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ON..... 7 June 2002

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**NETWORKS OF PROTEST,
COMMUNITIES OF RESISTANCE**

**AUTONOMOUS ACTIVISM
IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN**

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Networks of Protest, Communities of Resistance –
Autonomous Activism in Contemporary Britain

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is an examination of protest and collectivity in contemporary Britain. Preceding analysis of protest is refuted for its emphasis on protest's ability to generate instrumental change and on the notion that collectivity is a supplementary outcome of protest. This dissertation challenges the understanding that community is place based and instead delivers the contention that activism is driven by the desire and/or need of its protagonists to find and develop shared understandings – to be part of communities of resistance. I argue that there is a need to analyse political activism in the context of the communities that might have spawned the activism and the communities that have emerged from it. To demonstrate this need, I scrutinise the forms of collectivity, the networks and communities, generated by autonomous political activists in Britain from the mid-1980s to 1999. Evidence is derived from empirical studies including the 1984-1985 miners' strike, opposition to the poll tax, the role of social centres and activist zines, anti-roads protests, Reclaim the Streets activism and the J18 carnival against capital. These case studies, informed by activists' voices and opinions, provide new understandings of networks and communities.

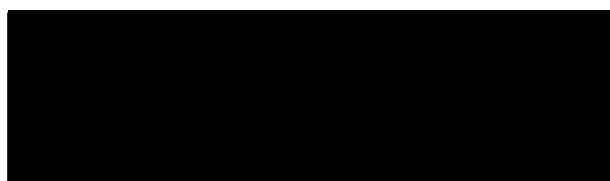
Therefore, the dissertation examines the nature of community and, to this end, asks the question if dissent plays a role in forming community or whether it builds on existing communities. Two further key questions are asked in the course of this investigation: is community locale-specific; and is community a certain and desirable outcome of the establishment of activist networks. I analyse activist communities according to whether they are geographically and spatially defined and find that while activist networks are often initiated at the local, geographic level, they often merge across spatial boundaries and transcend geographic confines. Activist networks

and the communities that form from their coalescence are independent of physical place. These networks and communities are also examined according to activists' own prescriptions, particularly the ability to foster both cohesiveness and diversity, recognising that activist communities are not fixed, nor do they have necessarily tangible defining parameters. I conclude the dissertation with the finding that activists are bound together in networks and communities of resistance by intangible togetherness and by shared understandings.

The material in this dissertation is based on my own research, unless otherwise acknowledged in the text.

The material has not been submitted in whole or in part for a degree or a diploma at this or any other university.

Signed:

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the author.

Dated: 29.11.01

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One of my great interests is in collaborative writing and while this project is designed to be an individual and individualistic experience, which in many ways it was, it would not have been possible without the encouragement, support and collaboration of many colleagues, friends and family.

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words of advice and encouragement. Both have managed to find time for many meetings and pep talks and I thank them for this and for their friendship. I cannot imagine having completed this project without their supervision.

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Material from this dissertation has appeared in the following published works:

'A shared space for activism', in *Arena Magazine*, no. 43, October-November 1999, pp. 22-23.

with Damian Grenfell: 'S11 and the media: the battle for reality', in *Arena Magazine*, no. 49, October-November 2000, pp. 9-10.

PREFACE

*...revolutionary activity will create its own forms of struggle...
the revolutionary process will include the totality of individual
autonomous struggles.*

R. Gomblin ¹

A number of events in the early 1990s captured my imagination and led me to undertake research on autonomous activism in Britain. I was struck by the extreme juxtaposition of the poll tax riot in central London: thousands of people protesting, in a carnivalesque atmosphere, which later became a riot, so close to the home of the Westminster parliamentary system. I felt compelled to investigate the nature of resistance to the poll tax, beyond the scenes conveyed by the mainstream media from Trafalgar Square. A few years on, images of communities of activists living in tree tops along road construction sites emerged from both the British activist scene and the mainstream media. These anti-roads protests were followed by further extraordinary activism, such as thousands of people taking back street space from car traffic and commercial activity at Reclaim the Streets protests in central London, Edinburgh, Birmingham and many other cities. Certainly extraordinary protest takes place all the time, in many corners of the world. But these examples of autonomous activism in Britain fascinated me, for their imagination and their subversion. One of the aims of my research became to look at the connections between these supposedly unrelated incidences. This dissertation examines a number of activistisms, movements, or campaigns, and the networks and communities which both underpin and emerge from them.

¹ R. Gombin, *The Origins of Modern Leftism*, trans. by M. K. Perl (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp. 20-21, emphasis added.

Academic research in the area of activist politics can be problematic and I have been acutely aware of this from the outset of this dissertation. I have endeavoured to convey a plurality of thought throughout this study. This plurality of thought is disclosed through the inclusion of activists' voices in original form. Activists are quoted throughout the work directly rather than in paraphrased form. These excerpts are taken from interviews I have conducted, with participants' explicit consent, or are quoted from primary sources, such as activist-maintained websites or zines.

A goal of this research project is to be faithful to and conscientious of the myriad of activists' beliefs and political actions, represented in the various empirical studies throughout the dissertation. Perhaps my own activism has increased my awareness of the need to represent a plurality of thought and to report events in authentic, original language. I hope that I have managed to inhabit a marginal space, where my own activism has allowed me to transcend the boundaries that often exist between activists and academics. bell hooks writes of her own marginal space as a site of creativity and power and one that allowed her to shape a radical intervention:

...marginality [is] much more than a site of deprivation; in fact I was saying just the opposite, that it is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance. It was this marginality that I was naming as a central location for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and in the way one lives. As such, I was not speaking of a marginality ones wishes to lose - to give up or surrender as part of moving into the center - but rather of a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds.²

² b, hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End, 1990), pp. 149-150.

My own marginal space, between writer, researcher and activist, has been a space of privilege and one that I have enjoyed transcending but also relished returning to.

From the outset I define activism for the purpose of this dissertation to pertain to autonomous left anti-capitalist activism. This is obviously a highly subjective definition and I shall qualify what I mean by this string of terms. I use the term autonomous to denote independence from any hierarchical, formally structured political party or group that aims to work within the parliamentary system; autonomous activism is anti-statist. I have derived my own definition of leftist or leftism from a hybrid of definitions and experiences. Richard Gombin uses the term leftist, or leftism, to refer to theories of present society, the future and the transition to this future which promote revolutionary change. Leftism, as a theoretical perspective and lived revolutionary politics, represents a break from Marxism-Leninism and promotes recognition of disparate visions, yet difference fed by common inspiration.³ This common inspiration can be summarised as the desire of broad collectives of individuals to break from oppression and attain equality and, in the case of the activist collectives examined in this dissertation, find this freedom from oppression in a society that is not dictated by capitalism. Modern leftism theory is "the expression of current struggle... and the theory of a revolutionary movement in full flood."⁴

In many ways, all people partaking in activism believe their activism to be leading towards progress, clearly dependent on their own definition of progress. This can be activism that is xenophobic in character or goal orientation, such as a rolling campaign of attacks on minority groups in order to instil fear in an ethnic community, or worse, to drive an ethnic community away.⁵ However, I have deliberately chosen to concentrate on

³ Gombin, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁵ See, for example, Roger Eatwell's discussion of the British, and Western European, far-right. R. Eatwell, 'The rebirth of the 'extreme right' in Western Europe?', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 53, no. 3 (July 2000), pp. 407-425; and R. Eatwell, 'Britain: the BNP and the problem of legitimacy', in H. G. Betz and S.

activism in contemporary Britain that has broad goals of liberating all people from racism, poverty, the effects of environmental degradation, sexism and/or ageism.

The dissertation is limited to a relatively small number of empirical studies, all of which are linked by common desire for change and by their broadly autonomous leftist anti-capitalist natures. I wanted to analyse actions and activism in detail, rather than provide a timeline-type exposition of all political activism in Britain throughout the late Thatcher years and onwards. I have therefore clearly not covered all activism. One prime omission is anti-racism activism. I do not believe that I, as a white researcher, could adequately research anti-racism activism in contemporary Britain. I feel that it is important to establish a sense of trust with the activists alongside whom I am researching. I did not feel that I could adequately undertake primary research on anti-racism activism without spending many years within these communities, attempting to establish meaningful social relations which would acknowledge my privilege.⁶ Some of the other recent political activism I have not addressed include the animal rights activist networks, and actions taken by farmers and responses

Immerfall (eds), *The New Politics of the Right: Neo-Populist Parties and Movements in Established Democracies* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 143-156.

⁶ On this matter I concur with bell hooks' comments about the problems of a member of a privileged group "interpreting" the reality of members of a less powerful, exploited, and oppressed group." Hooks explores this further, stating that:

First of all, let's acknowledge that few nonwhite scholars are being awarded grants to investigate and study all aspects of white culture from a standpoint of 'difference'; doesn't this indicate just how tightly the colonizer/colonized paradigm continues to frame the discourse on race and the 'Other'? At the same time, just as it has been necessary for black critical thinkers to challenge the idea that black people are inherently oppositional, are born with critical consciousness about domination and the will to resist, white thinkers must question their assumption that the decision to write about race and difference necessarily certifies antiracist behaviour....

Ibid., p. 55.

There are, however, a number of excellent texts on anti-racist movements in Britain, including P. Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (London: Routledge, 1992); S. Housee and S. Sharma, "Too black too strong?": anti-racism and the making of South Asian political identities in Britain', in T. Jordan and A. Lent (eds), *Storming the Millenium: The New Politics of Change* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999), pp. 108-126; and A. Bonnett, *Anti-Racism* (London: Routledge, 2000).

to the petrol dispute. I felt that these three activisms were not as clearly interlinked with other activist networks which I researched and therefore did not fall into my line of empirical inquiry. This should not, however, engender a sense that I deem these activisms to be any less vital.⁷

I began this dissertation with an interest in trying to ascertain if activists were moving from being active under an organised left umbrella to more autonomous activism. However, I decided that this would be a problematic research question, as I did not want to concentrate on shifts in trade union involvement, unquantifiable attendance at autonomous group meetings, or people's perceptions of organised and autonomous leftist groups.⁸ Instead, as my interest grew in the actions of anti-poll tax activists, Reclaim the Streets activists, and others, I wanted to explore the nature of these activists' connections with each other. I set out to explore connections and discovered rhizomatic networks and diverse, dynamic communities.

⁷ On the subject of direct action by animal rights activists, see, for example, R. McLeod, 'Calf exports at Brightlingsea', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 53, no. 3 (July 1998), pp. 345-357; for analysis of the recent petrol blockades, see, for example, A. Simpson, 'Oiling the green agenda', *Red Pepper* (November 2000), on-line version: <http://www.redpepper.org.uk>; accessed 13.11.01; and B. Morris, 'Fuel blockades are not the answer to the country's problems': <http://www.sourceuk.net/articles/f01325.html>; accessed 13.11.01.

⁸ Shifts in trade union involvement in Britain have been the subject of extensive research. See, for example, D. Gallie, M. Rose and R. Penn, 'The British debate on trade unionism: crisis and continuity', in D. Gallie, R. Penn and M. Rose (eds), *Trade Unionism in Recession* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 1-32.

*NETWORKS OF PROTEST,
COMMUNITIES OF RESISTANCE –*

AN INTRODUCTION

Networks of Protest, Communities of Resistance – An Introduction

... for a rare moment they had experienced the breath of the possible touching them – they had transformed the world. They had had experiences that would remain with them permanently.

John Jordan ¹

People pour onto the streets and reclaim the tarmac from cars; music plays from sound systems mounted on bicycles and hundreds of activists prevent the flow of cars and create a new space on otherwise traffic congested roads. Ten years prior to this reclaiming of the streets, people gathered in a hall in a colliery town, sharing meals, preparing parcels of donated food and clothing and receiving new stories of solidarity in times of extreme hardship. Scenes such as this recurred throughout the closing decades in twentieth century Britain: people took action, whether it be by refusing to pay local council taxes, occupying houses in the path of bulldozers, or establishing squat cafes. So often, in media reports or academic analyses of actions like these, activism is reduced to increments of success. Did, for example, city authorities change traffic by-laws, or did the government cease attempts to close coal mines? Such questioning ignores, however, a key element of activism, and that is activists' interactions and interpersonal relations. Instrumental examination of activism ignores its very essence – people

¹ J. Jordan, 'The art of necessity: the subversive imagination of anti-road protest and Reclaim the Streets', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 146, emphasis added.

coming together and fostering community. This cannot be seen merely as a by-product of activism. Instead it is worthy of independent research.

This dissertation is an examination of protest and collectivity; it challenges assumptions of community as place-based and delivers the contention that activism is driven by the desire and/or need of its protagonists to find and develop shared understandings – to be part of communities of resistance. I examine the desire for collectivity and the formation of communities by autonomous political activists in Britain from the mid-1980s to 1999. The notion of community is central to this examination. The thesis argues that there is a need to examine political activism in the context of the communities that might have spawned the activism and the communities that have emerged from it. There is a need to examine the collectivity of activism, as Scott Lash explains: "And to understand ...the collective representations of the new social movements... some fundamental thinking about the 'we' is surely needed." In order to understand the "we" or community, abstract aesthetic subjectivity needs to be replaced by empirical hermeneutics.²

Case studies of activism in contemporary Britain, incorporating the voices of activists, reveal the communitarian nature of much autonomous political activism. These case studies are of collective activism which I define as autonomous and progressive in nature. This has been addressed in the Preface, but I will reiterate that my choice of case studies is highly subjective, based on my own political subjectivity. I define autonomous to mean unaffiliated to any formally structured, signed membership-based political party that operates, or aims to, within the parliamentary system. The term autonomous is also applied to the collectives of activists examined throughout this dissertation as they are broadly anti-statist, working outside of the state. Activism that is progressive, I believe, has as its aim liberation for all from race-based, gender-based, class-based, economic-based and ecologically-based oppression. Therefore, emerging so-called national civil rights groups in Britain which promote white supremacy do not fall into

² S. Lash, 'Reflexivity and its doubles: structure, aesthetics, community', in U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), p. 144.

this definition of progressive, although activists within such groups may act autonomously and define their vision as a progressive one.

Examination and discussion of political activism needs to depart from the instrumental; rather than measuring or evaluating activism for the possibility of achieving policy changes, analysis of activism needs to convey the unquantifiable effects of protest in mobilising a network of activists and the effects that such networks, or pre-existing ones, have on ongoing activism.³ To this end, this dissertation addresses a central question of whether dissent plays a role in forming community or whether it builds on existing communities. The nature of community is examined and two key questions are asked in the course of this examination: is community locale-specific; and is community a certain outcome of the establishment of activist networks.

The aim of this introduction is to establish the central thesis of the dissertation and to outline the means by which this will be explored. Further to this aim, an investigation of the key terms and the debate surrounding these terms and their application will also take place. This will be done within the context of a critical literature review, in which I will discuss the central questions and debates raised in key literature. The methodologies adopted for this dissertation and the reasons behind this choice will be addressed; the structure of the remainder of the thesis will be established. A chapter outline will provide details of the empirical studies undertaken to substantiate the dissertation's main argument.

I will also investigate the many ways of examining the very nature of dissent, from the massive range of political science structures and theories, like resource mobilisation, and old/new social movement dialogues, also discourses pertaining to spatial politics and, finally, to networks of activism and community. I will then establish a theoretical hybrid that best ameliorates our understanding of contemporary British political activism and dissent and the role of community in activism. Giles Deleuze and Félix

³ I have employed Australian/British English spelling throughout this dissertation. However, in any quotations or titles where American English spelling is used, I retain the original spelling.

Guattari describe this type of theoretical construction as a nomadic tactic methodology, whereby the available arsenal of theories pertaining to activism has been utilised as a type of tool kit. This nomadic tactic enables me to best illustrate the very diversity of the activisms under investigation.⁴ This dissertation intends to generate new understandings of political activism and the communities that underpin activism. Employment of a nomadic tactic methodology, incorporation of primary source material stressing activists' voices and overarching emphasis on interpersonal bonds which link activists in lived political communities will illustrate these new understandings.

Activist networks, activist communities and situatedness

Activism and community share a symbiotic relationship: activism builds or emerges from existing communities and fosters new communities. The community of origin is often presumed to be a geographic community. Activists organise around a local issue with other local people. Narrow analysis of workplace disputes, for example, would reconfirm this belief. However, activism is rarely contained by a geographic border. Anti-poll tax activists may have primarily organised against payment of the poll tax according to local council boundaries, but the non-payment solidarity community extended well beyond any one council's limits. This community also extended beyond existing kinship or friendship ties. Activists were in solidarity with complete strangers and formed imagined communities.⁵ These types of community are central to the activism examined in this dissertation.

⁴ See H. Rietveld, *This is Our House: House Music, Cultural Spaces and Technologies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p. 5.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari write of the need for a Nomadology, whereby "there is a collective assemblage of enunciation, a machinic assemblage of desire, one inside the other and both plugged into an immense outside that is a multiplicity in any case." G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by B. Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1998), p. 23.

It is hoped that the interplay of activists' voices and theoretical sources goes part way in achieving this exciting nomadic tactic methodology.

⁵ Benedict Anderson employs this term 'imagined community' and this is discussed at length later in this introduction and in Chapter Two. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

Activist communities are not fixed; their sites of expression can be multiple and are fluid and people can move in and out. Activist communities have emerged in the course of fighting the destruction of hundreds of homes and fragmenting multiple, existing geographic and emotional communities in East London. These consisted of new networks merging with existing ones: some based on individuals' existing relationships with the physical space of Wandsworth, Wanstead or Claremont Road or with established connections to a sense of neighbourhood; others comprised of activists who gravitated to the sites under threat once news of the destruction spread. In the course of this intermeshing of new and old networks, new communities emerged. Original communities were not subsumed, but were augmented and entirely different, separate ones also emerged. Claremont Road, a focus of the chapter on anti-roads communities, is a prime example of the fluidity of activist communities. Long-term residents acted alongside people who squatted houses that were up for demolition; resident activists acted alongside people who could only support the campaign on weekends. The communities that emerged did not entail uniformity or heterogeneity. Nor did they necessarily last beyond the time of the demolition of the last house on the M11 route. However, the activist communities that did emerge during this struggle were at the very core of what the fight was about:

...the key to the political significance of the No M11 campaign lies less in the immediate aims of stopping this one road and in the immediate costs incurred by capital and the state... and more in our *creation of a climate of autonomy, disobedience and resistance*. ...People experimented with different ways of relating to each other and organising. ...In sum, this daily existence of thoroughgoing struggle was simultaneously a *negative* act (stopping the road etc.) and a *positive pointer* to the kind of social relations that could exist: no money, the end of exchange values, communal living, no wage labour, no ownership of space.⁶

⁶ Original italics. Aufheben collective, 'The politics of anti-road struggle and the struggles of anti-road politics: the case of the No M11 Link Road campaign', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 107, 108, 110.

Connecting through networks and communities

People strive for connectedness and activism can provide some of the bonds for which we long. Being involved in a day-long carnival against capital can lead to feelings of solidarity, togetherness and collectivity. Sharing visions via an Internet-facilitated news-server of Twyford Down before the bypass can lead to these same feelings of connectedness. I continually refer to the possibility of connectedness arising from activism because it is not necessarily present in all forms of activism. In fact, on further exploration of levels of connectedness, from initial interaction, to the formation of networks, and then the interweaving of these networks to form community, we will learn that association in the form of community cannot always be interpreted positively.

This delineation of levels of connectedness does not imply a hierarchy of interaction. Nor does it entail numerical distinction. A network of two people interacting with a network of three can be considered a community and this community is not necessarily a pinnacle of social relations. Networks and communities are simply expressions of connectedness. An extensive critical review of these terms, network and community, will follow in this introduction.

Networks are forms of interaction characterised by voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange.⁷ Manuel Castells recognises the modular nature of networks:

A network is a set of interconnected nodes. A node is the point where the curve intersects itself. ...If a node in the network ceases to perform a useful function it is phased out from the network, and the network rearranges itself – as cells do in biological processes. Some nodes are more important than

⁷ M. E. Keck and K. Sikkink, 'Transnational advocacy networks in international and regional politics', *International Social Science Journal*, vol. 51, no. 1 (March 1999), p. 91. Where I have emphasised that networks facilitate interaction between people, Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink refer to the organisational qualities of networks. I discuss this distinction at length as part of the critical literature review.

others, but they all need each other as long as they are within the network. And no nodal domination is systemic.⁸

While pertaining to an investigation of information networks, such a description is nevertheless pertinent to the application of networks to explicate activists' interpersonal relations. An activist network consists of interconnected individuals, unaffiliated or belonging to other collectives. There is no formal mediation, no formal membership and no hierarchy of belonging or of execution of power. Decision-making is shared and, when no quorum physically exists, decision-making takes place through the convergence of ideas. There are often no uniform plans or actions. Instead, activist networks are consolidated by intangible shared, but not necessarily homogeneous, beliefs and values.

Activists' beliefs and values form the warp and weft of the fabric of a network. They are subsequently central to activist communities, given that communities are the shifting collations of networks' interactions. Anthony Cohen treats community as a mental construct and argues that it is the sharing of values and beliefs that binds individuals in a community, rather than physical relationships:

...the 'community' as experienced by its members – does not consist in social structure or in 'the doing' of social behaviour. It inheres, rather in 'the thinking' about it. It is in this sense that we can speak of the 'community' as a symbolic, rather than a structural, construct.⁹

It is my contention, however, that the symbolic and the lived community are compatible and are often congruent. One can experience solidarity with someone they have never met in person, or one can experience it with someone with whom they live, and the emphasis of the relationship is not on the explicit sharing of beliefs and values, but the very act of being together physically or symbolically.

⁸ M. Castells, 'Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 51, no. 1 (January/March 2000), p. 15.

⁹ A. P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (Chichester: Ellis Horwood, 1985), p. 98.

This act of being together is used to delineate heterogeneous from homogeneous practices of community. Gerald Frug writes of the need to accept difference and strangeness as part of community, to embrace the tolerance of "being together with strangers."¹⁰ The activist communities examined in this dissertation certainly strive toward an acceptance of difference and this is discussed throughout the empirical studies. It is because of this resolve and the practice of recognition of the positivity of difference that I contend that autonomous activist communities in contemporary Britain are broad and fluid. These communities certainly do not reflect the enclosed, small-town ideal of community. This view of community maintains that people inhabit a fixed, geographically defined space, and that this space enables community members to interact face-to-face. It is this face-to-face interaction that fosters emotional commitment and ties. However, such a definition of community ignores that inherent to it is a sense of enclosure. People are restricted from these communities by possible physical access limits to the neighbourhood, small town or club. Furthermore, community defined by place tends to entail a degree of homogeneity of membership or conformist social relations. Entrance to and exit from such a community is difficult and pronounced.¹¹ Debate surrounding this narrow, perhaps nostalgic view of community will be returned to in the critical literature review.

What is needed, then, is a definition of community that allows for the recognition of both unity and diversity and the role of place and location. Ruth Liepins encapsulates these features in the following definition:

...'community' can be conceived as a social phenomena [sic]
that unifies people in their ability to speak together even while

¹⁰ G. E. Frug, cited in W. Sites, 'City making: building communities without building walls - review', *Social Service Review*, vol. 74, no. 4 (December 2000), p. 654.

¹¹ Laura Miller writes: "While the intellectual heirs of Tönnies continue to argue that emotional ties and commitments to circumscribed groups based on frequent face-to-face interaction remain necessary for social and individual well-being, others challenge this vision of community as romanticising repressive and conformist social relations." L. J. Miller, 'Shopping for community: the transformation of the bookstore into a vital community institution', *Media, Culture and Society*, vol. 21 (1999), p. 386.

being located in many positions and holding a variety of contrasting identities.¹²

Activists strive for community and this effort is in itself political and worthy of examination. I am not only looking at the fixed outcome, but the process itself. In the course of the following review and analysis of political, social and cultural theories used to analyse activism, I hope to demonstrate that ideas of diverse, heterogenous communities and networks can best inform our empirical and conceptual understanding of autonomous activism in contemporary Britain.

(Im)Posing theories of and on activism

The question of which political, sociological or cultural theories best conceptualise the workings of contemporary community activism in Britain is one focus of the dissertation. This question will be examined in part through the provision of a critical literature review. A summation and evaluation of theories of protest and activism, of movement, and of networks and community will be reviewed according to their relevance to contemporary autonomous leftist anti-capitalist activism in Britain. These theoretical parameters and more specific paradigms will also be discussed in relation to the empirical studies.

There is surprisingly little consensus amongst social and political science theorists on questions ranging from activists' motivations, the novelty of radical protest groups or if activists collectively constitute an activist community. Autonomous activism in contemporary Britain manifests itself in many forms, making it an arduous task to categorise or label all incidents of community protest generically. Hence, a question that I seek to address in this dissertation is whether any one social or political science theory provides an adequate theoretical framework for such widely varied activity as the Claremont Road anti-roads occupation, the anti-poll tax movement, the 18 June 1999 global day of protest, the production of zines and development of social centres, solidarity around the miners' strike and

¹² R. Liepins, 'New energies for an old idea: reworking approaches to 'community' in

Reclaim the Streets street parties.¹³ In attempting to locate a theoretical underpinning to such diverse activism, it is far too easy to generalise about the nature of the totality of these activations. While in general the activations considered empirically in this dissertation are characterised by their celebration of plurality of vision and voice and are open, democratic and decentralised, these generalities need to be critically examined. One of the aims of this dissertation is to uncover the extent of the existence of these attributes in the case study activations. In concluding this discussion, I will offer a theoretical hybrid which captures the spirit of community at the heart of activism.

I employ the term activist throughout the dissertation to describe protagonists of change. While it is vital to explore and critique theories of protest, it is equally necessary to first question the use of this term. Activist is used almost as a proper noun, a title to denote both stratification and function. This can be extremely problematic – activist comes to represent a badge of title, something that divides those who explicitly identify themselves as activists and those who do not. Activist, as a self-title, divides participants in a political action into a hierarchy of commitment – activists are in the top strata of this hierarchy:

contemporary rural studies', *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 16 (2000), p. 27.

¹³ Zines are self-published periodicals with small press runs, often photocopied, and distributed through infoshops, mail order, word of mouth or at independent bookshops. Stephen Duncombe defines zines as "noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves." (p. 6) He stresses the non-profit motive of most zine creators and the potential of zines to forge community:

In zines, everyday oddballs were speaking plainly about themselves and our society with an honest sincerity, a revealing intimacy, and a healthy "fuck you" to sanctioned authority – for no money and no recognition, writing for an audience of like-minded misfits. ...Rejecting the corporate dream of an atomized population broken down into discrete and instrumental target markets, zine writers form networks and forge communities around diverse identities and interests.

S. Duncombe, *Notes From Underground: Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture* (London: Verso, 1997), p. 2.

Fred Wright argues that despite a massive range of subject matter, the great majority of zines share common characteristics, including an emphasis on autonomy and independence, often a confrontational relationship with mainstream culture and communication media, and non-commercial, not-for-profit motives. The immediate source of the term 'zine' is the fanzine, originally an in-group slang expression to refer to fan magazines. See F. Wright, 'The history and characteristics of zines', at <http://www.zinebook.com/resource/wright1.html>; accessed 13.08.01.

The activist is a specialist or an expert in social change. To think of yourself as being an activist means to think of yourself as being somehow privileged or more advanced than others in your appreciation of the need for social change, in the knowledge of how to achieve it and as leading in the forefront of the practical struggle to create this change.¹⁴

This critique encapsulates the essence of the hierarchical potential for identifying some as the agents of social change, and others as the subjects of this change. Self-identified activists become part of an exclusive clique to which the subjects of their social change have little access, unless individuals make the transition from subject to object and don the activist hat, often worn as symbolic of lifestyle as well as action. In a paper presented for discussion at the Festival of Anti-Capitalist Ideas Workshop, part of the May Day 2000 events in London, Alice Nutter argues that it is not activism that is in need of critique, but the separation of so-called activists from non-activists and failing to see that a mass movement, such as the anti-capitalist movement, consists of people from many different cultural, social and political networks. Nutter identifies the linking of activism with a particular lifestyle (though this is not defined) as part of this segregation of activists and non-activists: "A lot of people, in fact most people, are not able and don't want to adopt an activist lifestyle, and why should they? If the purpose of all activity is to get everybody to emulate us we're pushing for a sect rather than a revolution."¹⁵

Recurring throughout this dissertation is the message that the activist title creates problems of exclusivity, whether this is expressed as lack of access to Reclaim the Streets planning meetings or alienation from the perceived and projected lifestyle politics of anti-road protests. Mindful of how charged with meaning the term activist is, I do, however, employ it to refer to participants in political acts, regardless of the extent of individuals' involvement, initiation or self-identification.

¹⁴ Anonymous author(s), 'Give up activism', *Reflections on June 18* (print version) (London: Editorial Collective, 1999), p. 2.

Through the course of an examination of the development of theories of protest, collective action and activism, it will become clear that new social movement theory, the dominant theoretical paradigm for understanding activism, and the term new social movements itself are inadequate tools of analysis or description. Instead, we need to look more at the interconnectedness of activists involved in small-scale projects for social change and the connections, or networks, formed between these activists and others, perhaps involved in large-scale struggles. Activism does not always fall neatly into the category of a movement. There are, however, certain merits to new social movement theory and these will be explored.

The term new social movement has come to be used to describe the emerging mass movements proliferating globally from the late 1960s – movements as widely varied as the peace, feminist, ecological, squatters' or animal rights' movements.¹⁶ These are movements that in many ways have fundamentally changed both public and private attitudes to rights and representation in the North. Yet the study of activism was widely considered as just another field of empirical study.¹⁷ Social movement study was an ethnographic enterprise, a branch of the participation subfield of political and social science. Certainly, Marxist social theory was an exception, though study even in this field was limited to the study of such commonly perceived working class organisations as trade unions and left

¹⁵ A. Nutter, 'What should a 21st century social movement look like?', reproduced online at the Chumba Wumba 'Everybody loves a carnival!' website: http://www.chumba.com/_gospel.htm; accessed 26.06.00.

¹⁶ J. L. Cohen, 'Strategy or identity: new theoretical paradigms and contemporary social movements', *Social Research*, vol. 52, no. 4 (Winter 1985), p. 663. Right wing and fundamentalist causes could also be considered in this broad list of social movements, but for the purpose of this dissertation are not examined, as discussed in the Preface.

¹⁷ I use this term North to refer to what some might call the First World, as opposed to their Third World, or the South. This choice is made in deference to writers from the South, who, in their work on development theory and politics of development, use this binary of North/South to describe the inequitable spread of resources and poverty. See, for example, B. Hettne, *Development Theory and the Three Worlds: Towards an International Political Economy of Development* (Harlow: Longman, 1995).

wing parties. Peasant revolts, for example, were examined within the broad confines of conceived class theories.¹⁸

The late 1960s are widely held as marking the critical moment in social movement research, and perhaps the starting point for assessing accounts of new social movements. It is since this time that the field has been promoted by social theorists to the level of grand theory.¹⁹ Jan Pakulski writes of this rise to prominence:

Social movements seem to emulate the career line of pop-stars: from obscurity to fame. Waves of mass mobilisation in the 1970s, 80s and 90s... have transformed them, almost overnight, from a Cinderella topic to celebrities, both within academic communities and among the general public.²⁰

The black civil rights movement in the US, opposition to the Vietnam War, events in May 1968 in France and the world-wide student revolt of which it formed a part, and revolutions in China, Mexico, and Cuba, signalled to researchers and theorists such as André Gorz, Alain Touraine, and Jürgen Habermas that new social actors had come to the fore.²¹ These new social actors were allegedly no longer Marxist working class revolutionary movements, but movements composed of intellectuals, ecologists, feminists and youth, whose relationships to class were ambiguous.

Despite the widely held position that the emergent social movements of the 1960s were no longer Marxist, the movements, according to David Plotke, were nevertheless too often measured with respect to their potential for generating an imagined revolutionary project, again illustrating the

¹⁸ S. Aronowitz, 'Introduction', D. A. Foss and R. Larkin, *Beyond Revolution: A New Theory of Social Movements* (South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey, 1986), p. xi.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ J. Pakulski, 'Mass Social Movements and Value Concerns: A Weberian Interpretation', unpublished (1992), p.2.

²¹ See, for example, A. Gorz, *Farewell to the Working Class: An Essay on Post-Industrial Socialism* (London: Pluto, 1982); A. Touraine, *The May Movement: Revolt and Reform* (New York: Random House, 1971); J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973); J. Habermas, *Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus* (Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp, 1973).

instrumental nature of much analysis of activism.²² Perhaps the rhetoric of some of the anti-war, feminist, and other movements was revolutionary, but not intent on a revolutionary project or political agenda. I therefore find that we, as academics and/or activists, are faced with the problematic instrumental deduction of activism. Even within this dominant instrumental mindset, it is impossible to ignore the non-revolutionary changes brought about by activism. Many protest movements, particularly in the US, achieved significant non-revolutionary political and social objectives, including major legal changes and expanding social and political entitlements for women and for minorities. For many in the North, these protest movements resulted in a change of popular consciousness and a widening of the arena for debate, with issues such as warfare, civil rights and ecology being critically evaluated, perhaps not for the first time, but on a much broader scale than ever before.

Agents of change

Many new social movement theorists have emerged from the Marxist tradition, questioning the relationship between social movements and political change, specifically querying Marxist ideas of the agent of this change. Herbert Marcuse, in *One Dimensional Man*, challenges Karl Marx's assumption that it would be the proletariat who would carry out the mission of ending capitalism, asking if some other section of society would not be better suited. Those people who were once the *agents provocateurs*, the instigators of social change, have become the stalwarts of social cohesion. It is the people "underneath the conservative popular base", the "sub-stratum of the outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted..." who will call for and bring about change. Their call for change to existing conditions and institutions is revolutionary, even if they themselves do not recognise this revolutionary spirit.²³

²² D. Plotke, 'What's so new about new social movements?', in S. M. Lyman (ed.), *Social Movements: Critiques, Concepts, Case-Studies* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), p. 114.

²³ H. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 199-200.

In the late 1960s, Frank Parkin, in his study of the social bases of support for a political mass movement, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Britain, writes of a middle-class radicalism. He identifies the growing bourgeoisie as being at the helm for calls for social reforms, not reforms of an economic or material kind, but reforms which were basically moral in content.²⁴ Verity Burgmann notes that even Lenin in *What is to be Done?* professes his concern that revolutionary consciousness could not emerge spontaneously from within the workers' movements, but had to be imported into these movements by professional, middle-class revolutionaries. Burgmann asks, "Is Lenin thereby the first new social movement theorist? Does he share with new social movement theorists a contempt for the revolutionary capacities of working-class people?"²⁵

This middle-class based analysis of social movements is problematic. Given the diverse and fluid nature of the constituencies of movements like the anti-poll tax movement or anti-roads movement it would seem problematic and complex to categorise their membership within any one class. Furthermore, as Paul Bagguley explains, to interpret new social movements according to class-based theories is to still be interpreting them according to class-theoretical Marxism or Weberianism.²⁶ So, movements that are said to have broken with old Marxist-type social movements are still analysed according to the same terms. Feminism, for example, cannot only be examined according to class-based theory.²⁷ What further confuses this

²⁴ F. Parkin, *Middle-Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968). More recently, see S. Cotsgrove and A. Duff, 'Environmentalism, middle class radicalism and politics', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 28, no. 2 (1980), pp. 333-51; P. Hoggett and D. Burns, 'The revenge of the poor', *Critical Social Policy*, no. 29 (1991), pp. 95-110; and P. Bagguley, 'Social change, the middle class and the emergence of "new social movements": a critical analysis', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 40, no. 1 (1992), pp. 26-48.

²⁵ V. Burgmann, *Power and Protest: Movements for Change in Australian Society* (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen and Unwin, 1993), p. 10. Touraine also writes of Lenin's *What is to be Done?*, noting that the idea that actors, instead of being integrated in a society by internalising its values, are submitted to a logic of domination and are unable to be real actors, was already present in Lenin's work, though it is only today being taken up by the structural Marxist school. A. Touraine, 'An introduction to the study of social movements', *Social Research*, vol. 52, no. 4 (Winter 1985), p. 767.

²⁶ Bagguley, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

²⁷ As Bagguley explains, "...feminism as a social movement is grounded in a system of patriarchy (S. Walby, *Theorizing Patriarchy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990)), which is made up of a diverse set of patriarchal social relations, and different

dichotomy is that many of the activisms studied within the confines of this dissertation could in fact be described as constituting predominantly middle-class activists. This, combined with the continuing, rather elitist nature of academia and therefore academic analysis, results in the possibility that class-based analysis is not completely irrelevant to social movement analysis. However, I have deliberately attempted to break away from such analysis. I remain critical of the narrow composition of many of the activist communities studied, but choose to concentrate on connectedness that can transcend class distinction, even if, in practice, it rarely does.

The use of the term new in characterising the social movements from the 1960s onwards can be partly attributed to social theorists' conviction that these ecology, peace, feminist, gay and lesbian and other movements are different from the labour-based socialist/Marxist movements of the past. Michel Foucault emphasises this novelty, this break with Marxism, in his portrayal of the conflicts in which new social movements have been engaged. More recent movements form in opposition to the privileges of knowledge and the translation of this privilege into a form of power; the isolation, standardisation and governmentation of individuals; and, above all, power in itself, rather than a particular institution, group, elite or class.²⁸ Foucault asserts that while new movements are concerned with defining and appreciating individual and collective identities and opposing centralised forms of power, labour-based movements were communal in both their form and aims and sought to transform the distribution of power and resources.²⁹

Burgmann alleges, however, that reactions like Foucault's, in designating the social movements of today as 'new', indicates theorists' endorsement of the values that the movements represent. The term 'new' is juxtaposed with the term 'old', which is used to specify the movements of the working class. These movements, whether they be labour, communist, socialist, or autonomous, are categorised as old social movements, representing an

feminist movements focus around different sets of patriarchal social relations." *Ibid.*

²⁸ M. Foucault, 'The subject and power', in H. L. Dreyfus and P. Rainbow (eds), *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1983), pp. 211-2.

²⁹ Plotke, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-6.

inferior, even obsolete, form of political mobilisation, limited in focus to economic deprivation. This is in stark contrast to the new social movements, which, as Foucault has asserted, are said to express individual and individualised needs and assert the significance of social divisions based on gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity rather than class. Further, the new social movements contest expressions of power existing outside the realm of workplace relations.³⁰ New social movements is a label used then not only to describe protest movements concerned with gender-, sexuality-, race- or ethnicity-based divisions, but explicitly to minimise focus on class-based issues. This is a problematic division and one that is called into question throughout the dissertation, particularly in the discussions of Reclaim the Streets activism and the J18 day of protest.

The many social movements that are now commonly called 'new' all have strong antecedents. 'Old' working-class/union movements date mostly only from the last century, having emerged with the rise of industrial capitalism. However, peasant, locale-based community, ethnic/nationalist, religious, and even feminist/women's movements have existed for centuries. Frank and Fuentes establish that European history records countless social movements throughout history, such as the Spartacist slave revolts in Rome, the Crusades and other religious wars, the peasant movements and conflicts in sixteenth century Germany, ethnic and nationalist conflicts throughout the continent, and women's movements that unleashed backlashes of witch-hunts and repression.³¹ It is conceded that if any movements could be termed new, the ecological and peace movements could be. These movements are said to be responding to social needs generated by recent world developments, including the extensive degradation recent industrial development has wrought upon the world and the generation of new means of mass destruction. Even these causes, however, are said to have been preceded by reactions to both war and environmental destruction, neither of

³⁰ Burgmann, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

³¹ A. G. Frank and M. Fuentes, 'Nine theses on social movements', *Thesis Eleven*, no. 18/19 (1987), p. 144.

which are phenomena confined to this century and have strong links to nineteenth century romanticism.³²

Collective behaviour theory

One of the first theoretical responses to emerge to the proliferation of new forms of collective action in advanced capitalist societies was collective behaviour theory.³³ Largely an American sociological response, collective behaviour theory examines social movements simply as part of wide spectrum of behaviour types ranging from panic to changes in fashion, from crowd behaviour to revolution.³⁴ Collective behaviour theories, and their stress on the irrationality of the crowd and the vulnerability of masses to manipulation and authoritarian control, had in fact shaped much of the work on social movements and mass society in the 1940s and 1950s. The term collective behaviour came to express the expressive, transgressive, and spontaneous facets of movement experience. It would seem to be a theoretical framework decidedly less than sympathetic towards collective activism:

...movements were to be taken seriously only as symptoms of social 'strain' (disorder or disorganisation), as symptoms of the breakdown of communal ties in 'mass society', as a species of 'deviant behaviour', as phenomena needing to be treated or controlled. The contents of movements' beliefs, structures, and programs were rarely attended to for their own sake. Instead, movement beliefs were thought to typify mass tendencies to

³² See Frank and Fuentes, *op. cit.*, p. 145. The relationships these movements have with new forms of technology will also be considered as both a measure of newness and distinction.

³³ Piven and Cloward refer to collective behaviour theory as malintegration theory, a paradigm they propose wrongly portrays movements as mindless eruptions lacking either coherence or continuity with organised social life. F. F. Piven and R. A. Cloward, 'Collective protest: a critique of resource-mobilization theory', in S. M. Lyman (ed.), *Social Movements: Critiques, Concepts, Case-Studies* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), p. 137.

³⁴ A. Melucci, 'The new social movements: a theoretical approach', *Social Science Information*, vol. 19, no. 2 (1980), p. 200.

short-circuit rational considerations and institutional realities in an effort to find magical solutions to people's troubles.³⁵

Collective behaviour theorists have focused on clarifying individual participation in social movements, examining grievances and values in response to rapid social change, or, in typical collective behaviour rhetoric, strain. Common to collective behaviour theorists is their stress on psychological reactions to breakdown, crude modes of communication, and volatile goals. Here, we see the implicit bias, and crucial failing point, of the collective behaviour thesis – the view that collective behaviour is an irrational response to change.³⁶

The black civil rights movement in southern United States from the late 1950s onwards, for example, posed a fundamental challenge to the collective behaviour framework. It was not the expression of irrational mob behaviour that the collective behaviour thesis would have us believe. Nor was the movement manipulated by demagogues, or imbued with some kind of magical belief. Instead, theorists were compelled by the movement to appreciate the interplay between spontaneous and organised action, the complex relations between leaders and participants, the ability cohesive communities have for mounting collective challenge, and the rationality of disorder and disruption.³⁷

³⁵ M. Darnovsky, B. Epstein, and R. Flacks, 'Introduction', in M. Darnovsky, B. Epstein, and R. Flacks (eds), *Cultural Politics and Social Movements* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), p. viii.

³⁶ For a summary of collective behaviour theories, see G. T. Marx and J. L. Wood, 'Strands of theory and research in collective behaviour', *Annual Review of Sociology*, no. 1 (1975), pp. 368-428.

³⁷ Darnovsky, Epstein and Flacks, *op. cit.*, p. x. Cohen presents a number of key assumptions common to all variants of collective behaviour theory, variants ranging from mass-society theories by Kornhauser and Arendt and Smelser's structural-functional model of collective behaviour:

- (1) There are two distinct kinds of action: institutional-conventional and noninstitutional-collective behaviour.
- (2) Noninstitutional-collective behaviour is action that is not guided by existing social norms but is formed to meet undefined or unstructural situations.
- (3) These situations are understood in terms of a breakdown wither in the organs of social control or in the adequacy of normative integration, due to structural changes.
- (4) The resulting strains, discontent, frustration, and aggression lead the individual to participate in collective behaviour.
- (5) Noninstitutional-collective behaviour follows a 'life-cycle,' open to casual analysis, which moves from spontaneous crowd action to the formation of publics and social

Resource mobilisation

In the mid-1970s, an unequivocally novel theoretical approach was adopted by American sociologists to re-examine social movements. The complete inverse of the collective behaviour approach, this new resource mobilisation approach assumed that movements were to be understood not as aberrational or deviant phenomena, nor as symptomatic, but as deliberate, patterned frameworks of collective action.³⁸ The mass-society version of the collective behaviour thesis was seen as inadequate to explain the proliferation of movements throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s in politics characterised by pluralists as democratic and in civil societies with a multitude of voluntary associations. The assumptions of the collective behaviour approach seemed obsolete because of the increasing difficulty in separating political action from collective action. Furthermore, in the United States debates stemming from both the War on Poverty and the civil rights movement re-emphasised the "enduring role of class and racial cleavages as generators of inequality." This was in stark contrast to the picture favoured by collective behaviour theorists of an increasingly homogeneous middle-class American society, one in which these questions of race- or class-driven inequality did not have to be addressed. Mayer Zald argues that increased emphasis on issues of power, conflict and the variable distribution of political resources in the 1960s provided a catalyst for changes in social movement theory.³⁹ Moreover, as Alberto Melucci argues, structural approaches such as the collective behaviour paradigm only explain why and not how movements are formed and maintained.⁴⁰

movements. (6) The emergence and growth of movements within this cycle occurs through crude processes of communication: contagion, rumor, circular reaction, diffusion, etc.

J. L. Cohen, *op. cit.*, pp. 671-2.

³⁸ Darnovsky, Epstein and Flacks, *op. cit.*, p. xxi.

³⁹ M. N. Zald, 'Looking backward to look forward: reflections on the past and future of the resource mobilization research program', in A. D. Morris and C. McClurg Mueller (eds), *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 327.

⁴⁰ A. Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*, ed. by J. Keane and P. Mier (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989).

Resource mobilisation approaches attempted to rectify these failures in social research.⁴¹

Resource mobilisation theory also departed from relative deprivation theory, which explains the origins of social movements according to the existence of grievances in society.⁴² Resource mobilisation theorists, such as John McCarthy and Mayer Zald, and Anthony Oberschall, argued that grievances are omnipresent in every society and, subsequently, the sole existence of grievances is not sufficient requisite for the rise of social movements.⁴³ The resource mobilisation thesis attempts to explain the growth and development of social movements by emphasising the fundamental importance of pre-existing organisations and the availability of resources like money, professional expertise and recruitment networks.⁴⁴ Resource

⁴¹ Zald writes:

Fresh, provocative, and iconoclastic in 1970, as Morris and Herring (1987) have demonstrated in a content analysis of journal articles, R[esource] M[obilization] theory by 1980 had become the dominant paradigm. It had become so dominant that its assumptions have often been assimilated as the routine and unstated grounds of much contemporary work.

The theory was useful not only because it challenged outmoded approaches but because it created a space for new perspectives not necessarily directly tied to core elements of RM theory. That is, it sharpened the boundaries of analysis, made critical disaggregating distinctions, and challenged many earlier assumptions. By turning the unproblematic into the problematic, it has helped us develop both more sophisticated social psychological analyses and, what barely existed before in American sociology, a serious foray into the macrosociology of social movements.

Zald, *op. cit.*, p. 327.

⁴² Relative deprivation theory proposes that an individual's socioeconomic situation is related to that person's propensity to participate in political action, particularly political violence, but only if the individual's situation is seen relative to other individuals' and groups' positions in society. So, one's perception of their place in society, socioeconomically, is not objective but relative to others'. People participate in political violence when they believe that they are constrained by socioeconomic inequalities relative to the position of other strata of people in their wider society. See D. Canache, 'Looking out my back door: the neighbourhood context and perceptions of relative deprivation', *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 49, no. 3 (September 1996), pp. 547-572; and P. R. Grant and R. Brown, 'From ethnocentrism to collective protest: responses to relative deprivation and threats to social identity', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 58, no. 3 (September 1995), pp. 195-212.

⁴³ B. Klandermans and S. Tarrow, 'Mobilization into social movements: synthesising European and American approaches', in B. Klandermans, H. Kriesi and S. Tarrow (eds), *International Social Movement Research Across Cultures*, vol. 1 (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1988), p. 4.

⁴⁴ J. Keane and P. Mier, 'Preface', in A. Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*, ed. by J. Keane and P. Mier (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), p. 3.

mobilisation analysts emphasise the importance of institutional continuities between conventional social life and collective protest.

While collective behaviour theory is frequently criticised as focussing on portraying movements as unruly eruptions, resource mobilisation is disparaged for the reverse: treating protest as being far more organised than it is. In emphasising the similarities between conventional and protest behaviour, resource mobilisation analysts frequently understate the differences between forms of protest which clearly violate established norms and those which perhaps are conforming to the interrelationship they identify as existing between conventional and protest behaviour.⁴⁵ Clearly, as analysis of radical protest behaviour among leftist activists in contemporary Britain determines, some protest departs more from 'normal' codes of behaviour.

One of the most manifest ways in which normative and non-normative theories of collective action diverge is on the question of civil violence. James Rule, in a study of theories of civil violence, asserts that resource mobilisation analysts define violent action as "simply a phase in other forms of collective action, caused by the same forces that move people to other, 'normal' assertions of collective interest."⁴⁶ Hence, advocates of resource mobilisation theories object to "sociological interpretations of protest, conflict, and violence that treat them as occurring outside of normal politics, or even *against* normal politics."⁴⁷ In fact, the Tillys, consistent with their predisposition to treat collective violence as within the realm of normal politics, de-emphasise violence by protestors and instead single-out violence by the authorities.⁴⁸ In arguing that the government is the main perpetrator of violence, the Tillys are wrongly implying that there is no capacity for

⁴⁵ Piven and Cloward, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁴⁶ J. B. Rule, *Theories of Civil Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 170-1, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁴⁷ C. Tilly, L. Tilly, and R. Tilly, *The Rebellious Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 240, cited in Piven and Cloward, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

⁴⁸ The Tillys claim that most "collective violence will ordinarily grow out of some prior collective action which is not intrinsically violent: a meeting, a ceremony, a strike... To an important degree, the damage to objects and, especially, to persons consisted of elite reactions to the claims made by ordinary people: troops, police, and thugs acting under instructions from owners and officials attacked demonstrators,

people themselves to engage in various forms of non-normative collective action.⁴⁹

Protest by Reclaim the Streets activists, for example, is a form of politics, but is indeed "outside of normal politics" and "against normal politics" in the sense that protestors break the rules defining permissible modes of political action. What is normal is a highly ambiguous and subjective notion, and Frances Piven and Richard Cloward offer a simple means of ascertaining the difference between what is and what is not normal political action: "...a riot is clearly not an electoral rally, and both the participants and the authorities know the difference."⁵⁰

Resource mobilisation theory also emphasises the normality of social movements by accentuating the role that perceived costs and benefits of participation play in the analysis of mobilisation processes. Drawing heavily from Mancur Olson's logic of collective action, this component of resource mobilisation theory argues that rational individuals will not participate in collective action unless selective incentives encourage them to do so.⁵¹ However, as resource mobilisation theorists rightly assert, Olson's theory does not explain why individuals sometimes do participate, even in the absence of selective incentives. Albert Hirschman observed in 1982 that "Olson proclaimed the impossibility of collective action for large groups...at the precise moment when the Western world was about to be all but engulfed by an unprecedented wave of public movements, marches, protests, strikes and ideologies."⁵²

In answer to this clear perplexity, Oliver asserts that individuals participate in collective action because they know that the end goal, the collective good, would never be attained if all people reasoned as Olson proposed rational

strikers, and squatters." Tilly et al., *op. cit.*, pp. 49 and 288, Piven and Cloward, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁴⁹ Piven and Cloward, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁵¹ Klandermans and Tarrow, *op. cit.*, p. 4. See M. Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968).

⁵² A. O. Hirschman, *Shifting Involvements* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 78.

individuals do.⁵³ Furthermore, for some people, even a slight chance of success is enough to motivate participation because the goal is so valuable. This is especially true if selective incentives are associated with participation.⁵⁴ Loyalty to the larger collectivity engaged in collective action and the perceived obligation to participate in order to maintain one's self-respect are two further reasons behind individuals' participation.⁵⁵

The resource mobilisation paradigm departed from previous social movement research with the emphasis it placed on organisation as a resource. Researchers focussed their efforts on examining individual organisations, referred to as social movement organisations. It was found that once a social movement was formed, the implementation of desired policies had to compete with the organisation's desire to maintain itself. In contrast to the nebulous nature of the underlying social movement, social movement organisations frequently adapt a hierarchical and highly routinised structure to maximise their efficiency in mobilising people, money and other resources in pursuit of the cause. Dalton, Kuechler and Bürklin argue that social movement organisations employ tactics that will best advance the goals of the organisation, rather than emotional outbursts by "frustrated citizens".⁵⁶

Activism as pressure group tactic?

The American resource mobilisation school embraced the view that movement actions are not, in principle, different from conventional 'power politics', along with the wider notion that movements may be seen as semi-rational or as strategically oriented and instrumentally rational. The only difference between the two in fact is a matter of resources, repertoires and

⁵³ P. Oliver, 'If you don't do it, nobody else will: active and token contributors to local collective action', *American Sociological Review*, vol. 49 (October 1984), pp. 601-10.

⁵⁴ A. Oberschall, 'Loosely structured collective conflict: a theory and an application', in L. Kriesberg (ed.), *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change*, vol. 3 (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1980), pp. 45 - 68.

⁵⁵ B. Fireman and W. A. Gamson, 'Utilitarian logic in the resource mobilization perspective', in M. N. Zald and J. D. McCarthy (eds), *The Dynamics of Social Movements* (Cambridge, MA: Winthrop, 1979), pp. 8-44.

⁵⁶ R. J. Dalton, M. Kuechler, and W. Bürklin, 'The challenge of new movements', in R. J. Dalton and M. Kuechler (eds), *Challenging the Political Order: New Social and Political Movements in Western Democracies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 9.

opportunities, and otherwise movements closely resemble embryonic interest groups. Pakulski argues that it is unlikely that US movements resemble pressure groups in Europe because the pluralism and openness of the American political system encourages movement mobilisations in the US to adopt a pressure group format and embrace instrumental logic, and enter power politics.⁵⁷

While it is not in dispute that some forms of relations must exist between participants of protest – namely some ability to communicate, some sense of common identity and some sense of shared grievances – many forms of protest require little more. A riot, such as the Poll tax riot of March 1990, requires “little more by way of organisation than numbers, propinquity, and some communication.”⁵⁸

Resource mobilisation focuses its attention on how a social movement could increase its chances of success in the political system, and identifies a number of factors in particular. The presence of a favourable political opportunity structure, of sympathetic third parties, and of allies are thought to considerably increase the chance of success of a social movement. In concerning themselves with these factors, resource mobilisation theorists are said to have moved the social movement research paradigm closer to the analysis of politics and political interaction.⁵⁹ Resource mobilisation is used to transform the study of activism into a study of strategies as though actors are defined by their goals rather than by the social relationships in which they are involved.⁶⁰ It is simply erroneous to assume that all activists, individually or collectively, want to gain access to or participate in the organised political arena, and erroneous to consider the end political goal as more important than the social relations established throughout activism.

⁵⁷ Pakulski, *op. cit.*, pp. 9 - 10.

⁵⁸ Piven and Cloward, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

⁵⁹ Klandermans and Tarrow, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁶⁰ Touraine (1985), *op. cit.*, p. 769. Touraine argues further:

Such a transformation is sometimes acceptable when apparently radical or ideological movements are actually instrumentally oriented interest groups. But in too many cases, this notion is used to eliminate enquiries about the meaning of collective action as if resource mobilization could be defined independently from the nature of the goals and the social relations of the actor, as if all actors were finally led by a logic of economic rationality.

The new social movement paradigm

At the same time resource mobilisation approaches were prevalent amongst American sociologists attempting to theorise social movements, many social scientists in western Europe had begun not only to find fault with the resource mobilisation school, but to develop their own research paradigms, collectively known as new social movement theory. In contrast with the resource mobilisation approach, emerging European attempts to explain new social movements contrasted with the resource mobilisation approach by focusing more prominently on ideological factors.

European observers noted in the 1970s that new emerging movements could not be understood as rational instruments of social change. Instead, organised protest was arising in social sectors and with a focus on issues that could not be explained by classical Marxian categories and predictions. The environmental, the women's, the peace and anti-militarist, the student and oppositional youth movements were difficult to assimilate into conventional understandings of class as the primary framework for collective action. What further highlighted the need for a new theoretical paradigm to analyse these emerging movements was that these non-working-class movements were taking forms that were, in the European context, surprising: "they appeared antiorganisational, disdainful of political parties, and indifferent to problems of state power and to the question of socialism."⁶¹ The new social movement theory emphasises that it is these values, as well as specific action forms and constituency, which mark the movements of the 1960s on as different from the old, generally characterised as the labour movement.

New social movements can be characterised as antimodernistic, rejecting the premises of a society based on economic growth. This is most evident in respect to the ecological movements which challenged and questioned the

Ibid.

⁶¹ Darnovsky, Epstein and Flacks, *op. cit.*, p. xiv.

notion of growth for growth's sake.⁶² New social movement theorists believe that the movements they study have collectively broken with the traditional values of capitalist and state socialist societies. They are said to be seeking "a new relationship to nature, to one's own body, to the opposite sex, to work, and to consumption."⁶³

Adherents of the new social movement school of thought juxtapose the goals and values of old and new movements. In old social movements, collective action could normally be traced to a sense of self-interest consistent with rational choice theory.⁶⁴ Workers, for example, joined the labour movement to improve their economic position. Goals of these old movements were, therefore, instrumental, aimed at benefiting the interests of members of a collective. Conversely, the goals of the new social movements often involve collective goods not restricted to group members and therefore violate Olson's *Logic of Collective Action*.⁶⁵ For example, while individuals may become active in an environmental campaign to address a problem in their locale, broader ideological goals and the pursuit of collective goods, generally override these immediate goals, or instrumental motivations. Other individuals are motivated to become involved by the expressive and social aspects of participation or simply the act of being in solidarity with other activists.⁶⁶

⁶² This is something that, in respect to the consequences on the environment, neither the labour, socialist or communist movements have historically challenged. Indeed, so-called workers' states have inflicted some of the most severe devastation on the environment due, in part, to rather singular focus on production targets and planning schemes. See, for example, P. Jehlicka, 'Environmentalism in Europe: an East-West comparison', in C. Rootes & H. Davis (eds), *A New Europe? Social Change and Political Transformation* (London: UCL Press, 1994), pp. 112-131.

⁶³ Klandermans and Tarrow, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁶⁴ John Scott describes rational choice theory as a generic label the theory incorporated into many aspects of political and social sciences theories for that belief that all action is fundamentally 'rational' in character and that individuals calculate the likely costs and benefits of an action before deciding to act. J. Scott, 'Rational choice theory', in G. Browning, A. Halcli, N. Hewlett and F. Webster (eds), *Understanding the Present: Theory and Society* (London: Sage, 2000), on-line version: <http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~scottj/socscot7.htm>; accessed 17.10.01.

In calculating the expected costs and benefits of any action, individuals are then expected, according to rational choice theory, to only act if their own interests will be served.

⁶⁵ Dalton, Kuechler, and Bürklin, *op. cit.*, p. 12. See Olson, *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ Dalton, Kuechler, and Bürklin, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

New social movement activists make extensive use of unconventional but long-used forms of action, such as sit-ins, demonstrations, petitions, and picketing. The new social movements theory asserts that many new social movements deliberately remain outside the institutionalised framework of government.⁶⁷ Many environmental groups, for example, openly reject participation in government commissions and/or regulatory groups because they feel they may be forced to compromise on their goals.⁶⁸ Rather than participating in the party political system, participants in new social movements prefer small-scale, decentralised organisations. New social movements are also anti-hierarchical and favour direct democracy.⁶⁹ Very few have an internal hierarchy and much of their membership base is loose, often with members not even being 'signed-up' in any formal way. So-called old social movements are characterised by centralised, hierarchical structures. Such a structure enables labour unions, for example, to mobilise their supporters in unison and direct the resources of the organisation. It is therefore seen as the optimal organisational structure, particularly, as discussed previously, by resource mobilisation theorists.⁷⁰

In stark contrast to centralised, hierarchical structures, new social movements, and what I term activist collectives, networks and communities, operate (or at least aim to operate) within decentralised, open, and democratic structures, more in tune with the participatory tendencies of their supporters.⁷¹ Anti-poll tax activists, for example, exercised the belief

⁶⁷ See, for example, C. Offe, 'New social movements: changing boundaries of the political', *Social Research*, vol. 52 (1985), pp. 817-868; and Melucci, 'The new social movements...', *op. cit.*, pp. 199-226.

⁶⁸ Dalton, Kuechler and Bürklin, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁶⁹ Klandermans and Tarrow, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁷⁰ See, for example, R. J. Brulle and B. Schaefer Caniglia, 'Money for nature: a network analysis of foundations and U.S. environmental groups', University of Notre Dame Department of Sociology Working Paper and Technical Report Series no. 2000-01, pp. 1-46; on-line edition: <http://www.nd.edu/~soc2/workpap/2000/money.pdf>; accessed 13.11.01. Here, Brulle and Schaefer Caniglia discuss the effectiveness of hierarchical organisation styles over non-hierarchical ones in attracting funding within the American environmental lobby movement. See also Dalton, Kuechler and Bürklin, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁷¹ Dalton, Kuechler and Bürklin write further: "The fluid organizational structure of new social movements is most visible among locally based citizen action groups or local branches of national organizations. The small size of these groups and their neighbourhood locale make an extensive organizational structure unnecessary and undesirable. Similar organizational tendencies can be observed, however, even in larger new social movements." Dalton, Kuechler and Bürklin, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

that instrumental change like the abandonment of the poll tax and other less tangible social change can be accomplished via face-to-face relations, at the level of personal identity and consciousness, in the household and neighbourhood, regardless of such change being superficially articulated in public policy and macro-level power relations.⁷² The claim that new social movements are open, decentralised and democratic will be critically evaluated throughout the course of the dissertation in relation to what I term communities and networks of activism. I will ask, for example, if the anti-roads movement was open to black activists, or if attempts were made to foster meaningful, horizontal relations between largely white, urban, middle-class young anti-roads activists and black activists.

Ronald Inglehart's theory about postmaterial values is the source of many of the new social movements theorists' ascription of value changes being at the core of the emergence and increased propensity of movements. According to Inglehart, a silent revolution was taking place in Europe, whereby a dramatic shift occurred in value orientations. Unprecedented economic development, the emergence of the welfare state, the transformation of the international system, and unparalleled developments in science and technology have resulted in the prevalence of postmaterialistic, rather than materialistic, values.⁷³ Assured of the satisfaction of material needs, postwar youth developed nonmaterial needs such as self-actualisation and participation.⁷⁴

In absolute contrast to this thesis, other new social movement theorists, including Horn, Berger and Löwenthal seek to ascribe the rise of new social movements to increased social strain related to industrialisation and bureaucratisation.⁷⁵ It is due to these two processes that a loss of identity may occur, whereby individuals have been stripped of their traditional ties

⁷² Darnovsky, Epstein, and Flacks, *op. cit.*, p. xiv.

⁷³ R. Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 4.

⁷⁴ Klandermans and Tarrow, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁷⁵ See, for example, K. Horn (ed.), *Gruppensynamik unter der 'subjektive Faktor.'* *Repressive Entsublimierung oder politische Praxis* (Frankfurt a.M: Suhrkamp, 1973); P. L. Berger, B. Berger, and H. Kellner, *Das Unbehagen in der Modernität* (Frankfurt a.M: Campus, 1975); R. Löwenthal, *Gesellschaftswandel und*

and loyalties. "As a consequence, people become receptive to visions of new utopias and new commitments."⁷⁶

What will become clear throughout the course of this dissertation is that neither Inglehart's nor Horn, Berger and Löwenthal's theses adequately account for the mobilisation of activists in autonomous actions in contemporary Britain. For example, anti-poll tax activists revolted against the very antithesis of society as described by Inglehart. June 18 activists' motivations can perhaps be ascribed to a search for new identities at a time of ever increasing industrialisation and bureaucratisation. However, Horn, Berger and Löwenthal further account for activism by claiming that there exists some sort of collective vision. The very essence of June 18, and Reclaim the Streets, and the anti-roads movements, is that there is a recognition of the multiplicity of visions of new utopias and new collective identities. It is for these reasons that new frameworks are needed for contextualising and analysing protest and collective action. I will now explore some framework possibilities which go beyond the canon of academic social movement research.

Direct action: framework or tactic

One tool of analysis that would encompass all of the movements examined is a direct action framework. This does not only give a means of describing a movement's methods but also their long-term goals. Resource mobilisation theory, for example, is simply too restrictive, positing access to the state and state-based change as the ultimate objectives of protest. A goal of direct action campaigns, however, is changing the general public's perception of the struggle or campaign, and, then, ultimately, altering societal values. It is precisely because participants in the anti-poll tax and the anti-roads movements so often identify with these holistic, community or general public-aimed goals rather than change at the parliamentary level that the direct action paradigm is a more appropriate means of analysing the movements. Many activists see organised politics, no matter where they

Kulturkrise. Zukunftsprobleme der westlichen Demokratien (Frankfurt a.M: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1979).

⁷⁶ Klandermans and Tarrow, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

might fit into the political left-right schema, as part of the broad societal 'problem', and their cooperation and collaboration are neither needed in or desired.⁷⁷ If we take Noel Sturgeon's direct theory, for example, as a tool of analysis, movements are no longer stagnant, impersonal entities, but they are seen through the lens of a "lived analysis of contemporary domination and resistance."⁷⁸

Direct action is not only a means of resistance common to all of the movements analysed, but it is also an ideology in itself.⁷⁹ In fact, April Carter insists that direct action cannot be solely defined in terms of methods or tactics used, like sit-ins or mass marches.⁸⁰ It is something of an umbrella term, and under the broad heading of direct action come such apt descriptions or meanings as a tactic for change, a method of protest or resistance, or any act or protest that takes symbolic action one step further, beyond the constitutional or lawful limits. In other words, when a rally or individual act of symbolic protest like a vigil or fast become illegal, it then becomes direct action.⁸¹ For the purpose of this dissertation, direct action will be used as part of a symbiotic framework for examination of activisms and activist communities. It will also be examined as a tool of activism.

The emphasis Carter places on the illegality of direct action could imply that activists' motivations lie in committing an illegal act. Instead, I believe it is more appropriate to stress the self-initiating nature of direct action, the desire of activists to enact change themselves. George McKay, in his discussion of what he terms DiY (Do-it-Yourself) Culture, emphasises the action orientation of contemporary autonomous activism:

Activism means action... action takes many forms, from
throwing a free party to setting up a long-term protest camp,

⁷⁷ See, for example, the scathing critique of British nature conservation groups like English Nature, Community Forests and Groundwork that work within the parliamentary framework in *Do or Die!* Anonymous author(s), 'Take a sad song and make it better? Ecological restoration in the UK', *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), pp. 159-173.

⁷⁸ N. Sturgeon, 'Theorizing movements: direct action and direct theory', in M. Darnovsky, B. Epstein and R. Flacks (eds), *Cultural Politics and Social Movements* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), p. 36.

⁷⁹ See A. Carter, *Direct Action and Liberal Democracy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

from swooping en masse on a destructive quarry to producing and distributing an alternative press, from trawling round the revived summer festival circuit with your message to organising one-off spectacular mediagenic stunts like climbing Big Ben.⁸²

Hannah Arendt relates action to power; collective action or acting in concert leads to power. This power is the source of community and because it has been brought about by collective initiative and unanticipated action, it is non-hierarchical power, power that is omnipresent and yet not enforced by violence.⁸³ This understanding of action leads to an ability to appreciate activism for non-instrumental qualities such as action's agitative and unitary potentials. Mary Ann Tétreault and Robin Teske recognise the possible positive extended qualities of Arendt's definition of action:

In this conception, action is the ability to start out, to begin something anew. Action extends beyond beginnings, however. The initiation of action is like tossing a stone into a pond. The impact makes ripples on the surface, but the most lasting changes occur in places we can't see, below the surface, where the life of the pond reorganises itself around the intruding stone and the injury as well as the assistance it inflicted on its way to the bottom. Like the stone, action is inherently neither evil nor benign. Regardless of what is intended, action simply is and, in the process of its realisation, makes change not only possible, but necessary.⁸⁴

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

⁸² G. McKay, 'DiY Culture: notes towards an intro', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 4-5.

⁸³ Arendt writes further that:

power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group holds together. When we say of somebody that he [sic] is 'in power' we actually refer to his [sic] being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name. The moment the group, from which the power originated to begin with disappears, 'his power' [sic] also vanishes.

H. Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Compass Books, 1965), p. 174.

⁸⁴ M. A. Tétreault and R. L. Teske, 'Introduction: framing the issues', in M. A. Tétreault and R. L. Teske (eds), *Partial Feminist Approaches to Social Movements*,

Communities of abstraction, communities of activism

It is simplistic to interpret activism as a series of actions without considering the links between these seemingly unrelated actions and the abstract communities which connect the perpetrators of these actions. Paul James uses the term abstract community in relation to the nation state. It is a term that James argues best meets the demands of the ambiguity of people's emotional affiliation to the otherwise abstract nation state:

How can the nation be experienced as a concrete, gut-felt relation to common souls and a shared landscape, and nevertheless be based upon abstract connections to largely unknown strangers and unvisited places? ...It is important to consider the contradictory intersection of more abstract with more concrete forms of association in grounding the emergence of the nation....⁸⁵

The nation state is not the sole domain of the abstract community. Perhaps in an even more ambivalent manner, protest communities are also abstract. Activists report feelings of solidarity with people whose names they do not know and with whom they have never had face-to-face contact. And James' description of the role of "the abstracting mediations of mass communications" applies as readily to the interaction between activists as it does to that between inhabitants, or citizens, of a nation state, albeit on a more micro scale.⁸⁶

Benedict Anderson's work on the nation state as an imagined community clearly affected James' thesis. While James focuses on the multiple ways in which abstraction of community occurs, Anderson's notion of nation as

Community, and Power, vol. 1 (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), draft version, page number/s unknown.

⁸⁵ P. James, *Nation Formation: Towards a Theory of Abstract Community* (London: Sage, 1996), p. xii.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.* It is important to note that when James refers to these abstracting mediations of mass communications he is not necessarily writing of the Internet. For example, James expounds on the influence of mass print media in creating a sense of the nation, something that obviously pre-dates the influence of Internet-facilitated communication. This is also relevant to abstract activist communities such as the anti-poll tax protest community that moved beyond the confines of the

community derives from a more concentrated, intangible imagining. A nation is an imagined political community because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."⁸⁷ Anderson gives little weight to the influence of the practice of abstraction to which James refers in his discussion of the role of the media, for example, in the formation of abstract communities.⁸⁸ This distinction becomes particularly clear in a note made by Anderson, referring to Hugh Seton-Watson's definition of the nation: "All that I can find to say is that a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one.' We may translate 'consider themselves' as 'imagine themselves.'"⁸⁹ Here, I would assert, that Seton-Watson's definition of the nation could be transcribed onto community as a whole. So, a community exists, in this case an activist community, when a significant number of people consider themselves to form a community, or behave as if they have formed one. It is in the imagining that community is formed. This should not, however, preclude other instigations of community, which will be explored further.

In applying these terms abstract and/or imagined community to a theoretical and empirical discussion of protest and activism, I am attempting to re-mould theory most often pertaining to the study of high politics, ie. the state and international relations, to one that is considered an ethnographic subfield of politics.⁹⁰ This is particularly pertinent given that I am studying activist communities whose collective goals are in fact not to gain access to political power in the nation state arena but to subvert that conventional power base.

immediate neighbourhood and became a hybrid of non-face-to-face and face-to-face activist relations. See *Ibid.* pp. 184-185.

⁸⁷ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁸⁸ See, for example, Anderson's discussion of the influence of the advent of mass print media, or print-capitalism as he refers to it. Anderson is interested in the way mass print media enabled "rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways," while James emphasises the interplay between the practices constituted in a disembodied level of abstraction and less abstract levels to association a depth of meaning. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 40; James, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁸⁹ Cited in Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

The role of space and place

The idea that community is imagined or abstracted is relevant not only to the macro community of the nation state, but also to communities of activists. It is necessary to explore further the contradictions and conflicts connected to concepts of community in order to find a definition that best describes activists' interconnectedness, both temporal and enduring. One of the key goals of this discussion is to avoid a symbiosis of location and meaning in any one definition of community. Laura Miller writes that two of the most common understandings of community are frequently and problematically melded together – community as a defined territory or geographical space and community tied to human relationships of a particular quality. When these meanings are merged, community is used to describe “a physical place and set of ideals which are juxtaposed against the world...” in which we now live.⁹¹ This nostalgic ideal is based on binaries that are often couched in a desire to return to a past that never existed.

This ideal is actually limited in its scope. Returning to the imagined past when responsibility to the common good outweighed individuals' needs or desires, when a moral voice compelled people to behave more virtuously, would not necessarily lead to a 'better' society. Instead, attempts to create this imagined ideal community of the past may lead to increased ostracism and alienation of anyone outside of the community's imposed or even imagined moral code.⁹² Iris Marion Young strongly condemns the community ideal's potential for exclusion: “The ideal of community denies and represses social difference, the fact that the polity cannot be thought of

⁹⁰ Aronowitz, *op. cit.*, p. xi.

⁹¹ Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 389.

⁹² I do not have the space to enter into a lengthy exposition of the new communitarian school of scholarship which, I believe, espouses a somewhat regressive ideal of community. Although one of its key proponents, Amitai Etzioni, espouses that new communitarianism does not prescribe a set of values, literature from self-identified new communitarians constantly refers to conservative notions such as community stemming from the nuclear family. Even the definition of community offered by Etzioni, while recognising the potential multi-layering of networks, pinpoints shared values as being integral to community. See A. Etzioni, 'Introduction' and 'The responsive communitarian platform: rights and responsibilities', in A. Etzioni (ed.), *The Essential Communitarian Reader* (Lanham, ML: Rowman and Littlefield. 1998), pp. ix-xxiv; xxv-xxxix.

as a unity in which all participants share a common experience and common values."⁹³

What is needed then is a definition of community that recognises and is inclusive of diversity and also allows for those rhizomes of networks, or communities, which look to subvert the imposition of a uniform moral code. Anthony Cohen offers one such definition, remarkable for the fluidity it conveys. Cohen does not attempt to formulate a lexical meaning of the word community, but instead to express its use.

A reasonable interpretation of the word's use would seem to imply two related suggestions: that the members of a group of people (a) have something in common with each other, which (b) distinguishes them in a significant way from the members of other putative groups. 'Community' thus seems to imply simultaneously both similarity and difference. The word thus expresses a relational idea: the opposition of one community to others or to other social entities.⁹⁴

Here, community implies a level of consciousness of otherness which I believe is often too difficult to ascertain. Certainly, if we speak of a community such as that pertaining to a village, it is quite simple to delineate otherness. For example, Cohen points to a study of the community of the village of Elmdon, near Cambridge. It was found that 'village' equated to community, distinguishing the place of the village from other larger town communities. For others in the community of Elmdon, community connoted kinship and class and the symbolic idea of villageness, including perceptions of otherness of those outside of the village, physically and socially.⁹⁵ Once outside the borders of a village, however, it becomes even more difficult to ascertain what distinguishes one network of people from another. If, for example, we take the June 18, 1999 carnival against capital activists to be a community, who or what are their defining others? If we define these others as any people who did not physically participate at any of the day's actions,

⁹³ I. M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 227.

⁹⁴ A. P. Cohen, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

then we automatically exclude members of J18-e-mail lists, plus the myriad of people who may have shared the activists' goals and aspirations, but did not actively contribute to the protest.

There is, however, a role for definitions of community that are inclusive of the importance of place and, above all, more nebulous shared emotional space. The notion of the space, both physical and emotional, that encircles protest is one that warrants investigation. Stanford Lyman and Marvin Scott assert that a defined space is essential to the success of activities that run counter to expected norms, as protest and activism do.⁹⁶ And Michel Maffesoli writes that the shared customs and rituals, in this case between political activists, or the proximity, gives meaning to what he refers to as the 'social divine'. It is this divine that "allows us to recreate the cenacles that keep us warm and provide social spaces in the heart of the cold, inhuman metropolis."⁹⁷ When we speak of protest, these social spaces that are created by the social divine are protest spaces.

Any activism results in the creation of a protest space. The relationship is symbiotic, however, and for activism to occur, a protest space must evolve. This space is both tangible and intangible. It is the physical environs of the protest site. More importantly, it is the ambiance, the camaraderie, shared by the activists. It is this milieu – a sense of shared emotional space – which is central to community, and not necessarily physical place. This sense of milieu is described by Kevin Hetherington, after Louis Marin, as utopics, "whereby a utopian outlook on society and the moral order that it wishes to project are translated into spatial practice through the attachment of ideas about the good society onto representations of particular places."⁹⁸ I contend, however, that these places can be constantly changing, if not imagined, rather than the fixed utopian sites of Hetherington's analysis of New Age Traveller utopics.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ S. Lyman and M. Scott, *A Sociology of the Absurd* (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1970), p. 90.

⁹⁷ M. Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, trans. by D. Smith (London: Sage, 1996), p. 42.

⁹⁸ K. Hetherington, 'Vanloads of uproarious humanity: New Age Travellers and the utopics of the countryside', in T. Skelton and G. Valentine (eds), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 328.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-342.

There is nevertheless a plethora of analysis which specifically examines the relationship between physical place and resistance/activism.¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Marxist readings of the industrial revolution and the formation of the working class have relied heavily on a spatial theory of urbanisation.¹⁰¹ However, Joseph Kling argues that a specific recognition of the relationship between space and social behaviour, in this case activism, emerged only after the changing nature of cities was realised in the post-war period. The city was no longer seen as a public, in which people are accountable to and connected with each other; instead, cities became regions of flows, as Manuel Castells argues, of no order, meaning or coherence.¹⁰² Such disaggregated spaces do nevertheless influence social life: "spatiality situates social life." Space is "an active arena where purposeful human agency jostles problematically with tendential social determinations to shape everyday activity, particularise social change, and etch into place the course of time and the making of history."¹⁰³ Importantly, this fragmented spatiality advances collective action or movements, whose participants aim to change the nature of their immediate space and their relationship with it.¹⁰⁴ It is therefore pertinent to any study of activism to take into consideration the space that fosters social networks and ultimately collective dissent. I have taken this idea of space, however, to be independent of physical place.

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, C. Dolgon, M. Kline and L. Dresser, "House people, not cars!": economic development, political struggle and common sense in a city of intellect', in M. P. Smith (ed.), *Marginal Spaces* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1995), pp. 1-36; M. P. Smith, 'Introduction: the social construction of marginal spaces', in M. P. Smith (ed.), *Marginal Spaces* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1995), pp. ix-1; and P. Routledge, *Terrains of Resistance: Nonviolent Social Movements and the Contestation of Place in India* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993).

¹⁰¹ See J. Kling, 'Complex society/complex cities: new social movements and the restructuring of urban space', in R. Fisher and J. Kling (eds), *Mobilizing the Community: Local Politics in the Era of the Global City* (Newbury Park, NJ: Sage, 1993), p. 36.

¹⁰² Manuel Castells, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁰³ Edward Soja, cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

¹⁰⁴ See the three goals of such movements that Castells establishes in *The City and the Grassroots*. The second goal is particularly informative for the definition of community that it offers. M. Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), pp. 319-320.

*Understanding activist communities through ideas of
grrrl networks*

Pertinent insight into the idea of communities of connectedness not reliant on physical location comes from an unlikely area of scholarship – the investigation of the nature of the riot grrrl ‘subculture’. I label this unlikely simply because of the lack of obvious connection between scholarship on what might easily be relegated as empirical study on a short-lived youth culture phenomenon and the enduring quest for understandings of community. However, Marion Leonard, Jessica Rosenberg, Gitana Garofalo and Ednie Kaeh Garrison, among others, have offered definitions of networks and community relating to riot grrrl movements or collectives that provide for the intangible connection people can feel with others, without face-to-face contact and without subscription membership.¹⁰⁵

Marion Leonard describes riot grrrl as a feminist network, which developed in the underground music communities of Olympia, Washington, and Washington, DC in the early 1990s. It is a network that is inclusive of people worldwide, though still largely concentrated in the North America, Britain and Australia/New Zealand.¹⁰⁶ Leonard contends that riot grrrl is a network rather than a scene, movement or subculture because the term network suggests lines of interconnection without suggesting a singular voice or aim.¹⁰⁷ Riot grrrl is simply a collective name for a polymorphous network; it is not a label given to a unified or homogenous grouping.¹⁰⁸ Nevertheless, it is no less relevant to speak of a riot grrrl community, a community made up of the sum parts of networks of interaction and communication.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, M. Leonard, ‘Paper planes: travelling the new grrrl geographies’, in T. Skelton and G. Valentine (eds), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 101-120; M. Leonard, ‘Rebel girl, you are the queen of my world’ Feminism, ‘subculture’ and grrrl power’, in S. Whiteley (ed.), *Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 230-256; E. Kaeh Garrison, ‘US feminism - grrrl style! Youth (sub)cultures and the technologies of the third wave’, *Feminist Studies*, vol. 26, no. 1 (Spring 2000), pp. 141-170; and J. Rosenberg and G. Garofalo, ‘Riot grrrl: revolutions from within’, *Signs*, vol. 23, no. 3 (Spring 1998), pp. 809-841.

¹⁰⁶ Leonard, ‘Paper planes...’, *op. cit.*, p. 102; Leonard, ‘Rebel girl...’, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

¹⁰⁷ See Leonard’s excellent critical analysis of the use of youth subculture to frame riot grrrl analysis Leonard, ‘Rebel girl...’, *op. cit.*, pp. 240-241.

¹⁰⁸ Leonard, ‘Paper planes...’, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111.

Understanding activist communities through ideas offered by the concept of riot grrrl communities allows for a definition of community that incorporates change. Stephen Duncombe stresses the centrality of modes of communication in his description of riot grrrls' new models of community, arguing that riot grrrl communities are created "anew with each act of communication between individuals."¹⁰⁹ Activist communities experience constant change in composition, with each new exchange of ideas and at each new collective protest. Like riot grrrl communities, the activist communities which feature as empirical studies throughout this dissertation are communities of flux.

Communities of networks

Leonard's use of Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome metaphor to describe networks has directly affected my understanding of both networks and communities and their role in activism. The nature of rhizomes is particularly apt to convey that sense of non-hierarchical structure of both riot grrrl and activist networks and communities in contemporary Britain and their attempts at celebrating plurality.¹¹⁰ A rhizome is a system of plant roots and tubulars extending both below and under the ground. The plants are connected in a living network.

Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari use the analogy of the rhizome to better describe, and understand, human thought systems and means of interconnection. It can also be used as an analogy of networks and communities between activists. For Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizome offers a conscious break with the image of the tree, so prevalent in traditional practices and structures. While an arborescent analogy restricts us to seeing interconnection, whether neurologically or interpersonally, as hierarchical – roots and branches form and attach to the tree's hierarchical trunk, the rhizome celebrates the contours and fissures of the multiple surfaces it crosses. The parts of the rhizome move non-linearly, without

¹⁰⁹ Duncombe, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹¹⁰ Leonard, 'Paper planes', *op. cit.*, p. 110.

established order or structure.¹¹¹ The activist collective like the broad network which established in opposition to the 1994 Criminal Justice Act was characterised by these rhizomatic attributes: fluidity, equality and flux.

Manuel Castells links the idea of the rhizome to social and computer networks in his description of networks consisting of nodes. If we take rhizome to mean a subterranean rootlike stem emitting both roots and shoots, a node is a knob on a root or branch, at which point a leaf stems. Castells defines node mathematically, stating that a node is the point where the curve intersects itself, while a network is a set of interconnected nodes.¹¹² Each means of understanding complements, rather than contradicts, the other. I hesitate, however, to use the mathematical jargon simply because such dialogue can become reminiscent of earlier social movement analysis such as the resource mobilisation school. What is crucial to any discussion of activism is the characteristics of networks Castells describes. Network is apt as a tool of analysis and as a description because of the decentred, non-hierarchical and organic qualities.¹¹³

The use of networks as a tool of analysis and description of activists' connectedness becomes more apt still when we take into consideration the increasingly prevalent role of computer-mediated communications for activist communities. As Ruth Liepins argues, "people will be simultaneously participating in one 'community', as a local network of interaction whilst also being located in networks and 'stretched-out communities' of many other kinds."¹¹⁴ These 'stretched-out communities' may be communities fostered by computer-generated communication and interaction, via e-mail, bulletin boards, discussion lists or webpages:

...[computer-generated] networks will be new places of assembly that will generate opportunities for employment,

¹¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *op. cit.*, pp. 15; 98.

¹¹² Castells, 'Materials for an exploratory theory...', *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹¹³ See also Harry Cleaver's water metaphor for describing the type of organising between grassroots activist groups, in place of networks, which he argues are more applicable to the inter-relations of NGOs. H. Cleaver, 'Computer linked social movements and the global threat to capitalism', <http://www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleaver/polnet.html>; accessed 26.11.99.

¹¹⁴ Liepins, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

political participation, social contact, and entertainment. At their best, networks are said to renew community by strengthening the bonds that connect us to the wider social world while simultaneously increasing our power in that world.¹¹⁵

Communities built around Internet-based networks are claimed to be based on the existence of social networks rather than local, place-based solidarities.¹¹⁶ They are what Scott Lash might describe as reflexive communities, after Dick Hebdige's writings on subcultures. Lash writes that we reflexively throw ourselves into communal worlds, in this case on-line communities, in part as a response to the passive act of being thrown into the collective meanings and practices of the being-in-the-world of simple community. On-line communities require an active decision to become involved in them or even with others who have had a hand in creating them.¹¹⁷ The qualities of computer-based, or cyberspace, communities are evaluated throughout the dissertation, particularly in relation to the extensive reliance on computer-based communications by J18 activists. What is pertinent to the closing paragraphs of this discussion is a glimpse into the vast debate raging around the merits of technology-driven communities.

Ferdinand Tönnies lamented in 1887 that there was a fundamental difference between the communally organised societies of yesteryear (*gemeinschaft*), characterised by densely interconnected social relationships between neighbours and kin, and those of the age of the industrial revolution, in which societies were to be organised contractually (*gesellschaft*). In contrast to the communally organised societies, contractually organised societies would consist of people barely acquainted, of sparsely knit relations. In large industrial cities, as opposed to small villages and rural areas, communal mutual support would no longer exist

¹¹⁵ P. Kollock and M. A. Smith, 'Communities in cyberspace', in M. A. Smith and P. Kollock (eds), *Communities in Cyberspace* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 2.

¹¹⁶ B. Wellman, 'Preface', in B. Wellman (ed.), *Networks in the Global Village: Life in Contemporary Communities* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999), pp. xii-xv.

¹¹⁷ Lash, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

and would be replaced by specialised, contractual exchanges.¹¹⁸ Lament for the loss of 'genuine' community was thus expressed over one hundred years ago and the finger of blame was pointed at technology.

