

Nottingham

Gutter Press

Pilot Issue - Summer 1994

Free or donation

The right to party...and much else besides!

The Criminal Justice Bill will massively increase the state's power to control our freedom to move, assemble, protest and have a good time.

It will affect people who go to parties and festivals, hunt sabs, squatters, travellers (new age and old) - and every campaign that uses 'public space'; from workers on strike to community groups.

The Bill gives the police the right to decide what constitutes a 'disruption' to the community and what marches can take place. They'll even be able to stop people from travelling to or near events they've banned. We saw what this means in the Miners Strike of 1984, when Nottingham was besieged by police road blocks.

The Bill represents a shift of police resources - from crime into public order. It gives the lie to the idea that policing isn't political.

The Bill builds on trade union laws which criminalised effective strike action and other pieces of legislation designed to restrict our freedoms to live the lives we choose - such as the homophobic Clause 28.

This is a bill designed to scapegoat easy targets. It is a sop to the law and order brigade in the hope of boosting support for a failing and flailing government.

So, what can we do about the Bill? One thing is certain - it won't be stopped in Parliament. In fact, the Labour leader Tony Blair publically supports parts of

the bill, and his party abstained in the first House of Commons vote.

The civil liberties group Liberty recommend a campaign of civil disobedience to make the bill unworkable. This is what killed the Poll Tax.

This doesn't have to mean *one* campaign. When even having a party is a crime against the state, *all* campaigns that want to be effective will become civil disobedience campaigns.

But civil disobedience needs the widest possible support. This means making links beyond this or that group and forming an alliance of mutual support. This needs to be based on respect.

People from the Freedom Network, who helped organise the recent demonstration in London, cut links with the SWP because the party wouldn't "consult with the people they were working with". Consultation is *exactly* what we want!

We need a campaign of *public* information. So far, much of the activity around the Bill has involved fairly small social groups. Information needs spreading.

Finally, in Nottingham we need a major public event in the city centre. This could be called by the existing Campaign Against the Criminal Justice Bill, supported by every campaign group and Trade Union activist in the city.

further information contact:
Campaign Against the Criminal Justice Bill
c/o 180 Mansfield Rd, Nottingham

Ronald Thomas Defence Campaign.

On Tuesday 23rd August, around 40 people rallied outside Nottingham Crown Court to support Ronald Thomas, who has been charged with ABH, GBH and affray as a result of an incident which took place at the Showcase cinema on September 18th last year.

That evening, Ronald and his wife Sharon went to the cinema to celebrate their wedding anniversary. As they were leaving, Ronald was attacked by three white men.

When the police arrived the three men alleged that it was Ronald who had started the incident. Despite his receiving hospital treatment, the police ignored his counter-allegations, made later at Beeston police station, and he was formally charged.

In the weeks leading up to the trial, Ronald and Sharon, supported by organisations such as Globe FM and local anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations, set up the defence campaign.

200, most from the black community, turned up to a meeting on the evening before the trial. Here people expressed support for Ronald, but also concern over the way the police handle incidents like this.

Nottingham's Race Equality Council was also criticised for showing little interest in such incidents.

• Ronald's case has been adjourned until December 23rd. Watch out for details.

• contact the Ronald Thomas
Defence Campaign. PO Box 179
Nottingham NG1 3AQ.
Phone (0602) 500998

A Monitoring Project?

At the meeting it was suggested that a monitoring project be set up in Nottingham to look into racial incidents and to monitor the police. Before we rush off to the council demanding cash for a grant aided organisation there needs to be a lot of thinking done here.

For example, how can we make sure that a project like this is answerable to the local community; that it represents its concerns and is politically independent.

A project that simply becomes part of the pally-pally network of council committees, REC 'suits' and senior policemen would be a ~~pointless~~ waste of time. As would a project that was just a stepping stone for career minded professionals. *there's a lot of them*

There are already too many projects that have become more concerned with cornering council cash - in competition with other council funded projects - than defending the interests of the community.

What we need are campaigns and organisations that struggle; that don't mind stamping on people's toes. *etc.*

Nottingham Leisure 2,000

At present the City of Nottingham has 11 swimming pools. If the recommendations in the document "Leisure 2000" are followed, this will be reduced to 7. For some obscure reason, the authors of Leisure 2000 see this as an increase in the "total quality of life". They believe that by closing 4 swimming pools (36%) and converting a further one into a "Leisure Pool" the people of Nottingham will enjoy a "total quality experience".

The pools to be closed are in the poorer parts of the city, where access to a car is even less than the citywide average of 50%. And yet this is justified by the claim that everyone will still live within 12 minutes car drive of a pool! The authors of Leisure 2000 admit that already "the quality of the swim may be questioned" because of the overcrowding of the pools but want to close them down and increase our journey times.

