

13 October 2008

(infousurpa inside)

## One hellllll of a mass

After many months of unwanted police presence, the Critical Mass, took place last 26 of September with no police with no police presence at all.

Reports came to the indymedia site that the mass ran like clockwork. It kept together, corked - it even let pedestrians through, which the police don't usually allow.

Although there was as much more aggression from drivers, as the following incident illustrates:

As the mass was coming on High Holborn from the east, a black cab came out onto High Holborn, turning right. Fifty metres ahead of him was a red light at the junction. Less than fifty metres ahead of him was a masser, riding slowly. The cab driver drove less slowly - he drove right up to within inches of the masser, tailgated him for ten metres or so, and then drove straight into the back of him. The guy went down.

The police were called, did their best to work everyone up into a frothing rage and decided they wouldn't follow up, as deliberately driving into a cyclist doesn't count as careless driving.

Subsequent comments on the site advise that when this happens, always make sure you get transport police on the scene when calling 999.

The guy was not hurt but this was yet another time that a bent wheel needed to be brought back into shape during a critical mass. Apparently finding a fence and doing a bit of ghetto truing is an essential urban cycling skill.

On a separate incident, a group of massers ran into a van load of police dressed in overalls, and baseball caps between Victoria Street and Buckingham Palace Road. Their van was apparently not equipped with a siren or flashing lights, so the officers, attempted to force their way through the mass by knocking riders to the ground, and dragging others to the side of the road and dumping them on the pavement.

At one point drivers of other vehicles were told by police: "Just drive

at them, they'll get out of the way!" in the middle of the traffic jam at the time.

In September 2005, after 11 years of relatively uneventful monthly Critical Mass rides, police issued a leaflet to participants stating:

"...These cycle protests are not lawful because no organiser has provided police the with the necessary notification. Your participation in this event could render you liable to prosecution. Police policy in facilitating these events is currently under review..."

There then followed court cases where this threat was challenged and a final appeal is due to be heard on 20th October 2008 at the House of Lords.

[criticalmasslondon.org.uk](http://criticalmasslondon.org.uk)

## Al Quds Day

*March meets opposition.*

Muslims, orthodox rabbis and other demonstrators marched through London on Sunday 28 September to celebrate Al Quds (Jerusalem) Day and support oppressed people across the world, particularly the Lebanese and Palestinian people.

Counter-demonstrators gathered at Piccadilly Circus to oppose the march. The United British Alliance were possibly the largest and certainly the most vociferous group opposing the march.

The marchers remained proudly defiant in the face of the insults flung at them across the road from the various groups, and stewards had some problems in keeping a few of the younger and more militant marchers moving.

## Hackney Wasn't Crap

*Walking tour of Gentrification*

The "Hackney isn't Crap" Gentrification Tour on Sunday the 28th of September walked from Dalston lane to Broadway market visiting new developments like Dalston Square and listening to shopkeepers and local residents at the sharp end of the regeneration of Hackney.

Inspired by Hackney Mayor Jules Pipes' comments that anyone who opposed the social cleansing of the area was part of a 'keep Hackney crap brigade', the tour set out to show that some parts of the borough have been deliberately run down and neglected by a mixture of council corruption and developers greed.

Around 100 people took part in the tour, with at least ten of them contributing their knowledge and opinions on the places the tour visited.

Speakers included Juan, who runs the Sound and Music Shop on Dalston Lane despite his shop having been sold to an overseas developer in 2002 and having seen his neighbours premises burnt down in the rash of arson attacks that followed the sale of the listed buildings. Juan told how Hackney Council has said they will make a Compulsory Purchase Order to buy the now mainly derelict strip of shops back, but that the tenants will even then not be allowed to stay in their shops. Activists from the London Coalition Against Poverty talked about the struggle of homeless people to gain their rights to housing from the Hackney homeless office that routinely turns them away. On Broadway Market there were emotional speeches outside the half demolished café that people fought so hard to save, and then the tour ended outside Spirit's Nutritious Food Galley that had received an eviction order a few days earlier on Thursday the 25th of September.

Spirit is a local shopkeeper who built up his shop from a derelict shell in the '90s. Although he put down a deposit and signed a contract to buy his shop from the Council his shop was auctioned anyway and sold to a Middle Eastern company who increased his rent by 700%. Despite paying off nearly £30,000 in arrears since 2005 the Possession Order was made for court costs he owed to the landlord for their previous eviction cases against him. While the rich people who now enjoy the expensive bars and cafes of Broadway Market watched and asked 'What are you protesting?' the tour organisers asked for support to be given to a campaign to save Spirit's home and business. [hackneysolidarity.info](http://hackneysolidarity.info)

# Peace Procession

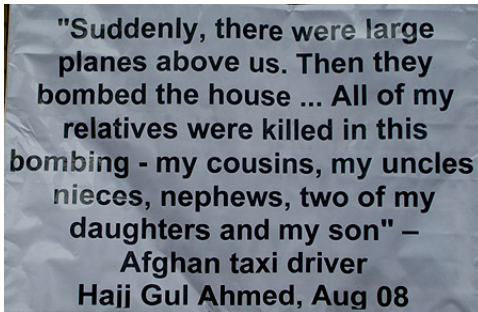
Peace campaigners from various faiths gathered at Westminster Cathedral last 5th of October to carry out the Peace Procession through London.

