General, saying how the CBI would cooperate fully to bring these two criminals to justice. (See 'Trouble in the Pipeline' inside)

We wonder why the biggest criminals, the corporate criminals like BP go unpunished. The two activists were arrested and charged with £6105 criminal damage. They will appear in court on 20 December. For more info on supporting the BP two contact 0161 226 6814. See 'Trouble in the Pipeline', inside, for more news of this growing campaign.

The Loombreaker is Manchester's monthly direct action round-up. Inside this issue:
Embrace the Base ♦ Baku Pipeline ♦ Defy ID ♦ Raids ♦ More raids ♦ Armed Badgers

The government wants to introduce a national identity card. They are planning to introduce it on the sly as an "entitlement card". The "entitlement" card will contain a photo and some kind of biometric information (fingerprint or iris scan) which will allow the verification of your identity.

Defy-ID

Everyone above the age of 16 will be registered and issued with their own "entitlement" card which allows them access to social security, health, education and other services. You won't be required to use a card unless you wish to work, use the banking or health system, vote, buy a house, or receive benefits. The card is planned to be combined with the existing photocard driving licenses and the forthcoming passport card. So you will also need your "entitlement" card to drive a vehicle or travel abroad. They say that you won't have to always carry the card. But once it's in place, you can bet this will change. This is the first government legislation since the Poll Tax which will affect everyone. It will require everyone to register, and which will initially have the most impact on marginal groups - those who need benefits, who are ill, who work on the sly, who are criminalised, who are seeking asylum, who are activists etc.

Defy-ID is an adhoc network of groups and individuals prepared to actively resist the introduction of a national identity card scheme in the United Kingdom as part of resistance to a Big Brother state. Tactics of resistance are likely to include non-cooperation, sabotage, and the creation of support networks for cardless people.



AM I UNDER
SURVEILLANCE?

For more information about ID cards
and the resistance to them

Visit: <http://www.defy-id.org.uk>
Contact: admin@defy-id.org.uk

A-SPIRE Raid

The Leeds a-spire collective reached new heights with their last fine residence. A large victorian mansion was transformed by an upferit bunch into a cafe/bar/skate park/home/temporary autonomous centre! Nearly as popular as the food and skateboarding were well-attended workshops that included women's self-defence, horticulture, theatre skills, puppet making, and talks and films on environmental and human rights issues. All of this run by a non-hierarchical collective of volunteers from the local community and all paid for purely from donations. The social centre was very popular with hundreds of people taking part in the various activities on a daily basis - thus confirming the need for this form of self organised "free space" and drawing attention to the amount of empty unused property that could be put to much better use.

Despite a court order to move, agreement was reached to stay in the squat till Tuesday 27th Nov. However the police had other ideas. Or rather no ideas. The party was a culmination of several weeks of hard work by all concerned and featured a degree of

organisation and concern for the comfort and safety of those attending that would put most city centre nightclubs to shame. It was going well, with no complaints about noise or disturbance. Trance, dance, tea and chillout rooms, loads of people and the main system had just got going... when an unhappy police officer stumbled by. Failing to persuade a party of 400 people to suddenly go home and failing to convince our polite door staff that he was even on the guest list he decided to override the door policy and call out 50 or so TSG cops.

Lashing out indiscriminately with pepper spray, CS gas and truncheons they smashed their way into the building. 300 gurning ravers couldn't visualise how to resist and the party was over! The police were ridiculously heavy handed and nicked a dozen people for complaining. They face charges of violent disorder and affray, although anyone who was there knows who the brainless thugs were that night. We cleared out all our stuff, the sound systems were allowed to go, and the cops went back to the station to take more coke! By the next afternoon we were back in possession and having a meeting to decide what to do next.
For more info www.a-spire.org.uk

