



WAKE UP! WAKE UP! IT'S YER BEHAVING BADLY

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Michael Howard
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David Blunkett
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FLAW AND DISORDER

“The powers available to the government and state agencies would be truly draconian. Cities could be sealed off, travel bans introduced, all phones cut off, and websites shut down. Demonstrations could be banned and the news media be made subject to censorship. New offences against the state could be “created” by government decree. At a stroke, democracy could be replaced by totalitarianism.” - Tony Bunyan, Statewatch.

Just when you thought Neo Labour would run out of new laws to keep us all in line, along comes the Mother of them all - The Civil Contingencies Bill.

This is, we are told, for our own safety, to help with those little emergencies in life such as terrorist attack, contamination of land with “harmful biological, chemical or radioactive matter or oil”, and flooding and “disruption or destruction of plant life or animal life”. In such an emergency, forget the Yellow Pages cos your phone would probably be cut off. Instead, everything would be done “to protect or restore the activities of Her Majesty’s government” and that means some rather uncivil powers could be invoked.

These include:

- The banning of the movement of people and vehicles in an area,
- Evacuation orders of an area,
- The seizure, confiscation or destruction of property, with or without compensation,
- Destruction of animal or plant life, with or without compensation,
- Ban of “assemblies of specified kinds, at specified places or at specified times”,
- Shutting down phone lines and websites,
- Arresting people who fail to co-operate with the emergency powers

And this is just a watered down version from a few months back! While Neo Labour and the media have promoted these powers to deal with floods and such like, SchNEWS reckons that these powers could be used against members of the public who complain far too much for their own good. Just look at the stalking laws which were originally touted to protect women from stalkers, but which were first used against animal rights activists (SchNEWS 126) and which Bayer are now using to silence critics of their genetically modified crops (SchNEWS, 436). Or the Terrorism laws, supposedly introduced to protect us from being blown up, which are now being routinely used at demos to

stop and search people who have been asking their government NOT to blow people up!

Behaviour Modification

Also in the queue of new bills and acts designed to make a more compliant public out of us is the new Anti-Social Behaviour Act, which just so happens to ignore the anti-social aspects of dropping bombs on civilians and letting corporations release genetically modified organisms into the countryside. Instead it concentrates on a hotch-potch of stuff from ‘anti-social’ tenants, noise, graffiti and litter to dealing with people who refuse to trim their disorderly hedges.

The new law also contains further serious attacks on people’s right to party and protest, tightening the screws of the Public Order Act 1986 and the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 – an Act which sparked massive protests in the nineties and spawned SchNEWS itself, but whose amendments have passed into law largely un-noticed. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act introduces a new law which will allow a senior copper to disperse a group of two or more people if another member of the public has felt intimidated, harassed, alarmed or distressed by their behaviour. It also states that a Public Assembly is no longer 20 people, but can be comprised of just two people!! So if you happen to be on a small picket in front of some nasty business, if there are more than two of you, you are now liable to be dispersed on the grounds that you constitute an illegal Public Assembly. Or all three of you might just be forced to move on by a senior copper for the terrifying affect your banner has on the general public. Meanwhile, ‘Aggravated Trespass’, frequently used to nick hunt sabs and people trying to stop more road building, now applies inside buildings, with the amendments explicitly referring to how the charge can be used against activists who enter company buildings for office occupations or supermarket protests! And all of you ravers take care. Yet another change to the Criminal Justice Act contained inside the Anti Social Act states that the numbers required for yer party to be classed as an illegal rave have now dropped from 100 to a mere 20—which is hardly a rave, more an indication that you haven’t got many friends. And the classification of an illegal rave now extends inside buildings as well as outside. The Act also includes a new offence –going to a rave within 24 hours of

being stopped from going to a previous one. Social butterflies beware!!

But while Neo Labour has been busy coming up with new ways to mould us into model citizens, ready to work, shop and die without any fuss, the largest, longest and most expensive study in the history of criminology has come up with the most bleedin’ obvious conclusion ever. The Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighbourhoods has spent \$51 million over the past 10 years to conclude that the most important influence on a neighbourhood’s crime rate is neighbours’ willingness to act for one another’s benefit. The study argues that most major crimes are linked to concentrated poverty and what it calls ‘collective efficacy.’ Which in plain English means that if your local park was full of rubbish and the local authority removed it all, the rubbish would probably return in a few weeks. But if the local community organised a meeting to clean up the park, with a chance for people to meet, solve problems and work together, the benefits would most likely be much longer lasting and the park would probably remain cleaner for longer.

