



April 1st: Blair's a Bloody Fool Day!



Blair's a murderous fool...

After the success of the day of civil disobedience against the war last October and the huge protests of recent weeks, Greater Manchester Stop the War Coalition have called April Fools day as another day of action against war.

There will be actions in the city throughout the day followed by a demonstration at 6pm from All Saints Park (Oxford Road)

In recent weeks resistance to the US and UK's illegal war on Iraq has stepped up all over the world. Manchester is no exception and over recent weeks there have been countless anti-war protests from candlelit vigils to simultaneous road blockades across the city to spontaneous marching and reclaiming of streets.

Week of action

So many different protests have been called by so many groups during the national week of action from March 17th that it seemed like as soon as one demo ended there was a blockade or something else to go to.

Tuesday 18th:

Princess Road in Hulme was blocked at 8am with a tripod

for one and a half hours, causing traffic tailbacks to the M56 until 10am. Six people were arrested, charged with obstruction of the highway and were bound-over to keep the peace. The magistrate wished them luck with future protests and the arrestees later vowed to keep the peace 'by whatever means necessary'.

Wednesday 19th:

Thousands of school children and college students went on strike and reclaimed the streets of Manchester city centre. Despite police attempts to control the protesters with horses and batons, the students broke through several police lines and blocked traffic for hours. One participant described the police as 'dumbfounded' by the

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The Loombreaker is Manchester's monthly direct action round-up. Inside this issue:

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energy and audacity of the youths. There were twelve arrests and numerous reports of police violence, including children being punched, kicked, battered and trampled by horses. Manchester City Council has expressed concern about the police behaviour and has ordered an inquiry into the events.

Thursday 20th:

Students and other concerned citizens again took to the streets from midday on the day war was officially declared. Workers in the city centre walked-out at lunchtime and protests continued all over the city throughout the afternoon until people assembled for the 5pm Rally:

One participant reports: 'The day war was declared I went cynically to Picadilly Gardens to a so-called rally, but, happily, speeches gave way to a roving crowd taking our passion through the streets of Manchester. We picked up people as we went, swelling to over 1000. Police tried in vain to stop and split the crowd but people just kept moving, taking detours, shouting and smiling with each other, splitting and reuniting. The police seemed to give up as we wended our way to Great Ancoats Street, blocking roads, drumming, paint bombing the windows of M&S, Starbucks and others, spray painting on billboards and road signs. It was spontaneous, strangely both solemn and joyful... we walked beyond dark then went home to listen to the news and paint a banner for the next morning's blockades.'

Manchester - Legal support, advice and call for witnesses

Manchester Legal Support Group is an established group set up by people to provide legal support for people involved in direct action.

If you were involved in last weeks protests and actions against the war, and were arrested or possibly assaulted by police, useful advice and information from people with experience of the process is available. We also have contact details for experienced legal firms who may be willing to take on your case. Also, if you witnessed any arrest or police misconduct, MLSG will compile all reports and statements, and make them available to persons as evidence for the defence in prosecutions, or lawsuits for abuse of legal rights. Call the contact number (yes, this number actually works), 07850 787182

Friday 21st:

Yet more blockades that stopped traffic all round Manchester. In Hulme, the Mancunian Way roundabout was briefly blocked by people locked to each other with arm tubes. Police violently dragged them from the road with no concern for their safety, injuring one woman's finger and arresting three. Stretford Road in Hulme was reclaimed for 2 hours by people locked to concrete barrels. Local residents danced to a samba band as lines of police looked on. In Longsight, Stockport Road was blockaded for an hour, while in Whalley Range local residents decided to have breakfast on the streets setting up a road block with sofas.

For the rest of the day, hundreds of people attempted to block streets throughout Manchester. The government made yet another good use of taxpayers' money by deploying hundreds of police drafted in from all over Greater Manchester and arresting at least 30 peaceful protesters.

Saturday 22nd: Marchers rallied in All Saint's Park while hundreds of other Mancunians went straight to the war makers at Menwith Hill US Spy Base in North Yorkshire.

Longsight Stop the War- 07952 062 842
Whalley Range- 07810 097 766

Manchester Uni - organising meeting
wednesdays 5.30pm in the student union
(all welcome)

Greater Manchester Stop the War
Coalition can pass on other local
contacts - 07760 224 580

www.manchesterstopthewar.org.uk

National round-up of anti-war resistance.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, we could fill several loombreakers with all the resistance from around the country. These are just a small selection of the various acts of resistance we have heard of. For a more comprehensive round-up see www.uk.indymedia.org

RAF Fylingdales, (N.Yorks)

- attempts to break in to the base, one person arrested cutting the fence.

USAF Menwith Hill (N.Yorks)

- 10th Jan Two people arrested trying to break in to the base.....1st Feb, Three other people cut the fence, paint anti-war messages and attempt to enter the base22nd March over 1000 people "foil the base" and attempt to pull down the fences.