This is not just a question of cost-cutting. In fact Leisure2000 will mean a substantial increase in the City Councils spending on Leisure services. The problem is more one of priorities, of priorities, of the move

towards centralisation rather than community and image rather than function. The authors of Leisure 2000 see more value in one state-of-the-art leisurepool in the centre of town, pulling in punters from all over the country than in a network of smaller local pools meeting the needs of often deprived local communities. It's all part of the grand plan to turn the whole city into one big theme park - a place for tourism, not living in.

There has been resistance. Campaigning groups have been started to fight the closure of local pools. At a noisy and at times angry recent meeting at Noel Street baths the council was forced to admit that their consultation procedure left a lot to be desired and that a questionnaire that they had sent out was misleading and would be reworded.

Leisure 2000 suggests that the residents of Hyson Green and Forest Fields should not have a swimming pool at Noel Street and that their needs would be better met by - a new car park!

Contact Save Noel St Baths
144 Ewart Rd
Forest Fields

What is Nottingham *Gutter* Press

Something to do for a bunch of Billy No-Mates? A 'radical alternative' to the Evening Post? A broadsheet for failed journalists? Maybe all this...hopefully none!

N. G. P was put together by a bunch of Nottingham activists. It's nothing new. There's a long and failed tradition in this city of people putting out independent, radical newsletters.

We're interested in the struggles and campaigns going on in the city. We're interested in what people do to resist a crap economy and a crap government (Aren't all governments crap? Ed.) and whatever other crap people are up against.

We're interested getting people involved in different issues to share information and experience. Whilst fanning the flames of discontent we'd like to help break down a few barriers.

Well, we dream of a different world - one where people matter (Quaint. Ed.). And for that we're not campaigning here for the Labour Party. Neither do we claim to have the answers. There's no party line to defend here - and no non-party line either. To misquote the Wobblies - 'The new society grows out of the struggles within the shell of the old'. It's what people are doing on the ground that interests us.

We're looking for stories and information.

We're looking for people to get involved - people to write bits, find out information, take photos, distribute the damn thng. Interested?

Contact: N. G. P. Box A.
Rainbow Centre.
180 Mansfield Rd. Nottingham.

Colly Wilson - Innocent. As clear as black and white.

In November last year, Colly Wilson was sentenced for ten years for an attempted robbery committed by two white men, over 6 feet tall and in their early 20's.

Colly is 5'7", 37 years old and black.

Colly was convicted on the evidence of an informant, Brian Murray, who was himself under suspicion for the crime.

The getaway driver for the robbery said that Murray was not only involved in the robbery but had planned it. He said that Colly was absolutely not involved.

The shopowner, who was the victim of the attempted robbery, which took place in Robin Hood Chase, St Anns, said he was sure about the men's height

because he himself is 5' 10". And although they were wearing balaclavas, he could see through their eye holes that they were white. He said he thought that both men were in their early 20's.

Another witness, who saw two white men together in the area, gave a description similar to that of the shopowner.

Colly Wilson has long been diagnosed as having mental health problems, and a psychiatrist who interviewed him said that Colly was liable to make a false confession to satisfy those he saw as a threat. Because of his mental state Colly did eventually make a confession.

Before making the confession Colly had been in police custody for 45 hours, and in that time had had only 6 hours sleep.

Attempts were made to get the judge to rule that the confession was inadmissible as evidence. The judge refused.

Colly has now been waiting ten months for a date for an appeal hearing.

For further information:
Conviction. PO Box xxxxxx Sheffield
Colly Wilson, JJ3012, HMP
Wakefield, Love Lane, Wakefield,

Support the signal workers.

At the recent TUC conference, Labour leader Tony Blair very carefully avoided giving his support to the signal workers. Whatever the streamlined Labour leadership decide, the signal workers need our support.

The xxxxxxxxx week old dispute began after Railtrack withdrew its 5.7% pay offer under government pressure.

That offer was made in response to a 11% claim made by the signal workers union, the RMT, which was designed to reflect productivity increases made over the past ten years.

The Government wanted to keep rail pay settlements down, so that the railways appeared more profitable in the run up to privatisation.

Also, they were scared that a settlement for the signal workers would itself signal the end of the Government imposed pay freeze on public sector workers.

Ironically, this strike is costing £10 million a day - the original Railtrack offer would only have cost £5.6 million a year. This shows how far the Government are ready to go to defeat the signal workers.

Yet public support for the signal workers remains high.

Railtrack have been bullying other rail workers, particularly signal supervisors, to operate the signals. This clearly has implications for rail safety.

x
x
x
x
x
x
x

donations and messages of support to: RMT E.Midlands Central Branch,
35a Bramble Drive, Honeywood
Gardens, Carlton, Notts. NG3 6NL.
Cheques to RMT Support Group
Signalmen's Dispute Fund.

The bridge across
the River Trent