

IF YOU THINK THIS IS BAD, FLETCHER, WE HAVEN'T EVEN HAD THE THATCHER AND BLAIR YEARS YET



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Free/Donation

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IN A RIGHT STATE

“Through a politics of fear, we are being frightened into abandoning our liberties in the name of protection from terrorist attack. In reality these anti-terror measures make us less secure, bringing us closer to a police state. Now more than ever, everyone is needed to demonstrate their opposition.” - Campaign Against Criminalising Communities

“It’s time to stand up for everyone’s freedom to leaflet, picket, assemble and march against injustice and oppression. Such rights and freedoms have not been handed down by the powers-that-be, but won through struggles over the last 100 years or more.” – Freedom To Protest Conference (see below).

Last week 600 people were stopped and searched in Brighton under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000, during the Labour Party Conference in Brighton. According to the Home Office, “Stop and search under Section 44 is an important tool in the on-going fight against terrorism” and that the use of the powers was “intelligence-led and based on an assessment of the threat against the UK.” But with 600 searches and no terrorists arrested, SchNEWS reckon that’s a pretty poor level of intelligence. So for four days we got a taste of what black and Muslim communities have been experiencing for years.

The widespread use of the Terrorism Act to stifle dissent has only come to media attention thanks to the silencing of 82 year old Walter Wolfgang during Jack Straw’s speech at the party conference. Wolfgang’s unprompted ad-lib ruined the Neo-Labour choreographed political theatre production. So he was thrown out and then detained

WHEEL MEET AGAIN

Cyclists on last month’s London **Critical Mass** ride found themselves being issued with letters from the Met, threatening arrests at future rides, unless the ‘organisers’ give notice of the route at least six days in advance, and warning that the police can impose restrictions on the rides. The letter states the Met are reviewing their ‘policy’ towards Critical Mass. So...get on yer bike for the Capitals **Biggest Mass Ever** on Friday the 28th. Meet up point is on the South Bank, under Waterloo Bridge at 6pm. There is no set route and anyone is free to join - as long as you’re on unpowered wheels. See www.criticalmasslondon.org.uk for a copy of the Met’s hate mail to CM and the Masses response to it. These rides have been taking place in London for 11 years with no trouble, so this sudden intolerance can only be seen as further erosion of our freedom of movement.

* **Last month in Budapest, Hungary the world’s biggest ever Critical Mass took place**, with an estimated 24,000 to 30,000 cyclists taking part!

for a search under Section 44 to stop him getting back in. Sussex Police apologised to him of course - but only because they were getting grief for it in the Daily Mail. The other 599 searched can get stuffed. What the public got was a glimpse of something that SchNEWS has been banging on about for years.

Without hammering home the obvious, Section 44 has nothing to do with stopping terrorism, it’s just another tool the cops can use to push people back into line – people who have the wrong ideas about democracy or who live in a community under suspicion. But it’s not like the Terrorism Act is the only thing that police have been using to batter anyone who protests over the past few years. From Anti-Social Behaviour Orders to the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act, the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 etc etc. New laws have been enacted and old laws dusted off and reviewed to snuff out dissent. Any gathering of two or more people can be made subject to police control under a recent (2003) modification of the 1981 Public Order Act - and still they want more.

Laws are coming in that will not just hinder free movement and assembly but will firmly infringe on freedom of speech. The government proposes to make the ‘glorification of terrorism’ - (whatever that means) a criminal offence. That has serious implications for anyone writing about why our society finds itself at war.

Here’s a snapshot of the 21st century liberty clampdown:

* **Injunctions under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997** creating exclusion zones around vivisection labs and arms factories. Examples include Smash EDO’s campaign against Brighton arms manufacturer EDO-MBM (www.smashedo.org.uk), (where two protesters face prison for breaching the injunction) and several animal rights groups including Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (www.shac.net) and Save the Newchurch Guinea Pigs (not that it stopped them winning! see SchNEWS 509)

* Sections 145 & 146 of the **Serious Organised Crime Act 2005** specifically criminalised protest outside ‘animal research’ facilities. Seven people are awaiting trial on this offence.

* In 2003 when **RAF Fairford** was used as a launch base for bombing raids on Iraq, cops used Section 44 powers on demonstrators 995 times, with some people being searched multiple times.

* This September, six students and graduates of Lancaster University – the **George Fox 6**

CRAP ARREST OF THE WEEK

For Being a “Vagabond”...

Here’s a taste of those 19th century methods: on September 10th, one of the “George Fox 6”* had a stall confiscated in Lancaster City Centre under the 1824 Vagrancy Act (originally brought it to use against returning soldiers from Napoleonic wars, left injured, battle scarred and with nowhere to go and no money). Under the act you are deemed a vagabond through the “Exposure of Wounds and Deformities to obtain or gather Alms” - apparently the police decided that the pictures of the wounds and deformities on his anti-vivisection leaflets meant he was begging!