Forms of technology continue to be blamed for an alleged loss of authentic community: "While all this razzle-dazzle connects us electronically, it disconnects us from each other, having us 'interfacing' more with computers and TV screens than looking in the face of our fellow human beings."¹¹⁹ There is simultaneously a romantic celebration of the virtues of the local and belief in the fragmentation of placedness by technologies. Anthony Giddens writes of this apparently conflicting duality:

In conditions of modernity place becomes increasingly phantasmagoric: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them... the 'visible form' of the locale conceals the distanced relations which determine its nature.¹²⁰

So, as the validity of an unaffected local experience wanes, the appearance of the local's genuineness and uniqueness increases. The local is no longer autonomous, but nevertheless can retain significance, as Ulf Hannerz argues, as "the arena in which a variety of influences come together, acted out perhaps in a unique combination, under those special conditions."¹²¹

It is simply erroneous, if not dangerous, to imbue the local, whether the home or village-like setting, with inflated positive values. Teresa de Lauretis cites the politico-biographical essay by Minnie Bruce Pratt and its explanation of the ever-changing nature of 'home'. Home could not be read as a more genuine community than elsewhere, because it was simply "an illusion of coherence and safety based on the exclusion of specific histories of

¹¹⁸ F. Tönnies in B. Wellman, 'The network community: an introduction', in B. Wellman (ed.), *Networks in the Global Village: Life in Contemporary Communities* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999), p. 4.

¹¹⁹ Jim Hightower cited in B. Wellman and M. Gulia, 'Net-surfers don't ride alone: virtual communities as communities', in B. Wellman (ed.), *Networks in the Global Village: Life in Contemporary Communities* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999), p. 332.

¹²⁰ A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990), pp. 18-19.

¹²¹ U. Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.27.

oppression and resistance [and on] the repression of differences even within oneself."¹²² Pratt gives up the idea of home, not only the home of her childhood and family, but any metaphorical home that:

...would replicate the conditions of home, that is to say "the suppression of positive differences [that] underwrites familial identity." And it is replaced by a notion of community as inherently unstable and contextual, not based on sameness or essential connections, but offering agency instead of passivity; a comm-unity [sic] that is "the product of work, of struggle...of interpretation."¹²³

This dissertation aims to dismantle the metaphorical placedness of community and to open dialogue which recognises the importance of communities of difference to activism. It examines the actions of activists' whose immediate aims of stopping the construction of a proposed road or the even implementation of a tax are outweighed by the desire for the creation of networks of connectedness, in which difference and diversity are celebrated and embraced: "Thus this life of permanent struggle is simultaneously a negative act and a positive pointer to the kind of social relation that could be...a community of resistance."¹²⁴

Methodology

As I have established, the purpose of this dissertation is to examine autonomous political activism in Britain from the mid-1980s to 1999 within the context of the communities that might have spawned this activism and the communities that emerged from it. The dissertation requires a fusion of both an historical narrative approach and an empirical approach, historical and contemporary, in order for activists' stories to be told. This is pivotal to the aim of focussing on unquantifiable elements of activism, such as the rhizomatic nature of activist networks and communities, rather than on measuring the instrumental impact of protest. The choice of utilising an

¹²² Biddy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty on Pratt in T. de Lauretis, 'Eccentric subjects: feminist theory and historical consciousness', *Feminist Studies*, vol. 16, no. 1 (Spring 1990), p. 135.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

historical narrative discourse seemed virtually automatic. Any analysis of the tangible qualities of protest campaigns requires detailed study of their evolution and course. It is only once this has been achieved that an informed social theoretical framework can be arrived at.

This dissertation is inter-disciplinary. In the course of discussing the empirical case-studies of contemporary autonomous activisms in Britain several fields of political, social and cultural inquiry are spanned and eventually bridged, until a theoretical position is reached that best enables an understanding of the nature and importance of community in and for activism. Fields of thought as diverse as collective behaviour theory and urban geographies of resistance are employed to understand better the complexities of the empirical studies. Some theory is referred to specifically only in the introduction of the dissertation, as part of a study of the various ways in which activism and dissent have been considered in academic discourse. Other discussion of social, political and/or cultural theory is interwoven throughout the text in order to expound on empirical case studies.

In order to best represent the diversity of activism and of activists, I have paid great heed to the value of empirical research. To this end, I undertook three research trips to Britain, in 1998, 1999-2000 and late-2000. During these trips, I focussed on collecting primary resource material, attending and observing activists' meetings and actions and interviewing activists. The empirical studies of miners' support networks, anti-poll tax activists, networks of CJA resistance, infoshops, anti-roads activists, Reclaim the Streets and the J18 network of activism have all been informed by utilising a combination of these three empirical research methods.

Collecting primary resource material was akin to an adventure, taking me to many activist-run infoshops and independent bookstores in London, Liverpool, Manchester, York, Bradford and Edinburgh. Some of the most valuable empirical information has come from flyers, posters and zines written, produced and distributed by activists themselves and these simply

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

were unavailable in Australia. With later actions, such as J18, there is also a plethora of primary source (and secondary source) material available on the Internet. In recent years, autonomous action groups have realised the infinite value in utilising the Internet as a cheap and efficient means of publicising current campaigns and/or actions, providing links to other groups' and individuals' webpages and facilitating interaction via listservers, e-mail bulletin boards and discussion lists. Many activists have set up personal webpages detailing their involvement in actions and include links to groups' homepages, like the London Reclaim the Streets one.¹²⁵ The web of Internet links helps to establish an idea of different groups' perceptions of their place within a wider activist community. Groups like Earth First!, *Squall* and *SchNEWS/Justice!* also include previous publications on their webpages, such as editions of print journals and zines, that would otherwise be inaccessible from Melbourne.

A second means of empirical research was to attend and observe activists' meetings and actions while in Britain. While I believe this to be an invaluable research method, it also proved to be somewhat problematic. Many activists in Britain have been the target of police surveillance and meetings and actions are often infiltrated by undercover police or security staff. This has understandably produced suspicion and wariness amongst many activists. I therefore encountered some trepidation during initial contact with activists and at meetings it was made clear that any plans for illegal or subversive actions should be made in private, away from the attention of strangers (such as myself). Perhaps if I had had the opportunity to remain in Britain longer I would have been able to build up a greater degree of trust with the activists and groups of activists I was interested in. I did, however, always make it clearly known that I was a researcher but also involved in activism in Melbourne and therefore could understand their hesitancy.

These problems also affected my ability to interview activists. There were relatively few activists who were willing to participate in an interview and those who did only did so after I had spent considerable time with them.

¹²⁵ As I explain in the course of the dissertation, the word group is used very loosely

None of the people interviewed agreed to have their real names used and therefore all carry pseudonyms. It was agreed that I would simply use their first initial and a place name in place of their real names. All interviews took place according to the guidelines of the Monash University Standing Committee on Ethics in Research on Humans, project number 98/439.

Chapter outline

This dissertation consists of three main parts, and an introduction and a conclusion. The introduction has thus far established the central argument of the dissertation and the framework in which this will be explored. Theories of protest and community have been considered, and will continue to be examined throughout the dissertation in the context of the empirical studies covered. A symbiosis of theoretical approaches is created, one which provides a framework for understanding the close relationship between protest activism and community. Following from the preceding explanation of the methodologies employed, I will now close this introduction by outlining the chapters.

Part I of the dissertation is a study of place- or geography-based communities of protest. The miners' strike of 1984-1985 and the anti-poll tax campaigns are used to illustrate the role of place in generating and sustaining protest communities. Women's support groups and the solidarity of people from outside of colliery areas are examined in relation to the miners' strike in Chapter One, thus introducing the duality of location specific and non-specific networks of activism and the ways in which this challenges traditional understandings of community. The massive mobilisation of local neighbourhood non-payment groups in response to the poll tax is the focus of the second part of Chapter One of the dissertation. While these non-payment groups were usually formed immediately around a local geographical community, a wider non-geographically defined network of non-payment groups emerged across England, Scotland and Wales.

here and does not connote any uniformity of thought or any formal membership.

Activism in opposition to the Thatcher government's closure of dozens of coal mines is studied for the insight the miners' strike of 1984-1985 offers to our understanding of the importance of community based around both location and physically dispersed senses of solidarity. The strike is noteworthy for the solidarity of striking mining workers and those in the immediate geographic surrounds of the coal pits but also for the activist support network that emerged outside of these precincts. Activism extended well beyond the hardship of maintaining presence on the picket lines and was not confined to the mining workers nor to the geographic communities of the colliery areas. The 1984-1985 miners' strike saw activist communities quickly emerge in solidarity with the striking miners, which spread beyond the immediate striking community.

Activism against the introduction of the poll tax, or Community Charge, and the diverse communities that took part in this activism is also examined in this chapter. People across Britain grouped together in neighbourhood-based non-payment groups. The nature of the tax encouraged these geographically-defined activist collectives, as the rate of payment differed in each council zone. However, once neighbourhood anti-poll tax groups established, larger communities that transcended spatial geographies began to emerge, united by their opposition to poll tax payment and the perceived inequality of the tax. The protest communities which emerged in opposition to the Thatcher government's coal mine closures and poll tax implementation demonstrate the transition from geographic-based communities to communities that are spatially diverse and defined by a non-geographically bounded spirit of opposition. They also exemplify the way in which many activist communities are formed, whereby locally-based communities form networks with activists from similarly focussed local groups and these come together to form larger, concentric communities.

Part II of the dissertation is titled Networks of Protest. The argument posed in the two chapters of this section is that communities of protest are often the sum of diverse networks of activists. In Chapter Three, activist networks are explored in the context of independent activist media and the proliferation of infoshops. These networks are examined as forms of

activism and also as key contributors to the proliferation of wider activist networks. Chapter Four focuses on the activism that emerged in protest against the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act. The Act brought many previously unlinked activists and groups together in non-spatially defined communities of solidarity and activism.

A non-spatially defined spirit of opposition aptly describes the common thread linking activists in communities that support and grew from networks of autonomous activist spaces across Britain. These networks, which manifest themselves in meeting spaces and social centres, squatted cafes and activist zines, provide locales for activist communities to foster and are the basis of a third empirical study. People are able to connect with one another in spaces that are not geographically defined. They are also able to learn of political actions and campaigns and thus the networks facilitate wider networks of activism.

A fourth empirical study is that of the activist communities that demonstrated opposition to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994. The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994, or CJA, was a catch-all attempt by the Tory Major government to assert a strong law and order stance and re-define acceptable conduct. In attempting to quash many varied networks of dissent or dissenting lifestyles, the CJA actually brought many previously unlinked activists together. The extent of interconnectedness of activist networks can be seen in an examination of the opposition to the CJA.

The final part of the dissertation, Part III, is titled Spaces of Community and examines the role of place and proxemics in communities of activism. There are three chapters in this third part of the dissertation. The first of these, Chapter Five, focuses on the anti-roads network of activists and the defence of place. The sense of community that emerges from anti-roads protest does not stem, however, from the geographic location threatened by the presence of a road extension; instead, the sense of community stems from activists working and living together at the site of protest. In the sixth chapter, the loose network known as Reclaim the Streets is explored. The

role of the street as a space of protest in fostering this network of activists is one of the key topics in this chapter, as are the links between proxemics and the carnivalesque. In the final chapter of the dissertation, the June 18 day of global action is posited as a prime example of rhizomatic networks of protest, whereby the activist community that constitutes the protest is in fact made up of activists from many different groups and affiliations. The J18 protests also demonstrate the impact of both the Internet and face-to-face communications as networking tools.

Communities emerged throughout the 1990s in opposition to the Thatcher and Major administrations' road building schemes. These communities of anti-road activists cannot be defined by geographic location nor solely by their opposition to the construction of roadway through any one area. Instead, anti-roads communities are diverse and fluid. They consist of some activists who oppose the dominance of car culture and its environmental costs no matter the location of the road extension or addition and others who are concerned about the specific location due to their attachment with the physical surrounds or the geographically defined community which the road threatens. Anti-roads communities are therefore made up of so-called local activists and activists who move from one anti-road camp to the next. These are non-geographically defined communities, built largely through the type of activist networks facilitated by the Internet, zines and social centres.

The loose network known as Reclaim the Streets forms the basis of a fifth empirical study of the interconnectedness of community and activism. Reclaim the Streets street protests are carnival-like and now take place in cities across the globe. Reclaim the Streets activists are linked in geographic communities and geographically diverse communities: geographically, activists at RTS street protests/parties are united by their presence in any one city but also by the proxemics of the street as site of community and of carnival; the spatially diverse nature of the communities is illustrated by the common spirit of resistance that transcends national or city boundaries. This spirit of resistance is characterised by the celebration of the street as a car-free, communal space, irrespective of location.

The final empirical investigation is of the protests that took place in London, Glasgow and Edinburgh on June 18, 1999. This activism reveals the need for new definitions of community that account for transnational activist networks coming together physically and/or emotionally and the impact of this changing basis of community on protest modes in Britain. The June 18 protests, known collectively as J18, are a prime example of protest actions evolving through the development of rhizomatic networks. Publicised as a carnival against capital, J18 attracted activists from a broad range of pre-existing activist networks and communities. In the conception and planning stages and execution of the day of actions new communities of specifically J18 activists also emerged. These were communities characterised by the diversity of constituent networks. Networking tools like the Internet played a vital role in facilitating the day and providing a forum of interaction in the lead up to and the aftermath of the June 18 protests.

Geographic communities can also be identified as instrumental to the J18 activist network, as activists were usually drawn to actions in the largest city nearest to them, be it London, Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, or Edinburgh. The question of whether this was a matter of convenience or ties to a physical location-based community is explored. The ongoing importance of face-to-face community is considered within this context of geographic community, and it is debated whether the two mutually reinforce each other. June 18 protests are vital to an empirical study of activist communities in Britain because of the position of the J18 day of carnival against capital as a forerunner to more recent global days of action such as the May Day actions in 2000 and 2001 and the so-called anti-globalisation protests in Seattle, Washington, Melbourne, Prague and Genoa.

The dissertation is concluded with a re-examination of the relationship between community and activism. I argue that community is a sense of solidarity shared by people, in this case activists, and is not one based on geographic placedness alone. I hope to partially fill that gap in academic research whereby the links between community and activism are often ignored, romanticised or over-simplified. The dissertation closes with a reiteration of the need to take into account the non-instrumental impact of

activism, and that is the fostering of a spirit of connectedness amongst activists, of networks and of communities. It is, I hope, a celebration of the activists' potentials for achieving diversity and union while seeking social change.

PART I

*COMMUNITIES OF RESISTANCE –
ORGANISING IN NEIGHBOURHOODS
AND BEYOND*

CHAPTER ONE

Organising in the neighbourhood, forming bonds beyond: the politics of resistance of the 1984-1985 miners' strike and the anti-poll tax campaigns

And the atmosphere was wonderful: like a carnival. People were happy, but this wasn't an empty, superficial happiness. This was happiness based on strength and power. ...The collective was growing, flexing its muscles for the first time in years. No more individualised, atomised discontent. No more feelings of powerless anger. This was it: thousands and thousands of people out on the streets, angry and strong.

Anonymous ¹

A sense of community often emerges during times of struggle; people band together around a common cause and against a common enemy. The negative focus on this common enemy and cause is transformed through shared activism, and struggle takes on positive values like convergence, support and solidarity. Community is formed spontaneously, as social relations are transformed by the very act of participation in the struggle.² Two such struggles in recent British

¹ Anonymous author(s), 'The final straw', *Poll Tax Riot: 10 Hours that Shook Trafalgar Square* (London: Acab, 1990), p. 33, emphasis added.

² I have paraphrased here from an article which appeared in *Virus*, the magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation. I have also significantly changed the meaning of the original, given the original focus on working-class-led revolution. Anonymous author(s), 'End of community?', *Virus*, no. 11 (1986), page number/s unknown.

history are the 1984-1985 miners' strike and the fight against the Community Charge or poll tax. In each case communities of struggle emerged. These communities are characterised by their simultaneous geographically- and non-spatially defined natures. Striking miners were part of and supported by their local, physical community and also by a non-physically defined solidarity network, while hundreds of thousands of people against the poll tax formed neighbourhood-based activist communities and were also part of a wider non-payment network, or community.

This chapter examines the activism of the miners' strike and anti-poll tax campaigns and the communities that emerged around and fostered these activisms. The mass miners' strike of 1984-1985 and the anti-poll tax campaigns of 1988-1991 are seemingly unrelated and yet are examined in tandem in this chapter. Both the miners' strike and the anti-poll tax campaigns are characterised by concurrent neighbourhood-based community organising and wider dispersal of support communities and activist networks. They are also tied because of the common climate surrounding each period of activism – people coalesced under siege. The long decade of the 1980s was a period of massive social and economic reform in Britain, as is demonstrated in the following discussion of the Thatcher administration's reform project. This reform project resulted in, for many, the loss of already fragile security nets and impinged on a general sense of equality and social justice. Threats to the coal industry and the introduction of the poll tax acted as stimuli for mass responses to the Thatcherite reform project. They were certainly not the only concerted attacks on social justice, but they were struggles that symbolised for many in Britain the extremities of injustice under the Thatcher government. Within this climate of negativity, communities of dissent emerged.

The miners' strike and anti-poll tax communities were communities of struggle and also communities which celebrated solidarity. These two characteristics are explored throughout this chapter. The chapter begins with an examination of the Thatcher government's reform project. This leads to an empirical study of the 1984-1985 miners' strike, detailing the development of communities of

solidarity which emerged both in the immediate geographic mining communities and outside of these physical constructs. The miners' strike is noteworthy because of this concurrent advent of spatially defined and spatially diverse communities. The focus then turns to the 1988-1991 anti-poll tax campaigns. People across Britain organised autonomous, neighbourhood-based non-payment groups, which were in part modelled on the autonomous (i.e. non-union) solidarity networks established during the miners' strike. The neighbourhood-based nature of non-payment groups was also partially a result of the nature of the poll tax itself, as the rate of payment differed in each council zone, thus collectivising people, at least initially, according to where they lived. However, I argue that, as with the miners' solidarity communities, the non-payment activist communities quickly evolved from forming around neighbourhoods to communities that were non-spatially defined. The chapter concludes by emphasising the commonalities between these two unlikely empirical partners; during both the campaign against mine closures and against the poll tax activists came together in solidarity, linked by opposition across physical place.

*The Miners' Strike of 1984-1985:
the need for community-based discourse*

For more than a year in the mid-1980s over one hundred thousand coal miners went on strike across Britain. It was a strike that resulted in tremendous hardship for the mining workers and for their families. Without work or unemployment benefits, miners experienced extreme financial difficulties, and the resultant material hardship was passed on to their dependants. Supplementary work was hard to find for the strikers' family members, as the colliery towns were often the sites of extremely high unemployment. Striking miners also endured the wrath of the government and its supporters. The Thatcher government labelled the strikers as the collective enemy of the British people and this marker was carried by the British media en masse. For the duration of the twelve month action, striking miners confronted psychological

warfare and were blamed for the full gamut of ramifications of their activities: power shortages, policing costs, political upheaval.³

While the striking miners and their immediate communities bore the full effects of the strike, its ramifications spread far beyond these areas. The 1984-85 miners' strike demonstrated the hard-line attitude and the divide and destroy tactic the Thatcher regime employed in strike situations. For many, in and outside colliery towns, the 1984-85 miners' strike increased awareness of the social consequences of the Thatcher government and they responded by supporting, rather than turning on, the miners. The effort involved striking miners on the picket lines, their family networks and the many thousands of non-colliery related people who sent food parcels, wrote scathing letters to the pro-Thatcher media and stood alongside the workers on the picket lines or at rallies. The 1984-85 miners' strike was a community-based protest and as such it cannot be examined as only a miners' strike but a campaign of solidarity.

The 1984-85 miners' strike demonstrates that a new frame of analysis is needed when examining disputes and protest in Britain, one that takes into account not only the labour-related issues pertinent to the strike but also the wider community's mobilisation in solidarity with the striking workers. The miners' strike brings into question the validity of the binary of old and new social movements, blurring the distinction between the two and highlighting the need for a community-oriented framework of analysis. This section of the chapter seeks to address this need. To this end, an account is given of the strike, including an analysis of the role of the Thatcher government in the lead up to the strike and particularly the mobilisation of thousands – both directly in the coal mining communities and outside of them – in solidarity with the striking workers.

³This term, psychological warfare, was used by Ken Capstick, National Union of Miners Branch Delegate at the Stillingfleet colliery, Anonymous author(s), 'The miners' strike: a balance sheet', *Marxism Today* (April 1985), p. 21.

Monetarism, Thatcher and the miners

Industrial disputes such as the miners' strike are not in themselves remarkable in the context of this thesis. Nor was mass civil dissent a novel phenomenon during the Thatcher administration. Protest seemed almost a mandatory successor to the implementation of the Thatcher government's radical economic and social policies. Elected on February 11, 1979, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was quick to implement broad-sweeping economic reforms. Governments internationally were rejecting Keynesian policies of full employment guarantees during the mid- to late 1970s, a time of concurrent high inflation and unemployment (stagflation). Keynesian policies were replaced by policies aimed at stabilising prices through the control of the money supply. This represented a fundamental shift, or, as Werner Bonefeld suggests, a counter-revolution, away from the Keynesian premise that the state act as the prime regulatory agent in the capitalist accumulation process.⁴ In Thatcher's Britain, money and market self-regulation took over this role, effectively replacing the state. In other words, there was a return ideologically to traditional economic liberalism in a variant summed up by Stuart Hall's formula: "Free economy, strong state."⁵

The apparent early success of monetarist policies in sustaining a long-term economic boom soon waned and it became evident that any improvement in levels of economic activity had in fact been propped up by unprecedented credit expansion, directly contradicting monetarist concern for the control of money supply. Fiscal expansion and credit explosion superseded the previous adherence to monetarist economics in the Thatcher government by 1983, while the ideology of the market continued to prevail.⁶ Clearly the role of the state diminished under Thatcherism in terms of market and price regulation. Nevertheless, the institutional structure of the state was concurrently

⁴ W. Bonefeld, *The Recomposition of the British State During the 1980s* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1993), p. 1.

⁵ S. Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London: Verso, 1988).

⁶ Bonefeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

tightened. Integral to Thatcherism was an active policy drive which conjured up traditional values of family and nation in order to legitimise strengthening the repressive state apparatus.⁷ It was this tightening or strengthening of the state under Thatcher that was to play an instrumental part in both the resilience displayed by the government throughout such long disputes as the miner's strike and the anti-poll tax campaign and also in the policing of these two disputes.

Social reforms

Thatcher's reforms went further than the adoption of monetarism.⁸ A clear aim of the Prime Minister, from the very inception of her government on May 4,

⁷ A. Callinicos, 'End of hard reign?', *Socialist Worker Review* (May 1989), p. 13.

⁸ Riddell warns of the dangers of referring to a Thatcherite 'project', arguing that Thatcherism does not represent the practical application of a coherent ideology or strategy, a set of theories whose proponents are known as the New Right. In fact, he condemns those whom he calls the 'fashionable left':

Too much of the analysis of the fashionable left (the school associated with the magazine *Marxism Today*, most clearly and subtly expressed in Gamble, 1988) has been based on an ex-post rationalisation of what has happened. Hindsight often provides the coherence and clarity denied to contemporaries. To talk, as the new Marxists do, of a coherent hegemonic project, or of the Thatcher project, is meaningless, as well as absurd. It is part of the dire linguistic legacy of Marx and Gramsci which makes the work of many Marxist commentators so indigestible and so misleadingly determinist. ...The new Marxists may be right to see the Thatcherism of the late 1980s as a deliberate attempt to replace the post-war social democratic consensus and to create an economic and political constituency for capitalist values and aspirations. But that has been very much a second and third-term phenomenon. That was not what the Conservatives were about in opposition or in their first term, up to 1983.

...There was no master plan.

P. Riddell, *The Thatcher Decade: How Britain has Changed During the 1980s* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp.4-5.

Nevertheless, I believe that the use of the word project, and any of its synonyms in its place, can be justified. Riddell points to it himself, with the statement that during the second and third terms there was a concerted effort to change the status quo, to pursue an agenda that would change Britain and Britons fundamentally, from a state reliant on welfare, to a strong state. There are innumerable examples of this clearly defined project, many even stemming from the memoirs of Thatcher herself. In a chapter of her *The Downing Street Years* memoirs aptly entitled 'Not so much a programme, more a way of life', Thatcher outlines her longstanding belief that:

...the root cause of our contemporary social problems...was that the state had been doing too much. A Conservative social policy had to recognize [sic] this. Society was made up of individuals and communities. If

1979, was to pose a two-pronged attack on the legacy of forty years of social democratic welfarism. The New Right school of economic and political thought to which Thatcher appeared to subscribe so enthusiastically, had long voiced its objections to two key aspects of this long-standing economic and social agenda. The redistribution of resources through the public service system came under attack both theoretically by the New Right and in practical terms by the Thatcher administration. So too did the enhancement and development of such distribution through the operation of electoral or organisational public decision-making systems.

There was constant modification during this administration of the notion of the legitimacy of state intervention in the markets to control or even influence incomes and welfare. The Thatcher government controverted the notion of legitimacy of the ability to exercise of universal political rights, independent of one's use of public services. Bosanquet notes that for the New Right there is no legitimate program for distribution, just as there is no place for social justice as a criterion of policy. Supporters of the New Right are particularly suspicious of attempts to broaden the goals of equal civil rights and equal opportunity into equality of outcome.⁹ Universalist social services came to be seen as a licentious means of redistributing wealth, just as accepted levels of government activity, public expenditure, and taxation, levels considered within the norm of the welfare state thesis, also came under direct attack throughout the Thatcher

individuals were discouraged and communities disorientated by the state stepping in to take decisions which should properly be made by the people, families and neighbourhoods then society's problems would grow not diminish. ...I expected great things from society...because I believed that as economic wealth grew, individuals and voluntary groups should assume more responsibility for their neighbour's misfortunes.

M. Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years* (London: Harper Collins, 1993), p. 626.

There is evidence of pre-planning of such legislation as the Community Charge, eg. the green paper of 1985, and the Riddell Plan which outlined industrial relations approaches, ten years before the mining strike.

For a discussion on the extension of Thatcherism under the Major government see the book by W. Bonefeld, A. Brown and P. Burnham, *A Major Crisis?: The Politics of Economic Policy in Britain in the 1990s* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1995), p. 154.

⁹ N. Bosanquet. Cited in D. Kavanagh, *Thatcherism and British Politics: The End of Consensus?*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 108.

decade.¹⁰ This onslaught was more directly and manifestly represented by the introduction of the Community Charge legislation than any other piece of legislation introduced during this time, which is the subject of the latter half of this chapter.

Thatcherism was a quintessentially conservative project, one which forged a link between new liberal paradigms of the free market with traditionally conservative themes of tradition, family and nation, respectability, patriarchy and order.¹¹ Stuart Hall writes of the cultural project of Thatcherism and its degenerative reworking of these aspects of so-called Englishness:

Culturally, the project of Thatcherism is defined as a form of 'regressive modernisation' – the attempt to 'educate' and discipline the society into a particularly regressive version of modernity by, paradoxically, dragging it backwards through an equally regressive version of the past.¹²

Fabricating the enemy within

Part of the cultural moulding of Britain under Thatcher's Tory government was the augmentation of a notion of the 'enemy within', one which would change according to whichever crisis the administration faced at the time.¹³ From striking miners and health workers, to IRA sympathisers, and poll tax non-

¹⁰ S. Miller, 'Thatcherism, citizenship and the poll tax', in M. Brenton and C. Ungerson (eds), *Social Policy Review 1988-9* (London: Longman, 1989), pp. 85-87.

¹¹ Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 2. Hall writes of Thatcherite populism, further expounding on the themes of the regime. He describes it as combining the "resonant themes of organic Toryism – nation, family, duty, authority, standards, traditionalism – with the aggressive themes of a revived neo-liberalism – self-interest, competitive individualism, anti-statism." Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹² Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

¹³ The term 'The Enemy Within' was used by the *Daily Express*, 29 August 1983, as their front-page headline in reference to both Arthur Scargill and Ken Livingstone. The article featured a story about Scargill's visit to Moscow where he had said that Britain and America were the biggest threats to world peace. Cited in M. Crick, *Scargill and the Miners* (Harmondsworth, Britain: Penguin, 1985), p. 151.

payers, all were inferred to be the enemy, tearing Britain apart from within and preventing it from reaching greatness.¹⁴ Chief Constable Anderton of the Manchester Police was quick to toe the Conservative line, describing picketers in the miners' strike as terrorists: [Mass pickets were] "acts of terrorism without the bullets and the bomb...."¹⁵ In fact, in July 1984, Margaret Thatcher even compared the miners with the Argentines, with whom Britain had been at war only two years before.¹⁶ The external enemy had been replaced by an internal one, the miners, to whom she explicitly referred as 'the enemy within.'

Thatcher set upon her targets one by one, usually enlisting the help and support of the majority to legitimise these attacks. It was a tactic of division Thatcher employed during the miners' strike. When Prime Minister Thatcher implemented the poll tax, however, she showed little restraint in her onslaught, and was no longer attacking a single, easily identifiable segment of the population, but the whole population.¹⁷ Even fellow Conservatives recognised the atypically unrestrained nature of the onslaught: "The government has declared war on the people."¹⁸

Cecil Parkinson, a Tory associate of Thatcher, referred to the aims of the Prime Minister as being that of starting a 'cultural revolution', whereby British society was to be re-formed to favour openly and systematically those in high income brackets and possessors of private wealth.¹⁹ This revolution did not pass unquestioned. Not only were the traditional or usual targets of the Tories affected, that is, the working class, but also the middle class. Measures such as the slashing of social welfare provisions, public health expenditure and education outlays affected a broader cross section than just workers and their families. Callinicos argues that such attacks on the welfare state in fact

¹⁵ Cited in D. Reed and O. Adamson, *Miners Strike 1984-1985: People versus State* (London: Larkin, 1985), p. 5.

¹⁶ Crick, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁷ D. Burns, *Poll Tax Rebellion* (Stirling: AK Press and Attack International, 1992), p. 20.

¹⁸ A. Marlow, Conservative MP for Northampton, March 1990, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁹ Cited in Callinicos, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

affected the middle classes more, as they are relatively greater users of state services than the working class.²⁰

Tough times

Unemployment too had far further reaching consequences than simply rendering workers in blue collar industries redundant. Mass unemployment and the climate of uncertainty it created was one of the Thatcher governments most potent and effective bargaining tools.²¹ In the four years from Thatcher's election to 1983, unemployment escalated from 1.2 million to over 3 million. Two major factors behind this increase were the 1979-82 global recession and the policy of forcing up interest rates, which had the end result of rendering over two and a half million manufacturing jobs uneconomical. Threatened with the prospect of unemployment, the position of militant labour was severely weakened in the workplace.²²

The 1980s, Thatcher's decade, was one of growing disparity within British society:

It is arguable that rich and poor, suburb and inner city, privileged and deprived, have been becoming more sharply separate from each other for many years, and that the impoverished minority

²⁰ *Ibid.* I have been unable, however, to find any statistical evidence to support (or, in fact, counter) this claim.

²¹ Callinicos and Simons write, for example, that rather than attempt to enforce wage controls, which had brought down the previous two governments, mass unemployment would be used to discipline workers. A. Callinicos and M. Simons, *The Great Strike: the Miners' Strike of 1984-5 and its Lessons* (London: Socialist Worker, 1985), p. 35.

²² Callinicos writes: "This industrial holocaust allowed management to remove militants wither by closing troublesome plants or by selective victimisation." Callinicos, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Callinicos writes further: "Certain groups of workers – above all the power workers – were to be bought off. Others, the miners and dockers for example, were to be left alone for the moment, while weaker or less militant sections were picked off and

has become increasingly cut off from the mainstream of our national life.²³

In statistical terms, a clear inequality can be seen. For example, between 1979 and 1986 average male earnings rose by 15.7 per cent in real, inflation-adjusted terms. The earnings of manual workers, however, rose by only 5.7 per cent, while that of white-collar employees rose by a comparatively massive 22.4 per cent. Further still, the average earnings of professional workers in administrative or management roles increased by 29 per cent. By contrast again, there was a difference in the increase experienced in various professions within the manual workers bracket, with employees in the fields of construction, mining, painting and assembling enjoying only a 3 per cent earnings increase in the same seven year period. Wages were no longer regulated under Thatcher's laissez-faire wages policy, as these figures clearly illustrate, and a direct consequence of this had been a resolute increase in disparity between the amount of money wage earners had to live off.²⁴ As a result, Britain became a nation divided into three groups:

There are now Three Nations, not Two, and the Thatcher Government has pampered not just the rich but even more that other, discreet Nation, the super-rich. The Three Nations are the

defeated - the steel workers in 1980, the civil servants in 1981, rail and hospital workers in 1982." *Ibid.*

²³ The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, *Faith in the City* (London: Church House Publishing, 1985). Cited in Riddell, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

²⁴ Riddell, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-151. Riddell also cites the following examples of the way in which wage earners fared during the Thatcher decade, in terms of the growing contrasts between top-level and middle and bottom-level wage earners:

These contrasts are shown by the following points:

1. Taking the Thatcher decade as a whole a single person on half average earnings gained £6.22 week (at 1988-9 income levels) from income tax cuts over and above the indexation of allowances to inflation. A single person on average male earnings (£244.70 a week) gained £16. However, someone on five times average earnings gained £270 a week.
2. In aggregate the top 10 per cent of the income range enjoyed a £9.3 billion reduction in payments compared with an indexed 1978-9 regime, compared with a £400 million cut for the bottom 10 per cent.

Ibid., p. 152.

haves, the have nots, and the have lots.²⁵

Of course, it was not only those in employment who were affected by government fiscal and wages policies. Social security benefits increased slightly between 1979 and 1988, yet still were only 53 per cent of national average personal disposable income in 1987. The unemployment benefit level, or supplementary benefit level, as it was known in Britain until 1988, marked the official poverty line, at, or below, which 17 per cent of the British population lived.²⁶ This is a devastating figure. Poverty was also a reality that many people lived with, a reality that was at the forefront of people's minds when they were striking to protect their employment or fighting another change to Britain's standard of welfare. Essentially, they were fighting to stave off this poverty and reduce the level of inequality. Protesting against pit closures and later against the poll tax brought people together; they formed networks of protest in their immediate neighbourhoods and bonds between other such networks outside of the local area. The sum of these networks were diverse and fluid communities of resistance, without geographic or hierarchical centres. The anti-poll tax and miners' solidarity communities were ultimately characterised by common goals, rather than common geographical reference points.

²⁵ J. Rentoul, *The Rich Get Richer* (London: Urwin, 1987) in *Ibid.*, p. 154. This sentiment is echoed by sociologist Professor Halsey in references to "a majority in secure attachment to a still prosperous country and a minority in marginal social and economic conditions." Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 166.

Will Hutton also reiterates this argument with his analysis of British society as a 40:30:30 society: "Forty per cent are better off than before Thatcher. The 30 per cent beneath are fraught and insecure but are earning incomes of some sort, while the 30 per cent at the bottom get by as best they can." From M. Flanagan, 'A window to the state we could be in', *The Age* (29 November 1996), p. A15.

²⁶ Riddell, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-6. Between 1979 and 1985 this figure had increased by 55 per cent to 9.4 million.

*Changes to the coal mining industry:
part of a long-term strategy*

The 1984-1985 miners' strike remains one of the most memorable disputes of Thatcher's time in office is. The strike was the impetus for hundreds of thousands of people from all over Britain to seek networks of solidarity in their efforts to resist the Thatcher government. The year-long strike which threatened to cripple British industry and saw over 26.4 million working days lost had long been foreseen by the Prime Minister.²⁷ In 1978, the radical right-wing MP, Nicholas Ridley, drafted a secret report on behalf of then opposition leader Thatcher which outlined means of dealing with potential political threats from "the enemies of the next Tory government" in a "vulnerable industry" such as coal, electricity or the docks. Ridley devised a five-point plan to counter the threats when, and if, they arose.²⁸

The Ridley report soon proved to be prophetic. The 1980 Social Security Act, for example, ensured that welfare payments to strikers' families were radically reduced. Groups of workers were assaulted at a piecemeal rate, beginning with the employees at state-owned British Leyland in November 1979. Steel workers were next, with a bitter thirteen week strike in early 1980 culminating in the eventual defeat of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation. Civil

²⁷ G. Peele, *Governing the UK*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 336-337.

²⁸ This plan consisted of these five points:

1. the rigging of the return on capital figures so that 'vulnerable' industries could be paid above-average wages;
2. the planning of the inevitable conflict in a field which the Tories believed they could win, such as the railways, the civil service or steel;
3. the building of maximum coal stocks, especially at power stations, the making of contingency plans for the import of coal, the encouragement of the recruitment of non-union lorry drivers for the removal of coal where necessary, and the introduction of dual coal/oil firing in all power stations as quickly as possible;
4. the implementation of the immediate cutting off of the money supply to strikers, in case of strike, therefore forcing the union to finance them; and
5. the preparation of a large, mobile squad of police to uphold the law against violent picketing.

Originally printed in *The Economist* (27 May 1978). Reprinted in Callinicos and Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

servants in 1980 and health workers and train drivers in 1982 were also soon to feel the determination and ferocity with which Thatcher attacked the working class. The summer of 1981 saw another facet of the Ridley Plan come into play and that was the formation and engagement of paramilitary riot police squads. These were employed in the 1981 inner city riots, which were the manifestation of mass unemployment and perceived state-endorsed racism.²⁹ They were also used extensively during the 1984-1985 miners' strike and whole colliery towns and villages were occupied by riot police. The involvement of these paramilitary riot police radically changed the nature of the strike from industrial dispute to communities under siege: picketers were forced to lie prostrate on the ground while police threatened them with truncheons, women and children were interrogated about the whereabouts of strikers and many incidences of police intimidation and violence were recorded.³⁰

Coal has a long history in Britain, a history of centrality to the British economy, as well as a history of labour movement militancy. This duality comes to the fore in any examination of the 1984-5 strike. In the seventy years since the Great Strike of 1926³¹ employment numbers had fallen from around one million

²⁹ Callinicos and Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 38. The authors note that the riot police were not the creation of the Thatcher government. A riot squad had been formed by the 1964-70 Labour government, and the number of similar units had grown under Labour in the later 1970s. However, the new Tory government had rapidly increased the revenue available to the special squads virtually from the outset of its election. At this time an estimated 11,000 trained riot police were available nationally.

³⁰ See Dave Douglass' extensive account of the activities of police during the strike: D. Douglass, *Come Wet This Truncheon: The Role of the Police in the Coal Strike of 1984/1985* (London: Aldgate Press, 1986).

³¹ According to then Prime Minister, Baldwin, the 1926 strike raised the spectre of civil war. R. Samuel, 'Introduction' in R. Samuel, B. Bloomfield and G. Boanas (eds), *The Enemy Within: Pit Villages and the Miners' Strike of 1984-5* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 2.

The 1926 Great Strike was a general strike which lasted for nine days. It was precipitated by the decision of coal mine operators in April 1926 to return all coal workers to a minimum wage at 1921 levels, a 13 per cent decrease in pay rates on top of this and an increase to an eight hour day. One million coal miners were locked out of their workplaces for three days while these changes were being ratified by the Baldwin government. Despite attempts by the leadership of the Trades Union Council to avoid general strike, 4 out of 5.5 million workers walked out on strike in solidarity with the miners. The government declared a State of Emergency and immediately instigated an Emergency Powers Act. At the same time, workers formed Councils of Action across Britain and these councils took responsibility for organising permits for transport,

workers to the 1984 level of approximately 184,000.³² This drastic decrease in numbers obviously reduced the degree of the miners' leverage. Furthermore, the importance of coal as an energy source had severely decreased by this time. The discovery of North Sea gas and the replacement of steam by diesel engines on railways, both of which occurred in the 1960s, more than halved the consumption of coal as a source of inland energy.³³ The Thatcher government clearly understood that its chances of defeating the miners in any strike action would be radically increased by reducing the dependency on coal and building up coal stock piles in accordance with the Ridley Plan.³⁴ The desire for a decisive defeat of the miners was undoubtedly strong for two prime reasons: firstly, a conquest against the miners would be a symbolic one against the working class movement as a whole; and, secondly, the pits left after the closures could be sold off to private investors.³⁵ The selling of public interests is clearly an ideological and practical goal of neo-liberal, or New Right, economic and political advocates and devotees.³⁶

picketing, entertainment and financial assistance. The General Strike came to an abrupt end when Trades Union Council leaders accepted a cut to miners' wages with the compromise of a reorganisation of the mining industry. The strike ended on May 12, 1926. The TUC capitulation had a profound effect on the mining workers but it did not quash them and parallels between the 1926 and 1984-1985 strikes have been drawn by those furious with the deals made by union leadership. P. Mitchinson, 'Britain 1926 General Strike: on the verge of revolution', on-line: http://www.marxist.com/History/british_gen_strike_1926.html; accessed 14.10.01.

³² Cited in Callinicos and Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

³³ For example, coal dropped from 84.5 per cent of inland energy consumption in 1955 to 46.6 per cent in 1970. Cited in Callinicos and Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

³⁴ Coal stocks rose from 42.25 million tonnes in 1981 to 57.96 million tonnes in 1983. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³⁵ The pits to remain were commonly referred to as super-pits, whereby large numbers of existing collieries would be grouped together or new pits would be created. They employed vastly fewer workers than other pits. Bradford University academics estimated that the combined effect of new technologies employed at the super-pits and the closures needed to create the super-pits themselves would be the loss of 100,000 miners' jobs over the five years from 1984 to 1989. *Ibid.*, p. 40-41.

³⁶ In a 1984 study on the economic case against pit closures, Glyn expounded the social cost of pit closures for the NUM:

His conclusion that 'there are no pits whatsoever whose closure would benefit government revenue' was based on a calculation which set the notional subsidy saved per miner in a closed pit against the redundancy pay for him, plus the dole payment of a man who might have taken his job when he retired. It added in the loss of tax from, and payment of dole to, workers elsewhere in the board and in other industries who would be consequentially affected. The calculation assumed that virtually no

Obviously, the Prime Minister and much of her government foresaw that any moves to downsize the coal industry would be met with fierce opposition, as indeed they were. This is in complete contrast to the unanticipated nature of the furore that engulfed the Community Charge policy. Undoubtedly, however, the Thatcher government could never have anticipated the degree of tenacity and resilience which would face them in their battle with the mining communities: "The scale of the Tory offensive evoked a heroic response. Whole mining communities rose up in revolt..."³⁷

One hundred and nine thousand English, Scottish and Welsh coal miners were out on strike by March 13, 1984, only the second day of strike action. Pickets and picket support centres emerged in colliery towns immediately and mining communities prepared for a long period of strike action. A Hatfield activist wrote in an account of the 1984-1985 strike that mining workers knew that the strike would be a protracted one: "With the arrival of 1984 I was asked regularly 'Will we go on strike?', and with millions of tonnes of coal stock-piled everyone realised that if we did strike it would be a very long affair."³⁸ This forewarning proved to be correct. The National Union of Miners (NUM) had passed a resolution in July 1980 that the Union would oppose pit closures on the grounds of so-called uneconomic activity and when the National Coal Board announced the closure of two pits in Yorkshire, at Cortonwood and Bulcliffe, the Yorkshire branch of the NUM went out on strike from March 9, 1984.³⁹ At the peak of the strike approximately 150,000 miners were out on strike and 140 pits were closed. Not all coal mines closed, with only very small pockets of

redundant miners found other work, and that if they did, they would effectively take work from someone else.

M. Adeney and J. Lloyd, *The Miners' Strike 1984-5: Loss Without Limit* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), p. 24. See A. Glyn, *The Economic Case Against Pit Closures* (Sheffield: National Union of Mineworkers, 1984).

³⁷ Callinicos and Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

³⁸ B. Hume, 'Welfare organisation', in D. J. Douglass (ed.), *A Year of Our Lives: Hatfield Main - A Colliery Community in the Great Coal Strike of 1984/85* (unknown place of publication: Hooligan Press, 1986), page numbers not provided.

strikers in the Nottinghamshire coalfields. A majority of miners in Yorkshire, Scotland, Durham, Northumberland and South Wales, however, were out on strike.⁴⁰ The strike lasted for a year until a deal was struck between the leadership of the National Union of Miners and the Coal Board and miners were forced to end their strike on March 6, 1985.⁴¹

It is not my purpose to re-examine the events of the strike, rather to outline the ways in which the 1984-1985 miners' strike can be seen as a community-based action. The historical narrative that I do provide aims to reinforce the notion of community that was central to the strike effort. The strike involved more than the sum of miners who stopped work; instead, all those living in and around colliery towns, including supporters of the striking workers and those who were against the strike effort, became enmeshed in the struggle to keep coal mines open. Coal mining was (and is) a male-dominated industry and the workers who were out on strike were men, with a few exceptions including the female staff members of the pit offices and canteens.⁴² However, the strike itself impacted on men and women. Colliery towns rely on the coal industry to pay wages and to support local businesses. Coal mines also provide an immediate physical nexus for the towns and when these were close to shutting down, operating only due to scab labour, the physical and emotional colliery communities could have fragmented. Instead, striking miners, their families and supporters came together.

³⁹ D. Sawbridge, 'The British miners' strike 1984-85', *Victoria University of Technology/Footscray Institute of Technology Faculty of Business Research Papers*, no. 8 (August 1990), p. 5.

⁴⁰ Sawbridge, *op. cit.*, pp. 3; 18.

⁴¹ For a detailed account of the end of the strike, see G. Goodman, *The Miners' Strike* (London: Pluto, 1985), especially Chapter 10: The final phase, pp. 170-194.

⁴² Martin Adeney and John Lloyd write that "down the pit was one of the few working environments in Britain where there were no women at all, although they were to be found in the pithead offices and canteens." Adeney and Lloyd, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

Mining communities

It is initially difficult to imagine how a dispute such as the miners' strike of 1984-1985, a classic example of a working-class versus authoritarian state/ruling class/big business dispute, could be likened to the anti-poll tax campaign, which transgresses labour dispute analysis. Yet further examination reveals both distinctive differences and common traits. One such common thread is the extent of community solidarity that emerged in both cases to stand against Thatcherism. Solidarity led members of the mining community to accept inordinate sacrifices: middle-aged men, for example, scorned generous offers of redundancy pay-outs to strike with their fellow employees; families developed self-managed schooling because they could no longer afford to send their children on the school bus; while others relied on the meals provided by support kitchens (stew kitchens) to feed themselves and their families.⁴³ Many people, of all age groups and backgrounds, made sacrifices.⁴⁴

Inter-generational support often formed the backbone of the mining support networks, with older miners or ex-miners supporting young striking miners, parents or grandparents supporting their striking children. Support took the form of financial aid and giving material assistance, even offering striking workers food, coal, packages of clothing, baby goods, etc. It is alleged that such practices were so widespread and so much coal was being passed on to strikers and their families that the National Coal Board cut down on fuel allowances to the aged.⁴⁵ Supporters of the strike formed a community linked by the spirit of the strike, a strike for employment, for security and against a state perceived to be unfair, but they also banded together to preserve existing communities. In an account of an interview with an anonymous woman from an unnamed colliery town in the aftermath of the strike, the desire to maintain a sense of

⁴³ Samuel, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7; Anonymous author(s), 'Miner conflicts, major contradictions', *Get Fucked!* (London: B.M. Combustion, 1984), p. 2; M. J. Mulligan, 'Stew kitchens', in Douglass, *op. cit.*, page number/s not provided.

⁴⁴ Samuel, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

community is singled out as a key source of inspiration to be resolute throughout the long strike:

All these people realise the value of communities. We do. We've always loved this community. To me it's important that a community is kept together. You go to big cities and you see people so uncaring that they don't even know their next door neighbor [sic]. It has a lot to do with how we survived this last twelve months, because everyone instinctively knows what you need. We all just look after each other....⁴⁶

The desire to help striking workers and their families grew from a sense of solidarity that extended beyond kinship ties and locality.⁴⁷ The somewhat nebulous term community best describes the coming together of supporters around the miners. But this was not a sense of community limited to any particular physical environs; it extended beyond the mining towns. This sense of 'community' was one of "spirit rather than place, a social rather than a physical nexus."⁴⁸ Geoffrey Goodman writes of people in southern England, "some of whom had probably never seen a pit village", "who organised collections of money, food and clothing for miners' families."⁴⁹ People responded to the hardship facing striking miners and their families with enormous generosity – many hundreds of people subscribed to miners' support collection funds, mining villages were 'adopted' by Labour Party and trade union branches, and individuals and unions from overseas sent financial and food

⁴⁶ Cited in C. Salt and J. Layzell (eds), *Here We Go! Women's Memories of the 1984/85 Miners Strike* (London: London Political Committee, 1986), p. 80.

What is also of note here is the comparison made between large city and small town communities. There is obviously some romanticisation of the latter and dismissal of the possibility of interpersonal relations in larger settings.

⁴⁷ See Mike Featherstone's discussion of localism and symbolic communities, in which he critiques the narrow view of equating kinship and the local with homogeneous community. M. Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity* (London: Sage, 1995), pp. 103-108.

⁴⁸ Samuel, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴⁹ Goodman, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

aid.⁵⁰ The South Wales women's support group gave the following description of the international support mining communities received:

Contacts have been made with union organisations, socialist groups, miners' families and communities with ordinary people. A great flow of clothes, food, toys and chocolate cake came at Christmas, with vast sums of money. Many lasting friendships were made. People from these countries have visited the mining communities.⁵¹

Women's action groups emerged within the first few weeks of the strike. They played a mammoth role in the strike and solidarity efforts, from maintaining food kitchens, raising money for striking miners and their families, picketing, deterring electricity and gas boards from disconnecting strikers' houses from essential services, to distributing essential food parcels once it became clear that the government was attempting to starve the miners into submission.⁵² It must be remembered that it was not simply the wives of striking miners who formed these groups, but women who might not have been directly involved.⁵³

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Cited in Adeney and Lloyd, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

⁵² Mulligan, *op. cit.*, no page numbers provided.

The actions of many of the mining community women was in stark contrast to the depiction of them in the mainstream media. The media presented the women as victims of the irresponsible action of the NUM (National Union of Mineworkers) or as strident, hard-line campaigners. All of this, of course, was a blatant attempt by government-supporting media agencies to undermine the strike effort. Callinicos and Simon, *op. cit.*, p. 178. See also D. Douglass, *Tell Us Lies About the Miners* (London: D. Douglass/Direct Action Movement/International Workers Association, 1985) for a critical account of the role of the media in the 1984-1985 miners' strike.

⁵³ This was not, however, always the case. Some support groups were closed to women perceived to be not directly involved in mining communities. Florence Anderson, of the Eppleton Area Miners' Wives' Support Group in Durham, writes of these imposed limits:

All the women in our support group had connections with the mining community. That was a rule we made at the start. We really didn't want any outsiders in our kitchen, or professional-do-gooders. We said it wasn't going to be like 1926, with people shuffling up to the soup kitchens demoralised and degraded. It was going to be miners' wives, miners' mothers, miners' sisters serving miners and their wives and families.

We didn't want any sort of intellectuals coming down to play around in soup kitchens. It was a working-class women's movement and that's why

It was a support campaign that went beyond any one social group, and was instead a genuine community campaign. One woman activist acknowledges the desire to preserve community as a propelling reason behind her involvement in the strike:

The 84/85 strike was the turning point for the majority of women (and men). It was an opportunity to get actively involved in the class struggle. Womens Support Groups sprang up all over the coalfields as families realised this wasn't a question of higher wages, but having a job, a community and a future.⁵⁴

Women activists organised and acted consciously as fully fledged strike participants and not simply as the partners or mothers or daughters of miners.⁵⁵ Women recognised that threats to the mining industry did not effect only the mining workers but also their own lives: "...the struggle became not only of miners against the National Coal Board, union against government, but

we were so proud of it. We kept it like that, because we said coming into the kitchen should be like coming home. Our kitchen was popular because we said everybody had to be made welcome. It was our own feeding our own. There was no feeling about it. We had no outsiders.

Cited in J. Stead, *Never the Same Again: Women and the Miners' Strike 1984-85* (London: The Women's Press, 1987), p. 29.

⁵⁴ Elaine Robe goes on to describe the changes that involvement in the support groups brought about:

Women realised that they had a lot to offer, at the beginning some had a lot of problems, feelings of guilt about their children, husbands and homes. Convincing their families that they were needed on picket lines, meetings, demo's [sic], etc, caused ill feelings. Many men felt it was alright for women to be in the kitchen, but not flying round the country campaigning for the struggle. The strike broke down many barriers between the sexes as men realised that women were no threat to their masculinity and women realised that they had more to give than their culinary skills. The strike gave women the confidence to fight for the right to become involved, the men soon began to welcome women in their picket lines and realised that sometimes women could be more successful than them at turning scabs away. We also showed the media that we were not the 'Petticoat Brigade' forcing our men back to work, that we were a force to be reckoned with and just as determined as the men to beat the 'Iron Lady' and the state machine.

E. Robe, 'Hatfield Main Womens Support Group', in Douglass, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

⁵⁵ S. Taylor, 'Grub up for the miners! Women's contradictory role in the 1984-85 miners' strike', in V. Seddon (ed.), *The Cutting Edge: Women and the Pit Strike* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1986), p. 83.

also of community against intransigence, women and men defying state power."⁵⁶ However, as Sandra Taylor argues, despite this widespread recognition, women activists continued to be forced into contradictory roles. For example, while the strike was seen by some as part of a broader struggle for, among other things, gender equality, much of their activism was restricted to helping out in the food kitchens or providing childcare.⁵⁷

Despite the involvement of a broad range of people in the strike, both geographically in and outside of the colliery communities, the 1984-1985 miners' strike has been criticised for having a narrow support base. After the miners' defeat in March 1985, many on the left came out to criticise the strike as not having been broad-based enough, which they believe eventually led to the miners' demise. The industrial organiser of the Communist Party, Peter Carter, for example, wrote in *Marxism Today*:

What has failed to happen is the bringing together in a mass popular movement of those forces within our society that have already demonstrated sympathy for the miners. This development has been restricted because of a view held that the strike can be won by picketing alone, by the miners on their own.⁵⁸

Cook argues further that building a broad democratic alliance that extended beyond the working class would have led to ultimate success:

The more the miners have expressed their struggle in terms of the defence of the community, the future of youth, the role of women and the need for a new energy policy, and have linked up with other groups, for example progressive church people, the stronger they have been.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Seddon, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

⁵⁷ See Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-96.

⁵⁸ P. Carter, 'Striking the right note', *Marxism Today*, vol. 29 (March 1985), p. 28.

⁵⁹ D. Cook, untitled article, *Marxism Today*, vol. 30 (April 1985), page number/s unknown.

To intimate that the appeal to a broader base and the dispersal of such so-called working class opposition tactics as picketing would have guaranteed success is simplistic in the least. The dispute did extend beyond the mining communities themselves, and, at a time before the proliferation of Internet facilitated communication, the miners' solidarity communities were communities not of place but of emotional ties that transgressed spatial limits. These communities of solidarity were widespread and diverse because many people realised that they were not only supporting striking mining workers but also taking part in an active resistance to a style of governance and a devastating social programme. The strike illustrated the need for broad-based solidarity in the face of a highly cohesive opposition.⁶⁰ Arthur Scargill, President of the NUM, eluded to the need for solidarity, and in fact blamed the miners' return to work on March 3, 1985 for the complicity of the government and its supporters, differentiating the miners' strike from other industrial disputes:

We faced not an employer but a Government aided and abetted by the judiciary, the police and you people in the media. At the end of this time our people have suffered tremendous hardship....⁶¹

Introducing the poll tax

It was announced in the 1987 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto that the government would implement reforms to the local government rating

⁶⁰ The British ruling class displayed a shocking ruthlessness with which, in a period of intense crisis, it would use all means at its disposal in order to crush any opposition to its rule. Reed & Adamson, *op. cit.*, p. 13. The use of the police to break the pickets and the police brutality displayed at riots like Orgreaves and Fitzwilliam well represents this sense of ruthlessness. Bystanders who dared to question the savage treatment of picketing miners were often beaten mercilessly. Two bystanders wrote of the Fitzwilliam riot:

Marching in a 70-strong formation, clad in helmets and with truncheons at the ready. They blocked off the road either side of the pub and then launched an attack on the people in the car park. One bystander, Peter Hurst, was grabbed by 5 police, handcuffed to a post outside the pub and was beaten with truncheons until he was unconscious. ...Horried protests from the people to the police were met with 'You can't do anything about it because you have got no witness - it's your word against ours!'

Cited in Reed and Adamson, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

system. Prime Minister Thatcher had finally achieved her long-time ambition of abolishing the rating system and replacing it with a new method of raising local revenue. This new means of revenue collection was the proposed Community Charge, the intended flagship of Thatcher's third-term.⁶² The policy change had met great resistance even during its inception, with some government members insisting it was a regressive tax. Yet few within the government could have foreseen the conflict and opposition which would surround the Community Charge issue. The Community Charge, or poll tax as it became infamously known⁶³, evoked mass protest across the United Kingdom and was soon to be labelled as the most celebrated disaster in post-war British politics.⁶⁴ Millions of people became involved in the anti-poll tax campaign. Even taking into account the variations in involvement, be it passive resistance or active defiance, there can be no denial of the scale nor of the vehemence of the mass mobilisation which arose in response to Thatcher's poll tax.

The introduction of the poll tax resulted in mass resistance and this frequently evolved into collective insurgency. Just as the closure of coalmines had simultaneously united and formed whole communities of struggle, communities of resistance emerged through opposition to the poll tax. The poll tax was seen by those who resisted it as another part of the logic of Thatcherite welfare

⁶¹ Scargill in *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁶² It was at a pre-recess talk to the Committee of Tory back-benchers in July 1987 that Thatcher first made her famous reference to the poll tax as the flagship of the British fleet.

⁶³ We may see the terms Community Charge and poll tax as interchangeable, but the widespread use of the term poll tax in place of Community Charge represented, as Deacon and Golding point out, a public relations defeat for the government. Barker explains this defeat as one based primarily on semantics: "A charge is a fee for services received, and therefore the wealth of the fee payer is not relevant. A tax, on the other hand, has redistributive implications, and thus if the levy is at the same rate for all payers, inequity is more likely to be perceived."

R. Barker, 'Legitimacy in the United Kingdom: Scotland and the poll tax', *British Journal of Political Science*, vol. 22 (1992), p. 521; D. Deacon and P. Golding, 'When ideology fails: the flagship of Thatcherism and the British local and national media', *European Journal of Communication*, vol. 6 (1991), pp. 291-332; B. K. Winetrobe, 'A tax by any other name: the poll tax and the Community Charge', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 45, no. 3 (July 1992), pp. 420-427.

⁶⁴ D. Butler, A. Andonis, and T. Travers, *Failure in British Government: The Politics of the Poll Tax* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

policies, directly connected with the government's attacks on egalitarianism and welfare.⁶⁵ The tax's introduction acted as a mandate for opposition to this wider neoliberal social project.

We will see on examination of the anti-poll tax campaign that many involved acted out of a sense of community rather than self-interest. Perhaps many onlookers, and certainly those critical of the campaign, would expect many of its participants to be involved in the fight against the poll tax due to personal financial hardship and inability to pay the Community Charge. This was certainly a motivating factor for many. For a large number of anti-poll tax activists, however, the sheer inequity of the tax was the motivating factor behind their activism. Many active opponents of the Community Charge could pay but chose not to as a statement in solidarity with those who could not, and as a statement of opposition.

Changes to local government finances, the most dramatic of which was the introduction of the Community Charge, were described by the Prime Minister as the flagship of third term reforms. Thatcher despised the domestic rating system, describing it in her memoirs as "manifestly unfair and unConservative... a tax on improving one's home."⁶⁶ In the 1986 green paper, *Paying for local Government*, the government clearly established the rationale behind the changes to local government rates systems.⁶⁷ One of the benefits of

⁶⁵ S. Macgregor, 'Poverty, the poll tax and Thatcherite welfare policy', *The Political Quarterly*, vol. 62, no. 4 (October-December 1991).

⁶⁶ Thatcher, *op. cit.*, p. 644.

⁶⁷ Department of the Environment, Scottish Office and Welsh Office, *Paying for Local Government*, Cmnd, 9714 (London: HMSO, 1986). See also Deacon and Golding for a detailed analysis of the content of this green paper.

D. Deacon and P. Golding, *Taxation and Representation: the Media, Political Communication and the Poll Tax* (London: John Libbey, 1994), pp. 30-32.

The idea of flat-rate local government tax to replace the local rates system had first been considered in 1971, in the Conservative government's green paper, *The Future Shape of Local Government Finance*. Here, the tax was considered as a possible means of imposing a surcharge on earning non-householders. Margaret Thatcher alluded to her ultimate intention to introduce a poll tax, when, in October 1974, she made an election pledge to replace domestic rates with more broadly based taxes. Pimlott refers to the poll tax as Thatcher's personal obsession which can be traced back to the October 1974 election when Thatcher, as shadow Environment Minister, pledged to abolish the

a flat-rate tax system was purported to be that users of local services would in effect pay according to their use of community services, and the local rates system would therefore be more in keeping with the Conservative Party vision of a user-pays society. The Community Charge was an integral part of the long-term Thatcherite project:

Acceptance of the principle of a flat rate charge for services at the local level would be one step in the step-by-step approach to replace one form of social engineering (based on communal provision, a sense of social responsibility and a pooling of risks) with another (based on incentives and signals, private provision and individual responsibility).⁶⁸

A flat-rate tax is certainly a massive departure away from social democratic norms of equality through progressive taxation and the assault on these norms led many to resist the poll tax. It is a form of regressive taxation, a form of taxation that has a sordid history dating back to feudal times.⁶⁹

domestic rate. Ten years later, in December 1981, the idea of a poll tax was tabled as a forthcoming means of rates reform in the green paper, *Alternatives to Domestic Rates*. In contrast to the model of poll tax eventually implemented, however, the paper concluded that a poll tax would only be feasible if it was executed in conjunction with, or as a supplement to, another major revenue-raising tax, in order to reduce the negative effects on those on lower incomes and enforcement difficulties. Rates reform was very much on the agenda, despite the veiled warnings in the 1981 green paper, by the time of the 1984 Conservative Party Conference, when an internal inquiry into local government finance was set up under the direction of the Environment Secretary, Patrick Jenkin. Winetrobe refers to these so-called secret internal inquiries as the preferred means of policy making under Thatcher.

See P. Pimlott, 'The politics of the poll tax: a touch of spring in the air', *New Statesman* (22 April 1988), p. 9; and Winetrobe, *op. cit.*, pp. 420-421.

⁶⁸ Macgregor, *op. cit.*, p. 446.

⁶⁹ Two poll taxes were introduced under Richard II in 1377 and 1380. Both were flat-rate taxes levied against each adult throughout England. Just as in the time of Thatcher, "in 1380, beyond a vague stipulation that the rich ought to help the poor, no provision was made for grading... The result was gross unfairness in the incidence of the tax." M. McKisack, *The Oxford History of England: The Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 406.

The taxes led to the ultimate expression of discontent, the Peasant's Revolt of 1381, the greatest absolute level of civil disobedience ever seen in England. Butler, Adonis and Travers, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

The new model citizenship of 1980s Conservatism is reflected in the Community Charge, whereby the Tory Government wanted to augment the public's awareness of the costs of services, as a bulwark against extravagance in public spending.⁷⁰ If a wider distribution of tax-paying was implemented, forcing more people to pay local taxes, more people would have a vested interest in low tax rates. So, if people were charged more for community services, they would pressure community service providers, their local councils, to decrease their level of spending. Consequently, this glow through effect would promote greater accountability by increasing the interest of local voters in the performance of their local authorities.⁷¹

The immediate impetus for the implementation of the Community Charge was the introduction of the 1985 rates revaluation in Scotland. Rating revaluations were carried out every five years in Scotland and the effects of the 1985 revaluation had proved especially severe, with an increased burden for local taxation having shifted from non-domestic to domestic properties.⁷² Naturally, there was a fierce public outcry against this increased financial burden north of the border. Authorised by a Tory Scottish Secretary, the rate revaluation had hit middle-class home-owners the hardest, and it was this group of voters who were the stalwarts of the Conservative Party in Scotland, so the backlash against the rate increases threatened the future of the party in forthcoming elections. The government did not want to repeat the financially and politically costly experience in England and Wales:

The prospect of a similar uproar in England filled Tory leaders with horror: the time for grasping the local government finance nettle seemed to have arrived. Local sales and incomes taxes were rejected. The poll tax passed the ideological tests of the moment.⁷³

⁷⁰ Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Deacon and Golding, *Taxation and Representation...*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

The rateable values of Scottish households had risen by about 260 per cent, while industrial values had risen by only about 170 per cent. Butler, Adonis and Travers, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

⁷³ Pimlott, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

Governments will virtually always encounter hostility and resistance when introducing a new tax, as new taxes are a natural and easily identifiable focus of popular resentment.⁷⁴ Possible exceptions may be taxes for more socially progressive causes such as the recent Gun Buy-Back tax scheme imposed in Australia.⁷⁵ However, it should have been clear from the outset that the imposition of the poll tax in Scotland first, and later Wales and England, would be met by much opposition and potentially replete with political danger.⁷⁶ It was a tax where more people would be clear losers than would be gainers.⁷⁷ As we will see, the regressive Community Charge often meant a quadrupling of previous domestic rates for not only the whole household but every adult in it. The full extent of these increases was not at first made clear, when the tax was tabled and later legislated.⁷⁸ It also became increasingly clear that the rates of taxation were not based on ability to pay – the rates varied according to levels set by local council governments but within those municipalities the rates were

⁷⁴ A. Gamble, 'Blue blooded revolt', *Marxism Today* (April 1990), p. 12.

⁷⁵ The Gun Buy-Back scheme was implemented in most Australian states by October 1, 1996 and ended on September 30, 1997. It secured the surrender of approximately 640,000 prohibited firearms nationwide and was funded through a one-off 0.2 per cent increase in the Commonwealth Medicare tax levy to raise more than the \$304 million to financially compensate owners. The scheme, part of the National Firearms Program Implementation Act 1996, was part of a government response to events at Port Arthur, Tasmania, when, on April 28, 1996, thirty five people were killed by Martin Bryant, who used a contraband semi-automatic weapon to carry out the massacre. For further details of the Gun Buy-Back scheme see Australian Auditor-General, *Audit Report No. 25: The Gun Buy-Back Scheme* (Canberra: Attorney-General's Department, 1997), available on-line: <http://www.anao.gov.au/>; accessed 14.10.01.

⁷⁶ It would seem, however, that the Tories had not intended for the tax to be implemented in Scotland first, and had thought the reform would be simultaneously introduced across Scotland, England and Wales. The Scottish Secretary, Younger, was determined, however, to have the necessary legislation passed in Scotland before the general election in 1987. An ardent supporter of the proposed Community Charge, Younger believed that it would be the key to holding marginal Conservative Party seats in Scotland. The Scots came to be seen by champions of the poll tax, as trail blazers rather than guinea pigs, as an English Tory MP referred to his 'colleagues' in Scotland. Younger was successful in his campaigning to have the tax reform introduced in Scotland first and on November 26, 1986, the poll tax bill for Scotland was introduced, followed by the announcement in February 1987 that the Scottish poll tax would start on April 1, 1989.

⁷⁷ Gamble, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁷⁸ See Appendix I for a copy of the parliamentary Community Charge legislation.

flat and each adult was charged the same amount regardless of income or personal wealth (or lack thereof).⁷⁹

Community solidarity against inequality

From the outset, the primary issue of contention was the absolute injustice of the flat-rate tax. This sense of injustice acted as a rallying point and an instigator of solidarity among local communities and broader non-geographically defined communities. It soon became evident that the poll tax would force most people in lower income brackets to pay two or three times their previous rates amount. But those who once paid the highest levels of domestic rates because of high property values actually experienced a dramatic decrease in their rates: "It was like Robin Hood in reverse: stealing from the poor to give to the rich."⁸⁰ The following is one example of a myriad of the sheer inequality of the new tax:

The Duke of Westminster, who used to pay £10,255 in rates on his estate has just learned his new poll tax: £417. His housekeeper and resident chauffeur face precisely the same bill.⁸¹

This is compared to the story of 54-year-old West Oxfordshire farmer, Norman Say, who faced a poll tax bill of £2,400 in 1990 because he and his wife had four grown up sons still living at the family home. In the past he had paid a rates

⁷⁹ See Appendix II for a table of sample 1990 poll tax rates in England for an indication of the flat and therefore inequitable nature of the poll tax and the massive variations in rates of pay according to place of residency.

⁸⁰ Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁸¹ Cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 10. Sewell, in a Militant pamphlet, cites numerous other examples of such absurd levels of inequality. For example, the Viscount Cowdrey with a personal estate worth £360 million will save £2,528 compared to the rates. Lord Egremont, with a personal family fortune of £30 million, will save £2,389, while the Duke of Richmond and Gordon with a personal fortune of £45 million will reap £1,470 from the tax. Sewell, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

The *Socialist Worker Review* reported that the Thatchers themselves would stand to gain significantly out of the change from local rates to the poll tax: "...if the Thatchers choose to retire early to their spacious residence in the leafy suburb of Dulwich, south

bill of £418.60.⁸² Those people in the lower income groupings would be most severely affected by the flat rate levy. This is especially true of the nearly poor, people who sat barely above the poverty line but whose incomes, no matter how modest, prevent them from receiving rebates. The poll tax threatened to take many of these nearly poor people from just above to below the level of absolute poverty.

Deacon and Golding also direct criticism at the poll tax for its discrimination against many disadvantaged social groups.⁸³ Ethnic minorities in Britain face higher than average levels of unemployment and are likely, if employed, to be among the lowest paid workers. Many ethnic minority groups, with a higher propensity to live in larger communal households, would also be disproportionately affected by the Community Charge, with each adult living in the house levied with the poll tax. In a 1984 Policy Studies Institute study, for example, it was found that 29 per cent of Asian and 11 per cent of Afro-Caribbean families lived in households of at least seven adults, while only 3 per cent of white households did.⁸⁴ Traditions of extended family systems would therefore penalise these families. Furthermore, ethnic communities in Britain are clustered in major cities and in the inner suburbs of these cities, and it is here that the poll tax levels were highest. Kumar cites the case of a black female hospital cleaner who was forced to pay three times her previous rates with the advent of the poll tax, £397 per year, despite earning only £90 per week. She spoke for many black people, 69 per cent of whom lived in inner city areas in 1988 where council spending was consistently high in response to difficult social and economic conditions: "I feel...that as black people we are

London, they will save £1,931 a year, or £37 a week." Anonymous author(s), untitled article, *Socialist Worker Review* (November 1987), p. 11.

⁸² Sewell, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Sewell goes on to quote Say: "The government is robbing the poor to pay the rich," said Mr Say, who has no savings and will not be paying the poll tax. "If I have to go to prison, that's what I'll have to do. Mrs Thatcher got us into this hole and she will just have to get us out of it."

⁸³ Deacon and Golding, *Taxation and Representation...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

⁸⁴ Cited in S. Kumar, 'Poll tax hardest on blacks', *New Statesman and Society* (5 August 1988), p. 27.

being penalised because we tend to stay together as a family, and because we are poor."⁸⁵

The charge also discriminated against women. Women in Britain are more susceptible to poverty, primarily due to lower wage and employment rates and a proportionately higher reliance on state directed income support. The Labour Party estimated that 77 per cent of women pensioners and two thirds of single mothers lost out financially in the switch from the rates to the poll tax.⁸⁶ Young adults were similarly victimised by the tax, and 18 to 24 year-olds formed the largest single group of new additions to the local tax base.⁸⁷ An estimated 600,000 Scottish young adults aged 18 and over were brought into the net of local taxation for the first time with the advent of the tax in 1989, many of whom would have to pay poll tax bills up to five times higher than they had paid in rates. The cumulative result of such massive increases in charges on a collective group already faced with endemically low levels of wages was an expected increase in homelessness and poverty.⁸⁸

Tenants in private rented accommodation were also hit particularly hard by the poll tax. Local rates had previously been charged to tenants as part of their rent, with landlords taking the appropriate charges out of rent received and

⁸⁵ S. Cedras in Kumar, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁸⁶ Cited in P. Bagguley, 'Protest, poverty and power: a case study of the anti-poll tax movement', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 43 (November 1995), p. 705. See also in Bagguley the explicitly self-conscious feminist argument against the tax:

I look at it as a particularly anti-woman tax... I think the way that it affects people who aren't in work at all has been overlooked politically and that particularly affects women because they tend to be the woman at home looking after the children and I mean I was billed for the full poll tax when I was living with Rob and it was a more or less direct clawback on the child benefits so my only income would have gone into the Poll Tax if I'd paid it and, you know, that must affect millions of women....

Jenny Otley cited in Bagguley, *op. cit.*, p. 707.

⁸⁷ Cited in Deacon and Golding *Taxation and Representation...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

⁸⁸ S. Lieberman, 'How does someone who can afford to spend only £3 a week on food cope with the poll tax?', *The Scotsman* (7 April 1989). Cited in J. Dickie (ed.), *Cause to*

paying it to the council. Landlords, however, no longer had to pay council rates after the introduction of the poll tax but rents did not correspondingly decrease. Instead, tenants effectively were forced to pay twice: the old council rates as part of their rent and the new poll tax amount. It was clearly a situation in which the landlords made significant gains, while tenants suffered large financial losses.⁸⁹

The Conservative government made little attempt to deny such absolute and irrefutable disparity. In fact, anti-payment activist and author Danny Burns claims they openly defended it. The government promoted the belief that policies which purposely augmented the differentials between people, increased the chances that people at the 'bottom of the ladder' would aspire to something better. In other words, widening the gap between rich and poor was a positive thing! Justifying the principle that rich and poor pay the same, Environment Secretary Ridley gave the following analysis of the poll tax:

Why should a duke pay more than a dustman? It is only because we have been subjected to socialist ideas for the last 50 years that people think this is fair.⁹⁰

Supporters of the poll tax relied on the rationale that because everyone used local services, everyone should pay for these services.⁹¹ They calculated on the resentment harboured by middle and high-income earners who felt that they

be Proud: A Local Group's Struggle Against the Poll Tax (Edinburgh: Gecko Press, 1992), p. 9.

⁸⁹ Church Action on Poverty conveyed the following story, so typical of the plight of many who did not own their home:

My wife and I are tenants who paid £260 in rates last year as part of our rent. There has been no reduction since April 1990. The house owner is keeping the extra amount as a rent increase. The Poll Tax, therefore, increases our bills by £682 per year. We have a tenancy agreement that is, by law, terminated and renegotiated every six months. If we disagree with the owner about the rent we could be evicted very easily. We cannot afford to buy a house and there is no possibility of us obtaining a council house.

Church Action on Poverty cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁹⁰ Ridley cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

paid too highly for services they did not often use. The argument that all people should pay an equal amount for all services ignores the fact that many people in the British community who were, and continue to be, most in need of such basic services as community health and child care services could not afford to pay for them. It is for this very reason, however, that local/community services are in place.

A further criticism directed against the poll tax concerned the issue of privacy. The administration of the new tax necessitated the compiling of a public register. For the first time, a complete list of the names and addresses of the whole adult population of Scotland, England and Wales would be assembled. The government maintained that lists would be made on individual council bases and that each list would remain separate. The National Council for Civil Liberties, the most outspoken group on the issue of the privacy implications of the tax, believed these lists would be too easily merged. Further, the group believed that the lists could easily be extended to include information regarding recipients on social security, those who might be held in suspicion by authorities, etc. Burns argued that the tax register would be a means of social control, requiring people to register each time they moved.⁹² The register was seen as a possible prelude to a national identity card and many saw the tax as endemic of Big Brother government. A member of the Broughton/Inverleith Anti Poll Tax Group voiced these fears: "I felt it was the beginning of something else - this personal registration, the thing in Europe about identity cards, very intrusive, quite dangerous really. That's what made me alert."⁹³

Moreover, concern was raised about the poll tax register being compiled from electoral registers, thus dissuading people from registering to vote. Glasgow University's Applied Population Research Unit claimed that by May 1989 over 26,000 people had 'disappeared' from electoral registers of Scottish cities,

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁹² Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁹³ Liz in Dickie, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

largely to avoid paying the poll tax.⁹⁴ By 1993, the number had allegedly climbed to at least a third of a million across Britain, all of whom had "...committed electoral suicide by deliberately failing to register in order to avoid paying poll tax."⁹⁵ This of course has serious implications for democracy and representation. If people were deliberately avoiding registering to vote for fear of being forced to pay the poll tax, a government policy was effectively discouraging the enfranchisement of the population. What was particularly alarming about this phenomenon was that the bulk of those people avoiding electoral registration lists were people who objected to the Conservative government's poll tax.

Too few people vote. And there is nothing random about who votes and who does not. Well-to-do people with stable homes, and in good health, are more likely to vote. Poor people, people in inner cities, physically and mentally disabled people, blind and partially sighted people, homeless people, are less likely to vote.⁹⁶

The introduction of the poll tax registration process meant that the government was effectively reducing the proportion of the electorate who would not vote for them.

⁹⁴ Cited in Butler, Adonis and Travers, *op. cit.*, p. 131. By mid-1991, *The Guardian* reported that the fears of a fall in registered voters was realised: "More than one million voters have disappeared from the electoral register since the Poll Tax was conceived.... The analysis by the Office of Population Census and Surveys will strengthen the belief that people have deliberately not placed themselves on the electoral register in the hope of escaping liability for the Poll Tax." *The Guardian* (19 June 1991). Cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁹⁵ G. Hodgson, 'Down a slippery poll', *New Statesman and Society* (21 May 1993), p. 18.

⁹⁶ Hodgson continues:

Or, to put it bluntly, given the long-term structure of our political parties, and as a result of various trends in our society and electoral system, Conservative supporters are more likely to vote than the supporters of the Liberal Democrats and Labour. ...There is solid academic evidence to suggest that it may well have been enough to swing half a dozen or even more seats in parliament towards the Conservatives. Since the present government has a majority of only 19, that is not unimportant and may even have been decisive.

Scotland resists the impending tax

There was widespread resentment in Scotland of the impending poll tax, especially at the feeling that Scotland was being used as a policy guinea pig. Many people would have agreed with Militant⁹⁷ member Rob Sewell's summation of Thatcher's thoughts behind the implementation of the tax first in Scotland: "The victor over the miners and the Argentine generals believed she could drive the Scots into submission, then impose the law on the rest of the country without resistance."⁹⁸

The issue of Scottish autonomy was at the heart of the anti-poll tax sentiment that quickly emerged after the announcements of late 1986 and early 1987. Any changes to the local rates system would be under the directive of a government, though representing Scotland, not actually elected by a majority of Scots. The Conservative Party has long been the minority party north of border, and yet, if elected by a majority in England to govern there, they have the mandate to

Ibid.

⁹⁷ The political organisation known as Militant was originally called the Revolutionary Socialist League, although Michael Crick, in *Militant*, argues that many present-day members of Militant deny that the Revolutionary Socialist League ever existed and that Militant, as an organisation, emerged only at the time that the newspaper of the same name came into circulation. Crick describes Militant as a revolutionary, far-left group, influenced by the philosophies of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, which formed in approximately 1937. M. Crick, *Militant* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), pp. 9-14; 27-62. Since Michael Crick wrote his history of Militant and the newspaper *Militant*, the organisation and newspaper have changed names - Militant is now part of the Socialist Party and *Militant* has been succeeded by *The Socialist*. Mark Wainwright writes of the role Militant members played in the struggle against the poll tax on the Militant website (linked to the Socialist Party website):

The mass non-payment campaign against the poll tax inspired millions to get organised and take action in their local areas. But it was Militant supporters (now Socialist Party members) who played the key role in arguing for and carrying through the strategy and tactics which eventually proved victorious.

M. Wainwright, 'Militant's proud role in defeating the poll tax', Militant website: <http://www.militant.org.uk/PollTax.html>; accessed 18.10.01.

Wainwright's brief history of Militant's role in defeating the poll tax is rather self-congratulatory and over stresses the organising role of Militant members in initiating and sustaining the non-payment campaign.

⁹⁸ R. Sewell, 'We won't pay', R. Sewell, A. Hill and M. Waddington, *Poll Tax: We Won't Pay* (London: Militant, 1990), p. 6.

introduce such policies as the poll tax in Scotland. There was a prevailing view that the new tax was being implemented by a government not endorsed by a majority of the Scottish people. Labour MP, John Maxton, said of this rancour in 1987, that the poll tax was a measure "imposed in Scotland by a government with no mandate to do so and one that the Scottish people have so clearly rejected."⁹⁹ In the 1987 general election, for example, three quarters of the people who voted in Scotland supported political parties which made opposition to the poll tax a central platform: 42 per cent voted for Labour, 19 per cent for the Alliance¹⁰⁰, and 14 per cent for the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP). Scotland had clearly not given the Thatcher government a decree to govern.¹⁰¹

Scottish newspapers renowned for their pro-Scottish autonomy stance, like *The Scotsman* and the *Glasgow Herald*, were attacked by defeated Conservative candidates for allegedly poisoning the minds of Scots against the idea of the poll tax just prior to its introduction.¹⁰² As the campaign against the poll tax intensified, the theme of Scottish autonomy came to be increasingly linked to the issue of non-payment.

It became clear that not only was the poll tax unfair and regressive but also that it would have dire effects on the standard of living of many in Britain. The public saw through the immense amount of propaganda issued by the Thatcher Government in the lead up to the introduction of the tax in Scotland in April 1989 and England and Wales a year later. The ability of people to pay was so clearly beyond the realm of the Tories' conscience. The pages of the Scottish dailies featured increasingly more stories of expected hardship and by 1987 the people of Scotland began to mobilise against the tax.

⁹⁹ J. Maxton, 'Poll tax: a solution far worse than the problem', *Glasgow Herald* (13 February 1987). Cited in Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 526.

¹⁰⁰ The Alliance was the political party which resulted from the partnership between the Liberal Democrats and the Social Democratic Party.

¹⁰¹ R. Edwards, 'When democracy's all through', *New Statesman and Society* (14 October 1988), p. 17.

¹⁰² M. Harrop, 'Press', in D. Butler and D. Kavanagh (eds), *The British General Election of 1987* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.175.

Two major protest networks emerged concurrently with very different participants, aims and strategies. There seemed to be little consensus among the participants of these two campaigns, with members of the Labour Party and Trade Union Council supporting a pressure campaign to stop the government implementing the tax, and groups within the community emerging to stage an active campaign of resistance. The Labour Party announced their Stop It campaign in early 1987, the aim of which was to simply stop the poll tax before it was implemented by swaying the government. To this end, the Scottish Labour Party used petitions, information briefings and legal challenges and produced posters, stickers and leaflets. It even had letters published in the press and had prominent Scottish Labour MPs such as Brian Wilson give public speeches challenging the fairness of the tax.¹⁰³ A send-it-back campaign was one of the major initiatives and this advised the public to query the poll tax registration forms and ask difficult questions of the council officers, thus overburdening and slowing down the registration and administration process. By mid-1988, however, the Stop It campaign, launched with great publicity and promises of a new type of broad campaign, had faded without trace.¹⁰⁴

All such protest techniques fell very much within the guidelines of legitimate and lawful protest. The Scottish Labour Party leadership believed that if it wanted to be elected in the near future it must not actively encourage unlawful behaviour, that is, it must not actively encourage non-registration and non-payment. Party leaders were not, at either the Scottish, or, as we shall later see, the English and Welsh levels, going to forego a decade long project of making the party more 'electable' for the sake of a protest against the poll tax.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Deacon and Golding, *Taxation and Representation...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73; Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous author(s), 'The eleventh hour', *Socialist Worker Review* (September 1988), p. 6.

¹⁰⁵ According to Labour's Shadow Scottish Secretary, Donald Dewar:

This is a party that aspires to be in government. Our aim is to redress the balance of interests of ordinary people. I don't believe such a party can afford selective amnesia when it comes to the law of the land.

The Labour Party was split on the question of how best to protest against the tax. A significant sector of the Scottish Labour Party argued for a non-payment campaign, with approximately a third of Labour's Scottish MPs refusing to pay the tax. These individual Labour MPs or councillors who pledged not to pay the poll tax faced prosecution by Labour councils implementing the Tory legislation.¹⁰⁶ Dissident Labour MPs formed a symbolic Committee of 100 of prominent Scots who refused to pay the tax. One of the initiators of the committee, Dick Douglas, explained his rationale:

The Poll Tax is the most vexatious and class-ridden piece of legislation I have ever seen. There will be many who cannot pay it. The only way I can demonstrate to my constituents that there is no shame in not being able to pay this tax is to stand beside them.¹⁰⁷

The Committee of 100 was to act as a stimulus for other local groupings of prominent non-payers to form and meet in other parts of Scotland.¹⁰⁸ The Committee of 100 served the anti-poll tax campaign well in so far as it lent an air of legitimacy and respectability to it. However, it was not to play a sustained role in the campaign, and like the SNP's Committee of 100,000, it quickly faded. What is of particular interest, though, about the Committee of 100 is that it had a direct ancestor in the 1960 Committee of 100.¹⁰⁹

D. Dewar, Labour MP, cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous author(s), 'The eleventh hour', *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ D. Douglass cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ This earlier Committee of 100 was formed by dissident Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament members, who felt that it was time for more radical tactics to be employed in the campaign and for non-violent direct action to be given more prominence. The Committee of 100 was headed by prominent peace activist Bertrand Russell, and it led such acts of civil disobedience as a mass sit-down by 2000 or more activists outside Whitehall in February 1961. It was certainly a more radical force in its day than its 1988 follow up. For a comprehensive look at the Committee of 100 of the 1960s see M. Randle, 'Non-violent direct action in the 1950s and 1960s', in R. Taylor

There was widespread resentment of the failure of the Labour Party to support a non-payment campaign.¹¹⁰ Again, the question of autonomy arose. Many Scots resented the leadership direction essentially coming from English Labour Party leaders. One Scottish National Party candidate claimed that in supporting the Labour Party's official policy of refusing to back a non-payment campaign, Dewar, the shadow Scottish Secretary, had effectively told Scotland: "You've got to accept the poll tax because England voted Tory."¹¹¹

The Scottish National Party leadership played on Labour's failure to initiate a coordinated response of non-payment, declaring to the public that they were the only party in Scotland that would make a concerted stand against the tax; it was their "moral obligation" to do so.¹¹² Jim Sillars, the SNP candidate in the 1989 Govan by-election, summed up the party's poll tax campaign ethos:

You'll only start defeating Thatcher, if you start mobilising and organising people in Scotland. ...The Labour Party's crime is that it has demobilised and depoliticised the people of Scotland. What we are doing is operating guerilla tactics against a government of occupation.¹¹³

One of the first initiatives organised by the SNP in response to the poll tax was to ask 100,000 Scots, who could afford to pay the tax but were morally opposed to it, to pledge themselves to non-payment.¹¹⁴ This was a classic exhibition of civil disobedience protest techniques. Civil disobedience was a means for

and N. Young (eds), *Campaigns for Peace: British Peace Movements in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987).

¹¹⁰ Tommy O. of the Broughton/Inverleith Anti-Poll Tax Group: "Our greatest weakness was not of our own making. That was the Labour Party's urging people to pay the tax." Tommy O. in Dickie, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

¹¹¹ Cited in K. Milne, 'Holding out', *New Society*, vol. 83, no. 1314 (4 March 1988), p. 9.

¹¹² K. MacAskill in *Glasgow Herald* (16 May 1988). Cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹¹³ J. Sillars cited in R. Edwards, 'A taxing poll', *New Statesman and Society* (28 October 1989), p. 11.