Women Speak Out

As trailed in previous Loombreakers, from the 22nd to 24th of November, Bridge -5 Mill in Ancoats hosted 60-70 women taking part in Manchester's first ever 'Women Speak Out'. WSO events have occurred before in many cities, but until now, always south of Watford. The idea is for women to come together for discussions and workshops, to meet each other, cook and eat communally and generally enjoy a weekend of fun and feminism. People travelled from as far away as Devon and Edinburgh, with a strong contingent of WSO regulars as well as local women who'd seen the publicity placed strategically round the city. Among many others, there were workshops on Feminism and Islam, DJ skills, Herbalism, Subvertising, Tae-Kwondo, ID cards and the Police State, and introductions to political issues such as the Baku-Ceyan oil pipeline, Palestine, the war in Chechnya, Animal Rights and the UK genetics campaign. We were entertained by inspiring performances from two local women poets, while another gave a preview of her one-woman play,

which led into a workshop looking at issues of gender in performance. Several womens' book collectives and organisations brought stalls, there was a good attempt made at running a creche (lessons were learned for the future, however!), heaps of delicious vegan food, mattresses to sleep on and on the Saturday night the surrounding mills echoed to the sound of partying, fuelled by plenty of organic beer. A camera skills workshop means that after a follow-up session on editing, a short film of the weekend should be coming soon to Beyond TV, so that those of you who missed out will be rushing home to check www.bellow.org.uk and ensuring you make it to the next Women Speak Out, which will be in Bristol, in the Spring.

Two women are in court for taking action against the other US spy base in Yorkshire, US Fylingdales. They are currently being tried by jury for intent to cause criminal damage after being apprehended by MOD police in March this year as they reached the perimeter fence of the base. More info from www.tridentploughshares.org

Community Organising Web-ring

At the Anarchist Bookfair 2002, a number of anarchists expressed the need and desire to put our energy into community organising. A web site and discussion group was subsequently created. The website (<http://www.geocities.com/cadsz/>) has details on how to sign up to the discussion group for UK based anarchists, which concerns how best to organise within our communities and become active around community issues.

AYN Gathering

The Anarchist Youth Network is holding its network gathering on the weekend of the 6th to 8th of December in Manchester. The Anarchist Youth Network (AYN) is a nationwide network of young people fighting for youth issues such as an end to tagging for young offenders, the scrapping of section 28 and an end to tuition fees. However, we also see the bigger picture and fight against capitalism, authority and the control which the government and big corporations have over our everyday lives. If you're interested, you can get in touch with the AYN at info@anarchistyouth.net, or you can see our website at www.anarchistyouth.net.

MORE TROUBLE IN THE PIPELINE FOR BP

The Baku-Ceyhan (pronounced Ba-Ku Jay-Han) Pipeline Campaign is gaining momentum throughout the country. The 1,750km oil pipeline stretching from Azerbaijan through Georgia and ending in Turkey threatens to create a 4km wide militarized corridor of land, destabilizing the nearby regions, increasing human rights abuses, degrading the local environment and releasing millions of tons of climate change gases into the atmosphere every year. BP leads the consortium of companies backing the pipeline, eager to start exploiting the Caspian Sea's vast reserves of oil and gas. This pipeline has not yet been built, and relies on 'free public money' to start construction. If we can convince the financiers, including the World Bank (surprise, surprise), and the UK's Export Credit Guarantee Department, not to invest then we can stop this pipeline, stopping the sacrifice of another region of the world to the West's desire for yet more oil. A campaign in Manchester has already started to oppose this pipeline.

Actions around the country have targeted BP's recruitment events, challenging students thinking of applying to BP for jobs to see through the company's greenwash. Meanwhile in Tbilisi, the Georgian capital, November 27 saw a protest at the office of the Georgian International Oil Company (GIOC), one of BP's partners in the project. The GIOC spokesman said that given BP's high professionalism the risk would be 'zero minus one' - the same probability a seismologist gave the pipeline's chances of avoiding a major earthquake in its lifetime.

5 days later Manchester's Baku Two (see front page) appeared in court to find a £750 suit and £300 shirt added to the damages. At the same time, London Rising Tide was occupying the offices of BP's environmental (un)consultants, ERM, handing out of questionnaires to employees and hanging banners outside. (The spoof website they created is at www.erm-concerns.com). Over 6 hours later the occupiers left the chairman's office without arrest, having been filmed, searched and ID'd.