- were convicted of “aggravated trespass” – for handing out leaflets at a corporate/academia cosy-up on the campus featuring suits from BAE Systems, Shell, GlaxoSmithKline, et al gathered to talk about how to “commercialise university research”. So handing out a leaflet is now ‘disruption’.

* **Gate Gourmet workers** are attacked under Thatcher-era Trade Union Laws (See SchNEWS 510).

* **The government can now declare exclusion zones at will** with Section 132 of the Serious Organised Crime Act. Since August 1st this year when the law came into force, the square kilometre around parliament has become such an exclusion zone, with all protests without prior police permission banned. Regular ‘picnics’ are being held there to hamper the law, with seventeen arrested so far, but the snacking goes on. (see www1.atwiki.com/picnic)

From ASBOs to Guantanamo... if you wanted to list all the infringements of civil liberties by UK Plc in the last ten years you’d have to write a book.

But the fight back for civil liberties is gaining momentum. Activists and communities have always resisted repressive laws and now coalitions of those most affected by this repression are being built. As the Freedom to Protest conference organisers say “We believe that oppressive laws can be made unworkable by determination and solidarity among those affected, by mass defiance, and by turning the tables on those who would try to silence and suppress dissent.”

*Top legal advice for all activists free B.E.A.G.L.E.S. www.freebeagles.org

Freedom To Protest Conference

Sharing experiences, and promoting mutual aid & co-ordination between protestors threatened by repressive laws and to develop effective strategies for standing up for our freedom to protest **The Resource Centre, 356 Holloway Road, London, N7**. October 23rd, 11am-5pm. To get involved in the conference contact them – see www.freedomtoprotest.org.uk

PADDY POWER

The "Rosport 5", five Irish protesters sent to prison for refusing to allow Shell onto their land, have been freed after 94 days inside. The five protesters were part of a wider campaign against the usual combination of environmental destruction, dodgy business deals and casual disregard for the health and safety of local residents (see SchNEWS 506).

The oil and gas multinational is hoping to build a dangerous high pressure gas pipeline just meters away from local residents' homes and has failed to carry out the necessary tests to ensure the scheme is safe. Last Friday in response to the plan to destroy 9km of the beautiful, wild North West coast of Ireland, demonstrators dumped two tonnes of sand in front of Shell's South Bank Headquarters, hanging a 40ft banner in protest at the proposed Irish pipeline. www.shellfacts.com

Amnesty International have released a report condemning a consortium of oil companies (led by ExxonMobil, who else?) for overriding human rights in Africa. The focus is on a pipeline being built from Chad to Cameroon and details abuse of farmers in the region. See www.amnesty.org for the full report.

SchNEWS in brief

Last Saturday 150 German neo-Nazi plans to march through Leipzig were thwarted by a blockade of up to a thousand anti-fascists. The police sent the Nazis packing after four hours of waiting in the rain. www.mob-action.de/bilder/categories.php?cat_id=131 ** "How will ID cards change our society?" with Tom Hickey, Phil Booth, and David Shayler next Monday (10th) at Sallis Benney Theatre, Grand Parade, University of Brighton ** Brighton's Rebel Alliance is back - find out about campaigning groups in the town by popping along to the Albert Pub, Trafalgar Street next Wednesday (12th) 6pm ** Laudelino Iglesias Martinez who spent more than 23 years in Spanish prisons will be speaking next Wednesday (12th) at LARC 62 Fieldgate ST London E1 7:30, 02073779088 ** Sunday 9th October at 3.45pm there will be a meeting to help maintain and develop the protests in Parliament Square in defiance of the new restrictions. At the Indian YMCA, 41 Fitzroy Square, near Warren Street/Goodge St tubes. www.indianymca.org ** Three speakers from Women of Zimbabwe Arise, the women's group resisting the Mugabe regime on the streets of Bulawayo and Harare and incurring arrest, detention, sexual abuse and torture as a result, will be touring the UK between 18 and 23 October. There will be a London meeting on 20 October at 7pm at the Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA. Organised by Amnesty International UK. iar@amnesty.org.uk or wzasolidarity2005@yahoo.co.uk

WOLF AT THE DOOR

In August, Bangladeshis received an unwelcome visit from Paul Wolfowitz, the new head of the World Bank. He's on a visiting tour of Asia sizing up countries for extortionate loans. It's easy to see why the Bank was described as "massively destructive" by NGOs and academics at a recent meeting: the number of people living in absolute poverty in Bangladesh has doubled from 30 million to 60 million since the country first started receiving World Bank "aid" in 1972.

Although poverty is (of course) at the heart of the Bank's agenda, Bangladesh also happens to have large reserves of natural gas, which the government has been busy selling off to various multinational companies in return for backhanders and free SUVs (can you think of a more appropriate gift from an oil company?). Another Privatisation Board was set up in 1993 and (once again) UK plc, together with their pals at the World Bank, is helping fund the bureaucracy's work. With this

Rumours that Nestlé, the union-busting, baby-killers, is to launch a Fair Trade coffee in the UK has led the Fair Trade Foundation to issue a (really useful) statement neither denying, nor confirming the company's intentions. The Foundation simply said that "any approach by a major company wishing to enter this market is a sign of success for all the dedicated shoppers." The rules state that to display the Fair Trade logo companies must "extend the benefits to as many disadvantaged producers in developing countries as possible". So what benefits are Nestlé in the business of extending?