¹¹⁴ K. MacAskill: "If 100,000 Scots are prepared to say no to paying the Poll tax, that is going to put unbearable pressure on the Tory's position in Scotland. Our judgement is that would be enough to make the government back down." Cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

individuals to express their moral dissent, and, banded together, the moral opposition of individuals amounts to public pressure on the state. The SNP clearly recognised the potential of civil disobedience, acknowledging the legacy civil disobedience had played in such campaigns as the anti-nuclear one in both the 1960s and 1980s. One of the criticisms directed at the SNP campaign, however, was that it was a middle-class based campaign, not so much interested in organising non-payment but simply legitimising it. They were dubbed the 'Can Pay, Won't Pay' campaigners, as opposed to the 'Can't Pay, Won't Pay' campaign of the Anti-Poll Tax Unions. Nevertheless, given the popularity of the party in Scotland, the SNP were successful in attracting increased numbers to the anti-poll tax campaign.¹¹⁵

Community-based non-payment groups

Emerging at the same time as the divided Labour and SNP campaigns, was the Citizens Against the Poll Tax campaign. This was an informal, non-party political campaign aiming to challenge the actual implementation of the poll tax. Citizens Against the Poll Tax was not a campaign based around local groups. Instead, it aimed to act as an umbrella group for fundraising activities in order to raise money for publicity against the tax. They also emphasised letter-writing drives to prominent politicians and newspapers and symbolic acts of civil disobedience. For example, the campaign urged people to take part in a symbolic group gesture of 'sleeping out' on the night the local registration officer was to compile the poll tax register. It was an information campaign, intent on informing local groups of action, such as the sleep out idea, rather than mobilising people to resist the Tory tax. Citizens Against the Poll Tax, or CAPT as they referred to themselves, also informed members and the public how best to delay the compilation of the Community Charge register by giving false or misleading information or simply by baffling the collector with pedantic questions. It was a campaign strategy designed to delay the administrative

¹¹⁵ Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

process, or, at the extreme, riddle the register with such inaccurate information as to force the government to re-think its policies.¹¹⁶

Citizens Against the Poll Tax were seen, particularly by members of the wider anti-poll tax movements, as:

...a sort of irate, largely middle class element who... just seemed to hang around, they never really got involved with the people who were trying to build the local groups.. they had letters in *The Scotsman* and things like that... they used publicity, that was the way they operated.¹¹⁷

Burns argues that by refusing to condemn civil disobedience yet not actively pursuing a policy of non-payment themselves, the group displayed a response typical of middle class activists: "...they seemed to have little appreciation that for many it wasn't a matter of choice. This could be seen as an outcome of their mainly middle class base, where conscience was a more important political motivation than economic necessity."¹¹⁸

Following the royal assent of the Community Charge Bill for Scotland in May 1987 a small political grouping, the Workers Party of Scotland, organised a series of public meetings in Glasgow. From this emerged the organisation the Maryhill Anti-Poll Tax Union. The aim of the union was to organise resistance to the poll tax on a Scotland-wide basis. Cockshott and Lygate, two of the more prominent activists of the union, coordinated a march from Glasgow to Aberdeen, at which their pamphlet, *The Poll Tax Nightmare*, was distributed. Members of the Maryhill Anti-Poll Tax Union also door-knocked in their local area, calling on people for donations and to pledge themselves to non-payment.

¹¹⁶ Milne, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

¹¹⁷ B. Goupillot cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

¹¹⁸ Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 27. See F. Parkin, *Middle Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), for an analysis of what he terms middle-class radicalism.

It was the first group to actively recruit support on a community basis and it was also the first to organise for non-payment.¹¹⁹

*The emergence of neighbourhood autonomous
non-payment groups*

This original Anti-Poll Tax Union acted as inspiration for other neighbourhood-based autonomous non-payment groups. These groups loosely followed the organisational style and campaigning techniques of the Maryhill Anti-Poll Tax Union (APTU). It strongly emphasised the need to build networks of local, community-based groups and relied on such simple publicity techniques as producing leaflets, posters and stickers and distributing them across Scotland. It was a grass roots community campaign, the first to emerge in the anti-poll tax movement. A significant part of their campaign strategy was local door knocking, whereby members would simultaneously publicise the work of the group, invite local people to join, ask for donations for future publicity and ask for pledges of non-registration and non-payment. Future anti-poll tax groups across Scotland, Wales and England would not only follow these campaign directives, focussing on local grass roots organisation, but would also take the name Anti-Poll Tax Union.

The Broughton/Inverleith Anti-Poll Tax Group, the subject of Dickie's *Cause to be Proud*, was one of the first Scottish local Anti-Poll Tax Unions to be formed which had a continued existence throughout the campaign. It had grown out of an Anti-Poll Tax Union in Leith, set up by the Workers Party of Scotland and the Revolutionary Democratic Group.¹²⁰ However, the group in Leith, a suburb of Edinburgh, had soon grown too large and was split into the

¹¹⁹ Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

¹²⁰ The Revolutionary Democratic Group formed in the early 1980s, splitting from the Socialist Workers' Party. They are part of the Socialist Alliance and are described by one member as a republican socialist party. S. Freeman, 'SWP: main barrier', *Weekly Worker*, no. 392 (12 July 2001), on-line publication: <http://www.cpgb.org.uk/worker/392/barrier.html>; accessed 02.11.01.

Broughton/Inverleith Anti-Poll Tax Union. It was typical of all other such local-based groups, with an enormous emphasis on grass-roots participation and stress on democracy and non-hierarchical structures. One member of the Broughton/Inverleith group, who was active in the trade union movement and, at various times, a member of the Labour Party, the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party, expressed her initial surprise at the loose structure of the group:

I thought, dear God, they'll never get anything done, these people, this is terrible. Of course they were very idealistic, they'd have a different chair, or person that would lead – they didn't even designate chairman or chairwoman or chairperson or chair, nothing like that, it was just a circle and go round. I think it was difficult for both of us to hold back and not say, don't you think we might just arrange things a bit better.¹²¹

The lack of formal structure at the majority of the meetings opened the movement up to a group of people within the community with little or no experience of formal politics. They were far less intimidating and made it possible to involve people who were not used to public meetings. The majority of groups also did not have an established membership. They rejected such membership schemes as cards and minimal contributions, as they too could form a barrier to participation, given that they were too closely linked with organised, structured politics. Some anti-poll tax groups found it necessary to elect a minimum of clearly identifiable office bearers, particularly a secretary and a treasurer, in order for the group to operate more smoothly. However, these people were essentially elected to perform a task, rather than to act as figureheads and exercise executive power.¹²²

The call for non-payment and active resistance to the poll tax was not restricted to the Anti-Poll Tax Unions alone. In late 1987, a coalition of different

¹²¹Ann in Dickie, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

¹²²See Bagguley, *op. cit.*, pp. 710-711; Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

organisations, including the Revolutionary Democratic Group, Militant Tendency and the libertarian socialists, Community Resistance Against the Poll Tax, made a call for active resistance. They had a profound influence on the activities and strategies of the Anti-Poll Tax campaign, as they essentially took the place that might normally be filled in community resistance campaigns by organised labour.¹²³ Unlike the Labour Party, for example, these groups advocated a direct, head-on challenge to implementation of the tax, rather than simply hoping that widespread disapproval would lead to non-implementation. As the strength and numbers of the Anti-Poll Tax Unions grew, the influence of these political groups in the day-to-day activities of the campaign diminished. They had, however, made a lasting impact in terms of the political dimension that they had earlier added. The group also emphasised political autonomy, emphasising that if the party was to align itself to any given party, faction, or organisation, it would automatically alienate potential supporters of the anti-poll tax campaign. Many people who had never been attracted to organised politics were attracted to the Community Resistance groups for this very reason of non-alignment.

The Socialist Workers Party believed that the community as an organised polity did not have the strength to fight the government. More importantly, though,

¹²³ The Community Resistance group had a significant influence on the wider campaign. Most members of this group had originally been part of the Unemployed Workers' Centre and Claimants' Union in Edinburgh, an autonomist, self-organised centre which took direct inspiration from the autonomist and anarchist direct action traditions of Spain and Italy and the self-organisation of squatters' movements in London, Berlin and Amsterdam. Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

The group also took a great part of its inspiration from the community resistance groups in South Africa. Goupillot, a member of the Prestonfield and District Community Resistance Against the Poll Tax group, explains this legacy: "It called itself 'Community Resistance' because it mainly started off doing solidarity work against South African apartheid, and it was called Community Resistance in recognition that it was the communities in South Africa where the revolt was taking place." Goupillot cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

It was a legacy that would later be identified as having a direct bearing on the tactics employed by member so the Community Resistance groups to ward off poll tax collectors and sheriff officers seeking to seize property of non-payers: "Using tactics modelled on the South African townships, many areas have become no-go areas for sheriff officers with literally hundreds of pairs of eyes on the look-out."

they argued that community politics diverted people away from the need to mobilise working class activity on a collective basis. It placed too great an emphasis on the individual and her/his own will to resist.¹²⁴ This would seem a strange or misplaced emphasis, given that community politics assumes a sense of collectivity. The very reason opponents of the poll tax very quickly banded together to form the non-aligned Anti-Poll Tax Unions was because they realised that their strength lay in numbers. The government could not ignore the issue of non-payment if enough people participated. And, as the number of non-payers grew to number in the many millions, it became clear that these extra-parliamentary activists were a force neither the government nor the opposition could ignore.

Despite the wide variance in strategies and ideologies represented by the various anti-poll tax groups, they managed to form a network by January 1988 and met on a regular basis in the Edinburgh Unemployed Workers' Centre. The various Anti-Poll Tax Unions, Community Resistance groups and other anti-poll tax organisations formed the Edinburgh Federation of Anti-Poll Tax Groups. This was the first of many city-wide federations to form in the United Kingdom during the campaign. The formation of the Edinburgh federation acted as a stimulus for the growth of the number of local non-payment groups in Edinburgh and Glasgow. By the time the tax actually came into effect in April 1989 there were over 40 local Anti-Poll Tax Unions in Edinburgh and over 40 in Glasgow.¹²⁵ Also at the time the poll tax was implemented, on April 1, 1989, an official protest march was organised. Thirty thousand people marched in Edinburgh, one of many such protests to be staged across the UK. What was unique about this protest march, however, was that although it was attended mainly by members of various Anti-Poll Tax Unions, it was actually organised by the Scottish Trades Union Council. It was essentially their last successful act of opposition to the poll tax.¹²⁶

Glasgow Evening Times, cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

¹²⁴ Socialist Workers Party pamphlet (1988). Cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39.

¹²⁵ Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-47.

A month prior to the STUC organised march, 15,000 non-payers, as part of the Anti-Poll Tax Federation, had marched in Glasgow. The non-payment campaign continued to attract increasingly more supporters, as people realised that protest without a commitment to non-payment was ineffective. Civil disobedience was seen as the only means to fight the tax. At every early Anti-Poll Tax Union meeting stories of civil disobedience were relayed to members, in an effort to inspire them and realise that protest combined with active defiance could bring about change. One of the frequently cited examples was that of the Glasgow rent strikes of 1915, when over 15,000 tenants in the Glasgow area refused to pay rent rises, eventually forcing the government to back down and return rent rates to pre-war levels. In England, the story of the poll tax peasants' revolt of 1381 was told. People often needed assurance that non-cooperation and civil disobedience could succeed, despite Thatcher's defeat of the miners, for example.¹²⁷

As the number of Anti-Poll Tax Unions grew in Scotland, news of the growing campaign spread to England and Wales where people were growing increasingly both concerned and angry at the prospect of the upcoming April 1, 1990, implementation of the tax there. The Community Resistance group produced an information pack about the work of the Anti-Poll Tax Unions (APTUs) and sent it to hundreds of various contacts in England and Wales. Soon local groups started forming there, often partnering themselves with working groups in Scotland. This was a technique that had been employed between support groups in the miners' strike. More than one thousand APTUs had formed by November 1989 across Britain, and, Burns argues, it is from these organisations that the real assault on the poll tax was launched.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

The organisational structure of the groups did not change with the move across the border. The focus remained on grass-roots participation and organisation, and very often groups were in fact so informally organised that they were formed by only a handful of concerned members of the community. Groups would meet in private homes, and then as the group grew, often to as many as 200 people, they would meet in pubs, community halls and centres. Members of larger groups, such as that in Prestonfield, Scotland, would often encourage smaller break-off groups to form.¹²⁹

Networks of solidarity

The APTUs were not merely campaign groups but support groups. They performed the important task of reassuring non-payers that they were not acting alone. This task of reassuring was taken up by the Easton APTU in Bristol, where members canvassed the local community to assess exact number of those committed to non-payment and those who would be if they knew that they were not acting alone.¹³⁰ Time was always set aside at meetings to answer questions about people's financial problems, reassure them about where they stood in terms of the law and to reassure them that no matter what they were experiencing there was an established network of help and assistance. Burns writes that often people could not see any way out of their personal hardship, so giving them the confidence to participate and trust in collective action was vital.¹³¹ The case of a pensioner who came to the Prestonfield Community Resistance Against the Poll Tax is cited:

¹²⁹ See, for example, the story of the way the Mayfield APTU formed in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 54. See also Burns' description of the formation of the APTU in Easton, Bristol, to which he belonged. It is an insightful and highly detailed description of how the group evolved from a core group of five or six friends, to a much larger group and how this group canvassed the local community and reassured them that they would not stand alone if they chose non-payment. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61.

¹³⁰ In fact, solidarity was so strong in Scotland that by April 1990 official figures showed that nearly a million Scots had not paid a penny of their poll tax and tens of thousands of people were organised into local APTUs. *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

We had a woman in tears, quite hysterical at the meeting, just because she was at the end of her tether. She was already doing without food, already not having the heating on, and still trying to pay the rent, so where the hell was she going to find any other money?¹³²

Demonstrating opposition to the tax

Both financial hardship of this nature and resistance as solidarity and opposition continued to determine the level of resistance to Thatcher's Community Charge. As the government continued to break its promises about the level of the poll tax, with the average poll tax coming out at approximately 70 per cent more than promised, an ever increasing number of people were refusing to pay.¹³³ Only 28 per cent of the poll tax had been collected across Britain during the 1990-91 financial year by December 31, 1990.¹³⁴ The pace of the campaign had steadily increased as the date of the English and Welsh implementation date had approached (April 1, 1990). Demonstrations were conducted across Britain, but they were of a particularly vehement nature in south-west England. In the months leading to the implementation, over 50,000 people from this region attended major local demonstrations, with as many as 10,000 demonstrators attending a protest in Plymouth, ironically organised by a former Tory voter.¹³⁵

As the number and intensity of these protests increased, so too did police activity. On the day the English and Welsh councils set the tax, March 6, 1990, rallies were held outside many council chambers. At one such rally in Bristol,

¹³² S. Rooney, *Prestonfield Community Resistance Against the Poll Tax*, Edinburgh (10 May 1991). Cited in *Ibid.*

¹³³ See, for example, the figures cited in *New Statesman and Society* (15 February 1991), p. 22. The government assured the public that the 1990 average poll tax would be £278, yet it turned out to be £357. Similarly, in 1991 the government-approved average was £380 yet was approximately £420.

¹³⁴ *The Guardian* (March 1 1991). Cited in Bagguley, *op. cit.*, p. 694.

¹³⁵ Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

the object of people's anger quickly changed from the tax, the council and the government, to the police, who had infiltrated the rally and begun to arrest demonstrators. The crowd responded by turning on the police and trying to pull those arrested away from the police. Police reinforcements were brought in and the crowd of some 5,000 people were charged with horses. Both police and protestors were injured and 26 arrests were made.¹³⁶

The extreme anger and violence that had erupted at Bristol, however, was simply a precursor of what was to follow in the next weeks. Council meetings were routinely met by supporters of local APTUs to voice their opposition to the setting of the poll tax rates and the blind support councils were giving to the Tory policy. These protests were frequently broken up by police riot squads, a move which very quickly turned the protest from non-violent opposition to violent opposition. In Hackney, for example, when police attempted to break up a 5,000 strong crowd outside the council chambers, protestors responded by hurling make-shift weapons, stones, bricks and bottles, at them. A riot followed, spreading into the main street of the London suburb.¹³⁷

On the March 31, a Saturday, 200,000 people gathered in Kennington Park, London, to voice their opposition to the poll tax. It was the largest protest of the campaign and a similar event was organised in Glasgow, where 50,000 people met to march as part of the non-payment campaign. At Kennington Park in London, the mood was one of a jubilant festival or carnival. People were excited to see that they were not fighting the tax alone: "...This was the day the people's voice would be heard."¹³⁸ Tens of thousands of people had come from outside of London to the march, mostly members of APTUs from all over England and Wales. The marchers represented a broad cross section of society, just as the membership of the APTUs had: young and old, people with children, people in wheelchairs, members of every leftist political group, ex-striking

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

¹³⁸ S. Chaffey, Bristol, (31 March 1990). Cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

miners, the middle class, the working class, homeless youth, etc. People had brought along musical instruments and the music added to the festive spirit:

The atmosphere on arriving at Kennington Park was like a carnival. Bands were playing, the sun was hot, thousands of people were out to demonstrate their united opposition to the Poll Tax. It looked like it was going to be a good day! ...It was a joyful experience, dancing and shouting through the streets virtually all the way to Trafalgar Square.¹³⁹

It is difficult to imagine this festive, peaceful march of solidarity in non-payment turning into a massive riot. The march left the park and proceeded toward the city centre. After two particularly antagonistic arrests were made at a small sit-in opposite Downing Street, more people joined the impromptu sit-in and were quickly charged by mounted riot police. For two hours police forced people to retreat from Whitehall into Trafalgar Square, thus restricting a large and by now angry crowd into a confined space. Police vans were used to try and break up the crowd, but this seemed to incense the trapped protestors and they retaliated. Fires were lit in bins outside buildings in the Square; people were seriously injured by baton wielding police and were hit by police vans; the police were attacked by people fighting back, using any makeshift weapon available including scaffolding poles, concrete rubble, and bins; cars were set upon and shops looted. It was a scene of chaos.¹⁴⁰ It was a display of their absolute frustration with the tax and the lack of response from the government to the mass display of opposition which had been taking place since 1987:

For a lot of people, the Poll Tax is the final straw of the last decade and now was their chance to let rip. All the accumulated anger, hatred, frustration, and powerlessness came boiling out in

¹³⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'I booked a babysitter', *Poll Tax Riot: 10 Hours that Shook Trafalgar Square* (London: Acab Press, 1990), p. 5.

¹⁴⁰ For a detailed description of the riot, see the 'Riot and Rebellion' chapter in Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-125. Numerous personal accounts of the day are also provided in Anonymous author(s), *Poll Tax Riot: 10 Hours that Shook Trafalgar Square* (London: Acab Press, 1990).

a torrent of fury.¹⁴¹

In the aftermath of the Trafalgar Square events, the anti-poll tax movement banded together as before to support its members. In London, a defendants' campaign was quickly formed by members of two local APTUs, a defendant, and a former member of the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign.¹⁴² Called the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign (TSDC), it set about offering unconditional support for all those charged with offences relating to the day. Volunteers attended all court hearings, and the campaign also established weekly meetings to provide legal briefings and give advice sessions on prison. A group of solicitors also volunteered their services. Twenty-five to thirty benefit gigs were held in order to raise money for these operations. It was a highly successful campaign. Success cannot be measured in this case in how many defendants were cleared of their charges. In fact, many participants in the riot were jailed, some for as long as three years. What made the TSDC successful was the immediate responsiveness of community members to form a support group. They resisted attempts by the All-Britain Federation to take-over the defendants' campaign, primarily because the federation had at first denounced those involved in the riot and threatened to expel them from the movement.¹⁴³

Communities of solidarity

The philosophy underlying the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign could also be seen in the defendants' campaign which was established to support the millions of non-payers called into court. Across Scotland, England and Wales councils began to summons people to court, in order to get a court liability order for each non-payer so that they could then begin to recover unpaid poll tax. The government seemed to be digging its own grave with its own legislation. The

¹⁴¹ Anonymous author(s), 'The final straw', *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁴² The founders of the TSDC were Terri Conway of the Islington APTU, Dave Morris of the Tottenham APTU, Sean Waterman who had been involved in the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, and Alistair Mitchell who was a defendant.

administrative nightmare that had been the registration and mailing out processes was nothing compared with the chaos that would ensue when the cases entered the court system. This was, of course, to the anti-poll tax movement's advantage:

We will clog the courts with non-payers, we will make them unworkable. The Anti-Poll Tax Unions will support the people in their fight for basic rights, and when the people turn up in their hundreds and thousands the Poll Tax will be made unenforceable.¹⁴⁴

Examples abound of the enormity of the task of summoning the non-payers to court. In Bristol 120,000 people were summoned, in Leeds 110,000 people were, and on the tiny Isle of Wight the Medina Council summoned 3,000 people to attend court on a single day. This allowed only a matter of seconds for each case to be heard. It was obvious that neither the council nor the court intended to hear each case and the circumstances which may have prevented them from paying. People were infuriated by this injustice. Many had assumed that the court case would finally give them the opportunity to voice their general outrage at the tax and also their personal financial hardship. Often people would ignore the requests of the court to simply state their name, and would give powerful and moving accounts of their financial circumstances.¹⁴⁵

No matter how dire the circumstances of the defendants, however, the courts were not allowed to take them into account. This was another unjust facet of the poll tax legislation. Previously, under the rates system, magistrates had the power to waive debts if they believed defendants to be suffering genuine hardship. The financial circumstances of individuals could only be taken into account under the poll tax when the non-payer was in court for a second time, facing imprisonment, and the council had made every possible attempt to

¹⁴³ See Burns, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-116 for a full summary of the defendants' campaign and the ensuing trials.

¹⁴⁴ Danny Burns, speech to Bristol demonstration, March 1990. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135.

recover the outstanding tax. Magistrates simply were not able to determine who could afford to pay or not. However, they did have the power to treat non-payers with dignity and respect, something which was often absent in the poll tax court proceedings.¹⁴⁶ Burns cites the example of a woman from Bristol who took with her to court a detailed list of her income and living costs. These revealed that she had only £3.50 per week left after she paid for the basic necessities and yet the poll tax for herself and her husband amounted to nearly £20 per week. After explaining this dire situation to the magistrate, the clerk replied to the woman, "Is that the only reason why you have not paid your Poll Tax?"¹⁴⁷ Non-payers were shocked at such condescending displays as this, and shocked at the lack of justice.

Local APTUs organised protestors to block the courts, encouraging as many supporters as possible to fill the court houses in order to disrupt the procedures. In Warrington, for example, the court was filled with more than 1,000 people, forcing the cases to be postponed. In most of the Anti-Poll Tax Unions at least three members became trained to be familiar with the poll tax legislation. Also, regular legal briefing sessions were held by APTUs to inform activists of their legal rights and also of how they might disrupt or delay the court proceedings. The Poll Tax Legal Group was established and this researched legislation and case law and set up a network of lawyers who could support the legal challenges of anti-poll tax groups. Thousands of APTU members were also trained to do court support work. Using the legal precedent of *McKenzie versus McKenzie* (1970), which said that a person could 'attend a trial as a friend of either party (to) take notes and quietly make suggestions and give advice to that party', these APTU volunteers acted as McKenzie friends. They could offer advice to the non-payer and offer technical defences, which helped to delay the court proceedings.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136. Burns writes further that although McKenzie friends were in accordance with the law, many magistrates immediately restricted the use of them, arguing that they had discretion over when and where it was appropriate to allow them. For example, people were often asked their profession and if they were a building

Many non-payers were not successful in their attempts to avoid prosecution for their failure to pay. One of the first apparatuses of attack employed by the state in its campaign against non-payment was the use of bailiffs and Scottish sheriff officers. In England and Wales, bailiffs were authorised to remove furniture and household goods from non-payers with no other assets, while in Scotland sheriff officers were only authorised by law to take so-called luxury goods. This process of distraint caused further consternation in the community. Usually it was the absolute poorest who were worst affected, as they had no means available to them of raising money to pay the tax once the threat of poinding goods was made. They literally had to wait for the bailiffs to come. This is where local APTUs stepped in. In Scotland, where sheriff officers have the right to break and enter after four days notice, hundreds of people were organised to physically stop the bailiffs from entering. In England and Wales, however, where bailiffs had to be invited into a property by the occupant, or find an open door or window, the focus of APTUs was on raising people's awareness of their rights.

Bailiff busting groups were formed throughout Britain, and their role was to monitor the activities of bailiff companies and inform local activists of their whereabouts.¹⁴⁹ Posters warned bailiffs not to enter Bailiff Free Zones. These were a prime example of the creativity of the campaign. One depicted a vicious rottweiler and read "Bailiffs...Make My Day." Another was a picture of a gun-wielding Malcolm X in hiding, and it read "Bailiffs We're Ready". These images were enjoyed by local people, they made them laugh and also depicted them as the victors rather than the victims.¹⁵⁰

worker they were allowed a McKenzie friend, and if they were a teacher they were not. He adds: "The hypocrisy of the courts was exposed by their sheer irrationality." *Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 147-153.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67. The government alternative to poinding goods of non-payers was to either arrest their wages or income support or freeze their bank accounts. Local councils had the authority to instruct employers or the Department of Social Security to deduct money directly from non-payers' incomes. The anti-poll tax movement responded in three ways to this latest threat. A small number of high profile protests were made, including the occupation and roof-top protest by the Tottenham APTU of

The threat of imprisonment was perhaps the last means of threatening non-payers and intimidating them to pay. This was not an idle threat, and it saw many poll tax objectors in prison. The first person to be threatened with imprisonment for poll tax evasion was a 74 year old pensioner, Cyril Mundin. He was threatened with a fourteen-day prison sentence, but, allegedly in an attempt to deflect bad publicity, *The News of the World* paid his poll tax, and thus Mundin did not have to go to prison. Others were not so lucky. The first non-payer to be jailed, Brian Wright of Grantham, spent 14 days of a 21 day sentence in prison. The reduction was brought about by constant public pressure on the local MP and government minister.¹⁵¹

Arrest of non-payers further incensed anti-poll tax activists. The overwhelming majority of those who were imprisoned could not pay; they were on low or no incomes, disabled or mentally ill, homeless or aged. In other words, they were from the parts of society left forgotten by the Thatcher government.¹⁵² Not only was imprisonment of non-payers an exercise in

local council buildings in July 1991. The second means of resistance was to focus on giving practical advice to non-payers. Members were advised to use smaller banks or building societies. Bank staff would sometimes warn people that their accounts were to be frozen, allowing them to move their money elsewhere. The banks themselves soon made it clear that account freezing was not an effective enforcement method and they would not cooperate with the local authorities indefinitely. For this reason, bank account freezing was never used as a means of enforcement in England and Wales. Wage arrestment also became problematic for the councils, as it became clear that people on low incomes were not deterred from non-payment. There was a maximum that councils could deduct from incomes each week and this was usually less than paying the poll tax direct. Thirdly, the anti-poll tax movement worked with the union movement to resist wage arrestment. Trade unions set up workplace APTUs, bypassing official trade union structures and hierarchies which refused to support non-payment. The factor that was most effective in the fight against the wage and income restraint measures was the paperwork and paperchasing that the policy involved. To arrest a non-payer's wages, the council first had to find out where they worked. Non-payers, already knee-deep in fines for refusing to pay the tax, simply increased these fines by failing to fill out employment detail forms. From a population of over a million Scottish non-payers, local authorities in Scotland had only managed 14,102 wage arrestments and 14,710 bank arrestments by July 1991. Clearly, these policies had had little effect. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-165.

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹⁵² Thirty-two per cent of all those imprisoned for non-payment were suffering from either physical or mental disability or physical or mental ill-health. A number of cases

negative public relations, but also councils were quick to realise that local prison facilities were not capable of detaining the millions of people who continued to refuse to pay the tax.¹⁵³

Effecting change

It was clear by early 1990 that the poll tax was unenforceable. Over 17.5 million had not paid the tax or were in serious arrears with their payments. This was approximately half the number of people eligible to pay. Only nine months after the implementation date, a billion pounds of tax was unpaid, an average of 90 per cent of the expected revenue.¹⁵⁴ Non-payers were clearly not being deterred by the intimidation measures implemented by their local councils. What is more, many of these measures, such as poinding and imprisonment, were attracting heightened negative press and responses even from Conservative supporters and those who had paid the Tory poll tax. The government attempted to modify the tax, implementing an increasing number of concessions from early 1990 on, targeting various sections of the community like single parents, the aged and low income earners. These measures certainly did not appease the anti-poll tax movement, who saw the introduction of ever increasing rebates as simply a publicity stunt. The government continued to defend the abhorrent principles of the tax. It simply tried to introduce band-aid solutions, cajoling voters with rebates and poll tax rate reductions.

involving such people made the national press, as people became increasingly outraged at the lack of care and justice shown by the state. One such case was that of Mr G who was 72 years old when sentenced to 28 days imprisonment by Peterlee Magistrates in August 1994. He had a heart condition and had received treatment for malnutrition. He lived in a nursing home where he received £12 per week residents' allowance. A group of fellow prisoners were so shocked by the fact that this frail and elderly man was serving time with them that they wrote to the local newspaper. This prompted a bail and judicial review application to be made. In the end he served 15 days before being released on bail. Another prisoner of the poll tax was a Mr P. He was a cancer patient who was also severely physically and mentally handicapped. He was sentenced to 28 days for poll tax arrears by the Wolverhampton magistrates, despite being unable to understand the correspondence from the council as he could neither read nor write. He spent six days in prison before being released on bail. R. Epstein, 'Let them do time', *New Statesman and Society* (30 June 1995), pp. 26-27.

¹⁵³Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

¹⁵⁴ Cited in Bagguley, *op. cit.*, p. 699.

Within the Conservative Party itself a growing sense of unease was developing. It was finally recognised that the unpopular, to say the least, poll tax could pose a threat to the Tory's chances of re-election. The poll tax was referred to as the most urgent domestic political matter by the Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd.¹⁵⁵ At a time when the non-payment campaign was at perhaps its strongest and enforcement and collection of the tax were troubled, the deputy Prime Minister attacked Thatcher in a speech at the House of Commons for both her stance on Britain's role in Europe and her autocratic style of government. This speech seemed to give rise to a tirade of criticism against the Prime Minister and her poll tax, culminating in a leadership challenge in November 1990. Michael Heseltine challenged Thatcher for the leadership of the Conservative Party, with the poll tax as the main election issue. Heseltine had long been an opponent of the poll tax and polls earlier in 1990 had revealed that the public would be more likely to vote for the Conservatives if he was leader.¹⁵⁶ Thatcher won the first ballot in the leadership challenge, but she failed to gain an overall majority. On November 20, 1990, after it had become increasingly clear that many in her party would no longer support her, Thatcher resigned as Prime Minister. After more than ten years in power, Thatcher was defeated, sunk by her very own flagship. John Major was elected as the new party leader and thus Prime Minister, and Heseltine became a member of his cabinet and minister in charge of reforming, but importantly not abolishing, the poll tax.

Major was quick to realise that one of the first things to address as Prime Minister was the growing poll tax debacle. Changes were soon announced to the tax. On March 19, 1991, for example, a further rebate of £140 was announced. This rebate applied to all poll tax payers, and was hoped to quell

¹⁵⁵ Macgregor, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

¹⁵⁶ The *Sunday Correspondent* reported on March 25, 1990: "Even more remarkable is the demonstration of Mr. Heseltine's electoral potency. Labour's standing in the poll is 55% compared with 28% for the Tories, but when voters were asked how they would vote if Heseltine were Conservative leader the lead narrowed dramatically to 48% for Labour, 41% for the Conservatives." Cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

the success of the non-payment campaign. It was not especially successful in this respect, as the anti-poll tax movement remained defiant and determined to continue non-payment and beat the tax. Furthermore, the change meant recalculating the poll tax bills of 35 million people, thus creating even deeper administrative turmoil for the councils.¹⁵⁷ Clearly fighting a losing battle, the government conceded defeat and announced on March 21, 1991 that the poll tax was abolished. It was to be replaced by a new taxation system, the Council Tax, in 1993. This new Council Tax would see a return to banded tax based on property values as the basis of local council taxation.

The abolishment of the poll tax caused celebration amongst the anti-poll tax movement. At the same time, though, the movement's activists were very aware that their fight against non-payment would have to continue until the new tax replaced the poll tax in 1993. They would also need to remain vigilant in their fight for justice for non-payers.

Resisting the poll tax, resisting Thatcherite reform

The role of the community-based non-payment network was quickly acknowledged by a broad spectrum of people as the key to the poll tax's demise:

If the Poll Tax is dead it was killed by non-payment, a tactic which each of the three main parties insisted was pointless and wrong. Extra-parliamentary action, that nightmare of Westminster politicians, proved itself and in the process exposed the hollowness of our claims to democracy... This weekend each and every one of those non-payers should feel proud of themselves.... It was left to a rag-tag army of ordinary people to destroy a bad law.¹⁵⁸

This message of congratulations came from the media, which had largely vilified the non-payment campaign, particularly after the Trafalgar Square riot.

¹⁵⁷ This move also created the bizarre and somewhat perverse situation in which residents of Wandsworth did not have to pay any tax, which, of course, created widespread resentment. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁵⁸ Cited in *Ibid.*

Major himself conceded that the tax had become unenforceable.¹⁵⁹

A campaign that had been consistently dismissed and disparaged had succeeded in its objectives. The poll tax had been defeated, and in the process a Prime Minister, who represented an unjust and autocratic regime, had been brought down. It was a triumphant display of civil disobedience on a mass scale. People had discovered that community was not dead. Attempts by Thatcher and her government to destroy the sense of community in Britain during, for example, the miners' strike, had not succeeded and, when confronted with the explicitly unfair and inequitable Community Charge legislation, communities banded together. Neighbours who had never before spoken found themselves working together in local Anti-Poll Tax Unions or in neighbourhood bailiff look-out activities. Certainly, people were demoralised by Thatcher's decade-long onslaught on the welfare state and organised labour. But this only fuelled their desire to fight and beat the poll tax legislation.

Anti-poll tax activists were also buoyed by the lack of solidarity shown by the organised left towards their community-based campaign. The Labour Party had clearly forsaken the anti-poll tax movement from its very inception in Scotland in 1987. The union movement, too, had chosen to disassociate itself with a movement that was not guaranteed of success and that it could not dominate. It was this indomitable strength which characterised the anti-poll tax movement, particularly the collective of over 1,000 Anti-Poll Tax Unions. Militant's dominance, for example, was virtually unanimously rejected, although it did persist at the national level in the All-Britain Federation for Poll Tax Unions. Organised left groups, such as Militant or the Socialist Workers Party, found the movement almost impossible to control or organise, because it was a decentralised movement made up of local groups.

This decentralised polycephalus network of local groups is an organisational

¹⁵⁹Major told concerned Right-wingers that the tax was unenforceable in a speech given a week before the poll tax's abolition. He cited figures of 17.5 million people who had either not paid or were in serious arrears - about half of those liable to pay. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

form typical of new social movements.¹⁶⁰ While I do not actively employ this term new social movements to describe activist networks and communities, as discussed in the dissertation's introduction, I do concur with Jan Pakulski that decentralised polycephalus networks of local groups is an apt way to describe the organisational structure of activist groupings. The anti-poll tax networks of resistance consisted of local networks, often based around neighbourhood, physically defined communities, and these operated within a broader network of non-payment and solidarity communities, which could not be easily physically defined.

In true grass-roots organisational style, the participants of the anti-poll tax movement spurned hierarchical, top-down structures. There were no leaders in this campaign. Even at the individual APTU level, an informal, non-hierarchical atmosphere prevailed, with members even rotating to take the minutes of meetings. When anti-poll tax group meetings were held, very little voting took place - people were simply too impatient to waste time with nonsensical formalities, such as voting on the best plan of attack. Any plan which attacked the poll tax and which contributed to the campaign to fight it was welcomed. Strategies included those that were clearly in violation of the law, such as petrol bombing Poll Tax Offices, and acts of civil lawful disobedience, like harassing bailiffs.¹⁶¹

Regular meetings usually form the basis of organised political parties' dissemination of information to members. With the APTUs, however, meetings were simply one means of organising the movement. Information was passed on to activists by mass-pamphleteering (the Haringey Anti-Poll Tax Union once letter-boxed over a million information pamphlets), word-of-mouth, even by posting messages on local notice boards or graffitiing them on walls.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰J. Pakulski, *Social Movements: The Politics of Moral Protest* (Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1991).

¹⁶¹Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

¹⁶²Greaves, of the Leeds Federation APTUs, gives an example of the use of graffiti to convey anti-poll tax information:

The thesis that the very unstructuredness of the anti-poll tax movement was the key, or at least part thereof, to its success is in general accordance with Piven and Cloward's analysis of poor people's movements. Piven and Cloward propose that protest is the means for the poor to obtain concessions from elite groups, primarily the state. For poor people's movements to succeed they need to be minimalistic in terms of order and organisation. Yet, Piven and Cloward argue at the same time that the more highly organised a movement's protest is, the more likely it is to be reintegrated back into the mainstream political system.¹⁶³ This assumes, however, that activists from all political movements or networks are seeking a role for themselves within the mainstream system. One of the recurrent themes of the networks of resistance examined in this dissertation is that many activists see no role for mainstream political institutions in their politics or in the future of change.

The anti-poll tax movement was not, however, a poor people's movement. Central to a poor people's movement is the notion that the activists in the movement are in fact poor. Certainly, many of the millions of people who defied the poll tax by participating in the non-payment campaign were poor, living on or below the established poverty line. Many of the activists were not, though, and could have afforded to pay the tax, if they had so chosen. Instead, they did not pay as acts of both solidarity and rejection.

Leeds City Council has a policy of blacking out all the posters of rock concerts and things like that. Somebody from the Hyde Park group thought they made excellent blackboards and started chalking out explanations on how you could delay registration in different coloured chalks with little pictures. It really worked. I could see people coming back from the pub standing there for about five or ten minutes reading these different messages.

I. Greaves, cited in Burns, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

¹⁶³ F. F. Piven and R. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements* (New York: Pantheon, 1977).

Conclusion:

Communities of resistance and solidarity

It is too simplistic to view the miners' strike of 1984-1985 and the anti-poll tax campaign as instrumentalist disputes. The activist communities that were involved in each did initially emerge in response to a government decision. However, activists were not only fighting against colliery closures or tax changes. Instead, they were fighting for justice and community. They were resisting the Thatcherite project and from this resistance networks emerged. People grouped together to support each other in times of struggle and to find a common means of resistance. The networks of resistance that emerged during the miners and poll tax disputes were often based around physically-defined neighbourhood-based communities. This can be in part explained by the natures of the struggles: colliery towns were threatened by mine closures; the poll tax was based on local council boundaries. Explanations can be less tangible. People are drawn to the safety net of their immediate neighbourhood, activism within this confine is about protecting immediate interests and the interests of those known.

Activism spread beyond direct boundaries. Activists formed broader networks - supporters of the miners from one colliery town would join with another, often far afield, for a march, a funds collection, a speaking function, while anti-poll tax activists soon formed networks of non-payment across Scotland, England and Wales, with messages of solidarity and ideas for resistance flowing between networks. These networks then randomly and intermittently interlaced to form broad communities of solidarity and of activism.

The miners' strike and anti-poll tax activism are important for their legacy on community activism in Britain. Non-hierarchical, autonomous direct action politics has become widely practised by activists and while neither the miners' strike or the fight against the poll tax were the first instances of such political practice, activists involved in the two campaigns did act as inspiration for many activists to form networks and communities of activism, no matter how locale-

based their struggle was. This first part of the dissertation, *Communities of Resistance: Organising in Neighbourhoods and Beyond*, has explored the role of place in generating and sustaining protest communities through the use of two empirical studies: the miners' strike and the anti-poll tax campaign. It has been demonstrated that physical proximity, particularly in neighbourhoods, might provide an initial focus for networking and organising activism, networks of solidarity, and ultimately, communities of resistance, spread beyond the confines of any one location. The following chapter explores the nature of some non-geographically defined or initiated networks of activism and this is followed by further empirical discussions of activists' communities of resistance.

PART II

NETWORKS OF PROTEST

CHAPTER TWO

Activist networks, weaving community

The Utopia of the community appears at first to distance itself from the new social struggles, yet far more often it is actually paving their way.

Alain Touraine ¹

The rhetoric surrounding actions against the Poll Tax and, as it will be demonstrated later in this dissertation, against the Criminal Justice Act and on June 18, 1999 suggests that there is a British-wide network of activists. Action plans, ideas and contacts are circulated via zines such as *SchNEWS*, *Earth First! Update* and *Counter Information* or on the Internet, on specifically formulated homepages or action bulletin boards.² Activists use phone trees to spread news of actions and posters, brochures and texts are posted around Britain, linking groups and individuals and providing them with the means to advertise further actions with common agit-prop material.³

This chapter examines the activist network in Britain, its effectiveness and extent in linking activists, and will also seek to address the question of

¹ A. Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements*, trans. by A. Duff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 19, emphasis added.

² See, for example, the on-line versions of *SchNEWS* and the *Earth First! Action Update* at <http://www.SchNEWS.org.uk/thisweek.htm> and <http://www.eco-action.org/efau/>, respectively.

³ Activists use phone trees as a communication technique infrequently, given the cost of telephone calls in Britain and the risk of police surveillance. For an account of the successful use of phone trees by activists, see Tommy Sheridan's account of their use in the anti-poll tax campaign in the Pollock area of Glasgow. T. Sheridan and J. McAlpine, *A Time to Rage* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1994), p. 54.

whether a network of activists equates to a community of activists. It is a chapter which focuses on the tools of activism, but also on the idea that the use of these tools, such as zines, social centres and bulletin boards, facilitates activists coming together, physically and/or emotionally. The idea of networks centred around a spatial or physical location will be considered, with reference to social centres such as the Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh, the 1 in 12 Centre in Bradford and the Brighton and Worthing Anarchist Teapots. Non-spatially linked networks will also be examined. The case of the eco-activist network in Britain is employed as a means of exploring networks that are independent of physical locations. The eco-activist network Earth First! is also presented as an example of a network that is not confined within national boundaries, and has in fact become internationalised. The idea of the existence of a transnational network of like-minded activists involved in Reclaim the Streets and Critical Mass actions across Europe and North America is also critically assessed. The research conducted for this chapter is based on my own participant observation of the social centres and networks, interviews with activists involved in these networks and primary source material emerging from the activist networks themselves. An examination of the pertinent question of the equation of network with community concludes the chapter.

Defining networks

Two terms appear repeatedly in work on dissent and activism that can, seemingly, be used interchangeably: network and movement. The interchange of these words is, however, a point of contention. Rupa Huq, for example, argues that the “vogueish word ‘network’” is often used to describe the anti-Criminal Justice Act campaign, rather than as a social movement. Yet, he suggests, this is a false dichotomy, as “much social movement writing argues that movements are networks anyway.”⁴ Paradoxically, Huq does not indicate which social movement writers argue that movements and networks are synonymous. Furthermore, there is a counter argument that

⁴ R. Huq, ‘The right to rave: opposition to the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994’, in T. Jordan and A. Lent (eds), *Storming the Millennium: The New Politics of Change* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999), p. 20.

deems movements to be made up of networks of diverse individuals, organisations and ideologies.⁵ If a social movement can be said to be made up of various networks, it can also be said that various movements can form a movement network. The protest that met the Criminal Justice Act in 1994, for example, was a network of diverse movements. The Criminal Justice Act "galvanised rather than dispersed activists"⁶, bringing together activists from the many groups in society singled out by its one hundred and eighty-one clauses: travellers, ravers, festival goers, any activists or members of the public who wanted to protect the right to assemble publicly and who were against new police stop and search powers and the removal of the right to silence.⁷

Mol and Law provide an enlightening exposition of the use of the term network in linguistics:

A network is a series of elements with well defined relations between them. The metaphor comes from semiotics where it is used to apply to language. But the elements of a network do not need to be words, and the relations between them don't necessarily have to do with the question of giving each other meaning. Network elements may be machines or gestures....⁸

Proximity or closeness between a network's constituents is measured not in metric increments but by degrees of similarity.⁹ Throughout the course of this chapter, it will be ascertained whether, in the case of activist networks, proximity can be measured by similarity of thought, ideology, or action.

⁵ T. Jordan, 'The hardest question: an introduction to the new politics of change', in T. Jordan and A. Lent (eds), *Storming the Millennium: The New Politics of Change* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999), p. 7.

⁶ G. McKay, 'DiY culture: notes towards an intro', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 27.

⁷ Anonymous author(s), 'The story of *Squall*: fresh flavour in the media soup', at the *Squall* homepage: <http://www.squall.co.uk/story.html>; accessed 30.05.00.

⁸ A. Mol and J. Law, 'Regions, networks and fluids: anaemia and social topology', *Social Studies of Science*, vol. 24 (1994), p. 649, cited in S. Hinchliffe, 'Home-made space and the will to disconnect', in K. Hetherington and R. Munro (eds), *Ideas of Difference: Social Spaces and the Labour of Division* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers/The Sociological Review, 1997), p. 207.

⁹ *Ibid.*

While network remains a rather nebulous term, it is used throughout this dissertation to mean a non-hierarchical form of communication and interaction between activists. The networks examined are largely informal, with some exception in the cases of organised unionist involvement in the miners' support groups, the trade union-based and labour movement-based anti-poll tax groups and formal membership-based groups like Friends of the Earth. In fact, what characterises many of the activist 'groups' examined, such as Reclaim the Streets and anti-road activists, is that they explicitly oppose formal membership.

The network established around campaigns like the 1994 Claremont Road protests against the M16's extension (as detailed later) is deliberately transient. A centralised membership in an action such as the squatting at Claremont Road would be totally inappropriate for a number of reasons. Firstly, the state deems such occupations as unlawful and activists would therefore put themselves at risk of surveillance and arrest if their names and details were supplied for centralised membership collection. Signing up for activist membership is also contrary to the belief systems of a majority of participants at the Claremont Road occupation. This attitude is summed up by an anonymous activist author on the Reclaim the Streets homepage: "We are not a send-a-donation/get-the-mag/sit-in-your-armchair organisation. We are about getting involved and changing things through our own actions."¹⁰ For direct action activists, political protest is about being involved and participating actively, rather than relying on largely passive formal membership as a token of activism. Linked to this is the conviction that formal membership is contrary to anarchist and autonomous eco-activist belief systems and, no matter how diverse these beliefs are, individual activists are not tied to a campaign nor are they defined by that campaign.

While it is my contention that the activist network in Britain is transient, Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink argue that social networks, the

¹⁰ Taken from Anonymous author(s), Hypermedia Research Centre, University of Westminster website: <http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/campaigns/RTS/Who.html>; accessed 25.09.97.

underpinnings of any political or activist network and the “foundations on which movements are built”, are “concrete linkages that derive from locality, shared experience, kinship, and the like...”.¹¹ I refute two points of this definition in relation to activist networks. I contend that networks consist of intangible rather than concrete linkages; activists are linked rather tenuously, with little evidence of formalised or permanent ties. There is no card-carrying membership of Earth First!, for example.¹² Secondly, the role of locality in connecting activists is questioned throughout this chapter and it is demonstrated that spatially disparate activists can share strong ties and act politically together over distance.

Technology-driven social networks

Arturo Escobar outlines the way in which networks are in vogue as a means of describing social relations of the future. The role of networks is often limited in this discussion to computer, and particularly Internet, networks. However, Escobar contends that networks extend beyond the realm of technology, and “are only as good as the ensemble of human, natural and non-human elements they bring together and organise.”¹³ In their brief introduction to social network analysis, Peter Hedström and Richard Swedberg expand on this idea of the importance of the building process and content of a network. A network’s structure influences the network’s processes, and it is this belief that underlies the social network approach.¹⁴

The potential of technology driven networks in fostering broader networks is well illustrated by the case of the Zapatista support network.¹⁵ This was

¹¹ M. Keck and K. Sikkink, ‘Transnational advocacy networks in the movement society’, in D. S. Meyer and S. Tarrow (eds), *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998) p. 219.

¹² There are, however, membership dues for members of both Bradford 1 in 12 Club and the Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh.

¹³ A. Escobar, ‘Gender, place and networks: a political ecology of cyberculture’, in W. Harcourt (ed.), *Women@Internet: Creating Cultures in Cyberspace* (London: Zed, 1999), p. 31.

¹⁴ P. Hedström and R. Swedberg, ‘Introduction to this special issue on social network analysis’, *Acta Sociologica*, vol. 37 (1994), p. 327.

¹⁵ The Zapatista uprising is examined in greater detail in Chapter Six of this dissertation.

a global network that was actively pursued by the Zapatistas and the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) from the time of the EZLN-lead uprising in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1994. The Zapatistas proposed an intercontinental communication and resistance network, which was distributed by e-mail and on the Internet.¹⁶ During the initial two weeks of fighting between the EZLN and the Mexican government forces, the Zapatistas relied on more conventional means of communication, including occupying a radio station and producing a newspaper, in which they issued reports of their quest for rights for the indigenous people of Chiapas. However, these means were quickly superseded in favour of the speed that the Internet offered and communiqués were rapidly released over the worldwide web by Subcommandante Marcos, the spokesperson for the EZLN. Tod Robberson of the *Washington Post* reported that word from Chiapas spread quickly via Internet bulletin boards, like PeaceNet and Chiapas-List:

With help from peace activists and rebel support groups ...the Zapatista message is spreading throughout the world, literally at lightning speed, thanks to telephone links to the Internet computer network. ...The Internet is the best vehicle we have to spread information around. Before, we used faxes and telephone, and it took forever. Now...the feedback is instantaneous.¹⁷

The Internet served as the ideal communication tool for the EZLN for reasons of speed and of scope. Marcos and the EZLN were able to relay messages both to their expanding network of supporters and to the government while in hiding and without trace of their whereabouts.¹⁸ The

¹⁶ M. S. Schulz, 'Collective action across borders: opportunity structures, network capacities, and communicative praxis in the age of advanced globalization', *Sociological Perspectives*, vol. 41, no. 3 (1998), p. 591.

¹⁷ T. Robberson, 'Mexico's ski-masked rebels show flair for communicating', *Washington Post*, 9 February 1994, cited in J. W. Knudson, 'Rebellion in Chiapas: insurrection by Internet and public relations', *Media, Culture and Society*, vol. 20, no. 3 (1998), p. 509.

¹⁸ Knudson reports that Marcos reportedly used the cigarette lighter in his pick-up truck as a power source for his laptop computer to write his messages and even the Mexican federal police were well aware that if Marcos had a telephone modem and a cellular phone he could hook into the Internet from any location. *Ibid.*, p. 509.

target audience of the daily communiqués was broadened to include not only sympathetic newspapers and bulletin boards but the people of Mexico, and the people, governments and press of the world.¹⁹

Support for the EZLN has spread well beyond the borders of Chiapas or Mexico to encompass pockets of supporters across the world, linked by mail and primarily e-mail and the Internet. The Zapatistas actively pursued a global network of solidarity and very soon after the uprising in Chiapas, they proposed an intercontinental communication and resistance network to distribute information and facilitate communication by e-mail and on the Internet.²⁰ An example of this network can be found on a German website for "Initiatives against Neoliberalism", whose authors linked the struggle of the Zapatistas with other struggles for social justice like the European March against Unemployment, the strikes of the Liverpool dockers, and the Berlin Social Alliance's (Berliner Sozialbündnis/Bündnis gegen Sozialkürzungen und Ausgrenzung) actions against welfare cuts and exclusion.²¹

The EZLN and the Zapatista support network is an example of a mass network that is determined both by its internal interpersonal dynamic and its use of the Internet, a tool that is, as Escobar reports, commonly thought of as a network itself. The network that emerged outside of Chiapas in support of the Zapatistas could be described as a virtual community, a network of people linked by their access to the world wide web and e-mail. What also links them, apart from shared communication tools, is common interest: "Members of virtual community want to link globally with kindred souls for companionship, information, and social support from their homes and workstations."²²

¹⁹ Cited in *Ibid.*

²⁰ Schulz, *op. cit.*, p. 591.

²¹ Schulz, *op. cit.*, p. 603.

²² B. Wellman, J. Salaff, D. Dimitrova, L. Garton, M. Gulia and C. Haythornwaite, 'Computer networks as social networks: collaborative work, telework, and virtual community', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 22 (1996), p. 214.

Barry Wellman *et al* argue that the relationship cyber community members share can be as productive and supportive as some people's face-to-face relationships. People are part of networks like the Zapatista support network due to shared interests, rather than mere physical proximity. This, Wellman *et al* argue, "is a technologically supported continuation of a long-term shift to communicate organized by shared interests rather than by shared neighbourhoods or kinship groups."²³ The idea of people working together or coming together through shared interest supports Keck and Sikkink's idea of a network as demarcating nonterritorialised spaces of regularised interaction. The participants of these networks are bound by shared values, common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services.²⁴

The social divine: at the heart of networks

Michel Maffesoli, in the manner of Emile Durkheim, uses the term social divine to describe the aggregate force which is at the base of any society or association. The social divine is akin to religion, when religion is used to connote a uniting force, a "common matrix, a foundation of the 'being-together'."²⁵ Maffesoli links the use of the term the social divine to a mystical tradition of aiming to lose oneself in a 'greater whole', a tradition which continues to be relevant to analysing social movements and therefore social networks. The desire to lose oneself in a greater whole is akin to the desire to participate in a collective, a desire that cannot necessarily be explained through rational or functional means. Economic-political analyses cannot offer an understanding of the strength of the socialities which underpin networks and communities, while, Maffesoli argues, the social divine (or demotheistic) perspective does allow for this understanding.²⁶ The perspective provides an insight into the importance of neo-tribalism, which is discussed at length in the chapter which examines the anti-roads movement.

²³ Cited in *ibid.*, p. 224.

²⁴ Keck and Sikkink, *op. cit.*, pp. 235-6; 217.

²⁵ M. Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, trans. by D. Smith (London: Sage, 1996), p. 38.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 40-41.

A possible source of interconnectedness of people within a particular network or community is shared sentiment. Maffesoli claims that shared sentiment could be the inexplicable glue which fosters association, despite the multitudes of egos and interests involved in any network. Shared sentiment does not imply uniformity, and this certainly is not a characteristic of the networks examined throughout this dissertation. Instead, shared sentiment is akin to a shared experience, or shared goals, based perhaps on lofty ideals or on localised objectives. Shared sentiment leads to feelings of interconnectedness and solidarity, and allows for simultaneous uniformity and emphasis on individual values.²⁷ In no way does this shared sentiment, at the heart of the social divine, imply or necessitate homogeny. Maffesoli writes of the need to see the social divine as a means of understanding why people are increasingly acting within a network framework, which is vital to an understanding of activists' relations with one another:

...we can notice...a reorientation towards goals near to hand, genuinely shared feelings.... It is precisely this proximity that gives much of its meaning to what we call the 'social divine'. It has nothing to do with any kind of dogmatism or institutional formula; it strengthens the pagan fibre which, whether historians like it or not, has never entirely disappeared from the masses. Like the Lares, the cause and effect of the family group, the divine of which we speak allows us to recreate the cenacles that keep us warm and provide social spaces in the heart of the cold, inhuman metropolis. ...The obvious dehumanization of urban life is giving birth to specific groupings for the exchange of passion and feelings.²⁸

Networks as rhizomes

A network can be thought of as a web of connections and affiliations, with diverse, interconnected, non-hierarchical links between those in the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 41-2.

network. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari use the analogy of the rhizome to conceptualise their interpretation of a network - an analogy that I feel aptly sums up the loose, non-hierarchical nature of the activist network in Britain. Deleuze and Guattari reject the analogy of a tree as a representation of the interconnectedness of social relations, arguing that a tree-like projection of social relations necessarily establishes an order or hierarchy, while a rhizome is non-hierarchical: any point of a rhizome can be connected to any other and there are no central points, only lines.²⁹ A rhizome is akin to a map because it is open, detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification, unlike a genetic axis which is like an objective pivotal point upon which successive stages are organised, or a deep structure which can be broken down into smaller constituents. Instead, a rhizome is not divisible and has multiple entry ways, just as an activist network has, with entrance points like friendship groups, the internet, and zines.³⁰

Alongside Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome analogy of a network, Marion Leonard's explanation of networks, and her exposition of the use of supposed synonyms in the examination of riot grrrl, stands out as one of the most applicable to a discussion of activist networks. Leonard argues that the term network, in the case of riot grrrl, a feminist network, is preferable to terms such as collective, scene, group or movement. I use the word preferable because Leonard herself recognises the importance of not prescribing a term. Leonard explicitly endorses using the term network to refer to riot grrrls collectively because "whilst it identifies lines of

²⁹ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by B. Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), p. 7. While Deleuze and Guattari reject the image of networks as akin to aboriginal form, as do I, in favour of a rhizomatic approach, Maffesoli supports the view that the social divine, or that which underlies our social networks, is an arborescent development, acknowledging Roger Bastide's use of this term to describe religion: "...we are encouraged to see elements in an organic structure (branches forming a tree), of rings and of concatenation, of communities interwoven on a larger canvas." Maffesoli, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *op. cit.*, p. 12. See Jim Carey's excellent article on *Squall* for further evidence of the use of zines as a networking tool. J. Carey, 'Fresh flavour in the media soup: the story of SQUALL magazine', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 58-78.

interconnection, it does not suggest a singular voice or aim."³¹ Just as riot grrrls have a multitude of views and voices, so too do activist networks like that of British social centres and Earth First!.

Network localities

A network of activists can consist of people who have never experienced face-to-face relations, and yet feel strong interpersonal linkages. In 'Paper planes: travelling the new grrrl geographies', Marion Leonard argues that geographically diverse people can maintain a sense of community. She asserts that there is a riot grrrl community, despite it being spread over a wide geographical area. Leonard also refers to riot grrrl as a sub-culture. Just as Leonard contends that a sense of community can flourish despite a lack of physical connectedness, she argues that "sub-cultures should not be considered unified groups tied to a locality, creed or style but as dynamic, diverse, geographically mobile networks."³²

What brings the young women of riot grrrl together is a "sense of shared history, of solidarity across local and national boundaries..."³³ The solidarity that links activists, whether they be riot grrrls or Earth Firsters, must not be underestimated as a motivating factor behind individuals' decisions to commit to a cause, to take part in actions and to maintain ties with other activists, whether in person, over the internet or simply because they read the same activist zine.

Paul Routledge contends that although most popular political movements have had their origin in specific places or regions, a place perspective has never been incorporated into political sociology research. This omission has been erroneous, as the geographical concept of place provides insight into why social movements occur in a specific location and how movements'

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² M. Leonard, 'Paper planes: travelling the new grrrl geographies', in T. Skelton and G. Valentine (eds), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 101. See also references to the riot grrrl subculture in anonymous author, 'Revolution auf Mädchenart', *Der Spiegel*, no. 50 (1992), pp. 242-246.

³³ T. Kaplan, *Crazy for Democracy: Women in Grassroots Movements* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 181.

agencies interpellate the social structure. Place also shapes the character, dynamics and outcomes of movement agency, and, finally, "a research paradigm that is sensitive to place provides the means of understanding the spirit of movement agency, that which inspires and motivates people, the articulation of the experiences of everyday life."³⁴

Sensitivity to place is clearly important when examining the campaign to stop the construction of a motorway extension through a recognised area of natural beauty like Newbury, one of the sites of anti-roads activism discussed in Chapter Four. Sentimentality and attachment to a site of natural beauty, the desire to protect and preserve the present state of a place, ideological opposition to road building, all such emotions can easily be associated with a place like the Newbury forest. It is, however, as important to recognise the role of the sense of place at sites of contention that are not recognised for their natural beauty. Place can play a great role in protest even when a location is not being contested. For example, the Bradford 1 in 12 Club is located in a legally acquired building. There is no chance of eviction, as in 1985 the collective purchased the building with a grant from the Department of Environment.³⁵ Nevertheless, a sense of locale, location and/or place³⁶ plays a significant role in shaping the character and emotion attached to the 1 in 12 Club. For example, the club is physically located down a narrow cobbled street in a run-down area of Bradford, a once prosperous industrial city, which is now overtly depressed. Activists involved in the 1 in 12 collective attribute the physical location and the locational attributes to a sense of tenacity and determination to keep the club open. One collective member summed this feeling up with the

³⁴ P. Routledge, *Terrains of Resistance: Nonviolent Social Movements and the Contestation of Place in India* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), p. 21.

³⁵ Anonymous author(s), 'What is the 1 in 12 Club?', 1 in 12 homepage: <http://www.legend.org.uk/~lin12/whatis.htm>; site accessed 15.05.00.

³⁶ Agnew identifies three main elements in the concept of place: locale, location and sense of place. "Locale refers to the settings in which everyday social interactions and relations are constituted, whether formal and informal. Location refers to the geographical area encompassing the locale as defined by social, economic and political processes operating at a wider scale, that is, the impact of the "macro-order" in a place... Sense of place refers to the local "structure of feeling" (1987: 28) or the subjective orientation that can be engendered by living in a place." Agnew, cited in Routledge, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

sentiment that it is a working class club in a working class area of a working class city.³⁷

*Infoshops and social centres
as networking sites*

Social centres or infoshops are concrete manifestations of activist networks. A social centre is a physical space where activists meet and sometimes even live and an infoshop is usually a smaller space where activists meet and can access information on campaigns, political groups, and meetings. These are purposefully rather vague definitions, as there is no single model of a social centre or infoshop; their size and range of activities vary enormously. In one of the few texts written in or translated into English on social centres in Italy, Steve Wright illustrates their diverse activities, based on the program at Forte Prenestino:

Apart from a documentation centre and meeting rooms for political campaigning, there is an exhibition gallery, practice rooms for bands, space for theatrical performances, a dark room, gymnasium, and 'tea salon'. The weekly schedule of the early nineties saw African dance classes on Tuesday nights, yoga on Mondays and Wednesdays, and a gym class on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Regular film nights were also held, along with courses on design and sculpture.³⁸

The social centre Wright describes is an occupied space, a squatted former fort in Rome's east.³⁹ The social centres in Italy are largely squatted, while those I am considering in Britain are largely occupied legally. This is one marked difference between social centres in Italy, and also Germany and Spain, and centres in Britain; the other is the number of such centres. It was estimated in 1997 that there were more than 130 social centres in Italy, while a list of infoshops and social centres in Britain puts the number at 30

³⁷ Interview with PA. at Bradford 1 in 12 Club, 03.02.00.

³⁸ CSOA Forte Prenestino, '7 anni di Forte Prenestino', *Nessuna Dipendenza*, vol. 3 (1993), p. 28, cited in S. Wright, 'A love born of hate: autonomist rap in Italy', *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 17, no. 3 (June 2000), p. 118.

³⁹ Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

in 2000, and this includes some autonomous zones, as they are termed by the creators of the Earth First! contacts list, without a permanent space.⁴⁰

These autonomous zones are akin to Hakim Bey's Temporary Autonomous Zones (TAZ) in that they are free enclaves, physical and/or emotional spaces free from the intervention of the state. They represent moments of insurrection, whereby the participants in the TAZ experience complete freedom. Unlike Bey's TAZ, the autonomous zones listed in the Earth First! contacts list do not disappear once they are named. This does not exclude them from being TAZ, however, as Bey's definition (or lack thereof) is open for interpretation; he writes: "In fact I have deliberately refrained from defining the TAZ - I circle around the subject, firing off exploratory beams. In the end the TAZ is almost self-explanatory. If the phrase became current it would be understood without difficulty...understood in action."⁴¹ The following section examines a number of autonomous centres or zones in Britain, including the Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE) and the Bradford 1 in 12 club (1 in 12), and investigates their self-ascriptive differences. The existence of a network of social centres in Britain will also be critically assessed and the section will end with an examination of the Exodus collective, a place-based collective that does not define itself as a social centre.

The Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh

In their own words, the Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh (ACE) collective, or at least the webpage author, describes itself as a social centre, where people can work together. It is:

...a self funded campaigning and social centre, for people who wish to take control of their lives by working collectively [sic] against social, economic and ecological injustice and

⁴⁰ Tactical Media Crew, 'Centri Sociali Autogestiti', cited in *Ibid.*; Anonymous author(s), 'EF! groups', *Earth First! Action Update*: <http://www.eco-action.org/edau/contacts.html>; accessed 11.04.00.

⁴¹ H. Bey, *The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), reproduced on-line: <http://www.t0.or.at/hakimbey/taz/>; accessed 29.08.01.

exploitation; rather than looking to politicians, bosses and bureaucrats for solutions.⁴²

When I went to ACE in November 1998 and January 2000, the social centre was housed in a small shopfront. This meeting place and infoshop was, and continues to be, in a quiet street in a part of Edinburgh that is a strange mix of modest housing and shops, some even rather rundown, and others that are slowly being gentrified. It is open on Tuesday afternoons, the designated claimants' day, and Sunday afternoons, the infoshop day. These activities are described in the following excerpt from an ACE flyer:

ACE is a base for several grassroots groups and projects, including:

EDINBURGH CLAIMANTS

Tuesdays 12-4pm

Waging the successful "3-Strikes-and-You're-Out" campaign against Benefit Office Bullies, Edinburgh Claimants offer advice and solidarity against benefit hassles and poll/council tax harrassment [sic]. Find out about the Claimants Solidarity Network. Join the resistance to the New Deal. Ring or drop in.

ACE INFO SHOP

Tuesday 12-4pm, and Sunday 2-6pm

radical literature/zines/clothing/new and second hand records/demo tapes/CD's/reading library

A wide range of radical reading, music and clothing... with a record lending library and, on Sundays, cheap Inter-Net access.⁴³

The space is also open for meetings. In January 2000, Autonomous Women of Edinburgh, Angry Youth, Edinburgh Animal Rights, Youth Solidarity Group, the Mutiny Collective and Prisoners' Support, as well as people meeting to discuss May Day in Edinburgh and possible responses to the

⁴² Anonymous author(s), 'Introduction to ACE', Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh homepage: <http://burn.ucsd.edu/~lothian/ace/>; site accessed 15.05.00.

⁴³ Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh, Information flyer (Edinburgh: ACE, 1999).

proposed Terrorism Bill,⁴⁴ met regularly at ACE. Social events are also arranged through the ACE collective, including video nights and picnics. This diversity of projects and activities facilitates ACE, both as an abstract entity and as a collective of individual activists, acting as part of a network.

Members of the ACE collective worked together at the Unemployed Workers Centre in Broughton Street, Edinburgh, before the workers' centre was forcibly evicted by local authorities in December 1994. The space had functioned as a campaigning and social space until that time. After the eviction of the Unemployed Workers' Centre, activists who would later form ACE continued to meet and support a wide range of campaigns, including claimants' rights, anti-McDonald's protesting and picketing, support for Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is on death-row in the U.S, and defending Pollok Free State from the construction of the M77 motorway.⁴⁵ However, until

⁴⁴ The Terrorism Bill 2000 was eventually passed in mid-2000 and came into effect in 2001. The definition of terrorism was broadened within the Terrorism Bill 2000 to include: "the use or threat, for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause, of action which a) involves serious violence against any person or property, b) endangers the life of any person, or c) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public." Si Mitchell writes that in the consultation document which preceded the Bill property-related offences and animal-rights and environmentalists were singled out as particular targets of the Bill, citing the following excerpt from the consultation document: "Animal and environmental rights activists: high cost of damage from attacks on abattoirs, laboratories, breeders, hunts, butchers, chemists, doctors, vets, furriers, restaurants, supermarkets and other shops." S. Mitchell, 'Raising terror', *SchQUALL* (Brighton: Justice?, 2000), page number/s unknown.

In an issue of the activist zine *SchNEWS*, the authors warn that under the Terrorism Bill 2000 the police will be able to arrest, without a warrant, anyone they reasonably suspect of being a 'terrorist' and that once an organisation has been proscribed as 'terrorist', then it will become a criminal offence to belong to that organisation, to openly support it, or to speak out at a meeting where members of that organisation are also speaking. Justice?, 'State of terror', *SchNEWS*, no. 242 (7 January 2000), p. 1.

⁴⁵ The Pollok Free State was an area of woodland park declared by activists on 20 August, 1994, to be an autonomous state. It was one part of a long-running anti-roads protest in the Pollok region of Glasgow. Activists from the local area and from further afield established anti-roads camps along the site of the proposed M77 motorway. McKay, *DiY Culture...*, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

George McKay also writes of the explicit recognition by many activists involved in the Pollok anti-roads protests of the environmental and class issues involved in the fight against the motorway. He cites the following excerpt from the environmental-focused *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*:

Pollok and Corkerhill lie next to the proposed M77 scheme, and their communities have opposed the road for decades. Corkerhill has the lowest percentage of car owners in Europe and 1 in 5 children there already has asthma. ...Many environmentalists began to see the

February 1997, the collective did not have a regular meeting or working space. After this time, the collective was based at its present home at 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh.⁴⁶

It is not known how many people form the ACE collective, but what is known is that they do not act as an exclusive group or a single issue pressure group. Instead, ACE forms part of a series of networks. These networks operate at the local level, in and around Edinburgh, at the national level, in Scotland, and at the British-wide and international levels, and are involved in a number of causes. ACE activists took part in and used their space as a meeting place for J18 activities in Edinburgh in 1999, along with a broad coalition of activists from other local groups, such as Edinburgh Critical Mass participants. Next, at the Scottish level, activists from ACE took part in the defence of the Pollok Free State near Glasgow and the centre acted as an information point and phone tree facility for others wanting to become involved in the anti-road campaign, or just be kept informed about it. In fact, ACE acts as part of a Britain-wide network in its role as an information centre for campaigns and direct actions that are taking place across Britain.

ACE's actions and campaigns against the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act and the proposed new anti-terrorism bill are two such examples, whereby activists collected information and held meetings at the space. However, during my most recent visit to the ACE infoshop and a meeting regarding action proposals in opposition to the anti-terrorism bill, members expressed discontent with their role in Britain-wide campaigns. The vast majority of ACE collective members with whom I met on these occasions believed that due to the London-centrism of much activism in Britain their role in disseminating information about campaigns and organising actions in Edinburgh in conjunction with actions in London and other regional centres was largely redundant. The focus on actions in London prevents equal access to information regarding supposedly Britain-wide actions.

campaign beyond wholly moral terms and saw the class and social implications of this fight.

Cited in *Ibid.*, pp. 46-47.

Activists at an anti-terrorism bill meeting at the Autonomous Centre expressed great surprise to see agit-prop materials produced regarding actions against the anti-terrorism bill; they knew of neither the agit-prop's production or the planned British-wide actions.⁴⁷

The Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh is principally an infoshop and meeting place. Large-scale benefit gigs or meetings are held outside of the West Montgomery Place building, due to limited physical space there. ACE offers more than physical space; it offers a sense of belonging and a locale for interaction, political and social, that spreads beyond the confines of the shopfront. Angelo Zaccaria identifies these qualities in his discussion of self-managed social centres (the CSA) in Italy:

The CSA are an important place of possible communication, proliferation and visibility for an antagonistic point of view; they are one of the few spaces in an ever more fragmented society where different subjects, which otherwise remain segregated in their respective specificities and places of belonging, can socialize and interact politically.⁴⁸

Networks of infoshops

In addition, infoshops like ACE act as a means of bringing people together and disseminating information about actions and events, they are part of an infoshop network. A website exists for this purpose:

The Infoshops Network has been set up as a resource by – and for – autonomous centres, infoshops, free cafes, reading rooms, etc.

...The aim of this site is to provide up-to-date links to people, groups, information and other resources that are of direct relevance to infoshops.

The main purposes of the network are to:

⁴⁶ Anonymous author(s), 'Introduction to ACE', *op. cit.*

⁴⁷ Interview with M. at ACE, 06.02.00.

⁴⁸ Zaccaria cited in Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

Enable networking, skill and information sharing between
autonomous groups who run infoshops
Inspire and help others to create their own autonomous spaces
Get people away from their computers and into the real world
by putting them in touch with real people near them who want
to create actual communities!⁴⁹

This self-description clearly differentiates between what its author(s) describe(s) as actual communities, and the unmentioned opposite, imagined communities.⁵⁰ This is in direct contrast to the argument that community can exist without face-to-face relations. Wellman argues that computer-mediated communication tends to emphasize ties based on shared interests, rather than ties based on kinship or neighbourhood. As interests change, so too will these on-line ties.⁵¹ They are not, however, more or less important than those ties sustained via face-to-face relations. Community can be defined as personal community, an individual's set of ties with others. This then assumes that not all communities, or individuals' sets of ties, are local solidarities. People can maintain sociable and supportive community ties via computer communication.⁵²

Anarchist Teapots

The Anarchist Teapot infoshop blurs the distinction between physically and non-physically situated infoshops and/or social centres. The Teapot is "a collective of people who have been involved in direct action and are now making the most of empty buildings by moving in and providing cheap food, tea and coffee by donation, and a place to chill and cheate [sic] if you feel the need."⁵³ At present, there are two Anarchist Teapots operating in Britain,

⁴⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'So what's an infoshop?', Infoshops Network homepage: http://www.radicalfluff.demon.co.uk/infoshops_network/; site accessed 15.05.00.

⁵⁰ See earlier discussion of Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991) in the Introduction.

⁵¹ B. Wellman, 'The network community: an introduction', in B. Wellman (ed.), *Networks in the Global Village: Life in Contemporary Communities* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), p.25.

⁵² B. Wellman, 'Preface', in B. Wellman (ed.), *Networks in the Global Village: Life in Contemporary Communities* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), pp. xiv-xv.

⁵³ Anonymous author(s), 'The Anarchist Teapot: just who in the hell are we?',

one in Brighton and the other in Worthing. They are not, however, the only infoshop cafés in Britain, others exist in Norwich, Nottingham, North London, Leeds and Manchester.⁵⁴ Both the Worthing and Brighton Teapots are established around the ethos of providing a space free from capital where information can be exchanged. The author or authors of an article in the eighth edition of *Do or Die!* about the spread of infoshop cafes describe(s) their appeal as follows: "an autonomous zone is created in the heart of the community, serving as a space from which individuals involved in direct action can organise and also as an attempt at 'activist' involvement in their local community."⁵⁵ The cafes serve as a means of reaching out beyond an existing network, and building a more diverse and larger one.

The names of the Brighton and Worthing Anarchist Teapots are in fact literal, with an emphasis on providing free tea:

The action being to make tea for free for lots of people, the idea being that the act and it's [sic] attendant implications will do something to break down social relations imposed by the capitalist system (such as the monetary system) plus providing people with a good cup of tea.

...Tea can be (and is) used as a catalyst for communication between people, and I believe that proper communication is one of the first steps in revolution – be it of mind, body or spirit.

...I believe that the act of giving freely is a revolutionary act, because it subtracts the money from the relation between the person who makes the cup of tea and the person who drinks it! Hey, what if we could subtract the monetary relations between the people who grow and pick the tea and the people who buy the tea to give away free! And if we applied that to every monetary relation in the known world, we'd have a revolution on our hands! Or at least a big part of one anyway.

Anarchist Teapot homepage: <http://www.eco-action.org/teapot/teapot.html>; site accessed 15.05.00.

⁵⁴ See Anonymous author(s), 'Autonomous spaces: there's a storm brewing in every teacup', *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), pp. 130-2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

Done with no begrudgement or motives other than those of rebuilding community, re-establishing mutual aid, and generally being good to each other!⁵⁶

In January 1998, the Brighton Anarchist Teapot was based in a “squat Center”, where people could not only have a cup of tea, but also access the collective’s assortment of books, pamphlets, files and magazines, talk with others, or attend regular film nights or discussion nights.⁵⁷ The Teapot therefore served as an infoshop, if we employ the Infoshops Network’s definition:

Infoshops (autonomous centres, reading rooms, free cafes – call them what you will) are a little piece of anarchy in action. Run by collectives, often from squatted premises, they provide autonomous space for people to meet, chat, and – not surprisingly! – obtain information. Infoshops aim to inform and inspire within their communities.⁵⁸

Both teapot collectives are based in squatted centres, with eviction constantly threatening their existence and location. The collectives also often take the infoshops onto the streets of Worthing and Brighton, adding a further dimension of temporality of space to the infoshops. The Worthing Anarchist Teapot, for example, has taken the “front room in town” on a number of occasions since the Worthing Anarchist Teapot collective formed in October 1998. The idea behind transporting the infoshop from the squatted space to the street is to draw attention to the collective, to its activities, and to the alternative use of space:

bored of the usual stall and wanting something to draw more attention we decided to cart the sofas etc from the old squat down into the town centre and set it all up there... we set up in montage place which is by the bandstand and is what you

⁵⁶ Anonymous author(s), ‘Anarchist Teapot – its theory and practice’, Anarchist Teapot homepage: <http://www.eco-action.org/teapot/teapot.html>; site accessed 15.05.00.

⁵⁷ Anonymous author(s), ‘Welcome to... the Anarchist Teapot. Come in!’, Anarchist Teapot homepage: <http://www.eco-action.org/teapot/teapot.html>; site accessed 15.05.00.

⁵⁸ Anonymous author(s), ‘So what’s an infoshop?’, *op. cit.*

might call the 'hub' of the town centre...it also happens to be where a huge new shop is proposed to be built – on the one remaining space in town.⁵⁹

The street stalls, offering free tea, vegan cake, and information, blur the distinction of what is possible and what exists. Those in the collective and people who are drawn to the stall are able to imagine a different use of space and a different way of exchange, free from capital, while experiencing these things on a small scale on a Saturday morning in Worthing. Michel Maffesoli writes of this junction of imagined and real:

Artist or person in the street, in either case it is the imaginary of a certain time and a certain place which will determine activity or creation, whether it be the grand creation of a Bernini, or the small-scale creations of everyday life. But let's not forget that 'what is self-evident' creates community. The imaginary forms the matrix.⁶⁰

The street stall infoshops perhaps provide greater opportunity for the Anarchist Teapot to reach out beyond a circle of acquaintances and friends who already know about their existence. The street stalls increase the size of the Anarchist Teapot's network. More people have access to information about local campaigns and actions, and can find out about regular events at the squatted Anarchist Teapot space.

Infoshops and the exchange of information

Infoshops like ACE and the Brighton and Worthing Anarchist Teapots draw together information from a massive range of campaigns. At ACE, for example, any person passing by the small shopfront when it is open could pick up flyers, leaflets, newsletters, magazines or journals about diverse campaigns: anti-vivisectionist, anti-monarchist, hunt saboteurs, anti-job

⁵⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'Our story: a brief history of the anarchist teapot in Worthing', Anarchist Teapot Worthing homepage: <http://www.worthing.eco-action.org/teapot/ourstory.html>; site accessed 30.05.00.

⁶⁰ M. Maffesoli, 'The social ambiance', *Current Sociology*, vol. 41, no. 2 (Autumn 1993), p. 10.

seekers' allowance. Infoshops are not single issue campaigning points. Instead, as one ACE activist states on the collective's homepage, infoshops seek to draw together information on many different struggles for justice, in order "to create one fight against the whole system of exploitation."⁶¹ Much of the information produced in the form of leaflets, flyers, pamphlets, etc., is distributed freely in infoshops, in order to make it more accessible to all and to break free of the dominant mode of exchange:

Information is not treated as a commodity to be brought and sold, nor is it passively scanned by spectators looking in from the outside. On the contrary, hundreds of pamphlets, position papers, articles, magazines, and newspapers are created by the users of these shops, making them less consumers in a store than part of a network within a movement. In this context, the info-shops organically connect ideas and action.⁶²

George Katsiaficas, writing primarily on the autonomous movements in Germany and in Italy, recognises the web that links infoshops. While focus is on the network of informally linked infoshops in more than fifty cities in Germany, there is undoubtedly such a network in Britain.⁶³ As I have stated previously, there are numerous examples of the links between autonomous centres across Britain, with many publications listing them, including the ACE and Bradford 1 in 12 webpages, the Brighton and Worthing Anarchist Teapot webpages, *Do or Die!*, all of which cross-reference each other as contact points. Activists can therefore gain access to a myriad of information about other campaigns and other autonomous centres both while in an infoshop such as the infocafe at the 1 in 12 Club or once they have logged onto a website like ACE's.⁶⁴

In 'Street libraries: infoshops and alternative reading rooms', Chris Dodge writes of infoshops' recent histories:

⁶¹ Anonymous author(s), 'Introduction to ACE', *op. cit.*

⁶² Original italics. G. Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Movements and the Decolonisation of Everyday Life* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1997), p. 199.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ See Appendix III: print-out of links from ACE website.

From where did infoshops come? Prevalent in Western Europe, infoshops have their roots in the international punk and anarchist movements. In Germany alone there are at least 100 "infoläden" ... Chris Atton, author of *Alternative literature: a practical guide for librarians* (Gower, 1996) writes that in Great Britain, infoshops "grew out of the squatted anarchist centres of the 1980s, such as the 121 Centre in Brixton, London." In a recent issue of *Maximumrocknroll*, Munson notes that in the U.S they also fall into the tradition of peace and justice centers, many of which arose during the Vietnam War era.⁶⁵

While this is clearly a brief history of the advent of infoshops, it omits the influence of the Italian and Spanish autonomous social centres. It also fails to acknowledge antecedents such as market and street stalls as information points, used to disseminate information during suffrage campaigns, anti-slavery campaigns, and anti-conscription campaigns, among others.⁶⁶

Katsiaficas explicates the 1970s squatters' movement and women's centres' influence on the growth of infoshops.⁶⁷ Throughout the 1970s, feminist activists established women's centres throughout much of Western Europe and North America as meeting places for women who desired a venue in which to organise actions, to socialise and to participate in consciousness-raising groups - all outside of the realm of the patriarchal society. Katsiaficas examines in considerable detail the role of Hamburg's Hafenstraße, a row of eight houses along Hamburg's harbour, first occupied

⁶⁵ C. Dodge, 'Street libraries: infoshops and alternative reading rooms', adapted from an article first published as 'Taking libraries to the street: infoshops and alternative reading rooms', *American Libraries* (May 1998). This version taken from <http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/Café/7423/infoshop.html>; site accessed 15.05.00.

⁶⁶ See, for example, S. Holton, 'From anti-slavery to suffrage militancy: the Bright Circle, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and the British women's movement', in M. Nolan and C. Daley (eds), *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Perspectives* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994), pp. 213-33; and J. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion Against the Slave Trade* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) for accounts of the use of public petitioning at street stalls during both the women's suffragette campaigns and anti-slavery campaigns in Britain.

⁶⁷ Katsiaficas, *op. cit.*, pp. 200, 128.

in 1981. Hafenstraße acted as a significant focal point of European autonomous movements:

When the squatters' movement elsewhere suffered a series of defeats, the Hafenstrasse's [sic] capability to remain intact made it a symbol of almost mythic proportions among Europe's Autonomen. As one leaflet put it: "Everything is present in this struggle: militant resistance, the fight to live together in communes, internationalism, the struggle for self-management and collective structure. The Hafenstrasse [sic] has shown that resolute struggle can become the path for many."⁶⁸

A squatted space, like Hafenstraße in Hamburg, can act as a micro example, though not a prescriptive one, of a social order outside of the existing dominant one. It can thus inspire and spawn other such squatted spaces, social centres, or infoshops, just as the Brighton Anarchist Teapot led to the formation of the Worthing Anarchist Teapot collective. The belief that one social centre can act as a piece in a domino-like subversion of the dominant social mode is echoed by Wright in his discussion of the Italian social centre movement:

Some within it see the occupied spaces... as one contribution to a broader undermining of the existing social order through the development of 'segments of life, of time, of space, that function according to criteria antagonistic to those of capitalist society, based as this is upon the commodity and its spectacular domination.'⁶⁹

*The Bradford 1 in 12 Club:
the social as political*

The 1 in 12 Club in Bradford is a social centre that perhaps owes more to Italy's large-scale social centres.⁷⁰ It provides not only an infoshop, but also

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁶⁹ CSOA Forte Prenestino, cited in Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁷⁰ The 1 in 12 FAQ webpage gives an account of where the collective's name came from: "The late 1970s and early 1980s saw massive job losses across Britain and Bradford was no exception with GEC and International Harvesters shutting plants

a café, a children's play area, a bar, large meeting areas and performance spaces. Like ACE, however, the 1 in 12 Club acts as both part of a network and a network facilitator. The 1 in 12 formed as a collective around the anarchist oriented Bradford Claimants Union in 1981, and, like ACE, did not have a permanent space for many years - in this case until 1988. Its members did not see this as a hindrance, however. In fact, its homepage author(s) state(s) that "the Club is not the building - the building is not the Club, it is just our most recent home, the present location of our activity and focus to our social scene." They go on to write:

The 1 in 12 Club is two separate things; firstly and most importantly it is a group of people who work together to promote certain political ideals and social change; secondly it is a building housing a members [sic] social club. This difference [sic] is vital, with or without the building the 1 in 12 Club lives. For the first seven years the club led a nomadic life in pubs around the city, and it was during this period that the club's reputation for political and social action was established.⁷¹

Ongoing collectives' rejection of the centrality of permanent space is worthy of note. The belief that social relations are not dependent on place underlies this assertion.⁷² The 1 in 12 collective concentrated on building a sense of

in the City. Against this backdrop a particularly strong and active Claimants Union emerged which campaigned vigorously to improve the situation for unemployed and low waged people in Bradford. When, in 1981 a government investigation into benefit fraud (the 'Raynor Report') found that '1 in 12' claimants were "defrauding the state", the union lost no time in adopting this statistic for themselves." Anonymous author(s), 'Bradford 1 in 12 Club frequently asked questions', <http://www.legend.org.uk/~lin12/faq.htm>; site accessed 15.05.00.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² In contrast to this rejection of the centrality of a permanent space is the desire expressed by a member of the Exodus collective for a permanent space in order to undertake new projects:

Exodus have a dream, the Ark Community Centre, transport out of Babylon, a warehouse where the dances could happen once a month, towards which everyone would donate £5. This money would go towards the running of the centre. There would be recording studios, cost-price food and Marley's bar, workshops, a craft area, a local radio station and newspaper, so no longer would the community have to rely on outside media interests. In effect the Ark would enable revenue from the dances to be channelled back into the community from which that revenue originated, rather than going out of the

community amongst collective members and others involved at its fringe before the collective had found a permanent venue or space. A 1 in 12 collective member reiterates the belief that the style of political interaction in a social centre, with or without a permanent venue, can act as part of widespread social change:

The immediate objectives of the 'Club' were to generate and sustain a social scene, accessible and affordable to both the low waged and unemployed. The expectation and hope was that this would in turn encourage the anarchist values of self-management, co-operation and mutual aid.⁷³

The 1 in 12 Club has actively sought to break away from one of the characteristics besetting Italian social centres: the widespread association with youth. Wright identifies the "string of reductions" that has many involved in and on the periphery of Italian social centres believing that "youth=rebellion=CSOA [the Italian acronym for autonomous social centres]".⁷⁴ For instance, activists at the La Strada social centre in Rome's south-west are seeking to broaden the centre's demographics by "abandoning the youth-centred logic of dance rebellion, of rebellion of spectacle."⁷⁵ A collective member has expressed the opinion that "for us the social centre is everyone's place, where rap and the mazurka have the same place and the same dignity."⁷⁶ One of the consistently popular activities held in the Bradford 1 in 12 are music nights with local bands, particularly punk bands. However, the club has sought to diversify activities by not only opening the venue to punk fans, but also having regular pub nights, which appeal to a wide adult demographic, and also reserving Saturdays for children's activities.

community and into a promoter's pocket. As Exodus themselves say, 'It will give this movement a permanent home and a means whereby people who have no voice at present can speak.'

Tim Malyon, 'Tossed in the fire and they never got burned: the Exodus Collective', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 204.