The Procession marched through London and toward Parliament Square via a prayer session and moment of silence outside Westminster Abbey where they signed a petition calling for an end to war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

After signing the Peace Plan petition in Parliament Square and blessing the British Parliament building with holy water they walked to Downing Street, where Maria handed in the petition to the British government.

## Reading the Names of the Dead

Peace campaigners gathered in Whitehall opposite Downing Street on the 7th of October this year, for a seven hour vigil, seven years after Afghanistan was invaded by a US/UK led coalition in the opening salvo of the now disgraced so-called War on Terror.



"Suddenly, there were large planes above us. Then they bombed the house ... All of my relatives were killed in this bombing - my cousins, my uncles nieces, nephews, two of my daughters and my son" - Afghan taxi driver Hajj Gul Ahmed, Aug 08

*One of the banners held*

They read out the names of those who have been killed during the misadventure including Afghani civilians and British soldiers.

In previous years those attending the ceremony had been arrested under sect 132-138 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police act (SOCPA), now collapsed and pending appeal.

## SOCPA is dead

... but the illegal harassment continues

Sections 132-138 of the 'serious organised crime and police act' sought to control demonstrations near parliament, and specifically Brian Haw's seven-year vigil opposite the carriage gates. The law can not be applied against Brian Haw, but police are resorting more and more to unlawful violence, intimidation, and harassment

Back in July, police raided the

tents at parliament square to perform a supposed PACE section 17 search. Brian's lawyers have since put together a document, citing many examples of case law, that shows that the use of section 17 cannot be lawful under these circumstances.

Despite that, a van full of police turned up at around 3.30 on 8th October, donned purple latex gloves, and began another unlawful search of the tents.

They did not identify what they would be searching for, and they did not seek permission. There was also no record made of the "search".

Once and again Barbara and Brian warned the police that their search was unlawful, that there were privileged legal documents in the tents that the police had no right to see, and that their solicitors had written to the police pointing out that searches would be unlawful. Briefly, CW3193 checked with base, but he received instructions to continue and so they proceeded.

As police attempted to open the first tent, barbara pushed CW3193 to the ground. Normally, this would be cause for arrest with a charge of assaulting a police officer, but, the charge has to be "assaulting a police officer IN THE COURSE OF THEIR DUTY".

Although the officer threatened Barbara with arrest for assault, both she and Brian continued trying to stop the cops from entering the tents and going through their things. The police simply responded with force and violence.

At one point, three male police twisted Barbara's arms and held her down on the grass after dragging her away from the tents. Brian, who is currently on crutches due to sciatica most likely caused by previous police assaults, was also manhandled away from the tents, while officers crawled in and scabbled around amongst personal possessions and legal documents.

The PACE section 17 legislation allows a search under extraordinary conditions "for the purpose of saving life or limb or preventing serious damage to property".

This pattern of unlawful force was also seen earlier this same day when barbara used her megaphone outside the carriage gates as ministers arrived for PM's question time.

She was shouting to the public about how Peter Mandelson has been made a secretary of state, i.e. he can sign off legislature, while he is an unelected person and a disgraced ex-member of parliament after a scandal over favours.

Police tried to rip her megaphone away from her, but it was firmly attached. They cited no law, and instead stole her batteries. Once all the

MPs were in they returned the batteries, but refused to give any lawful reason for their actions. They did however manage once again to twist and injure her arm and wrist.

The parliament square peace campaign (now continuous for more than seven years) continues, and Brian will be 60 years old before Christmas.

The most striking example of police stealing property from parliament square campaigners was the night they raided Brian's display on the 23rd may 2006. Court sentences have since established they had no right to do so. No record was made of what they took, even though it included several prized artworks by Banksy and others, and to date the items have not been returned.

On that night, several peace campaigners were arrested for obstructing police officers, but it was later shown in court that the police were not in the execution of their duty and so all the campaigners were acquitted

A number of megaphones have been stolen by police on previous occasions. Again, no legal right has ever been established, court cases have collapsed, and yet, at least one megaphone remains unlawfully in police hands

Barbara wrote previously to the Metropolitan Police legal directorate asking for a legal explanation of earlier searches - these letters have been ignored.

Barbara Tucker currently has 23 civil actions filed against the police - today's episode is part of a much bigger and ongoing campaign of harassment - she is also seeking an interim injunction against the authorities

[parliament-square.org.uk](http://parliament-square.org.uk)

## Marie Vesco

On the 4th of June this year, 12 people set off from London to Brighton, by bike, in order to participate in the protest against the arms trade taking place that date. Going to Brighton by bike was part of their action. They were also taking a sound system with them.

About half way the sound system had an accident and the tandem that was carrying it had to be put on a van, leaving the ride with just 10 bikers.

Then 14 miles away from Brighton, Marie was hit by a car, then dragged along for about 20 metres by another car and then pronounced dead on the scene.

Four months later, Marie's family have been told that the Crown Prosecution Service will not charge any of the two drivers.

Her family feel she has been killed a second time.

There will be an inquest but the date has not been set yet.

## Indymedia London welcomes your involvement:

This is an open invitation to participate in Indymedia London - from the technical aspects, or helping to maintain the open newswire and producing features, to a variety of offline activities such as film screenings, stalls at events, reporting from the streets and whatever else you may come up with. The London collective has regular meetings, often at LARC. Please feel free to come and share your ideas, knowledge and skills. [london.indymedia.org.uk](http://london.indymedia.org.uk)