If you want to know more about the national Baku-Ceyhan Pipeline go to www.bakuceyhan.org.uk (it should be up very soon - if it isn't go to www.ilisu.org.uk for the latest news of the campaign. To find out about Manchester activities email mancef@nematode.freemove.co.uk or phone 0161 22 68 814.



Embrace the Base, Blockade the Base

Menwith Hill is the biggest US military spy base in the world and won an award for its work in intercepting communications and providing strategic information during the Gulf War. The base will play a critical role in any war against Iraq, as reported in the last Loombreaker. Now, with the US and Britain threatening another war against Iraq - and the use of nuclear weapons in such a war - two protests at Menwith Hill will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the women's blockade at Greenham Common, and encourage the contribution that women make to the peace movement. (See box opposite)

Embrace the Base is on Thursday 12 December, 1-4pm, followed by Blockade the Base on Friday 13.

What you can do: Encourage woman friends and family to attend. If possible, organise transport to the base. If you are a member of a women's group, a trade or student union, get it to support and publicise the action. For leaflets call Sophie on 07930 235791. Transport from Manchester is being organised by CND - contact 0161 273 8283.

December '02

- 7 Radical Book Fair, 1-5pm, Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street, Ancoats. info@radicalbookfair.org.uk
- 7 Direct Action/Civil Disobedience workshops, 6-9pm, Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street, Ancoats. Info: ludred@hotmail.com, raisinmayhem@yahoo.com
- 7 Free Palestine - End the Occupation, 12-5pm, St Peter's Chaplaincy, Oxford Road. Half-day seminar plus "After Jenin" documentary film. Info: psc.manchester@tesco.net
- 7 Love Music Hate Racism. £5. 7:30pm-2am, Contact Theatre. Fund raiser for the campaign to stop the BNP in the NorthWest. 26 DJs Info: Charlotte & Paul, Anti Nazi League (07866 065 062/07751 482 475, charlotte@lmhr1.fsnet.co.uk)
- 10 Palestinian Wind Quartet, hosted by Amnesty for International Human Rights Day. 7.30pm Cross Street. £6 (£4 concessions) on the door, or phone 0161 442 8649
- 10 International Day for Animal Rights Info: Uncaged (0114 253 0020, info@uncaged.co.uk)
- 11 Earth First! Meeting at The Vine pub, 7.30pm
- 12 Embrace the Base. Women's peace protest at Menwith Hill US spy base. Transport from Mcr. Info: Greater Manchester & District Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (0161 273 8283, gmdcnd@gn.apc.org)
- 13 Blockade the Base. As above.
- 14 National Anti-War Action at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire
- 16 Manchester Friends of the Earth ask santa for a train set for xmas, one that works. 8am Victoria station. Manchester FoE (0161 834 8221, office@manchesterfoe.org.uk)
- 17 Under the Pavement, 10-12pm, ALL FM 96.9, Manchester's radical & activist communities take to the air.
- 27 Boxing Day Anti-Hunt Demos, NW Hunt Sabs (07960 038 230, info@nwhsa.org.uk)

January '03

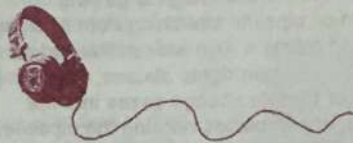
- 1 New Year's Day Anti-Hunt Demos, NW Hunt Sabs (07960 038 230, info@nwhsa.org.uk)

more comprehensive listings on the web www.loombreaker.org.uk

Above the Parapet

"Reade's Lane is not a top priority for a 20 mph limit and speed camera", said a spokesman for Cheshire County Council, but Mr and Mrs Oakes weren't buying it. After 17 road accidents outside their home in Dane-in-Shaw near Congleton, the retired couple made a wooden speed camera - complete with small glass lenses and a winking infra-red light - and stuck it in their garden, distributing home-made 20mph speed signs around the village.