⁷³ Anonymous author(s), 'Bradford 1 in 12 Club frequently asked questions', *op. cit.*

⁷⁴ Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁷⁵ Smeriglio, cited in *ibid.*

⁷⁶ Smeriglio cited in *ibid.*

Alberto Melucci argues that social movements create defensible counterspaces; so too do social centres.⁷⁷ Social centres and infoshops are counterspaces, which assert a challenge to the dominant confines of everyday life. Routledge expands on Melucci's idea, arguing that in demarcating a space in opposition to the hegemony, social movements, and in this case social centres, are attempting to defend civil society as well as democratise it. He goes on further to expound Melucci's belief that social spaces free from repression are required for democratisation, and these social spaces are formed by empowering processes, processes of organisation, leadership or ideology that empower collective actors.⁷⁸ I would argue that the maintenance of an autonomous, non-hierarchical collective is an empowering process of particular relevance to autonomous social centres and this has been omitted.

Networks = communities

Manuel Castells contends the end of the 20th century and the beginning of this the 21st century are being forged by the information technology revolution and the restructuring of capitalism. These two forces have, in turn, shaped a new form of society, a network society.⁷⁹ Castells further argues that the network society is inducing new forms of social change, because it is based on "the systemic disjunction between the local and the global for most individuals and social groups."⁸⁰ It is this disjunction which forms the basis of people's identities and, consequently, the networks in which they operate. It is not so much that the fissure between local and global influences creates a situation whereby a conscious choice must be made between which influences to take on and which to reject. Identity is clearly influenced by multifarious factors, and a single person can have multifarious identities. However, Castells maintains that in the network society, for most social actors, both individually and collectively, meaning, or "the symbolic identification by a social actor of the purpose of her/his

⁷⁷ Melucci, cited in Routledge, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ M. Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture, vol. II: The Power of Identity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p. 1.

action", is organised around a primary identity that is "self-sustaining across time and space."⁸¹

The notion of identity that is not attached to a fixed space complements Barry Wellman's thesis that communities are in fact loose networks, rather than tightly bound, densely knot groups tied to the neighbourhood.⁸² Wellman, a self-described proponent of social network analysis, firmly rejects previous sociologists' lamentations about the loss of community. Ferdinand Tönnies, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and Georg Simmel are among those who Wellman cites as bemoaning the loss of community due to such processes as urbanisation, industrial capitalism, bureaucratisation, and new individualism brought about by urbanisation.⁸³ Wellman refutes such claims:

Community, of course, had never been lost. ...The traditional approach of looking at community as existing in localities - urban neighbourhoods and rural towns - made the mistake of looking for community, a preeminently social phenomenon, in places, an inherently spatial phenomenon. Why assume that the people who provide companionship, social support, and a sense of belonging only live nearby? ...The trick is to treat community as a social network rather than as a place.⁸⁴

The network which exists in and between social centres in Britain exists beyond the physical confines of their individual locations. They are not neighbourhood centres. Indeed, one anonymous member of the Bradford 1 in 12 Club collective argued that the majority of regular attendees and collective members lived in and around Bradford, or its neighbouring town of Leeds. Hence, the 1 in 12 member argues that the Club's community extends further than that geographic reach.⁸⁵ The 1998 MayDay

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁸² Wellman, 'Preface', *op. cit.*, p. xiii.

⁸³ See Wellman, 'The network community: an introduction', *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5 for a discussion of Wellman's perception of the contradictions of these theories of loss of community.

⁸⁴ Wellman, 'Preface', *op. cit.*, p. xiv.

⁸⁵ Interview with PA. at Bradford 1 in 12 Club, 03.02.00.

Conference held at the 1 in 12 is an example of community stretching beyond place. More than 250 delegates attended the three day event at the 1 in 12, many of whom travelled from outside of Bradford and Yorkshire. One of the events of MayDay 1998 was a football competition, the One in Twelve F.C. Mayday Football Tournament, and this included teams from Hannau in Germany, Norwich, Bristol, Hebden, Bradford and Leeds, all in England, and one from the Highlands of Scotland. The web-based report of the event recalls that "as the workers of the world celebrated Liberty, Equality and Solidarity over the Mayday holidays, so too did the ... take part in the ...Football Tournament."⁸⁶

The MayDay Conference in 1998 was a networking exercise amongst the community attached to or around the Bradford social centre. It provided for many who may have been linked previously through the Internet or postal mail only with an opportunity for face-to-face relations. This is not to say that it is only when the community meets physically in person that it reaches a highpoint or a pinnacle of interaction. It is simply a different type of interaction, rather than a superior kind.

In contrast to the sense of community fostered amongst delegates at the Bradford MayDay Conference, activists build relations with one another without face-to-face contact through exposure to the activist zine *SchNEWS*. The weekly publication *SchNEWS* is a networking tool. Published on the internet and in print or sent via an e-mail list by Brighton-base group Justice?, it is a free weekly update of actions, gatherings, arrests, and some analysis or description of recent events. A typical issue of the newsletter opens with the line "This is *SchNEWS*, the weekly direct action newsletter published by Justice? In Brighton", an appeal for donations and a quirky by-line, such as "Wake up! Wake up! It's yer DAM STUPID *SchNEWS*", referring to a story in the newsletter about the construction of the Ilisu dam in Turkey and the protest it has spurred.⁸⁷ Each edition of *SchNEWS* includes the audaciously titled "Crap arrest of the week" section and

⁸⁶ Anonymous author(s), Bradford 1 in 12 Club homepage, *op. cit.*

⁸⁷ Justice?, untitled, *SchNEWS*, no. 259 (19 May 2000), page number/s unknown.

"SchNEWS in Brief" with details of actions, film showings, fundraising events, etc.

The newsletter, in print form, is distributed through the network of social centres and infoshops as well as left-oriented bookshops. Again, this illustrates a situation whereby a network reinforces the existence of a wider network: the distribution of *SchNEWS* through the social centre/infoshop network strengthens the ties among activists, as the newsletter provides information to activists about future meeting venues.

The Earth First! network

The Earth First! Groups or collectives are among Britain's most virulent active networks. Derek Wall describes Earth First! (UK)'s rather modest beginnings as having emerged from the discussion of two young university environmental activists, who had been inspired by the *Earth First! Journal*, the American journal of the US Earth First! (EF!) network, which had been formed eleven years earlier by five environmental activists.⁸⁸ Both George McKay and Wall write of very important differences between the American and the British Earth First!⁸⁹ Particularly in recent years, British Earth First! activists have taken a more radical approach not only to environmental issues but a wide range of political and social issues, while their US counterparts have emphasised a non-revolutionary stance and a single focus on the preservation of the American wilderness. While the two students who began the first British Earth First! group admired and were inspired by the American EF! Publication, there is no evidence that they sought to import its beliefs and organisational structure. In fact, there was a distinct move away from what some saw as the negative features of the American EF!. By the time of the first national EF! (UK) gathering near Brighton in April 1992 British activists were addressing problems such as

⁸⁸ D. Wall, *Earth First! and the Anti-Roads Movement: Radical Environmentalism and Comparative Social Movements* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 40. T. Harding, 'Viva camcordistas! Video activism and the protest movement', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 79-99; especially pp. 80-81.

⁸⁹ See G. McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance Since the Sixties* (London: Verso, 1996), pp. 199-200; and Wall, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-64.

the perceived male-oriented nature of the EF! office in London,⁹⁰ and distancing themselves from the US EF! by renouncing the racist comments of US EF! leaders:

...and that kind of woke me up to some of the things they were saying and all the ideas of...what's his name, Dave Foreman...on population and AIDS, you know, people are being allowed to die in Africa and famines because it is part of the natural cycle, and it just turned me absolutely cold.⁹¹

This refute, however, did not take the form of a party denial. In fact, there is no British Earth First! platform or ideology.⁹² One reason is that Earth First!⁹³ is not a group, with a list of members, a leader, a headquarters. Instead, Earth First! serves as a title for a diverse range of collectives and campaigns:

Earth First! is not a cohesive group or campaign, but a convenient banner for people who share similar philosophies to work under. The general principles behind the name are non-hierarchical organisation and the use of direct action to confront, stop and eventually reverse the forces that are responsible for the destruction of the Earth and its inhabitants.⁹⁴

There are fifty-four Earth First! groups in Britain listed on the Earth First! action update contacts list on the Internet.⁹⁵ The majority of the groups go

⁹⁰ Zelter, in an interview in Wall, complains that "I don't know whether it came from the states, or whatever, but the first Earth First! office in London...was rather crude, rather druggy, drink-orientated and very male.. really eco-warrior-type stuff...". Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁹¹ Tilly, in an interview in Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 40. See also B. Doherty and M. de Geus, 'Introduction', in B. Doherty and M. de Geus (eds), *Democracy and Green Political Thought: Sustainability, Rights and Citizenship* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 11. Dryzek writes "In a 1987 article Miss Ann Throphy [the pseudonymous columnist in the Earth First! Journal (US)] welcomed famine and disease (such as AIDS) as useful checks on human numbers." J. S. Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 157.

⁹² Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁹³ From this point onwards, unless specified, Earth First! will refer to Earth First! in Britain.

⁹⁴ Anonymous author(s), untitled, *Earth First! Action Update*, no. 59 (June 1999), p.1.

⁹⁵ Anonymous author(s), 'EF! Groups', *Earth First! Action Update* on-line:

by the name of Earth First!, with a locational tag attached, such as Leeds EF!. The use of the name, however, does not indicate a sense of ownership to a central organisation or even answerability on the part of each of these fifty-four groups. Instead, each group acts as an equal participant in the Earth First! network, which spreads across Britain and many other states.⁹⁶ In his study of Earth First! activists, Wall found that "only a minority of activists owed a 'primary loyalty' to EF! and local 'groups' can be seen as networks of networks, acting as contact points into the denser local green circles."⁹⁷ He cites the example of a Leeds activist who describes the way that a local EF! group networks amongst other local groups: "We'd phoned round our huge list of contacts. We let the hunt-sabs know....Leeds Cycling Action Group are usually good for people on anti-roads actions.... Third World First have helped us out a lot as well."⁹⁸ This structure, characterised by fluidity and an avoidance of hierarchy, allows for actions to occur quickly:

an initially small and local campaign has the potential to become the focus for a large scale national protest site in the time it takes to network the information – Newbury, Fairmile and Manchester Airport are the most recent examples. This 'rapid response' networking technique is highly effective, and links back to anarchist methodologies and philosophies – there's a reliance on cooperation between autonomous groups, and a mistrust of traditional hierarchical or centralised

<http://www.eco-action.org/efau/contacts.html>; site accessed 11.04.00.

⁹⁶ A good example of the spread of the network of a single EF! group is the list of campaigns of the North Wales EF! group: Local - the proposed A55 Euroroute through Anglesey; the proposed housing development on Brewery Fields; Critical Mass; permaculture projects; the local 'No Hawks' group (Anglesey is allegedly an air training base for Indonesian pilots). Nationally - information and actions networked on the following campaigns: genetic engineering; The Land is Ours; land mines and other arms sales; Forest Action Network. "On top of these individuals take time out to protest at Manchester Airport and other direct action camps around the country. The group liaises with groups including Women's Environmental Network, Transport 2000, Friends of the Earth, Corporate Watch." A. Plows, 'Earth First! Defending Mother Earth, direct-style', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 160-161.

⁹⁷ Wall, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

structures and strategies, which are considered as 'part of the problem.'⁹⁹

Earth First! is described by the author(s) of *Do or Die! Voices from Earth First!* as "a network of autonomous decentralised groups."¹⁰⁰ They recognise EF!'s structure as non-hierarchical and decentralised, and the writers are themselves EF! Activists. Earth First!'s network character is perhaps best captured in this paragraph from Alex Plows, both an academic and EF! activist, whose work appears in George McKay's compilation:

In a sense, EF! does not exist at all – certainly not as a 'traditional' campaign group such as Friends of the Earth, with paid membership and policy-making bodies. Instead, EF! is an egalitarian, non-hierarchical 'disorganisation', relying on grassroots networking and local/individual autonomy rather than centralised policy control. EF! publications, pre- and post-action discussions, workshops and gatherings are the forum for debate. EF! has no law, no hard-and-fast policies, but general principles which are reached through democratic debate and consensus. EF! as a disorganisation exists through the people who actively make it up at any given time, who come together for a mass action and then dissolve away...¹⁰¹

The monthly publication, *Action Update*, which, as the name suggests, is a listing of direct actions and campaigns and contacts, is one of the networking apparatuses EF! uses. Its networking aim is explicitly acknowledged: "The EF! AU is written by activists as a networking tool for activists."¹⁰² In keeping with EF!'s non-hierarchical principles, a different collective edits *Action Update* for a year at a time.¹⁰³ Therefore, even the prime networking tool of Earth First! in Britain is decentralised. Its second publication is the *Do or Die!* journal (formerly known as *Do or Die!*

⁹⁹ Plows, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-157.

¹⁰⁰ Anonymous author(s), inside cover of 'The maturity or senility? issue', *Do or Die! Voices from Earth First!*, no. 7 (publication date not provided), p. 1.

¹⁰¹ Plows, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-153.

¹⁰² Anonymous author(s), untitled, *Earth First! Action Update*, no. 59 (June 1999), p. 1.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

Voices from Earth First!). The journal's editorial collective lament the lack of diversity of published material emerging from the network and wish to be one voice amongst many. They encourage others to produce publications:

For many different reasons we would like to see more publications coming out of the movement, of which DoD would only be one amongst many. You don't need loads of money and resources to do a publication – anyone with a bit of commitment can produce one, and we're willing to give you help and advice if you want it. Don't be put off by the (relatively) professional quality of some magazines' production – DoD started off as a badly photocopied A4 zine back in 1992.¹⁰⁴

Earth First! activists have sought to distance themselves not only from their American predecessors but also from their antecedents in Britain. In a review of Derek Wall's book on Earth First! in Britain in *Do or Die!*, the anonymous reviewer calls to Earth First! activists to acknowledge the reality of the background to the collectives:

...EF! is...the bastard offspring of middle class single issue campaigns like the peace and green movements. However much we'd like it to be it's not the latest upsurge of class struggle from the line that includes the Luddites and so on. Thankfully EF! has cast off a lot of the problems inherited from its 'parents' and has tried to consciously place itself in this tradition of struggle, but it's as well to be aware of these issues as they're bound to have an influence for years to come.¹⁰⁵

Activists address this directly as part of a probe into the future of Earth First! collectives in Britain in an earlier edition of *Do or Die!*. The author(s) ask if Earth First! can possibly move forward and grow into a mass movement if it remains "a small band of young, noisy, white, middle class,

¹⁰⁴ Anonymous author(s), inside cover of 'The maturity or senility? issue', *op. cit.*

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous author(s), 'Resources', *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), p. 303.

unemployed, physically able 'extremists'?"¹⁰⁶ While the Earth First! network is extensive, it is evident that there are fears that it is one consisting of rather homogeneous activists. Two main reasons behind this alleged lack of diversity are explored. Firstly, a need for greater networking is identified. The author(s) of the *Do or Die!* article probing the future of EF! recognize the American civil rights movement and the British trade union movement as two examples of movements which have successfully networked to include a diverse activist base.¹⁰⁷ The author(s) contend(s), "we need to ...build a mass movement, reclaim our social history and stop being an elite."¹⁰⁸ These feelings are reiterated by Plows, who argues that EF! needs to connect with other social groups, and "take time to affiliate and cooperate with the communities around us."¹⁰⁹

A second reason given for Earth First!'s homogeneity in Britain is its emphasis on direct action that is physically suited to able-bodied and fit activists: "at present, direct action requires only the physically fit and alienates those who are older or less able. If this continues, our actions will always be isolated and limited."¹¹⁰ This does not have to be the case. Direct action does not necessarily exclude those who are not adept at tree climbing or tunneling. Actions can be far more inclusive and involve things like the guerilla gardening that took place as part of the May Day events in London, and other cities like Manchester, Belfast, Bristol and Brighton, May 1, 2000.¹¹¹ Guerilla gardening in London was planned by Reclaim the Streets

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous author(s), 'Earth First! – but what next?', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 6 (publication date not provided), p. 18.

¹⁰⁷ It is ironic, however, that both of these identified movements are overwhelmingly male dominated and led and that the trade union movement in Britain has had a chequered past in regards to racism, xenophobia and homophobia.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous author(s), 'Earth First! - but what next?', *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Plows, *op. cit.*, p. 171. Plows goes on further to write about the need of the EF! network to expand: "Using our initiative and creativity for proactive grassroots activities, contributing to our local communities, is essential, which means anything from talks to Women's Institute groups to devising environmental plays in schools, and so on." *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Anonymous author(s), 'Earth First! - but what next?', *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹¹¹ See, for example, the account of guerrilla gardening in *SchNEWS*, 'Lawn and order', *SchNEWS*, no. 258 (5 May 2000), p. 1, or the London May Day 2000 Group's account of guerilla gardening published in advance of the action on their website: [wysiwyg://22/http://www.mayday2000.org.uk/](http://www.mayday2000.org.uk/); accessed 26.04.00.

but was an open action in which anyone could participate. In fact, the pre-May day publicity emphasised the inclusiveness of guerilla gardening:

Reclaim the Steets contribution to MayDay in London is a mass Guerilla Gardening action!

Armed with trowels, seeds, and imagination, the idea is to garden everywhere and anywhere. An urban adventure at the threshold of nature and culture, Guerilla Gardening is about taking back our own time and space from capital. ...Guerilla Gardening is not a street party

It is an action demanding everyones [sic] participation and preparation. An adventure beyond spectating!

Come prepared, and ready to get your hands dirty.¹¹²

The guerilla gardening action, inspired by a long history of community gardening in New York City and elsewhere, was deliberately attempting to be inclusive of anyone, regardless of age or physical ability.¹¹³

Earth First! activists' difficulty is establishing a means to vanquish the image that EF! as an exclusive anti-roads network which does not welcome older people, individuals who are incapable of climbing trees or living in tunnels, or people who would rather engage in other types of direct action, like sit-ins at road building agencies. It must also break the preconceived image of an exclusive club of tree climbing young activists is also in breaking the image of the network as an anti-road building one. However, campaigns against road building have shaped Earth First! in terms of the network's tactics, attitudes, ambitions and politics.¹¹⁴ Wall writes that from 1992 the British EF! network as a whole shifted its focus of attention from a diverse range of issues like targeting the Whatley Quarry¹¹⁵ to anti-

¹¹² Anonymous author(s), Flyer text for RTS action, reproduced on the MayDay 2000 website: <http://www.mayday2000.org.uk/gardening.txt>; accessed 26.04.00.

¹¹³ For a brief history of guerilla gardening in New York City, see Ibid.; for a history of guerilla gardening as practiced by Roma people and activists in the USA, see S. Jones, 'Fertile minds', *The Guardian* (26 April 2000), on-line edition: <http://www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/Article/0,4273,4011603,00.html>; accessed 23.08.00.

¹¹⁴ Anonymous author(s), 'Direct action: six years down the road', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 7 (publication date not provided), pp. 1-2.

¹¹⁵ Plows writes that actions targeting Whatley Quarry in Somerset and the timber firm TIMBMET in Oxford were among the earliest mass EF! actions. Plows, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

road campaigns. Local groups continued to campaign on many varied issues, while, at the same time, EF! activists mobilised more generally against car use and particularly against road construction.¹¹⁶

The Earth First! network was highly visible at the Twyford Down anti-roads campaign as an identifiable network, rather than as individuals who identify themselves as EF! activists.¹¹⁷ Plows believes Earth First! raised its profile and consequently expanded its activist base at Twyford Down.¹¹⁸ He also claims that state and private security firms' heavy-handed response towards protesters at Twyford also played a role in the raising of the network's profile: "Being attacked, we lost the 'eco-terrorist' label and gained the moral high ground; and the real terrorists – the state – had let their mask slip."¹¹⁹ While Plows argues that EF!'s involvement at Twyford Down advanced the network's profile and increased activists' presence, an anonymous activist interviewed by Wall sees the relationship in reverse, with the Earth First! network being the drawcard to the anti-roads actions at Twyford Down:

EF! brought people to Twyford, that was what really did it....They were the network who did it. Other networks wouldn't touch it. FoE wouldn't touch it, none of them would touch it, and that is still the kicking power of EF! It can produce people who are willing to do something.¹²⁰

Earth First! activists participated in or even initiated many subsequent anti-road campaigns after Twyford Down.¹²¹ 'Clare', for example, claims that five members of Bath EF! started an anti-roads camp on the site of the Batheaston bypass.¹²² However, by 1993-1995, the Earth First! network dissolved into a wider anti-roads network, which included local campaigners, environmental groups like Friends of the Earth and Transport

¹¹⁶ Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-9.

¹¹⁸ Plows, *op. cit.*, p. 155.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Anonymous in interview, cited in Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹²¹ Wall writes "While Twyford was the first arena for direct action anti-road protest in the 1990s, EF! (UK) activists were instrumental in creating permanent anti-road camps and maintaining campaigns at over a dozen other sites." Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

2000, and unaffiliated activists.¹²³ 'Geffen', in an interview in Wall, supports this view that after Twyford Down, the Earth First! network lost its distinct presence:

What was interesting was that EF! was a presence at Twyford Down but not at the M11 and subsequent road campaigns. You knew the people were EF!ers who you knew through the EF! network, but EF! never had a visible presence at the M11. There were no EF! banners or anything like that - it wasn't Leytonstone EF!¹²⁴

Castells argues that the lack of colourful banners which overtly pronounce their owners' claims to being the harbingers of social change does not indicate the absence of networks of social change. Instead, our "historical vision" has become accustomed to far more obvious displays of attempts at social change and we have little historical precedence of "incremental changes of symbols processed through multiform networks, away from the halls of power."¹²⁵ However, despite the apparent lack of overt presence of symbols of Earth First!, 'Clare' acknowledges that activists from the EF! network were present at the anti-M11 occupations in and around Leytonstone and Wanstead.¹²⁶ Earth First! does not consist of a central core of people who appear at every anti-road occupation or global day of action, carrying banners, placards or selling newspapers. Instead, Earth First! is a network with an ever-changing constituency, with no visible core. Plow contends:

EF! is defined by the people who make it up at any one given time. ...Road protester becomes airport protester becomes The Land is Ours urban squatter becomes rave-goer becomes EF!er ad infinitum, simply through her/his presence on that particular campaign or demo.¹²⁷

¹²² 'Clare' in interview, cited in Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹²³ Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹²⁴ 'Geffen' in interview, cited in Wall, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.

¹²⁵ Castells, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

¹²⁶ 'Clare' in interview, cited in Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

¹²⁷ Plows, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

The ever-changing nature of the make up of the Earth First! network is reflected in self-identified EF! activists' massive variety of backgrounds, as recorded by Wall. He found that a majority of founding EF! activists had previously been involved in green political organisations, pressure groups or social movements. The majority had also been active in the peace movement, while several had been involved in animal liberation groups. Of the fourteen founding EF! activists Wall interviewed, five had also been members of non-ecological or environmental political movements, such as Marxist, anarchist or anti-poll tax groups. Only one member of the interview group had previously been involved in anti-roads protest, demonstrating that Earth First! acted as an introductory network to a wider anti-roads network for these activists. Wall also interviewed sixteen EF! activists whom he identified as non-founding EF! activists, and found that their involvement in anti-roads politics became a means to access the wider green movement.¹²⁸

This insight into a small number of EF! activists' backgrounds indicates a diversity of political interests and political aims. Earth First! is far from a homogenous political group. Instead, it is a diverse network. Castells attributes the success and impact of networks like EF! to their diversity, which he claims often results in agitation, and this leads to social change:

These networks [the environmentalist movement, built around national and international networks] do more than organizing activity and sharing information. They are the actual producers, and distributors, of cultural codes. Not only over the Net, but in their multiple forms of exchange and interaction. Their impact on society rarely stems from a concerted strategy, masterminded by a center [sic]. Their most successful campaigns, their most striking initiatives, often result from 'turbulences' in the interactive network of multilayered communication – as in the production of a 'green culture' by a universal forum of putting together experiences of

¹²⁸ Wall, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 104.

preserving nature and surviving capitalism at the same time.¹²⁹

In recent years, however, particularly since May 1998 and the first global day of action, there has been a concerted effort by members of the British EF! network to broaden its scope and to address social justice issues more broadly. In the critical assessment of the future direction/s of EF! in *Do or Die!*, the author(s) address this need for diversification and the need to break from the image of a single-issue network:

...we need to change what is happening to the planet and encourage all people to live sustainably. We are not just trying to stop the destruction of one wood or one treehouse.

Our ultimate aim has to be the destabilising of global industrial capitalism. This is the system that demands that there are always rich people exploiting the poor. If we do not challenge capitalism itself, we cannot hope to put environment and people at the top of the world agenda.¹³⁰

Self-described activist/academic Alex Plows argues that the resolution to incorporate social justice issues into the network's agenda further distances British EF! from American EF!, in which it would seem that nature is given precedence over the welfare of people. Unlike the deep ecology of the American Earth First!, the British EF! network philosophies and strategies are more akin to the social ecology perspective, as advocated by Murray Bookchin, among others.¹³¹

A concrete example of EF!'s attempts to interconnect capital, environmental sustainability and social justice is the following text from an Earth First! flyer. The anonymous EF! activist author(s) link(s) the late 1994 and early 1995 protests against live calve exports from Shoreham to the need for

¹²⁹ Castells, *op. cit.*, p. 362.

¹³⁰ Anonymous author(s), 'Earth First! – but what next?', *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹³¹ Plows, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-4.

activists to continue campaigning and make active links between seemingly wide-ranging issues of ecological and social justice.¹³²

The second anniversary of the Battle of Shoreham harbour is upon us. Now an even greater battle faces us – against the ecologically destructive practices of the global corporations. By going on to the streets and taking Direct Action against live exports in 1995 we stopped the trade at Shoreham. With our combined strength we can do the same again...

The three main industries at Shoreham are Oil, Timber and Aggregates. Communities just like ours are fighting these corporations all around the earth. Wild Nature is being destroyed everywhere and turned into frivolous items to feed the demands of western consumer culture....

By ignoring single issues and attacking the whole thing we can begin to highlight the consumption end of the process.¹³³

Not only do members of the Earth First! network recognise the importance of extending the scope of direct action undertaken to include all social justice issues, but activists outside of the EF! network recognise the increasing scope of Earth First! At a meeting in London to plan May Day 2000 actions one Reclaim the Streets activist raised the point that there was a need for the involvement of the Earth First! network if May Day 2000 was going to be as enormous as the J18 action.¹³⁴ At the same meeting, however, an anonymous activist reported back from an Earth First! meeting on planning for May Day 2000, and stated that activists who identified themselves as Earth First! activists wanted to plan May Day actions that stressed positive change and creating 'the sort of world we want'. Suggested actions included guerrilla gardening, which eventuated, and decorating McDonalds stores, rather than sacking them. The same report of the EF!

¹³² For a detailed account of the protests against the export of live calves at Shoreham, and at many other harbour towns around England like Brightlingsea, see P. Binding, 'Alive and kicking', *New Statesman and Society* (13 January 1995), pp. 16-17. See also a comparable article on protests against the export of live sheep: Anonymous author(s), 'The meat of the matter', *The Economist* (21 January 1995), p. 62.

¹³³ From a 1997 Earth First! and Shoreham Wilderness Defence flyer. Reproduced in McKay, *op.cit.*, p. 36.

May Day planning meeting expressed a desire to not repeat the direct confrontation of June 18 actions.¹³⁵ There are therefore competing visions of the role of the Earth First! network in mass direct actions – some believe that involvement of Earth First! is a means of diversifying and enlarging an action, while others see Earth First! involvement as a means of changing the nature of an action, with greater stress placed on positive alternatives.

The actions of the numerous EF! collectives in Britain have diversified, just as ideas of the role of the network have. The number of large scale road building projects have diminished since the advent of the Blair Labour government, and so too have long-running anti-road protests. This is not to say, however, anti-road protests have ceased to take place in Britain. In the bi-annual *SchNEWS Guide to Party and Protest* details of current anti-roads protests are given.¹³⁶ In a summer 2000 edition of *SchNEWS*, it was reported that an anti-quarry campaign at the Nine Ladies camp was continuing.¹³⁷ The Nine Ladies camp began in 1999 to defend the Stanton Moore hillside in the Peak District National Park, in Derbyshire, from the reopening of two quarries to serve the needs of road construction companies. As of November 4, 2001, the Nine Ladies anti-quarry camp continued to be active.¹³⁸ Anti-genetic modification campaigning has also become part of the activist agenda of many EF!ers: "Two years ago direct action against genetic engineering in Britain was non-existent. Two years later and it has become one of the main struggles in which our movements are involved. Hundreds of new people have got active in everything from mass trashings to night time sabotage."¹³⁹ The anti-genetic modified food campaign has diversified the Earth First! network enormously, with activists mobilising globally.

¹³⁴ Anonymous, Reclaim the Streets meeting, London, 01.02.00.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ See, for example, the Winter 2001 edition: <http://www.schnews.org.uk/guide.htm>; accessed 14.11.01.

¹³⁷ Anonymous author(s), untitled, *SchNEWS*, no. 263 (16 June 2000), page number/s unknown.

¹³⁸ Allsorts@gn.apc.org, 'Nine Ladies anti-quarry update', e-mail to rts@gn.apc.org; 06.11.01.

¹³⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'The new Luddite war: we will destroy genetic engineering!', *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), p. 89.

There is a strong prospect that anti-genetic modification will become a truly global campaign.¹⁴⁰

Transnational eco-networks

The advent of a transnational Earth First! network demonstrates the dual pertinence and insignificance of place in the development and endurance of an activist network. As part of a transnational network of activists and activist groups, a person active in Leeds EF! can be active in local campaigns while also participating and interacting in national and international actions. The transnational Earth First! network has been largely facilitated by, or certainly promoted by, the interaction of activists over the Internet. The network's community is not limited to a single geographical location. Instead, Barry Wellman and Milena Gulia argue that the virtual community, or EF! community in this case, is glocalized:

Operating via the Net, virtual communities are glocalized. They are simultaneously more global and local, as worldwide connectivity and domestic matters intersect.¹⁴¹

The Internet is used as a contact point for the dozens of local Earth First! groups internationally. As of January 2000, the following were listed as international Earth First! contacts:

A Seed Europe (Netherlands), Autonomous Green Action (Canada), Action for Social Ecology (Sweden), An Talamh Glas/Pobal an Dulra (Ireland), Australian EF!, Coast Mountains EF! (Canada), Czech Republic EF! (Czech Republic), Eco-Action EF! (France), Ecodefence! (Russia), FIN (Germany), Finland EF! (Finland), Green Action Israel, Groen Front! (Netherlands), Highway 55 Blockade Campaign (US), Limerick Talamh Glas (Ireland), People's Global Action (Netherlands), Poland EF!, Rainbow Keepers Ukraine, Rainbow Keepers Russia, Rainbow Action Network (US),

¹⁴⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 89-96.

¹⁴¹ B. Wellman and M. Gulia, 'Virtual communities as communities: net surfers don't ride alone', in M.A. Smith and P. Kollock (eds), *Communities in Cyberspace* (London:

Rainforest Information Centre (Australia), Volunteers for Earth Defence (Philippines), Young Lions EF! (South Africa)¹⁴²

Wall argues that "Earth First! is a powerful example of the globalised nature of modern environmental protest, with groups not only in the US, UK and Australia but in a four-continent matrix of sympathetic networks."¹⁴³ I would contend, however, that the Earth First! network extends internationally but is far from a global network, given the relative absence of contacts in Asia, Africa and South America. The allegations raised earlier of Earth First! consisting of white middle-class activists could very easily be levelled at the international network when examining a list of contacts such as that above. The majority of the countries listed have a majority white population and are generally affluent, though extreme poverty is certainly rampant in the Philippines, South Africa, Russia and Ukraine and these states also represent a break from white homogeneity. It is, however, beyond the scope of this chapter to investigate possible reasons for the concentration of EF! network contacts in Europe and North America, with a spattering of other contacts in Australia, South Africa, and the Philippines.

Two of the tools of networking that have been instrumental in establishing a flourishing EF! network in Britain – the Internet and zines – have also been effective in establishing a transnational EF! network. These communication media spread not only news of actions occurring in different locations but also new ideas and tactics of direct action amongst activists. *Do or Die!*, the zine published by Earth First! collectives in Britain, is particularly effective as such a tool, acting as an informal channel for accelerated international diffusion.¹⁴⁴ Each issue includes detailed accounts of actions happening outside of Britain, written by or with activists involved in the actions. The most recent issue of the zine, which is book-like in size, covers actions in Germany, Bougainville, Sweden, Nepal, Israel, West

Routledge, 1999), p. 187.

¹⁴² Anonymous author(s), *Earth First! Action Update* contacts list: <http://www.eco-action.org/efau/aulast.html>, accessed 02.03.00.

¹⁴³ Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

Papua, New Zealand, Mexico, Kenya, India, the USA, Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, the Philippines, the Czech Republic, Indonesia, Malaysia and Nigeria.¹⁴⁵ *Do or Die!* does not limit its reports of international struggles and activism to those being undertaken by self-ascribed Earth First! Groups. This supports Wall's claim that local EF! groups in Britain are affiliated with a far more diverse network than the sum of their fellow Earth First! groups. Wall writes:

Relatively few of EF! (UK)'s international contacts are with named EF! groups or in networks such as Russia's Ecodefense which in part model themselves on EF!, in either its US or its UK manifestation. Most of EF! (UK)'s international contacts are based in direct action campaigning groups which have a shared issue-focus. Beyond anti-road campaigns, many EF! (UK) actions focus on international solidarity work. EF! (UK)'s international solidarity actions tend to support grassroot radical environmentalists, particularly those who advocate militant tactics and who may be otherwise ignored by UK environmental campaigners.¹⁴⁶

One such recent international solidarity campaign has been between activists from the broad Earth First! network in Britain and the ORU people of Colombia.

The *Do or Die!* zine/journal also includes debates concerning different tactics, such as the merits of non-violence versus violence, and practical information regarding such things as tunnelling as a tactic.¹⁴⁷ Another important component of every edition of *Do or Die!* is the list of contacts, enabling readers to establish links with others, wherever their geographical location. The zine is distributed outside of Britain, further emphasising the transnational focus of its collators and publishers.

¹⁴⁵ See the long list of articles under the title of 'Other islands' in *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), back cover.

¹⁴⁶ Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

¹⁴⁷ See, for example, Anonymous author(s), 'Going underground: some thoughts on tunnelling as a tactic', *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), pp. 60-2.

Wall describes the transfer of ideas and tactics as diffusion, and identifies three different varieties of diffusion. Cross-national diffusion occurs between countries, as in the movement of Earth First! from the US to Britain. Intra-movement diffusion is the process of transference between groups within a movement: "In the case of the anti-roads movement, tactics have been taken from a broader green movement family, with peace and animal-liberation activists contributing to the development of repertoires of action."¹⁴⁸

One example of intra-movement diffusion which also crosses national boundaries is the struggle of Polish activists against the Trans European Network road building programme. The Trans European Network (TEN) for transport was devised in 1993 as part of the European Union's Maastricht Treaty and is a plan to integrate or interconnect all national transport networks in European Union member-states and to which prospective member-states, such as Poland, must comply. The TEN guidelines set out plans for the construction and upgrading of approximately 140 road schemes, a figure without an upper limit, including 15,000 kilometres of new motorways. There is little scope within the TEN guidelines for habitat protection and virtually no allowance for local or national governments to oppose the TEN plans.¹⁴⁹ Polish activists have organised actions against the impact of the TEN road programme in Poland. Their campaigns have been reported in *Do or Die!* and involve the establishment of anti-road protest camps along the proposed route, in much the same way that British activists established protest camps at sites like Newbury, Twyford Down, Pressmennan Woods, and many others.¹⁵⁰

Wall writes of the influence of Australian environmentalists on EF! groups in Britain, and contends that reverse diffusion also occurred, with Reclaim

¹⁴⁸ Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

¹⁴⁹ F. Minderhoud, "A bridge too far": European Union transport policy and sustainable development', *Outreach 1987*, vol. 1, no. 25 (23 April 1997), on-line version: <http://www.igc.apc.org/habitat/csd-97>; accessed 13.11.01. See also the ASeed networking newsserver for environmental activists throughout Europe. The ASeed transport campaign works with local resistance to TEN projects: <http://www.igc.org/can/candir/candir260.html>; accessed 13.11.01.

¹⁵⁰ See Anonymous author(s), 'Polish anti-road protests', *Do or Die!*, no. 8

the Streets actions spreading from Britain to Australia.¹⁵¹ The success of activism can also be measured by the diffusion of a movement's or network's ideas and values to wider society. Wall cites Melucci as having observed that wide social change can be introduced by movements, which act as the transmitters of novel cultural codes.¹⁵²

Conclusion: networks of interconnection

This chapter has sought to examine the notion of networks as a means of connection between activists. Networks are intangible and activists can be part of a number of interconnecting or isolated networks. For example, an activist may learn of forthcoming Earth First! campaigns through a newsletter like *SchNEWS*, which she/he learnt of through their involvement at the Bradford 1 in 12 Club. The networks themselves are characterised by their non-hierarchical structure and the fluidity with which activists can move in and out of and between them. Some activist networks, like those enveloping the Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh and the 1 in 12 Club in Bradford, are place oriented. While each of these social centres can be contacted via e-mail or their World Wide Web homepages, both are set in permanent physical communities, due to their location in fixed sites.

This is not to say, however, that either ACE or the 1 in 12 are confined or defined by their location. Activists can feel affinity with each other and share information across distances, particularly since the advent of e-mail and the Internet. Earth First! is an example of a network that traverses place boundaries. Earth First! activists can feel part of a local EF! branch, the wider British EF! network, or part of a large, international, direct action eco activist network. The term network is an invaluable one in any examination of activism in contemporary Britain because it is perfectly suited to describe the links between individuals and broader circles of activists. Reclaim the Streets, Earth First!, and the Worthing Anarchist Teapot, for example, are not groups with exclusive memberships. Yet, they

(publication date not provided), p. 219.

¹⁵¹ See Wall, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-5.

¹⁵² Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

can be described as networks with fluid, non-official memberships, and with links to countless other autonomous networks locally, nationally and internationally. Interaction through networks allows activists to escape the organisational replication of the dominant mode of interaction against which they are struggling. In the words of Felix Guattari, re-fashioned by Nick Dyer-Witheford in *Cyber-Marx*, for the molecular revolution to succeed, new forms of organisation will need to be found. Experimentation with coalitions, rainbows, networks and webs has characterised anticapitalist struggle in the last decade, and all has been an experimentation with rhizomatic forms of organisation, forms of organisation in which "the different components" are in no way "required to agree on everything or to speak the same stereotypical language."¹⁵³ As a mode of interaction and organisation, networks allow activists a multiplicity of voices, divergent ideas and disparate visions, and yet still allow for activists to interact and act collectively.

It has been demonstrated throughout this chapter that activist networks are not always reliant on activists' shared geographic proximity. Instead, what draws activists together in a network is shared spirit, shared goals, shared visions. Activist networks can be situated around a physical space, such as a social centre, or around an Internet-driven non-physical locale. What is common to all activist networks is that they foster a sense of community. Activists are able to connect with one another and share information. In the next chapter, the networks that developed around activists' fights against the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJA) will be examined. The anti-CJA protest network well illustrates the coming together of diverse, previously unlinked activists and the fostering of a rhizome of activists.

¹⁵³ F. Guattari cited in N. Dyer-Witheford, *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High-Technology Capitalism* (Urbana, ILL: University of Illinois Press, 1999), p. 182.

CHAPTER THREE

Resisting the CJA: networks of diversity

Informal networks were united in protest at the new legislation. These people were prepared to cross a legal boundary, whether to stop a new road, to disrupt a fox-hunt or to take their drugs of choice and enjoy their own brand of entertainment. The latent period of this movement was over, the strands surfaced and cemented together in more visible opposition.

M. A. Wright ¹

The feeling of collective empowerment, in stark contrast to the feeling of vulnerability felt by the individual pedestrian, was immense. The police were powerless to intervene as the crowd danced its way to Winchester to the rhythm of bongos, chants of 'kill the bill', 'no more roads' and the syncopated 'smash the Criminal Justice Bill'.

Aufheben collective ²

The protest campaign against the introduction of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJA) acted as a catch-all protest, uniting many otherwise disparate activists. It was, however, legislation with entirely different aims. The Tory government designers of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act aimed to provide British police forces with greater

¹ M. A. Wright, 'The great British ecstasy revolution', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 239, emphasis added.

² Aufheben collective, 'Kill or chill? Analysis of the opposition to the Criminal Justice Bill', *Aufheben*, no. 4 (Summer 1995), page number/s unknown, emphasis added.

power to deal with crime and public disorder.³ Instead, the Act incited dissent. Activists came together to oppose the legislation, which sought to target and criminalise dissent.⁴ For the first time, a piece of legislation specifically named and targeted such diverse groupings as hunt saboteurs, anti-roads protesters, squatters, so-called New Age Travellers, football fans, ravers, neo-fascists, and many more.⁵ The CJA came to be a common ground for protest. The British government's attempt to quell the activities of otherwise disparate groups created a bond of commonality.

The CJA's criminalisation of dissidence acted as a unifying force for activists. The CJA emphasised that activists are linked, and that, in the words of the editors of the activist bulletin *SchNEWS*, "there is no such thing as a single issue."⁶ The perception that land access for travellers was unrelated to the right to hold free festivals, for example, was quashed with the introduction of the 1994 CJA. The campaign against the CJA is an example of a protest network in action. Activists in pre-existing networks joined with others to voice their dissent in the face of the far-reaching legislation. Anti-CJA activists were linked in networks of a different nature from those networks that had connected activists during the anti-poll tax

³ See Appendix IV for 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, Part V Public Order: Collective Trespass or Nuisance on Land. For complete text of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, see the British Houses of Parliament on-line reproduction at Her Majesty's Stationary Office website: http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1994/Ukpga_19940033_en_1.htm#tcon

⁴ See, for example, the commentary regarding the perception that the CJA was effectively an outrageous criminalisation of dissent in *Living Marxism*. J. Hussey, 'A law to make you raving mad', *Living Marxism*, issue 64 (July 1994), from archives at http://www.informinc.co.uk/LM/LM69/LM69_CJB.html; accessed 15.01.01.

⁵ John Fitzpatrick writes:

Lord Renton boasted in the House of Lords that this bill had 'the longest Long Title in modern history'. The Long Title recites the objects of the legislation, and in the case of the Criminal Justice Bill a long list of targets had to be accommodated: young offenders, bailed persons, squatters, travellers, ravers, protesters, trespassers, arrested persons, defendants, hunt-saboteurs, pornographers, video pirates, obscene telephone-callers, prisoners, racists, terrorists, ticket touts, cannabis-smokers, serious fraudsters and not forgetting gay men under 18.

J. Fitzpatrick, 'Power to police the people', *Living Marxism*, issue 64 (July 1994), from archives at http://www.informinc.co.uk/LM/LM69/LM69_CJB.html; accessed 15.01.01.

⁶ Justice?, untitled, *SchNEWS*, issue 136 (26 September 1997), <http://www.schnews.org.uk/archive/news136.htm>; accessed 05.01.01.

campaign. While activists opposing the poll tax organised primarily around neighbourhood ties and later formed geographically diverse communities of solidarity, those protesting against the CJA did not organise their resistance around a specific location, nor did they form communities based initially around ties to place. This style of issue-based rather than place-based network has been introduced in the preceding chapter. The extent of networking that was achieved in the campaign against the bill also impacted on future activism and this is demonstrated in subsequent chapters on the anti-roads and Reclaim the Streets networks of protest and days of protest like June 18.

This chapter will explore activism in opposition to the CJA as an example of a protest network. The anti-CJA network consisted of disparate groups and individuals and a number of these will be examined in isolation. These include groups like travellers, rave-goers and football supporters, who were specifically targeted by the bill. Threats to the right to assembly and protest will also be examined; these threats were felt by many of those who actively opposed the CJA, but who did not fall easily under any of the legislators' broad labels. The connectedness of activists in their opposition to the legislation will be probed, as will the question of how links between activists were forged. A contention of this chapter is that the networks established amongst activists opposed to the CJA are akin to communities; protest networks and communities become synonymous.

In order to understand the nature of the protest networks that emerged in the struggle against the CJA I will outline possible reasons behind the bill's implementation. One argument that will be explored is that the bill was an attempt by an unpopular government to broaden its social control and to appeal to an unidentified majority who allegedly desired a tough law and order stance from government. The introduction of the 1994 CJA can be seen as indicative of a sense of moral panic, defined by Tony Jefferson and Stuart Hall as "a spiral in which the social groups who perceived their world

and position as threatened, identify a 'responsible enemy', and emerge as the vociferous guardians of traditional values."⁷

The chapter does not aim to provide a comprehensive judicial understanding of the legislation itself. Instead, I will demonstrate the effects the activism against the bill had on establishing interlinking protest networks and I will contend that these networks collectively constitute a community or communities. A key argument in this chapter is that the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act can be seen as a response by a conservative government to quash not only dissent, but dissenting communities. The legislation can be viewed not only as a threat to personal liberties; it is also an attack on the connectedness of people whose lifestyles and politics differed from the prescribed norms the Major government preferred. The legislation itself identifies groups of people, travellers, ravers, squatters, and so on, people who are identified collectively and targeted as a group. Paradoxically, if one of the goals of the legislation was to quash dissenting communities, the threat of prosecution under the CJA actually strengthened networks or communities of activism. The focuses of this chapter are therefore the protest which met the passing of the Act; the effects that the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act had on uniting many otherwise disparate activists; and the CJA as an attack on community.

The legacies of the anti-poll tax campaign

At first glance, the protests that emerged in response to the CJA could be compared to the anti-poll tax campaigns of 1988 and onwards. In each case, thousands of people across Britain were mobilised into dissent and direct action by the proposal and eventual passing of government legislation. However, the anti-CJA protests were not only a reaction to the legislation; rather they were a reaction to the threat to a continuum of protest. The

⁷ S. Hall and T. Jefferson (eds), 'Resistance through rituals: youth subcultures in postwar Britain', *Working Papers in Cultural Studies*, 7/8 (Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1975), p. 72. On the idea of moral panics, see also U. Boëthius, 'Youth, the media and moral panics', in J. Fornäs and G. Bolin (eds), *Youth Culture in Late Modernity* (London: Sage, 1995), pp. 39-57; and S. Thornton, *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).

remarkable grass-roots campaign in protest against the imposition of the poll tax in England, Wales and Scotland built, in some cases, on neighbourhood community ties which were already functioning or were physically pre-defined. It was, however, a campaign that emerged in direct response to government policy and legislation. The CJA protests, in contrast, were certainly a response to legislation, but built on existing protest networks.

What further sets the CJA protests apart from the poll tax protests is the perceived attack on what the status quo deemed alternative lifestyles which the 1994 Act constituted. Both the anti-poll tax and anti-CJA campaigns attracted activists from diverse backgrounds, with the poll tax campaign perceived as an attack on social justice for all, while the activism against the CJA focussed largely on the sense that the marginalised were being further marginalised. This perception of the marginalisation of difference and dissent will be explored throughout the course of this chapter. Any critique of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act will focus primarily on the so-called Public Order provisions of bill; these provisions directly affected activists and their rights to protest.

Some background to the introduction of the CJA

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act was published in 1993 by the Conservative Party and passed by both houses of the British Parliament in 1994, unopposed by the Labour leadership in opposition.⁸ The act received royal assent on November 3, 1994. The government promoted the CJA as a means of combating an alleged 250 per cent increase in crime between 1979 and 1994.⁹ However, rather than addressing the alleged crime rise, the CJA simply attempted to criminalise many more people in British society, people like those who could be broadly labelled travellers, ravers, football hooligans, squatters, hunt saboteurs.

⁸ E. Brass and S. Poklewski Koziell, *Gathering Force: DiY Culture - Radical Action for Those Tired of Waiting* (London: Big Issue, 1997), p. 77; Anonymous author(s), 'Critical moments in public order policing', *New Statesman and Society* (24 June 1994), p. v.

The CJA can be regarded as a deliberate attempt to vilify difference, and not as a response to a majority view. The bill reviled many people already on the fringes of society, threatening them with further criminalisation and at the same time scapegoating them for alleged increases in crime and alleged fragmentation of society:

Reading through the bill, it is possible to sense a government at bay, a ruling elite that feels threatened on all sides; threatened, not by New Age travellers or hunt-sabs, but by the fragmentation of society at large, the sense that things are out of their control.¹⁰

British society did not conform to John Major's, nor presumably to his colleagues', much cited vision of what it should be:

Fifty years from now Britain will still be the country of long shadows on country grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs, dog-lovers, pool-fillers and, as George Orwell once said, old maids bicycling to holy communion through the morning mist. Britain will remain unamendable in all essentials.¹¹

The CJA was a desperate attempt to enforce stability, conformity and control by criminalising those deemed to be a threat to the Conservative Party's vision of Britain. Those most overtly targeted by the bill were easily labeled by both the government and the supporting media as deserving of punishment, and were easily identifiable because of their divergence from the government's version/vision of the societal norm. John Fitzpatrick writes that the Conservatives had learned from the success of the Public Order Act of 1986 that increased law and order provisions and diminished individual rights could easily be made more acceptable by targeting unpopular groups.¹² The inclusion of child pornographers, for example, in

⁹ Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 81. There is no evidence provided as to how this figure was statistically determined.

¹⁰ Fitzpatrick, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

¹¹ Cited in C. J. Stone, 'The nature of reality', *New Statesman and Society* (24 June 1994), p. xiv.

¹² Some of the key measures introduced in the Public Order Act 1986 were the introduction of powers connected with demonstrations including the requirement of notice before demonstrations, the power to impose conditions on demonstrations, the power to ban demonstrations, and the power to impose conditions on open air

the 1994 CJA won over the support of even those who opposed most of the bill's measures.¹³ Threats to civil liberties therefore became secondary concerns in the fight against such moral demons.

The government, with the support of the opposition parties' leadership, played the law and order trump card in order to strengthen its standing with many voters.¹⁴ Not only were anonymous child pornographers tagged by the Major government in plans for the CJA, but the specific case of James Bulger was used in order to gain support for the government's radical legislation. The February 1993 abduction and brutal murder of two-year-old James Bulger by two ten-year-old boys in Liverpool caused an enormous outpouring of grief and rage amongst the British public. It was a case that received enormous media coverage, and in a chronology of the case *The Guardian* writes of the "tabloid frenzy" in which the two convicted boys were compared to serial child killer Myra Hindley and Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.¹⁵ In an appeal for support for the far-reaching CJA, the Major government appealed to the general public's desire to protect children by promoting the incarceration of children as adults, incorporating the ability to incarcerate the children convicted of murdering Bulger in the legislation.¹⁶ The impact of James Bulgers' murder was instrumental in creating a

assemblies. However, one exception to this requirement for prior notice for demonstrations is that no notice is required for 'spontaneous' demonstrations, after strong pressure from the Trade Union Council resulted in the insertion of this clause in the Act. Anonymous author(s), 'The Public Order Act', *Socialist Worker Review* (April 1989), p. 24.

¹³ Fitzpatrick, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

¹⁴ The CJA:

...represents an increasingly desperate attempt by a very unpopular government to regain the initiative as a party of 'law and order'. It is against this background, with the resurgence of the Labour Party as a popular opposition alternative, that the latest 'offering' has to be judged and the assertion of an embattled Home Secretary ...that 'prison works.'

A. H. Goodman, 'The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994', *Capital and Class*, no. 56 (Summer 1995), p. 10.

¹⁵ Anonymous author(s), 'The Bulger case: chronology', *The Guardian* (2001), on-line version: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Print/0,3858,3942426,00.html>; accessed 22.10.01.

¹⁶ See Sections 16-18 of Part 1 of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, http://www.hms.gov.uk/acts/acts1994/Ukpga_19940033_en_1.htm#tcon, in which the legislation relating to young offenders is changed to reflect the James Bulger case: young offenders, for example, can be detained by police at 12 years of age, rather than 15 years of age.

climate of fear and panic that was extremely significant in facilitating the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act's passage.¹⁷

*Rave and dance:
threats to the moral fibre of the nation?*

The act's public order provisions were justified by both the government and the supportive mainstream and tabloid press as necessary to retain the moral fibre of the nation. Mainstream press reported in the early- to mid-1990s that the rectitude of British society was at risk. There seemed to be ever-increasing panic reported in, and perhaps fuelled by, the press regarding youth dance culture and drug usage, hunt saboteurs, anti-roads protests, and traveller culture. We will see that the government and media used the 1992 free festival at Castlemorton to fuel a sense of crisis, in much the same way that it constructed the death of the toddler James Bulger.

In the lead up to the introduction and passing of the CJA, the British mainstream press focussed particularly on the alleged link between rave culture and drug-related deaths. Britain's youth were suddenly uniformly portrayed as being at risk of premature deaths from indulging in a dangerous mixture of dance and ecstasy. Headlines and by-lines proclaimed the dangers of raves: "Rave' music is propelling the nation's young into a frenzy of all-night, high-energy dancing...";¹⁸ "Youngsters dancing until they drop!"; "The scandal of the M25 drugs parties."¹⁹

The picture painted by the press appeared to also be shared by members of government and other parliamentarians. Alun Michael, a Labour MP from Wales, believed that a new youth culture had developed, centred around

¹⁷ Aufheben collective, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

See M. O'Kane, 'Heyssel, Hillsborough and now this', *The Guardian* (20 February 1993), on-line version: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Print/0,3858,3942352,00.html>; accessed 22.10.01 for an excellent account of the impact of the abduction and murder of James Bulger.

¹⁸ Anonymous author(s), 'All the rave', *The Economist* (30 May 1992), p. 60.

¹⁹ Cited from tabloid headlines in S. Garratt, 'Those hazy, laser crazy days of summer', *The Guardian* (11 April 1999), taken from Guardian Unlimited archive: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,3852625,00.html>; accessed 07.03.01.

drugs and raves.²⁰ Liberal Democrat, Robert MacLennan reported at the time of the CJA's passing through Parliament that there was a problem in Britain of hundreds of hardcore juvenile offenders, linking these people to rave parties.²¹ The following sample of exchanges in the House of Commons demonstrate the heightened sense of pertinence of the alleged dangers of ecstasy, its use by young people and the link to raves:

Mr. Hind [Conservative Party]: Did my right hon. Friend see the front pages of *The Star* and *The Sun* yesterday which expressed concern about the misuse of ecstasy in the north-west, and especially on Merseyside, where seven young people have died and where a drug centre is using Merseyside regional health authority funds to distribute a leaflet encouraging young people to take ecstasy, a class A drug?²²

Mr. Rathbone [Conservative Party]: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to

²⁰ Fiona Measham, Howard Parker and Judith Aldridge define a rave in the following excerpt on raves and rave music:

The term dance and rave music covers a specific genre of music and dancing with its roots in the acid house music, warehouse, and pay party club scene that developed among British people, both in Britain and while on holiday in the Balearic Islands, since the late 1980s. Its musical influences included house from Chicago, techno from Detroit, and the European electronic dance music from the Netherlands and Germany from earlier in the decade. The term rave used in the late 1980s and early 1990s developed negative connotations both in the press and among clubbers and has now been largely superseded by the term dance to cover the specific, everwidening genre that includes house, happy hardcore, garage, techno, trance, and jungle music played at pay parties and licensed and unlicensed clubs. Some of the characteristics of the dance club, pay party, and rave in the early 1990s included their clear distinction from mainstream licensed nightclubs, the emphasis on social bonding, the collective dance experience, the communal state of euphoria, and the 'happy vibe' alongside a rejection of the alcohol-associated physical aggression and sexual harassment prevalent in many mainstream British nightclubs and licensed venues.

F. Measham, H. Parker, and J. Aldridge, 'The teenage transition: from adolescent recreational drug use to the young adult dance culture in Britain in the mid-1990s', *Journal of Drug Issues*, vol. 28, no. 1 (Winter 1998), p. 11 of on-line version: <http://proquest.umi.com/>; accessed 05.02.01.

For an extensive account of the development of rave, as both style and culture, see Hillegonda Rietveld, 'Living the dream', in S. Redhead (ed.), *Rave Off: Politics and Deviance in Contemporary Youth Culture* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1993), pp. 41-78.

²¹Cited in Hussey, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

control rave parties and young people's clubs where ecstasy use is likely.²³

The linking of youth, raves and drugs was not limited to debate in the House of Commons, or to tabloid media, such as the cited articles from *The Star* or *The Sun*. Much of the British public also intrinsically tied youth, raves and drugs to each other. These were members of the public who did not protest against the forthcoming Criminal Justice Act, but who saw it as a much needed tough law and order assault on an increasingly degenerate youth.

It is not my intention to demonstrate statistically that the association of youth culture, drug use and raves became widely fixed in the British public's mind. It is, however, my intention to demonstrate that the alleged link between the three was exploited by the government in pushing through the CJA. At the same time I will support the argument that the CJA was incorrectly portrayed as an attack on the right to rave only, instead of a more apt portrayal as a restriction and curtailment of liberties.

The CJA had far greater ramifications than outlawing rave parties and Atiya Lockwood of Liberty, formerly the National Council for Civil Liberties, recognises the human rights violations implicit in the CJA:

²² Cited in the House of Commons Hansard Debates for January 30, 1992, <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/>; accessed 08.03.01.

²³ Cited in the House of Commons Hansard Debates for January 17, 1992, <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/>; accessed 08.03.01. Another example is the following exchange in the House of Commons:

Mr. Howarth [Conservative Party]: Is my right hon. Friend aware that I have lost a young constituent to one Ecstasy tablet? It is a killer drug.

Mr. Patten [Conservative Party]: ...I agree entirely that Ecstasy is a drug which can kill. The first reported death was in 1989 and there were five deaths last year. Ecstasy kills because it affects the respiratory system and causes lung failure and hence death. Also clear evidence is emerging that, unfortunately, long-term psychotic effects may be involved.

Miss Lester [Labour Party]: ...I agree with the hon. Member for South Hams (Mr. Steen) about the dangers of Ecstasy. There is not a parent of teenage children who is not worried out of their life about the use of cocaine, Ecstasy and heroin, especially when our children can obtain them almost without question anywhere in the country.

Cited in the House of Commons Hansard Debates for February 20, 1992, <http://www.parliament.the-home-stationery-office.co.uk/>; accessed 08.03.01.

It [the CJA] was an easy way of blaming our current problems on an unpopular minority who were accused of scrounging off the social security, creating problems in the countryside by organising free parties and so on. But that is why it is a human rights issue because in a democracy you have to talk about protecting the rights of the minorities as well as obviously going with the majority view.²⁴

The Aufheben collective writes that one of the fundamental flaws in analysis of both the CJA itself and opposition to it has been a lack of recognition of the ramifications of the Act as a whole. Critiquing the Act as a series of attacks on specific groups in society belies the true nature of the Act, which can be seen through a Marxist analysis as an attack on the working class as a whole and “as a weapon in the struggle between the contending classes”.²⁵

This weapon was introduced by the Conservative Party not only as the centerpiece of a renewed law and order policy drive but as a rallying point for a divided party. The 1993/1994 period was one of crisis for Major's Conservative Party. Major was failing to have the enormous public impact that Thatcher had made and the party and government were divided over issues like Value Added Tax on fuel and the role of Britain in Europe.²⁶ These crises in both the Conservative Party and the Conservative government led to a renewed attack on the working classes:

With the dream of a property-owning democracy sinking into the nightmare of debt, the consensus is rapidly becoming unravelled, but UK plc cannot retreat. What better tonic than a good old attack on those firmly outside of the deal, the marginalised, whose exclusion the Conservative deal was predicated upon, to stiffen up resolve in the ranks for those attacks which threaten to recompose the class.²⁷

²⁴ Atiya Lockwood, cited in Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

²⁵ Aufheben collective, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

²⁶ For an account of the divisions facing the Major government and the Tory Party, see Anonymous author(s), ‘How did the triumphant winner of the 1992 election become the disregarded underdog of 1997?’, *The Economist* (10 March 1997), reprinted in an on-line archive of 1997 British general election news stories: http://www.ge97.co.uk/news_archive/mar_10/1403tory.html; accessed 15.11.01.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

It is important then to see the CJA as a multi-faceted attack which emerged in the context of crisis in government.

*Public order acts:
acting to quash community/ies*

This section seeks to explore the 1994 CJA as an attempt by the Conservative government to suppress the physical facilitation of traveller and festival communities. In establishing this, the CJA is examined as part of a series of public order policing acts.²⁸ The Traveller and festival scenes or, as I contend them to be, communities, are described in the context of having roused a sense of threat amongst the government, the mainstream press and supporting public. These Traveller and festival communities are then described as being under threat themselves by the introduction of the CJA.

Eight years prior to the introduction of the 1994 CJA, the Conservative government, then under the leadership of John Major's predecessor Margaret Thatcher, passed the Public Order Act of 1986. In their analysis of the opposition to the 1994 CJA, the Aufheben collective write that the style of the 1986 Public Order Act was directly anticipative of the 1994 Act and was passed in part as a response to the 1985 Stonehenge Festival.²⁹ It is pertinent to explore possible reasons as to why free festivals were seen as a threat to the state and/or to social order. Increasingly large numbers of people rejected the lifestyle of the masses and found an alternative at festivals across Britain: "the festival was seen as a free space, a green city where travellers could take drugs, listen to music and make the life they

²⁸ The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 was preceded by the 1986 Public Order Act, the Criminal Justice Act of 1987, the longer Criminal Justice Act of 1988, and two further Criminal Justice Acts of 1991 and 1993. G. McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance Since the Sixties* (London: Verso, 1996), p. 159.

²⁹ Aufheben collective, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided. For an account of the events at the 1985 Stonehenge Festival and the conflict between festival-goers and police when police attempted to prevent people from assembling at Stonehenge (a conflict known as the Battle of the Beanfield), see N. Goodwin, 'Jackboot and the Beanfield', *New Statesman and Society* (23 June 1995), p. 22-23.

wanted without the uptight codes of straight society.”³⁰ Free festivals could act as an exercised alternative to the everyday, as temporary or mobile sites of community:

Free festivals are practical demonstrations of what society could be like all the time: miniature utopias of joy and communal awareness rising for a few days from grey morass of mundane, inhibited, paranoid and repressive everyday existence....³¹

Hillegonda Rietveld likens the organisation of most free festivals to a non-hierarchical organic web, “involving a network of many people operating small ventures (such as selling foods, drinks, accessories or playing music) rather than the hierarchical set up of commercially organised events.”³² Here, the rhizome metaphor is applied to commercial enterprise, albeit small-scale.

The government’s determination to stamp out free festivals and the lifestyle they associated with it seemed to coincide with the increase in numbers of people attracted to festivals such as that at Stonehenge. The government and the tabloid and conservative media claimed that festival-goers epitomised everything wrong with sections of Britain’s youth: “social security scroungers who didn’t subscribe to the money-dominated culture of the market economy and who were actually having fun without paying for it.”³³

Negative reporting of alternative communities can be seen to have facilitated legislation to curb these communities’ activities. Media reports, for example, of the clash between festival-goers and police at the 1985 Stonehenge Festival depicted travellers as marauding hippies, as reckless and potential murderers. Neil Goodwin believes that this media cover-up

³⁰ Chumbawumba, ‘The politics of hedonism’, at: http://www.chumba.com/_hedonism.htm; accessed 03.01.01.

³¹ Cited in McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

³² H. Rietveld, *This is Our House: House Music, Cultural Spaces and Technologies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p. 169.

³³ Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

"heightened public outrage for the travelling lifestyle, and eased the way for a new 'anti-hippie clause' to be added to the Public Order Act of 1986."³⁴

The people who went to festivals were often not content to attend the occasional festival; instead, increasingly large numbers of festival-goers adhered to a nomadic, Traveller lifestyle.³⁵ This Traveller lifestyle can be seen as an affront to the c/Conservative vision of Britain: "The Conservatives are the party of law and order and we were an annoying thorn in their side, a whole troop of crazy people going out and rejecting everything they believe in and encouraging others to join them."³⁶

Prime Minister Thatcher's response to the growing number of people enjoying a travelling lifestyle was to be "only too delighted to do anything ...to make life difficult for ...hippy convoys." The 1986 Public Order Act was an explicit attempt to do so and end the travelling way of life. A precursor to the 1994 CJA, it gave police powers to break up any gathering of twelve vehicles or more. Convoys of Travellers could therefore be stopped by police. This was taken a step further in the 1994 CJA, which stated that when six or more vehicles are parked together without permission, then members of the convoy can be moved on. The nomadic lifestyles of Travellers and New Age Travellers alike came under direct attack from the two pieces of legislation. The 1986 Public Order Act effectively outlawed the Stonehenge Free Festival, as it made illegal the gathering of Travellers and festival-

³⁴ Goodwin, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

³⁵ The term Travellers is used to describe people who lead a nomadic lifestyle. It is also often used to refer to Roma people in Britain and Ireland. The combination of the terms New Age and Traveller is also of interest. New Age has connotations not only of mysticism, but, unfortunately, also of a detachment from this age, and, attached to the term Traveller, the label seems to further denigrate Traveller culture. New Age Travellers and T/travellers are not necessarily synonymous, as demonstrated in the following quote from a National Roma Rights Association report: "...many sites are not used for the people intended [sites provided by councils for Roma people], but are occupied for example by New Age Travellers." National Romani Rights Association, 'Cambridgeshire Travellers Review: identification of key issues',
Cambridgeshire City Council:
<http://www.camcnty.gov.uk/sub/resrchgp/travel/nrra.htm>; accessed 09.03.01.

³⁶ Jay, quoted in Richard Lowe and William Shaw, *Travellers: Voices of the New Age Nomads* (London: Fourth Estate, 1993), pp. 75-76; cited in McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

goers both on historic or archaeologically important sites such as Stonehenge, but also on any public land.³⁷

Thatcher and her supporters publicly justified such extreme measures. Douglas Hurd, for example, then Home Secretary, described Travellers as “nothing more than a band of medieval brigands who have no respect for the law or the rights of others.”³⁸ Statements such as this served to justify the extremities of measures made to criminalise Travellers’ ways of life, as they then became synonymous for many with lawless scroungers who needed to be controlled.

Matthew Collin expands on the idea that the state was concerted attempting to crack down on travellers’ lifestyles, and attempts to give an explanation from the travellers’ viewpoint:

The travellers had their own explanation for the severity of the crackdown. Their numbers were doubling yearly, they said, they were the pied pipers leading Thatcher’s children out of the inner cities and into alternative lifestyles... the very name the Peace Convoy, implying active links between nomadic dropouts and political activists, may have struck fear into the sections of government that believed a traveller’s way of life involved a rejection of and a threat to the system of property and land rights on which Britain is based.³⁹

Part of this rejection of the system of property was the refusal of many Travellers and New Age Travellers to participate in the formal employment system. Instead, many Travellers and New Age Travellers sold crafts and services or busked, and were thus able to support themselves from an

³⁷ McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 161 and J. Carey, ‘Assemblies of celebration, assemblies of dissent’, *SchQUALL* (Brighton: Justice?, 2000), page numbers not provided.

³⁸ Cited in Carey, ‘Assemblies of celebration...’, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

³⁹ M. Collin, *Altered State: The Story of Ecstasy Culture and Acid House* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 1997), cited in Chumbawumba, *op. cit.* Jim Carey writes that the term ‘Peace Convoy’ was a generic term coined largely by the media and, given the ongoing involvement of travellers in anti-nuclear demonstrations, it was a term that was used often to describe the traveller and festival scenes. Carey, ‘Assemblies of celebration...’, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

alternative economic base. Jim Carey claims that "evidence suggests that the political campaign to eradicate festivals was in good part aimed at breaking this economy."⁴⁰ The black economy became more difficult to sustain as free festivals, the sites of operation of travellers' alternative economy, came under attack. Alan Lodge recalls that "as soon as they scared away the punters [from free festivals] it destroyed the means of exchange. Norman Tebbit went on about getting on your bike and finding employment whilst at the same time being part of the political force that kicked the bike from under us."⁴¹ In the continual denunciation of Travellers and their apparent dole scrounging lifestyle, the conservative and tabloid press never acknowledged the role of the break up of the festival economy in forcing a reliance on social security.⁴²

Survival of and changes in the Travelling scene

The Traveller/festival scene was not quashed by the heavy-handed police tactics at the 1985 Stonehenge Festival nor by the 1986 Public Order Act. Travelling and free festivals have a long history in Britain and neither of these events of 1985/86 curbed the travelling and festival lifestyles; instead, the nature of these lifestyles changed, including the deterioration in the travellers' and festival-goers' living conditions. The Aufheben collective notes that "the nomadic dream of rural idyll gradually gave way to the reality of being moved from noisy lay-by to squalid car park, with decent sites often blocked off by farmers and local councils."⁴³ Heroin addiction and alcoholism, disillusionment and further alienation afflicted the travelling community perhaps more notably in the post-1985/6 period.⁴⁴ Despite this

⁴⁰ Carey, 'Assemblies of celebration...', *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

⁴¹ Cited in *ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.* Carey also cites a working party report on Itinerant Claimants, by the Department of Health and Social Security:

Local offices of the DHSS have experienced increasing problems in dealing with claims from large groups of nomadic claimants over the past 2 or 3 years. Matters came to a head during the summer of 1985 when several large groups converged on Stonehenge for a festival that had been banned by the authorities. The resulting well publicised confrontation with the police was said to have disrupted the normal festival economy and large numbers of claims to Supplementary Benefit were made.

⁴³ Aufheben collective, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

⁴⁴ Matthew Collin writes of these difficulties:

and the ongoing state repression since 1985, “a significant travelling scene survived to see the psychedelic cavalry arrive in 1992.”⁴⁵

The psychedelic cavalry refers to the increasing influence of rave culture on the festival and Traveller scenes. Acid house and later rave or trance music changed the nature of travelling and festivals. Many rave music enthusiasts rejected the increasingly commercial warehouse parties in favour of outdoor parties. Like the old rock music festivals of the 1970s and 1980s, these outdoor raves were transient and encouraged both old Travellers and new music fans to follow the raves to their next location. The growing popularity of raves during the closing years of the 1980s through to the present day is important because of their prevalence’s contribution to the 1994 enactment of the Criminal Justice Act.

A number of raves in 1992 attracted more than 10,000 people each. Spiral Tribe, a sound system originally from London, switched from offering free techno parties in squatted London venues to taking raves to the countryside: “the tribe grew constantly as it left a kaleidoscope trail through the idyllic countryside of the south-west in its Luton van.”⁴⁶ Exodus and the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) sound systems were two other sound system collectives emerged in 1992 to offer patrons commercial-free music events. The Exodus collective, for example, grew to attract 10,000-strong crowds at the raves held in and around Luton, north of London.

The most significant rave events of 1992 were the free festivals at Castlemorton and the Torpedo Town festival at Otterbourne. It was the very popularity, in numerical terms, of these raves and those put on by Exodus that led the Conservative government to commence legislation to outlaw rave gatherings. These events were a fusion of rave and festival, a fusion of

After the Battle of the Beanfield, sections of a downcast and disillusioned travelling community started to seek oblivion through Special Brew superlager or even heroin as the hippie dream turned sour. Festivals had lost their shine, and were plagued by marauding, sometimes violent drunks, the crustie punks of the Brew Crew.

M. Collin, cited in Chumbawumba, *op. cit.*

See also Aufheben collective, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

⁴⁵ Aufheben collective, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

⁴⁶ M. Collin, cited in Chumbawumba, *op. cit.*

a new scene and one which had been somewhat drifting since the mid-1980s, the most significant outcome of which was the weight of numbers the fusion afforded.⁴⁷ For example, in Otterbourne, Hampshire police were forced to renege on their steadfast refusal to allow a free festival to take place when the sheer numbers of festival-goers refused to go home and threatened to clog up the county's roadways. "By coming together, sheer weight of numbers meant that each group enabled each other to defy police bans, raising the prospect that the steady process of the state's crushing of the free aspects of each genre could be put into reverse."⁴⁸

The fusion of raves and free festivals was a product of the mutual rejection by many thousands of rave goers and travellers of the commercialisation of dance and music events. Even many underground sound systems were operating pay parties, such as the infamous M25 raves around the London orbital motorway. Travellers began to challenge this commercialisation by organising their own free parties:

All of a sudden you started hearing about traveller dos, traveller festivals. We were getting phone calls telling us this travellers' do was going on in Chobham Common or Lechlade or wherever it was, mainly in the West Country, and obviously, again, you follow your nose. We shot down there, to be very pleasantly surprised. It was a free party. In you went, the vibes were back, the spirit was back, the 'I want all the money out of you I can get then piss you off in the morning' was gone again and it was back into the underground. The travellers took it right into the underground. I don't think the state liked that, because it was opening up the townies' eyes to what travellers are. ...But then what happened was, all of a sudden you had an influx of thousands of townies going into these travellers' dos and actually realising these travellers were the soundest people you could ever meet. I don't think the state

⁴⁷ This coming together of people was, however, problematic, with some level of mutual dislike between the ravers and the travellers. Aufheben collective, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

quite liked that. It was a definite bonding of the street youths.⁴⁹

The sentiment that the state did not like these new gatherings of new age travellers and ravers at mass free parties would certainly appear true. Castlemorton in particular captured the attention of the media, the public and the government and directly led to the enactment of the 1994 CJA: "Castle Morton [sic.] had alerted the government and media to the scale of the free festival scene and their reaction was the Criminal Justice Bill (CJB)."⁵⁰ Castlemorton was a six-day rave party around the May Day weekend of 1994, which attracted more than 25,000 people in the rural area of Castlemorton, outside of Worcestershire.⁵¹ Pre-empting the powers which the CJA would bring them in 1994, police entered the site after the majority of the party-goers had left, seized the sound equipment of travelling sound system Spiral Tribe and charged those deemed to be rave organisers with conspiracy. The conspiracy trial eventually cost more than four million pounds, yet this was justified by Conservative Prime Minister, John Major, who declared that dissenting voices and alternative lifestyles wouldn't be tolerated when he said: "New age travellers. Not in this age. Not in any age."⁵²

The huge Castlemorton festival served to fuel Middle England's terror of the "dreaded hippie convoy."⁵³ The media seized on the idea that Castlemorton could arrive in one's backyard at any moment, highlighting the issues of access to land, and, more specifically, travellers' access to land and trespass laws.⁵⁴ Carey claims that in the immediate aftermath of Castlemorton, the

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* Although the Aufheben collective uses genres to refer to the different groups of people, the word genre is usually used to refer to an artistic style rather than a collective of people.

⁴⁹ Hazad, cited in T. Malyon, 'Tossed in the fire and they never got burned: the Exodus Collective', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 192.

⁵⁰ Chumbawumba, *op. cit.*

⁵¹ Cited in H. Rietveld, 'Repetitive beats: free parties and the politics of contemporary DiY dance culture in Britain', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 248.

⁵² Chumbawumba, *op. cit.*

⁵³ Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁵⁴ An extreme example of the negative reporting of Traveller lifestyles is that by a commentator in a leading Irish Sunday newspaper. In the aftermath of a spate of

right wing press published acres of crazed and damning coverage of the event, including the editorial headline in the Daily Telegraph "New Age, New Laws", the front page headline "Hippies fire flares at police" and the feature headlined "From ravers to travellers: a guide to the invaders."⁵⁵ Festivals and free parties became synonymous with anarchy, crime and a "motley collection of dog-on-a-string travellers, ravers, holidaymakers and hooligans determined to share, variously, their drugs, drink, music and defiance."⁵⁶ Such negative stereotyping served to prepare the public for and provide the basis for the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994.⁵⁷

Curtailling access to land

The CJA of 1994 included a number of provisions for the police to deal with what was termed collective trespass or nuisance on land.⁵⁸ Three of these provisions specifically dealt with the camping of so-called new age travellers on land; the holding of 'raves'; and the activities of hunt saboteurs. These three activities were differentiated from general trespassory assemblies; unauthorised vehicular campers and squatters. The CJA differs from traditional public order policing measures because of the situations in which

murders of elderly people in rural Ireland in the mid-1990s, murders in which Jim MacLaughlin contends there has been no proven Traveller involvement, Synon wrote:

We know now the source of the terror that has overtaken the lives of old people living alone in the countryside. It is lying on the roadside, living in the fields, sustained, encouraged, indulged by the money of the welfare state and the sanction of the intellectuals. I mean of course the travellers and their 'culture'. [The life of Travellers is...] a life which marauds over private property and disregards public laws. It is a life of money without production, land without cost, damage without compensation, assault without arrest, theft without prosecution, and murder without remorse. It is a life worse than the life of beasts, for beasts at least are guided by wholesome instinct. Traveller life is without the ennobling intellect of man or the steadying instinct of animals.

M. E. Synon, "Time to get tough on "Traveller culture", *Sunday Independent* (28 January 1996), cited in J. MacLaughlin, 'Nation-building, social closure and anti-Traveller racism in Ireland', *Sociology*, vol. 33, no. 1 (February 1999), p. 146.

⁵⁵ Carey, 'Assemblies of celebration...', *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

⁵⁶ B. MacIntyre, in *The Times*, cited in Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

⁵⁷ Jim Carey writes: "The news-manufacture used to prepare the public palate for the coming law was incessant, with media descriptions of travellers including 'a swarming of human locusts' in the *Daily Telegraph* and 'These foul pests must be controlled' in the *Daily Mail*." Carey, 'Assemblies of celebration...', *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

these new 1994 CJA provisions have been used. For example, where industrial disputes and political protests have tended to occur in public places in which officers of local police forces have had sole responsibility for public order, the provisions of the CJA have been used in relation to the protests and lifestyles of communities outside of a strictly defined norm, have taken place on private land, and/or involved forms of policing from both security guards and public police forces.⁵⁹ These clauses which deal specifically with travellers or hunt saboteurs create offences which privilege the ownership of land in an unprecedented manner. The ownership of land is sanctioned by criminal law through the CJA in its specific empowerment of police to stop people entering land, removing them from it and jailing them if they will not leave.⁶⁰

Access to land is not a newly politicised issue in Britain. There is a long history of land and property-based disputes. In 1649, for example, the Diggers published a pamphlet entitled 'A declaration from the poor oppressed people of England', which publicised demands for common ownership of land and an end to the domination of land ownership by those who acquired it through birthright alone.⁶¹ In 1866, in a precursor to contemporary environmental direct action, the Commons Preservation Society ripped down enclosures' fences in order to save public access to

⁵⁸ See Appendix IV, Part V of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act.

⁵⁹ T. Bucke and Z. James, 'Policing protest under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994', C. Barker and M. Tyldesley (eds), *Fourth International Conference on Alternative Futures and Popular Protest* (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 1998), page numbers not provided.

⁶⁰ Hussey, *op. cit.*, page numbers not provided.

⁶¹ Excerpt from G. Winstanley et al, 'A declaration from the poor oppressed people of England', 1649:

We whose names are subscribed, do in the name of all the poor oppressed people in England, declare unto you, that call yourselves lords of Manors, and Lords of the Land, ...That the earth was not made purposely for you, to be Lords of it, and we to be your Slaves, Servants, and Beggars; but it was made to be a common Livelihood to all, without respect of persons: That our hearts begin to be freed from slavish fear of men, such as you are; and that we find Resolutions in us, grounded upon the inward law of Love, one towards another, To Dig and Plough up the Commons, and waste Lands through England; and that our conversation shall be so unblameable, That your Laws shall not reach to oppress us any longer, unless you by your Laws will shed the innocent blood that runs in our veins.

Reproduced at the T. Gosling, Levellers and Diggers archives website: <http://www.bilderberg.org>; accessed 14.03.01.

Berkhampstead Common, New Forest and Epping Forest. A mass trespass took place in 1932 at Kinder Scout in the Peaks district, with activists demanding free access to roam land. In the same year the Ramblers' Association was formed to help ensure walkers' access to roam freely over uncultivated open country, protect rights of way (footpaths) and defend the British countryside's beauty. Since its formation in 1932 the Association has advocated free access to land.⁶² The Criminal Justice Act of 1994 saw a formal, legislative retreat from progress made by the Ramblers' Association and other walking groups since this 1932 act of civil disobedience. Once again, trespass became a focus of criminal law. This is not to say that trespass has not always been a punishable offence under criminal law. However, as George McKay states in *Senseless Acts of Beauty*, "there was a traditional, if erroneous, understanding that trespassers could not be prosecuted in criminal law. Trespass was seen as belonging to the civil realm in which personal rights are defensible by damages or injunctions, rather than in criminal law where the state can intervene with the ultimate deterrent of imprisonment."⁶³

For some, the link between the privilege of landowners and the new CJA was an explicit one:

Ever since the enclosures of the 16th century there has been a decline in an Englishman's [sic.] right to walk on English land. He [sic.] has fought for it but cannot walk on it. The Criminal Justice Act brought protest because it struck many people as unfair. Very like the reaction to the Poll Tax, the gut feeling was 'NO'. The two things are linked: one enables landowners to exclude people from their land and the other sought to tax the landless while rewarding at the same time the landed. ...The landowner has done well out of the Criminal Justice Act....⁶⁴

⁶² Aims of the Ramblers' Association taken from: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/info/ramblers/aboutus.html>; accessed 22.10.01. See also the brief history of the Ramblers' Association at: <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/campaigns/history.html>; accessed 14.03.01.

⁶³ McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

⁶⁴ A. Laurie, 'Monopoly without, part two', *Land Essays Volume One*, The Land Is Ours: <http://www.oneworld.org/tlio/research/landessa.html>; accessed 08.01.01.

What struck many people as unjust was the extension of trespass laws under the CJA.⁶⁵ Assemblies of people could be deemed to be trespassory assemblies if the land on which they were assembling was deemed by the CJA legislation to be limited. In other words, an assembly of activists on a public highway could be deemed a trespassory assembly and therefore banned because a road is defined in section 70 of the CJA as being restricted to use for a particular purpose.⁶⁶ As contrary as this may seem, these new interpretations by the Tory architects of the CJA had very real implications for anyone planning to protest the act itself, protest against the extensive road building schemes of the Major government, and for Travellers and New Age Travellers.

One of the obvious aims of the extension of trespass legislation under the CJA is a further containment of Travelling and squatting lifestyles, deemed to be so problematic by the government and many in the press. In parliamentary discussion prior to the introduction of the CJA, extreme prejudice towards the Traveller lifestyle was indicated:

Mr Trimble: Would it be possible to have another look at the last provision [the Caravan Sites Act 1968] that the Minister mentioned, which imposes on local authorities a duty to provide sites for travellers? Why should they have to facilitate what is, in all its aspects, an anti-social form of life and thus impose a loss on rate and charge payers, who then have to put up with such sites in their neighbourhood?⁶⁷

It would seem that in such discussions, members of parliament were either subconsciously or explicitly preempting the CJA.

⁶⁵ See sections 61, 62, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79 and 80 of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act which relate specifically to trespass and occupation.

⁶⁶ McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-169.

⁶⁷ Cited in the House of Commons Hansard Debates for February 20, 1992, *op. cit.*

Attempts to criminalise squatters

The label of anti-social was also applied to squatters, who therefore also came under attack in the Criminal Justice Act of 1994. Squatting can be a tremendous act of resistance, as well as a material necessity. People may chose to squat in order to reject the notion of property ownership, "to live and celebrate in ways outside the official market formula", or they may chose to squat a property because of an inability to afford market rates for rent or ownership.⁶⁸ Many squatters may squat a property as a deliberate rejection of dominant modes of exchange; they are rejecting conformist, dominant culture in much the same way as are Travellers. Squatters may also choose to live precariously and squat as a political act of reclaiming space that they believe should not be in private hands; housing, like the street to attendees at an Reclaim the Streets street party, is public. Without access to squatted premises, many squatters would be living on the streets or in homeless shelters. Some people are forced into the often precarious lifestyle of squatting because of such circumstances as unemployment, lack of rental records, poor credit ratings, and/or an inability to find and afford temporary accommodation while on council housing waiting lists.⁶⁹

George McKay highlights the double-edged sword of the effects of the CJA on both squatters and travellers, as the effects of the act augment the already dire effects of the Thatcher and Major governments' social welfare and housing policies:

Over a decade and a half, Conservative administrations produce some of the worst social conditions in terms of homelessness and poverty seen since the Second World War,

⁶⁸ J. Carey, 'Fresh flavour in the media soup: the story of *SQUALL* magazine', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 60. Carey goes on to make an explicit link between the choice of squatting and/or the necessity of it for some and an ongoing attack on the ability to squat, lead in part by the British media: "And there to facilitate this cultural attack was and is the likes of the *Daily Telegraph* with its sales figures of over a million a day, the *Daily Mail* with over two million a day, and the poorly written *Spectator* magazine shoring up the prejudices of its 50,000 readers with fortnightly dollops of right-wing pseudo-intelligentsia." *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ See, for example, Nick Wates' piece at the Advisory Service for Squatters website on the housing crisis in Britain: N. Wates, 'Introducing squatting', on-line publication: <http://www.squat.freemove.co.uk/story/ch1.htm>; accessed 20.11.01.

then, as its crowning glory, the latest Tory government seeks to punish with harassment, fines and imprisonment anyone - everyone? - who devises their own solution to these conditions.⁷⁰

Under the 1994 CJA, squatters are allowed only twenty-four hours after an eviction notice has been served to pack their belongings and leave the squatted premises.⁷¹ After this twenty-four hour period is up, the squatters are not permitted to return to the premises for one year: "a day to leave, a year to return: a combination of deadlines which is itself punitive, regardless of any criminal proceedings and subsequent sentence." Furthermore, the CJA repeals the 1977 Criminal Law Act which prohibited the use of violence by a person securing entry to squatted premises. Now, under the 1994 CJA, landlords and property owners have far greater legal entitlement to actually use violence to evict squatters.⁷²

The dire effects of the CJA on squatters' abilities to secure housing did not go unnoticed, with even members of the Metropolitan Police claiming concern:

The chairman of the Metropolitan Police Federation, Mike Bennett, told the federation's annual meeting in January 1995: "The criminal law should alienate criminals, not deprived members of society...I have to say that travellers, raves and squatters do not appear in the top ten of law and order priorities for the people or police officers in London. We do not cherish making criminals out of homeless people."⁷³

⁷⁰ McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

⁷¹ See the quickly amended legal warning issued by some squatters to potential evictors, published after the CJA came into effect, as reproduced in Anonymous author(s), *Cultures of Resistance* (London: Bock Factory, publication date not provided), page numbers not provided.

⁷² McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-4. George McKay writes of the effective sanctioning of vigilanteism by the CJA under section 72:

"Squats are by their nature insecure living spaces - the front doors to almost all but the longest-surviving squat communities are notoriously flimsy barriers. The Criminal Justice Act adds further to the social insecurity of the homeless." *Ibid.*, p. 164.

⁷³ S. Platt, 'Breach of the police', *New Statesman and Society* (10 March 1995), p. 17.