USAF Faurford (Gloucestershire)

- Ongoing protests, peace camp, people pull down main gate followed by mass trespass, many other trespasses, over 30 military support vehicles for the b52 bombers trashed, landing lights smashed, runway blockaded, attempt to disarm the b52s.....

RAF Leuchars, Scotland

- Trident Ploughshares activist successfully disarms a tornado

Brize Norton - Oxford Peace Pledgers blockade the runway for several hours.

Greenpeace campaigners blockade Ark Royal sailing out to Gulf

Newcastle - anti-war protesters occupy labour party offices

Scotland - train drivers refuse to move military trains

Blackburn - persistent protesters regularly make noisy protests both inside and outside foreign minister Jack Straw's office .

Hulme - Bogus Terror Charges Dropped

The four Hulme 'terror suspects' who were recently arrested in a high profile raid in January have all been released. The 'suspects', who are all asylum seekers from Algeria, were arrested under the Terrorism Act but released without any charge. They were then re-arrested on forgery charges, accused of having false identity documents and were remanded in custody to appear before Bow Street Magistrates in London.

Loombreaker readers will know that life in Algeria is no great place to be (see Loombreaker 23). In 1991, with the backing of a number of democratic political parties, the national workers' union and a few other civil organizations, the military regime cancelled parliamentary elections that the FIS - Islamic Front for Salvation, the party representing the Islamic fundamentalists - was poised to win. The cancellation of those elections was followed by a decade of "a war against civilians", in which as many as 200,000 people were slaughtered. Thousands of others have disappeared. Although terrorist groups have also claimed responsibility for horrendous acts, human rights organizations have accused the military regime alone of being responsible for the assassinations and massacres of whole villages. Small wonder that many should want to leave.

But here in the UK police operations under the Terrorism Act are much the same as they were under the old Prevention of Terrorism Act. Then thousands were detained, interrogated and intimidated under the act before being released without charge, with the media invariably losing interest once charges were dropped (see Loombreaker 8 & 11). Only now, instead of being used to harass Irish Catholics it is asylum seekers who are primarily targeted as the 'suspect community', and helping to put the boot in are those nauseous little creeps in Fleet Street with their constant barrage of disinformation about asylum seekers, of which "asylum seeker = terror suspect" is only the latest version.

* The government has recently lost a court hearing which ruled that it was in breach of the human rights act for bringing in legislation that refuses benefits to asylum seekers who fail to make their claim for asylum the day they arrive in the country. Earlier in the month a demonstration where people were asked to bring food, clothing and blankets for destitute asylum seekers was held outside the town hall.

The National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC) is a support network for asylum seekers facing deportation. 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 or see www.ncadc.org.uk

Send in the Clowns

'Carnival as an experience brings into question, subverts and overturns the hierarchical dualities that shape our thinking under capitalism.' Rhythms of Resistance.

There is a proposal to create an International Carnival Bloc for the G8 meeting at Evian-les-Bains in France this June. A carnival bloc is an inclusive form of direct action in which all who dissent can participate with less fear of extreme police violence. This is done with music, dance, performance art and carnival as forms of protest. The No Pasaran Network has proposed the creation of an anti-capitalist village in the last week of May and the idea is to create a carnival space within this autonomous zone.

There are preparation meetings in London on the 7th April and 5th May, and a preparation weekend on 10-11th May. Manchester contact is sambalaclave@connectfree.co.uk, national contact xit@mymailbox.com, 07752 003528.

DIARY

- April 2003**
- All Month** Laboratory Animals Month
- Tuesday 1** Day of Civil Disobedience Against War
- Tuesday 1** Intro to Wheels for All - £25. 10am/1pm, "Wheels for All" Cleavley Track, Winton, Eccles. Half day training course on how to involve people of all ages with disabilities and differing needs in cycling. Info: Ray Pugh (0161 736 6366)
- Thursday 3** Jews for Justice for Palestinians - 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Mount Street M2 Info: Jfjfp (07760 127809, just_peace_now@hotmail.com)
- Saturday 5 & Sunday 6** Reclaim the Bases - International days of anti-war protest and direct action at military bases. Potential transport from Manchester. Info: Reclaim the Bases (email@reclaimthebases.org.uk). Possible transport: GM&D CND (0161 273 8283, gmdcnd@gn.apc.org)
- Saturday 5** Not a Grand National - Local group campaigns against "Grand National". Info: Animal Aid (01732 36 45 46, info@animalaid.org.uk), Manchester Animal Protection (0845 456 2492, info@mapsoc.org.uk)
- Tuesday 8** National Circus Day - Circus Arts Forum have announced this as National Circus Day so CAPS are encouraging local campaigners to highlight the cruelty of animal circuses. Demos at circuses, information stalls, letter writing etc. Info: Captive Animals' Protection Society (0845 330 7955, info@captiveanimals.org)
- Saturday 12** - Saturday 19 SHAC Week of Action - Campaigning against Huntingdon Life Sciences. Info: Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (0845 458 0630, info@shac.net), Manchester Animal Protection (0845 456 2492, info@mapsoc.org.uk)
- Monday 21 National Day of Action Against Zoos. Demos, information stalls etc. Leaflets and posters available from CAPS. (see above)
- Tuesday 22** Really Big Blockade - Faslane naval base, Scotland. Help close down Britain's Trident base. Info/transport: Greater Manchester & District Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (0161 273 8283, gmdcnd@gn.apc.org)
- Monday 14 - Saturday 19** Peat Week of Action - Info: Peat Alert or Manchester Earth First! (0161 226 6814, mancef@nematode.freeserve.co.uk)