"Everyone we spoke to was tired of the situation," said Mrs Oakes. "Our neighbours had tried to take action and had petitioned the local council, but nothing was done and I felt that we needed to do something to get the speeders to slow down." The national media picked up the story, somehow bemused at 67 year olds taking such action, even 67 year olds with cars crashing into their wall at 2am. Suddenly the Council was in the spotlight and blinking, claiming it had installed some chevrons. The Oakes' DIY speed limiters are sited on private property, not hanging into the road or obscuring vision, so are legal. "Normally we are not the kind of people to raise our heads above the parapet but this is something we felt we just had to do", said Mr Oakes.



Under the Pavement

...the beach! The slabs are pulled up again on Tuesday 17 December, 10pm-midnight on ALL FM 96.9. The explosive radio show goes out on Tuesday every four weeks, reporting on Manchester's radical and activist communities, including news, interviews, opinion, music, poetry and spoken word. <http://www.underthepavement.org> has playlists, news of future shows and webcasts and a guestbook to share your thoughts with.

Over the Top

At 8:45 on Thursday 28th November 2002 both houses which make up Cornerstone Housing Co-op in Leeds were raided by the police. The raid was in connection with an action against the 'New Tribes Mission' (in solidarity with the indigenous peoples of the South Pacific) in Grimsby, Lincolnshire on 11 October 2002. The raid was carried out to secure evidence, namely some computer hard disks that were reported stolen during the action.

The police arrested everyone who had slept in the houses that night or arrived during the raid for "conspiracy to burgle", and seized a wide variety of personal and communal effects. These included 15 computers used by lots of people and groups, and part of a printing press owned by Footprints Workers Co-op, which is based in the co-op. All arrestees were released without being charged and bailed to return to the police station on 6,7,8,9 January '03.

Cornerstone are grateful for the many offers of support they've recieved, and express solidarity with the other three places raided in the same fortnight on unrelated pretexts: A-SPIRE (see inside), the Sumac Centre in Nottingham, and a friend in Manchester. (The moral of these tales, respectively: don't let police get a foot in the door, don't give someone else's address when arrested without asking beforehand, and... don't take your house keys on actions.)

Armed Badgers Build Illegal Settlement:

"If Israel can, we can."

On Thursday 31st October at 3.00pm, 30 badgers armed with waterpistols stormed the Starbucks on Oxford St, Central London, claiming it as their ancestral home. Using the logic of Israeli settlers the badgers evicted some of the customers and erected the first badger settlement in London. With placards proclaiming "If it works in Palestine why not here" and "It's ours because we say so" the self-styled Badger Defence Force set up checkpoints to inspect shoppers and tourists for concealed weapons. "If they're not a badger, they could be a terrorist" a spokesbadger said. They handed out copies of the badger bible which proves their ownership of Starbucks and a fact sheet which answered Frequently Asked Questions about their activities. The badgers have selected the store for their settlement because of the role of its CEO as a major supporter of the Israeli state. The company has become a prime target of an international boycott of companies with ties to Israel. A spokesbadger said "Since the chief executive of this company clearly believes it is ok for one group of people to grab land belonging to another and say they have a right to it, we believe they won't mind if we take some of theirs..."

...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.

Pick it up FREE from:

- 8th Day Cafe, Oxford Road & Old Birley Street
- Bridge 5 Mill, Beswick St., Ancoats
- Café Pop, Oldham Street, Piccadilly
- Mistys Café, Longsight District Centre, Stockport Road
- Pankhurst Centre, Nelson Road
- Unicorn Grocery, 89 Albany Road, Chorlton
- Top Cafe, Afflecks Palace, Oldham St
- Vanilla, Sackville St
- 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.

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The Loombreaker

c/o Department 29,
22a, Beswick Street, Manchester M4 7HS
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Interested in taking action?
Look at the Loombreaker website or call 0161 226 6814 for details of upcoming events, actions and meetings.