The study has challenged the “broken windows theory” that if people are allowed to get away with little crimes like graffiti or dropping litter, bigger acts of disorderly conduct will follow. This theory has provided the intellectual justification for a crackdown on “quality of life” crimes in New York City and is also being used to justify part of Neo Labour’s new anti-social crusade. This crusade in New York has led to fines being handed out for everything from people falling asleep on the subway to sitting on a milk crate! But research in the Chicago Neighborhoods study shows that crime and ‘anti social behaviour’ is most effectively fought not with more laws and more jails, but by building strong communities where people take control of their own lives. But maybe that’s just the sort of nonsense which could only lead to less government, happier people, and pure anarchy!

* Residents’ Groups - revolutionary or reactionary? Haringey Solidarity Group discussion evening, 27th January, 7pm @ Phoenix Millennium Centre, West Green Rd (entrance in Vincent Rd.) 020 8374 5027 <http://hsg.cupboard.org>

* Discuss the Civil Contingencies Bill at the Manchester Social Forum, this Saturday (17) Friends Meeting House, Mount St. at 11am www.manchestersocialforum.org.uk

COV-EN-TRY IT

Travellers near Coventry hotted it up on Monday morning when the bailiffs came to call by defending their site with burning barricades and 7-foot wide trenches. Perhaps proving the point that flaming barricades sometimes get results, the travellers have now won the right in the High Court to a judicial review of their case - successfully protecting their site until the review can be heard.

The travellers bought the land that they live on in north Warwickshire nearly three years ago and around 20 families moved onto the plot. Although planning permission for a private travellers' site was denied, the group decided to make its home there, constructing buildings, fences and roads on the land. More than a year ago the travellers lost their first High Court case, but still refused to give up their homes and give in to the authorities that wanted them out.

The local council, however, was gagging to make the 20 families homeless and get their own hands on the land - if they had been successful in their attempt at eviction, the council planned to repossess the land in order to pay for the costs of the eviction. With this ridiculous goal in mind, the council sent in the bailiffs and 40 odd police on Monday morning, only to have them beaten back by two burning caravans, trenches filled with flaming rubbish, and a human chain which refused to budge. The travellers' spokesman, John Lee, said: "There is no way we were letting them in. If they had got past us on the gate, they would have been confronted by the women and children. All we want is to protect our homes."

Apparently, the travellers might actually get to do just that. In an emergency measure to stop the council evicting them from their land, the travellers had gone to the High Court on Thursday to seek an interim injunction against the council. For the moment they have been successful and will remain on their land until the new judicial review of the case. In the meantime, they plan to sit down with the council yet again and try to come to some sort of agreement. "Surely the council can work with us to either find us another site or to leave us in peace at this one?" says John Lee. "We are not asking anyone for money, just for permission to live as we want to."

TWIN PEAKS

Nine ladies anti-quarry camp was set up back in 1999 to help stop the destruction of Stanton Moor hillside in the Peak District National Park, which is under threat from the possible re-opening of two dormant quarries. The quarries would have a disastrous impact on the Nine Ladies Stone Circle and local wildlife and camp residents have always vowed to stay until the quarry plans are shelved.

But, on 12 December quarry company Stancliffe Stone submitted a scheme for working the two quarries to the Peak District National Park Authority. Stancliffe wants to extract 3.2 million tons of rock from a site within 100m of the Nine Ladies Stone Circle. The quarry company has also told local papers that they plan to begin an eviction process against the camp almost immediately.

Campers are calling for reinforcements from around the country, "As fast as they get people out, we hope others from around the country will be getting in across fields, etc." To get your name on the eviction alert phone tree, please contact the site mobile: 0700 5942212 or write to: Nine Ladies anti-quarry campaign, Lees Road, Stanton Lees, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 2LQ.