Read Loombreaker online and subscribe to the email version: www.loombreaker.org.uk

Manchester Animal Protection

Manchester Animal Protection campaigns actively against all forms of animal abuse, both locally and nationally. We have recently begun pickets against shops selling fur in the city centre, and have carried out press stunts against Adidas (who make kangaroo skin football boots), and on Valentine's Day we did a "Go Veggie" publicity tour of several Manchester regions.

We regularly support national campaigns, attending demos against the notorious animal testing lab, Huntingdon Life Sciences, and the proposed primate research unit at Girton in Cambridge. We have a coach booked for the World Day for Lab Animals demo on Sat. 19th April, to be held in Cambridge and are taking bookings for seats now.

MAP hold meetings on the 1st Wednesday of every month, from 7.30pm in a room above the Town Hall Tavern, Tib Lane, off Cross St, Manchester. Everyone is welcome. We have a new phone number, 0845 456 2492, and a new website: mapsoc.org.uk which lists all forthcoming events and has reports of recent demos. To receive our monthly mailout and diary dates please drop us a line at MAP, PO Box 155, Manchester, M60 1FT, or email us at info@mapsoc.org.net

New community TV station for Manchester

The ITC (Independent Television Commission) are currently inviting applications for Manchester's Restricted Service Licence. This is a free local channel, available to any viewers in the Manchester area on a normal tv set. While it is currently being operated by Channel M, we intend to propose an alternative non-profit making station that puts the local community right at the centre of its content.

We believe that as tv has become more about advertising revenues and ratings ordinary people's expression has been squeezed to the margins - a token half hour here, a 30 second news item there. Yet around the Manchester area there are many community groups which need proper access to the media. There are also many independent media groups actually making films and documentaries with the community and for the community with nowhere to show them. The challenge has to be to open up the airwaves, give tv back to its users and to produce content that is impossible to ignore

Environmental Consultancy Occupied to Protest BP's Baku Pipeline

RSK ENSR is a company that doesn't often get mentioned in the environmental direct action movement. Till now, little has been known about them. However, their involvement with the proposed Baku-Ceyhan pipeline, due to cut a scar of destruction across Azerbaijan, Turkey and Georgia, has drawn the attention of environmental activists. RSK is a Bullshit Propaganda merchant for all the major oil companies, plus other ethical multinationals such as Enron. They conduct 'Environmental Impact Assessments' to find out what damage a proposed project will do to the environment - and then ignore it, paving the way for their corporate paymasters to wreak havoc on our planet.

In response to such despicable behaviour, a group of concerned individuals visited RSK's head office in Cheshire on 13th March. Refusing to be distracted by indignant employees, we gained access to 'confidential material' (apparently the fate of the planet isn't any of our business), occupied offices and disrupted work, before being escorted from the premises by police. There were no arrests and a fun day out was had by all.



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
- Bridge 5 Mill, Beswick St., Ancoats
- Café Pop, Oldham Street, Piccadilly
- Mistys Café, Longsight District Centre, Stockport Road
- Pankhurst Centre, Nelson Road
- 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.

Please send your information for action, contributions, comments cartoons & photos, offers of distribution help, or donations (cheques payable to Manchester EFI) to:

The Loombreaker

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

loombreaker@nematode.freemove.co.uk
<http://www.loombreaker.org.uk/>

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loombreaker@nematode.freemove.co.uk
to get the Loombreaker by e-mail.

We believe that access to this new station will be the key to its success. We aim to train anyone who wants to get involved - irrespective of how many GCSE's or media degrees they have - to help run the station. This could be anything from using a camera to editing, or presenting, directing or scriptwriting. We will give people the tools to tell their stories, highlight issues or showcase their art. This will be real reality tv - informing, educating, entertaining and exciting, blossoming from the grass roots of Manchester society. We believe it's about time that cultural fair trade arrives on our tellies.

We have less than six weeks to make this station happen - we need help with fundraising, letters of support, business plans, technical knowledge or just any ideas to ease its birth.

Please e-mail us at stephen.kingston@virgin.net if you would like to be involved and we will pass on the time, date and place of meetings.