This is not, however, necessarily representative of the whole of the federation or the police force in general, and in no way is this an apology for policing practices in Britain. Police did use the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 to evict squatters, just as they used it to move on Travellers and evict them from sites.⁷⁴

Protesting for the right to protest

George McKay describes the passing of the Criminal Justice Act of 1994 as the beginning of a postmodern self-referential phase in British law: "protest against the Criminal Justice Act can be prohibited by the Criminal Justice

Alan Dearling, in 'Rebels with a cause?', an article which appeared in *Criminal Justice Matters*, expands on this idea that not all police and local authorities were willing to enact the CJA:

The CJA was an attempt to further criminalise a way of life with its outlawing of groups of more than six vehicles travelling together, increased sanctions against outdoor music and unauthorised camping, and the introduction of 'aggravated trespass'. But it was still up to the police and local authorities to implement this and other legislation regarding health and planning. Organisations like FFT [Friends and Families of Travellers], the Children's Society and the Telephone Legal Advice Service for Travellers (TLAST) have been in increasing contact with new Travellers in the last three years and have built up a picture of very different responses to Travellers across the UK. In some areas multi [sic] evictions, especially by the police, have forced Travellers to leave their nomadic way of life. But in other areas, these tactics have resulted in Travellers becoming effectively trapped in a single county as they run out of money for fuel or essential repairs. Everywhere, sites are hard to find even in local authorities where efforts have been made towards making site provision. It's a confusing situation with lots of different local patterns.

A. Dearling, 'Rebels with a cause?', *Criminal Justice Matters*, no. 28 (Summer 1997), reproduced on the Enabler Publishers website: http://members.aol.com/_ht_a/dearling/enabler/rebels.htm; accessed 19.03.01.

⁷⁴ The case of Sally Bowers, as reported in the conservative weekly magazine *The Economist*, is a case in point of the police force's acquiescence:

Sally Bowers lives with her two small children and her pig, Truffles, in a bus outside Crowborough in East Sussex. In June, under Section 77 of the Criminal Justice Act, Wealden District Council tried to evict her from the site where the bus was parked. She was due to give birth at the time. Because the act has abolished the duty of councils to provide sites for people like her, as well as giving powers of speedy eviction, she had nowhere to go. So she got a solicitor, and had the decision overturned in the High Court. 'I wouldn't have thought of going to court,' she says, 'but the act left me no alternative.'

Anonymous author(s), 'The failure of the Criminal Justice Act', *The Economist* (11 November 1995), p. 67.

Act.”⁷⁵ The effects of the act on the right to protest acted as the ultimate unifying agent for hundreds of thousands of British activists. Protest was criminalised by the CJA. Anyone seeking to oppose the government democratically, voice their dissent, or defend their politics could now be prosecuted under the Criminal Justice Act. A number of clauses in the CJA attack the right to protest: under Clause 65, for example, police have the power to prohibit all gatherings of more than 20 people on a highway or on any land without the owner’s permission. Taking part in such a gathering is a punishable offence and inciting anyone else to participate in such a gathering is an imprisonable offence.⁷⁶ Police officers are also given the power under the act to ban protests if they believe they are likely to disrupt “the life of the community.”⁷⁷ Commenting on the effects of the CJA on the right to protest, Michael Mansfield QC contends that it is “the most draconian act this government has put through.” He compares it to apartheid South Africa, where banning orders prohibited the gathering of more than two or three black people together. Further, Mansfield argues that under the CJA “we will have no effective right to assemble. It’s at the discretion of police officers. And all you’ll be allowed to do to protest is stay at home and write letters. The democratic right to demonstrate in this country is going down the chute.”⁷⁸

Activists in the hunt sabotaging community and concerned football fans realised the impact that the CJA could potentially have on their right to protest. Under the new public order provisions of the 1994 act, hunt saboteurs could be prevented from protesting against a fox hunt on public land. Likewise, football fans who want to demonstrate their opposition to their clubs’ management decisions could be prevented from gathering outside club headquarters, and even arrested if they do so.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-9.

⁷⁶ S. Platt and J. Gallagher, ‘Police crack down on protest’, *New Statesman and Society* (4 November 1994), p. 6.

⁷⁷ Anonymous author(s), ‘The police: off beat’, *The Economist* (26 November 1994), p. 68.

⁷⁸ M. Mansfield, cited in Anonymous author(s), ‘United you’re nicked: criminal injustice’, *New Statesman and Society* (24 June 1994), p. vi.

⁷⁹ Anonymous author(s), ‘Football fans against the Criminal Justice Act’, at Urban 75 homepage: http://www.urban75.com/Footie/cja_cpgn.html; accessed 23.10.00.

Football fans were targeted by the Major government's CJA because of a growing sense of concern over rife football hooliganism, particularly after the tragedies at football matches at Heysel and Bradford in 1985 and Hillsborough in 1989.⁸⁰ The CJA was part of a series of legislative attempts to control football fans' behaviour. Some of the pre-CJA measures include the outlawing of alcohol at football matches, the installation of Close Circuit Television at games. However, rather than quash any raucous football hooligan activity, the CJA simply served to heighten the idea among many British football fans that their passion for the game was being unnecessarily curbed and controlled by the state:

Against a background of continually falling numbers of arrest and a widely-held belief that football grounds are much safer places to visit now, these new powers seem to fly in the face of common sense. Many supporters feel that the very essence of their Saturday afternoon is under threat. Fans have often believed themselves to be victims of aggressive and provocative policing, and this new legislation opens up the possibilities of creating tension, ill-feeling and possible confrontation between them and police.⁸¹

Some football fans reacted against the CJA by forming the Football Fans Against the CJA, a loose coalition of fans who, as far as I can ascertain, published articles and flyers informing fans of potential threats to their rights under the CJA. It is unclear, however, if the Football Fans Against the CJA met face-to-face at local or national meetings or they acted as a

⁸⁰ While the Heysel, Bradford and Hillsborough incidences were commonly associated with football hooliganism and the need to curb it, the three tragedies were in fact dramatically different, with only the Heysel tragedy the direct result of so-called football hooliganism. At the European Cup final between Juventus and Liverpool on May 29, 1985 at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels thirty-nine spectators died after riots broke out between rival English and Italian supporters. Only weeks earlier, on May 11, 1985, a fire caused by a stray cigarette stub killed fifty-six people at the Bradford football stadium. The Hillsborough incident refers to a third English football tragedy, in which ninety-six people died at the Hillsborough Stadium at Sheffield, on April 15, 1989. The victims were crushed against riot fencing when police allowed a huge number of fans outside the ground to enter the stadium through a narrow entrance way. Anonymous author(s), 'Football's worst tragedies', BBC Sport on-line: http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport/low/english/football/newsid_1273000/1273347.stm; accessed 22.10.01.

means of disseminating information through a central point, such as the Urban 75 activist website.⁸² This is a question which will be posed repeatedly in the course of examining activists' resistances to the CJA. For many, resisting the CJA meant informing others of its scope in outlawing dissent, while for other activists in Britain resisting the CJA involved physical protest and meeting with others in opposition to the legislation.

Resisting the CJA

Activists from diverse political groups and backgrounds mobilised when the CJA was first tabled. For many varied reasons, activists believed the proposed legislation was a vicious attack on their rights and their lifestyles. The perceived extent of this attack was enough to unite a divergent array of activists. Kate Evans sums up a common reaction when she first read of the CJA, claiming that she was "spurred into action by disbelief" at the legislation.⁸³ The threat to civil liberties generally, the threat to the right to protest, the threat to lifestyles deemed alternative by the Conservative government, all generated enormous outrage. One way of manifesting this anger was to attempt to prevent the law from being passed, not by pleading with members of parliament, but by demonstrating opposition to the legislation. Another way was to resist the CJA once it became law. Hundreds of thousands of activists across Britain did both. It is this resistance that makes the CJA a unique event in recent political history in

⁸¹ M. Slocombe, 'Gaol!', *New Statesman and Society* (18 August 1995), pp. 18-19.

⁸² The following text is an example of the web-published information concerning the CJA for football fans on the Urban 75 website:

Under the CJA supporters no longer have the right to peacefully protest about what is happening at their club. Fans can now expect yet more body searches on their way to matches, face a criminal record for selling on a spare ticket, be arrested for joining in with lively chanting and have their DNA samples forcibly extracted and logged on to a national database.

If all that wasn't bad enough, the Government is still considering a national identity card scheme. Consider this – you're at a game shouting at your team for playing badly – next thing you know you're arrested under the 'intentional harassment' laws, dragged off to the station, samples taken and your identity card electronically marked.

Next time you try and go to football you find yourself barred.

Anonymous author(s), 'Football fans...', *op. cit.*.

⁸³ K. Evans, *Copse: A Cartoon Book of Tree Protesting* (Biddestone: Orange Dog, 1998), p. 69.

Britain. To understand this resistance it was first necessary to understand the legislation itself. The focus of this section, however, is the resistance itself and the unique networks of activism that formed from it.

As the law was being debated in the summer of 1994 in Parliament, tens of thousands of protesters gathered in central London for a series of demonstrations in protest against the proposed CJA. One of the first mass demonstrations took place on May Day, 1994 in London's Hyde Park. The demonstration took the form of a march and was allegedly officially organised by Advance Party, a coalition of rave organisers against the CJA. Perhaps organise, a word used in an article about the May 1, 1994, demonstration in *New Statesman and Society*, overstates the role of Advance Party activists and understates the role of other anonymous activists who may have played a part in the march. Activists from Advance Party did, however, organise sound systems to be at the march and played an active role in publicising the event; they also served as crowd marshalls and liaised with police. These two roles were the subject of much controversy among activists against the CJA and the debate will be explored.

Between 6,000 and 20,000 people attended the march against the CJA on May 1, 1994.⁸⁴ Vicky Hutchings' report of the march describes it as something of a party, with "jugglers, a break-dancing spaceman on stilts, and two fairies in tutus and gauzy wings" and music everywhere: "cross-legged men tapping out a rhythmic beat on bongos, others playing pipes, the drums of the gay group, Outrage, a punk with a ghetto-blaster, a group of people peddling away on a Heath Robinsonesque bicycle-powered sound system...."⁸⁵ This party-like atmosphere was deliberately encouraged by members of the organisers, Advance Party, who were adamant that the march from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square would be peaceful. Michelle Poole, of Advance Party, boomed the message to all at the march over a loud speaker: "This is a peaceful march. This is a tactic, not a moral issue. We

⁸⁴ Police estimates put the crowd at 6,000 people, while organisers estimated there to be 20,000 people at the march. V. Hutchings, 'Fight for the right to party', *New Statesman and Society* (6 May 1994), p. 13.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

are showing them that we can play the game by their rules.”⁸⁶ This statement glosses over the controversy implicit in ‘playing the game by their rules’. Hutchings reports that even amidst the party atmosphere some activists angrily objected to the “love-in feel to the whole event.”⁸⁷

The anti-CJA networks

Steve Platt and Paul Anderson posit activists against the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act fall into one of two broad organisational models: either “a loose, often anarchic alliance of groups and individuals, many of them linked through the Freedom Network” or those whose “organisational model is provided by the more traditional left, with the Socialist Workers Party...to the fore.”⁸⁸ I disagree with this binary model - it is too narrow and ignores the complexities of activist self-identification – not all activists would categorise their activism as either anarchic or traditional leftist in nature. However, Platt and Anderson do offer a framework for understanding some of the divisions that quickly emerged amongst activists against the Act. A sense of frustration is reported amongst members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), with the national organiser, Weyman Bennett, telling Platt and Anderson that he has mixed feelings about the organisational abilities of some of the “newer” activists involved in campaigning against the CJA: “Sometimes they don’t put the work in. They don’t realise that protests don’t just happen, even if people are angry about something. They’ve got to be organised.”⁸⁹

Without wanting to negate the sense of frustration that Bennett and others may have felt, it is precisely this sentiment that fuelled much of the division amongst activists against the CJA and continues to do so. There seems to be inherent in this statement a lack of appreciation for different modes of political organising. Not all activists were willing for their anti-CJA activism to be organised by the Socialist Workers Party or by any other

⁸⁶ Cited in *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ S. Platt and P. Anderson, ‘It’s criminal’, *New Statesman and Society* (30 September 1994), p. 19.

⁸⁹ Cited in *Ibid.*

hierarchical established left party. Instead, many activists wanted to act in solidarity with others, but within a loose network of groups and individuals against the CJA. One such anti-CJA network is the Freedom Network, which in its publicity literature terms this second style of loose political organising DIY Culture:

...the only way we are going to get our voice heard is through peaceful direct action and encouraging people to become part of 'DIY Culture' – ie, there's no point in complaining about things. If you want change, you've got to get off your arse and Do It Yourself.⁹⁰

McKay argues that this term DIY is perhaps a misnomer and that rather than Do It Yourself a more appropriate term might be Do It Ourselves.⁹¹ I would certainly contend that the term DIY belies the collectivity of the majority of actions against the legislation. In the anti-CJA context, and later as we see with anti-roads protest, Reclaim the Streets and global days of activism, DIY is political activism that is organised and acted out by protagonists themselves. There is less emphasis in so-called DIY activism on political participation through a central organisation or party. Instead, activists will often be politically active autonomously, but perhaps act under arbitrary umbrella names like the Coalition against the Criminal Justice Bill. This coalition was simply a collation of various groups and individuals all actively opposing the CJA.

The heterogeneity of the anti-CJA networks does not alter that bonds were shared and developed by individuals within and between these networks. In regards to the diversity of networks which coalesced around the issue of resistance to the CJA, I believe it is relevant to utilise Michel Maffesoli's notion of tribalism as a framework of analysis. In his discussion of

⁹⁰ Cited in *Ibid.*

⁹¹ See G. McKay, 'DiY culture: notes towards an intro', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 27. Though George McKay concedes that the term Do It Ourselves might be a more fitting term to describe activism in Britain in the 1990s, he continues to rely on the term DiY in his 'DiY culture: notes towards an intro' and, I believe, on the focus on self and individualism behind the term. See the introduction of this thesis for a more extensive discussion of the difficulty in using the term DIY and the problematic links McKay draws between this term and youth culture.

proxemics, or “the foundation of a succession of ‘we’s’ which constitutes the very essence of all sociality”, Maffesoli asserts that micro-groups can collectively constitute a community, or as he terms it, a tribe. He uses the metaphor of a “‘multitude of villages’ which intersect, oppose each other, help each other, all the while remaining themselves.”⁹² Here, there is no prescription for micro-groups, the networks which came together to resist the CJA, to surrender their uniqueness in order to form one tribe or one community. Instead, Maffesoli celebrates the diversity of the collectivity of networks in any one community. Opposition to the CJA provided the commonality around which diverse networks coalesced; activists found common space and formed a new specific anti-CJA community, albeit a transitory one. Ben Malbon emphasises the fluidity of the groupings Maffesoli terms neo-tribes, conceptualising them as transitory tribes “to reflect the highly spatialised nature of these constantly in-transit, continually re-forming and temporarily bounded social interactions.”⁹³ I would like to also re-emphasise not only the fluidity of the CJA networks but their concurrent ability to find commonality despite difference.

The transitory tribes, with all their differences, came together at the anti-CJA marches like that on July 24, 1994. Flyers advertising the march listed some of the many facets of the “building ...coalition against the Criminal Justice Bill”, including both the SWP and Advance Party, two groupings which Platt and Anderson argue are diametrically opposed in organisational style. It would seem that the flyers for the July march in London were trying to appeal to a diverse range of activists, with a real catch-all flavour to the list of coalition supporters. Listed at the bottom of the flyer were three rogue Labour MPs, prominent names from the miners’ strikes, the Winston Silcott Campaign,⁹⁴ and then such different groups as the Advance

⁹² M. Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, trans. by D. Smith (London: Sage, 1996), p. 139.

⁹³ B. Malbon, ‘The club: clubbing, consumption, identity and the spatial practices of every-night life’, in T. Skelton and G. Valentine (eds), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 280.

⁹⁴ The Winston Silcott Campaign aims to publicise the alleged miscarriage of justice over the imprisonment of Winston Silcott in 1985. Winston Silcott was charged with the stabbing death of Anthony Smith and serves a life sentence for this crime. In 1984, when the stabbing took place, Silcott was released on bail and the case was treated as manslaughter. However, Silcott became wrongfully associated with the

Party, Socialist Workers Party, No M11 Campaign, Hunt Saboteurs Association, *Squall* and Forgive Us Our Trespasses⁹⁵ and spokespeople from the gay rights group OutRage!, *New Statesman* and the Bridgewater Four Campaign.⁹⁶ From our knowledge of the division among activists from the Advance Party and members of the Socialist Workers Party and from the debate that would rage amongst activists over the question of the use of violence, we can surmise that the coalition was a union in name only. Throughout the fight against the implementation and collection of the poll tax, meetings were regularly held on a nation-wide basis to bring together activists from diverse community and national groups and who were unaffiliated. However, there were no such regular face-to-face meetings of activists involved in campaigning against the CJA. Instead, the coalition identified on flyers was one that existed to bring people together at the two national demonstrations in July and October 1994.

It is not surprising that divergent reports emerged of the July 24 demonstration in London, given the enormous number of voices and causes it tried to represent. CJ Stone, a freelance press and radio journalist whose work appears in *Squall*, describes it as the best political march ever: "It was like taking vast amounts of heart-pumping chemicals but without the toxicity. Or like being in love with 60,000 people all at the same time."⁹⁷ Stone's report certainly paints a glowing picture of the march, a picture that he builds on further in a *New Statesman and Society* article.⁹⁸ However, for

death of police officer Keith Blakelock during the Broadwater Farm riots. His photograph was released to the press, severely hampering his chances of a fair trial in the Smith case. After he and two alleged accomplices were found not guilty of involvement in the Blakelock case, Silcott remained in jail continuing to serve a life sentence for the murder of Anthony Smith, for which he never received a fair trial. Anonymous author(s), Youth Against Racism in Europe website: <http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/1320/justice.html>; accessed 22.10.01.

⁹⁵ Forgive Us Our Trespasses was a Leeds-based Britain-wide campaign group which listed details of actions against the 1994 Criminal Justice Act.

⁹⁶ The Bridgewater Four Campaign aims to bring to light the alleged miscarriage of justice in the case of four men accused of the murder of Carl Bridgewater in 1978. The Campaign has publicised the submission and subsequent rejection of extensive new evidence which would bring the men's innocence to light. For more details regarding the case and the campaign see: XEMU: The Bridgewater Four Case at <http://www.xemu.demon.co.uk/injustice/brdgwtr.html>; accessed 23.10.01.

⁹⁷ C. J. Stone, 'The triumph of love over pain', *Squall*, no. 8 (Autumn 1994), p. 20.

⁹⁸ See C.J. Stone, 'Party politics', *New Statesman and Society* (29 July 1994), pp. 12-15.

every reference to the party-like atmosphere of the march in left-leaning and activist press, there were many more references in the mainstream media to riotous mobs. A small number of the 20,000 protesters at the demonstration climbed the gates of 10 Downing Street and the conflict which ensued between these protesters and police attracted enormous media attention.⁹⁹ Steve Platt argues that the overwhelmingly fun nature of the demonstration rather than the confrontation between protesters and police at the Downing Street gates provoked the ire of the mainstream media:

Perhaps it is that sheer pleasure – both the unpaid-for gratification, and the sense that people can find fun in protest – that prompts such hysterical reaction against travellers, ravers, squatters and all those whose protests break the bounds of the old politics. The young have always scared the old. Perhaps it is this that informs this sort of editorial comment in the *Daily Star* on Monday: "They made a nauseating sight. For three hours the dregs of Britain – scroungers, anarchists and shaven-headed trouble-makers – rampaged through London... The sooner the new law comes into force the better."¹⁰⁰

Kill the Bill

The series of national demonstrations culminated on October 9, 1994, when over 20,000 protesters were met by 2,000 police at a rally held in Hyde Park, London. Again, conflicting accounts emerged of the demonstration, with some claiming it to be a violent riot, and others proclaiming it a celebration of difference and the right to protest. London Metropolitan police described it as a battle and one of the worst riots they had experienced since the poll

⁹⁹ Steve Platt offers a description of what prompted the media hype:

The worst that happened on Sunday was that a few demonstrators rattled the gates at Downing Street, a few more threw some plywood sticks and (mainly plastic) bottles at the police officers behind those gates, and a few more still engaged in some unpleasant verbal badinage of the kind that denies the essential humanity of the people in blue uniforms in much the same way that Conservative MPs and their supporters in the media have sought to deny the humanity of many of those on the demonstration.

S. Platt, 'Rattling the gates', *New Statesman and Society* (29 July 1994), p. 14.

tax demonstrations of the 1980s. Participants in the rally, however, claimed that the police had acted in a heavy handed and provocative manner.¹⁰¹

The protest had begun as a kind of carnival, though the Metropolitan Police officially banned sound systems. One senior police officer argued in defense of this decision to prohibit sound systems from Hyde Park, as sound systems “would become a focal point for those intent on causing disorder.”¹⁰² In a counter explanation of the decision, a protester, quoted in activist zine *SchNEWS*, explained that the decision to ban music systems from the Hyde Park demonstration was based on the inability of police to cope with rave music: “One of the great things about rave music is that it winds up the old Bill something chronic.”¹⁰³ The nature of the music cannot be assessed here, but what can be questioned is whether it was perhaps provocative on behalf of the police “to ban music at a demonstration that was demonstrating against what it saw as the banning of music.”¹⁰⁴ The presence of a sound system on a truck in the park seemed to heighten tensions between activists and riot police, who were keen to break up the direct challenge to their authority. Conversely, the ability of activists to defy the police and keep the sound systems in the park created a sense of unity amongst them. The park became their autonomous space and the music and dancing was part of celebrating that collective autonomy.¹⁰⁵

In a demonstration of the potential that the campaigns against the CJA had for uniting activists from diverse political groups, campaigns and backgrounds, activists against the CJA joined demonstrators against the M25 on the day the CJA received Royal Assent. James Morton describes this as “a final gesture of solidarity”, but, as George McKay rightly argues, this was far from the final gesture of solidarity. Instead, it was the first against the Act as legislation and the first of many acts of solidarity amongst activists.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁰¹ Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

¹⁰² Cited in McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

¹⁰³ Cited in *ibid.*, footnote no. 28, p. 204.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁰⁵ Aufheben collective, *op. cit.*, page number/s not provided.

¹⁰⁶ McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

According to Camilla Berens, young activists on anti-Criminal Justice Act protests asked where the “old hippies” and “the punks of the seventies” were when they were needed.¹⁰⁷ This question indicates the frustration felt by many activists actively fighting the CJA who felt that too many in Britain perceived the CJA as a piece of legislation which threatened the activities of the young only. This is in large part due to the press focus on the effects of the Act on so-called youth culture. Thus for many the CJA was anti-raves, anti-festivals and anti-Travellers:

...Joe Public has been brain washed by the tabloid press and TV into thinking that the CJA is a fight against ‘hippies, travellers, ravers, squatters – and all the other ‘scum’ of England’, its [sic] not. Its [sic] an attack on EVERY liberty of EVERY UK citizen.¹⁰⁸

However, as this commentator astutely argues, the CJA was an attack on political culture in Britain per se, not youth culture in isolation.

The alleged presence of far greater numbers of young activists at anti-CJA demos is worthy of examination. Jonathan Margolis, writing in *The Sunday Times*, ironically acknowledges the problems associated with the media’s reporting of the CJA and resistance to it. He contends that there is potential that the wider British public, and specifically anyone over the age of 25, would be unaware of the mass politicisation of people against the Act.¹⁰⁹ Following this, people over the age of 25 who were allegedly unaware of protest actions could not join them. It is a contention supported by Josephine Hussey, who writes in *Living Marxism* that the only people who demonstrated opposition to the public order sections of the Act, specifically Section V, were young people. Hussey quotes sections of a letter written to the editors of *New Musical Express*, in which Paul Ackrill, a participant on the May 1 march against the Act, writes that he “found it ‘sinister in the extreme’ that although ‘10-15,000 people’ marched in central London, ‘not a

¹⁰⁷ Cited in McKay, ‘DiY culture...’, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous author(s), ‘Its [sic] criminal’, from <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/kcc1/cja.html>; accessed 05.01.01.

¹⁰⁹ J. Margolis, untitled article, *The Sunday Times* (17 July 1994), p. 4.

mention was made of the event on any channel, radio or TV.”¹¹⁰ Despite this alleged lack of coverage of anti-CJA actions, the network of activists that emerged in response to the CJA extends well beyond under-25 year olds, as the anti-CJA network built on pre-existing, non-age specific political networks.¹¹¹

Beyond the march

Activists who protested the CJA did not only participate in the three national demonstrations in London; they demonstrated their opposition in multifarious ways, often as part of their participation in other campaigns. Demonstrations like mass trespasses against the CJA confirmed the existence of rhizomatic networks of activists, whose political activism was not limited to anti-CJA activism. Protest against the Criminal Justice Act brought to the fore the interconnected nature of many activists' political activity.

At Twyford Down in early July 1994 approximately 2,000 people participated in a mass trespass. The act of mass non-violent civil disobedience had multiple purposes. The trespass took place on the site of the motorway extension through the Twyford Down chalk hills, a site of natural and archaeological importance which had been vehemently defended by anti-roads activists. The battle to save Twyford Down from the motorway extension is detailed in Chapter 4. The trespass highlighted ongoing opposition to the road, which was now near completion. It also stressed the potential future ramifications of the CJA. Activists who participated in the mass trespass in July, who were able to do so without arrest, would be in violation of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act once ratified only a few months later. The trespass also served to demonstrate the widespread nature of the opposition to the CJA. Tim Malyon lists some of the participants at the trespass: the man who led the 1932 Kinder Scout mass

¹¹⁰ Paul Ackrill, cited in Hussey, op. cit., page numbers not provided.

¹¹¹ It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to categorically prove that the anti-CJA network of protest consisted of people of diverse ages. It is also unfortunately beyond the scope of this dissertation to probe the racial make-up of anti-CJA actions, in order to determine the extent of racial diversity of anti-CJA activists.

trespass, so-called representatives from road protest, squatting, raver and traveller organisations, the Hunt Saboteurs, Charter 88,¹¹² the Green Party, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and CND.¹¹³ The Twyford Down trespass was the result of an informal network of activists acting in opposition to the CJA, acting without a name like the July national march's Coalition Against the Criminal Justice Bill.

Activists were reported to have promised at this mass trespass that it would be the first in a series of rolling non-violent direct actions and it would seem that the promise was kept when on July 23, 1994, activists took part in the Kent Freedom to Party, Travel and Protest Campaign's picnic against the CJA. The picnic took place on Folkestone Pleasure Beach and included a march to lobby CJA advocate Michael Howard at his surgery. Like the mass trespass, the picnic was characterised by a party-like atmosphere: "Dancing, drums, good-natured banter, chants that owed more to their rhythmical qualities than to their content, whistles, war-whoops, a lot of noise...".¹¹⁴ Protest at the picnic was fun, but activists were also trying to convey the actual creativity and positivism of what the CJA opposed.

Diversity and disunity

The advent of networks of protest in opposition to the 1994 CJA does not imply uniformity of intent or method; the common enemy was the bill and, outside of this commonality, great diversity and even disunity existed. The anti-CJA networks were also open, with intangible boundaries, so that any activist in opposition to the CJA could join an action group or attend a demonstration.¹¹⁵ The very mode of organisation that activists employed to

¹¹² Charter 88 was formed in 1988 as a pressure group, based originally around the *New Statesman* magazine. A small group, originally numbering five which by 1993 had grown to include 50,000 signatories, drafted a charter in an attempt to create a centre-left alliance around a programme of constitutional reform. One of the key issues that Charter 88 promotes is the need for electoral reform in Britain and a Bill of Rights. S. Weir, 'A child of its times', *New Statesman and Society* (3 December 1993), pp. 6-7.

¹¹³ T. Malyon, 'Killing the bill', *New Statesman and Society* (8 July 1994), p. 12.

¹¹⁴ Stone, 'Party politics', *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹¹⁵ See Jan Flora's article in *Rural Sociology* regarding the importance of maintaining open networks, as she contends that "networks and networking can serve to exclude as well as include...". J. L. Flora, 'Social capital and communities of

oppose the CJA, that is fluid, non-hierarchical networks with no centre of command or power, was in direct opposition to the nature of the CJA: an homogenising piece of legislation which sought to consolidate the power of the centre, or government. Manuel Castells notes this dichotomy:

Historically, power was embedded in organisations and institutions, organised around a hierarchy of centres. Networks dissolve centres, they disorganise hierarchy, and make materially impossible the exercise of hierarchical power without processing instructions in the network, according to the network's morphological rules.¹¹⁶

Activists in the anti-CJA networks formed a collective or a community in which difference was not only recognised but was essential to its nature. While community suggests collectivity, it does not imply homogeneity; it is possible, in fact essential to this dissertation, to recognise unity and difference as integral to community.¹¹⁷ Anti-CJA activists participated in a variety of networks, such as the Traveller networks, the rave networks, etc., and also in a broader community: the anti-CJA community. These networks were fluid and activists were able to be involved in multiple networks.¹¹⁸ Differences of perspective and vision were encompassed both within these component networks and also within the broader anti-CJA community. This is not to ignore, however, dissension amongst activists in these varied networks. This discord was particularly evident at the mass marches, rallies and protests against the CJA, when groups like Freedom Network would attempt to group activists under one single metaphorical and physical barrier, despite the vast range of networks represented. The Aufheben collective writes of some of the contradictions evident in such singular collectivising of such diverse activists:

place', *Rural Sociology* (December 1998), on-line version: <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdlink>; accessed 19.06.01.

¹¹⁶ M. Castells, 'Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society', *British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 51, no. 1 (January/March 2000), p. 19.

¹¹⁷ R. Liepins, 'New energies for an old idea: reworking approaches to 'community' in contemporary rural studies', *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 16 (2000), p. 27.

¹¹⁸ Liepins writes that "references to networks are particularly valuable ...for they remind us that people will be simultaneously participating in one 'community', as a local network of interaction... whilst also being located in networks and 'stretched-out communities' of many other kinds." *Ibid.*, p. 30.

A movement to defend autonomy and subversion or an appeal for rights? Anyone who has had any involvement in the campaign against the Criminal Justice Bill, if only to the extent of going on one of the three national marches, must be aware that the opposition to the act is riven by this contradiction. 'Keep it Fluffy' or 'Keep it Spikey'? 'Kill the Bill' or 'Chill the Bill'?¹¹⁹

Highlighted here is the debate which raged between many anti-CJA activists over the maintenance of non-violence versus the use of violence at anti-CJA protests. It is a debate that the Aufheben collective believes came to dominate the anti-CJA community and effectively split it in two. The argument ran deeper than a question of tactics - it was a question of whether the CJA was seen as an attack on individual freedoms or a struggle between contending classes.¹²⁰ The discord surrounding these questions were particularly heightened due to the insistence of the Freedom Network, the collective which claimed to represent a coalition of anti-CJA activist networks, to maintain uniform 'fluffyism'. To this end, at the July 24 demonstration in London, the Freedom Network provided fluffy stewards, 'Chill the Bill' placards, and 'Non-Violence' stickers, and distributed 'Keep it

¹¹⁹ Aufheben collective, *op. cit.*, page number/s unknown.

¹²⁰ The Aufheben collective provides an extensive discussion of this debate in the 'Kill or Chill?' analysis. *Ibid.* In their chapter on the No M11 Link Road campaign, this debate is summarised:

Many who went on the national demonstrations against the CJB may be under the illusion that the fluffies are simply the pacifists of the 1980s re-emerging from the woodwork. There are, however, important differences between fluffyism and the pacifism of the old peace movement. Pacifists at least recognised the state as a social force of violent coercion that needed to be confronted for 'freedom' to have any meaning. Fluffyism, on the other hand, takes liberalism to its logical extreme (and is even more incoherent as a result). The fluffy view of society as an aggregation of individuals denies the possibility of recognising the state as a social force: below their suits and uniforms the bailiffs, police, property speculators, industrialists, and even Michael Howard and his cohorts, are just human beings. Fluffies assume, therefore, that all individuals have a common human interest. Any conflicts which arise in society can, by implication, only be the results of misplaced fears or misunderstandings. This view underpinned the fluffies' conception of how the campaign against the CJB needed to proceed.

Fluffy' leaflets.¹²¹ This explicit attempt to universalise the political beliefs and actions of heterogeneous activists is a problem that recurred throughout anti-CJA activism, but also in anti-roads, Reclaim the Streets and J18 activism that is examined in proceeding chapters.

The issue of enforcing codes of non-violence generated rifts amongst activists. However, this was not the only issue to cleave the already fractious anti-CJA community/ies. Two further examples are the question of focus and the question of reformism. As has become evident even in this analysis of opposition to the CJA, much of the focus of dissent against the Act related to its effects on sections of society, rather than society as a whole. Different aspects of the 1994 Act are stressed by activists and commentators, depending on their own interest group and/or their intended audience. Hunt saboteur groups, for example, stress the ramifications of the CJA on trespass, while football fan advocate groups, organising under the banner of Football Fans Against the Criminal Justice Act, emphasise the ramifications of new stop and search powers and the bill's effects on ticket selling, protesting against club management and crowd behaviour.¹²²

In supposedly general commentaries on the CJA only certain issues arising from the bill are highlighted, perhaps because the CJA's scope of legislation is so extensive that any comprehensive commentary would simply involve a reproduction of the legislation in its entirety. For example, the main points listed in the *New Statesman and Society* by writers Paul Anderson and Steve Platt are that the 1994 CJA "abolishes suspect's rights to have no adverse inference drawn from silence in the police station; gives police new powers to take samples of bodily tissue for DNA testing; gives police substantial new powers against travellers, squatters, ravers and

Aufheben collective, 'The politics of anti-road struggle and the struggles of anti-road politics: the case of the No M11 Link Road campaign', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 121.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² Hunt Saboteurs Association's Internet-based report is a case in point. Hunt Saboteurs Association, 'Who's afraid of the CJA?: a report on the first season of the implementation of the new offence of aggravated trespass', 1995, Hunt Saboteurs Association website: <http://www.enviroweb.org/HAS/legal/endterm.html>; accessed 12.03.01. See also the Football Fans Against the Criminal Justice Act information

demonstrations on private property; increased police 'stop and search' powers."¹²³ What is of primary concern to this dissertation, however, are those aspects of the legislation listed as relating to public order, including provisions relating to trespass and assembly, because these provisions tended to act as rallying points for networks of activists.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, the possible ramifications of the CJA for Asian and black youth were not part of the mass outcry against the CJA by the majority of white activists. John Hutnyk explains this glaring omission from anti-CJA protest:

While the inclusion of clauses to increase police powers in the inner urban areas was of special concern to Asian anti-racist organisations, these aspects were rarely addressed by white middle-class activists more concerned with the attacks on raves and parties. ...The most political of responses from the white Left took up the attacks on demonstrations, the anti-terrorism clauses and the abolition of the right to silence..., but rarely the stop-and-search powers [predominantly used against urban black and Asian youth].¹²⁵

It certainly would not have been desirable for white anti-CJA activists to claim to speak on behalf of black and Asian people affected by the provisions of the Act; however, it is an indictment on the lack of inclusiveness of activism that claims to be diverse in its base.

At the superficial heart of anti-CJA activism was a desire to kill the bill (the CJA) and/or create enough dissension over the Act that it would eventually be withdrawn. This latter aim is reformist in nature, a characteristic that did not sit easily with all CJA activists: "...opposition to legislation is problematic. For those who want to see an end to capitalism and the state, all laws are bad and all politicians are our enemies."¹²⁶ However, in

at the Urban 75 homepage: http://www.urban75.com/Footie/cja_act.html; accessed 12.03.01.

¹²³ P. Anderson and S. Platt, 'Whatever happened to civil liberties?', *New Statesman and Society* (3 November 1995), p. 16.

¹²⁴ See Appendix IV, Part V of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act.

¹²⁵ J. Hutnyk, cited in McKay, 'DiY culture...', *op. cit.*, p. 276, footnote number 74.

¹²⁶ B. M. Makhno, 'Kill kill kill!', a text handed out at a meeting of old communists in London 1994, from the Antagonism website of 1980s and 1990s British political flyers and posters:

attempting to make the CJA unenforceable, by taking direct action in violation against it, activists were still in effect engaging with the legislation and therefore could be accused of attempting to reform the law. As the author of the 'Kill kill kill!' text argues:

Some radicals may not wish to involve themselves in opposition to the CJB. They might argue that it is a campaign, or it is reformist (or probably both). These arguments are just red herrings. Of course there is a campaign against the CJB. So what? There was also a campaign against the poll tax, a campaign in support of sacked printers at Wapping and campaign in support of the miners in 84-85.¹²⁷

Makhno identifies direct action as being at the heart of the successful opposition to the poll tax and claims that it is only in this way that the Criminal Justice Act can be defeated. Despite the widespread activism that took place in opposition to the Act, the CJA was not repealed. It was, however, difficult to enforce, an attribute accorded by the very nature of the Act, rather than due to radical direct action against it.¹²⁸ It is beyond both the aim and scope of this dissertation to analyse the effectiveness of the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act in terms of arrests made or, even more ambitiously, of the efficacy of prosecution under the CJA in

wysiwyg://73/http://www.geocities.com/antagonism1/our80s90s/kill.html; accessed 14.03.01.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* Makhno extends this comparison between opposition to the 1994 CJA and the poll tax further:

We sometimes choose to oppose specific laws, but this is not on the level of a campaign for a better law, but is practical opposition which makes the law unenforceable. Obviously we want to make all laws unenforceable, but where there is widespread opposition specific legislation can be defeated outside of a generalised revolutionary situation. A good example of this is the poll tax. Now various liberals and leftists and also 'non-political' types certainly did mount a campaign against this. They wrote letters to their MP's, trying to make them realise they were mistaken, they tried to get Labour councils not to collect (ha ha!), they tried to win over public opinion. But it was not this campaign that defeated the poll tax, it was the widespread proletarian resistance of non-payment, rioting and looting.

Ibid.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Steve Platt's article 'Protests stretch police to limit', *New Statesman and Society* (27 January 1995), p. 7; C. Ward, 'Fringe benefits', *New Statesman and Society* (26 January 1996), p. 29; and Anonymous author(s), 'The failure of the Criminal Justice Act', *op. cit.*, p. 68.

detering breaches of the Act. Nor is it of prime concern whether activism hindered the passage of the legislation or its implementation. What is of importance to the thesis at hand is the proliferation of rhizomatic networks of protest and diverse activist communities that arose in response to the CJA.

Conclusion:

community/communities under siege

Diverse networks coalesced and formed temporal communities of resistance in response to the proposal and final introduction of the 1994 CJA. These networks were not necessarily formed to oppose the legislation but certainly took on new forms as a result. Disparate networks suddenly came together, with thousands of people across Britain perceiving the CJA as threatening their individual and collective liberties. As has been discussed throughout this chapter, the CJA sought to quash networks and communities that were paradoxically deemed to threaten "the life of the community", or that community which was deemed by the ruling elite to encompass middle Britain.¹²⁹ Here we are faced with a potentially confusing array of interpretations of community: that which was deemed to be in need of protection by the same government, those which were directly targeted in the Major government-initiated legislation and those which emerged in response to the enactment of the legislation. I have demonstrated through the course of this chapter that the diverse networks and communities specified by the CJA in fact posed no real threat to 'the life of the community', or the constructed ideal of middle Britain. It was their very difference from a falsely supposed norm that brought about their vilification within the 1994 CJA.

It is very difficult to characterise the many varied networks and communities that came out in opposition to the CJA. One general statement that one could make is that they all celebrated diversity and a plurality of thought and practice. However, beyond the rhetoric of a desire for the

¹²⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'The police: off beat', *The Economist* (26 November 1994), p. 68.

recognition of difference lay the harsh reality that actions against the Criminal Justice Act were largely dominated by select sections of British society. Links were not made between, for example, Travellers and young urban Asians. Having acknowledged these limitations, it is nevertheless important to note the desire of many anti-CJA activists to be inclusive of difference in protesting against the legislation.

Resistance to the CJA increased connectedness of otherwise disparate people. People from a wide range of networks and communities came together physically and/or emotionally in opposition to the Act's perceived attack on liberties and difference. These networks and communities often transformed into new ones, relating more specifically to the campaign of resistance to the CJA. They were, however, temporary anti-CJA networks and communities. Like Hakim Bey's Temporary Autonomous Zones, these anti-CJA networks and communities liberated areas of imagination, like the occupation of Trafalgar Square, but then quickly dissolved and were re-formed elsewhere.¹³⁰ In the case of CJA resistance, the Temporary Autonomous Zone or Zones were re-formed or re-invented around new sites of resistance, physically and emotionally. Activists stopped resisting the CJA specifically, although all acts of resistance were shrouded by the threat of prosecution under the CJA. Instead, resistance was carried onto new sites and new issues. One of the legacies of the period of activism specifically against the CJA is the coming together of activists around multitudes of issues, as we will see in the future chapter on J18.

In this second part of the dissertation, *Networks of Protest*, I have argued that networks of activists, representing diverse interests and beliefs, can come together to form solid, yet also heterogeneous, communities of

¹³⁰ I am not applying the points of definition of the TAZ precisely here, and this seems fitting given Bey's desire not to confine the TAZ to any one rigid definition. Bey writes:

The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State can crush it.

H. Bey, *T.A.Z: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), reproduced on-line: <http://www.t0.or.at/hakimbey/taz/>; accessed 29.08.01.

resistance. Networking tools such as zines or infoshops provide spaces, geographically and non-spatially, for activists to group together. People are able to connect with one another and the networks formed and fostered overlap and meld together in rhizomatic maps of connectedness. Perversely, the CJA also brought activists from diverse interests and groups together to form communities of protest. What linked anti-CJA activists was not their proximity to one another, but their solidarity in opposition to the legislation and desire to defend diversity.

PART III

SPACES OF COMMUNITY

CHAPTER FOUR

Anti-roads protests: networks of difference; communities of dissidence

We're not protesting for trees, we're protesting for communities.

Anonymous ¹

*...On direct action camps we create spaces and communities
that are windows to the future world we wish to create.*

Anonymous ²

Communities emerged throughout the 1990s in opposition to the Thatcher and Major administrations' road building schemes. These anti-road activist communities are diverse and fluid. They cannot be defined by their geographic location nor by members' opposition to the construction of roadway through any one area. Instead, anti-roads communities are communities of difference. They consist of some activists who oppose the dominance of car culture and its environmental costs no matter the road's location, and others concerned about the specific location due to their attachment with the physical surrounds or the geographic communities which the road threatens. Anti-roads communities are therefore made up of so-called local activists and activists who move from one anti-road camp to the next. These are communities unfettered by physical boundaries, built largely through activist networks facilitated by the Internet, zines and

¹ Anonymous, as seen in the video directed by Mayyasa Al-Malazi and Neil Goodwin, *Life in the Fast Lane: The No M11 Story* (London: 1995), emphasis added.

² Anonymous author(s), 'Tree houses of the world', *Do or Die Voices from Earth First!*, no. 7 (publication date not provided), p. 38, emphasis added.

social centres. They are temporary autonomous zones, re-locatable and easily dissolvable.

This chapter explores the nature of anti-roads activism in Britain in the 1990s and the communities that evolved from this activism. I focus on the communities of protest that formed the basis of activism at a number of anti-roads protest sites, including the high profile activism at Twyford Down, Claremont Road and the Newbury Bypass. This is of course a limited empirical discussion, and, while I have deliberately focussed on these three protest camps, I do not wish to imply that the myriad of other anti-roads activism should be ignored from future scholarship, nor am I deliberately setting about establishing a canon of protest.³ I selected to focus on the Twyford Down, Claremont Road and Newbury Bypass anti-road actions because of the relative profusion of primary and secondary source material available which relates to these camps. They were also selected as case studies because they represent a different relationship for activists to place – Twyford Down and Newbury Bypass are sites of great natural physical beauty while Claremont Road is an inner London residential area.

The focus of this chapter is the communities of resistance that emerged from and facilitated anti-roads activism. I do not emphasise more instrumental effects of anti-roads activism such as the impact of activism on British governments' road building programmes. This focus does not necessarily reflect activists' own sense of what anti-roads protesting has achieved.⁴ This chapter will explore the networks which came together during anti-roads protests and the ways in which activists from very

³ Other anti-roads protests that I have not focussed on include the struggle against the bypass at Newcastle, against the M65 motorway at Stanworth Valley, against the A30's construction in Devon, and against the Bath bypass at Solsbury Hill.

⁴ A prime example of the different prioritising of outcomes can be seen in *The Roadbreaker*, a zine published spasmodically by activists. In the August/September 1994 issue a text box is featured on the second page and lists 'What we've achieved.' Eleven dot points are listed, including attracting national and international news status, highlighting the ineptitude of the road planning hearing procedure, and achieving access to Parliament and European Parliament. The ninth of these points focuses on community: "revitalised a sense of community spirit and motivated people to empower themselves by taking Direct Action." My own interpretation of the anti-roads networks' successes would prioritise this point over attracting media

different networks formed communities of resistance. Anti-roads activism is an ideal case study to illustrate the development of relations between activists over issues of perceived injustice, such as road construction through neighbourhoods and/or areas of great physical significance. Activists became enmeshed in new networks and sometimes communities, which were specific to sites of anti-roads protest but also could be transferred to new sites of activism.

Media and elites stereotyped anti-road activists and, in doing so, created a façade of community. Anti-road activists were popularised by media and political elites as crusties and greenie, dreadlocked twenty-somethings.⁵ This characterisation of the anti-road protestor culminated in the mythology of Swampy, a media product.⁶ Such popularisation and stereotyping acted to falsely collectivise anti-roads protesters. This chapter seeks to demonstrate that indeed anti-roads activist communities did emerge, but they were characterised by diversity and plurality.

A large proportion of those involved in the activism against the road building programme of the Conservative government could not and did not wish to be named 'crusties'. In fact, as evinced in the Twyford Down campaign, one of the versions of how the protests began claims that they were initiated and sustained by conservative, middle income residents of the area, even Tory voters. A journalist from the ultra-conservative *The Times*, Richard Girling, acknowledges the diversity of the anti-roads protesters, yet

coverage. See Anonymous author(s), 'What we've achieved', *The Roadbreaker* (August/September 1994), p. 2.

⁵ Brass and Poklewski Koziell express this characterisation as being one made of the direct action movement as a whole:

DIY culture can seem to be about dreadlocks, juggling, living up trees and tribes with strange names. But it is more than that. It is also about trying to bypass institutions and monolithic structures to do lighthearted, individualistic empowering. This can mean anything from writing a letter to standing in front of a bulldozer.

E. Brass and S. Poklewski Koziell, *Gathering Force: DIY Culture – Radical Action for Those Tired of Waiting* (London: Big Issue, 1997), pp. 8-10.

⁶ 'Swampy' was a male protestor who endured seven days in a tunnel, dug to prevent bulldozers from approaching trees. He was given his own weekly column in the *Sunday Mirror*, as well as coverage in other publications. See B. Doherty,

still manages to stereotype anyone who did not fit within the middle class: "The battle of Tywford Down united middle-class road protesters with Swampy's subterranean militia...."⁷

It is here that one of the contradictions of the movement emerges. In the Newbury Bypass campaign, for example, many local residents were resentful of protesters who were seen as intruders on a local issue, protesting against a bypass some protesters felt was needed, and bringing unwanted camps replete with dirty, drug smoking alternative lifestyle adherents.⁸ In the Twyford Down campaign many residents publicly denounced the level of participation of the Dongas Tribe, claiming it as their protest, a local protest. But in other anti-road protests in Britain, such as that against the open cast mine in Cwmgwrach in Wales, there was a meshing of local and non-local protesting energies.⁹ Local residents joined

'Opposition to road-building', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 51, no. 3 (July 1998), p. 373.

⁷ R. Girling, 'Concrete cancer', *The Sunday Times Magazine* (5 April 1998), p. 16.

⁸ Kate Evans writes of the reception many activists received in the town of Newbury:

Actually, a large proportion of Newbury residents did not want us there at all. People would greet us on the street with icy stares. Taxis wouldn't take our money; buses didn't stop. I once watched the women in the cake shop systematically search out and give me the smallest doughnut on the rack.

The town was polarised. There was those who vehemently opposed the road, who did their bit and more: making food, distributing supplies, taking to the trees. But the town has been Tory since time began and the shopping streets were crowded with rednecks and County types who directed at us, the invading crusty hoards, a singular amount of unspoken venom.

K. Evans, *Copse: A Cartoon Book of Tree Protesting* (Biddestone: Orange Dog, 1998), p. 111.

⁹ While at first glance activism at road construction sites and open cast mine sites may seem unrelated, many activists felt the need to highlight the connection between road construction and the destruction of the landscape through open cast mining, which provided the materials needed for roads. The link between open cast mining and environmental destruction has also been made by activists in mining communities:

Steve saw a direct link between the environmental destruction caused by open cast and what was happening to the mining communities. In most cases there are local opposition groups to open cast mines and he set up a national information network to link them. To bring home the issues to those who make the decisions, Steve and 60 colleagues broke into the grounds of Heseltine's [then Industry Secretary] mansion several times to hold picnics, dig holes and plant trees.

Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

anti-road activists who had traveled across Britain to participate in the fight to save Selar Farm in Cwmgwrach, South Wales in protest.¹⁰

It was not only a sense of community that was developed between local and non-local activists but a sense of community that grew on the anti-road sites. Anti-road camps became communities.¹¹ The camps were communities in many ways, in the sense of locale, in the sense of affinity, in the sense of a new type of place, even a utopia. The anti-road movement has therefore come to be seen as a new political and social arena. Nevertheless, anti-road camps or communities are not entirely new or free of political hierarchies that exist beyond the bounds of camps. Charges of patriarchy, for example, are frequently levelled against anti-road sites.

The extension of the M11 motorway through eastern London destroyed not only the physical houses but fragmented a community. This was admittedly a diverse community, consisting of the more affluent Wanstead and the poorer, eastern high-density housing areas around, for example, Claremont Road. Perhaps the only tenable link in this community was the fact that they were threatened with destruction. Nevertheless, the community and, just as importantly, its inhabitants' collective memories were destroyed.¹² People reacted to this dispersal and upheaval, and thus the network of protest was broadened. It now consisted of not only anti-roads activists protesting against the M11 as symbol or component of wider-spread destruction and growth-oriented politics, but also immediate physical community members involved in activism for the first time.

Claremont Road, for example, could be viewed as a kind of social network, whereby environmental and/or social activists from beyond the immediate physical community and local activists forged links to pursue collective objectives.¹³ It is this network that forms the basis, or webbing, of the

¹⁰ See, for example, Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

¹¹ See, for example, *Ibid.*

¹² See G. Lipsitz, *A Life in the Struggle: Ivory Perry and the Culture of Opposition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

¹³ M. Smith, 'Introduction', in M. P. Smith (ed.), *Marginal Spaces* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1995), p. xiii. See A. Melucci, *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*, ed. by J. Keane and P.

activist community. The term community is preferable to the term movement in describing the collective of anti-road activists and their activisms because it better conveys the fluidity of anti-road activism. This preference has been discussed at length in the dissertation's introduction.

No singular theory is wholly appropriate to account for the anti-roads movements of the 1990s in Britain. Through exploring the course of events of anti-roads protests and anti-roads activists' motivations and the types of protest activity they employed, it will be shown that a theoretical hybrid is more apt to analyse anti-roads activism. The over-riding tool of analysis, however, is community-centric reflecting the aim of the chapter to determine the extent of community formation and/or maintenance in anti-roads activism.

Direct action protest

Doherty attributes the ability of so-called eco-protesters to achieve a high level of positive media coverage to their adherence or commitment to nonviolence and "the exploitation of vulnerability."¹⁴ This is a somewhat cynical approach to the role of the media in the anti-roads movement. Mohandas Gandhi, for example, required commitment to nonviolence as a tactic of all those who participated in his mass movement in India.¹⁵ There

Mier (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989), for a detailed explanation of his concept of submerged networks.

¹⁴ Doherty, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

¹⁵ H. Kaur, *Gandhi's Concept of Civil Disobedience: A Study with Special Reference to Thoreau's Influence on Gandhi* (New Delhi: Intellectual Publishing House, 1986), p. 7. Just as no single protest theory can alone disclose the nature of participation and activism of the anti-roads movement, no single preceding influence can be identified. Instead, there is a myriad of influences. A tradition of passive resistance or nonviolence is one clearly identifiable influence. Nonviolence plays a vital role in a number of cultures and faiths, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism. A core element in shaping Hindu society is the *Laws of Manu*, which list nonviolence, or *ahimsa*, as being equal to the rules of truthfulness, non-stealing, purity and control of senses - all to be obeyed by all castes. Mohandas Gandhi is perhaps the most famous recent proponent of the virtues of nonviolence. He was heavily influenced by existing Hindu tradition, taught to him by Jainas, followers of a branch or sect of Hinduism. He was also inspired by vegetarianism, Tolstoy, and Thoreau. Gandhi applied nonviolent action in his leadership of the struggle for Indian independence from British rule. Albert describes the motivation for Gandhi's use of nonviolent action, claiming that Gandhi saw nonviolence as "a technique for waging conflict efficiently, with as little damage as possible to the human person and effecting the

is, however, no such required universal adherence or commitment to nonviolence in the anti-roads movement, at least not in a formal sense. Instead, advice seems to be given to activists at each protest site according to such variables as police presence, and the use of private, often more aggressive, security personnel, and professional climbers in evictions.¹⁶

Contrary to Doherty's claim, the decision of whether to go 'fluffy' or 'spiky' was not wholly, if at all, influenced by the presence of the mainstream television and print media. These terms, fluffy and spiky, were often issued as directives: to keep things fluffy was to use nonviolence, while to go spiky was for activists to match the violence of the police with their own violence.¹⁷ However, one activist, from the underground magazine *POD*, expresses cynicism at this demarcation, seeing the debate around the fluffy/spiky issue as diversionary and divisive: "The whole Fluffy/Spiky debate was seen by most activists as a fuss about nothing... But more than anything, it showed the huge gap in communications between some factions of the far left and those involved in NVDA campaigns."¹⁸

This statement requires some further explanation. The problematic communications relationship referred to between some involved in the far left and some involved in nonviolent direct action campaigns points to the conflict between these two loosely defined groups. It is a conflict that is not unique to the anti-roads movement. At the height of the anti-nuclear

fullest development of the human personality." The word conflict in this description cannot be underestimated, as Gandhi was in conflict with the dominant power, in this case the British government. In fact, Gandhi's legacy is that of adherence to nonviolence while maintaining a revolutionary stance against injustice. Kaur, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

¹⁶ In many tree-top anti-road camp evictions, professional climbers were used as bailiffs and often employed violence to remove protesters. See Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63, 118-126; and Merrick, *Battle for the Trees: Three Months of Responsible Ancestry* (Leeds: Godhaven Ink, 1996). However, both Merrick and Evans write that by the time of the Newbury Bypass tree-top evictions, the climbers hired by the Department of Transport were expelled from their climbing club, the mountaineering club in Sheffield, under pressure from the British Mountaineering Council. What is more, many members of the Sheffield club then came to the protest sites to help the protesters. Merrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-9; Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

¹⁷ G. McKay, 'DiY culture: notes towards an intro', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 15.

¹⁸ Miss Pod, 'Where does it go from here?', *POD*, no. 6, (publication date not provided), p. 11. Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 15.

campaign in the late 1960s debate raged between members of such groups as the Direct Action Committee (DAC) and the Committee of 100 (Cof100) and trade unionists and members of the Labour Party. While the DAC and Cof100 totally endorsed nonviolent tactics of protest, and in fact forbade violence in protests against nuclear weapons, other opponents of nuclear weaponry believed that the focus being placed on nonviolence was detracting from the struggle itself. Moreover, many on the left believed that the campaign against nuclear weapons would be better fought through parliamentary channels, rather than through mass sit-ins.¹⁹

Today, the conflict is not so much between advocates of nonviolent direct action and proponents of parliamentary action, but between those who believe that emphasis on nonviolence only is too rigid.²⁰ This rigidity is particularly inappropriate when the state employs violence to evict anti-roads activists, as they did for example at Stanworth Valley, Claremont Road, Selar and, as recounted here by an activist from the Newbury Bypass actions:

Camps were falling. You think every day is your last. The horror stories are coming in. The log cabin in Pen Wood

¹⁹ See, for example, Peter Sedgwick's scathing attack on non-violent tactics 'Non-violence - dogma or tactic?', *Socialist Review* (December 1961), pp. 6-7.

²⁰ An example of the debates regarding the employment of violent or nonviolent tactics of protest during anti-roads protests is the following excerpt from an interview with an activist in the anarchist zine *Organise!*:

Organise! – What are people's views in the violence/non-violence debate?

E.A – Most of the people involved in the roads protests take the non-violent direct action approach, they are really the people who get called fluffies, a lot of them class themselves as anarchists, but pacifists. On the other hand, all the protesters who think that when the security get heavy handed or violent – as they do sometimes – that we should have a go back and fight, self defence really, they get called spikeys. There is quite a lot of conflict between the two different groups, mostly verbal disputes, but the fluffies heavily outnumber the 'let's have a go' brigade. I myself think that we are entitled to defend ourselves if the police or security attack or get heavy with us, 'by any means necessary', you know, the old anarchist saying, but there isn't enough of us to get heavy at the moment, so I would say that tactically the non-violent approach is best at present. It gets more of the general public on our side, they like sit-downs, but not riots.

EA, 'Roads out ahead: interview with an anti-roads protester and Essex anarchist', *Organise! For Class Struggle Anarchism*, issue 43 (Summer 1996), website version: <http://burn.ucsd.edu/~acf/org/issue43/roa.html>; accessed 24.07.00.

resisted two men with sledgehammers on the roof. It took eight men to get in. The protesters had bloody noses when they were brought out.

One bailiff at Rickety Bridge went apeshit with a karabiner (a metal climbers snap-clip about 10cm long) on a rope, smacking protesters in the face. Bringing Balin down from a tree, the bailiffs were punching him in the face. John Vidal asked 12 people (5 journalists, 2 legal observers and 5 protesters) if they saw it, they all said yes. He asked 12 policemen who'd been watching if they'd seen it, they all said no.²¹

Car dependency

A survey of the road building programme and the car culture that underpins this programme is essential to a full understanding of anti-roads activism. During the course of her more than decade long period in office, Prime Minister Thatcher openly promoted the 'great car economy'. British people were increasingly forced to be dependent upon the car, with public transport funding and service reduced by the Conservative Government.²² Their aversion to government funded public transport can be largely explained on ideological/economic grounds. The Tory Government quickly privatised the public transport system, viewing the market as an efficient instrument that would determine the level of public transport services that would be provided to the public. Private companies, driven by the incentive of profits, were seen to run the public transport system more efficiently than a publicly-owned company. The potential liability of the government covering losses of a publicly-owned public transport system was avoided by privatisation, and in keeping with the Tory tradition, this ensured that the tax burden on society was minimised. However, public transport prices increased as the public transport system was privatised. By allowing this, Thatcher dismissed benefits that accrued to society through a highly

²¹ Merrick, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

²² See Appendix V for a comparison of public transport expenditure and road expenditure from 1979/1980 to 1999/2000. It is clear that public transport expenditure was dramatically reduced throughout Thatcher's period in office and

patronised public transport system, that is, less congested roads, less road accidents, less wasted commuting time and less pollution.

In order to justify the massive road construction project, largely pre-empted by the decline in public transport availability and the increase in its cost, the Thatcher government publicised predictions that car travel would increase by 130 per cent between 1990 and 2015. Vast quantities of funds were then channelled into the road building programme, with contracts worth £23 billion given to members of the British Road Federation and the Road Hauliers Association. These same contractors were seen as major business supporters of the Tory Party.²³ This ameliorated road building programme began in earnest in 1990.

Fordism

Dependence on the car is not new. The phrase 'the great car economy' is not only applicable to the Thatcherite economy, in which road building played so important a role. In fact, a significant component of the critique of capital centres on the role played by the car. The introduction of the car in the late nineteenth century came at a crisis point for capitalism. The development of the railway as the dominant mode of land transport brought with it by the close of the nineteenth century the emergence of large industrial cities. Railways had facilitated production to take place on a larger scale, with raw materials and finished goods able to be transported to centralised production centres. Of course, these production centres, or large industrialised cities, were not only locales of capital in terms of industrial production but also became homes to ever increasing numbers of workers. In the age of industrial capitalism, workers were centralised for the first time. They had moved from fragmented places of labour/work to industrial cities like Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds, where they would eventually form communities. It was this community formation that led to the emergence of an urban industrialised proletariat. This resulted in almost a

this continued into Major's government. It is not yet clear if public transport expenditure will continue to decline under the Blair government.

²³ Brass and Poklewski Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

three-pronged attack on capitalism; firstly, this increasingly large proletariat began to question and oppose the existing *modus operandi*, capitalism; secondly, their new locale provided the perfect means for organised opposition; and, thirdly, the very existence of the proletariat was at the heart of the success of industrial capitalism and, therefore, it threatened the very existence of capitalism.²⁴

The arrival of the car in the late nineteenth century provided the ideal solution to stem this attack on industrial capitalism. However, it was really only after the devastation of two world wars that this solution came to full fruition with the increased dispersal of the working class in new suburbs and their reliance on continued employment within the Fordist system. The Fordist mode of production had been developed in the inter-war years and later refined by the American Ford Motor Company (after which Fordism was named) and Volkswagen in Germany. Fordism enabled the car and a myriad of consumer goods to be produced on a massive scale. In addition to establishing the production line, Fordist modes of production contributed to reduced motor car prices and far wider availability. The working class, receiving higher wages as a result of the post-war employment boom and labour shortage and the new, cheaper modes of production, was able to afford these new mass-produced cars.²⁵

The new wealth both created improved material wealth but also an increased reliance on the capitalist mode of production to sustain this new lifestyle.²⁶ The whole system of mass production came under increasing attack from the left. Aldous Huxley, for example, painted a world which was emotionless and autonomised, where the worker was like a machine and Ford was the demonic god. The worker became part of the machine.²⁷

²⁴ For a detailed of the critique of the car as a tool of capitalism, see Aufheben collective, 'Auto-struggles: the developing war against the road monster', *Aufheben*, no. 3, (Summer 1994), pp. 3-23.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8.

²⁶ J. Roberts and W. McNeill, *The People's Century*, (London: BBC Television, 1997).

²⁷ See A. Huxley, *Brave New World* (Mitcham, VIC: Penguin, 1964). Simon Clarke writes of this de-humanising process:

Fordism sought to fuse the labour force into an organic whole, a genuinely collective labourer, in which the productive contribution of each individual and group was dependent on the contribution of every

One result of the new wealth was that the proletariat was able to move into newly created suburbs, designed around the new ease of transport the car provided. The automobile enabled the proletariat to disperse; they were no longer part of a geographically close community. Certainly, the new suburbs were aesthetically more pleasing and physically more comfortable. Yet, they were also alienating, with neighbourhood communities slow to establish, if at all. The spread of the suburbs served car culture well because motor-dependence seems both less destructive and more necessary, and therefore the equation that increased roads reduced congestion range true.²⁸ The scattering of the proletariat to the suburbs also meant the working class' organisational power became dispersed. It of course became more difficult for the working class to band together in protest against capitalism.²⁹ These themes are explored further in the following chapter on Reclaim the Streets' activism.

other. ...Fordism recomposes the tasks by welding the individual labours into a human machine.

S. Clarke, 'What in the f...s name is Fordism', in N. Gilbert, R. Burrows and A. Pollerts (eds), *Fordism and Flexibility: Divisions and Change* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), p. 19.

²⁸ P. Field, 'The anti-roads movement: the struggle of memory against forgetting', in T. Jordan and A. Lent (eds), *Storming the Millennium: The New Politics of Change* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999), p. 69.

French intellectual Andre Gorz also wrote of the intrinsic relationship between the car and suburbia:

The truth is, no one really has any choice. You aren't free to have a car or not because the suburban world is designed to be a function of the car – and, more and more, so is the city world. That is why to do away with the car in favour of the bicycle, the streetcar, the bus and the driverless taxi is not even applicable any longer in the big commuter cities like Los Angeles, Detroit, Houston or even Brussels, which are built by and for the automobile. These splintered cities are strung out along empty streets lined with identical developments; and their urban landscape (a desert) says, 'These streets are made for driving as quickly as possible from work to home and vice versa. You go through here, you don't live here...'

Andre Gorz, *Le Sauvage*, September-October 1973, cited in N. Baird, *The Estate We're In: Who's Driving Car Culture?* (London: Indigo, 1998), p. 49.

²⁹ Anti-roads activists, environmentalists more generally and the labour movement need to be aware of the link between road schemes and labour issues:

There is an urgent need to link up the fight against road schemes to the fight of rail workers and bus workers. The car economy promoted by capitalism has to be directly related to the attacks on public transport, and the vision of a new society which would be geared to environmental harmony and the expansion of a free public transport system.

Fordism refers to far more than a mode of production; Fordism is a "regime of accumulation based upon techniques of mass production buttressed by a mode of regulation consisting of mass consumption and the Keynesian welfare state."³⁰ Simon Clarke contends that Fordism, in the 1920s, was seen by many in Europe particularly as central to Americanism, a key component itself of Modernism. For its supporters, including Gramsci, Fordism's technical rationality would bring an end to all archaic residues of pre-capitalist society in Europe. The term was virtually superseded in the 1950s and 1960s by the virtually synonymous terms State Monopoly Capitalism and Keynesianism. However, in the 1970s Italian autonomists began to use the term Fordism to refer to the bureaucratic representation of the Fordist mass worker in the Keynesian Welfare State as the outcome of an historical process of class struggle, rather than a mere manifestation of the technology of production.³¹

Fordism can be seen as a reflexive rationality: Clarke argues that Fordism sought to break down what was an extremely rigid technology and an equally rigid labour process organisation into its component parts and then reassemble these according to the principles the doctrine espouses.³² What is of importance to this dissertation is that Fordist modes of production, accumulation and organisation resulted in a self-stimulating demand for cars and a dispersal and fragmentation of working classes. Fordism is a Utopian project, an ideal which would ultimately offer stabilised capitalism and consequently sustained capital accumulation, social harmony and political tranquillity.³³ Throughout this chapter this Utopian project, represented here by the realised dominance of the car, is countered by other Utopias, ones based on society that is car-free or at least less dependent on cars, and in which community is not fragmented by roads.

Anonymous author(s), 'Twyford Down and the state', *Organise! For Class Struggle Anarchism*, no. 30 (Summer 1993), website version: <http://burn.ucsd.edu/~acf/org/twyford.html>; accessed 24.07.00.

³⁰ R. Burrows, N. Gilbert and A. Pollert, 'Introduction: Fordism, post-Fordism and economic flexibility', in N. Gilbert, R. Burrows and A. Pollerts (eds), *Fordism and Flexibility: Divisions and Change* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1992), p. 3.

³¹ Clarke, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Car problems

Cars can be critiqued not only for their part in the dispersal of workers, but for perhaps more immediately obvious reasons.³⁴ Cars produce twenty per cent of greenhouse depleting gas such as carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide.³⁵ Other poisonous gases cars emit include benzene and lead. With the number of cars on British roads expected to climb from approximately twenty-seven million at present to forty million by 2025, the level of emissions of these poisonous gases is also expected to climb dramatically.³⁶ They are also responsible for 51 per cent of the emissions of nitrogen oxides in the UK. Nitrogen oxides both irritate the lungs and create acid rain. Furthermore, car fumes are linked to such respiratory diseases as asthma. One in seven children in London suffers from asthma, and car pollution has been shown to be a major contributor. It is also estimated that 15 million people in Britain are suffering illnesses related to traffic pollution.³⁷

A further health risk directly linked to cars is the risk of traffic or road accidents: "And if they can't gas you or destroy your climate they'll run you over...."³⁸ Each year, approximately 4,500 people are killed on British roads. *Aufheben* writes that these 4,500 deaths are depoliticised. They are not referred to as road deaths, but merely 'traffic accidents': "they [road deaths] are not in fact incidental and inevitable – they are a consequence of a particular mode of accumulation and social existence, and therefore contestable."³⁹ Yet the very questioning of the safety of the car simply seems to spur on greater car use, with people wary of using bicycles, for example, due to the threat cars present to bike riders.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

³⁴ See Reed Noss' extensive record of the ecological impact of roads: R. Noss, 'The ecological effects of roads', taken from the Dead Trees EF! (Brighton) website: <http://www.eco-action.org/dt/roads.html>; accessed 06.07.00.

³⁵ Baird, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Brass and Poklewski Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

³⁸ *Aufheben* collective, 'Auto-struggles...', *op. cit.*, p. 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

The car directly contributes to the destruction of the landscape, both urban and rural. This destruction was foreseen in 1947 by the road safety critic J. S. Dean:

...nothing is to be seen except colossal roads, so long and wide that even the super-cars using them are scarcely visible and the minute pedestrians merely enter or emerge from subways, and then only in two's and three's or singly; in which, in fact nothing exists except 'fast traffic' and the entire life of the community is held up to allow it to pass; but in which whatever else happens, everyone goes on buying more and more cars.⁴⁰

For every mile of motorway, 25 acres of land is used and 250,000 tonnes of sand and gravel is used.⁴¹ This material is mined predominantly from areas such as the Mendips, Snowdonia and the Scottish Highlands, areas of remarkable physical beauty now blighted by massive quarries.⁴² The land allocated to roads, necessitated by cars, is space that could otherwise be used for housing, recreational space, or places of natural interest or beauty. Instead, 226 square miles in Britain, the size of Southampton, is allocated to parking space.⁴³ And in London, for example, 25 per cent of land is devoted to the car.⁴⁴

Cars necessitate roads and roads carve through communities, physically and socially. This is true of rural and urban communities - it is essential not to revert to romantic notions of community equating only to the quaint village. This chapter seeks to reassert the diversity of communities, their spaces and places of being and their components. So, the following commentary from *The Times* writer Girling, bemoaning the loss of rural community (along with other idealised visions of yesterday's country life) applies not only to rural communities but to urban ones also:

⁴⁰ Cited in Field, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

⁴¹ Brass and Poklewski Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁴² Aufheben collective, 'Auto-struggles...', *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁴³ Brass and Poklewski Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

⁴⁴ Aufheben collective, 'Auto-struggles...', *op. cit.*, p. 4.

But even in this expression of concern over the destruction of rural England we are missing perhaps one of the first elements of rural life to come under attack: community. Roads divide, de-harmonise and alienate. People no longer walk but drive, missing the opportunity to talk with their neighbours. Rather than shop at their local grocery store they will travel on the new perhaps more direct road system to a mega-Sainsburys or Tescoes.⁴⁵

Halting cars and roads

There are clearly innumerable reasons which spurred the activism of anti-roads protesters in Britain. It is also evidently erroneous to describe all of these motivating factors as ecological. Anti-roads activism is triggered by a symbiosis of community-based, class-based, health and safety-based and ecological concerns or consciousness. A sense of necessity and imperativeness prompted many activists who were against the massive road building programme to set up anti-roads camps and long-term tree dwellings rather than take conventional political action.⁴⁶ The established means or structure to object to road schemes was for people to select an alternative route option at a public consultation organised by the Department of Transport (or the Scottish or Welsh equivalents). The next stage was the Public Inquiry, at which protesters were urged to state their opposition to the plans politely and quickly.⁴⁷ But the usual public appeals process against new roads seemed blocked and ineffective.⁴⁸ Emma Must, a former Twyford Down campaigner, highlights its extent: "there have been 146 public inquiries [in the 1990s] into trunk roads and on only five

⁴⁵ Girling, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁴⁶ It is important to note that opposition to the car, car culture or road construction is not new. One example from the recent past that pre-dates both the anti-roads protests in Britain in the 1990s and the advent of Reclaim the Streets is that of anti-car street parties organised by Victor Anderson during the early 1970s. D. Wall, *Earth First! and the Anti-Roads Movement: Radical Environmentalism and Comparative Social Movements* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 15.

⁴⁷ Brass and Poklewski Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁴⁸ See, for example, the article by Martin Cohen, 'The never-ending story', *New Statesman and Society* (10 February 1995), page numbers unknown.

occasions has the inspector found against the government. So it is no wonder that people end up in trees."⁴⁹

We can recall that in the struggle against the poll tax, activists also felt that a dramatic act of defiance was needed, rather than reliance on conventional representational politics recourses. Letters of appeal, petitions, audiences with local MPs or ministers, all simply were ineffective. Patrick Fields sums up activists' disdain for the public inquiry system:

The public inquiry system asks what kind of road shall we build? It cannot question the assumptions underlying road-building itself, and which maintain the demand for road-capacity. Contempt for the public inquiry system – even amongst volunteers who dedicated years of their lives to fighting within it – allows activists to consider a whole spectrum of tactics: lobbying politicians, public agitation, bureaucratic opposition in the law courts, symbolic stunts, disobedient mass-action and clandestine sabotage. ...They are all valid and complementary.⁵⁰

The Twyford Down campaign

The first large-scale anti-roads protest in Britain took place at Twyford Down between 1985 and 1992.⁵¹ It is a site of immense historic, scientific and natural interest, with evidence of an Iron Age village settlement across the Down. Until the site was destroyed in the motorway construction process, it was possible to see the patterns of the small fields that were ploughed by villagers over two and a half thousand years ago. They formed a patchwork-like pattern of zigzags, interspersed with tracks from the site of the village leading to fresh water in the valley or eastward to more fields. The tracks had ditches on each side to protect livestock from falling into the valley below. These tracks and ditches also remained in evidence until the

⁴⁹ First quoted in the *Guardian*, (6 May 1995), p. 27. Cited in G. McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance Since the Sixties* (London: Verso, 1996), p. 128.

⁵⁰ Field, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

construction of the road through the Down, as did the medieval track system which had been worn over the hundreds of years to form ditches. Some were more than 20 feet deep, and this track system is known as the Dongas.⁵² The name would later be taken by a group of anti-roads protesters at Twyford Down, who collectively labelled themselves the Dongas Tribe.

In June 1983 the Minister for Roads, Kenneth Clarke, announced that the Ministry for Roads and the government were going to initiate plans to complete the missing link in the London to Southampton M3 motorway.⁵³ Engineering consultants had recommended that the most efficient means of completing the roadway was to cut through Twyford Down. This was to be an enormous engineering feat and certainly not, according to critics, the most efficient of solutions. Despite an extensive public inquiry process, the Government ignored the alternatives and public objections to the cutting process. Residents, including Tory councillor Barbara Bryant, who describes herself in an extensive account of the Twyford Down campaign as "the activist", began employing direct action techniques in an attempt to raise public awareness of the necessity of saving Twyford Down and pressuring the Public Inquiry to choose an alternative motorway route. This occurred as campaigners against the M3 extension became increasingly jaded by the appeals process:

Twyford Down is the justification, whenever it is needed, for non-violent direct action. The system allowed us to spend decades in argument, and huge sums of money, making an intellectually unshakeable case, only for the system to brush it all aside. When you hear the brazen words 'democratic process' and 'rule of law', reply quietly 'Twyford Down'.⁵⁴

⁵¹ See *ibid.*, for details of earlier anti-roads protests, particularly in London during the 1970s.

⁵² B. Bryant, *Twyford Down: Roads, Campaigning, and Environmental Law* (London: E and FN Spon, 1996), pp. 6-7.

⁵³ See *Ibid.*, p. 16 for an account of earlier attempts to complete the motorway through Winchester and the opposition these plans encountered.

⁵⁴ Chris Gillham of the Twyford Down Association. Cited in Brass and Poklewski Koziell, *op. cit.*, p.37.

One act of nonviolent direct action undertaken by anti-Twyford Down activists was to lay black polythene sheeting across the sides of the proposed cutting in 1985. This act, designed to heighten awareness of the impact the proposed route would have on the landscape, was shown on television, but did little to alter the course of the Public Inquiry.⁵⁵

Representing and harmonising diversity at the Down

In her account of the campaign at Twyford Down, Bryant levels extensive criticism against prominent environmental agencies, including the Landscape Advisory Committee and Countryside Commission:

It is a sad reflection that the more hopeless the fate of Twyford Down became so the greater the involvement of certain environmental pressure groups. It is too easy to explain this away by saying that no one knew about the threat to Twyford Down until the profile reached its pinnacle in 1991. To my certain knowledge, appeals for help went unacknowledged over the years and only when it was too late to realistically hope for a change in the decision did the eco-troops start massing.⁵⁶

This scathing view discounts the part that the so-called "eco-troops" played in the campaign. It must be considered by the residents of the Winchester area that if the Twyford Down campaign had not broadened to include non-residents the road would not have attracted the widespread media coverage it did and may also have been constructed far earlier than in 1992. It can also be directly contrasted with the account of the Twyford campaign as presented by the Aufheben collective: "...a growing number of Donga dwellers, travelling eco-warriors and *their* local supporters occupying land, bridges and machines and sabotaging property in their efforts to save the land."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Bryant, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. iii.

⁵⁷ Emphasis in original. Aufheben collective, 'Auto-struggles...', *op. cit.*, p. 13.

Despite this conflicting view of the role of so-called eco-activists, it is undeniable that they played a vital role in the Twyford Down campaign. When the road construction work began in February 1992, "the bulldozers were met with massive resistance from all sorts of people. Young Earth First! activists were joined by 70-year-old lifelong Tory voters."⁵⁸ It was this varied mix of activists that caught the attention of the media. News clips and feature photos in the print media featured prominently shots of young activists with eyebrow rings and dreadlocks alongside the 'pearl's and twinset brigade', of which Bryant described herself a member.⁵⁹

The media played an increasingly vital part in the Twyford Down campaign, as it did in subsequent anti-roads campaigns. Activists were aware that media coverage of direct action was necessary if roads were to be considered controversial by a wider public.⁶⁰ Media coverage reached all levels of conservative and liberal press and television, including editorials, full colour feature articles, current affairs segments, news coverage, etc. ⁶¹ Yet, despite the expression of sympathy for the anti-roads protesters' cause in the multi-page spread in the *Sunday Times Magazine* on the death of the countryside, the article, and publication more generally, is littered with glossy adds for new cars.⁶² A consequence of this coverage was the establishment of the anti-roads protestor as a (sub-)cultural icon. Post-Twyford Down, the anti-roads activist character began to appear in television and radio serials, in novels and on children's television.⁶³

This popularisation or coverage not only increased public awareness of the roads issue:

This media and cultural focus on protestor lifestyles and spectacular tactics helps to alienate many people from our

⁵⁸ Cited in McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, op. cit., p. 136.

⁵⁹ See footnote no. 22 in *ibid.*, p. 200.

⁶⁰ Anonymous author(s), 'Direct action: six years down the road', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 7 (publication date not provided), p. 3.

⁶¹ See, for example, the editorial in *The Times* regarding the Twyford Downs appeals procedure. Editor, 'Editorial', *The Times* (3 November 1990), page number/s unknown.

⁶² Girling, op. cit., pp. 16-22.

⁶³ Anonymous author(s), 'Direct action: six years down the road', op. cit., p. 3. An example is J. Wright and B. Elsley, *Nature Boy* (London: BBC Television, 2000).

struggles, to stereotype activists, and thus to fit the movement in to a pigeonhole (or perhaps a tunnel?). Everyone's heard of Swampy, but few know what he was digging under, or why, or could relate this to their own lives. Our impact on the public consciousness has been large, but few seem prepared to get out of their car, still less to demand an ecological revolution!⁶⁴

The Aufheben collective echo these concerns:

Of course we needed to let people (all people?) know that a force of active opposition existed to the road. But this should not be conflated with relying on the needs of the mass media to disseminate our message. The problem with relying on the mass media is that of colluding with the very prejudices you're trying to subvert. The more that people like us get our more 'fluffy', middle-class face accepted by the media and the Daily Mail readership, the more we may be agreeing to marginalise our 'darker' side – our clothes and jewellery, opinions and arguments, drugs, and language – to send it deeper underground. ...If the struggle is indeed about a whole way of life, the aim should be to change or confront 'public opinion', not appease it.⁶⁵

In an effort to convey the image that an anti-roads campaign was a local campaign so that more local residents would become involved, some activists played up to the media. For example, at the Lewes campaign only middle-aged women who "put across more of an image of second world war 'land girls' than crusties" were used in interviews in a concerted attempt to portray the campaign as one not dominated by 'eco-warriors.'⁶⁶ It is this duplicity, though undertaken for reasons to gather more physical support for the campaign, that Aufheben attacked.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Aufheben collective, 'The politics of anti-road struggle and the struggles of anti-road politics: the case of the No M11 Link Road campaign', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 116.

⁶⁶ Anonymous author(s), 'Victory at Offham! What... you mean we won?', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 6 (publication date not provided), p. 63.

In the first month of the road construction, February 1992, the Twyford Down site was defended by activists belonging largely to two groups, Friends of the Earth and the Twyford Down Association. Both employed far more conservative protest tactics than would later be used on the site. In late February, on the first day that work could legally begin on the Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Friends of the Earth set up a camp and a 'chain of protection' along the path of the motorway.⁶⁷ The chain was inspired by the words of the outgoing Chair of the Nature Conservancy Council:

To achieve success, nature conservation has to win the hearts and the interest of people throughout the land... Local enthusiasm will need to be harnessed to an effort of national will. It has to be carried out throughout the UK... wherever there is a community to enjoy our country's magnificent heritage. It is a protective chain which we must forge around our land; if any link in it falls, the chain itself will snap.⁶⁸

Though the protective chain did not protect the Down from the bulldozers, it served as a stimulus for more radical direct action in later months.

The Dongas Tribe

A month after construction on the road began in February 1992 the Dongas Tribe arrived on the Down, and this coincided with a distinct diversification of the participants involved in the protest action. The protest at Twyford Down now included activists from the newly formed Earth First!; some activists acting completely independently, or as Lamb terms them "squads of freelancers"; hunt saboteurs; Travellers; and groups of "Crusties, raggedy and dreadlocked, part of a teenage underclass that appeared in small-town Britain in the wake of the Thatcher era."⁶⁹ However, the Dongas Tribe became particularly synonymous with Twyford Down, with anyone who looked like a so-called crustie quickly labeled by the popular media as

⁶⁷ R. Lamb, *Promising the Earth* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 4.

⁶⁸ Cited in *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

belonging to the tribe. Clearly, however, not all activists at Twyford Down were tribe members.⁷⁰

The Dongas were predominantly new to direct action, as explained by Dongas Becca Lush: "We didn't know what the fuck we were doing, only that we *were* doing *something*."⁷¹ They were inspired in part by the new Earth First!, with radical direct action seen as the remedy to the perceived inadequacies of more mainstream environmental pressure groups:

Well obviously, you know, the Earth was still being fucked about and fucked up and nothing was happening, they weren't doing anything new, they weren't solving the problem, obviously, because it was still going on, like, so something had to be done stronger than that.⁷²

The Dongas Tribe adopted the name tribe in part to reflect their identification with Australian Aborigines, the rainforest Amerindians of the

⁷⁰ Just as not all activists were Dongas, anti-roads activists who described themselves as Dongas do not fit neatly into only one mould; the term Dongas Tribe belies the diversity of the activists collectivised under the label. Wall cites the views of an activist known as Jazz who refutes the homogenisation of the label:

A camper called 'Jazz' claims that the Dongas identity has been reified into a badge of identity that fails to show the loose affiliations of the original campers. Initially people at Twyford were quite a muddled bunch. There were pagans and there were anarchists, and there were people coming from all walks of life and from the established green movement, from FoE [Friends of the Earth] and the Green Party. So I initially came across something called EF! at Twyford, but it was so muddled in that I didn't really pay an awful lot of attention to it. The identity was the Dongas' ...ancient medieval trackway.... We had a meeting and passed a little totem pole around. We declared it an autonomous territory and called ourselves - loosely, all this collection of different people - 'the Dongas Tribe', which has progressed into something quite silly, but at the time was meaningful.... Unfortunately, I do feel that that identity has become something quite different and it has become a tool to disempower people, simply because there are groups of people saying 'I am a Donga' and placing themselves on some sort of pedestal.... At the beginning anyone who came to Twyford Down and did anything, you know, was a Donga.... I think, now, it has been recuperated into a fashion statement/identity/ideology.

Jazz, cited in Wall, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.

⁷¹ McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁷² I. Donald, 'Off paper and on to the land; the contemporary grassroots environmental movement: where does it come from? Where is it going?', unpublished dissertation for BSc. (Hons) Environmental Quality and Resource

Amazon Basin and the native American people of North America.⁷³ There was clearly a sense of rejection of British parochialism and an embracing of transnational identities. Donga Alex claims:

We are a tribe in far more than name. We have a collective purpose and a cultural identity as the nomadic indigenous peoples of Britain – we have formulated our own customs, mythology, style of dress, beliefs and are evolving our own language.⁷⁴

There is clearly a lack of awareness here of the privilege which these so-called indigenous peoples of Britain possess when compared to the Australian Aborigines, Amerindians and First Nation people of North America to which the Dongas compared themselves. Dongas Tribe members have not, for example, suffered genocide or displacement and still benefit from their whiteness.⁷⁵

Michel Maffesoli's account of neo-tribalism can be used to argue that the Dongas Tribe were in fact a tribal grouping in more than name only. Maffesoli emphasises the shared emotions of tribes and that people coalesce around a shared emotional community. This emotional community I would argue extends beyond Max Weber's understanding of emotional community as a category for understanding society;⁷⁶ instead, it is either a lived or symbolic form, both being of equal value, in which the 'being-together' is a uniting force.⁷⁷ The Dongas are a tribe brought together by disenchantment with the dominant social order, in this case, a conservative government's road building programme, but whose togetherness is the primary common ingredient. Shared beliefs or goals may have been instrumental to the

Management, University of the West of England, 1995, p. 57. Cited in McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁷³ Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁷⁴ A. Plows, 'The Donga Tribe: practical paganism comes full circle', *Creative Mind*, no. 27, Summer 1995, p. 26. Cited in McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

⁷⁵ bell hooks strongly criticises such appropriation of exploitation, writing of the attempt by privileged white women to consider themselves in similar circumstances to exploited black women, thus ignoring the reality of black women's exploitation. b. hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston, MA: South End, 1981), pp. 8-9.

⁷⁶ M. Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, trans. by D. Smith (London: Sage, 1996), p. 12

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

coming together of the tribe's members, but their being together in a shared emotional space, physically and symbolically, becomes the tribe's bond. The Dongas Tribe are simply part of a growing trend, whereby "the saturation of abstract phenomena, of overarching values, of great economic or ideological structures..." has led to "a reorientation towards goals near to hand, genuinely shared feelings; in short, all those things which constitute a world: customs and rituals which are 'taken for granted.'"⁷⁸

As part of the collective purpose and identity referred to by Donga Alex, many of the Dongas tribe believed that they demonstrated a more holistic and committed attitude to anti-roads protesting. They particularly reacted to the part-time, or 'lunch out', attitude of some protesters. They believed that too many activists were there for the digger diving but not for the day-to-day camp work, such as washing up.⁷⁹ This was a problem at all anti-roads sites, as we will see on examination of both Newbury and Claremont Road.