There's the benefit of jobs for kids for starters, as Nestlé buys cocoa from the Ivory Coast and Ghana which has been produced using child slavery. Meanwhile for company bosses in Colombia and the Philippines, Nestlé extends the advantage of non-recognition of Trade Unions and tacit support for the murder of left-wing activists. For those of you who just hate Mother Nature, Nestlé offers water-bottling activities in Brazil where the company was found to have been illegally using underground water supplies belonging to local communities. For parents there's the convenience of baby formula which due to predatory marketing may have led to the deaths of 1.5 million babies. And for those of our readers in countries facing 'democratic revolutions', there are the benefits of expensive court cases as

Nestlé sues countries, including Ethiopia and Iraq, for debts knocked up by evil former dictators who used the cash to build fancy palaces and buy bigger guns to guard them.

Only two years ago, and in response to the growing crisis affecting farmers who face falling coffee prices, Nestlé said that it "did not believe that the fair-trade approach is a solution for the coffee crisis". Too much of a dent on profits, you see. Facing the longest consumer boycott in UK corporate history, Nestlé is desperate to bring back the punters. Having got use to paying 'experts' fat salaries to produce reports extolling the brilliance of the company, the Fair Trade logo is the next logical step in its greenwash campaign. But not everyone's fooled. Last week the Department of Geography and Sociology at Strathclyde University decided to adopt an ethical purchase policy and resolved to boycott products made by Nestlé. The Head of Department, Professor David Miller commented that "Nestlé have repeatedly refused to put their house in order in relation to marketing baby milk in the developing world. We hope the boycott will send a signal that corporations cannot simply ignore their responsibilities to local communities". Why not extend the benefit of your community's hand of friendship to Nestlé and boycott its many goods and services? 01223 464420 www.babymilkaction.org

UP TO NO GOODFELLAS

Giant bureaucracies they may be but when it comes to an opportunity to make some fresh profits, the mafia cartel that is the IMF, World Bank and G8 are quicker off the mark than any double-crossed Sicilian Don. Even before the civil war had ended in Sierra Leone a privatisation package had been forced down the country's throat. The plan's centrepiece policy is flogging off the water supply. Not content with charging Bolivians half their wages for drinkable water (SchNEWS 481) or blowing £12m of aid on a pop video extolling the virtues of privatization in Tanzania (SchNEWS 499), corporate interests are now descending with a vengeance on Sierra Leone, the world's second poorest country.

UK plc is leading the deal, 'lending support' to the establishment of a National Commission for Privatisation. This new (well paid) bureaucracy intends to oversee the selling off of 24 public enterprises including shipping, roads, airline, telecommunications, housing and the postal service as well as the water supply in a country where only one quarter of people have access to safe water and sanitation. The usual team of highly paid and 'right-thinking' consultants are on board to ensure that the profits, (rather than the water), run in the right direction.

And what success they will be building on! In Bolivia, the Bechtel corporation forced the government to ban the collection of rain water without a permit so it could make sure it was charging for all the water that was being drunk. Meanwhile in Tanzania the water companies took 10% profits from the deal and the right-wing think-tank the Adam Smith Institute charged £36m for its pop video and other services.

The backlash that followed in Tanzania wasn't surprising, given that the company involved in the sell off, City Water, hadn't even got around to laying any water pipes two years into the project! This time the Sierra Leone contract includes a public relations campaign to overcome the anticipated public resistance. Not that anyone's bothered to tell the Sierra Leoneans: aid worker Lucinda Amara told the World Development Movement (WDM) that "We didn't know about the privatisation planned for the Guma Valley Water Company in Freetown until the WDM told us about it!"

Why not let the consultants who have been short listed for the propaganda campaign know what you think? They can be emailed via www.wdm.org.uk/campaigns/aid/action/sierra.htm

...and finally...

Advertisers are always keen to reach new demographics and co-opt alternative social sub-groups in the name of edgy post-modern brand awareness. In this spirit, Citroen identified the perfect people to try and tempt over to the selling business: the Clandestine Insurrectionary Revolutionary Clown Army (CIRCA), as seen at the G8 Summit.

The corporate ring-masters must've been surprised and disappointed to receive a response to their offer from Colonel Klepto, turning them politely down, saying "...we would never help promote such a stupid thing - we love to be stupid but our stupidity is based on dignity and love and a deep respect for human beings and the planet; unfortunately being part of the advertising industry does not seem to match up to our desires."

Adopt a clown or visit www.clownarmy.org and for Klepto's full reply to Citroen see: www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2005/09/324043.html

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