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SchNEWS in brief

RIP Tom Hurdall, who was shot in the head by an Israeli soldier while shepherding young Palestinians out of the way of a tank, died on Wednesday evening after spending 9 months in a coma. www.ism-london.org/tom-action.html ** **Non-violent direct action** workshop and discussion day for Palestine, Saturday 24th, 2-5pm, Friends Meeting House, Ship St, Brighton thewallmustfall@hotmail.com ** Ken Loach introduces a special showing of **'Bread and Roses'** about Mexican immigrant women janitors in downtown Los Angeles, Thursday 22nd, 6.30 pm, Other Cinema, Rupert St, London W1. £8 Bookings: www.picturehouses.co.uk or 020 7734 1506. All money raised will be spent fighting sweatshops in the UK and in Mexico. ** **Mobile demo against shops selling fur in Brighton** this Saturday (17th) meet outside Lush, 41 East St, 1pm. Bring whistles, drums, costumes, and loud voices. www.furfree.info ** **Dissent** is a new direct action group in the Edinburgh area. To get involved dissentedinburgh@riseup.net ** **Noise Demo outside Lindholme Removal/Detention Centre** - part of the Europe Wide Day of Action against Refugee Detention and for Migrant Rights. This Saturday (17th), noon, Tyrham Hall Hotel, South Yorkshire, on the A614 south of Hatfield Woodhouse. 0845 458 9595 lindholme@veggies.org.uk ** **No Borders Night** - this Saturday (17th), 7pm-late - free/donations at **London's newest political social centre**, 93 Fortress Road, Kentish Town, London NW5 1AG. Films, chilled music, dinner, bar and an open discussion on activities & action for the European-wide Day of Action against Detention Centres & Borders on Jan 31st. www.wombles.org.uk ** **Bristolian Party Big Benefit**, Seymour's Club, Midland Road, St. Phillips, Bristol. Saturday 31st 8pm-2am £5 Attila the Stockbroker, Dynamo's Rhythm Aces, Kid Carpet. ** Discussion about **Indymedia London**, its role, media actions, skill share, etc. Convergence from Friday 30th, info: imc-london@lists.indymedia.org www.indymedia.org.uk/en/regions/london ** **Reclaim Lakenheath**, Suffolk. Demo followed by mischief making and distraction around the US bases in the area. Assemble noon Sunday 18th, USAF Lakenheath Gate 1. Bring banners, binoculars, cameras (with or without film), notepads etc. www.lakenheathaction.org 07881 782772. This is part of the **Reclaim the Bases** weekend of action against military bases. www.reclaimthebases.org.uk ** Meeting about **Compulsory Work Focused Interviews for the Disabled and Single Parents**, Cowley Club, London Road, Brighton, 5.30pm, Tuesday 20th ** **Fight The Power - benefit for St Agnes Place** (see SchNEWS 429) Hip Hop night @ The Telegraph, Brixton Hill, London. Friday 23rd Jan £6/£5. ** Meeting to plan for **International Women's Day** (8th March) at the Freedom Bookshop, 84b Whitechapel High St, London, 7.30pm, Tuesday 20th. www.enrager.net/m8

SchNEWS Training Day

If you want to get involved with helping SchNEWS, whether it's writing, desktop publishing, distribution or making the tea, then come along to our Training Day on Wednesday 21st January, 12 noon til 5pm. Places are limited so get in touch beforehand.

Inside SchNEWS

Chris Baldwin has been jailed for 6 months for running a Dutch-style cannabis café in Worthing, West Sussex. The wheelchair-bound medical cannabis user has now started a hunger strike in the nick. Send him letters of support at: Chris Baldwin, JC 9521, HMP High Down, Downview Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5PJ.

* Anarchist Cassidy Wheeler, who was sentenced to eight years for shoplifting (the severity was probably due to his political beliefs), has been attacked by Nazis and prison guards and is asking people to write to the Superintendent to demand he is moved to another jail. Write letters to The Superintendent, 777 Stanton Blvd., Ontario, OR 97914-8335, USA.

FINGER PRINTIN' GOOD

A few weeks ago, the US started photographing and fingerprinting any foreigners arriving in the US (apart from European tourists!). This is supposedly to stop terrorism, although this scheme seems unlikely to work against potential suicide bombers. "Ooh, I've had my fingerprints taken. Best not blow myself up!"

In an extremely fair and comical response, Brazil has decided that all Americans arriving in Brazil should be fingerprinted as well, with the simple reasoning that if Brazilians have to be fingerprinted, then why not Americans? Never one for a sense of humour, the US government is more than a bit miffed. The US Embassy in Brazil has stated, "...we regret the way in which new procedures have suddenly been put in place that single out US citizens for exceptional treatment that has meant lengthy delays in processing...[We] will continue to raise our concerns with the Brazilian Government regarding equitable treatment for US citizens travelling to Brazil." Equitable treatment, eh?? Perhaps the US government needs a dictionary as badly as it needs a sense of humour.

* One American pilot has already been arrested in Brazil. When asked if he could be fingerprinted, he raised his middle finger in the universal gesture of insult. His company, American Airlines, has agreed to pay the \$12,000 fine and issue an apology. Ten other crew members were denied entry to Brazil after causing problems during the identity checks.

...and finally...

At a Burger King in Troy, Michigan, customers have been shocked recently by the honesty and bluntness of the employees on the drive-through intercom. "You don't need a couple of Whoppers. You're too fat. Pull ahead," is just one example of what drive-through food consumers have been told. Bigger King taking an interest in their customers' health at last? Finally a bit of actual corporate responsibility? Well not exactly. Police believe that the "health-conscious" messages are in fact the work of pranksters who have been hacking into the radio frequency of the intercom system and are watching and broadcasting from close range. Customers who order everyone's favourite cola have been told, "We don't have Coke." But when the customer then asks what they do have, the hacker replies, "We don't have anything. Pull ahead."

Booger King franchise owner Tony Versace issued the following statement in response to the incidents, "We apologise to our customers who've been insulted by the use of this drive-through speaker." It's a shame he didn't apologise for the insultingly bad food Murder King produces.

Disclaimer

SchNEWS warns all anti-social readers to have contingency pants in case you piss yourself reading SchNEWS. Honest!