For many of the Dongas Tribe, anti-roads activism became a means of adopting an entirely new lifestyle. After Twyford Down, where "living fulltime outdoors in a communal situation, cooking on fires, building simple but snug shelters was new",⁸⁰ some of the Dongas began a travelling lifestyle. Others returned to it, having been travellers prior to their participation at anti-roads sites. Some, such as Wanda and Pete who are interviewed in Evans' *Copse*, travelled around Britain in a gypsy-style horse drawn yurt. They see it as a lifestyle that well communicates the anti-roads message:

You get people in their eighties who remember when there were more horses and wagons on the roads than cars. It wasn't that long ago, yet these people didn't think they'd see it again in their days. And that's given them optimism: they come out and say, "How amazing!". There are a lot of old

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁷⁹ See McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 137. Digger diving is the act of occupying bulldozers and other road-building equipment. See, for example, Kate Evans' for some digger diving techniques: Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

people, especially those living in the country, who are very anti-roads, very anti-the traffic problems and who are shocked by the amount of cars. It's a nice way to communicate with people, and you see the country: it's the most beautiful way to travel. And it makes you even more anti-car. There are too many bloody cars on the roads.⁸¹

Shifting sites of activism

When topsoil was removed from the downland of Twyford in the 1992 summer a white chalk scar was left. This was visible from a considerable distance and seemed to mobilise activists and promote greater use of direct action. It was also the first time that people could see the destruction that the motorway was inflicting on the landscape, or on 'Mother Earth'.⁸² Lock-ons became the norm, with activists attaching themselves to machinery with hardened steel bicycle locks known as D-locks or cementing themselves into the ground.⁸³

Despite these direct action techniques, the Dongas camp was violently evicted in early December 1992. The vehemency of the eviction brought great media attention to the small scale campaign. It also encouraged those who were sympathetic to the more radical protesters to actively support the campaign. Strangely, the eviction proved the Dongas' commitment to local groups, demonstrating that these predominantly young activists were prepared to experience danger and violence yet maintain a commitment to nonviolence themselves.⁸⁴ By the end of 1993, protests at Twyford had largely shifted to other sites. There was, however, one last demonstration of mass protest with a mass trespass in the summer of 1994, before the road opened in late 1994.

⁸⁰ A. Plows, 'The Donga Tribe: practical paganism comes full circle', *Creative Mind*, no. 27, (Summer 1995), p. 26. Cited in McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

⁸¹ Pete cited in Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁸² Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 4. See Evans, *op. cit.*, for practical details of how lock-ons could be performed.

⁸⁴ Doherty, *op. cit.*, p. 372.

The site of the extension of the M11 motorway through Wanstead and Leytonstone in East London became a new focal point for protest. This protest site differed considerably from that at Twyford Down. The proposed road route did not pass through sites of special scientific interest or outstanding natural beauty. Instead, the extension of the M11 would cut through communities, and involved the destruction of parklands and hundreds of homes.⁸⁵ The campaign thus captured far less attention from environmentalists from conservation agencies like the Countryside Commission, but did attract the involvement of many locals who were concerned with the complete disregard the government showed to the communities living in Wanstead and Leytonstone. It also involved many of the young direct action activists who had lived at Twyford Down. One activist in the No M11 campaign remarked on this:

That's something to say about the M11 campaign. The distinction between 'locals' and 'activists' didn't happen. There was none of that 'them and us' feeling at all. A lot of the stalwarts of the campaign, the long term campaigners, lived in the local area. People who are still doing direct action to this day started because they lived on the route of the M11.⁸⁶

Construction of the M11 extension link began at Wanstead in September 1993. The public appeals procedure had failed the community with the last public inquiry, which had become simply a means of settling the details of the Compulsory Purchase Orders and land transfers. The subterfuge of this democratic appeals procedure seemed to buoy opposition. The regular meetings, letter writing, pamphlet drops and fund raising continued with perhaps renewed vigour. Activists persevered with these activities beyond the time that bulldozers first began work on the site in September 1993. At the same time, however, their activism became more seditious in nature, and increasingly large numbers adopted radical direct action. Two key events acted to incite heightened direct action: the destruction of the first

⁸⁵ The campaign against the construction of the M77 at Pollock near Glasgow is another example of an urban anti-roads protest. Activists re-named the area under threat of the road construction the Pollock Free State. See, for example, Faol-Chu, 'Pollock Free State lives wild and free', *Scottish Anarchist*, no. 2 (publication date not provided), p. 3.

house on the proposed extension route and the threat of felling a 240 year old chestnut tree at George Green in Wanstead. The tree held a special significance for the people of Wanstead and the threat to it acted as a catalyst for involvement:

When they fenced off the common, George Green, there was just this spontaneous anger that happened. Children were walking to school and there were old people sitting at the bus stop next to it. With a little bit of help from us (although we weren't really the catalyst) loads and loads of kids started pushing at the fence. There were probably about a hundred or so, maybe more, pushing. I was pushing with them. Right next to me there was this 80 year old granny. She was pushing and her force didn't have much effect, but combined with the force of the whole community it pushed these massive 10 foot fences down.⁸⁷

Communal spaces

The tearing down of the contractor's fences around the Sweet Chestnut in November 1993 marked the beginning of over a month of tree sitting.⁸⁸ Activists, including local people and children, reclaimed the public land and "a community was created as the tree became a meeting place for locals and campaigners."⁸⁹ After a letter was delivered by post to the Sweet Chestnut, campaign solicitors argued that the tree house (by this time a tree house and bender had been constructed at the tree site) should be recognised as a formal dwelling. The court complied, and authorities were further delayed in their attempts to begin their destruction/construction as they had to apply for the occupants of the tree house to be evicted.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Justin, cited in Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁸⁷ Sean, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁸⁸ Anonymous author(s), 'On the road: a condensed history of the incredible expanding NVDA experience', *Roadbreaker* (August/September 1994), p. 3.

⁸⁹ C. Zine (ed.), *The End of the Beginning. Claremont Road: E11 not M11* (London: No M11, 1995), p. 8.

The Department of Transport sent 400 police to fell the chestnut tree before dawn on December 7, 1993. There were approximately 200 people there, again many of whom were locals, and they had formed a human chain around the tree before the police arrived. Confronted with this, and no doubt instructed to 'get results' and fell the tree, the police treated the protesters with extreme violence.⁹¹ After the eviction and felling of the chestnut tree the attitudes of many activists towards police was changed dramatically.⁹² However, the campaign continued despite the symbolic loss of the tree:

The tree got evicted. The police, the newspapers, everybody prophesised, 'That's the end of the campaign' despite the fact that it was only one tree on a route with 300 to 400 houses. So they were expecting us to all fuck off but of course the campaign just got bigger.⁹³

The next two stages of the No M11 campaign occurred in quick succession. The next area to be destroyed was a row of five large Edwardian houses, still in Wanstead, next to the green. The two houses still occupied by long term residents soon became an area known as Wanstonia, with activists joining the residents in creating a semi-communal protest environment.⁹⁴ When the eviction date arrived, it took hundreds of police an entire day to evict the protesters out of the partially barricaded gardens, houses and off their roofs. Most activists moved further down the proposed construction route to Leytonstone after the Wanstonia houses were evicted. They spread themselves amongst a number of squats and a bender site, among the 300 houses to be demolished. Concurrently, a direct action rota was launched,

⁹⁰ See McKay, *Senseless Acts...*, *op. cit.*, p. 149; and Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30. Evans writes further that state recognition of tree houses as dwellings is the basis upon which all subsequent tree campaigns have been fought.

⁹¹ See Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-1 for details of the eviction and activists' reactions to the violence of the police.

⁹² Zine, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁹³ Sean, cited in Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

⁹⁴ "From the steps of the Royal Courts of Justice, WANSTONIA (2-12 Cambridge Park, Wanstead, E11) declares itself an Independent Free Area." Anonymous author(s), 'On the road...', *op. cit.*, p.3.

whereby activists would occupy machinery each day. This was designed to delay work on the road sites.⁹⁵

It was soon decided that it would be strategically better to concentrate on one area of housing to be demolished, as it was essentially impossible for activists to defend every house along the route.⁹⁶ At this point, Claremont Road became the central point of the No M11 campaign. Claremont Road was a small street, filled with terrace houses, and in the heart of a working class area. This is in contrast to the earlier stage of the campaign in Wanstead, a more leafy, middle class East London suburb.⁹⁷ In both Claremont Road and Wanstead, however, neighbourhoods were to be carved in two. Where once houses stood and people gathered, a by-pass was to stand.⁹⁸

The community of Claremont Road

By the time of the Claremont Road occupation the number of activists participating in the No M11 campaign had grown considerably. Both the physical presence of the increasingly large number of people involved and the type of road that Claremont was allowed for a new type of protest space to emerge. The road was not a through road and thus the residents and other activists were able to block off the entire street to traffic. It was this act that led to the eventual creation of a community, a different space. This should not imply, however, that the emergence of a community space was incidental; the street space was actively claimed by activists: "It started off

⁹⁵ Zine, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

⁹⁶ See Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-34 for a highly detailed account of the occupation and eviction of Wanstonia, Euphoria and Leytonstonia.

⁹⁷ Zine, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁹⁸ I have paraphrased here John Garton from *The Roadbreaker*:

...One looks at the place where houses stood, in which good people lived with their children and animals, breathing fresh air; one remembers the ambling cattle, the birdsong and the splendour of the sweet chestnut tree. All has gone – to be replaced by a gang of yellow-jacketed, yellow livered thugs in multicoloured helmets... Bob Brazier referred recently to the M11 link through Wanstead as a 'by-pass'. Since when did a by-pass slice a residential neighbourhood in two?

J. Garton, 'The people speak', *The Roadbreaker* (August/September 1994), p. 11.

as just a few individual houses and then somebody decided at some point that we were going to try and take the whole street.”⁹⁹

Soon after the street was blocked, people started to paint the fronts of the houses, linking them all with a painted daisy chain. Claremont Road became known as the State of the Art. Painting and sculpture filled the street and an entire house became a gallery space and was known as the Art House:

...the street itself was art, every single house was painted, every single fucking foot of the road was painted on. The trees were covered with adornments.

The practical and the art met in the middle. Cars filled with concrete with scaff [scaffolding] bars going out at all angles, painted all mad colours, with little pennants flying from the end of each scaff bar.¹⁰⁰

The *détournement* of living space into art gallery played a central role in the Claremont Road occupation and had a strong influence on Reclaim the Streets activism, as explored in the next chapter.¹⁰¹

The streets were also turned into living rooms, with the furniture from the front rooms of the houses taken out and placed on the pavement and street. Justin and Cathy, both activists living at Claremont Road, explain the relevance and importance of the furniture displacement:

Justin: The furniture, all the front rooms of all the houses were taken out, whole and put on the street. Whatever was in the room, the carpet, the furniture, the tat, was taken out and erected exactly the same way in the street. The personal, private, home, street; all these concepts were getting mashed up.

Cathy: Also, the whole thing about putting the furniture out onto the street in Claremont Road was, “You are putting us out of our houses.”¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁰ Justin, cited in *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Claremont Road attracted people of diverse political and class backgrounds. It also attracted people of all levels of commitment to the campaign. This was especially true after the July 24, 1994, anti-Criminal Justice Bill demonstration.¹⁰³ Many of the participants in the demonstration went back to Claremont Road for the regular Sunday party and stayed.¹⁰⁴ The authors of the *Claremont Road* zine describe the effect of this new influx:

Although some people in the No M11 campaign have argued that the new people didn't seem to be here because of the fight against the road, it was already apparent to many of us that our struggle was about far more than the road anyway. The road itself obviously raised issues that didn't fit neatly into the 'environmental issues' category: housing, the issue of protest itself etc. But in taking over Claremont Road it became

¹⁰¹ The term *détournement* is defined in the following chapter, *Streets as sites of resistance: Reclaim the Streets*.

¹⁰² Justin and Cathy, cited in Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

¹⁰³ The Criminal Justice Act did impact on anti-roads protesters – it both mobilised many activists into anti-roads activism as a means of opposing the law and the government imposing it and was used as a means of hindering the activism of anti-roads protesters. This is outlined in the following account from "an anti-roads protester and Essex anarchist", which appeared in *Organise! For Class Struggle Anarchism*:

I went down to Kent as well to a 2 day 'Stop Work On The Road', building site invasions and that. There was a full moon party, the organisers said in the local paper that they were expecting 2000 road protesters, so the police were ready for those numbers, out numbering the protesters by 6 to 1, as there were only about 250 protesters turned up. They were at one of the two camps the Blue group had built and set up, 70 protesters on site, and about 200 Old Bill turned up and formed a circle all around us. They read out the Criminal Justice Act (CJA) about how they thought there was going to be a party or illegal rave there that night, and anybody who was (found) within a 5 mile radius of that area in the next hour was liable for arrest. ...Then the police pulled up, 2 vans, they all came up to me and said was I at the site when the C.J.A order was given out, and as it was one and a half hours since it was given out I was under arrest as I was only three and a half miles away. ...It was section B or C of the C.J.A, and the jury were out for three and a half hours deciding what to do with us, cause we was the first people to be up for that in Kent.

EA, 'Roads out ahead...', *op. cit.* See also C. J. Stone, 'Iggy gets out', *New Statesman and Society* (17 November 1995), p. 26, for another example of an arrest of an anti-roads activist under the CJA.

¹⁰⁴ Zine, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

increasingly clear that the struggle was about a whole way (or ways) of life.¹⁰⁵

It was not only this change in focus away from strictly an environmental to a more community-based campaign that became an issue. *Aufheben*, however, dispute this: "Participants in the No M11 campaign clearly shared an identity, an identity which was deeply political, whether explicitly understood in relation to capital or not."¹⁰⁶

Commitment to activism

The issue of level of commitment heightened. It became increasingly evident that activists were willing to engage in different types of activism and to varying extents. Claremont Road was a free space, a space for tolerance of all lifestyles, a space for art, for music, for community. But there was also a level of day-to-day living that needed to take place. Just as at the Twyford Down anti-road camp, there seemed to be relatively few people who wanted to deal with problems of rubbish, cleaning, etc. Also, a great amount of work was necessary to maintain the extensive barricading system. Those who did the bulk of barricading were joined by a number of people who pitched in, particularly just prior to eviction attempts. But there was also a number of residents of Claremont Road, known collectively as 'lunch-outs', who enjoyed the hedonistic lifestyle that the space provided. *Aufheben* writes of the conflict that this created:

For one person or a small group to devote themselves single-mindedly to barricading is laudable and certainly produced some highly useful defences, but it could also be a kind of self-sacrifice that conflicts with the desire for pleasure.

...But the special ambience of our free space was not guaranteed simply by single-minded barricading, nor was it guaranteed by its opposite – pure hedonism. The tarmac in Claremont Road was full of armchairs and art, enabling a leisured way of existence. But resentment built up among both the hard-core barricaders and others who put a lot of

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Aufheben* collective, 'Auto-struggles...', *op. cit.*, p. 111.

effort into the street. They saw that things needed to be done and that some people were doing nothing and yet enjoying the benefits of the street, such as the subsidised meals. These do-nothings were called the 'lunch outs', and drinking strong lager came to be associated with parasitic laziness, internal violence and making a mess of the street.¹⁰⁷

While Aufheben concedes that these people were often forcibly expelled from Claremont Road, others write that it was the very tolerance of the lunch-outs that set Claremont Road apart from hierarchical, homogenous communities. The authors of the *Claremont Road* zine, for example, argue that those people who were seen as freeloaders, who did drugs, who did not work, etc., were accommodated rather than turned away.¹⁰⁸

Merrick concurs with the Aufheben writers and argues that anti-road communities are noteworthy for the degree of understanding and tolerance activists show toward one another. He also highlights the dangers of establishing a false dichotomy between the totally committed and the halfhearted:

No one person was on site the whole time. This whole image of the Mighty Eco-Warrior, expert at field craft, like Robin Hood, Tarzan and Emmeline Pankhurst rolled into one is bollocks. Everybody takes breaks, goes to stay with their mum and get a bath, has lunch-out days, has to go and do mundane stuff in the outside world. Anyone who didn't would burn out and be no use to anyone. ...Protesters have always been shown as either irresponsible drop-outs who don't want to fit in with The Real World, or else as selfless heroes who give up everything to Save The Planet.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

¹⁰⁸ See Aufheben collective, 'The politics of anti-road struggle...', *op. cit.*, p. 118 and Zine, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Fluffies versus Spikies?

The issue of nonviolence also proved to be potentially divisive. There was a virtual two-way split between those who believed that nonviolence should be adhered to under all circumstances and others who saw it as an ideal that could not always be followed. The latter group argued that it was not always practical to respond to violence from police and security guards with nonviolence, and if they were being attacked they would certainly, and did, respond with violence.¹¹⁰ However, when a newcomer to Claremont Road asked what to do after she/he was hit by police or security guards, the activist was shouted down with rhetoric about nonviolence by virulent supporters of adherence to nonviolence under any circumstance. No rational argument was given.¹¹¹ As demonstrated in recent British protests, when no justification for or explanation of nonviolence is given, it is easy for nonviolence's maintenance to become dogma.

The nonviolent tactics used were extraordinarily diverse. Activists filled a house, for example, with rubber tyres so that bulldozers would hit them and simply bounce back off. Their use of tyres in an anti-roads protest against the Department of Transport was also symbolic and satirical. Claremont Road activists also employed pixieing, or "magically enchanting a machine of environmental desecration into not working", as another form of nonviolent direct action.¹¹² They also engaged in other tactics including locking themselves into the road with strapping, sealing themselves into the basements of condemned houses and hanging in nets stretched across the length of the road. All trees in the street supported tree houses filled with locked-on activists, just as the roofs of the houses did. Activists also occupied the 100 foot scaffolding tower (known as Dolly after a long-term resident of the street)¹¹³ and they timed the flash of the large neon pink and blue light with the flashing of the tower light in the Docks precinct.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Merrick, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹¹⁰ Accounts of violent evictions abound. See, for example, the account of the eviction of Claremont Road in *The Roadbreaker* (August/September 1994), pp. 6-7.

¹¹¹ Aufheben collective, 'The politics of anti-road struggle...', *op. cit.*, p. 114.

¹¹² Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

¹¹³ The following is a summary of the role Dolly played in the No M11 campaign:

Eviction from community space

Activists at Claremont Road were evicted on November 28, 1994. Befitting of the space that was created at Claremont Road, the eviction took place to music, with the activists cheering the 700 police, 200 bailiffs and 400 security guards who were part of Operation Garden Party, as the £2 million eviction was codenamed.¹¹⁵ It was not all music and dance, however. A full description of the five day eviction is beyond the realm of this dissertation, but suffice to say that there were often intense battles between eviction personnel and the increasingly determined activists. It took police and bailiffs hours to disengage, for example, some of the lock-ons.¹¹⁶

Claremont Road was a new space, a completely different protest milieu. Claremont Road was not only about lifestyle and hedonism, but also about a protest over the destruction of a community. Perhaps because a community was under threat, a community was created or reinforced. The physical threat of the M11 through Wanstead and Leytonstone simultaneously presented a threat to the lived community there. With this threat came a realisation that the residents of Wanstead and Leytonstone, and especially Claremont Road, possessed what historian George Lipsitz calls "collective memory": the "shared experiences and perceptions about the past that

One single story from the campaign [No M11 campaign] has captured more media attention than any other this year; this is the saga of Dolly and her disgraceful treatment at the hands of the DoT. Her story is so moving and so significant that it has travelled the length and breadth of the country – perhaps even the globe. I think, in terms of the campaign, this is the hottest news item of the year: it is not just about what happens to Dolly, it is quite simply about how our society treats it's [sic.] elderly people. ...Dolly was given two weeks notice to leave a house she had been born in, two days before her 93rd birthday. She had been paying rent up until this time. ...At 93 Dolly is old enough to remember the real Victorian values that John Majors [sic.] government spouted so glibly about in their recent 'Back to Basics Campaign': particularly those which deal with respect for the individual and for old age.

Editor, 'Editorial', *The Roadbreaker* (August/September 1994), p. 4.

¹¹⁴ Zine, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

¹¹⁵ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

¹¹⁶ See C. Foley, 'Under siege with the road warriors', *New Statesman and Society* (25 February 1994), page numbers unknown; Zine, *op. cit.*; and Evans, *op. cit.*, for excellent accounts of the violent eviction of Claremont Road.

legitimate action in the present.”¹¹⁷ The anti-M11 community or communities that emerged at Claremont Road, around the chestnut tree, and in and around Wanstead and Leytonstone were driven only in part by the instrumental goal of stopping the construction of the M11 motorway extension. The unquantifiable desire to find collectivity inspired many activists to participate in the No M11 campaigns. Once this was clearly lost, the newly forged communities dispersed; activists were members of transitory tribes and would go on to be involved in new networks of protest and new communities.¹¹⁸

Community in and amongst the trees of Newbury

Claremont Road was an anti-roads protest that was largely about the destruction of community. Conversely, the Newbury Bypass campaign was mounted against the construction of a bypass through the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, through three Sites of Special Scientific Interest, a stone age settlement, eleven other archaeological sites and two preserved civil war battle sites. The habitats of kingfishers, nightjars, hobbies, bats, dormice, and threatened species of snails were all to be destroyed. The proposed bypass would pollute the Lamborne River, one of the cleanest in England. And, because the nine mile bypass route was designed to cross through woodlands, an estimated ten thousand trees were to be destroyed.¹¹⁹

The campaign against the bypass was to be one of the most violent, with a number of activists' lives risked in the eviction process. The violence was echoed in the popular name of the campaign – it became known as the Third Battle of Newbury, named after two previous civil war battles which had been fought on the site during the English Civil War.¹²⁰ It was also the protest that perhaps most captured the media's and the general public's

¹¹⁷ Cited in C. Dolgon, M. Kline and L. Dresser, “House People, Not Cars!”: Economic development, political struggle and common sense in a city of intellect’, in M. P. Smith (ed.), *Marginal Spaces* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1995), p. 27.

¹¹⁸ See the discussion in Chapter 3 on Ben Malbon's idea of the transitory tribe.

¹¹⁹ Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 103. See also Friends of the Earth, ‘The Newbury Bypass year review’, at <http://www.foe.co.uk/archive/newbury/brief.html>; accessed 11.07.01.

¹²⁰ Anonymous author(s), ‘A protest protest’, *The Economist*, (16 March 1996), p. 15.

imaginings, with the drama of the treetop battles to evict protesters shown nightly on television screens.¹²¹

The battle to save the trees of Newbury was fought against a backdrop of a community divided over the issue of the bypass. Many in the Newbury community actively campaigned for the bypass to be built – they advocated that the bypass would ease severe traffic congestion in the town.¹²² While activists were joined by many local supporters, the activist communities often came under attack from police, bailiffs, construction workers, and also the local community itself. Hostility from local residents perhaps made the campaign from the tree tops and tunnels more difficult. Trips into Newbury town for food supplies, for example, were often extremely unpleasant, with activists treated with contempt by some supporters of the bypass.¹²³ This is not to say, however, that many locals did not also actively help activists or participate in the campaign to save Newbury from the bypass.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Doherty, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

¹²² S. Platt, 'Anti-roads protest movement at crossroads', *New Statesman and Society* (28 July 1995), p. 9. Neil Goodwin and Julia Guest write of these traffic problems and the issue of whether the bypass will solve them:

Newbury's traffic problems reflect a nationwide dilemma. Like countless other towns and villages, its narrow streets have reached saturation point, choked by a continual flow of thunderous, fume-belching traffic. Beleaguered citizens scurry along the pavements, nervously negotiating hazardous junctions. The tranquillity of this market town, now just a distant memory in the minds of elderly residents, has been torn apart.

Newbury's first by-pass, built in the 1960s, encouraged the town to sprawl out, which in turn generated more traffic. Sainsbury's recently built a superstore on one of its many roundabouts, cancelling out what little remained of the relief road's effectiveness in easing congestion. Planning permission has already been sought for the construction of 5,000 new homes along the route of the new by-pass, a development that could introduce a further 8,000 cars into the local area. Far from solving the town's traffic problems, the new road may make matters worse.

N. Goodwin and J. Guest, 'By-pass operation', *New Statesman and Society* (19 January 1996), p. 15.

¹²³ Merrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

¹²⁴ While Merrick's account of his time at the Newbury Bypass anti-roads camps includes accounts of hostility from local residents, he is also quick to note that hostility was far outweighed by support:

I get back on Friday night midnightish to find that Suzanne is the only person on site. She's really really pleased to see me. A couple of hours ago a car stopped and the people shouted that they were going to come and kill us. There's been a bit of this, one brave soul even throwing a firework in the bottom of the field by the road 400 metres away. But the support is way bigger. Friendly beeps from cars and

It was in fact local activists who began the campaign against the bypass as far back as the mid-1980s. Like the case against the cutting through Twyford Down, the campaign against the A34 bypass culminated early on in an unsuccessful public inquiry in 1988. The local Society for the Prevention of a Western Bypass (SPEWBY) had lobbied for the inquiry and continued to fight a determined campaign against the road project. A minor follow-up inquiry followed in 1992 and after its ruling also failed to prevent the road's construction, the Third Battle of Newbury began in February 1994.¹²⁵ Protest camps were established along the bypass route as early as the summer of 1994, although direct action against the road was most intense from late 1995 through 1996.¹²⁶ The direct action activism seemed to build on all previous anti-roads activism, incorporating protest techniques from Twyford Down, M11, and others:

We developed various tactics and innovative defences where, as well as the basic walkway and treehouse networks, there were tripods, platforms, tunnels, scaffolding poles extending from the tops of trees and various lock-on techniques; and each of these worked with varying degrees of effectiveness.¹²⁷

The Newbury Bypass campaign was mainly conducted from treetops and tunnels spread across the nine mile route, and the treetop and tunnel protests seemed to reveal complete binary opposition to the roads that they were designed to protest against: organic versus artificial form; ecological versus technological world system; convergence versus divergence. Camp life and tree and tunnel dwelling were not only instrumental to the

trucks on the A34 outnumber the hostile ten to one. It goes on all day and night. The donations of food, blankets, clothes, even alcohol and money are still coming in. At weekends there's visitors here *all* day.

Merrick, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

¹²⁵ Not only was opposition to the construction of the bypass quashed at the hearing, but the government also refused to conduct a legally-mandated environmental impact study, and ignored objective environmental reports advising against the scheme. The Carnival vs. Capital website: <http://www.homemadejam.org/mapmaking/carnivals/backgroundinfo.html>; accessed 11.07.01.

¹²⁶ For excellent first-hand accounts of the Third Battle of Newbury see Merrick, *op. cit.*, and Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

¹²⁷ Cited in Wall, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

protection of the route, to barricading, but were also lived experiments in community living:

On direct action camps we create spaces and communities that are windows to the future world we wish to create. One of the most beautiful experiences of camp life is treehouse living. Up in the canopy, surrounded by an amazing abundance of life we begin to feel a part of the eco-system we inhabit - not merely its defender.¹²⁸

The space of protest has therefore become the site of community, regardless of whether it is on the ancient downs at Twyford, houses doomed for eviction in East London, a mining site, or a forest or individual tree in Newbury. While many activists' accounts of their anti-roads activism tells of enormous levels of attachment to the places of protest, including to tree houses, the place of protest is often almost incidental to the evolution of community there.¹²⁹

Hierarchies in utopia

The treetop protest was seen as a new communal way of life. This did not mean, however, that existing hierarchies did not creep into the protest camps along the Newbury Bypass route, or other anti-roads protest sites. Just as there was conflict at Claremont Road over the issue of lunch outs, there was also a degree of concern at Newbury over the presence of the 'ego warrior'.¹³⁰ This was the term Alex Plows used to describe not eco-warriors but young men who sometimes dominated the camps with egotistical

¹²⁸ Anonymous author(s), 'Tree houses of the world', *op. cit.*, p. 38.

¹²⁹ Merrick describes how he came to live at a particular camp site:

For me, my camp choice was accidental. ... Gradually, insidiously, Mary Hare [the camp] got my love. It becomes so much. Your camp is not just a piece of natural heritage that you are defending, it's your home. You know every bit intimately, you've watched it change, you know how it runs day to day, if something's lost you'll have a fair guess at where it might be, it's your home. It's where you live. And it's your work, you labour hard to make things happen here, that's what you spend most days doing. You become familiar, attached.

Merrick, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

¹³⁰ The 'lunch-out' problem persisted at Newbury - see Merrick's account of Freddie in *Ibid.*, p. 106.

behaviour and macho aggressive attitudes.¹³¹ In fact, while Kate Evans writes of the usefulness of men at sites: "it is constructive when men get together and get enthusiastic about pickaxing roads apart, or building incredibly tall towers, or the like", she also concedes that it is men who are more likely to get around in balaclavas and army greens, falling in with this vision of the aggressor.¹³²

Army greens and balaclavas are not integral to militant defence of the environment and yet are deeply entrenched in many activists' vision of activism. Deep ecology, and particularly that strand of environmental action espoused by the founder of Earth First! in the US, Dave Foreman, has influenced the idea of the need for militant and military-style defence of the environment. Foreman argues that we need to be warriors, defending the earth.¹³³ Even at the time of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s many activists believed that in order to create a peaceful and just world, an army-like mentality was needed. However, many female activists were critical of the vision of the macho guerilla fighter that had inspired this belief.¹³⁴

Unfortunately, the idea of the exclusive effectiveness of eco-warrior or ego warrior activism prevailed at many anti-roads sites and led to the ubiquity of patriarchal attitudes and actions. Both eco- and ego warriors are characterised by their overt aggressiveness, their eagerness to take control and dominate in the name of saving a forest, a glen, or, better yet, the whole environment. The heroic warrior image is reinforced in accounts like that of a direct action road camp at the bypass site at Jesmond Dene, near Newcastle in 1997, in which continual references are made to Earth Warriors, to Eco-Warriors and Crusty Armies defending the feminised

¹³¹ A. Plows, 'The rise (and fall?) of the ego-warrior', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 5 (publication date not provided), p. 89.

¹³² Evans, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

¹³³ R. Scarce, *Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement* (Chicago: Noble Press, 1990).

¹³⁴ B. Doherty, 'Green parties, nonviolence and political obligation', in B. Doherty and M. de Geus (eds), *Democracy and Green Political Thought: Sustainability, Rights and Citizenship* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 39.

helpless Mother Earth.¹³⁵ In one of her many cartoons, Kate Evans overtly attempts to demystify the warrior-like qualities of eco-activists, claiming that the eco-warrior is simply a product of the mass media, designed to ostracise eco-activists:

Here is an Eco-Warrior displaying incredible Bravery and Daring by having a cup of tea. This Eco-Warrior is daringly and bravely sleeping in the name of planetary salvation. And so is his dog. Other acts of courage which Eco-Warriors participate in include: ...eating veggie slop...getting pissed...avoiding midges. This cartoon is intended to show that the Brave Eco Warrior is a sad media stereotype invented to prevent the news consumers from identifying with on-the-case individuals.¹³⁶

Another example of the proliferation of the idea of the eco-warrior is an article posted on the Internet by self-proclaimed eco-warrior, Captain Paul Watson of Sea Shepherd, an offshoot of Greenpeace International, which focuses on direct action in order to protect marine life. Again, there is reference to the idea of an earth warrior, implying that only those who physically assert their might, in fact their masculine might, and fight for the earth can save it. The heroic male activist saves the world. In Paul Watson's biography on the Internet, there is reference to his being the first man to put himself directly between a whale and a harpoon (but the question remained unanswered as to whether he saved the whale!).¹³⁷

The image of the eco- and ego warrior is not confined to rhetoric and is played out in the direct action network in Britain, and in particular at sites of anti-roads activism.¹³⁸ Women are depoliticised by the commonly held

¹³⁵ Anonymous author(s), 'ForFlapjack and Mother Earth: earth warriors at Jesmond Dene', taken from the Dead Trees EF! (Brighton) website:

<http://www.eco-action.org/dt/jesmond.html>; accessed 06.07.00.

¹³⁶ Evans, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83. The text is accompanied by illustrations in the original.

¹³⁷ P. Watson, 'The politics of extinction: remain a parasite or become an earth warrior', taken from the Dead Trees EF! (Brighton) website:

<http://www.eco-action.org/dt/beerswil.html>; accessed 06.07.00.

¹³⁸ Winfried Wolf's observations about the masculinisation of the car and car culture offer a further take on the idea of the ego warrior fighting cars and roads: if cars and

belief by many male activists that only they, usually dressed in uniform black balaclavas and army greens, can commit heroic deeds, while women do the washing up. Even more seriously, incidences of sexual assault and rape at anti-road protest camps are reported amongst activists.¹³⁹ Anti-road camps are supposed to be models of a better society, where anarchy, equality, freedom, and free love are practised: "you can speak to any 'road protester' and they will tell of [these] ideals."¹⁴⁰ However, the hierarchies which exist in wider society are often replicated at protest camps and in activist communities. This almost perversely reinforces a thesis at the heart of this dissertation, that activist communities are lived communities of difference, rather than closed, homogenous communities. This is not to say, however, that the replication of pre-existing hierarchies within anti-road camps is desirable. Until they are overcome, anti-roads communities can offer no true resistance to the existing social order.

An anonymous activist writes of her experiences at a number of protest camps that "there seems to be this assumption that women can't climb, can't put up walk ways and that their treehouses need the stern eye of the more experienced male cast upon them before anyone would dream of having a smoke in them."¹⁴¹ Labour is frequently divided according to an activist's gender, with the more adventurous or dangerous aspects of anti-roads protesting like tree climbing appropriated by male activists, while women activists are left with the mundane tasks of ensuring the camp is clean and preparing food. In an account of a sabotage action at an open cast

car culture are masculinised, then surely the protester fighting these is in danger of being masculinised also. Wolf writes:

The patriarchal nature of the car society expresses itself also in the nature of property...urban planning and residential structures are unfriendly to women. ...'Many women see multi-storey car parks as unfriendly and threatening and they avoid them when they can'. ...Car advertisements, especially those for car accessories, are clearly based on the assumption that the car society is male dominated. In no other industrial branch is the woman so openly and aggressively used as a sex object.

W. Wolf, *Car Mania: A Critical History of Transport*, trans. by G. Fagan (London: Pluto, 1996), pp. 205-8; cited in McKay, 'DiY culture...', *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹³⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'Let patriarchy burn! A feminist rant', *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), p. 79.

¹⁴⁰ Anonymous author(s), 'No escape from patriarchy: male dominance on site', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 7 (publication date not provided), p. 10.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

mine site, one activist implies that it is not so much the gender divide which is damaging revolutionary politics, but the division of labour between those tasks which are considered daring and intrinsic to the action, and those that are seen as soft options. Therefore, the ego warrior becomes gender-less in this activist's account, but is nevertheless problematic:

The attitude of the 'ego-warrior' that 'if you can't climb a tree then there's no point in you being here and there's nothing you can do except make the tea' has been recognised as an actual and potential problem in our movement. The opencast action did to an extent suffer from the same division of labour – if you weren't prepared enough (or knowledgeable enough) to trash machinery then you could end up feeling pretty superfluous. Was this just another example of the production of a hierarchical division between the full-on activists and the 'ground support'?¹⁴²

The prevalence of a work-based hierarchy as opposed to a gender-based one is, however, rejected by a female activist who believes that anti-roads communities are patriarchal: "...as a woman living on the site and speaking to other females involved in various campaigns - everyone agreed that it was without a doubt, a patriarchy dominated environment."¹⁴³

Activists attempt to deal with patriarchy by establishing women-only camps, protests and action groups as means of avoiding the replication and affliction of patriarchy.¹⁴⁴ The Greenham Common peace and anti-nuclear protest camp was at various times a strictly women-only site. This was done in an effort to ensure that women were included in the political process, rather than primarily to exclude men. One woman activist from Greenham justified or explained the rationale of women-only activism with

¹⁴² Anonymous author(s), 'All this lurking about in the dark inspired a lot of giggling', Anonymous author(s), 'Reports and thoughts on the action in Derbyshire', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 7 (publication date not provided), p. 28.

¹⁴³ Anonymous author(s), 'No escape from patriarchy...', *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁴⁴ Despite extensive efforts, I cannot find the name of a women-only anti-roads protest site or camp, although there are general references to them in women activists' writings. For example, in 'No escape from patriarchy: male dominance on site', the author writes: "If I was going to get hardcore feminist about it then I wouldn't have survived on site for as long as I have, or I would be living in some equally repressive matriarchal site." *Ibid.*, p. 12.

the following, "as long as men still insist on being at the centre of everything that happens in our society, we'll still need women-only demonstrations."¹⁴⁵ Only by excluding men did women feel safe from domination and subordination. However, even at women-only camps hierarchies can be quickly established.¹⁴⁶ Separatism does not necessarily equate to inclusiveness of all women, with Greenham Common and contemporary women-only protest camps the sites of protest of predominantly white, middle class, young to middle aged women.¹⁴⁷

An international anti-roads community

The period of intense anti-roads activism in Britain has resulted in an exchange of activisms between British and European activists. A trans-European anti-roads network has emerged. David Boyle writes in *New Statesman and Society* that "Britain may be struggling to maintain its influence in Europe these days, but there is one British export that is having a growing impact – anti-roads protests."¹⁴⁸ I contend, however, that rather than a one-way export, a fluid and reciprocal network has been established between British and continental activists. Activists exchange ideas, tactics and support across a vast communications network. There has also been a series of road protester summits. Activists from all over Europe gathered at Eeklo in Belgium, Berlin, and Madrid in 1995. These three summits or meetings attracted up to six hundred activists (at Berlin) each and importantly included activists from across the continent, rather than only the western states.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Anonymous author(s), originally printed in *The Guardian*, 15 December 1982, p. 13, reprinted in J. Liddington, *The Road to Greenham Common: Feminism and Anti-Militarism in Britain since 1820* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1989), p. 255.

¹⁴⁶ The anonymous author(s) of 'Let patriarchy burn! A feminist rant' writes of the potential for sexual harassment at women-only camps:

New women being fuck fodder: This is particularly present, or maybe just most visible, on mixed protest camps, although also a problem in women's camps when they are treated like lifestyle cruising grounds, at squat cafes/social centres and in urban groups.

Anonymous author(s), 'Let patriarchy burn!...', *op. cit.*, p. 82.

¹⁴⁷ For details on the debate waged around the question of separatism at Greenham Common, see Liddington, *op. cit.*, chapter 12.

¹⁴⁸ D. Boyle, 'Killers of the road', *New Statesman and Society* (4 August 1995), p. 18.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

European anti-roads activists have networked at the same time as heads of states of the European Union have implemented an extensive road building programme to link roads in the ambitious Trans European Network (TEN).¹⁵⁰ So, there is a concurrent networking of road construction across Europe and of activists in opposition to this expansion of roads.¹⁵¹ At the core of the anti-roads activist network is an intricate communications rhizome, with no centre and no coordinator. One part of that network is the Road Alert action bulletin, e-mailed from an office near Newbury, Britain, to at least forty groups around Europe, which then distribute it through local networks. Another component of the network is Concrete Action's bulletin, available on the Internet, and written and published by anonymous authors through the organisation ASeed in the Netherlands. Concrete Action is particularly concerned with the development of TEN.¹⁵² This international anti-roads network has continued to evolve, particularly in regards to Reclaim the Streets activism, which is explored in the next chapter.

Conclusion: anti-roads communities

An instrumental account of anti-roads activism would record that some of the most important results of the activism include the slicing of the English roads budget from about £23 billion to a few billion pounds since 1992; the scrapping of 500 out of 600 road schemes since 1989; and the virtual destruction of the major roadbuilding programme, as reported in *Construction News*.¹⁵³ In this less instrumental account of anti-roads activism, I have emphasised the development and nature of anti-roads activist communities. These communities are characterised by fluidity and heterogeneity and consist of activists who have come together over one issue, but whose political beliefs are diverse. Activists in other activisms

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*; and Anonymous author(s), 'Twyford Down and the state', *op. cit.*

¹⁵¹ For a sound insight into the degree of this concurrence see A. Doherty and O. Hoedeman, 'TEN green battles', *New Statesman and Society* (10 March 1995), p. 29. See also previous discussion of TEN and transnational activism in Chapter Two.

¹⁵² See *Road Alert* and *Concrete Action*; *Concrete Action* can be accessed on-line at: <http://www.ngo.grida.no/ngo/nu/concrete/oldtexts/conc8.htm>; accessed 11.07.01.

¹⁵³ Anonymous author(s), 'Direct action: six years down the road', *op. cit.*, p. 1.

have in turn adopted the communications networks and non-hierarchical structures of the anti-roads campaigns. Reclaim the Streets activism is one example and is the subject of the next chapter.

Throughout this chapter, I have explored some commonalities to a number of anti-roads communities at specific anti-roads campaigns. These are of course case-studies and yet in many ways are typical of many or even most anti-roads communities which emerged in Britain in the 1990s. All involved diverse groups of people attracted to the campaigns for innumerable reasons. Not all anti-roads activists at Twyford Down, Claremont Road or Newbury, for example, were local residents, nor were they all so-called crusties or members of the Dongas Tribe, who had travelled from the most recent site of ecological travesty. Anti-roads protests were characterised by diversity. However, as I have also argued, this diversity was not unproblematic. At a number of anti-roads sites diversity of tactic and of commitment led to friction amongst some activists. Hierarchies were also established at sites of anti-road protest, and these were often at odds with the desire to create communities of resistance resistant to boss/employee-type hierarchies or ones based on gender and gender-specific divisions of labour.

Despite these deficiencies, I argue that anti-road camps and protest sites consist of activists from multiple networks of association and the diversity (albeit limited) they bring to collective anti-roads activism makes for rich communities of dissidence. Activists at anti-roads protests are linked by transient proximity to one another and by the desire to preserve the proposed road sites. There is something less tangible, however, that also connects anti-roads activists with one another and that is the spirit of resistance and the desire to create a changed world. Kevin Hetherington describes this connectedness as proxemics – as utopian space which accommodates diversity:

...Utopia is a boundless space of connections, the endless horizon of possibilities made up of a space into which social relations are extended, unlocatable, unrepresentable and

impossible. A space of integration and disintegration, of combination, resistance and disorder.¹⁵⁴

Anti-roads protests are characterised by networks of difference coming together in resistance at a physical site of contention. In the next chapter, I argue that the anti-roads collective Reclaim the Streets focuses on reclaiming and/or creating new community spaces through protest actions like street parties and road occupations. I build on the affiliation between physical protest place and emotional space in the analysis of the politics of Reclaim the Streets and look at some of the key influences on the loose collective which can now be found in cities around the world.

¹⁵⁴ K. Hetherington, 'In place of geometry: the materiality of place', in K. Hetherington and R. Munro (eds), *Ideas of Difference: Social Spaces and the Labour of Division* (Oxford: Blackwell/ Sociological Review, 1997), p. 191.

CHAPTER FIVE

Streets as sites of resistance: Reclaim the Streets

To 'street party' is to begin reconstructing the geography of everyday life; to re-appropriate the public sphere; to rediscover the streets and attempt to liberate them. To 'street party' is to rescue communality from the dissection table of capitalism; to oppose the free market with a vision of the free society. This vision, which the street party embodies, is collective imagining in practice. It radically dissolves political, cultural, social and economic divisions in a utopian expression. A utopia defined, not as 'no-place', but as this-place, here and now.

Anonymous ¹

Since 1995 activists have reclaimed high streets and motorways across the United Kingdom. Reclaim the Streets, a loose collective with no formal membership and with groups which now meet in cities across the world, has actively sought to transform politics. The anti-car, anti-road message of Reclaim the Streets has not been conveyed through canvassing members of parliament nor by marching through streets. Instead, Reclaim the Streets' direct action politics are played out on the streets, in carnivalesque celebrations of reclaiming public space. Politics is no longer restricted to a domain of 'seriousness', but is also fun and spontaneous. Reclaim the

¹ Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets!', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 6 (publication date not provided), p. 6, emphasis added.

Streets actively incorporates art into its protest action, further transforming our conception of politics and the British political landscape. Moreover, Reclaim the Streets has helped to re-emphasise the importance of lived community and community space. When a street party spontaneously takes place on a London, Birmingham or Edinburgh high street, the participants are actively reclaiming the space, away from traffic, away from commercial ventures.

This chapter explores the modes of action of Reclaim the Streets (RTS) activists in Britain and the centrality of the idea of reclaiming space and community to RTS activism. The origins and the key influences behind Reclaim the Streets, such as the ideas of the Situationists, are examined. This chapter also analyses the notion of community space and the deficiency of current urban planning to accommodate public, community space is also considered, particularly in relation to the political aims of RTS. It also addresses how RTS activists re-appropriate art and reclaim it as a political tool. Reclaim the Streets is noteworthy for the attempts its activists make working in alliance with labour movement activists, bridging the alleged gap between the workers' and environmental movements. This leads into a debate surrounding RTS' engagement with class struggle. Lastly, the chapter also considers RTS's transformation from a British phenomenon to a fixture on the world's streets. This transformation is used to introduce the notion of transnational activist networks, an idea expanded on in the subsequent chapter on the June 18, 1999 day of protest.

The emergence of the RTS communities

The loose network known as Reclaim the Streets forms the basis of an empirical study of the interconnectedness of community and activism and their changing natures. Reclaim the Streets street protests are carnival-like and now take place in cities across the globe. The name Reclaim the Streets, or RTS, is used without connoting membership or uniformity of activists in attendance at the street protests or at their planning meetings. Reclaim the Streets activists are linked in geographic communities and non-spatially defined communities: geographically, activists at RTS street

protests/parties are united by their presence in any one city but also by the proxemics of the street as site of community and of carnival; the non-spatially defined nature of the communities is illustrated by the common spirit of resistance that transcends national or city boundaries. This spirit of resistance is characterised by the celebration of the street as a car-free, communal space, irrespective of the street's location.

I employ the title Reclaim the Streets to refer to loose collectives, which now meet all over the United Kingdom and many cities around the world, and the protest actions they organise. When I refer to a Reclaim the Streets event, the word event is used to mean a gathering, a protest action, a happening, and not a staged affair like a concert.

The anti-roads direct action group Reclaim the Streets' emergence was perhaps as spontaneous as we now regard their protest actions. At the height of the protest against the proposed road cutting through Twyford Down, Reclaim the Streets formed in London to activate and highlight the destructiveness of car culture. RTS published a leaflet published soon after it formed in the autumn of 1991 proclaiming its purpose as campaigning: "FOR walking, cycling and cheap, or free, public transport, and AGAINST cars, roads and the system that pushes them."²

The No M11 Link Road Campaign both absorbed RTS and spawned a larger group after the campaign's dissolution. RTS activists became particularly involved with the Claremont Road campaign and during this time did not stage separate RTS actions. The campaign in East London against the M11 Link Road both provided RTS activists with a local focus and urban focus. This is what so clearly set the No M11 campaign apart from the previous anti-roads campaigns, particularly the Twyford Down campaign. The resistance against the M11 and the urban issues that were linked to this resistance shaped the re-emerged group's focus after the No M11 campaign's dissolution.

When Claremont Road, and the M11 campaign, were lost, Reclaim the Streets reformed in February, 1995, utilising the strong relationships which had formed during the year-long struggle.³ "If we could no longer reclaim Claremont Road, we would reclaim the streets of London."⁴ Reclaim the Streets emerged from this East London campaign focussed on issues of urban living, including the promotion of public over private car transport; city road congestion; pedestrian and cyclist safety; and the reclamation of road or street space for community space. Even the name Reclaim the Streets has a specifically urban context.⁵

While Claremont Road acted as the precipitous for the emergence of a re-focussed and re-invigorated RTS, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act was perhaps the catalyst. The threat to the right to protest, to assemble, even to dance en masse in public, simply spurred more overt displays of these activities, of which RTS actions are a prime example.

Streets as sites of protest

The name Reclaim the Streets gives a clear insight into its politics. While so much activity in Britain at the time of its emergence focussed on so-called anti-roads protests, the Reclaim the Streets collective chose the title of 'Streets' in opposition to perhaps 'Reclaim the Roads'. The word street conjures up images of community, of a neighbourhood, where children can play, people can meet to talk, cyclists can ride. In opposition to this, roads are part of car culture. They are the instruments of car culture, the means upon which cars travel. They are devoid of community and in fact

² Taken from Reclaim the Street network London, untitled flyer (London: RTS network, 1991).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ J. Jordan, 'The art of necessity: the subversive imagination of anti-road protest and Reclaim the Streets', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 139.

⁵ See the brief histories of RTS in N. Klein, *No Logo* (London: Flamingo, 2001), pp. 310-323; and A. Starr, *Naming the Enemy: Anti-Corporate Movements Confront Globalization* (London: Zed, 2000), p. 68. Naomi Klein describes Reclaim the Streets as "...the most vibrant and fastest-growing political movement since Paris '68...", while Amory Starr describes RTS as a "European organization." Klein, *op. cit.*, p. 312; Starr, *op. cit.*, p. 68, respectively. Both of these descriptions misstate the loose,

discourage it. Roads are anonymous and alienating. While streets may be the sites of conversation, of play, of meanderings, roads are the sites of fast travel, of convenience, and, very often, of danger.⁶ Reclaim the Streets acknowledges the importance of the symbolism of the street: "...because your whole enculturation experience is geared around keeping you out of the street. The idea is to keep everyone indoors. So, when you come to challenge the powers that be, inevitably you find yourself on the curbstone of indifference, wondering 'should I play it safe and stay on the sidewalks, or should I go into the street?'"⁷

Streets are more than a corridor of transport; they are a community space. Reclaim the Streets is opposed to the process of turning a street into a road - commodifying what was once a community space. In London, the streets of Leytonstone and Wanstead were demolished and replaced with a mega road, an extension of the M11. Certainly, streets such as Claremont Road were not without tarmac, not without cars. However, suburban streets and motorways have different dynamics. There is more potential for community in the former. This potential was explored and ameliorated by the Claremont Road activists:

One of the first acts of resistance was to close the road off to traffic and open it up to the art of living. In a superb act of *détournement*, the road - normally a space dominated by the motor car, a space for passing not living, a dead duct between a and b - was reclaimed and turned into a vibrant space in which to live, eat, talk and sleep.⁸

collective nature of Reclaim the Streets, a characteristic discussed throughout this chapter.

⁶ "We talk of 'the word on the streets', 'taking to the streets' and 'streetculture'. A street suggests dwellings, people and interaction, in a word: community. A road, in contrast, suggests the tarmac, the horizon, 'progress' and the private enclosure of the motor car. We speak of 'roadworks' and 'roadrage'." Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets!', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 6 (publication date not provided), p. 4.

⁷ Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets! The commoditisation of virtually everywhere', on <http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/>; accessed 04.06.99.

⁸ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 135. In a footnote on p. 285, Jordan writes of the word *détournement*: "a French term which literally means a diversion or a re-routing. It was developed as a Situationist concept and is defined by Greil Marcus, in *Lipstick Traces*, as 'theft of the aesthetic artifacts from their contexts and their diversion into contexts of one's own devise'."

Reclaim the Streets does not simply proclaim that roads without cars become community spaces. A street lined with pseudo village-like shops is not a street that Reclaim the Streets is aiming for: "Won't the streets be better without cars? Not if all that replaces them are aisles of pedestrianised consumption or shopping 'villages' safely protected from the elements."⁹ A street free of cars, yet filled with shoppers, unaware of the people walking beside them except as potential competitors in the market place, is not a dreamscape for RTS activists.¹⁰

Urban communities

Urban planners seem to be increasingly aware of the attractiveness of cul-de-sac developments, and of housing estates with an artificial lake and walking paths in the centre. A sense of community is imposed on many new housing developments: a new estate development like Delfin's Caroline Springs in outer west Melbourne is a recent, non-British-specific example. The estate is enclosed by sandstone-look-alike fences, differentiating those who have bought on the estate from those who have not. Or perhaps these fences signify something more sinister, like the gated communities in the United States, where the security fences separate the inhabitants of an estate from the 'infidels' beyond.¹¹

⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets! The pollution of capitalism', on <http://www.gn.apc.org/rtss/>; accessed 04.06.99.

¹⁰ This statement does not mean to imply that all activists who have participated in RTS staged events share the same viewpoints on all matters. In fact, the thousands of revellers at street parties and actions against Shell differ considerably in their opinions on the prime focus of the RTS collective, whether it is anti-car primarily or anti-car in a capitalist context. This debate continues and we shall see how it manifested itself in relation to the Liverpool Dockers/RTS joint actions.

¹¹ Zygmunt Bauman writes of the false notion of community that gated communities provide, suggesting that it is a sense of otherness that gated groups of houses foster, rather than any common understanding or warmth between fellow inhabitants:

The heavily guarded, electronically surveyed 'gated communities' into which the moment they ["the present-day successful"] get enough money or credit they buy themselves to keep their distance from the 'messy intimacy' of ordinary city life are 'communities' in name only. What their residents are prepared to pay an arm and a leg for is the right to stay aloof and be free from intruders. 'Intruders' are all other people guilty of having their own agendas and of living their lives in their own ways. ... 'Prowlers' and 'stalkers' are the fear-and-hate figures...and it is freedom from such characters, promised by the

A community centre greets visitors as they pull into the estate, with an artificial lake and wooden bench seats opposite. It is unclear, however, what is actually done to foster community in this space. Instead, it appears as though these are simply reminders of community, appealing to new home buyers and lulling them into a false sense of affinity with their new neighbours. All urban planning can be seen as a means of control, all urban development as the capitalist definition of space:

It is one particular realisation of the technically possible, and it excludes all alternatives. ...The 'theory' of urban development seeks to enlist the support of its victims, to persuade them that they have really chosen the bureaucratic form of conditioning expressed by modern architecture. To this end, all the emphasis is placed on utility, the better to hide the fact that this architecture's real unity is to control men [sic] and reify the relations between them. People need a roof over their heads: superblocks provide it. People need informing and entertaining: telly does just that. But of course the kind of information, entertainment and place to live which such arguments help sell are not created for people at all, but rather without them and against them.¹²

This attack on urban planning per se fails to take into account the opposition from within the field itself to what Hillier and Hanson remark as the 'de-spatialising and de-socialising space' agenda of some urban designers.¹³ Debate has raged within the profession for decades over the idea of community planning. For example, in the 1944 Greater London

heavily armed guards constantly on the beat and a dense network of electronic spy cameras, that makes 'gated communities' so alluring and avidly sought after and becomes a point which the developers and estate agents of such communities emphasize [sic] much more than any other feature in their commercial handouts and advertising leaflets.

Z. Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), p. 54.

¹² Kotanyi and Vaneigem, cited in C. Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1972), p. 59.

Plan, Sir Patrick Abercrombie proposed that the basic planning unit of London would be the community structure of the city and that the planning task is to define, complete and reclaim communities.¹⁴ Nicholson, however, argues that the concept of neighbourhood as developed by Abercrombie and others was a top-down notion, reflecting that what community-minded urban planners of the immediate post-war period advocated were planned communities, rather than community planning: "Planned communities such as those proposed by Abercrombie, bold and innovative as they were at the time, were nevertheless a product of the school of ideas which tended to see the city as a machine, albeit a human one."¹⁵ This is in contrast to Nicholson's vision of community planning, whereby community organisations are involved in the urban planning process, thereby giving expression to Castell's dream that "at last citizens will make cities."¹⁶

There is a marked difference, of course, between the ideal of community planning that Nicholson promotes in his discussion of London urban planning and the marketing of supposedly community-minded urban design by developers. Including an artificial pond and a few park benches in the middle of an estate does not necessarily foster community. In fact, because these parks and playgrounds in the middle of housing estates are frequently poorly lit and attract drug usage and disenfranchised youth in evenings, the people whom they are meant to attract may be frightened to use them, e.g., women, especially after dusk.¹⁷ Geddes too writes of the problems of social exclusion reinforced by poor urban planning, whereby the concentration of disadvantaged groups on peripheral housing estates, combined with

¹³ See B. Hillier and J. Hanson, *The Social Logic of Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

¹⁴ P. Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan: 1944* (London: HMSO, 1945) in G. Nicholson, 'The rebirth of community planning', in A. Thornley (ed.), *The Crisis of London* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 119-127.

¹⁵ Nicholson, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

¹⁶ From M. Castells, *The City and the Grassroots: A Cross-Cultural Theory of Urban Social Movements* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), cited in *Ibid.*, p. 132.

¹⁷ See, for example, G. Valentine, 'London's streets of fear', in A. Thornley (ed.), *The Crisis of London* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 90-102.

physical isolation and inadequate and poorly planned community facilities, reinforces marginalisation.¹⁸

Forging community

Reclaim the Streets recognises that attempts at fostering community in urban planning are often artificial and ill-conceived. For example, RTS contends that creating car free shopping strips or malls do not lead to an increased sense of community amongst those who traverse down them. The reality of housing and urban development in market dominated, liberal democracies is that community is overwhelmed by capitalism:

With a metal river on one side and endless windows of consumerism on the other, the street's true purpose: social interaction, becomes an uneconomic diversion. In its place the corporate-controlled one-way media of newspapers, radio and television become "the community". Their interpretation our reality.¹⁹

The media dominate our sense of community by becoming our source of news, of gossip, of entertainment and (limited) interaction. Simultaneously, however, there is an ongoing depiction of community in the media - the media, particularly television producers, know the attractiveness of the image of community to audiences. We only have to look at the enormous success of such television soap operas as *EastEnders* (BBC, England), *Coronation Street* (Granada, England) and *Brookside* (Mersey Television, England), *Neighbours* (Grundy's, Australia), and *Gute Zeiten Schlechte Zeiten* (RTL, Germany). In each of these programmes a community is imagined and broadcast into millions of homes as a packaged ideal. They are communities that are built up around neighbourhoods, even streets in the case of *Neighbours* (Ramsay Street). Part of the reason for their appeal is that these soaps replicate communities that are only imagined, that do

¹⁸ M. Geddes, 'Poverty, excluded communities and local democracy', in N. Jewson and S. MacGregor (eds), *Transforming Cities: Contested Governance and New Spatial Divisions* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 205.

¹⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets! Painted Ladies', on <http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/>, accessed 04.06.99.

not in fact exist for a majority of their viewers. Relationships are sanitised or dramatised only to heighten ratings. Communal gatherings in these streets of the soaps rarely happen and are usually only for the purpose of gossip, self-aggrandisement or saccharine displays of homecoming or farewell. Community in these shows is false and limited. Only those from the street or neighbourhood are members or participants in the community; it is exclusive.

These soap opera depictions are far from reality. Producers, marketers and advertisers know they will be attractive because they temporarily fill a void left by our consumerist, alienating society:

Everywhere becomes the same as everywhere else. Community becomes commodity – a shopping village, sedated and under constant surveillance. The desire for community is then fulfilled elsewhere, through spectacle, sold to us in simulated form. A tv soap 'street' or 'square' mimicking the arena that concrete and capitalism are destroying. The real street, in this scenario, is sterile. A place to move through not to be in.²⁰

As the audience watches the virtual street-based community, they are in fact unlikely to even know their own neighbours.

John Freie explicitly acknowledges the exploitative potential of people's longing for community:

It is ...[the] disjunction between the longing for community and the reality of separation that makes us vulnerable to counterfeit claims of community.... The desire for association and connectedness is so great, and our experience with genuine community is so limited, that we are easily deceived.²¹

The development of rhizomes of interpersonal relationships can form the reality against which counterfeit communities can be measured and subsequently feigned community can be superseded by lived

²⁰ Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets! The commoditisation of virtually everywhere', *op. cit.*

community, by "the feeling of connectedness, of solidarity with others...."²² Reclaim the Streets activists attempt to foster this feeling of connectedness amongst themselves, forming communities through sharing experiences and building relationships. RTS activists also reject the fragmentation of communities by the domination of cars and commercial trade on street spaces. RTS activists therefore create communities at the same time as attempting to free potential community spaces from the fetters of capital.

Living community

Reclaim the Streets probes the transformation of car space into living space. At street party number one, in Camden High Street, Camden Town, North London, on May 16, 1995, activists participated in street theatre. As Saturday shoppers looked on from the pavement, two cars collided on the busy road. The drivers jumped from the cars and argued, one brandishing a hammer and smashing the other car. They caught the shoppers' attention: "passers-by are astonished; time stands still." People emerged from the crowd onto the street and began to dance on top of the cars and throw multicoloured paint. From the roofs of the two destroyed cars, activists released an enormous banner, which proclaimed: "Reclaim the Streets - Free the City/ Kill the Car". Five hundred people spilled out from the tube station and took over the street. "As the Surrealists might have said, everyday life has been penetrated by the marvellous."²³

Camden High Street was radically altered as approximately 500 people danced all afternoon to music provided by a mobile bicycle-powered sound system. Hillegonda Rietveld writes of the loss of a sense of self and the forging of community among dancers at house parties, something that I believe can also be applied to the moods of participants at an RTS action like that in Camden Town:

²¹ J. F. Freie, *Counterfeit Community: The Exploitation of Our Longings for Connectedness* (Lanham, ML: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), p. 3.

²² *Ibid.*

The dancer loses a sense of alienation during the abandonment to the relentless groove, which according to some Shamanic ideas, can make the dancer lose his or her bearings. Thereby the mastering gaze (of the potential observer) dissolves within the dancing group. As subjectivity disintegrates, a sense of 'the (objectified) other' disappears as well. Hereby a temporary carnivalesque community is forged, whose celebrations of disappearance can seem to the observing outsider to be rather spectacular and which to the participant is nothing less than being part of 'our house'. ...In creating a dream world of emotions through the use of stories, keywords and sounds, the sharing of that dream 'glues' a community together.²⁴

The influences of Situationism

Activists created a street cafe and served free food, not on the pavement but in the middle of the reclaimed road, and the epitome of play was seen in the building of a children's playground in the middle of a liberated crossroad junction.²⁵ The idea of free space or reclaimed space for children to play has been a recurrent one in Reclaim the Streets actions. It brings to the public's attention the need for a safe, car-free play zone. Further, a playground or sandpit in the middle of a road demonstrates the limitless possibility of transforming the streetscape from dangerous car space to a fun play space. A children's playground created in the middle of a busy road is the ultimate symbol of fun.²⁶ As McKay notes, this was a fabulous literalisation of the situationist slogan, slightly inverted, *sur not sous le pavé, la plage*.²⁷

²³ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

²⁴ H. Rietveld, *This is Our House: House Music, Cultural Spaces and Technologies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp. 11, 112-113.

²⁵ The children's sandpit was spontaneously created, yet this should not imply that the sandpit appeared on the bitumen of Camden High Street without forethought on the part of the RTS activists. Rather, the construction of the sandpit was spontaneous because it was a *détournement* of the usual use of road space and it was done without the usual process of bureaucratic intervention.

²⁶ See Ward, *op. cit.*, for an interesting commentary on children's playgrounds.

²⁷ Translated from French, this subversion of the original Situationist slogan is 'On the pavement, the beach' rather than 'Under the pavement, the beach.' See footnote

The philosophies and politics of Situationism have profoundly affected the Reclaim the Streets activism. We can even find the situationist slogan "sous le pavé, la plage" on the RTS website.²⁸ It was a slogan that appeared throughout Paris in 1967/68, along with another situationist axiom, "La Beauté est dans la Rue", which appeared on a poster featuring a woman throwing a grenade.²⁹ At one of the biggest RTS mass actions, the taking over of the M41 motorway in London on Saturday July 13, 1996, the words of the Situationists, "The society that abolishes every adventure makes its own abolition the only possible adventure," spread across six lanes of traffic free motorway on a huge, multicoloured banner.³⁰

Activists from the 1960s to the present day name the Situationists or Situationism as a key influence on their politics and on their practised activism. However, this influence is difficult to define or isolate. Firstly, writers of the *Situationist International*, the journal that was to become an identifier for its contributors, reject the notion of Situationism as an ideology as it "perversely froze their ideas into a dogma."³¹ What perhaps comes closest to a definition or explanation of the eclectic collective thoughts of those who describe(d) themselves as Situationists is from Guy Debord, author of *The Society of the Spectacle*. In an age of incessant technological renewal and the integration of the state and economy, direct experience is replaced by passive contemplation of images. Debord calls for creation of situations rather than reproduction of already existing situations. This call was made in reference to the creation of a new art, but can be applied to all life experiences, which, Debord argues, were in danger of becoming nothing more than vapid images:

number 68, in G. McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance Since the Sixties* (London: Verso, 1996), p. 202.

²⁸ See Anonymous author(s), 'The Evolution of Reclaim the Streets', on <http://www.gn.apc.org/rt's/xtree.htm> accessed 12.06.99.

²⁹ See the connection made, for example, with this image and Reclaim the Streets in the untitled article by Anonymous author(s), 'Global street parties', *Black Flag for Anarchist Resistance*, no. 214 (publication date not provided), p. 12.

³⁰ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

³¹ Cited in A. Jappe, *Guy Debord*, trans. by D. Nicholson-Smith (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), p. 3.

The spectacle is thus not a pure and simple adjunct to the world, as propaganda broadcast via the communications media might be said to be. Rather, it is the entirety of social activity that is appropriated by the spectacle for its own ends. From city planning to political parties of every tendency, from art to science, from everyday life to human passions and desires, everywhere we find reality replaced by images. In the process, images end up by becoming real, and reality ends up transformed into images.³²

Perhaps the influence of the Situationists on contemporary activism is best seen as part of the bricolage of influences that Julie Stephens describes in her analysis of 1960s' anti-disciplinary politics, whereby "cultural borrowing was much more the order of the day than following the clearly defined parameters of a Left tradition."³³ We can see evidence of this fusion of influences in Reclaim the Streets activism. While the influence of Situationism is clearly identified on the RTS website, for example, perhaps this influence is better described as an amalgam of 1960s revolutionary politics. When, for example, the *détournement* of the Situationists is referred to in the slogan of 'under the pavement, the beach', it is in fact unclear whether activists are influenced by the writings of the Situationist International or by the widespread postering by students of slogans such as this one.

Not only is it vitally important to understand the philosophy of the Situationists in order to understand the stimuli of RTS, the politics of Situationism, though far from a unified movement, can augment our overall understanding of Reclaim the Streets.³⁴ So, rather than only being a tool of

³² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³³ J. Stephens, *Anti-Disciplinary Protest: Sixties Radicalism and Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 30.

³⁴ Peter Wollen provides a highly detailed account of the divisions within the Situationist International (SI) movement, arguing that from the time the SI was founded in 1957 it was rife with dissension and splits. P. Wollen, *Raiding the Icebox: Reflections on Twentieth-Century Culture* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 120-157. The Aufheben collective also criticise the identification of Debord's work as the embodiment of all Situationist thought,

RTS, Situationism can also provide a means of better understanding the actions of the loose collective. Reclaim the Streets' street parties are akin to the situations that Situationist International (SI) artists advocated creating, whereby encounters would be constructed and urban settings would be the stage for "creatively lived moments", instances of critically transformed everyday life. Artists, in this case RTS protagonists and participants, were to produce:

...settings for situations and experimental models of possible modes of transformation of the city, as well as to agitate and polemicize against the sterility and oppression of the actual environment and ruling economic and political system.³⁵

The Situationist International advocated that creativity would be employed in the eventual defeat of capitalist systems and their inherent oppression and fragmentation. Workers (a term, Peter Wollen claims, was used in the broadest sense to denote non-capitalists and non-bureaucrats) could throw off the shackles of their alienation once they became aware, or conscious, of the spectacle they were passively consuming, a sense of spectacle fed by state and market capitalist societies to falsely unify alienated and fragmented workers.³⁶ Part of this awakening and realisation of alienation would be a grasping of obscured but omnipresent creativity:

Nobody, no matter how alienated, is without (or unaware of) an irreducible core of creativity, a camera obscura safe from intrusion from lies and from constraints.³⁷

Reclaim the Streets taps into this creativity. Music, dance, art, theatre, are all featured in any RTS action.³⁸ Creative displays are not the sole domain of the unknown organisers of an RTS action. Instead, the stage of the street is open to all to participate. Even the police in their blue or fluorescent

ignoring the diversity within and of the SI. See Aufheben collective, 'Intakes: back to the Situationist International', *Aufheben*, no. 9 (Summer 2000), pp. 47-48.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

³⁷ R. Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Rebel Press/Left Bank Books, 1994), p. 191.

yellow add colour and excitement to the street stage. Reclaim the Streets asks for pedestrians, even motorists, to unleash their creativity and join in the action. Vaneigem, in a classic text of Situationism, claims that "Spontaneity is the true mode of being of individual creativity, creativity's initial, immaculate form, unpolluted at the source and as yet unthreatened by the mechanisms of co-optation."³⁹ This would seem, however, to ignore the potential for collective spontaneity. The impact of spontaneous action is limited if it is confined only to individual spontaneous acts of creativity. When, for example, hundreds of RTS activists raced from the tube station at Camden in May 1996 and took over the High Street for a street carnival, it was an act of collective spontaneity that transformed the site from domain of cars and traffic to a community domain. The spontaneity was not limited to one person only.

The creativity and spontaneity that was unleashed in the events of May 1968, particularly in Paris, signalled the beginning for the Situationists of a prelude to revolution: "creativity, though equally distributed to all, only finds direct, spontaneous expression on specific occasions. These occasions are pre-revolutionary moments, the source of the poetry that changes life and transforms the world."⁴⁰ It is commonly mistaken, however, that for the Situationists May 1968 was the revolution itself. Instead, these events, when students and workers took to the streets of France in their thousands, were, for Situationists like Debord and Vaneigem, pre-revolutionary times. Perhaps the process of inflating the fervour of Paris 1968 as revolutionary fervour and honing in on the sentiment of activists like Daniel Cohn-Bendit, one of the student leaders, that this was a revolution, has warped the words of the Situationists. Acts of creativity and spontaneity do not in themselves signify a revolution from everyday life, but can stimulate a revolution and act as pre-revolutionary moments.⁴¹ Reclaim the Streets actions are not,

³⁸ For an autobiographical account of one anarchist's views on the politics of being permitted to dance freely, as part of self expression, see E. Goldman, *Living My Life*, vol. 1 (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970), p. 56.

³⁹ Vaneigem, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 197.

⁴¹ Wollen writes of the contradictory nature of the role of the SI in the events of 1968:

therefore, revolutions in themselves, but are intended to be agents of the revolution to come, during and after which community space takes precedence over strip shops and roads.

Carnavalesque protest

It is difficult, if not undesirable, to measure the revolutionary potential of RTS actions to bring about real political change. Robert Schechner argues that a carnivalesque action brings about temporary change only, while a revolution signals a more enduring, permanent change in the political status quo.⁴² Certainly, we can ascertain that over a series of RTS actions little permanent change has been achieved, particularly in terms of policy change. However, RTS activists would argue that all those spectators who either became participants or were initiators of the actions themselves had experienced permanent mindset change. They no longer saw a street as simply a corridor of transport but a site of community; they had also

...1968, saw the great revolutionary uprising, first of students, then of workers, which threatened to topple the de Gaulle regime. Here ...student groups were influenced by the SI, especially at Nanterre, where the uprising took shape, and the Situationists themselves played an active role in the events, seeking to encourage and promote workers' councils, and a revolutionary line within them, without exercising positive powers of decision and execution or political control of any kind. 1968 was both the zenith of SI activity and success, and also the beginning of its rapid decline. One more issue of the journal [*Internationale situationniste*] was published, in 1969, and the same year the last conference was held, in Venice. Further splits followed and in 1972 the organization was dissolved. For the situationists 1968 proved a bitter victory. Indeed, ironically, their contribution to the revolutionary uprising was remembered mainly through the diffusion and spontaneous expression of situationist ideas and slogans, in graffiti and in posters using detournment (mainly of comic strips, a graphic technique they had pioneered after 1962) as well as in serried assaults on the routines of everyday life. In short, it was a cultural rather than a political contribution, in the sense that the Situationists had come to demand. Debord's political theory was more or less reduced to the title of his book [*Society of the Spectacle*], generalized as an isolated catch phrase, separated from its theoretical component.

Wollen, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124.

⁴² R. Schechner, *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 83; in Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 146. See also J. R. Mintz, *Carnival Song and Society: Gossip, Sexuality and Creativity in Andalusia* (Oxford: Berg, 1997).

experienced being part of a community, albeit temporal, on the streets.⁴³ Jordan argues that:

...in the act of insurrectionary imagination carnival became revolution, real trees were planted, real transformations occurred. Real people, in a real space, in real time (that is, not framed by a calendrical festive date), underwent real change as they developed a new sense of confidence and an awareness of their individual and collective power; for a rare moment they had experienced the breath of the possible touching them – they had transformed the world.⁴⁴

Carnivals help to foster community – people come together freely to celebrate and, in the case of Reclaim the Streets actions, to revel in the creation of new community spaces. Ulf Boëthius argues that carnivals have historically fostered temporary communities, particularly by bringing people of different social classes (what Boëthius terms the high and the low) together when they would not normally coalesce. During carnivals, “the usual order was [is] turned upside down.”⁴⁵ In the case of RTS street carnivals, this subversion of normality means that the road becomes a festival space or even a place for trees. Jordan describes activists surreptitiously planting trees as an act of carnivalesque insurrection at the reclaiming of the M41 motorway by RTS activists in London. On July 13, 1996, 8,000 people took control of the motorway in West London and danced, celebrated and reclaimed the space for a nine hour carnival.⁴⁶ Thousands of people had arrived by tube at Shepherd’s Bush station by train and emerged from it en masse, awaiting directions to the secret location: “no-one knows where they are going – the mystery and excitement of it all is electrifying.”⁴⁷

⁴³ Author’s own interview with LS, London, 10.11.98.

⁴⁴ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

⁴⁵ U. Boëthius, ‘The history of high and low culture’, in J. Fornäs and G. Bolin (eds), *Youth Culture in Late Modernity* (London: Sage, 1995), p. 14.

⁴⁶ Anonymous author(s), ‘The Evolution of Reclaim the Streets’, on <http://www.gn.apc.org/rtss/>; site accessed 12.06.99. Jordan claims that as many as 10,000 people were at the M41 party. Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

⁴⁷ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

Jordan's description of the beginnings of the day of carnival on the M41 motorway convey the spontaneity and electricity of the RTS action:

Shepherd's Bush Green comes to a standstill as people pour on to it; up ahead a line of police has already sealed off the roundabout and blocked the way. A man takes off all his clothes and starts to dance on the roof of a stationary car. The crowd knows this is not the place: where is the sound system, the tripods? Then, as if by some miracle of collective telepathy, everyone turns back and disappears around the corner; a winding journey through backstreets, under railway bridges and then up over a barrier and suddenly they are on an enormous motorway and right behind the police lines. People run into the fast lane yelping with joy; up ahead they can see the sound system and tripods surrounded by police. ...The ecstatic crowd gravitates towards the truck carrying the sound system which is parked on the hard shoulder. People start banging on the side of the police van guarding it. The truck is now swarming with people. The police van decides it has lost control of the situation and starts to drive off; as it does the sides of the truck are lifted and the gut-shaking thump of techno blasts out of the sound system. The crowd roars – we've liberated a motorway through sheer numbers, through people power!⁴⁸

The M41 became a carnival for the day: people danced and socialised, celebrating their transitory collectivity; a café and stalls served food from the tarmac; a picnic site and a stage for fire jugglers and performers were erected on the central reservation of the motorway; a children's sandpit transformed the fast lane to a play lane. Art filled the black road, with vivid banners stretching across the six lanes, featuring a giant golden sun, 3.5 metre flowers *à la* Matisse, and the situationist slogan 'The society that abolishes every adventure makes its own abolition the only possible adventure.' Even a scrap-metal yard adjacent to the motorway was caught

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-4.

up in the "carnavalesque spirit of fun, irony and subversion"; they suspended a wrecked van over the motorway using one of their cranes.⁴⁹

The possibility of street theatre as political action was realised at the M41 day of carnival. Two massive figures, 10 metres high and 3 metres wide, moved through the crowd, with two women atop white hooped skirts, wearing Restoration wigs and playing bagpipes. They made for a striking image in themselves, but what the skirts disguised was the real subversion. Hidden beneath the skirts were people, drilling into the tarmac and planting saplings rescued from the path of the M11, which was still being built at the time. The people were completely hidden from the police by the skirts, and the noise of the drills was disguised by the ever-present music.

A feature was the skirts – wooden frames in which a person would stand on a platform looking like a giant in Elizabethan costume. Most of the time they were just wheeled up and down the motorway with the person on top scattering glitter like at a carnival. Then we stopped near the sound system to hide the noise and someone got in the bottom of each and started digging holes in the tarmac with petrol-driven road hammers. Actually, the holes weren't that big. But there were quite a few of them.⁵⁰

They worked throughout the day and night, and the next morning the M41's tarmac was strewn with freshly planted saplings, which forced the Highways Agency to close the motorway for several days while resurfacing it.⁵¹

Street protest as theatre

At this RTS event, and, for that matter, any RTS event, there is a symbiosis of theatre and politics. Reclaim the Streets have become synonymous with

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

⁵⁰ Ian, an RTS activist, interviewed in E. Brass and S. Poklewski Koziell, *Gathering Force: DiY Culture – Radical Action for Those Tired of Waiting* (London: The Big Issue Writers, 1997), p. 49.

⁵¹ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 144. See the visual images on the Reclaim the Streets homepage, at <http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/>; site accessed 12.06.99.

activists carrying enormous puppets, effigies of political figures such as the Roads minister of 1990-1992, Christopher Chope, with activists in colourful, carnivalesque costumes parading through the dancers on stilts, and with activists performing with fire sticks and drums. This emphasis on performance and theatre as political action is not, however, unique to Reclaim the Streets. Nor did it begin with the advent of RTS. One of the most celebrated examples of the combination of direct action protest and theatre occurred during the May 1968 Paris uprising. Lebel, in *Notes on Political Street Theatre, Paris 1968-1969*, explicitly uses language that invokes the theatre to describe the events of the Paris uprising. For example, "the first stage of an uprising...the first stage of any revolution, is always theatrical.... The May uprising was theatrical in that it was a gigantic fiesta, a revelatory and sensuous explosion outside the 'normal' pattern of politics." He goes on to describe the actual theatrical events which occurred in the May 1968 uprising:

Street theatre as such started to pop up here and there in mass demonstrations, such as the 13th of May, which gathered more than a million people. Large effigies appeared of the CRS [French Riot Police], of De Gaulle and other political clowns. Short, funny, theatrical rituals were performed around them as they burned. When the officially subsidised Odeon theatre was occupied by the movement, many small groups of students and actors began to interpret the daily news in the street in short comic dramas followed by discussions with the passing audience.⁵²

This idea of taking direct action theatre, or agit-prop (agitation and propaganda) theatre as it is sometimes referred to, to the streets is very important in any discussion of Reclaim the Streets. The carnival atmosphere created by the use of street theatre in a demonstration can make the political message more accessible for a wider audience, and hence potentially enhance community. Lebel writes that "...we tried to use street

⁵² J-J. Lebel, 'Notes on political street theatre, Paris 1968-1969', *Drunken Boat*, no. 1 (Autonomea, no date), p. 27, in Anonymous author(s), 'Stop making sense: Direct

theatre as a means to provoke encounters and discussions among people who usually shut themselves off from each other."⁵³ Many people spontaneously participate in RTS actions because of the action theatre that takes place. This action theatre is a hybrid of direct action protest and drama. Rubin writes of the role of theatre: "The role of the revolutionary is to create theatre which creates a revolutionary frame of reference. ...The goal of theatre is to get as many people as possible to overcome fear by taking action."⁵⁴

The street party atmosphere of RTS events fosters spontaneous political activity. Activists there may suddenly turn from dancing to painting slogans on the tarmac. It is a simple example but it reveals the impromptu nature of RTS activism. Schechner identifies that this improvisation is also at the heart of festivals and carnivals. This is an unsurprising observation, given that RTS events are so closely aligned with carnivals and street festivals. He writes:

When people go into the streets en masse, they are celebrating life's fertile possibilities. They eat, drink, make theatre, make love, and enjoy each other's company. They put on masks and costumes, erect and wave banners, and construct effigies not merely to disguise or embellish their ordinary selves, or to flaunt the outrageous, but also to act out the multiplicity each human life is. ...They protest, often by means of farce and parody, against what is oppressive, ridiculous, and outrageous.⁵⁵

We can liken an RTS to Ehrenreich's description of a European carnival of the late middle ages and early modern period, when "people feasted, drank, danced for days on end, usually in circles, lines, or groups of three."⁵⁶ Also

action and action theatre', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 6 (no publication date provided), p. 12.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁵⁴ J. Rubin, cited in Schechner, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁵⁵ Schechner, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁵⁶ B. Ehrenreich, 'Transcendence, hope and ecstasy: a historical look at political passion and fun', *Z Magazine* (August 1998), online publication: <http://www.zmag.org/zmag/zarticle.cfm?url=articles/ehrenreichsept98.htm>; accessed 23.09.99. Ehrenreich also asserts that in the 16th century French peasants could expect to spend up to three months of the year in carnival revelry.

of pertinence to Reclaim the Streets carnival-like actions, Ehrenreich underlines the importance of the long, historical fusion of politics and carnival.

"Celebrating life's fertile possibilities" is something echoed in the RTS web page: the street party was "an explosion of our suppressed potential."⁵⁷ The possibilities are limitless at an RTS event because there is no prescribed agenda, no set list of activities. RTS does not direct participants simply to march behind placards. This unpredictability has caused consternation amongst UK authorities, something Schechner warns of: "To allow people to assemble in the streets is always to flirt with the possibility of improvisation – that the unexpected might happen."⁵⁸

There is, however, a key difference between the state recognising the possibility for state-sanctioned impromptu activity, such as the contemporary Nottinghill Carnival in London, and the lack of recognition for illegal gatherings like RTS ones. In this way, RTS protests are vastly different from traditional carnivals or festivals, which are most often organised around a particular date and with the state's prior knowledge, such as May Day celebrations: "Obeying strict calendars, and confined to designated neighbourhoods, the authorities can keep track of these carnivals and prepare the police."⁵⁹

Party as protest: no invite for police

Reclaim the Streets events in the UK have all been held without police cooperation. This is a key part of Reclaim the Streets's politics in the UK. It is not a political decision to which all activists organising under the name of RTS have subscribed. RTS in Melbourne, for example, has organised legal street parties in conjunction with the police.⁶⁰ However, in UK cities RTS gatherings are always illegal. A small number of people are involved in the planning of a location:

⁵⁷ Anonymous author(s), '...Painted Ladies', *op. cit.*

⁵⁸ Schechner, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

How an action generally evolves is that if somebody has a strong idea they put it forward and we consider if it will work. If enough people agree then we all meet and find out what our commitments and roles will be. A closed core group then forms to keep the location secret.⁶¹

This is done in secret to prevent the police from barricading the site of the RTS event. Police nervousness was seen after the massive M41 gathering, when London police raided the RTS offices, impounded computers and arrested an activist for conspiracy to cause criminal damage to a motorway.⁶²

Only a small number of people are involved in the planning of the otherwise secret RTS locations and this secretiveness has resulted in accusations of hierarchical organisation. Although there is no official membership-type organisation at the core of RTS, the need to keep the RTS locations secret from police and the state has resulted in there being a small group of people who have more knowledge than other activists. This is, of course, a problem for a collective that aims to be different from traditional leftist political groups, marked by their hierarchies.

At times, even the weekly RTS meetings in London have been held in secret locations, due to fear of police surveillance and infiltration.⁶³ This further reinforces the notion of those interested and involved in Reclaim the Streets being divided between those who are in the know and those who are not. The secret location of meeting places also means that it is difficult for people who have been at an RTS gathering to know where to go to be involved in the planning meetings. They run the risk of arousing suspicions if they ask others at an RTS street party and yet also risk being a continual participant in the street party without any deeper level of involvement.

⁶⁰ Interview with G. and S., Melbourne, 18.11.99; and L., Melbourne, 05.10.98.

⁶¹ Ian, in Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

⁶² Jordan, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-7.

⁶³ RTS meet on a weekly basis in London and many other cities across the UK and now the world, including Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Edinburgh, Cardiff,

Meetings are often not user-friendly for women activists, with meetings in late 1998 held in a pub in a backstreet of an estate near the Elephant and Castle tube, an area renowned in London for a high incidence of violent attacks on women.⁶⁴ The question must then be asked if women are effectively excluded from attending planning meetings due to their location, just as it must be asked if newcomers are excluded due to the secrecy of the meeting place. From mid-1999, the location of the weekly RTS meeting began to be advertised on the RTS webpage.⁶⁵

In 1997/8 RTS trialed a brief experiment. Meetings in London were divided between the north and south of the city. There were multiple reasons for this arrangement. Some north London activists claimed that consistently holding the meeting in south London prevented them from attending the meetings, as north-south travel in London can be quite laborious. The split was also partially designed to break the south's stronghold. RTS activists from north London objected to the stereotype that their part of the city was less politically active. The two meeting system did not last. It essentially split the group in two, both numerically and psychologically. Separate RTS events were more difficult to organise, with fewer people at the separate meetings than expected. Joint events were also difficult to co-ordinate due to problems maintaining communications between the two groups.⁶⁶

The street as a meeting space

One way RTS solved its objective of making public meetings more open was to treat the street parties themselves as the ultimate public meetings. The street became transformed into an open political arena, a meeting place where political participation was non-hierarchical and unrestricted: "A carnival celebrates temporary liberation from the established order; it marks the suspension of all hierarchy, rank, privileges, norms and

Glasgow, Birmingham, Sydney, Melbourne, Berlin, Amsterdam, Prague, Boston, and Toronto.

⁶⁴ Author's own observation of these RTS meetings. Interview with LS., London, 10.11.98.

⁶⁵ See <http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/>; site accessed June 23, 1999.

⁶⁶ From interview with S., London, 08.11.98.

prohibitions."⁶⁷ Reclaim the Streets advocates that the street party become the forum for communal politics: "The street party, in theory, suggests a dissolution of centralised power structures in favour of a network of self-controlled localities."⁶⁸

This network would extend beyond the temporary street party to permanent political change: "the participatory 'party' or 'street' meeting could be a real objective... for an event that goes beyond temporarily celebrating its autonomy to laying the ground for permanent social freedom." Participatory communities, with discussion areas, decision-making bodies, and delegates mandated to attend other parties, could all occur within the broad street party arena. But they would not only occur within the street party. These participatory communities, or communes, would spread to form throughout the society.⁶⁹ RTS's take on the role of these communes in anarchist theory is described in the Earth First! eco activist journal/zine:

Based on self-government through face-to-face grassroots or street level assemblies they were the final authority for all public policy. Linked together in confederal co-ordination they formed the Commune of communes, which, translated into current terminology, gives us the Network of networks or, more appropriately: the Street Party of street parties.⁷⁰

The depth of this belief that the participatory communities that can emerge from RTS street parties will grow beyond the street party will become more evident in discussion of the collaboration between RTS and striking Liverpool dock workers.

RTS: part of a direct action protest network

Reclaim the Streets activists label themselves as part of a direct action group, however loose that group may be. There is an acknowledgment in RTS publicity that direct action is "not a last resort when other methods

⁶⁷ Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets!', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

have failed, but the preferred way of doing things."⁷¹ This is a sentiment shared not only by Reclaim the Streets activists but also, as we have seen, by anti-roads activists and anti-Criminal Justice Act activists. A direct action network is a loose coalition of groups which utilise direct action protest techniques and adhere to the belief that direct action is more than a tactic, it is a means of change:

Direct action is founded on the idea that people can develop the ability for self rule only through practice, and proposes that all persons directly decide the important issues facing them. Direct action encompasses a whole range of activities, from organising co-ops to engaging in resistance to authority. Direct action is not just a tactic, it is individuals asserting their ability to control their own lives and to participate in social life without the need for mediation or control by bureaucrats or professional politicians.⁷²

From the beginning RTS utilised direct action techniques that went beyond the norm of protest marches and petitioning. Instead, London RTS activists placed a trashed car in Park Lane, London, to symbolise the arrival of Carmageddon (Armageddon triggered by continued proliferation of cars) and painted cycle lanes during the night in London streets.⁷³ The carnival as protest is itself an example of direct action as both tactic and politics. It goes beyond tactic because it is purposefully non-hierarchical and because it is a subversion of our preconceived notion of politics as orderly and organised by elites. Direct action is, in theory, empowering and this empowerment extends to all participants in RTS street parties. There is no command, there is no limit to the creativity and expression that an individual can reveal in protest to the dominant car culture and the political hierarchical status quo.

⁷¹ From 'Reclaim the Streets! Direct Action', <http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/>; site accessed 23.06.99.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets!', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

Direct action has not been limited to staging street parties and the reclaiming of streets. Reclaim the Streets targets other aspects of car culture. RTS activists employed direct action tactics when they locked on to the entrance of the Nigerian High Commission and dropped enormous banners proclaiming 'Murderers' from the Shell AGM building.⁷⁴ The action at the Shell's UK headquarters illustrates RTS's tackling of multiple issues. Car culture is seen to impact on human rights, and this is particularly evident in Nigeria. The oil producer Royal Dutch/Shell is reputed to have strong links with the Nigerian government and army and has been accused by many human rights groups of providing the Nigerian army and police forces with arms for use against protestors. The Royal Dutch/Shell company even has its own police force in Nigeria, whose members, drawn from the state police force, wear Shell uniforms which are virtually identical to their state counterparts' except for the yellow oil company logo. This Royal Dutch/Shell police force has detained anti-oil activists and was instrumental in the case of the imprisonment and subsequent execution of nine Ogoni tribe members.⁷⁵

Politics as play and theatre

RTS activists' use of direct action encroaches upon the commonly held view of politics as staid. This is because direct action frequently makes use of play as a political tool and a protest tool. Jordan writes:

⁷⁴ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

⁷⁵ These nine Ogoni, including world famous writer and activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, were executed for their part in highlighting the ongoing destruction of their homeland by Royal Dutch/Shell's operations and the complicity between the corporation and the Nigerian government and security forces. This, of course, was not the reason given by the Nigerian government when the nine Ogoni activists were executed in 1995. For an excellent account of Saro-Wiwa's activism in Nigeria, his subsequent execution and the relationship between oil production, environmental degradation and human rights abuses see Aaron Sachs, 'Dying for oil', *World Watch*, May 1996, pp. 10-21. Other commentaries include Anonymous, 'Delta blues', *The Economist*, February 13 1999, pp. 44-45; A. Ruddock, 'Shell should wash its dirty hands', *New Statesman*, November 8 1996, p. 10; C. Bright, 'Eco-justice in Nigeria', *World Watch* (July/August 1996), pp. 9-11; D. Wheeler and P. Moszynski, 'Blood on British business hands', *New Statesman and Society* (17 November 1995), pp. 14-18; and J. Damu and D. Bacon, 'Oil rules Nigeria', *Black Scholar* (Winter/Spring 1996), pp. 51-55.

Direct action introduces the concept of play into the straight, predictably grey world of politics. People being chased by a bunch of uncoordinated security guards through thigh-deep mud on a construction site; figures jumping on to the machinery, laughing, blowing kisses to the diggers drivers and D-locking their neck to the digger arm; driving the security off a piece of land, re-squatting it, climbing to the top of a tree and singing at the top of your voice.⁷⁶

By utilising play activists are really subverting the political process. Reclaim the Streets activists are reclaiming politics, taking it away from the state, where the political process often deters because of the veneer of inaccessibility. Play helps to break down these barriers and, therefore, through play, the potential for both political participation and inclusive community is broadened. Blocking a motorway to protest against the government's road policy and turning that motorway into the scene of a dance party is inclusive and not exclusive as parliamentary politics are so often deemed.

Party as protest is one of the integral elements of Reclaim the Streets. Activism or protest is not necessarily restricted to the so-called corridors of power, to parliaments, council chambers and lobbyist offices. We know that political activism physically takes place far away from these venues. And yet even as we acknowledge that politics can take place in any arena, we often find it difficult to detach politics or political activism from a stigma of dullness, staidness and seriousness. These words do little though to convey the electricity of an RTS street party. Barbara Ehrenreich writes of this frequently unacknowledged side of politics:

Perhaps the best kept political secret of our time is that politics, as a democratic undertaking, can be not only fun, in the entertaining sense, but profoundly uplifting, even ecstatic.

⁷⁶ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

...politics overflows the constraints of parties, committees, elections, and legislation and becomes a kind of festival.⁷⁷

Direct action as demonstrated by RTS is not only playful but can also be dramatic and theatrical. Many RTS utilise street theatre as part of the protest action. One of the most evident displays of this street theatre element is the inclusion of stilted figures, often dressed in exaggerated business attire. They loom over the protest scene taking place on the street below. Performers, such as mime artists and fire twirlers, also join in the throngs of activists at Reclaim the Streets. Jordan goes so far as to proclaim that all direct action of RTS is in fact performance, "performance where the poetic and the pragmatic join hands."⁷⁸ The use of theatre or the theatrical is not new, as we have seen in discussion of the Situationists. In 1970, Jerry Rubin wrote:

The role of the revolutionary is to create theatre which creates a revolutionary frame of reference. The power to define is the power to control... The goal of theatre is to get as many people as possible to overcome fear by taking action.⁷⁹

The theatre of an RTS action is integral to the concept of difference and subversion that is at the heart of RTS. People dressed in period costume while trees are planted beneath the skirts is a visually dramatic inclusion in a street dance. Even the use of the RTS flag en masse at events creates a vivid visual impact, with their bold black, green and red lightning strike design. At any Reclaim the Streets in Britain dozens of activists carry these massive flags. Activists' loud drumming is another RTS feature. Drummers always perform throughout the crowds and activists will often sing at events. While some RTS performance is spontaneous and unorchestrated, such as the singing and drumming, other performance is planned. Jordan describes the performance art intrinsic to crane occupation:

⁷⁷ Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*

⁷⁸ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

⁷⁹ J. Rubin, cited in Schechner, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

The sight of a fragile figure silhouetted against a blue sky, perched dangerously high on a crane that has to stop work for the day, is both beautiful and functional. Direct action is by nature deeply theatrical and fundamentally political. The performance of climbing a crane on a building site has many different functions – pragmatism, representation, theatricality and ritual coalesce in direct action.⁸⁰

Reclaim the Streets's use of dramatic performance as protest follows a long history of unofficial performances taking place in spaces or locales not architecturally imagined as theatres. Seizing a work space, traffic space or official space and turning it into a play and performance space is part of the theatre itself. Outdoor spaces, including courtyards, streets, walls, beaches, lakes, rooftops, plazas, mountains, have all been used over the past three decades by an increasing number of performance experimenters. The purposes of these performances overlap, and include aesthetic, personal, ritual, and political aims. Art performances and symbolic public political actions have overlapped. Schechner uses the example of students from the Shanghai Theatre Academy who performed a graphic and striking interpretation of how they experienced China. One performer/demonstrator was bound in chains, with another wearing a skeletal death mask and others drenched in stage blood. All of the students were contorted, as though writhing in agony. It was like an insight into the future, of what would occur in Beijing, June 8, 1989.⁸¹

Using street theatre as a political act has become increasingly uncommon, despite examples like the Shanghai students' protest drama and the RTS street theatre. John Jordan argues that this is unsurprising, given the ongoing separation of art and politics in societies that have adopted western cultural values as their norm. The separation can be revoked or reversed if these values, which Jordan argues are at the centre of the global ecological and social problems, are challenged by a cultural response. So, the culture

⁸⁰ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

⁸¹ Schechner, *op. cit.*, pp. 49 - 51.

that has resulted in a schism between everyday life, politics and art can only be challenged or assaulted by a cultural response.⁸²

Protest and artistic expression

The beginnings of an attack on the separation of art from politics and from everyday life can be seen in the incorporation of art into the Reclaim the Streets events. Politics and art meld: a painting of a Matisse-inspired giant flower above a street party on a motorway is not only an artistic statement but also a political statement. The flower contrasts with the concrete eyesore that is a motorway, and reminds us that the giant road is not the only possibility that could exist in that space.

The image of the flower, just one such artistic, creative statement made at RTS events, is not the work of an artist removed from the politics of RTS. Instead, it is the work of an activist, someone whose prime motivation is not the creation of something for its aesthetic appeal, but for its statement. Often, the art of an RTS is virtually invisible, having melded into the politics so well that it does not stand out as art, rather part of the effective statement or message. A clear example of this successful fusion of art and politics is the incorporation of original music into the street scene of an RTS. Activists beating on both conventional and unconventional percussion instruments have become virtually an expected feature of any RTS.

The incorporation of art into political resistance helps to remind us that politics is neither staid nor exclusive. Reclaim the Streets' political activism is open to all, and can be inclusive of people creating giant street puppets or spontaneously scrawling slogans on the roadway. The image of political power as being remote has been historically supported by the forced cleavage of politics from creativity and fun, as Ehrenreich argues.⁸³ Resistance that actively seeks to make use of creative expression makes politics more accessible at the same time as making its message more vivid and more attractive, not only aesthetically, but because it is not serious, but

⁸² Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

enjoyable. By focussing on incorporating play and art in RTS politics, activists are not only attempting to reclaim community spaces but are also inviting the wider community to participate.

RTS and street party as attack on capital

This emphasis on politics as fun can perhaps lead to a misunderstanding or a downplaying of the 'serious' side of RTS. People often fail to see that the colourful carnivalesque atmosphere of a massive street party in Islington, London, Birmingham, or the most recent nine-hour street party on a nine-lane freeway in Helsinki held in July 1999, are part of the political statement of the various RTS collectives. By staging a street party, or a "dis-organisation" stunt as they are referred to in Brass and Koziell, some people may think of Reclaim the Streets as a collective that simply coordinates mass public events. Brass and Koziell describe the scene of an RTS in rather simplistic terms, focussing on the entertainment value of the reclaiming of the street: "...jugglers, mime artists and fire eaters entertain the crowd and picnic tables provide food."⁸⁴

Reclaim the Streets, however, has a message that goes beyond simply staging street carnivals in opposition to the car: "...We're using the metaphor of a car to illustrate a variety of things: pollution, congestion, urban planning, public space."⁸⁵ The Reclaim the Streets Internet homepage goes further than this and proclaims that capitalism itself is RTS's target:

But cars are just one piece of the jigsaw and RTS is also about raising the wider questions behind the transport issue – about the political and economic forces which drive 'car culture'. Governments claim that "roads are good for the economy". More goods travelling on longer journeys, more petrol being burnt, more customers at out-of-town supermarkets – it is all about increasing "consumption", because that is an indicator of

⁸³ Ehrenreich, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

⁸⁵ Phil, a so-called "member of the group", in Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

"economic growth". The greedy, short-term exploitation of dwindling resources regardless of the immediate or long-term costs. Therefore RTS's attack on cars cannot be detached from a wider attack on capitalism itself.⁸⁶

Part of this broadened attack on capitalism has been an ongoing active affiliation between London RTS and two major industrial disputes in the UK, the Liverpool Dockers dispute and the current Tube Workers dispute. The link between RTS and parts of the labour movement was made active in 1996, when Reclaim the Streets held street protests to support the RMT rail union in their dispute over staffing with the London Underground. RTS participation in these protests in support of the Tube Workers was based not only on RTS's pro-public transport stance; Reclaim the Streets advocates that the alliance was formed with the RMT rail union and later with the Liverpool dock workers "because the Dockers and tube workers are attacked by a social order that puts the requirements of the market above those of human need. ...They're fighting back and so are we, when we work together the simple fact is, we're stronger."⁸⁷ RTS activists sought networks between their loose collective and other activist networks. An activist community that extends beyond the temporal coming together at a street-party action must be based on strong networks.

*Collaboration between London RTS and the Liverpool dockers:
the advent of a common protest space*

In September 1996 links between Reclaim the Streets and organised labour were intensified when RTS and a range of other activist groups and individuals joined in support of 500 Liverpool dock workers who were sacked by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company (MDHC) on September 26, 1995. These workers were dismissed without notice by the MDHC for striking after five workers were dismissed on September 25, 1995, for leaving a ship when told they were expected to work overtime at short

⁸⁶ From Anonymous author(s), 'The origins of Reclaim the Streets', *op. cit.*

⁸⁷ From Anonymous author(s), 'Why did RTS link up with the tube and Liverpool dock workers?': <http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/>; site accessed 23.06.99.

notice without overtime rates. Twenty-two fellow workers of the private contractor Torside were dismissed on that same day for refusing to return to work without their sacked colleagues. By September 28, 1995, the events in Liverpool worsened and over 500 dockworkers⁸⁸ were sacked by the MDHC for taking strike action in solidarity with the original dismissed workers. The Liverpool docks continued to operate, however, as MDHC entered a contract with Drake International, a London-based employment agency, to provide casual, non-unionised or 'scab' labour.⁸⁹

The sacked Liverpool dockers picketed the Liverpool docks for over two years and, like during the 1984-1985 miners' strike, the dockers waged a solidarity campaign that extended well beyond the physical confines of Liverpool. Peter Kennedy writes of the significance of the Liverpool Dockers dispute:

It is now over two years since 500 Liverpool Dockers were dismissed by the MDHC for daring to defend minimum conditions of work and the collective principle of not crossing a picket line. In the ensuing period the sacked dockers, their families and support groups, have mounted a national and international campaign for the reinstatement of the dockers and a fight against the global tide of work casualisation imposed by the ruling classes. The campaign has been unique in the way it has combined 'old' and 'new' collectivities, such as rank and file trade unionism, women and unemployed support groups, environmentalists, socialists and Anarchists, to produce the embryo of new forms of class struggle.... Effectively, the dockers have been at the centre of a network of

⁸⁸ This figure varies widely. For example, Michael Lavalette and Jane Kennedy cite that 500 workers were dismissed, while John Pilger writes that 329 men employed by MDHC were dismissed on September 26, 1995. M. Lavalette and J. Kennedy, *Solidarity on the Waterfront: The Liverpool Lock Out of 1995/96* (Merseyside: Liver Press, 1996), p. 2; J. Pilger, 'They never walk alone', on-line publication: <http://www.labournet.net/docks2/9611/pilger.htm>; accessed 15.12.1999.

⁸⁹ Lavalette and Kennedy, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-3.

social groups who have drawn together against a common enemy....⁹⁰

Diverse networks of activists came together to commemorate the anniversary of the Liverpool Dockers' Dispute in September, 1996. The groups that joined with the Liverpool dockers included the Green Party, EcoTrip, the Freedom Network and, of course, RTS.⁹¹ They were in turn joined by a host of organised labour organisations, particularly trade unions, which participated in the long running campaign in support of the Liverpool dockers. Reclaim the Streets helped to organise a 10,000 strong march and rally in Liverpool on September 28-29, 1996, to commemorate the first year of the strike. Brass and Koziell write of the strange combination of elements of traditional labour commitment and DiY innovation, with brass bands and bagpipes playing alongside techno music; and trade union banners held aloft alongside the red, green and black Reclaim the Streets Victory to the Dockers flag. This contrast is also noted in an account of the day by a dockers' supporter, Dave Graham: "On the Saturday there was a demonstration through the city centre which was [an] odd mixture of the old and new. New was the colour, the music and the feeling of excitement which many of the people brought to what has been in the past a rather tired, social democratic trudge through the streets."⁹²

Brass and Koziell also make much of the juxtaposition of families in official strikers' T-shirts and dreadlocked cyclists from groups like Reclaim the Streets.⁹³ This, however, is a rather simplistic interpretation of the diversity evident at the march through Liverpool's City centre. Clearly, not all striking dockers and their families dress conservatively and nor do all RTS collective supporters sport dreadlocks. Nevertheless, activists participating in the march were concerned that there was too great a

⁹⁰ P. Kennedy, 'Liverpool dockers: the struggle against the bosses and labour bureaucracy', on-line publication: <http://www.labournet.net/docks2/9710/mpss1.htm>; accessed 15.12.99.

⁹¹ Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

⁹² D. Graham, 'Docking and diving', *RSN News*, issue 2 (publication date not provided), p. 6.

⁹³ See, for example, Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 118 and the photo and caption on p. 119.

difference between the RTS people and the dockers and their supporters. This was largely overcome by building a level of trust and cooperation before the event:

'We were working with the dockers for six or seven weeks before the September march,' says Sam of Reclaim the Streets. 'There was a lot of distrust at the beginning as each side didn't know where the other was coming from. We were worried that the dockers might be very hard left with fixed ideas and they were worried that we were young, crusty anarchists.'⁹⁴

Dave Graham, heavily involved in the waterfront dispute and a prominent commentator on the dispute, contends that rather than there being a sense of distrust among participants in the march, there was simply a sense that the two broad groups did not know how the other would react in a crisis situation. There was such a crisis situation during the weekend of the September march, when the Operational Support Division of the Liverpool police, kitted out in full body armour with holstered pistols, surrounded the Custom House where RTS activists had been squatting. As Liverpool dockers and their supporters rushed to the scene, one of the activists allegedly wanted "to impress on the eco-warriors the need to avoid a futile confrontation", and asked "would they be in the same frame of mind? How do they handle situations like this?"⁹⁵

A protest space was developed, with RTS activists, or the so-called eco-warriors, basing themselves in Liverpool for a number of weeks before the march date. A sense of trust was developed, an essential component of any joint action. The strong sense of community that had developed around the dockers dispute extended to include the RTS activists. For example, dockers, their families and supporters billeted activists from outside of Liverpool and a local pub provided activists with a place to 'crash' for the night and free food and beer. The march was followed by a day of

⁹⁴ Taken from Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

⁹⁵ Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

workshops, de-briefings and the opportunity for dockers and their support groups to talk politics with the so-called DiY brigade.⁹⁶

The protest space created around the march in September to mark the first year of striking was a cohesive and rewarding one. Graham writes that the activists who came to Liverpool in support of the striking dockers under the banner of Reclaim the Streets brought with them new ideas and new ways of doing things. Graham contends that many also expressed a naive curiosity about the dispute, as they had participated primarily in green disputes rather than labour disputes in the past.⁹⁷ With this alleged curiosity came enthusiasm: one of the dockers' leaders, Bobby Morton, says about the September march that, "The DiY people brought their exuberance and gave us a tremendous boost."⁹⁸ The benefits of the union between labour left and green were mutual, with one activist at the march, a member of the Green Party, pointing out the lessons that could be learnt by collectives like RTS from the Liverpool dockers' experiences:

The dockers are not 'greenies', their perspective is centralist left. Due to lack of support from the trade union leadership and the Labour Party, they have formed incredibly strong ties in their local community – in a way that most greens just dream about – and on an international level with dockers around the world.

However, we are both against the same things – such as global capitalism and imports of toxic waste – and through more contact between us the dockers will see the inherent connections between social justice and environmental protection and the greens will get an understanding of the sort of tight-knit self-supporting communities we want to build.⁹⁹

The Reclaim the Streets webpage states that the very question of why RTS and the Liverpool dock workers came together reveals that there is a massive over-emphasis on a distinction between ecological issues and social

⁹⁶ Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁹⁷ Graham, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁹⁸ Cited in Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

issues. In fact, the anonymous author(s) of the webpage asserts that "this separation and presentation of the ecological crisis as unconnected to other forms of exploitation only serves the interests of business and state, and needs to be overcome if society is to survive."¹⁰⁰ The ongoing division between green and labour campaigns can be viewed as a divide and destroy ploy on behalf of the state, whereby the efforts of activists concerned with broadly social justice issues are forced to join one camp and resist the dominant paradigm from within that single camp only. The Reclaim the Streets-Liverpool dockers alliance reveals that these two supposedly separate interests can combine effectively. Further, the issue of mass dismissals on the waterfront can be viewed not as a specific labour issue, but an issue of justice. It is a dispute that has benefited from the input of diverse networks of activists.

RTS involvement in the action with the Liverpool dockers was, of course, made possible by previous attempts by both Liverpool dockers and RTS activists to form links and networks between the two groups of activists. The alliance is integral to the politics of RTS, specifically to its belief that open forums build direct action networks, whether these open forums occur in a meeting place like Conway Hall in London, a council-owned space used for many activist meetings, or on the street:

The street party could easily involve a public meeting or community assembly that works in opposition to the state; towards taking direct control of its locality and giving all an equal voice in decision-making. By including and engaging with other struggles, by involving more local associations, clubs, tenants', work and community groups, by helping others organise smaller street parties that bypass official channels, we extend the practice of direct action and make such a politics possible.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Cited in Brass and Koziell, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-1.

¹⁰⁰ From Anonymous author(s), 'Why did RTS link up with the tube and Liverpool dock workers?', *op. cit.*

¹⁰¹ Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets!', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

There is a degree of inclusiveness in the politics of Reclaim the Streets. It would seem that activists involved in RTS seek an expanding and more diverse activist network. Such rhetoric does, however, gloss over the advantages gained by Reclaim the Streets. The collective's involvement in support of the dockers dispute exposed the politics of RTS to a whole new audience – trade unionists, and other activists most often associated with labour disputes. The involvement also went part way in overcoming the preconception that there is an insurmountable gap between activism pertaining to labour disputes and activism pertaining to supposedly more ecological issues. It must also be recognised, however, that the joint actions between RTS activists and the Liverpool dockers and their supporters were not unanimously supported. In an article on activism against opencast mining, an activist argues that in her/his ideal world there would in fact be no mines or docks, thus qualifying her/his solidarity with the Liverpool dockers.¹⁰²

Reclaiming whose streets?
RTS and the disrecognition of class

Reclaim the Streets publicity does not refer to the notion of class - neither in its pamphlets nor on its homepage. One possible explanation is that an explicit reference to class conflict or class struggle would possibly limit the appeal of Reclaim the Streets. People are attracted to RTS and its politics because it offers something new. This is, of course, not accidental. Reclaim the Streets is actively seeking something new - an inclusive, spontaneous, fun activism. The issue of the reappropriation of space, just one of the focal points of Reclaim the Streets, transcends class. Issues of pollution and the promotion of car culture transcend class.

RTS activists explicitly argue through their actions and through their publicity that issues of social justice relating to the dockers dispute or the London Underground workers also transcend class. On the RTS webpage, under the title of 'Reclaim the Streets and the Liverpool dockers and if the

¹⁰² Anonymous author(s), 'Re-open the deep mines? Over my dead body!', *Do or Die*:

world of the Liverpool Dockers seems at odds with that of the Street Party, think again...', references are made to the evils of big business and the state;¹⁰³ both are conventionally foes of the labour movement. The implication then is that the adversaries of the labour movement are also the antagonists of activists from Reclaim the Streets. Again, the deletion of the word class would seem deliberate. It is implied, certainly with reference to big business, but it is not explicitly stated that the struggle for social justice is a class-based struggle.

A criticism levelled at Reclaim the Streets is that it does not openly engage in the class struggle. For such critics, like the Aufheben collective, its involvement in the Liverpool dockers campaign and the ongoing tube workers campaign is not enough.¹⁰⁴ Instead, this group advocates open acknowledgement of the importance of class issues and the innate link between class struggle and the struggle for social issues. In an article on the anti-roads movement and the No M11 campaign in particular, Aufheben accuses the movement of obscuring the connection with historical antecedents of workers' struggles in Britain, Germany, Spain. It is necessary, claims the Aufheben collective, for those engaged in the anti-roads struggle, including Reclaim the Streets, to "seek to go beyond their limits" and develop class consciousness. In a more vehement manner, the authors also attack the appropriation of the word 'culture' by academics and

Voices from Earth First!, no. 7 (publication date not provided), p. 32.

¹⁰³ See Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets and the Liverpool Dockers and if the world of the Liverpool Dockers seems at odds with that of the Street Party think again...', <http://www.gn.apc.org/rtts/>; site accessed 23.06.99.

¹⁰⁴ As discussed in the preceding section, RTS activists have attempted to build networks of activism with the striking London Underground workers. The struggle of these workers against the proposed privatisation of the tube system (or part privatisation as is currently being proposed by London Mayor Ken Livingstone) is ongoing and on May 1, 1999, RTS activists staged an action in support of the tubeworkers, turning "the tube into a Place to Party!" Activists were asked to show their solidarity with the tube workers and "revel against the fat cats." Justice?, 'Tubeway barmy', *SchNEWS*, no. 208 (16 April 1999), p. 2. For up-to-the-minute news of the tube workers dispute see the Transport Issues section in *The Guardian*, on-line edition: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>.

journalists in the term 'DiY Culture' to obscure the connections with past class struggles.¹⁰⁵

Linked to this notion of lack of engagement in the issue of class, is the criticism that Reclaim the Streets activists in fact have no affinity with the working class because they are in fact members of the privileged middle class. In a letter entitled 'Reclaiming whose streets?' in the anarchist *Black Flag* magazine, RTS is the subject of a barrage of criticism, relating particularly to an RTS in Tottenham in 1998:

...I looked around to see people of various states of consciousness crashed out in alcoholic heaps on the road and some highlighting the problems of public transport by dancing to the bland throb of techno on bus shelters which looked like they were going to collapse. The notion didn't occur to the ravers that the day after someone might need that shelter to catch a bus or shelter from the rain on a cold night.

...I tell you what does make a difference to someone of low or no income, who does a bit of minicabbing on a Saturday night and can't get their cars out because some group has decided to have a street party in their road. Although Tottenham is the home to North London's inferior football side it's also home of your average bod who hasn't a bean, normal people who see owning a vehicle as a way of making ends meet and really do not have any control over the cult of the motor car.

...How many got into their cars to drive home after RTS, even if it was the day after? What are the aims of RTS? Is it about a group of Trustafarians (crap dreads and Mummy and Daddy supplementing giros) getting off their faces in working class areas like Tottenham while disregarding the aims of RTS in attacking the motor car.

If attacking car culture take your argument to the streets of Chelsea, Hampstead, or Virginia Water, the land of porsches,

¹⁰⁵ Aufheben collective, 'The politics of anti-road struggle and the struggles of anti-road politics: the case of the No M11 Link Road campaign', in G. McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain* (London: Verso 1998), p. 128.

rollers and jags, and guess where the people with the power who make the laws live, instead of Tottenham High Road. But then again you wouldn't want to piss off Mummy and Daddy, would you?¹⁰⁶

There is a tone of absolute aversion to the apparent lack of thought given to the issues surrounding the RTS in an area like Tottenham or Camden. Rather than attempting to engage with the people of these communities, it is implied in this heated letter that RTS activists alienate the residents of these areas and reclaim the streets only for themselves.

Homogenising taste at street parties

A reference is made in the letter by 'A' to the *Black Flag* zine to the use of techno music in RTS actions. Given the overall negative tone of the letter, it is not surprising that even the use of techno at the Tottenham RTS is referred to in a derisive manner. The author is not alone in her/his disdain of the exclusive use of techno music at RTS actions. One anti-roads activist from Lancaster told of the alienating effect that techno music has at events. Rather than appealing to a broad cross section of the community whose streets are being reclaimed, techno music appeals to a rather narrow cross-section of people. The Lancaster anti-roads activist suggested that the use of a wide variety of music at RTS would perhaps widen the appeal of the party atmosphere. Further, he argued that the combination of techno, 1950s rock'n'roll, punk and opera would be a real subversion of culture.¹⁰⁷

To counter these criticisms of the exclusiveness of the techno music is the argument that RTS embraces a form of music often sneered at in disdain and elevates it to a form of art. Techno is not (yet) part of the music canon, but at RTS it is an integral part of the subversive street party. The music is unrestricted and open to interpretation, allowing those in attendance at RTS to be creative and dance as they will. The use of music is political:

¹⁰⁶ Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaiming whose streets?', *Black Flag for Anarchist Resistance*, no. 214 (publication date not provided), pp. 29-30.

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Ly., Melbourne, 04.05.99.

"The sound system is not only generating sound but actively struggling for a culture in which music and dance are not attacked but embraced."¹⁰⁸ Reclaim the Streets promotes the re-appropriation of art, including music and dance, for the public space and for the community. What is clearly in contention, however, is which community.

The March for Social Justice

After the September 1996 Liverpool march, RTS, the Liverpool dockers and their support network, the Hillingdon Hospital Workers, Magnet Strikers, and others planned a March For Social Justice to take place in London on April 12, 1997. The march's organising group extended an invitation to "the trade unionists, the unemployed, pensioners, people with disabilities, the homeless, refugees and asylum seekers, environmentalists and the young" to join the march, held three weeks before the May 1, 1997 General Election.¹⁰⁹ London RTS already planned to do an action to highlight the issues surrounding the election and the notion of democracy, and so after being approached to become involved in the March For Social Justice, RTS began to organise for the day's events, planning to add their own dimension.

Participation in the March for Social Justice represented an opportunity for RTS to promote direct action as "an alternative to the disempowering ritual of making a cross on a piece of paper, and voting for someone you have never met to 'represent' you, every five years."¹¹⁰ It was an opportunity to advocate direct action as a real democratic alternative to the flawed democracy of parliamentary representation. This goal was clearly stated in RTS flyers advertising the day: "RTS believe that... change will be brought about, not through the mediation of professional politicians, but by individual and collective participation in social affairs. In short – by direct action."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Anonymous author(s), 'Highway hold up: Reclaim the Streets invite you to this Summer's festival of resistance', *Squall*, no. 13 (Summer 1996), p. 50.

¹⁰⁹ Cited in Anonymous author(s), 'Never mind the ballots... Reclaim the Streets!', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 6 (publication date not provided), p. 7.

¹¹⁰ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

¹¹¹ Cited in Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

Publicity was distributed prior to the March for Social Justice, urging people to "Never mind the ballots... Reclaim the Streets!"¹¹² Reclaim the Streets activists had spent much time planning for the event, which they had titled a "Two Day Festival of Resistance", a festival which would coincide with the March for Social Justice, on April 12, 1997. One of the plans was to distribute 10,000 copies of a spoof London newspaper, *Evading Standards*, featuring a headline of "General Election Cancelled".¹¹³ These copies would be given to London commuters during the Friday rush hour before the march. Another 10,000 copies were printed and were to be distributed during the March for Social Justice itself. These plans, however, were foiled by police, who raided the central distribution point, confiscated all 20,000 copies of *Evading Standards* and arrested three activists, including Jordan, for 'incitement to cause affray and incitement to cause obstruction of the public highway.' Other plans were also foiled by police, including the plan to squat the half-empty offices of the Department of the Environment, and proclaim it the 'Real Department of the Environment', where the two-day festival would be held. When police blocked access to the DoE on the Saturday of the March for Social Justice,

¹¹² The full text of the Never Mind the Ballots publicity is as follows:

Never mind the ballots...Reclaim the Streets! With the increasingly meaningless ritual of the general election drawing near and with the main political parties committed to 'more of the same' or 'tinkering with the details' at best, what can be done by those with a vision of a liberated, green society? 'Vote for a lesser evil?' Work for change inside the system?

Reclaim The Streets believe that there is another way: take direct action in the streets, in the fields and in the workplace, to halt the destruction and create a direct democracy in a free and ecological society.

Publicity flyer reprinted in full in Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

It needs to be noted that the publicity entitled "Never mind the ballots... Reclaim the Streets!" was inspired by both Situationism and punk. The Sex Pistols' first album was titled "Never mind the bollocks" and featured a picture of Queen Elizabeth II with a safety pin through her mouth on the album cover. This image itself is an adaptation of a situationist poster. See Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1990), for a detailed account of situationist influences on the Sex Pistols. David Huxley contends, however, that Greil Marcus (and others) exaggerates the influence of Situationism on the Sex Pistols. See D. Huxley, "Ever get the feeling you've been cheated?": Anarchy and control in *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*, in R. Sabin (ed.), *Punk Rock: So What? The Cultural Legacy of Punk* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 81-99, esp. pp. 85-87.

¹¹³ Even the title was a spoof, playing on the title of the tabloid *Evening Standard*.

an alternative plan was set into action. RTS initiated a street party in Trafalgar Square instead, with 20,000 people gathering in the square to first listen to the official speeches of the social justice rally and then to participate in a massive street party.¹¹⁴

Jordan reports that the Trafalgar Square party left "Reclaim the Streets dazed and confused, unsure of its next step."¹¹⁵ Instead of a creative street party, it was a successful rave.¹¹⁶ It also attracted an enormous amount of negative publicity, with the mainstream media proclaiming the event to be a "Riot frenzy: anarchist thugs bring terror to London".¹¹⁷ There were, of course, positive aspects of the Trafalgar Square party, with Liverpool dockers, ravers, environmentalists, trade unionists, anarchists and socialists all joining together in a public, subversive celebration. Activists also managed to subvert the face of the National Gallery, with "Fuck the election" and "Art for all or none at all" plastered across the front of the austere classical building.¹¹⁸ One activist explains these actions as an attempt to highlight the enclosing walls of art galleries, "which keep 'art' as something removed from everyday life, to be exclusively controlled by a few."¹¹⁹

After the April Trafalgar Square event Reclaim the Streets declined to stage another large street party in London. The London collective spent the next two years meeting and trying to find ways "to develop the idea of the street party, to root events more in community, to build on the idea of the budding international street party movement and to bring carnival and revolution one step closer together."¹²⁰ One campaign that RTS activists believe will bring them closer to realising these goals is the ongoing involvement with the tube workers, who have been staging a sustained campaign of resistance against the privatisation of the London Underground system.

¹¹⁴ Jordan, *op. cit.*, pp. 149-150.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹¹⁶ Jordan writes that the rave scene saw the event as "the best illegal rave or dance music party in history." Cited from *Mixmag*, no. 73, June 1997, p. 101. *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Cited from *Express on Sunday*, in *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹¹⁸ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

¹¹⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'Clamp down rundown', at the Bassdove website: <http://www.bassdove.co.uk/bills.htm>; accessed 03.01.01.

The idea of RTS in Britain fostering a global street party movement or network is one that has certainly seen fruition. Reclaim the Streets-style street parties, usually bearing the name of Reclaim the Streets, have taken place in cities across the world, including Tel Aviv, Toronto, Melbourne, Prague, Rio de Janeiro, Sydney, Dublin, Amsterdam, Berlin and San Francisco. There is no set pattern or programme for these RTS events. Activists in all of these cities reclaim the streets and stage street parties according to their own plans. Some have been more akin to legal street raves, like those staged in Melbourne by the Streets for People collective, a local public transport and bicycling advocacy group, while others, like that held in Prague where three McDonald's restaurants were destroyed and 64 people arrested, were more subversive and riotous.¹²¹ Others have attempted, consciously or not, to rectify some of the shortcomings of the British RTS events, with a 1998 RTS street party in Sydney featuring three different sound stages, with reggae, rock and techno music playing simultaneously, and thus accommodating some difference in musical taste.¹²²

Conclusion:

RTS's go global

In the last two years Reclaim the Streets have been held simultaneously across the world as part of days of resistance, which coincide with the annual meetings of the G8. The RTS have been a part of concerted joint direct action campaigns to highlight such diverse, yet interconnected, problems as 'Third World' debt, environmental destruction, and labour justice. The international network of activists, formed largely through the Internet, was diverse:

Environmentalists, workers, the unemployed, indigenous peoples, trade unionists, peasants groups, women's networks, the landless, students, peace activists and many more are working together in recognition that the global capitalists

¹²⁰ Jordan, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

¹²¹ Anonymous author(s), 'Global street parties', *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹²² *Ibid.*

system, based on the exploitation of people and the planet for the profit of a few, is at the very root of our social and ecological troubles.¹²³

Global festivals of resistance, particularly the J18 Carnival Against Capital, warrant individual attention and are the subject of the following chapter.

Reclaim the Streets emerged on the British political scene as a London-based collective which staged a number of actions to highlight the perils of car culture. Since this time, the loose collective has organised a number of massive street parties and stunts like the subversion of billboards. More than this, Reclaim the Streets activists have reinforced that activating for change can be fun, spontaneous, and set to music. RTS is not only about less car traffic - the firm grip of car culture is questioned not only for its devastating environmental consequences, but also because of its equally devastating impact on community and on the symbolic street. The street is a central theme in RTS activism, as a site of public community, of open and inclusive politics, of fun and subversion. The street forum of RTS is a subversion of our pre-conception of politics as enclosed and hierarchical, the rigid, organised domain of the powerful.

Reclaim the Streets activism has also begun to bridge the imagined, but often tangible, gap between labour and green politics. The RTS collective in Britain participated in joint activisms with the striking Liverpool dockers and tube workers. The failure of Reclaim the Streets to openly engage in the question of class initially suggests that perhaps the transformation of politics is incomplete. However, throughout the course of this chapter it has been demonstrated that the activism of RTS indicates that the notion of reclaiming community space surpasses class distinctions. Reclaim the Streets advocates societal change, change that transcends class distinction, and is aimed at reclaiming the streets:

At first the people stop and overturn the vehicles in their path... here they are avenging themselves on the traffic by decomposing it into its inert original elements. Next they

¹²³ Taken from a J18 agit-prop, advertising the 1999 global day of resistance.

incorporate the wreckage they have created into their rising barricades: they are recombining the isolated inanimate elements into vital new artistic and political forms. For one luminous movement, the multitudes of solitudes that make the modern city come together in a new kind of encounter, to make a people. 'The streets belong to the people': they seize control of the city's elemental matter and make it their own.¹²⁴

This chapter has demonstrated a desire among many activists, participating in the RTS collective or in activisms organised under that name, to reclaim community spaces. It is a conception of community that is locale-specific and yet in the next chapter we will see that this idea of community is taken by activists to a multitude of sites. RTS-style activism is applied to a global carnival against capital, and the streets of protest are no longer limited to any one temporary location.

¹²⁴ M. Berman, 'All that solids melts into air', cited in Anonymous author(s), 'Reclaim the Streets!', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, op. cit., p. 6.

CHAPTER SIX

J18: carnival, conformity and global community in London?

Carnival, n. 1. An explosion of freedom involving laughter, mockery, dancing, masquerade and revelry 2. Occupation of the streets in which the symbols and ideals of authority are subverted 3. You cannot watch carnival, you take part.

Justice? ¹

Street party-style protest took place in cities across the world on June 18, 1999, with the largest actions taking place in London. That activists protested on this one day globally was no coincidence. The June 18 day of action, ostensibly against global capital, was deliberately planned as a single day of simultaneous carnivalesque protest across financial centres around the world. The date had been chosen to coincide with the meeting of the Group of Seven (G7, or G8 as it sometimes referred to, if Russia is included) superpowers in Köln, Germany, and at the time of this summit was the third year of globalised resistance. Due to obvious timeline differences, the day of action began in Auckland, moving to cities like Melbourne and Sydney, touching parts of Asia, including Delhi, Manila, Bangkok, culminating in the largest actions in Western Europe, particularly in Köln and London, before moving on to North and South America.²

¹ Justice?, 'Carnival', *SchNEWS*, no. 214 (4 June 1999), p. 1, emphasis added.

² In an article explaining J18 in *SchNEWS*, this simultaneity is explained: Groups involved are based in each continent, so as the Earth spins and the sun rises on June 18th, actions will start in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne, Australia, through Indonesia, India and Bangladesh, moving on to simultaneous actions in Senegal and Nigeria in concert with many European states from Czech Republic to Ireland and Italy to Greece, with June 18th finishing with events in almost 20 U.S. cities together with actions in Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Columbia and Uruguay. *Ibid.*

The June 18 carnival against capital, or J18 as it became known, was a day of action against the ongoing process of globalisation and its perceived multifarious negative ramifications like transnational corporations gaining monopolistic power and controlling the lives of thousands of people dependent on them for employment or trade. It was also a protest against the power wrought by the government leaders and business elites of these G7 states. However, activists placed emphasis on protesting for positive change – for different ways of relating to each other, outside of the suit and tie realm, and for increased recognition of diversity. This emphasis on demonstrating for positive change is linked to the style of protest adopted, particularly by activists in Britain, and the focus that carnivalesque protest places on activating for rather than against.

Another aspect of the J18 carnival against capital that will be discussed is the significance placed on recognising diversity. It is not within the scope of this chapter to examine the massive variety of actions that took place on the day. Nor can I adequately probe the global nature of J18 in any detail. Instead, I focus on the actions and the planning process behind J18 in London. To some extent it is problematic to concentrate on the J18 activities of London and thus deliberately misrepresent the diversity of the day. The planning behind J18 and the events that took place in London is deservedly the focus of detailed investigation as London acted as a global networking centre for J18 activists. The J18 webpage, the bulk of graphic design and publicity text and the e-mail bulletin board all emanated from London. Two of the most pertinent questions of this chapter are to examine why this was the case and what impact this had on the nature and diversity of J18 actions globally. I will also question if the networks which facilitated J18 collectively constituted an activist community or communities. A new understanding of both the potential for and limitations of diversity in community(ies) will be garnered from the examination of J18.

The information for this chapter has been gathered from a variety of sources, including discussions with people involved in London J18, and a combination of primary and secondary sources. The enormous variety of

primary sources produced both before and after the carnival against capital will be reflected in the selection of materials. It is hoped that this will adequately convey a sense of the diversity of experiences of J18 activists.

Throughout the discussion of J18, I will avoid using analytical constructs which J18 activists themselves avoided replicating. So, for example, J18 will not be critiqued according to the cohesion of people's ideas and political perspectives. Nor do I want to critique it in terms of preconceived notions of effective structure. It was never planned that J18 would be a highly organised and orchestrated march, as this would not allow for the spontaneity and diversity that J18 actively sought.

Examining J18 as community

One construct which will be used throughout the discussion of the carnival against capital is the notion of community. The understanding of community as expressed in this chapter comes from a hybrid of interpretations. One is Anthony Cohen's definition of community as existing not in shared participation, but shared thinking of the community: "the community as experienced by its members – does not consist in social structure or in 'the doing' of social behaviour. It inheres, rather, in 'the thinking' about it." In this way, the community is symbolic, rather than physical.³ The network or community of J18 activists was largely a shared space of thought, given that many participants in actions did not experience face-to-face contact; the J18 protest community was a disembodied community. Iris Marion Young commends this understanding of community, one that is not reliant on the problematic comprehension of community as only being authentic if it is based on face-to-face interaction among its members. She argues that such a definition is exclusive, and often results in a dichotomy of authentic community, based on face-to-face relations, and inauthentic community.⁴

³ A. P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (Chichester: Ellis Horwood, 1985), p. 98.

⁴ Young cited in D. Harvey, 'From space to place and back again: reflections on the condition of postmodernity', in J. Bird, B. Curtis, T. Putnam, G. Robertson & L. Tickner (eds), *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 15.

In this chapter, I explore the possibility of building communities without face-to-face contact through the Internet and e-mail technologies. Sandel's definition of community as constituting members who share a common dialogue or vocabulary is perhaps most pertinent to the discussion of a J18 community:

Insofar as our constitutive self-understandings comprehend a wider subject than the individual alone, whether a family or a tribe or a city or a class or a nation or people, to this extent they define a community in the constitutive sense. And what makes such a community is not merely a spirit of benevolence, or the prevalence of communitarian values, or even certain 'shared final ends' alone, but a common vocabulary or discourse and a background of implicit practices and understandings within which the opacity of persons is reduced if never finally dissolved.⁵

Protesting globalisation

The terms globalisation and global capital feature prominently in publicity prior to June 18, 1999, and in the ensuing discussion. It is unclear, however, how J18 activists defined these terms. There was actually no attempt in the J18 planning activities in London to establish consensus on definitions of globalisation and global capital and its effects. There were two reasons behind this. Firstly, there is a myriad of understandings of these terms. Secondly, one of the key sentiments behind the J18 international actions was the desire to recognise diversity, including diversity of thought, culture and needs. Therefore, a single definition of globalisation was seen as both undesirable and unachievable.⁶ In the period after J18, however, some

⁵ Sandel cited in Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁶ In the flyers distributed prior to J18, globalisation was not defined, rather described, allowing room for diversity of interpretation and room for individuals to prioritise its implications according to their own beliefs. For example, in the *Black Leaflet* globalisation is defined as simply synonymous with negative trends:

On the eve of the 21st century the list of woes facing us seems greater

activists have reproached the failure of the J18 activist communities to critically discuss the concept of globalisation, and this is clearly stated in the following excerpt:

Virtually every group involved in left/green or direct-action politics has at the very least stated their opposition to 'globalisation' or gone a step further and declared it to be the most serious problem facing us today - "The final act of enclosure" (RTS 'global street party' agitprop [sic]). Yet despite this wave of 'enthusiasm' any analysis of the content of this supposed devastating change seems to have been largely confined to the repetition of a limited range of ideological positions which are at best superficial and at worst reactionary. The mere fact the terms like 'Globalisation' and 'Neo-Liberalism' are applied uncritically to describe any and every change taking place within the global economy suggests a lack of thought and analysis.⁷

Globalisation does remain difficult to define, despite being a key buzzword since the mid-1980s and 1990s. While the notion of globalisation has been referred to incessantly in both popular media and academic circles, it is most often done so in vague, elusive terms.⁸ Globalisation can be taken to

than ever - economic meltdown, the millennium bug, environmental crisis, war, famine, poverty - all unconnected, we are told by the experts - to be solved only by more 'growth' and 'free' trade. The global market economy however, which had come to be seen as unquestionable dogma, is crumbling. As usual talk of reform is in the air, but a system based on the 'survival of the fittest' and 'growth' can only continue to cause human misery while destroying the ecology of the planet. ...Across the world, social and ecological movements are coming together, talking, taking direct action and enacting radical alternatives to 'globalisation.'

J18 network London, *Black Leaflet* agit-prop, (London: J18 network, 1998).

⁷ Anonymous author(s), "The ideology of "globalisation"", *Reflections on June 18*, print version, (London: Editorial Collective, 1999), p. 11.

⁸ In a discussion of the origins of the term 'globalisation', Roland Robertson writes that the use of the noun 'globalisation' has developed quite recently and in academic circles:

it was not recognised as a significant concept, in spite of diffuse and intermittent usage prior to that, until the early, or even middle, 1980s. During the second half of the 1980s its use increased enormously, so much so that it is virtually impossible to trace the patterns of its contemporary diffusion across a large number of areas of contemporary life in different parts of the world. By now, even though the term is often used very loosely and, indeed, in

mean simply a process whereby the world is becoming increasingly smaller, due to the increasing speed of communications and the growing access to common modes of communication and technologies.⁹ This understanding of globalisation has been greatly influenced and emerges from Marshall McLuhan's *Explorations in Communication*, and his idea of the global village. Here, McLuhan portrays a compressing or shrinking world, one that is becoming smaller due to the simultaneous nature of new media, especially television.¹⁰ This would seem an inadequate definition, because it does little to distinguish the circumstance or specific nature of today from, for example, the world of the turn of last century, when the automobile, the telegraph, the radio and the telephone were having an enormous impact on global communications.¹¹ In fact, Arrighi argues that it is only in the 1990s that the degree of global capital integration of national trade, investment, borrowing and lending has begun to approach the level reached at the beginning of the twentieth century.¹²

Jan Nederveen Pieterse contends that one of the most common understandings of globalisation is that it is a process simply of homogenisation, whereby technological, commercial and cultural synchronisation emanating from the West have resulted in standardisation.¹³ This is a view reinforced in some literature written and

contradictory ways, it has itself become part of 'global consciousness,' an aspect of the remarkable proliferation of terms centred upon 'global.'

R. Robertson, *Globalisation: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992), p. 8.

⁹ For example, one definition offered of globalisation by Giovanni Arrighi is that it is "a new process driven by major technological advances in the transmission, storage and processing of information." G. Arrighi, 'The global market', *Journal of World-Systems Research*, vol. 5, no. 2 (Spring 1999), p. 199.

¹⁰ M. McLuhan, *Explorations in Communication*, ed. by E.S. Carpenter (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960).

¹¹ See D. Harvey, 'Globalisation in question', *Rethinking Marxism*, vol. 8, no. 4 (1995), pp. 1-17.

¹² See Arrighi, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

¹³ J. Nederveen Pieterse, 'Globalization as hybridization', Working Paper Series no. 152, (The Hague: Institute of Social Studies, 1993), p. 1.

Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash use Roland Robertson's description of the first generation of globalisation debaters as either homogenisers or heterogenisers to demonstrate the plethora of narrow debate regarding globalisation:

the *homogenizers* tend, ideal-typically, to subscribe to some sort of notion of world system. They look primarily at the presence of the universal in the particular, whether as commodification or as time-space distancing. They would at least implicitly invoke a scenario

published by activists, with globalisation linked to processes of economic and cultural homogenisation.¹⁴ Nederveen Pieterse sees this as overly simplistic, arguing that globalisation is more than a process of homogenisation and is instead one of hybridisation. He uses the definition of hybridisation which relates to cultural forms and applies it also to structural forms of social organisation: "hybridisation is defined as 'the ways in which forms become separated from existing practices and recombine with new forms in new practices.'"¹⁵ Thus globalisation is seen as an ever-changing process of flows from not one direction, i.e. not mere Americanisation of cultural forms, but from a myriad of directions. People can link with one another at global, transnational, international, macroregional, national, microregional, municipal, local and/or institutional levels¹⁶, so that activists wanting to reinforce their local identities may connect with a similar local-based struggle on the other side of the globe through cyber technologies.

It is difficult then not to define globalisation itself but to summarise its effects as either wholly positive or wholly negative. Fantu Cheru writes of the constraints of globalisation to be overcome and the opportunities that it presents that remain to be exploited, from the particular vantage point of an African academic and activist. He thus encapsulates some of the contradictions that globalisation presents:

In both the mainstream media and corporate boardrooms, globalization is presented as the only avenue that will bring unprecedented world prosperity and freedom in the post-Cold War era (Barnet and Cavanagh 1994). Others, however, characterize globalization as the greatest threat to potential

of convergent development. *Heterogenizers* would tend to dispute that a system existed, will disclaim the distinction of universal and particular, and see the dominance of the West over 'the rest' as that of simply one particular over others. They will not dispute convergence but the notion of development altogether.

M. Featherstone and S. Lash, 'Globalization, Modernity and the Spatialization of Social Theory: An Introduction', in M. Featherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson (eds), *Global Modernities* (London: Sage, 1995), p. 4.

¹⁴ See, for example, Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: confronting capital and smashing the state!', *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), pp. 1-2.

¹⁵ Rowe and Schelling cited by Nederveen Pieterse, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

human development. They point out that as the remote forces of globalization hobble governments and disintegrate the bonds of social solidarity, anger is growing among those whose existence is being threatened (Barber 1996; Mittelman 1996).¹⁷

A practical example of how activists might harness the positive opportunities offered by globalisation to attempt to overcome some of its negative consequences is that of the Zapatistas and their transnational support network which uses new technologies, integral to the apparent shrinking of the global space, to publicise the negative effects of the globalisation of trade in Chiapas. This example is discussed at length later in this chapter.

Reinforcing the arguments that both Nederveen Pieterse and Cheru raise is the idea of a symbiosis of effects of localising and globalising trends at the heart of this broad process of globalisation. Globalisation can thus be seen as both "a process whereby the world increasingly becomes seen as 'one place' and the ways in which we are made conscious of this process" and a reinforcement of the local.¹⁸ To use Nederveen Pieterse's term, globalisation is thus a process of hybridisation, of increasing emphasis on the global and the local and all reference points in between. The impacts of this hybridisation are far from uniform:

For many of the people in the world the consciousness of the process of globalization, that they inhabit the same place, may be absent or limited, or occur only spasmodically. ...At the same time there are clearly systemic tendencies in social life which derive from the expansive and integrating power of economic processes and the hegemonizing efforts of particular nation-states or blocs.¹⁹

There is a clear lack of recognition of these complexities in the understandings of globalisation presented by J18 activists, a deficiency which limited the depth of diversity of participants and the cohesiveness of joint actions with British-based J18 activists and members of the

¹⁷ F. Cheru, 'The local dimensions of global reform', in J. Nederveen Pieterse (ed.), *Global Futures: Shaping Globalization* (London: Zed, 2000), p. 119.

¹⁸ M. Featherstone, *Undoing Culture: Globalization, Postmodernism and Identity* (London: Sage, 1995), p. 114.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 123-124.

Intercontinental Caravan. These limitations are the focus of the latter half of this chapter.

A narrow understanding of globalisation is offered in an edition of *Do or Die*, published after the J18 day of action. Here, globalisation is seen as the process of "reduction of diversity in the corporate landscape and the concentration of power within international institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the financial markets...".²⁰ It is this definition that is also closest to the understanding of globalisation offered in J18 agit-prop:

In practical terms, globalisation means that multinational corporations and distant, undemocratic institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund now form a virtual global government. Helped by international trade agreements, transnational capital has gained increasing control over our lives.²¹

The following use of the term globalisation as a synonym for neoliberalism, the free market, even capitalism, in a J18 agit-prop from Scotland indicates the level of appropriation of the term globalisation by J18 activists to be synonymous with negative forces only:

It is time to recognise that the global capitalist economy lies at the root of many of the woes facing us today: ...Globalisation, Neoliberalism, the Free Market – whatever its new names and attributes, capitalism has always been inherently flawed: it reduces people and a beautifully rich natural world to just one dimension – the one that increases profits.²²

²⁰ Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: confronting capital and smashing the state!', *op. cit.*, p. 1.

²¹ J18 network London, *Evading Standards* (London: J18 network, 1999), p. 7.

²² J18 network Edinburgh, *Bank of Bigotry* (Edinburgh: Autonomous Centre of

International resistances

International resistance to global capital is clearly not a new phenomenon; we only have to think of 1848, the anti-slavery movement, the response to the Russian Revolution in 1917-1918²³ and the students' and workers' uprisings in 1968. These were, however, restricted to the industrialised world. What has made the protest actions of the last six years unique is that there has been a more international aspect to them, with the involvement of not only activists from Europe, North America and other developed nations like Australia and Japan, but of activists from developing countries, such as India, Pakistan, Mexico, Columbia. As will be discussed in relation to J18, however, it is my belief that we have not yet witnessed truly international protest, as there is still such a pronounced element of western dominance and directives from North to South, or rich to poor.

The 1999 J18 Carnival Against Capital can be directly linked to the 1994 Zapatista uprising in 1994 against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), when two thousand indigenous people from several different Chiapas tribes occupied five towns in the Chiapas region and voiced demands for their own land.²⁴ The masked and armed Zapatistas, as the rebels named themselves, also demanded freedom from neoliberalism and the effects of trade agreements like NAFTA on indigenous peoples.²⁵

Edinburgh, 1999).

²³ For an account of the revolutionary movements inspired by the events in Russia, 1917, and the corresponding reaction by global capital against these movements and events, see S. Weissman, 'The Russian Revolution Revisited: Myths and Distortions Then and Now', *Against the Current* (1998), on-line version: <http://www.igc.org/solidarity/atc/weissman75.html>; accessed 12.11.01.

²⁴ For an excellent summary of the events of January 1994, their background and their consequences, see Anonymous author(s), 'Behind the balaclavas: breaking bread with the Zapatistas', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 7 (publication date not provided), pp. 110-116.

²⁵ At the time of the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) on January 1, 1994, Subcommandante Insurgente Marcos delivered the following explanation of the Zapatista uprising:

Today the North American Free Trade Agreement begins, which is nothing more than a death sentence to the Indigenous ethnicities of Mexico, who are perfectly dispensable in the modernization program of Salinas de Gortari. Then the companeros decided to rise up on that same day to respond to the decree of death that the Free Trade Agreement gives them, with the decree of life that is given by rising up in arms to demand liberty and democracy, which will take them to the solution to their problems. This is the reason that we have risen

The Zapatista forces, or EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army), and their unarmed, non-masked supporters were fighting the Mexican government for landrights, but were also staging an insurrection against neoliberalism. The Aufheben collective argue that the Zapatistas' struggle is one part of the wider battle to replace the reified community of capital with real human community.²⁶ In one of the many statements of the EZLN leader, Subcomandante Marcos, neoliberalism and globalisation are synonymous with what the Aufheben collective refer to as capital and are complicit in the insidious war against the people:

To the people of the world:

Brothers and Sisters:

During the last years, the power of money has presented a new mask over its criminal face. Above borders, no matter race or color, the Power of money humiliates dignities, insults

up today.

Cited in B. O'Malley, M. Waldron and K. Boyce, 'NAFTA: free trade, poverty and power in Chiapas' (1998), online publication: <http://www.providence.edu/polisci/projects/zapatistas/nafta.html>; accessed 04.11.01.

The indigenous peoples of Chiapas object that NAFTA will result in the privatisation of all land. Communal lands held by indigenous populations such as those in Chiapas were previously protected by the Mexican constitution. Under NAFTA and the Structural Adjustment Programs required of the Mexican government for the Agreement to be initiated and for Mexico to be eligible for World Bank loans, the 70% indigenous population of Chiapas will lose their land. The Structural Adjustment Programs also require massive cuts in public social spending, reducing the number of schools in Chiapas and the availability of medical care. These are among the issues that propelled the EZLN to take action on New Year's Day in 1994. *Ibid.*

²⁶ In one of the more critical analyses of the Chiapas uprising, the Aufheben collective argue that this effort to find real human community is the most important lesson to learn from the Zapatistas. Aufheben collective, 'A commune in Chiapas? Mexico and the Zapatista rebellion', *Aufheben*, no. 9 (Autumn 2000), pp. 3-28. Part of this recognition of the centrality of communalism and community in the Zapatistas' struggle is a rejection of two prominent interpretations or critiques of the post-1994 New Year's Day events:

We reject the academics' argument of Zapatismo's centrality as the new revolutionary subject, just as we reject the assertions of the 'ultra-left' that because the Zapatistas do not have a communist programme they are simply complicit with capital. However we are keen not to fall into the orthodox Marxist trap of dismissing this struggle as an unimportant peasant uprising. The Zapatistas may be marginal but we cannot deny them their revolutionary subjectivity. ...Their battle for land against the *rancheros* [ranch owners] and *latifundistas* [the large landowners] reminds us of aspects of capital's violent stage of primitive accumulation, which, for billions, still continues – reminds us, in other words, of capital's (permanent) transitions rather than its apparent permanence.

Ibid., p. 27. Original emphasis.

honesties and assassinates hopes. Re-named as 'Neoliberalism', the historic crime in the concentration of privileges, wealth and impunities, democratises misery and hopelessness. A new world war is waged, but now against the entire humanity. As in all world wars, what is being sought is a new distribution of the world. By the name of 'globalisation' they call this modern war which assassinates and forgets. The new distribution of the world consists in concentrating power in power and misery in misery.²⁷

This explicit identification of neoliberalism and globalisation as the enemy was one of the key influences behind the J18 actions against global capital four years later. Perhaps of even greater influence were the series of global Encuentros (meetings, or literally encounters) called by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos.²⁸ More than three thousand people came together for the first global Encuentro in July-August 1996 in Chiapas.²⁹ Known as the 'First Inter-Continental Meeting Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity', the Encuentro was intended to bring together activists of various backgrounds - social and political - together to look at coordinating resistances and struggles. It was recognised that "now as never before the world is linked together, so that for things to change in Mexico, things must change here, and if change can happen in Mexico, it can happen here"³⁰ (here, in this case, referring to Britain). This global Encuentro, which had been preceded by smaller meetings in cities on each continent, was followed by another such gathering in Spain a year later. The desire to form a more concrete global campaign emerged out of this meeting. Subsequently, "ten of the largest and most innovative social movements, including the Movimiento Sem Terra, the Brazilian Landless Peasants Movement and the

²⁷ Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, *Declaration of La Realidad* (January 1996), cited at <http://www.utexas.edu/students/nave/realidad.html>; accessed 13.03.00.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ The attendance figures range from a reported 3000 people in Anonymous author(s), 'Zapatista! Today Chiapas, tomorrow the world', *Do or Die: Voices from Earth First!*, no. 6 (publication date not provided), p. 134 to over 6000 people in Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: Confronting capital and smashing the state!', *op. cit.*, p. 4.

³⁰ Anonymous author(s), 'Zapatista! Today Chiapas, tomorrow the world', *op. cit.*, p. 134.

radical Indian Farmers - the Karnataka State Farmers Union (KRRS)" came together to form People's Global Action.³¹

People's Global Action

The first gathering of Peoples' Global Action (PGA) occurred in February 1998 in Geneva.³² In their own words, Peoples' Global Action (or Peoples' Global Action against "Free" Trade and the World Trade Organisation, as it was called in full) "intends to serve as a global instrument for communication and co-ordination for all those fighting against the destruction of humanity and the planet by the global market, building up local alternatives and peoples' power."³³ A number of key elements of PGA, as well as the Encuentro of 1996, had a clear effect on the language used in later J18 agit-prop, with common emphases on strength through diversity in the publicity dialogue of all three.

Emerging from PGA gathering was another goal, this time a more concrete one. Rather than simply building on the desire for a global activist community celebrating diversity, activists at the Peoples' Global Action assembly also planned to stage actions against the meetings of the Group of Seven/Eight (including Russia, a temporary member) in Birmingham in May 1998, and against the following meeting of World Trade Organisation in Geneva. These actions did not take place under the banner of the PGA; instead, activists worldwide were encouraged to plan their own actions in opposition to the world trade process and its negative ramifications. During the four days of the G8 summit in Birmingham, England, simultaneous acts of resistance took place across the world:

in Hyderabad, India, 200,000 peasant farmers called for the death of the WTO; in Brasilia landless peasants and

³¹ Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: Confronting capital and smashing the state!', *op. cit.*, p. 4.

³² In attendance were "mass-based farmers' movements from India (KRRS), Philippines (KMP), Indonesia (KAP), Brazil (MST), Peru (CCP) and Bolivia (FCB), indigenous peoples' organisations from Nigeria (MOSOP) and Mexico (CNI and Asamblea de la Resistencia Civil from Chiapas), trade unions from Nicaragua (CST) and diverse organisations from the North." Cited in Anonymous author(s), 'The accelerating history of the PGA', *PGA Bulletin*, no. 5, reproduced at: <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/herstory.htm>; accessed 27.06.00.

³³ *Ibid.*

unemployed workers joined forces and 50,000 of them took to the streets; over 30 Reclaim the Streets parties took place in many countries.... In Prague, the biggest single mobilisation since the Velvet Revolution in '89, brought over thousands into the streets for a mobile street party which ended with several McDonalds being redesigned and running battles with the police. Meanwhile in the UK, 5,000 people were paralysing central Birmingham as the G8 leaders fled the city to a local manor to continue their meeting in a more tranquil location. The following day, the streets of Geneva exploded.³⁴

The emergence of the travelling carnival against capital

The 1998 resistance against the meetings of the G8 and the WTO served as a model for the J18 Carnival Against Capital in 1999. This role was multifarious: the next G7/8 meeting would be met with protest actions in multiple locations; these acts of resistance would be autonomously organised, without centralised directives; and they would be carnivalesque in spirit. This last commonality is also pertinent because not only were actions carnivalesque, many also shared the name of Reclaim the Streets. I contend that this common name went some way to undermine the desire for actions to be diverse and autonomous. As will be demonstrated, Reclaim the Streets (RTS)-style of activism served as a model, to which many activists at Birmingham and J18 closely adhered, therefore minimising the spontaneity and diversity of actions and of participants.

While plans were being made for the Birmingham action, London-based Reclaim the Streets activists were also planning protests in that city. However, as the time of the 1998 G8 summit drew closer, those in London decided that, for that year, actions would be better concentrated in Birmingham:

³⁴ Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: Confronting capital and smashing the state!', *op. cit.*, p. 5. See also the extensive first hand accounts of the actions in Birmingham on the Global Street Party 1998 website: <http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/g-birm.htm>; accessed 28.06.98.

But the 'ring of steel', the blanket CCTV [Closed Circuit Television] coverage and the fact that the event was going to be during the weekend and the City would be empty of office workers put us right off.³⁵

The idea of a massive action in London around the issues of world trade and global concentration of power did not simply pass after the Birmingham protests. Reclaim the Streets and London Greenpeace³⁶ activists were inspired by the number and vivacity of protests and campaigns already happening in London. The tubeworkers' actions on the Jubilee Line are cited as an example of the heightened direct action atmosphere in London at the time.³⁷ It was also believed that one mass action, such as that which had occurred in Birmingham, would successfully link many varied campaigns around the "common enemy of capital."³⁸ This occurred in London in the mid-1980s during the Stop the City actions, when "activists disrupted the normal economic activity in the City of London, highlighting

³⁵ Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: Confronting capital and smashing the state!', *op. cit.*, p. 6.

³⁶ London Greenpeace is not affiliated with Greenpeace International.

³⁷ Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: Confronting capital and smashing the state!', *op. cit.*, p. 6.

In 1996 over 700 electricians and plumbers working on the Jubilee Line tube extension went on an unofficial strike. It was an action not endorsed by their union officials and instead was a spontaneous act of resistance and solidarity. The following is a brief history of the wildcat strike action:

Three years ago some workers on the Jubilee Extension set up 'The Shop' a work-place run union organisation. Because their contract of employment does not include sick-pay they set up a #2 a week hardship fund to ensure members received payment during illness. This fund was also used to support other workers in struggle. Slowly the Shop grew in numbers, so when 100 electricians returned to the surface after working underground to find that the site had been evacuated and was swarming with fire-fighters, they refused to work until the fire-alarms were fixed. 12 workers were sacked. All 500 working for the contractors Drake and Scull went on strike and were also sacked. Two hundred electricians working for other companies on the Jubilee line, refused to cross the sacked workers [sic] picket line. A week later all those sacked were reinstated.

... the electricians have shown that by sticking together, by building a strong grass-roots organisation, by ignoring anti-trade union laws and the union bureaucracy, they can win and improve working conditions. None of this of course is new. As their strike bulletin pointed out, they are merely 'carrying out the activities that unions were originally built for.'

Justice?, untitled, *SchNEWS*, no. 200 (5 February 1999), p. 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

the death and destruction which are caused by its investments."³⁹ The Stop the City actions brought together a vast range of people, from peace and anti-nuclear protesters to activists from the anarchist collective Class War and its eponymic paper.⁴⁰

These same Reclaim the Streets and London Greenpeace activists called a meeting in mid-August 1998 in a community centre in central London, to collectively plan a day of action. Activists from a number of collectives were present at this first meeting including Reclaim the Streets, London Greenpeace, the Mexico Support Group, London Animal Action, McLibel and Class War. As had happened in Birmingham, activists decided that the day of action would coincide with the next G8 summit, beginning on Friday June 18, 1999, in Köln.⁴¹ That the day would be a Friday was a deliberate move by activists, as it would be a work day, a day when capital would be in full motion in the City of London and financial centres around the world. The activists also drew up a text at the initial meeting to send to different groups around the world in a number of languages. An excerpt of this text, which was produced in print, on e-mail and on the Internet, follows:

Around the world, the movement grows – from the forests of Chiapas to the streets of London, from the grain farmers of India to the landless in Brazil to the unemployed in France. Inspired by the Zapatista struggles in Mexico and the Inter-Continental Encuentros, and by the global actions against the G8 (most powerful) nations and the World Trade Organisation in 1998, activists from many countries are planning co-ordinated actions around the world to oppose neoliberal capitalism.

On June 18th this year the G8 nations will meet in Köln, Germany, to further promote their vision of 'free' trade,

³⁹ fHUMAN London Committee, 'UK flexploitation and resistance beyond waged labour', from http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/3849/fhuman_paper.html; accessed 12.12.97, p. 3.

⁴⁰ S. Home, *The Assault on Culture: Utopian Currents from Lettrisme to Class War* (London: Aporia Press and Unpopular Books, 1998), p. 97.

⁴¹ For an account of how the RTS and London Greenpeace activists came together "during a hot summer's day in June 1998" and originally discussed the idea of a global day of action and the way that this initial conversation translated into the planning meetings, see Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: Confronting capital and smashing the state!', *op. cit.*, p. 6.

economic growth and corporate dominance. Meanwhile across Europe, in Canada, Nigeria, Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, South Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brazil, Australia and many more nations, activists will occupy and transform their local financial districts (stock exchanges, banks, corporate HQs).

...June 18th 1999

A day of protest, action and carnival in financial centres across the globe.⁴²

At the same time as this publicity was sent across the globe, monthly coordinating meetings began in London. While a number of varied groups were present at these meetings, as with the first planning meeting, the writers of the J18 website called for more people to become involved planning the international day of action: "We still need to expand the network by a long way and involve more sectors – women, workers, students etc."⁴³ What I will demonstrate when I evaluate the day of action itself is that the call for a widening of the network was only marginally successful.

Shortly after activists held the first planning meeting in August 1998, the name for the planned day of action was decided upon – J18: a day of action, protest and carnival in financial centres across the globe. Most often, the subtitle was dropped, and the day became known as J18 (Jay One Eight, as opposed to Jay Eighteen). Earlier suggestions such as Reclaim the City and Reclaim the World were rejected, as it was felt that these names would be too closely aligned to the name of Reclaim the Streets. Others, like Laughing all the Way to the Bank and For a Millennium without Multinationals, simply could not be agreed upon. Activists believed that the name J18 was "the ultimate in global ownership" - it applied equally to people everywhere - while a catchy phrase in English did not.⁴⁴

The choice of the subtitle, Carnival Against Capital, reflects the desire on the part of the J18 network to propose positive alternatives to the present

⁴² Taken from the J18 website: <http://www.j18.org>; accessed 15.11.98.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: Confronting capital and smashing the state!', *op. cit.*, p. 6.

economic order. Rather than choosing a negative statement such as War or Fight against Capital, they selected the word carnival to emphasise the spontaneous carnivalesque actions that would take place on 18 June 1999.

J18: an Internet-based protest community?

Activists made extensive use of the Internet in planning J18. Reclaim the Streets had long used the Internet as a means of distributing information about street parties and also as a means of publishing texts that had influenced some participants' beliefs, such as that by Raoul Vaneigem.⁴⁵ While the J18 homepage is clearly separate from that of London's Reclaim the Streets, there are some similarities between the two, particularly in terms of design. Moreover, activists from Reclaim the Streets set up and maintained the website.⁴⁶ This reflects the prominent role RTS activists played in planning for the day and in the RTS-style of carrying out the action.

Established approximately nine months prior to 18 June 1999, the J18 website acted as a bulletin board, linking users to J18 sites of activity globally. It also established London as the central information point. Moreover, the website was maintained there and contained far greater levels of information regarding planning for J18 actions in London than in any other city. It must be asked, however, if establishing London as the information base encouraged it also to be the hub of activity on the day of protest. This links in with the question of the London-centricity of the J18 day of action, a day of protest about global issues that took on a very limited public face. In the international media, London activists became the faces of J18. Actions that took place locally were seen as a secondary adjunct to those much larger scale actions in London. In Melbourne, for example, the pie-ing of a federal politician was compared to the 10-15,000 strong riots in central London, with images of the two side-by-side in daily newspapers.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ See the Reclaim the Streets (London) website: <http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/>; accessed 12.05.97.

⁴⁶ Compare the websites: <http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/>; and <http://www.j18.org>.

⁴⁷ See, for example, coverage of the pie-ing of Australian Federal Opposition Leader and leader of the Australian Labor Party Kim Beazley in *The Age* newspaper (19 June 1999), p. 1. For example the story by Tony Wright, chief political

At no time were these actions examined for their own value, something that will be discussed further in relation to the media and J18.

J18 activists used the Internet as a means to call for international support, in the same way the Zapatistas and their international supporters have, and continue to, use it.⁴⁸ In fact, the pro-Zapatista movement has been referred to as a 'prototype' for movements wanting to make use of the Internet and e-mail.⁴⁹ Immediately after the rebellion began in Chiapas, Mexico, in January 1994 communications flowed between activists there and their supporters around the world. University of Texas academic Harry Cleaver, one of the protagonists behind the spread of this communication, commented on the struggle, noting that the "most striking thing about the sequence of events set in motion on January 1, 1994 has been the speed with which news of the struggle circulated and the rapidity of the mobilisation of support which resulted."⁵⁰ While the superlative used here would seem to ignore the massive changes that the Chiapas uprising brought about for people actually in Chiapas, there is no refuting the implications that the Zapatistas and their supporters' use of the communications technologies have had on activism since this time. Direct action groups worldwide have used the Internet and e-mail technologies as means of rapidly spreading information about actions. They have also used these technologies in order to evaluate and critique these actions: discussion lists act as forum sites before, during and after major actions.

From local to global

Internet technology has facilitated not only greater access to information about struggles, but has transformed the focus of direct action activism from local- to global-scale organising. For example, the fight to save the Newbury

correspondent, 'Beazley hit by pie in Uni protest'.

⁴⁸ For an excellent account of the first six months of the Zapatista struggle, largely based on documents produced by the Zapatistas themselves, see Editorial Collective, *¡Zapatistas! Documents of the New Mexican Revolution (December 31, 1993 - June 12, 1994)* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1994).

⁴⁹ H. Cleaver, 'Computer linked social movements and the global threat to capitalism', <http://www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleaver/polnet.html>; accessed 26.11.99.

⁵⁰ H. Cleaver, 'The Chiapas uprising and the future of class struggle in the new world order,' *Riff-Raff: Attraverso la Produzione Sociale* (March 1994), pp. 133-145.

forests from the construction of a bypass would have once been a strictly local campaign, with perhaps some sensational news bites in the international television media regarding activists' tree and tunnel occupations. Instead, activists constantly posted updates on the Internet and by e-mail on Earth First!, *Squall*, *SchNEWS*, and Friends of Newbury bulletin boards and distribution lists. Anti-roads activists and their supporters could log on at any time anywhere in the world, providing they had Internet or e-mail access. Likewise, London Reclaim the Streets have had a bulletin board and webpage for over five years, where people can learn of meeting venues, street 'reclaimings' all over Britain and in cities across the world, and of links to groups like London Greenpeace and publications on and off the Internet. An anecdote is cited in *Do or Die!* which reflects the spread of information globally via the Internet:

Someone in the international networking group sent an e-mail to an anarchist group in New York, which was then forwarded by them to Chicago, who in turn forwarded it to Boston and so on to several other cities in the US until eventually it reached Mexico City, where it was forwarded to Zapatista supporters in Chiapas, who were friends of the originator of the e-mail in the UK but who had no idea that she knew anything about J18. They then e-mailed her saying "Wow, have you seen this proposal? Have you heard about this action?" The message had literally gone around the world.⁵¹

Colin Ward, in the 1972 classic text *Anarchy in Action*, describes the communications structure above as a network, different from conventional political structures and therefore capable of challenging globally interdependent capital:

The very growth of the state and its bureaucracy, the giant corporation and its privileged hierarchy, are exposing their vulnerability to non-co-operation, to sabotage, and to the exploitation of their weaknesses by the weak. They are also giving rise to parallel organisations, counter organisations, alternative organisations, which exemplify the anarchist

⁵¹ Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: confronting capital and smashing

method.... None of these movements...fit into the framework of conventional politics. In fact, they don't speak the same language as the political parties. They talk the language of anarchism and they insist on anarchist principles of organisation, which they have learned not from political theory but from their own experience. ...They are networks, not pyramids.⁵²

Marcos Novak describes the collation of technology-driven communication networks as cyberspace, through which multiple users can interact; for Novak, cyberspace takes on physical form - it is a "completely spatialized visualization of all information in global information processing systems."⁵³ The idea that cyberspace, and of particular pertinence to this discussion, that the Internet, e-mail lists and web-based bulletin boards, constitute physical space further compounds the notion that activists can form communities with one another without ever having made face-to-face contact. Michael Ostwald argues that perceptions of space have been changing since the introduction of communication technologies that pre-date the Internet, including the radio, telephone and television. He writes that "the human mind can now perceive a new spatial form, one which derives from the television and computer screen but which has expanded outside the 'thin', 'nonreflecting' surface. ...The new space, like the television, simulates something that is *other than the real space* and, also like the television, is impermanent."⁵⁴ This spatiality is not necessarily tangible, but nonetheless present; it cannot be touched, but it is lived in. Ostwald uses Virilio's idea of the 'third window' to conceptualise the physicality of virtual space:

Virilio's third window is the flat screen of the television. ...In the case of the third window, the television or computer scree, this extension is like the space just outside the physical window: it is a perceived space, one which the senses identify

the state!', *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁵² C. Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1972), pp. 137-138.

⁵³ M. Novak, 'Liquid architectures in cyberspace', in M. Benedikt (ed.), *Cyberspace: First Steps* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. 225.

⁵⁴ M. Ostwald, 'Virtual urban futures', in D. Bell and B. M. Kennedy (eds), *The Cybercultures Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 659-660.

as being present. ...it represents a constantly changing space (since it is both temporal and simulated). ...Virilio's third window may well be seen as more than television and as all aspects of time- and space-altering technology.⁵⁵

The emotional space I occupy when communicating with an activist in Edinburgh via e-mail can feel as physical as that space I see beyond the frame of my computer screen and terminal. Such communications can provide the sense of commonality of purpose or thought which is at the basis of community. I repeatedly phrase these ideas, however, in the context of possibilities as cyberspace-based communication does not automatically lead to the coalescence of people in communities, just as there is no guarantee that activists in a meeting room, discussing a forthcoming action face-to-face, will form a community. Given the continued rejection of the automatic, and often exclusive, link between physical place and community throughout this dissertation, I would like to reiterate, however, that I do not judge cyberspace communities to be any less real than ones based on physical locality, on the local. I therefore reject Ziauddin Sardar's scathing reduction of Internet-facilitated community to meaningless exchanges of simple common interests, in which he argues that:

belonging and posting to a Usenet group, or logging on to a bulletin board community, confirms no more an identity than belonging to a stamp collecting club or a Morris dancing society. ...On this logic, the accountants of the world will instantly be transformed into a community the moment they start a newsgroup: *alt.accounts* (with *alt.accounts.spreadsheets* constituting a sub-community).⁵⁶

While I certainly concur that subscription to an e-mail listing does not result in one's automatic entrenchment in community, I would argue that locality does not itself generate a sense of community amongst those who

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 662.

⁵⁶ Z. Sardar, 'ALT.CIVILIZATIONS.FAQ: cyberspace as the darker side of the west', in D. Bell and B. M. Kennedy (eds), *The Cybercultures Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 743. Sardar does raise some pertinent arguments about the potential for communities facilitated by cyber communication to simply replicate imperialist, hierarchical relationships between people in the North and those in the South. *Ibid.*, pp. 732-752.

find themselves there. People seek collectivity and this can be generated by being together in cyberspace or being together in the neighbourhood.

The common interests that Sardar derides can act as open entry points into communities. Communities formed around shared interests and passions are not based on membership determined by race, for example, or a common history to which others who did not experience it have no chance of accessing. Many of the activists in Reclaim the Streets in cities like Amsterdam, Tel Aviv, Eugene, and Melbourne would only know of the massive street parties that happened in London through their access to Reclaim the Streets' homepage. And yet some Reclaim the Streets/Streets for People (as the RTS-type collective is known in Melbourne) activists in Melbourne believe themselves to be part of a global anti-car network of activists.⁵⁷ What links them is clearly more than occasional shared access to a homepage monitored by activists in London. It is the sense that activists, wherever they are physically located in the world, share similar, though not homogeneous, aspirations and ideas. They are part of a community, linked by both technology and reports of activism: "...the locality is no longer the prime referent of our experiences. Rather, we can be immediately united with distant others with whom we can form a 'psychological neighbourhood' or 'personal community'."⁵⁸ Tim Jordan applies Anderson's definition of a nation to cyberspace in *Cyberpower: the Culture and Politics of Cyberspace and the Internet*:

Anderson defined a nation as 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (Anderson, 1991:6). It is imagined because it is impossible for all members of the community to meet; they must hypothesise their commonality. ...Finally, it is a community because, regardless of actual inequalities between members of a nation, it is always conceived as a 'deep, horizontal comradeship' in

⁵⁷ Interview conducted with G. and S., previous participants in Melbourne's Streets for People street reclaimings and legal street parties. G. and S., Melbourne, 18.11.99.

⁵⁸ Featherstone, *Undoing Culture...*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

which all are equal as members of the nation (Anderson, 1991:6-7).⁵⁹

Linked to the J18 discussion list and/or website, activists became part of an imagined community. It would seem that they are linked not only by technology but also by a desire to change, as the authors of one of the J18 agit-props expressed, the "reckless global system", a system "actually run by the financial market – a giant video game in which people buy and sell blips on electronic screens, trading life for money in their search for ever-higher profits."⁶⁰ This object of resistance is rather vague and clearly would have different ramifications for the imagined community's members. One of the points of criticism that has emerged since June 18 has been the failure for many activists in the North to recognise that the global economy has very different effects on their lives than it does on the lives of people in the South.⁶¹ Another point of debate that has emerged in the post-J18 period has been the failure to recognise that access to the Internet activism community is limited to the relatively privileged only, most of whom are located in the northern hemisphere. Both of these criticisms warrant individual attention, and they will be explored further as part of a wider discussion of J18's aftermath.

The Internet: activists' tool

The speed with which activists are able to communicate plans of action, agit-prop for distribution and tales of triumphant actions is perhaps the most potent attribute of the Internet as a tool of activism. In the build up to the day of action itself, one of the ways that activists employed the Internet was to disseminate ideas for actions to the numerous planning groups

⁵⁹ T. Jordan, *Cyberpower: The Culture and Politics of Cyberspace and the Internet* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 181.

⁶⁰ J18 network London, *Game Over* (otherwise known as the *Gold Agitprop*) (London: J18 network London, 1999).

⁶¹ Aziz Choudry argues that for many activists in the South, globalisation is a continuation of colonial oppression that has been inflicted on the people of the South for more than five hundred years. Activists in the North must realise this connection before any effective, non-hierarchical joint North-South activism can take place. A. Choudry, 'Bringing it all back home: anti-globalization activism cannot ignore colonial realities', on-line publication: <http://www.arena.org.nz/globcoln.htm>; accessed 31.08.01.

worldwide. In a series of J18 bulletins, released through the J18 distribution list, activists were able to read of plans for the day of action in other cities and perhaps use these plans to inspire them to augment their own.⁶²

London's J18 network explicitly recognised the Internet's importance in bulletins and other literature:

The Internet is a powerful tool: electronic communications will allow us to know what is happening everywhere on the day though [sic] the main site www.j18.org. This site will have a continuous feed of text reports, photos, video and audio from as many places as possible. It will also be an invaluable tool for media work, prisoner support and a future archive for inspiration as well as a breakthrough in setting up our own direct communication channels.⁶³

The creation of an alternative media agency was an act of both empowerment and refusal; J18 activists no longer had to rely on the mainstream media for reports of the day of action.⁶⁴ Instead, they created their own means of keeping activists up-to-date, with Internet link-ups to many J18 centres of action. These link-ups went far beyond exchanging e-mails. Instead, as the J18 bulletin promised, they transferred live footage, complete with video footage, audio bites and text.

⁶² See, for example, the list of proposals in the Second J18 Bulletin e-mailed to distribution list subscribers on June 4, 1999. J18 network London, *Second J18 Bulletin* (London: J18 network, 1999).

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Jim Carey, content editor of *Squall*, argues that this is one of the most important aspects about the use of the Internet by activists and direct action groups:

People find it difficult to understand that a demonstration of this scale can be organised without a central office or a headquarters. But J18 isn't like a corporate organisation. It is made up of different groups who all have their own special areas, but whose interests are entirely linked. They keep in touch and aware of one another's activities on the Internet. The Internet is empowering, it means that different groups can generate their own media without having it diluted by the mainstream media.

Cited in Anonymous author(s), 'Grunge verses greed', BBC website: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/>; accessed 16.06.99.

The activists themselves were not the only groups aware of the Internet's value as a tool for political action. In the days prior to the Carnival Against Capital, the mainstream media in Britain commented on the use of the Internet as a means of planning under the subtitle "Internet empowerment": "what is for sure is that the groups involved know what they are doing and have been able to keep in touch with one another with the help of the Internet."⁶⁵ In a rather mordant attack, Tim Reid of *The Times* in London writes:

Anarchy is highly organised these days. The bloody riots that erupted in the City of London on Friday had been planned in detail on the Internet for months.

What has emerged since Friday's Carnival Against Capitalism, which resulted in damage estimated 2 million Pounds [sic], is how the Internet has become a powerful tool for Britain's anarchist groups.

...One City of London police officer said: "There is a hard core of violent and dangerous protesters who are now able to use the Internet and mobile phones to great effect...they can use the modern technology to recruit new members much more easily."⁶⁶

The inference here is clearly that the Internet has become a tool in the wrong hands, a dangerous networking tool. Members of the mainstream press have, however, misconstrued the use of the Internet as a *shared* planning tool and a forum for discussion. While activists used the Internet to spread ideas and plans, they never intentionally used it as a central point for distributing orders to group followers, as the *London Times* reporter seems to imply.

In Melbourne, Australia, news reports on one commercial television network termed the day of action an Internet campaign, and even an Internet war, against capital, while a reporter posed in front of a computer screen revealing video coverage of J18 actions in that city, such as the Bionic Baking Brigade representatives' pie-ing of the Australian Opposition

⁶⁵ Anonymous author(s), 'Grunge verses greed', *op. cit.*

⁶⁶ T. Reid, 'Organising the city anarchists', *The Times* (22 June 1999), page number/s unknown.

Leader.⁶⁷ An activist writing in *Black Flag* alleges that some British media commentators implied that using the Internet to organise the J18 protests was an abuse of Internet technology.⁶⁸

This sentiment, that the Internet represents a dangerous tool in the hands of radical activists, has been echoed in the corporate world. A fitting example is given in the J18 exposition in *Do or Die!*:

A PR manager teaching multinationals how to deal with modern day activist groups was quoted as saying 'The greatest threat to the corporate world's reputation comes from the Internet, the pressure groups' newest weapon. Their agile use of global tools such as the Internet reduces the advantage that corporate budgets once provided.'⁶⁹

Perhaps this warning is warranted, given the use in recent years of computer technology to sabotage both corporations and government bodies. Clearly, some computer hacking is done for either personal gain or as a daring practical joke, as was the case with the hacking of the NASA website and computer files by two British teenagers.⁷⁰ Computers can also be used as tools of sabotage, as they were by thousands of J18 activists. On June 15, 1999, a group known as the Electronic Disturbance Theater began sending out e-mails on the J18 discussion list and Reclaim the Streets lists urging the recipients to join an act of 'Electronic Civil Disobedience' against the Mexican Government.

The call made in conjunction with the Reclaim The Streets day of action [in reference to J13] was intended to introduce a virtual component to the numerous off-line actions happening all over the world. ...By directing Internet browsers toward the Zapatista FloodNet URL, during this time period, people

⁶⁷ Channel Nine news coverage of J18, 19.06.99.

⁶⁸ Anonymous author(s), 'J18 in the city... all around the world', *Black Flag for Anarchist Resistance*, no. 218 (publication date not provided), p. 4.

⁶⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'Friday June 18th 1999: Confronting capital and smashing the state!', *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁷⁰ In 1994 two hackers (known as "Data Stream" and "Kuji") broke into several hundred computer systems, including NASA and the Korean Atomic Research Institute. After extensive investigations, detectives from Scotland Yard arrested two

joined a virtual sit-in. What this meant was that their individual computer began sending re-load commands over and over again for the duration of the time they were connected to FloodNet. In a similar way that people were out in the streets, clogging up the streets, the repeated re-load command of the individual user – multiplied by the thousand engaged – clogged the Internet pathways leading to the targeted web site.⁷¹

On June 18, 1999, the Mexican Government's homepage received over 18,000 'hits', effectively jamming it as a statement against that government's renewed violence against the people of Chiapas. Activists from the Electronic Disturbance Theatre, who had issued the call to jam the Mexican Government's homepage, acknowledge that virtual demonstrations of this type are limited and do not replace activism on the street and face-to-face contact between activists. Instead, the Electronic Disturbance Theatre activists see the action that was staged on June 18 as bridging the gap between the virtual and the real: "The Zapatista FloodNet action in conjunction with the global Reclaim The Street actions is an example of real-virtual hybridity at a world-wide level."⁷²

Limitations of Internet community

Activists' use of the Internet in planning and executing J18 was not met with universal approval. The criticisms waged by J18 activists against what many saw as the excessive use of the Internet and e-mail technologies came after the event. In an e-mail posted to the J18 discussion list in October 1999, CopWatch expresses her/his concerns about face-to-face relations being replaced by electronic forums. In response to another J18 activist's confession of fear of 'speaking' on discussion lists because of the intimidating tone of many e-mails, CopWatch argues in defence of electronic

16-year-old boys. M. Devitt, 'A brief history of computer hacking', online publication: <http://www.chiroweb.com/columnist/devitt/>; accessed 02.11.01.

⁷¹ S. Wray, 'June 18: the virtual and the real action on the Internet and in Austin, Texas. Zapatista FloodNet and Reclaim the Streets', posted to the J18 discussion list j18discussion@gn.apc.org; on 20.06.99.

⁷² *Ibid.*

discussion forums, claiming they provide a forum for discussion not always available due to time constraints and the difficulty of assembling people together after an action:

I would be interested whether you would be as reticent to speak up in a face-to-face situation. ...There's *no replacement* for the human interaction that takes place between individual people on a day like J18. But, at the same time, when -- in the past -- have you had the opportunity to reflect on a day like J18 in the way that you, I and others have managed to do on this list?⁷³

One of the most scathing attacks on the British J18's network's organisational methodology echoes widely felt sentiment that activists are now effectively divided into two: those who have access to the Internet and e-mail and those who do not. 'Observations on e-litism' was prepared for the post-Inter-Continental Caravan meeting at Exodus in November 1999 and focused on the costs and accessibility of the Internet and e-mail for people in Britain, arguing that only 12 per cent of the adult population in Britain have access to the Internet at work or home and this "just leaves the rest of us out of the game and on the margins." The letter, by an activist known as Jim, ends with an appeal:

E-mail might be instant, convenient and cheap for people with Internet access at home or in some college or office they visit frequently. BUT FOR THE REST OF US, IT'S SLOW, INCONVENIENT VERY TIME CONSUMING AND BLOODY EXPENSIVE! And that's if we can get access AT ALL. Any chance of these simple facts penetrating the perceptions of the netocracy? So far, the Internet intelligentsia have been remarkably thick on this subject. At least that's the charitable interpretation of the attitudes encountered.⁷⁴

⁷³ CopWatch, 'kAt', copwatch@hotmail.com posted to the J18 discussion list on 05.10.99. See also Amusing Pseudonym, 'Keep it up, don't let violence divide us', *Reflections on J18 by Reclaim the Streets*, http://www.infoshop.org/octo/j18_rts3.html, accessed 29.11.99.

⁷⁴ Jim, 'Observations on e-litism', in an e-mail from kAt, 'e-litism (UK and beyond)', kat.fisher@virgin.net, posted to the J18 discussion list on 21.11.99.

What is particularly striking about Jim's outrage at the perceived elitism of the reliance on e-mail in planning for and discussing J18 is its lack of acknowledgment of privilege. The total focus of the article is on the access of activists in Britain to e-mail and Internet facilities. This is quite remarkable, given the ostensibly global nature of the J18 day of action. In relation to many of the activists who took part in J18 actions around the world, activists in Britain, even those who are unable to access e-mail or the Internet, are still far more likely to have had regular access to J18 information than their counterparts in Pakistan, in Nigeria and in India, for example. Activists on the Inter-Continental Caravan were either assumed to have no regular e-mail access or this was not taken into consideration. And yet the Inter-Continental Caravan was seen as an integral part of the Carnival Against Capital. Jim was certainly correct then in (presumably) his⁷⁵ assertion that J18 activists were divided into those with and those without access to the J18 discussion list and J18 webpages.

The accessibility of e-mail and Internet on a global scale has received scant activist attention. In the *Evading Standards* publication distributed to thousands in London on June 18, a few short lines are devoted to the unequal distribution of Internet access, amidst glowing praise of the potential of the Internet: "Admittedly, the situation is far from perfect. We should never forget that most people on this planet have never used a telephone, and digital networks are central to the process of economic globalisation."⁷⁶ The lack of appropriate acknowledgment compounds the reality that many activists in the South and even in parts of Europe relied solely on mail-outs of J18 publicity and bulletins, while other activists were far more privileged and had access to extensive discussion and regular updates via computers and modems.⁷⁷ J18 activists' desire to facilitate open communities of resistance was thus only partly successful.

⁷⁵ It must be remembered that many women adopt male persona on the Internet. See Dale Spender, *Nattering on the Net: Women, Power and Cyberspace* (Melbourne: Spinifex, 1995).

⁷⁶ J18 network London, *Evading Standards* (London: J18 network, 1999), p. 8.

⁷⁷ Featherstone argues that even within broad locality divides, like North and South, there are "clear differentials, with the wealthy and well-educated most likely to have access to the new forms of information and communications technology through possession of the necessary economic and cultural capital." Featherstone, *Undoing Culture...*, *op. cit.*, p. 117. Writing five years later, Featherstone continues to acknowledge the uneven possession of access to technology: "we need to see

*Recognising communities' differences:
the case of the Inter-Continental Caravan*

This question of the acknowledgment of privilege is an appropriate point at which to discuss the Inter-Continental Caravan. The Inter-Continental Caravan (ICC), a tour of Indian farmers/activists to campaign against the World Trade Organisation and multinational corporations, had been planned by the participants to coincide with the G8 summit. The original idea was proposed by the Indian farmers movement, the Union of the Peasants of the State of Karnataka (KRRS), in the summer of 1998, but it was not until November 1998 that activists committed to organising the Caravan.⁷⁸ In turn, the J18 network established connections with the activists from the Inter-Continental Caravan and together they planned that the ICC would become part of the J18 Carnival Against Capital. Extensive planning took place for the arrival of the ICC in Europe up to seven months in advance. One of the first plans to be made was the establishment of Welcoming Committees in each city the Caravan was visiting. These committees were linked by an e-mail list, had a co-ordination office in the Netherlands and met regularly for two to three day meetings to discuss the issues associated with the ICC.⁷⁹

Before arriving in Europe, the Inter-Continental Caravan grew to include many more activists from the South, numbering approximately 500. As part of the tour, these "grassroots activists from the global South – Latin America, Africa and the Indian Sub-Continent" visited collectives throughout Europe, including the UK. Shortly before June 18 itself, at the end of May, a small number of the ICC members were granted visas to enter Britain. The following excerpt from *Evading Standards* describes one of the

technology as intertwined with social codes that maintain hierarchies of power." M. Featherstone, 'Technologies of post-human development and the potential for global citizenship', in J. Nederveen Pieterse (ed.), *Global Futures: Shaping Globalization* (London: Zed, 2000), p. 204.

⁷⁸ Luciao, 'Evaluation attempt of the ICC political from a European point of view', posted to the J18 discussion list j18discussion@gn.apc.org; on 23.09.99.

⁷⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'The Intercontinental Caravan - a critical analysis', *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), p. 28.

actions taken by activists in Britain and their Inter-Continental Caravan comrades:

...in a beautiful, active expression of international solidarity the Caravan, many of them farmers from some of the poorest parts of the world, joined us in reclaiming land and life from Corporate control.

As the sun rose on a Monsanto-owned field in Essex campaigners moved onto the (ex!) GM crop test site. They set up tripods, tents, banners and flags, and for two days the land was squatted and reclaimed. Battle songs from the Punjab were exchanged for English ballads about the Diggers land squats of 1649. Organic plants were planted where GM Rape had once contaminated the ground and flags and ideas for resisting Corporate dominance were exchanged.⁸⁰

The image created here is of a highly successful union between activists from South and North.⁸¹ A different reality emerged, however, in the aftermath of J18, one that was clearly present throughout but was not publicly raised until after both the departure of ICC activists from Europe and J18. In the *Do or Die!* article, 'The Intercontinental Caravan - a critical analysis', the author/s substantiate this: "Early on, serious logistical, political and inter-personal problems emerged."⁸² Issues relating to ICC activists obtaining visas were the first to emerge. The activists' ability to undertake direct action was jeopardised by the immigration process in the UK:

Large-scale brown-nosing of politicians and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) was needed to get the applications through. Apart from being utterly odious, this affected the political nature of the project. In the UK, questions were raised as to whether direct action was an option, as the Home Office wished to see the tour's itinerary....⁸³

⁸⁰ J18 network London, *Evading Standards*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁸¹ For another account of solidarity between ICC participants see Anonymous author(s), 'The Inter-Continental Caravan', *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.

⁸² Anonymous author(s), 'The Intercontinental Caravan - a critical analysis', *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

The NGOs' involvement in securing the ICC visas led to further tactical problems, as many who became attracted to the ICC project favoured NGO-type political approaches. This was totally at odds with the direct action approach of activists involved in the J18 planning. These differences, however, seemed to have been stifled, rather than confronted.⁸⁴

The Inter-Continental Caravan was not an ill-prepared jaunt to Europe.⁸⁵ And yet it would seem that many of the issues the ICC raised could have been predicted and perhaps tackled prior to the Southern activists' arrival. While there was extensive joint dialogue between the activists from the South and their comrades in the North, many expectations on both parts were simply not met. Accounts of the ICC, such as the one reported in *Evading Standards*, imply that activists instantly formed a global activist community. The one extensive examination of the ICC, the critical analysis in *Do or Die!*, presents a very different picture. The anonymous author asserts that there was no mutual dialogue between European, Indian and other activists from the South. Furthermore, some Inter-Continental Caravan activists arrived having never even seen the programme or 'manifesto', both prepared for them by their European counterparts. Participants in the Caravan reported consternation with the unrealistic expectations they felt their European hosts had of them, with one member of the ICC commenting that "organisers in Europe suffered from the 'expectation that visitors would be true peasants with the political sophistication of university graduates.'" ⁸⁶ There was little open acknowledgement by the hosts of the Caravan, the J18 network amongst them, that the ICC in fact incorporated a massive diversity of interests and backgrounds. Perhaps the most obvious of these was that the participants came from different nation-states and regions of the world. The majority of

⁸⁴ "At the evaluation meeting [of the ICC] in July 1999 someone commented: 'So many people were regularly angry and frustrated with other people. The anger is really demotivating... Leftist movements are often criticised for arguing too much, but in the ICC we should have argued more, and really confronted our differences.'", cited in *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ In the extensive critique of the ICC published in *Do or Die!*, the author cites statistics of some of the resources which the project exhumed, including £125,000 in airfares and over £50,000 in preparation costs. *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

the ICC activists came from India, and the Latin American, Nepalese and Bangladeshi activists reported being marginalised and harassed by the Indian majority.⁸⁷

Women activists, both the participants of the ICC and their hosts in European countries, reported harassment from male ICC members, and this extended to serious allegations of sexual harassment. Quite aside from the shocking incidences of sexual harassment and assault, it would clearly seem that the idea of sexual equality was not stressed strongly enough in briefing sessions on differences in gender relations in Europe before the Caravan participants arrived: "One Indian man refused to take part in a demonstration in Cologne, as he was so outraged at the behaviour of the European women - smoking and drinking."⁸⁸ Luciao, in an e-mail entitled 'Evaluation attempt of the ICC political from a European point of view', summarised some of these differences: "Embarrassing disparity in the gender distribution (male dominated), daily gender oppression, racism and lack of respect towards the minorities involved in the Caravan, strong tradition of hierarchical organisation, tourism and consumerism, nationalism, internal political conflicts, non-transparency in the selection process, misinformation of the participants etc. etc. were as much an integral part of the Caravan as the deficits on the European side."⁸⁹

Perhaps the ultimate example of the 'sweep the problems under the carpet' syndrome which seemed to beset the ICC organisers comes from one European bus co-ordinator:

On the very first day, an Indian guy got up and started talking about how wonderful Hitler was...how the swastika symbolises a maize mill which functions by getting rid of the bad parts of the maize and keeping the good parts.... Hitler "defended the German nation state when it was in crisis, by getting rid of the problem elements, and now India has to do the same"!!!!
...How he came into the caravan again raises many questions...
I cannot stay in a project that is not strong enough to kick out

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Luciao, *op. cit.*

a nazi.... We kept him on the bus over a week through indecision and default.... I am sorry we have been providing him with free food and accommodation for 10 days, and am sorry that we had such difficulty in chucking him off, and could not really reach a consensus.⁹⁰

The frustration expressed here seems to have characterised much of the ICC experience, on the part of activists in Europe at least. Activists felt reluctance to voice concerns, and when concerns were raised at either J18 meetings or ICC welcoming committee meetings, activists were told they were too negative.⁹¹

While these numerous problems beset activists in Europe, Caravan activists also encountered great difficulties. Perhaps foremost amongst these was the sensation that they had been brought to Europe as an exhibition and were expected to parade and perform. In the words of a European activist: "It is a sad fact that on many actions the Caravan made an exotic picture outside whatever institution they had been taken to protest at, but local activists were conspicuous by their absence."⁹² The lack of true dialogue between the activists from South and North resulted in the Caravan activists feeling that they were "treated like cattle."⁹³ This situation seems to almost be the reverse of the Zapatista Encuentro situation, whereby the hosts, the indigenous peoples of Chiapas, were effectively put on display to activists from the North. At the Encuentro, the inequality between the activists was actually reinforced by the cooking arrangements, whereby the Northern Encuentro delegates were fed a variety of foods, cooked for them by Chiapas women who lived on tortillas and beans throughout the Encuentro.⁹⁴ True international dialogue or networking cannot be possible while such inequalities and feelings of exploitation go unacknowledged.

One of J18's central tenets was difference. The publicity literature and media are replete with references to the recognition of difference as being at

⁹⁰ Anonymous author(s), 'The Intercontinental Caravan - a critical analysis', *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁹¹ Interview with C., Melbourne, 20.01.00.

⁹² Anonymous author(s), 'The Intercontinental Caravan - a critical analysis', *op. cit.*, p. 28.

⁹³ Cited in *Ibid.*

the heart of the J18 global day of carnival against capital. Even in the brief letter preceding the distribution of the text of the following J18 leaflet on the J18 discussion list, the need for recognition of diversity is addressed:

Here's the text of the London J18 leaflet as agreed by the 'agitprop working group' (or something like that).

...Obviously this is not intended to be the only or 'official' London J18 leaflet. A diversity of leaflets for diverse people and situations are welcomed and encouraged...

DAY OF PROTEST & PARTY IN FINANCIAL CENTRES
ACROSS THE GLOBE

...We want to build strong, diverse communities in which everyone has control of their lives....⁹⁵

It is quite clear that the Inter-Continental Caravan did little to build a community of activists that worked with difference.

Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink establish a loose framework with which to evaluate the strength of activist networks. Clearly, they argue, activist networks are most effective when they are strong and dense. Strength and density are derived from two factors: the identity of the networks, as defined by principles, goals and targets; and from the structural relationships among the networked organisations and individuals.⁹⁶ If we apply these criteria to the Inter-Continental Caravan and their comrades in Europe, we find a rather weak network, with little evidence of soundly developed horizontal relationships or the sharing of principles, goals or even plans.

J18: community, conformity and carnival

The problems that beset the J18 network in relation to South and North networking can be seen to have beset the J18 network in microcosm in the UK. The London J18 video, produced by Undercurrent after J18, opens with the proclamation that "The resistance movement is growing. They are

⁹⁴ Interview with L., Melbourne, 05.10.98.

⁹⁵ Helen@globalnet.co.uk, 'London J18 leaflet', e-mail to the J18 discussion list, 12.04.99.

⁹⁶ M. Keck and K. Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 206-7.

battling for diversity...."⁹⁷ The reality of the J18 actions, however, is that despite over 10,000 people gathering in the City of London to stage actions against global capital, it was a very homogeneous group of activists. 'G.', from the Lancaster J18 collective, questions this lack of diversity in 'June 18th - if I can dance it's not my revolution?':

What I want to know is where are the people that marched with us to Trafalgar Square (accepting the failure of other plans for the day!) on the March for Social Justice, the dockers, the RMT dissidents, disaffected trade unionists, Kurdish workers, pensioners groups, twice the number of people we attracted to the City. People whose tradition and history speak volumes about differing forms of resistance, from whom we might learn differing repertoires of activism and to whom we might teach certain tactical innovations. ...Why have we failed to mobilise large swathes of people whose lives are touched everyday by the machinations of the City, whose communities have long traditions of resistance and whom we have worked with in the past.⁹⁸

In an attempt to answer these questions posed by 'G.', I would suggest that one reason that J18 failed to attract a diverse range of activists is that people were expecting, and in fact created, another Reclaim the Streets-type action. As established in the previous chapter, RTS actions generally attract activists of a certain demographic. The use of the subtitle for J18 of *Carnival Against Capital* also added to the expectations of J18 being an RTS-style day of activism. The use of this term 'Carnival' deliberately intoned a sense of pleasure and play, a sense of fighting negative with positive. This was reinforced in the *Evading Standards* publication, distributed on the day. Under the heading of 'June 18th: game over for apocalypse roulette', the authors of the spoof on the *Evening Standard* write:

⁹⁷ Undercurrents Productions and i-Contact Video Network, *J18: The Story the Media Ignored* (Oxford: Undercurrents Productions, 1999).

⁹⁸ G, 'June 18th - if I can dance it's not my revolution?', *Reflections on J18 by Reclaim the Streets*, http://www.infoshop.org/octo/j18_rts3.html, accessed 29.11.99.

Activists from around the country will descend on the City bringing it to a standstill in the morning. Then in the afternoon the roar of profit and plunder will be replaced by the sounds and rhythms of party and pleasure as a massive carnival of resistance snakes through the Square Mile. We invite all city workers to take a day off and join the carnival.⁹⁹

June 18th in London certainly had a carnivalesque atmosphere, with the day commencing in London with a Critical Mass bike ride of over 500 cyclists jamming streets around the Square Mile.¹⁰⁰ One of the next mass actions in London was the meeting of activists at Smithfield Meat Market, where they were met with a small number of police and an unusually quiet marketplace. Many of these activists went on to the British Poultry Association headquarters and various McDonald's stores, before joining some 10,000¹⁰¹ activists at Liverpool Street Station.¹⁰² This is certainly not a complete list of all of the actions that took place before the gathering at the Liverpool Street tube station, nor does it aim to be. It would be both difficult and undesirable to summarise the experiences of thousands of activists on June 18, 1999, as it would do little to reflect the diversity of what occurred on that day. Instead, I will endeavour to sketch an outline of some of the day's events in both London and other British cities, and the ramifications these actions had on the sense of community among 'J18ers' and the implications they had for the future of such mass actions.

The gathering at Liverpool Street Station was one part of the day of action that had been planned in advance. The venue and time (12pm) were well advertised and in *Do or Die!*, it is this part of the day which is referred to as

⁹⁹ J18 network London, *Evading Standards*, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ Justice?, 'Suits you, Sir!', *SchNEWS*, no. 217 (25 June 1999), p. 1.

¹⁰¹ This figure is a rather contentious one, with figures ranging from a reported 4,000 in *The Independent* to one activist commenting that "Most newspapers said around 4,000 - I reckon more like 15,000." See S. Goodchild, '16 held, 46 hurt as carnival turns to carnage across Square Mile', *The Independent* (19 June 1999), page number unknown; and Anonymous author(s), 'Carnival Against Capital' collage, *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), p. 18. I have chosen the figure 10,000 as an estimate, due to the frequency of its citation in non-mainstream press. It is also the approximate median figure.

¹⁰² qpaul@londonaa.demon.co.uk, 'June 18th Stop the City demo', e-mail to the J18 discussion list, 19.06.99.

the Carnival Against Capital.¹⁰³ From many personal accounts, it was at this Carnival Against Capital at Liverpool Street and in the immediate hours after that the atmosphere was most festive:

The beginning of the march in Liverpool Street Station was great, the place was filled up completely and some pukka drummers got the vibes going. Mad costumes, suddenly out of nowhere everyone had carnival masks on, some really funny banners ("Ignore Us" was my favourite).

Cautious grins breaking out everywhere followed by loads of cheering and "capitalism sucks" confetti, the suits all looked a bit amazed and I was glad to see that most passers by had smiles on their faces.¹⁰⁴

The anarchist publishing house Freedom Press summarised the aims of the Carnival Against Capital as being "a peaceful festival of carnivalesque occupation", with the aim of disrupting normal business in the City and replacing it with something more human.¹⁰⁵ The vision of thousands of people dancing to the beat of drummers in the Liverpool Street tube station and the streets of London's Square Mile, as seen on both the live webstream on June 18 itself and on the Undercurrents and i-Contact video,¹⁰⁶ reveals that the Carnival Against Capital certainly achieved the aim of creating a carnivalesque atmosphere and disrupting the everyday atmosphere and business of the City.

The J18 revelers not only danced, but in the tradition of the Venetian Carnivale, they also wore colourful masks. Activists involved in the regular J18 planning meetings produced 9,000 masks for the Carnival Against Capital in the City of London. These masks came in four different colours, and when it came time to leave the station, the crowd was divided into groups according to their mask's colour, led by people with streamers of

¹⁰³ See Anonymous author(s), 'Carnival Against Capital' collage, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁴ M. Brown, 'Shaky stuff', Urban 75 website: <http://www.urban75.com/Action/j18.html>; site accessed 05.11.99.

¹⁰⁵ Anonymous author(s), 'Police trigger riot in city', Freedom Press website: <http://freedom.tao.ca>; site accessed 13.07.99.

¹⁰⁶ Undercurrents Productions and i-Contact Video Network, *op. cit.*

matching colours.¹⁰⁷ This was done largely to confuse the police and disperse them. The following text was printed on the reverse of each of the masks:

Those in authority fear the mask for their power partly resides in identifying, stamping and cataloguing: in knowing who you are. But a Carnival needs masks, thousands of masks; and our masks are not to conceal our identity but to reveal it... The masquerade has always been an essential part of Carnival. Dressing up and disguise, the blurring of identities and boundaries, transformation, transgression; all are brought together in the wearing of masks. Masking up releases our commonality, enables us to act together, to shout as one to those who rule and divide us 'we are all fools, deviants, outcasts, clowns and criminals'. Today we shall give this resistance a face; for by putting on our masks we reveal our unity; and by raising our voices in the street together, we speak our anger at the facelessness of power. On the signal follow your colour. Let the Carnival begin....¹⁰⁸

The distribution of masks at Liverpool Street Station was not only a symbolic act, reminding one activist of the colour-coded crash helmets used by South Korean rioters.¹⁰⁹ J18 carnival-goers could also use the masks as a means of protecting their identities from the ever-present CCTV (Close Circuit Televisions) security cameras.

The Carnival Against Capital in the City of London was one of only a handful of actions that were organised for the day.¹¹⁰ Again, it is impossible

¹⁰⁷ This tactic did not go unquestioned. In a cartoon story of one activist's experience of J18 in *Do or Die!*, the author asks:

There's this recurring phenomenon on RTS'/big actions, that the majority hasn't got a clue where they're heading or even if things are going to plan or not. There's someone shouting "That way!" without explanation and you don't know if that's bollocks or if they're an 'organiser' or what. It's all for obvious reasons, I know, but it's confusing and people are forced to follow some anonymous leaders like sheep. I don't know, but is there a better way to organise mass action?

Anonymous author(s), no title, *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), p.24.

¹⁰⁸ Reprinted in Anonymous author(s), 'Carnival Against Capital' collage, *op. cit.*, p.19.

¹⁰⁹ Anonymous author(s), no title, *Do or Die!*, no. 8, p. 24.

¹¹⁰ The following is a timetable of planned events for J18 in London:

to sum up the massive variety of autonomous actions that took place in cities across the UK. Stress was placed on spontaneity, rather than activists being led: "There was a move away from the passive street party punter waiting to be entertained."¹¹¹ Activists played a game of giant Monopoly in front of the Bank of England in London; others formed the More to Life Project (MTLP) and posed as immaculately-dressed business people and sang such ditties as 'money makes the world go around' while strolling the streets of the City with briefcases on their heads.¹¹² In Glasgow, activists participated in a dance party against capital in both the city centre and a nearby park, with some dressing up in costumes and others bringing along drums.¹¹³ The enthusiasm for this spontaneity was well expressed in an e-mail sent to the J18 discussion list:

What a day, a day to lift the spirits... At last, a chance not to be the passive spectator... The sun shining and hot. In the morning I hear on the radio reports, mainly on the traffic news, of imaginative actions, Tower Bridge closed by a low-slung banner hung by abseilers. ...This is co-ordinated decentralisation and the cops don't know how to deal with it, used to all those easy years of leftist marches to Trafalgar Square, controlled by them marching either side of it, always at a pace that makes your feet hurt.¹¹⁴

For other activists, however, the hybrid of organised actions and the emphasis on lack of detail to encourage activists to be spontaneous caused confusion. Activists from Manchester formed a June 18th organising group and made the collective decision to undertake an action in London, rather than Manchester itself. The group soon found that the meetings were

7:30 am: Critical Mass; 10:00 am: Picket of Reed Employment Agency; 10:30 am: Animal abuse is as transnational as Capital; 11:00 am: Anti-McDonalds picket; 11:00 am: Global chain reaction; 12 noon: Carnival of Resistance; 13:30: Protest against the militarisation of space; 4:00 pm: Picket of Aroma; 19:00: Eurobunk.

Extract from J18 network London, *Evading Standards*, *op. cit.*, p.23.

¹¹¹ Anonymous author(s), 'J18 in the City... all around the world', *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹¹² See Undercurrents Productions and i-Contact Video Network, *op. cit.*, and Anonymous author(s), 'More to Life Project', *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), pp. 15-16.

¹¹³ See PLUR, 'Glasgow J18/RTS party', Urban 75 website: <http://www.urban75.com/Action/j18.html>; site accessed 05.11.99.

¹¹⁴ Harrier, 'j18', e-mail to the J18 discussion list, 20.06.99.

failing to mobilise activists, particularly beyond the 'usual networks'. In the article, 'Northerners doing it down South!', the author(s) argue(s) that one reason for this was that activists in Manchester were operating in an information vacuum, with little idea of what sort of event J18 was going to be, how the action would differ from a street party, as this desired difference was constantly emphasised, and whether the group was acting simply as a networking agency, or if they should plan an autonomous Manchester action in London. The author(s) sum(s) this up with the following comment: "The accepted wisdom on diversity is that it is a strength. Yet in a group trying to plan around an unknown action, with an unknown random collection of people, with different politics and experience, diversity is a real bind."¹¹⁵

The frustration felt at the ambiguity of J18 is also expressed in an e-mail entitled 'Some ideas on getting people involved.' Here, the author argues that the emphasis placed on organising autonomous protests or actions¹¹⁶ discouraged a large body of people from becoming involved in the J18 actions:

...I've seen the stickers, browsed the web site, and I'll definitely be going down to the City on the 18th to make myself heard. But, I don't have time (exams) to help organise anything, or indeed do much at all except just turn up (on the Friday after the last exam, with a load of other hyped-up students). But where do I go? And what time do I go there? And what do I bring?

What I, and all the other 'come alongers' need, are times, places, and concrete 'Do's' like 'Do cycle to smithfields market at 7:30am in time for a critical mass' which is on a sticker on the UCL cycle racks but not on the website.

Why not? It's great to get people fired up against capitalism, globalisation, and all associated evils, but if no-one knows

¹¹⁵ Anonymous author(s), 'Northerners doing it down South!', *Do or Die!*, no. 8 (publication date not provided), pp. 16-17.

¹¹⁶ See J18 network London, *Red and Green* (London: London J18 network, 1998).

where to go to join in with the protests, not a lot will actually happen.¹¹⁷

The City of London as a temporary autonomous zone

Scenes like that at Liverpool Street Station can be described according to Hakim Bey's idea of the Temporary Autonomous Zone (TAZ), whereby the TAZ "is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the State can crush it."¹¹⁸ The assembly of approximately 10,000 activists in a tube station and then in the streets beyond it generated a Temporary Autonomous Zone. Time, space and imaginations were liberated, as activists danced, sang, paraded on stilts and in costumes, climbed CCTV (closed circuit television) camera poles, etc., and imagined a world unfettered by the constraints of the global capitalist system. Once the mass of celebrating activists spread through the City, however, the TAZ dissolved. As activists dispersed, they were increasingly subject to heavy policing.¹¹⁹ TAZ is a space free from the intervention of the state and as soon as police played an increased role in controlling, or attempting to control, activists' freedom, the J18 TAZ disappeared.

The community of resistance was, in the case of J18, extremely temporal, lasting for a few hours only in the City of London. However, we cannot ignore the community that grew from the months of planning actions that preceded J18 and that which continued to exist through discussions and the exchange of analyses once the Carnival Against Capital day of actions was over. Just as Hakim Bey avoids a definitive definition of TAZ,¹²⁰ I would avoid a direct correlation between physicality and temporary autonomous

¹¹⁷ Anonymous author(s), 'Some ideas on getting people involved', e-mail to the J18 discussion list, 04.06.99.

¹¹⁸ H. Bey, *T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), p. 101, reproduced on-line: <http://www.t0.or.at/hakimbey/taz/>; accessed 29.08.01.

¹¹⁹ The policing of J18 has been the subject of much media coverage, both mainstream and independent, and debate. For a selection of this coverage, see the J18 resources on the Urban 75 website, which includes Hansard reports.

¹²⁰ See previous discussion in Chapter Two.

zones or communities. While J18 activists may have only come together physically on June 18, 1999, itself (and for some activists even this did not occur), the idea that activists were enmeshed in both networks and communities of activism specific to J18 should not be automatically dismissed. Instead, the strength and veracity of these networks and communities can be examined.

The advent of extreme criticism of the politics of J18 in its aftermath has brought the integrity of the J18 TAZ or communities into question. As part of the extensive debate that emerged after June 18, 1999, some activists questioned the collective consciousness of the activists involved. This questioning was particularly aimed at the level of privilege which some felt characterised the day of action, with both the choice of focussing the attack on capital in the City only and the class composition of participating activists debated. The choice to concentrate activism on June 18 in the Square Mile, or the City of London, was based on the belief that it is the headquarters of capitalism.¹²¹ However, some activists believed this to be the wrong decision: "...an action against capitalism which identifies capitalism as 'out there' in the City is fundamentally mistaken – the real power of capital is right here in our everyday lives – we re-create its power every day."¹²² In the execution of a single day of action against global capital in financial centres, whether in London, New York, Toronto, Montevideo, Melbourne or Gujrat, the real nature of capital is obscured. Certainly, a network of Temporary Autonomous Zones existed among activists who protested in these cities. However, this network was limited to supposed capitals of capital, rather than recognising that a TAZ against the exploitative nature of capital can be formed in any physical space. If we accept that capitalism is not simply an external thing, but an exploitative social relationship, then we must also accept that this social relationship cannot be protested against. Instead, capitalism must be changed while recognising that all, whether inside or outside the limits of the financial districts, are affected and part of capitalism.¹²³

¹²¹ See, for example, Justice?, 'So why the city?', *SchNEWS*, no. 217 (25 June 1999), p. 1.

¹²² Andrew X, 'Give up activism', *Reflections on J18 by Reclaim the Streets*, http://www.infoshop.org/octo/j18_rts3.html, accessed 29.11.99.

¹²³ See, for example, 'paulp', 'Musn't grumble', *Reflections on J18 by Reclaim the*

Activism in the City did not involve the workers of the financial district. Not all workers in the City are stockbrokers and bankers. Cleaners, secretaries, couriers, sandwich hands – all were absent from the day of action against capital. Instead, J18 was characterised by “people [who] think of themselves primarily as activists and as belonging to some wider community of activists.”¹²⁴ In the case of J18 in Britain, particularly in London, these activists are also often labelled the direct action network, and this network often includes activists from groups like Earth First!, Reclaim the Streets, London Greenpeace, and the Animal Liberation Front. These activists are what Andrew X describes as activists with a capital A, set apart from others by their self-identification as activists, belonging to a wider community of activists. Activism for these people is akin to a job or a career, a job whose end product is social change. Kathryn Joan Fox uses the image of concentric circles in her study of the social organisation of punk culture to describe the various levels of commitment of punks to their local punk scene: “they [the punks] formed a series of concentric circles, with the most committed members occupying the core, inner roles, and the least involved participants falling around the periphery.” Fox’s concentric circles framework could well describe Andrew X’s typology of activists’ levels of commitment and that division of activists from non-activists which I discussed in the introduction of this dissertation. In dividing society, however, into activists and non-activists or even into circles of varying levels of commitment, as Fox does, the actions of so-called non-activists or peripheral activists are considered irrelevant or less relevant in bringing about social change.¹²⁵

Streets, http://www.infoshop.org/octo/j18_rts3.html, accessed 29.11.99. Here, ‘paulp’ describes the real “centres” of capital as 1. Working in a job in order to live (wage labour); and 2. Housework, washing the dishes, changing the baby’s nappies, queuing in the supermarket, running for the bus, when one has no real choice (reproductive labour). He writes that “these are the two points where we come up against capital as a social relation that exploits us in our own lives. And it is these two points where we as proletarians might have any direct or indirect bargaining power to pull the plug on the system and start collectively transforming things.”

¹²⁴ Andrew X, *op. cit.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid*; K. J. Fox, ‘Real punks and pretenders: the social organization of a counterculture’, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, vol. 16, no. 3 (October 1987), p. 351.

Following this line of criticism is the belief that many activists, in fact, are there only for the fun and excitement of the street party:

A protest should not be viewed by the majority of its attendants as a nice prelude to Glastonbury festival. Perhaps some people got confused and thought they were going to a massive party packaged in an innovative format such as 'carnival in the city'.¹²⁶

Just as activists attended anti-Criminal Justice Act marches for diverse reasons, we cannot assume that all activists were participating in the J18 actions for the same reasons or with the same goals. Judging that some activists participated in J18 only for fun, while others were there to change the world, belies the calls for a diversity of actions and a diversity of understandings of the carnival against capital. Here we can reinforce Ben Malbon's concept of transitory tribes, which is as pertinent to the analysis of J18 actions as it was to anti-CJA networks. Activists coalesce despite difference, and, using the idea of transitory tribes, these differences shape the temporary identities of the new coalitions of activists.¹²⁷

The relatively large number of participants at the Carnival Against Capital does not mask the relative homogeneity of the activists who participated. 'paulp', for example, points directly to what he sees as "the predominantly white, majority middle-class, protest fashion scene" who led events like J18. Those who are conspicuous by their absence either did not know about J18 or did not know what it was about,¹²⁸ or perhaps were intimidated by the party-like atmosphere of RTS actions and simply expected a repeat. Activists from Manchester believed that the exclusiveness of the day was further emphasised by the lack of information available to activists in cities other than London.¹²⁹ The information contained in this discussion certainly reflects this bias, as so little has been produced about actions elsewhere in Britain.

¹²⁶ Sara M., 'Reply by Sara M. to Jim', Urban 75 website: <http://www.urban75.com/Action/j18.html>; site accessed 05.11.99.

¹²⁷ B. Malbon, 'The club - clubbing: consumption, identity and the spatial practices of every-night life', in T. Skelton and G. Valentine (eds), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 280.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Undercurrents Productions and i-Contact Video Network, *op. cit.*

¹²⁹ Anonymous author(s), 'Northerners doing it down South!', *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

Conclusion:
the travelling carnival against capital?

London J18's organisational style was replicated, on differing scales, in cities around the world. The Internet and e-mail-based discussion lists dominated as the modes of spreading information, even in developing countries such as Nigeria, Pakistan and Uruguay. Furthermore, actions were based in financial centres. In Prague, Toronto, San Francisco and New York, the actions staged under the J18 umbrella were openly termed Reclaim the Streets, organised as street parties by local RTS collectives. The organisational style of J18 in London did not only affect J18 actions globally, but also the meeting of direct action activists in Seattle in November, 1999. The World Trade Organisation's meeting in Seattle was met with mass resistance, as thousands of direct action activists came together from all over the Americas and across the globe. Again, computer-related technologies were used extensively in an attempt to inform activists, and to facilitate non-hierarchical, loosely affiliated networking of activists from many different organisations and groups. The anti-WTO actions in Seattle, like those that took place in London on J18, 1999, were celebrations of diversity, at the same time as being anti-globalisation protests.¹³⁰

Activists from the Seattle actions included many from J18 actions in London and yet their role in inspiring the modes of organisation has not been sufficiently acknowledged in post-Seattle commentary. Instead, the anti-WTO actions in Seattle are themselves held up as the antecedent of all subsequent anti-globalisation activism. Neither J18 nor N30, as the Seattle actions became known amongst many activists, were catalysts of global protest. Nor did either act as a model of organisation for subsequent days of carnival against capital such as the days of protest in Washington DC, Quebec, Melbourne, and Genoa. Throughout this dissertation it has been shown that protest is fluid and to ascribe one action as having facilitated a movement that both preceded it and has followed from it is simplistic in the

¹³⁰ There are a plethora of activist accounts of the anti-WTO protests in Seattle. See, for example, Justice?, 'Seattle's a gas', *SchNEWS*, no. 239 (3 December 1999), pp. 1-2; Justice?, 'Bare breasts and rubber bullets', *SchNEWS*, no. 240 (10 December 1999), pp. 1-2; J. Thomas, *The Battle in Seattle: The Story Behind and Beyond the WTO Demonstrations* (New York: Fulcrum, 2000)

least. Seattle did, however, alert the world's media, both mainstream and less conservative, to the growing networks amongst people from diverse political and social backgrounds. In this sense, as a signal of a pre-existing and fluid, growing movement, Seattle did act as a means of evoking more widespread awareness of increasing dissent at transnational corporate power, at inequality, at environmental destruction... the list is as endless as the number of participants at the actions in Birmingham, London, Köln, Seattle, Washington, Davos, Prague, Quebec, Melbourne, Göthenburg, Genoa.¹³¹

This list of cities hints at the analogy I employ of a travelling carnival against capital, whereby actions are staged in different cities by local-based activist communities and activists who have travelled from other geographic locations. These actions mimic the diverse networks of Temporary Autonomous Zones of J18 - the communities that are formed around these short-lived days of action are temporal and yet lived. The activists who protest on site are joined by a far more diverse community of activists around the world, who are connected via discussion lists and indymedia-facilitated updates. As with the J18 activist communities, these global communities against capital are often limited to those who have access to computer technologies. They are, however, diverse in interest and perspective and, like the myriad of activists who participated in J18, activists at these recent days of action against global capital are difficult to typify. What does unite them is shared, but not necessarily common, desire to seek safety from the negative impacts of the processes of globalisation

¹³¹ Again, there is a dearth of material concerning these global days of protest, from journalistic commentary to more critical analysis. In the latter vein, see Anonymous author(s), 'After Genoa - what way forward?', *The Socialist*, e-mailed to anti-capitalism@yahoo.com (28 July 2001); W. Bello, 'Lilliputians rising - 2000: the year of global protest against corporate globalization', *Multinational Monitor*, vol. 22, no. 1/2 (January/February 2001), pp. 33-36; Anonymous author(s), 'The global resistance movement in Prague: interview with a woman activist', *Off Our Backs*, vol. 30, no. 11 (December 2000), pp. 6-7; J. Smith, 'Behind the anti-globalization label', *Dissent*, vol. 48, no. 4 (Fall 2001), pp. 14-18; S. Gill, 'Toward a postmodern prince? The Battle in Seattle as a moment in the politics of globalisation', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2000), pp. 131-140; J. A. Scholte, 'Cautionary reflections on Seattle', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2000), pp. 115-121; F. Halliday, 'Getting real about Seattle', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2000), pp. 123-129; M. Kaldor, 'Civilising' globalisation? The implications of the Battle of Seattle', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2000), pp. 105-114; and

and neo-liberalism, or, as Zygmunt Bauman terms it, to find "community in the world of the individuals, ...a community woven together from sharing and mutual care; a community of concern and responsibility for the equal right to be human and the equal ability to act on that right."¹³²

I have demonstrated in this chapter that networks and communities of activists did come together to celebrate alternative realities to the present capitalist-oriented global system on June 18, 1999. I have argued that this day of action was beset by contradictions such as the idea of a single day of action against such a pervasive, enveloping system. Problems of lack of diversity and inclusivity have also been explored. The J18 carnival against capital demonstrated alternative realities to lives confined by capital. It also demonstrated that a resistance movement against global capital needs to be far more diverse and inclusive. Subcommandante Marcos, of the EZLN in Chiapas, reinforces this need to build an international community of resistance based on differences:

...The triumph of a resistance movement of those who are different would have repercussions in everything that globalisation has called up as a network, not of financial control, but of international resistance.¹³³

In *Spaces of Community*, the final part of the dissertation, the roles of place and proxemics in communities of activism have been examined. In each empirical study in this closing section, from anti-roads protests, Reclaim the Streets and the J18 Carnival against Capital, it has been demonstrated that activists come together in specific physical locations, yet the emotional communities they form there are not determined by belonging to that place. Instead, activists create new proxemics, in which their interaction with one another defines their relationships to the physical locales of protest. Communities are shown to transcend physical boundaries; they are emotional spaces of resistance.

K. Ainger, 'To open a crack', *New Internationalist*, no. 338 (September 2001), pp.9-13.

¹³² Z. Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), p. 150.

¹³³ Anonymous author(s), *Zapatista* (London: The Spirit of Emma, 1999), pp. 1-2.

C O N C L U S I O N

*NETWORKS OF RESISTANCE,
COMMUNITIES OF PROTEST –*

*AUTONOMOUS ACTIVISM
IN CONTEMPORARY BRITAIN*

CONCLUSION

Networks of Resistance, Communities of Protest: Autonomous Activism in Contemporary Britain

Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and ever-changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference.

bell hooks ¹

As I feel my ground, it is in the midst of concrete, complex, nonreducible, cantankerous, fleshy, interrelated, positioned subjects, noncontainable within any easy, abstract, hard-edged, simple classification. It is from within this multitude that I want to consider the question of community.

Maria Lugones ²

I see Pete from Leeds for the first time in ages, which is lovely. He's one of the warmest people in everything he does, right through to his voice, choice of hat and facial hair. Especially his voice. Rosie, who face-painted kids that first Sunday at Tot Hill, who'd been at Manic-Sha with Zwee and Mahalia and everyone, and who'd been

¹ b. hooks, *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics* (Boston: South End, 1990), p. 148, emphasis added.

² M. Lugones, 'Community', in A. M. Jaggar and I. M. Young (eds), *A Companion to Feminist Philosophy* (London: Blackwell, 1998), p. 466, emphasis added.

giving out cakes at Old Winchester Hill, wanders around playing mandolin.

These are beautiful people. This place has been fucked over so badly. I look up the hill towards Middle Oak, and there's all that thick mud... All that thick mud that used to be trees. I look down to the rivers and streams and canal, at the mess of logs. The Battle For The Trees is over. ...NOBODY IS GIVING UP.

Merrick³

These three seemingly unconnected excerpts offer insight into both the central thesis of this dissertation and to my own observations about communities of resistance. Communities are not always locale-based; what is essential to communities, however, is an intangible sense of home to which bell hooks refers, of coming together despite difference, yet celebrating that difference. It is my hope that I have conveyed this idea of the centrality of celebrations of difference, whether realised or not, throughout the empirical examinations of communities of dissent and activism. Maria Lugones touches on the difficulty of singularly placing oneself, a difficulty that is to be addressed in any scrupulous examination of community/ies. It is imperative to recognise that we are enmeshed in multiple social networks, which are woven into complex rhizomatic communities of interaction and solidarity. Merrick alludes to this multiplicity and complexity in his description of the bonds he feels with fellow activists at a Newbury anti-roads protest camp. He tells of activists who have come from the local area and further afield and with whom he feels affinity that goes beyond collectively trying to save a copse of trees. This dissertation has analysed the relations Merrick describes – the relations between activists, their networks of connection, the circumstances of their activism and the role of physical place and intangible emotional space in forming senses of community.

This dissertation has provided an examination of protest and collectivity. It has attempted to challenge assumptions of community as place-based and to

provide new understandings of activism as being driven by the need and/or desire of activists to find and develop shared understandings. Above all, I have concentrated on the communities of resistance activists have forged.

What is crucial to the development of activist communities are networks of communication, which are accessible and open. I have made use of a number of empirical studies of recent activisms in Britain in order to learn more of the interface between notions of community, networks and activism. Within these broad parameters of questioning, I have also sought to learn more of the relationship between participation in political activism and proxemics, as opposed to physical place. These discussions have been influenced by my broad attempt to depart from an instrumental account of activism. In my exploration of activism, I have not focussed on policy change. Instead, I have concentrated on the efforts of activists, their relations with one another and any sense of community that may evolve in the course of their political participation. I have explored the question of the existence of activist communities and the relationship between physical place and these communities. I have determined that people's physical proximity to one another or to a location of activism does not govern their engagement or affinity with campaigns or with fellow activists.

The core studies of this dissertation indicate that activist networks transcend boundaries, and hence they have great potential to completely transcend the physical. However, as I have demonstrated in discussions of the prevalence of the ego warrior, the rifts that developed between white and black activists on the Intercontinental Caravan, the Internet divide between those with access and those without, and the urban focus of J18, there are challenges to the direct relationship between the existence of networks and the building of communities. Emotional community, a community that is potentially more inclusive than that defined by location, continues to be challenged. In this closing section of the dissertation I will conclude by reinforcing the key arguments I have presented throughout and briefly reiterate the empirical

³ Merrick, *Battle for the Trees: Three Months of Responsible Ancestry* (Leeds: Godhaven,

studies I have employed. I will then point to some areas of debate and discussion to which future research on the topic of this dissertation could lead.

I have examined activism that has taken place in Britain since the miners' strike of 1984-1985 from the perspective of the communities that might have generated this activism and also any resultant surfacing communities. This represents a distinct shift from instrumental analysis of protest and activism as demonstrated in the review of collective protest, resource mobilisation and new social movement theories. Clearly, focus on community and networks is not novel. However, dissent has rarely been analysed within a framework which focuses attention on the social relations formed between activists.⁴ Community is described throughout this dissertation as physically nebulous, defined not by physical borders of exclusion or even by its constituent parts' proximity to one another. Community is instead used as a term to describe collectivity, a social network, or, as Barry Wellman terms it, a personal community, "a person's set of ties with friends, relatives, neighbors [sic.] and workmates" and, I clearly contend, people's affinity with fellow activists.⁵ This collectivity, however, does not require homogeneity and indeed difference is celebrated and desired by activists in the networks and communities considered in this dissertation. Ruth Liepins offers a definition of community that provides for affinity over physical distances and differences, arguing that community is a unifying force that

1996), p. 123, emphasis added.

⁴ There is a range of accounts written by activists reflecting on protests and campaigns which take into account and sometimes focus on social relations established between activists. See, for example, Merrick, *op. cit.*; Anonymous author(s), *Poll Tax Riot: 10 Hours that Shook Trafalgar Square* (London: Acab Press, 1990); K. Evans, *Copse: A Cartoon Book of Tree Protesting* (Biddestone: Orange Dog, 1998); and the various contributions to Anonymous author(s), *Reflections on J18 by Reclaim the Streets*, on-line version: http://www.infoshop.org/octo/j18_rts3.html; accessed 29.11.99.

However, I have found that in the vast array of work concerning communities and networks, there is little use of such discourse to analyse activism. Two particularly clear exceptions are C. Dolgon, M. Kline and L. Dresser, ' "House people, not cars!": economic development, political struggle and common sense in a city of intellect', in M. P. Smith (ed.), *Marginal Spaces* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1995), pp. 1-36; and T. Wright, 'Tranquillity city: self-organization, protest and collective gains within a Chicago homeless encampment', in M. P. Smith (ed.), *Marginal Spaces* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1995), pp. 37-68.

⁵ B. Wellman, 'Preface', in B. Wellman (ed.), *Networks in the Global Village: Life in Contemporary Communities* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), p. xv.

allows for people to speak together even when they are physically apart and "holding a variety of contrasting identities."⁶ It is this simultaneous sense of togetherness and difference that defines community.

Political activism undertaken by groups of people (rather than individuals) is facilitated by the existence of social networks. In the first section of this dissertation, these pre-existing social networks are initially based around physically defined neighbourhoods. Practical activism as expressions of solidarity with striking miners during the 1984-1985 miners' strike was based, in the beginning, around colliery neighbourhoods and groups. However, as the long strike continued miners' support groups made links with other such groups outside of the immediate physically-defined community and networks of support and solidarity were formed that were not geographically defined. These networks coalesced in spatially diverse communities of solidarity, inclusive of strikers, their immediate families and people who acted in empathy with the miners.

In the struggle against the implementation and execution of the poll tax, activists initially organised themselves into activists groups or collectives according to the municipality in which they lived. This was, however, circumstantial rather than due to strictly defined neighbourhood-based social affinities. The poll tax was implemented throughout Scotland, England and Wales by the Tory government; however, taxation rates were different in each local government municipality and collection of the flat-rate tax was the responsibility of each municipal government. It was primarily for this reason that anti-poll tax groups initially organised around the physical location of constituent activists. I demonstrate that this situation soon changed, with activists who were campaigning against the poll tax making connections with others who rebelled against the implementation and collection of the tax. Networks were established between anti-poll tax groups in neighbouring municipalities or between groups dispersed over large geographic distances.

⁶ R. Liepins, 'New energies for an old idea: reworking approaches to 'community' in

These networks facilitated the exchange of information such as new tactics to avoid non-payers' goods being poinded by debt collectors. Non-hierarchical, unaffiliated networks facilitated extensions of support and camaraderie and the participation of people never before involved in large-scale direct political activism:

In order to sustain a long and protracted struggle, it was necessary for as many people as possible to feel responsible for some aspect of the movement, however small. ...In the local groups, people didn't need permission to act, they just had to get on the phone to their neighbours and get something going.⁷

Paul Bagguley describes the anti-poll tax protest as consisting of a decentralised polycephalus network of local groups, after Jan Pakulski's definition of new social movements.⁸ I have established in the introductory section of the dissertation my preferred theoretical and exploratory framework and both polycephalus and new social movements fall outside of this. Polycephalus, if taken to mean the sum of its roots, multi-headed, implies a level of disconnectedness irrelevant to anti-poll tax groups. While polycephalus implies that at some level the components are connected, there is still an inference that the emergent heads are only loosely connected at the base. Anti-poll tax groups were linked in a far more erratic manner and, most importantly, without any single unitary coordinating base.

The example of community-based activism and solidarity groups that formed during the miners' strike of 1984-1985 was used in part to demonstrate the need to move beyond the dichotomies of old and new social movements as tools of analysis. The miners' strike would seem at first glance to be a classic example of an old social movement, with activism based around questions of labour justice. However, the manner in which people formed networks and

contemporary rural studies', *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 16 (2000), p. 27.

⁷ D. Burns, *Poll Tax Rebellion* (Stirling: AK Press and Attack International, 1992), pp. 190-191.

⁸ P. Bagguley, 'Protest, poverty and power: a case study of the anti-poll tax movement', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 43 (November 1995), p. 712.

ultimately wide and diverse activist communities during the strike belies the idea that participants in the miners' strike were concerned only with labour issues. The words of activists are used throughout the section on the campaign to convey that they were politically active in an effort to maintain or preserve a sense of physical and emotional community. Existing communities among mining workers and their social networks were partially linked to economic well-being and the ability of people to remain in colliery towns and not leave to look for new sources of income. However, in the course of fighting the Thatcher government's plans, mining workers and pre-existing social networks were joined by many from outside of these immediate circles. New activist networks emerged and ultimately these networks became interwoven, forming new communities of solidarity.

Part II of the thesis addressed the symbiotic relationship between existing activist networks and political activism beyond these networks. A number of empirical studies informed this discussion. I considered the manner in which social centres, meeting places and activist zines act to proliferate activist networks. While social centres and meeting places like the Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh and Worthing Teapot are physical places for activists to meet and interact, the networks which form around these places extend well beyond any immediate, physically-defined contact base. Activists are able to learn about actions and campaigns in places beyond Edinburgh or Worthing, for example. The information that is available at social centres and meeting places enables activists to form contacts and networks with activists over spaces unconstrained by physical boundaries. Zines also act as important networking facilitators, linking activists in rhizomatic networks, characterised by their lack of hierarchy and ability to easily change form and constitution.⁹ Activists can feel part of communities that include people they have never before met in person but with whom they share a link or bond - they know that they are

⁹ G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by B. Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1998), pp. 15; 98; and M. Leonard, 'Paper planes: travelling the new grrrl geographies', in T. Skelton and G. Valentine (eds), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 110.

collectively participating in like-minded activism across geographically separated physical locations.

The chapter on networks among activists and the communities that develop from these networks stresses the mutual importance of both geographic or place-based communities and post-geographic spaces of community. David Harvey recognises the symbiotic nature of the relationship between place and space, a characteristic that I have stressed in my discussion of the similarly symbiotic relationship between networks and communities. He writes that "what goes on in a place cannot be understood outside of the space relations that support that place any more than the space relations can be understood independently of what goes on in particular places."¹⁰

Only when we understand this relationship between physically defined places and imagined spaces can we come to a definition of social community that is inclusive of difference. "A notion of places as social relations...facilitates the conceptualisation of the relation between the centre and the periphery, and the arrival of the previously marginal in the ...centre."¹¹ While this quote from Doreen Massey refers specifically to cities as series of social relations, the idea of communities of difference and appreciation of difference facilitated by the recognition of the interplay between imagined and real locations is shown to be pertinent to the central thesis of the dissertation and the empirical studies employed.

In the second chapter of Part II, the diverse networks of activists which assembled in protest against the introduction of the 1994 Criminal Justice Act were examined. These networks existed prior to the anti-CJA protests and when activists from them coalesced to oppose the CJA new networks were

¹⁰ D. Harvey, 'From space to place and back again: reflections on the condition of postmodernity', in J. Bird, B. Curtis, T. Putnam, G. Robertson and L. Tickner (eds), *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 15.

¹¹ D. Massey, 'Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place', in J. Bird, B. Curtis, T. Putnam, G. Robertson and L. Tickner (eds), *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 67.

formed. People from diverse backgrounds and interest groups came together to oppose the introduction of a bill which included a massive array of means to limit dissent and the ability to enjoy lifestyles deemed outside the norm or threatening to a predetermined mainstream society. Not all of these people would be described as activists prior to the advent of a mass protest campaign against the CJA - some were people who enjoyed attending raves, others were football fans concerned about vilification of their fandom, and others were Travellers whose nomadic lifestyle was threatened by the Act. All of these people were and are perhaps political but not necessarily involved in ongoing activism. As with the perceived injustice of the poll tax, many were compelled to act in defiance of the CJA or to voice their objections to it despite no previous involvement in direct action activism. Thus the campaign against the CJA built on pre-existing social and political networks, but also many new ones were forged, relating more specifically to resisting the Criminal Justice Act. Resistance to the CJA provided shared emotional spaces, whereby activists who protested against the CJA formed temporary communities, or after Ben Malbon, transitory tribes of defiance.¹² These communities lasted as long as the life of the anti-CJA campaign. The communities changed and transformed, with activists moving away from the fight against the CJA to other sites of activism and organisation. The Temporary Autonomous Zones of resistance dissolved and were re-formed around new sites of resistance, physically and emotionally.

One of these new sites of resistance was anti-roads protests. Anti-roads protests were examined in the third section of the thesis, *Spaces of Community*, which addressed the relationships between proxemics, physical place and the evolution of communities of activists. Communities emerged throughout the 1990s, and continue to do so, of activists opposed to the prolific road building programmes of the Thatcher, Major and Blair governments. Chapter four of this dissertation employed empirical studies of three prominent anti-roads campaigns - at Twyford Down, Claremont Road and the Newbury Bypass - to

¹² B. Malbon, 'The club: clubbing, consumption, identity and the spatial practices of every-night life', in T. Skelton and G. Valentine (eds), *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 280.

argue that distinct communities developed around these protests. These communities were characterised by difference. Activists with widely diverse motivations joined together to protest against road construction, with some protesting as residents of an area which was deemed to be destroyed by the construction of a new road. Others came to the road protests from far afield and were opposed to road construction wherever the location because of its intrinsic link with the promotion of the dominance of car culture.

Anti-road protest camps were set up by activists as part of the long running attempt to prevent planned roads from being constructed and here new proxemics emerged. So-called local activists and activists with no immediate physical ties to the location became enmeshed in the new, specific anti-road camp environment, whether as weekend activist visitors or people who lived on site for months on end. Anti-roads communities are non-spatially defined communities, consisting of people who came together from diverse backgrounds and from diverse physical locations. These communities were facilitated by activist networks, through the Internet, zines, social centres and word-of-mouth, as discussed in the preceding section of the dissertation. Anti-roads communities are shown to be temporary autonomous zones, distinguished by their re-locatable and easily dissolvable natures. Anti-roads activists are part of emotional communities, whereby their very 'being-together' unites them. This being together, an idea substantiated in Michel Maffesoli's thesis on neo-tribalism, physically and symbolically, is the basis of the anti-roads communities, the glue which links diverse activists together.¹³

Reclaim the Streets activists emphasise the value of community in their publicity, agit-props and actions and the centrality of place and space to community.¹⁴ Reclaim the Streets activism thus was the perfect departure from the preceding discussion of anti-roads activism. RTS activists take back street space from car traffic and the dominance of capital in community spaces. They

¹³ See M. Maffesoli, *The Time of the Tribes: The Decline of Individualism in Mass Society*, trans. by D. Smith (London: Sage, 1996).

¹⁴ This is clearly illustrated in the quote included at the beginning of the fifth chapter.

use carnivalesque-type street parties to both physically reclaim these spaces and symbolically convey visions of alternative realities. One of the key themes of the chapter on Reclaim the Streets was the explicit desire to reclaim community spaces. The chapter makes clear that community spaces are more than the physical streetscape where an RTS street party takes place; instead, community spaces are a synthesis of physical and emotional environs where difference can be celebrated, where capitalism does not define the physical space and where togetherness is lived. The debates regarding the role of place and space determining the existence and/or constitution of community continue throughout this discussion of RTS activism. I again reiterate my prioritising of shared emotional space, rather than physical proximity, as at the heart of community.

The chapter does also take into account the limitations of RTS-style activism, limitations which are also discussed in the next chapter on the J18 Carnival Against Capital. One of these limitations is the narrow diversity of activists at RTS actions. This limited diversity, despite the explicit celebration of diversity in RTS agit-props, also afflicted J18, again despite explicit attempts to promote inclusivity. This serves as a crucial reminder that the prevalence of rhizomatic networks, coalescing and morphing into new, possibly transitory communities which transcend the limitations of narrowly defined physical communities, does not guarantee the emergence of infallible communities – emotional communities must still overcome limits of lack of gender, class, locational, race and/or age diversities.

The J18 Carnival Against Capital occurred approximately ten years after the beginnings of massive resistance to the poll tax, on June 18, 1999. The Carnival Against Capital was in part inspired by the street party-like style of RTS actions and was a day of action against the negative impacts of globalisation. It was timed to coincide with the meeting of the Group of Seven's heads of state in Köln, Germany, and while it was planned as an international day of action, I concentrated on the British J18 actions. I contended that J18 activists collectively constituted a disembodied community, a community which

came together simultaneously (taking into account obvious timeline differences) in cities across the world. The J18 community was one that was bought together largely through networking which took place over the Internet and e-mail bulletin boards. Many of its members also were able to meet face-to-face on the day of action itself. I argued throughout the chapter that the face-to-face meeting of activists, particularly in London, did not necessarily constitute a penultimate level of community facilitation. The J18 community existed prior to and after June 18 itself - activists were in constant contact with one another at planning meetings and via computer technologies prior to the day of action and afterwards as well, evaluating J18 and planning for future such resistance to the negative effects of globalisation.

The J18 Carnival Against Capital was a fitting final empirical study for this dissertation. Activists at London's J18 actions employed styles of organising and protest that have been discussed throughout this dissertation - activists organised actions in small groups, without any formal or official centre to which they were to report; J18 actions were ostensibly non-hierarchical and inclusive; they were also carnival-like actions, stressing the possibilities of life unfettered by the pervasiveness of global capital. In each of these characteristics we can see echoes of the fight against the poll tax, the proliferation of activist networks, the anti-CJA campaigns, anti-roads protests and Reclaim the Streets activism. None of these instances of collective action, including J18, were free from fault and these flaws are of particular focus in the final chapter of the dissertation. There existed, for example, a rather weak network between British-based J18 activists and their Inter-Continental Caravan comrades, a network which was far from horizontal and certainly did not generate a sense of strong community. The very idea of a single day of carnivalesque actions against global capital was also problematic. Certainly without wanting to dismiss the often imaginative and provocative activism that took place in London on June 18, 1999, I have argued that a single day of action is somewhat tokenistic and did not adequately take into account the pervasiveness of the globalisation process's negative ramifications.

Another key criticism of the J18 actions made in the final chapter was that the Temporary Autonomous Zones of the J18 actions were inadvertently rather closed. Access to these temporal yet lived communities varied according to activists' access to information about the J18 actions and this access was in turn very dependent on computer access. One of the results of this chain of access to information was that the constitution of the J18 community, both that community present in London at the day of action and the wider community which joined in the chat-forums and went to meetings on and off-line, was quite homogeneous. Even taking into account the presence of the largely Indian Inter-Continental Caravan activists, J18 was a rather white, middle-class carnival. It recognised the value of diversity, but was not in itself particularly diverse.

The activist communities I have explored and analysed throughout this dissertation are communities of spirit; what brings people together into these communities are similar dreams and visions of a changed society. At the same time, however, these are communities that are far from homogeneous and while activists within the communities are linked by the lived experiences of a series of actions or a long campaign, the sense of togetherness often dissipates once a relatively short-term campaign is won or lost. Heterogeneity is a core principle of community, both as I have defined it and as I have shown activists themselves to have recognised, and yet this explicit celebration of diversity often fragments the togetherness of spirit the binds people in community. I have demonstrated that activist communities have not yet reconciled this quandary. Unlike communities based ostensibly around physical place, which is fixed and easily identifiable, the activist communities I have examined are linked by intangible spirit. The networks which I have examined are often small and close-knit, with relatively narrow interest bases, especially when compared with the larger communities that evolve from amalgams of these networks.

The constituencies of communities of activists, like those in opposition to the CJA that emerged from the alliance of existing activist networks, are constantly

changing. Activist communities are continuously evolving and the sense of solidarity in recognition of diversity is the weft that holds the rhizomatic networks together. It has also been illustrated, particularly in the discussion of networks of resistance and the J18 protests, that new forms of technology are changing the ways in which activists can connect with one another. These new technologies, like e-mail and Internet websites and bulletin boards, have facilitated even more geographically diverse activist communities to emerge. Activist communities are defined in terms of access to these technologies, rather than geographical proximity. The question of access to networking technologies looks set to determine the depth of diversity among activists, and this will be particularly pertinent to the notion of a truly global movement against capital.

Not only are activist communities incessantly changing, but so too are ideas of community. New technologies are bringing about practical changes in the ways that activists can interact with one another, form practical networks and ultimately geographically diverse communities; these same technologies institute notions of community that question the integrity of face-to-face communications. Community is increasingly less tangible, though our understandings of community are undergoing constant change and it is certainly not yet clear if new electronic technologies will result in people making connections over telephone cable lines across vast distances or if they will feel closer to their immediately physically-defined and identifiable neighbour. What is clear, however, is that millions will not be included in activist communities lived only through e-mail, bulletin boards or websites.

The lack of diversity that currently typifies technology-facilitated communities has been a characteristic of all of the empirical studies in this dissertation, including those that pre-date these technologies. This is an area that I would like to address more extensively in future research on the issue of communities of dissidence. The possible reasons for the lack of age, gender, cultural and racial diversity links intimately to another future extension of this research on the relationships between shared spaces and communities of activism and that is anti-racism activism in contemporary Britain.

Race 'riots' have recently occurred in Bradford, Oldham and other northern English cities. Members of Asian communities in these cities took to the streets in opposition to the ongoing presence and political campaigning of the far-right British National Party and violence between police and these two groups ensued. In light of these protests and ongoing incidents of racist violence, it is increasingly imperative to examine anti-racism activism.¹⁵ Research needs to take place on the ways activists organise against racism and their physical and proxemic networks. I demonstrated throughout this dissertation that communities of dissent frequently come under attack from the government and police and this would certainly appear true of anti-racist activists, particularly those who are black, Asian and/or non-white. They are communities under siege, not only due to their activism, but because they are the victims of ongoing racism, attacks from far-right racist and xenophobic groups/individuals and vilification in the popular media. The activism of young Asians in cities like Oldham cannot be compared to that of anti-roads activists and therefore would constitute an entirely separate research project, one for which I would need to resituate myself. Anti-racist activists who are not privileged in British society by their skin colour are politically active in a society that is deeply racist - they therefore cannot remove their activist hats.

The impact of Thatcherism and the Thatcher government was the subject of extensive analysis in the first half of the dissertation and, to a far lesser extent, so too was the Major administration. I have not, however, explicitly examined the Blair government or what is termed Blairism. There are a number of reasons for this omission and the impact of Blair on activism in Britain could certainly be another area of future research. One of the primary reasons for concentrating on the Thatcher government and not the Blair government is a

¹⁵ Analysis of these recent riots is already emerging. See, for example, P. Harris and M. Bright, 'Bitter harvest from decades of division', *The Observer* (15 July 2001), on-line edition: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/racism/story/0,2763,522020,00.html>; accessed 13.11.01; Anonymous author(s), 'Race against time', *SchNEWS* (13 July, 2001), p. 1; and A. Kundnani, 'From Oldham to Bradford: the violence of the violated', Institute of Race Relations on-line resources: <http://www.irr.org.uk/riots/>; accessed 13.11.01.

matter of direct mobilisation. As outlined in the chapter on the poll tax and miners' strike, thousands of people across Britain came out in protest directly against the Thatcher government and policies deemed inequitable. By comparison, such mass protest has seldom occurred specifically against the Blair Labour government or its policies, with possible exceptions being the government's handling of the petrol crisis, plans to outlaw blood sports, and plans to introduce anti-terrorism measures. These examples of dissent, however, were not as overtly anti-Blair as the anti-poll tax protests, for example, were specifically aimed at toppling the Thatcher government. Instead, they can be viewed as anti-neoliberal, with the Blair government the secondary focus.¹⁶

¹⁶ There are a plethora of critical analyses of the Blair government and Blair's New Labour. In some, such as a recent feature article which appeared in the Melbourne-based broadsheet, *The Age*, by Simon Mann, Blair's Britain is compared directly with that of his predecessors Major and Thatcher. For example, Mann argues that: ...the spoils of New Labour's Third Way Blair's notion of a society in which citizens are 'stakeholders' who have 'duties as well as rights' and safety nets catch the less fortunate have yet to materialise. Despite its unparalleled 21st-century prosperity and the 'feel-good' rhetoric of New Labour, Britain remains a land of haves and have-nots. ...Official data reveals a nation where the rich are getting richer and the poor poorer. During Labour's brief reign [to date], the income of the richest 10 per cent of the population has increased at more than twice the rate of the poorest 10 per cent. ...Political commentator Brian Reade sneered: 'So, instead of taking all of Britain on this magical prosperity tour, we now know his bus can only hold so many.' In 1997, New Labour held no truck with Tory excuses for Britain's yawning inequality. They had had 18 years to get it right, after all. 'There is a wider gap between rich and poor than for generations,' New Labour's election manifesto said. 'We are determined not to continue down the road of a permanent have-not class, unemployed and disaffected from society.' S. Mann, 'Blair's Britain: very best and very worst of times', *The Age* (12 May, 2001), p.2. In no way is my omission of detailed examination of the Blair government and New Labour an admission of approval. These figures cited above read very much like ones which were proffered as evidence of social injustice in Chapter One. However, a specifically anti-Blair movement is yet to emerge.

For further analysis of the Blair government and New Labour see: Anonymous author(s), 'The Blair government and the British working class: a year of New Labour's "third way"' (6 May 1998), World Socialist Web Site: <http://www.wsws.org/news/1998/may1998/lab-m6.shtml>; accessed 30.03.01; D. Jahn and M. Henn, 'The 'new' rhetoric of New Labour in comparative perspective: a three-country discourse analysis', *West European Politics*, vol. 23, no. 1 (January 2000), pp. 26-46; and R. Heffernan, *New Labour and Thatcherism* (London: Palgrave, 2001), in which the author argues that the biggest demonstration of Thatcherism's success as a political and economic project is the transformation of the Labour Party into New Labour after 1983.

There has been no easy way to determine an end to this research on networks of resistance and communities of protest in contemporary Britain. Dissent is ongoing and imaginative even awe-inspiring autonomous activism has continued to take place beyond June 18, 1999. We are only just beginning to see, for example, the mobilisation of large numbers of activists across Britain protesting for peace and against attacks on Afghanistan.¹⁷ Nevertheless, this dissertation represents just one complete part of a possible ongoing project of examining autonomous activism in Britain. I have explored many empirical examples of networks of resistance and communities of protest that emerged from the mid-1980s to the late 1990s. Rather than focus on any instrumental measurement of the effectiveness of activism, I have explored the less quantifiable effects of the materialisation of collectives. These can be described as the social divine, the emotional spaces created through shared practices and, in the case of activists, through their shared but not homogeneous political activism. Individuals find a sense of collectivity in networks and communities, or, in the words of Michel Maffesoli, the cenacles that keep us warm and provide social spaces.¹⁸ I have also considered transnational activism that is facilitated by cyber technologies. The role of physical place in initiating and sustaining these networks and communities has been a key point of inquiry and I have found that it is not activists' proximities to one another that determines connectedness; instead it is unquantifiable senses of vision and hope that bring activists together.

There is an intrinsic relationship between protest and the desire for collectivity; this dissertation has provided new understandings of activism as being driven by the search for shared understandings and for a sense of being enmeshed in networks of protest and communities of resistance. The unquantifiable sense of

¹⁷ A number of reports and analyses of these recent and ongoing anti-war protests have emerged. See, for example, H. Wainwright, 'Plans for action', *Red Pepper* (November 2001), on-line version: <http://www.redpepper.co.uk/>; accessed 13.11.01; S. Millar, 'Anti-war groups widen protests', *The Guardian* (9 October 2001); on-line version: http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk_news/story/0,3604,565947,00.html; the Stop This War issue of *The Socialist Review*, no. 255 (September 2001); and the Stop the War coalition webpage: <http://www.stopwar.org.uk/>; accessed 13.11.01.

¹⁸ Maffesoli, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

vision that brings activists together can be shared across vast distances and consist of different paths and different mappings, yet ultimately from the sharing of these visions emotionally and in practice, a we-ness emerges.¹⁹ It is this we-ness that is at the heart of community.

¹⁹ This is a term I have adopted from Scott Lash. S. Lash, 'Reflexivity and its doubles: structure, aesthetics, community', in U. Beck, A. Giddens and S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994), p. 144.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: *The Community Charge - Local Government Finance Act 1988 (c. 41)*

An Act to create community charges in favour of certain authorities, to create new rating systems, to provide for precepting by certain authorities and levying by certain bodies, to make provision about the payment of grants to certain authorities, to require certain authorities to maintain certain funds, to make provision about the capital expenditure and the administration of the financial affairs of certain authorities, to abolish existing rates, precepts and similar rights, to abolish rate support grants and supplementary grants for transport purposes, to make amendments as to rates and certain grants, to make certain amendments to the law of Scotland as regards community charges, rating and valuation, to provide for the establishment of valuation and community charge tribunals, and for connected purposes.

[29th July 1988]

Be it enacted by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

Part I

Community Charges

Charges

The charges.

1. In accordance with this Part, each charging authority shall have rights and duties in respect of the following community charges—

- (a) personal community charges,
- (b) standard community charges, and
- (c) collective community charges.

Persons subject to personal community charge.

2.—(1) A person is subject to a charging authority's personal community charge on any day if—

- (a) he is an individual who is aged 18 or over on the day,
- (b) he has his sole or main residence in the area of the authority at any time on the day, and
- (c) he is not an exempt individual on the day.

(2) Schedule 1 below shall have effect to determine whether a person is for the purposes of this section an exempt individual on a particular day.

(3) In deciding whether a person has his sole or main residence in an area, the fact that he does not live in a building is irrelevant.

(4) If a person's sole or main residence at a particular time consists of premises, and the premises are situated in the areas of two or more authorities, he shall be treated as having his sole or main residence in the area in which the greater or greatest part of the premises is situated.

(5) A person undertaking a full-time course of education and resident in England and Wales for the purpose of undertaking the course shall be treated as having his sole or main residence, on each day of the course, in the place where he is resident for the purpose of undertaking the course.

(6) A person detained in legal custody (other than an individual for the time being exempt) is not to be treated as having his sole or main residence in the place where he is detained.

Persons subject to standard community charge.

3.—(1) A person is subject to a charging authority's standard community charge on any day if he has at any time on the day a freehold interest in the whole of a building, and the following conditions are fulfilled as regards the building throughout the day—

- (a) it is situated in the authority's area,
- (b) it is not the sole or main residence of an individual (construing sole or main residence in accordance with section 2 above),
- (c) it is domestic property,
- (d) it is not designated for the purposes of collective community charges of the authority,
- (e) it is not divided into self-contained parts, and
- (f) it is not subject (as a whole) to a single relevant leasehold interest.

(2) A person is subject to a charging authority's standard community charge on any day if he has at any time on the day a relevant leasehold interest in the whole of a building, and the following conditions are fulfilled as regards the building throughout the day—

- (a) the conditions mentioned in subsection (1)(a) to (e) above, and
- (b) the condition that it is not subject (as a whole) to a single relevant leasehold interest inferior to his interest.

(3) A person is subject to a charging authority's standard community charge on any day if he has at any time on the day a freehold interest in the whole of a self-contained part of a building, and the following conditions are fulfilled as regards the part throughout the day—

- (a) the conditions mentioned in subsection (1)(a) to (d) above, and
- (b) the condition that it is not subject (as a whole) to a single relevant leasehold interest.

(4) A person is subject to a charging authority's standard community charge on any day if he has at any time on the day a relevant leasehold interest in the whole of a self-contained part of a building, and the following conditions are fulfilled as regards the part throughout the day—

- (a) the conditions mentioned in subsection (1)(a) to (d) above, and
- (b) the condition that it is not subject (as a whole) to a single relevant leasehold interest inferior to his interest.

(5) A person is subject to a charging authority's standard community charge on any day if he is at any time on the day the owner of a caravan, and the following conditions are fulfilled as regards the caravan throughout the day—

- (a) the conditions mentioned in subsection (1)(a) and (b) above, and
- (b) the condition that it is stationed on land which is a protected site.

Section 3: interpretation.

4.—(1) This section applies for the purposes of section 3 above.

(2) "Interest" means a legal estate.

(3) A relevant leasehold interest is an interest under a lease or underlease which was granted for a term of 6 months or more and conferred the right to exclusive possession throughout the term.

(4) A building or self-contained part of a building is domestic property if it is used wholly for the purposes of living accommodation.

(5) But a building or self-contained part of a building is not domestic property if it is wholly or mainly used in the course of a business for the provision to individuals whose sole or main residence is elsewhere of accommodation for short periods together with domestic or other services or other benefits or facilities.

(6) In construing subsections (4) and (5) above, anything not in use shall be treated as domestic property if it appears that when next in use it will be domestic property.

(7) The Secretary of State may by order amend, or substitute another definition for, any definition of domestic property for the time being effective for the purposes of section 3 above.

(8) A self-contained part of a building is a part of a building used, or suitable for use, as a separate dwelling.

(9) "Owner" in relation to a caravan—

(a) means, if it is subject to an agreement for hire-purchase or conditional sale, the person in possession under the agreement;

(b) means, if it is subject to a bill of sale or mortgage, the person entitled to the property in it apart from the bill or mortgage.

(10) Land is a protected site at any time if it is at that time a protected site for the purposes of Part I of the [1968 c. 52.] Caravan Sites Act 1968.

(11) Where a building is situated in the areas of two or more authorities, it and each part of it shall be treated as situated in the area in which the greater or greatest part of the building is situated; and where a caravan is situated in the areas of two or more authorities, it shall be treated as situated in the area in which the greater or greatest part of it is situated.

Persons subject to collective community charge.

5.—(1) A person is subject to a charging authority's collective community charge on any day if—

(a) he has on the day a qualifying interest in a dwelling situated in the authority's area, and

(b) on the day the dwelling is a designated dwelling.

(2) For the purposes of this Part a dwelling is a designated dwelling on a particular day if it is a building, or part of a building, which on the day concerned is designated under this section.

(3) The registration officer may designate all or part of a building for the purposes of a charging authority's collective community charges if at the time of designation—

- (a) the building is situated in the authority's area,
- (b) in his opinion the building or part is used wholly or mainly as the sole or main residence of individuals most or all of whom reside there for short periods and are not undertaking full-time courses of education,
- (c) in his opinion it would probably be difficult to maintain the register in respect of, and collect payments in respect of personal community charges from, individuals who would be subject to such charges of the authority if the designation were not made, and
- (d) the building does not fall within a description prescribed for the purposes of this paragraph by regulations made by the Secretary of State.
- (4) A registration officer who has designated a building or part may revoke the designation if at the time of revocation the conditions for designation in subsection (3) above are no longer satisfied.
- (5) A designation under this section shall take effect at the end of the period of 7 days beginning with the day on which it is made, and shall cease to have effect at the end of the day (if any) on which it is revoked.
- (6) A person has a qualifying interest in a designated dwelling on a particular day if at any time on the day—
 - (a) he has a freehold interest in the whole dwelling and it is not subject (as a whole) to a single leasehold interest, or
 - (b) he has an interest in the whole dwelling under a lease or underlease and it is not subject (as a whole) to a single inferior leasehold interest.
- (7) "Interest" means a legal estate.
- (8) Where a building is situated in the areas of two or more authorities, it and each part of it (whether or not designated) shall be treated as situated in the area in which the greater or greatest part of the building is situated.

Registers

Community charges register.

- 6.—(1) The registration officer for a charging authority shall compile, and then maintain, a community charges register for the authority in accordance with this Part.
- (2) A charging authority's register must be compiled on or before 1 December 1989.
- (3) A charging authority's register shall contain an item in relation to each community charge of the authority to which a person becomes subject on or after 1 December 1989.
- (4) The item shall state—
 - (a) whether the charge is a personal, a standard or a collective community charge,
 - (b) the person's name,
 - (c) the day of his becoming subject to the charge and (if applicable) the day of his ceasing to be subject to it, and
 - (d) which (if any) of the days on which he is shown in the register as subject to the charge is a day on which he is undertaking a full-time course of education.
- (5) The item shall also state—
 - (a) in the case of a personal community charge, the address of the residence by virtue of which the person is subject to the charge,

(b) in the case of a standard community charge, the address of the property by virtue of which the person is subject to the charge and (if different) his residential address for the time being, and

(c) in the case of a collective community charge, the address of the dwelling by virtue of which the person is subject to the charge and (if different) his residential address for the time being.

(6) The item shall also state, in the case of a standard community charge, the class (if any) which is for the time being specified under section 40 below and into which the property concerned falls.

(7) Where a person is subject to a personal community charge, and the place of residence giving rise to the charge has no address, under subsection (5)(a) above the item shall state that place.

(8) A registration officer's duty to compile and maintain a register in accordance with this Part includes the duty to take reasonable steps to obtain information for that purpose under the powers conferred on him.

Charges and registers: miscellaneous

Persons subject to charges: miscellaneous.

7.—(1) A person shall by virtue of different residences, or different periods of residence in the same residence, be subject (if at all) to different personal community charges, whether of the same or different authorities.

(2) If a person becomes and ceases to be exempt under section 2 above he shall be subject (if at all) to different personal community charges by virtue of different periods when he is not exempt.

(3) A person shall by virtue of different properties, or different periods of having an interest in the same property, be subject (if at all) to different standard community charges, whether of the same or different authorities.

(4) A person shall by virtue of different dwellings, or different periods of having an interest in the same dwelling, be subject (if at all) to different collective community charges, whether of the same or different authorities.

(5) The day a person becomes subject to a community charge shall be taken, subject to the rules in section 8(2) and (4) below, to be the first (or only) day on which he is subject to it.

(6) The day a person ceases to be subject to a community charge shall be taken, subject to the rule in section 8(3) below, to be the last (or only) day on which he is subject to it.

Registers: miscellaneous.

8.—(1) An entry may be made in an authority's register in anticipation of, or after, the occurrence of an event (such as a person's becoming or ceasing to be subject to a community charge of the authority).

(2) If on any day a person becomes subject to an authority's community charge but a period of more than 2 years (beginning with the day) ends without an entry being made in the register in respect of the charge, he shall be treated as becoming subject to it 2 years before the day on which an entry is made in the register in respect of it.

(3) If a person becomes subject to an authority's community charge, an entry is made in the register accordingly, he then ceases to be subject to it and a period of more than 2 years (beginning with the day of his ceasing) ends without an

entry being made in the register in respect of his ceasing, he shall be treated as having ceased to be subject to the charge 2 years before the day on which an entry is made in the register in respect of his ceasing.

(4) If a person in fact becomes and ceases to be subject to an authority's community charge but a period of more than 2 years (beginning with the day of his ceasing) ends without an entry being made in the register in respect of the charge, he shall be treated as not having become subject to it;

and subsection (2) above shall have effect subject to this.

(5) The registration officer may remove from an authority's register an item relating to a community charge of the authority at any time after the end of the period of 2 years beginning with the day on which the register shows the person subject to the charge as having ceased to be subject to it.

(6) For the purposes of this Part—

(a) a day on which a person is shown in a charging authority's register as becoming subject to a community charge of the authority shall be treated as a day on which he is shown in the register as subject to the charge,

(b) a day on which a person is shown in a charging authority's register as ceasing to be subject to a community charge of the authority shall not be treated as a day on which he is shown in the register as subject to the charge, and

(c) as regards a day on which a person is shown in a charging authority's register as both becoming and ceasing to be subject to the same community charge of the authority, paragraph (b) above shall apply and paragraph (a) shall not.

Collective community charge contributions

Liability to contribute.

9.—(1) A period of a day or successive days is a contribution period if it falls within a chargeable financial year and each of the following conditions is fulfilled on each day in the period—

(a) an individual is resident in a dwelling,

(b) he is a qualifying individual,

(c) the dwelling is a designated dwelling, and

(d) another person is shown in a charging authority's register as subject to a collective community charge of the authority in respect of the dwelling.

(2) In respect of the contribution period, the individual shall be liable to pay to the person mentioned in subsection (1)(d) above an amount by way of contribution to the amount he is liable to pay to the authority in respect of the charge as it has effect for the year.

(3) The amount shall be calculated by—

(a) finding the amount to be paid by way of contribution for each day in the contribution period, and

(b) aggregating the amounts found under paragraph (a) above.

(4) The amount to be paid by way of contribution for a day in the contribution period shall be calculated in accordance with the formula—

A

B

(5) A day which falls in the financial year beginning in 1990 shall be ignored in

ascertaining a contribution period if, when the day begins, no amount has been set by the authority for its personal community charges for the financial year.

(6) The liability to pay an amount under this section must be discharged by making a payment or payments in accordance with regulations under Schedule 2 below.

Contributions: interpretation of formula.

10.—(1) This section applies for the purposes of section 9 above.

(2) In a case where (when the day concerned begins) no amount has been set by the authority for its personal community charges for the financial year, A is the amount set by the authority for its personal community charges for the previous financial year for its area or (as the case may be) for that part of its area which contains the building constituting or containing the designated dwelling.

(3) In any other case A is the amount set by the authority for its personal community charges for the financial year for its area or (as the case may be) for that part of its area which contains the building constituting or containing the designated dwelling.

(4) B is the number of days in the financial year.

(5) In construing subsection (3) above in relation to a particular day the amount or amounts to be taken shall be the amount or amounts set or last set before the day begins.

(6) For the purposes of subsections (2) and (3) above the Secretary of State may make regulations containing rules—

(a) for treating a building as contained in an authority's area if part only falls within the area;

(b) for ascertaining what part of an authority's area contains a building (whether contained in the area in fact or by virtue of the regulations).

Contributions: further provisions.

11.—(1) For the purposes of section 9 above—

(a) a day on which an individual becomes resident in a dwelling shall be treated as a day on which he is resident in it,

(b) a day on which an individual ceases to be resident in a dwelling shall not be treated as a day on which he is resident in it, and

(c) as regards a day on which an individual both becomes and ceases to be resident in the same dwelling, paragraph (b) above shall apply and paragraph (a) shall not.

(2) For the purposes of section 9 above an individual is a qualifying individual on a particular day if—

(a) he is aged 18 or over on the day,

(b) he is not an exempt individual on the day within the meaning of paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 or 10 of Schedule 1 below, and

(c) the day does not fall within a period in which he is undertaking a full-time course of education.

(3) An individual shall by virtue of different dwellings, or different periods of residence in the same dwelling, be liable (if at all) to make different payments under section 9 above, whether to the same or different persons.

(4) If, in an individual's period of residence in a dwelling, different collective

community charges arise in respect of it because of a change of person with a qualifying interest, the individual shall be liable (if at all) to make different payments under section 9 above as regards the different charges.

(5) If an individual is, ceases to be and again becomes a qualifying individual for the purposes of section 9 above he shall be liable (if at all) to make different payments under that section by virtue of different periods when he is a qualifying individual.

(6) If a period of successive days begins in one chargeable financial year and ends in another it shall be deemed to be as many periods as there are chargeable financial years for which it subsists, and each deemed period shall be deemed to fall within a different year.

(7) Different contribution periods shall be calculated in accordance with subsections (3) to (6) above.

Liability to pay in respect of charges

Personal community charge.

12.—(1) If a person is entered in an authority's register as subject in a chargeable financial year to a personal community charge of the authority, he shall be liable to pay to the authority an amount in respect of the charge as it has effect for the year.

(2) The amount shall be calculated in accordance with the formula—

$$\frac{A \times B}{C}$$

(3) A is the amount set by the authority for its personal community charges for the financial year for its area or (as the case may be) for that part of its area which contains the residence by virtue of which the person is shown in the register as subject to the charge.

(4) B is the number of days which fall within the financial year and on which he is shown in the register as subject to the charge.

(5) C is the number of days in the financial year.

(6) For the purposes of subsection (3) above the Secretary of State may make regulations containing rules—

(a) for treating a residence which consists of premises as contained in an authority's area if part only falls within the area;

(b) for ascertaining what part of an authority's area contains a residence which consists of premises (whether contained in the area in fact or by virtue of the regulations).

Relief for students.

13.—(1) This section applies where—

(a) a person is liable under section 12 above to pay an amount to an authority in respect of a personal community charge as it has effect for a chargeable financial year, and

(b) on any day in the period represented by B he is undertaking a full-time course of education.

(2) If he is undertaking the course on each day of that period, the amount he is liable to pay under that section shall be one fifth of the amount it would be apart from this section.

(3) If he is not undertaking the course on each day of that period, the amount he is liable to pay under that section shall be determined in accordance with the formula—

$$\frac{P \times A}{C} + \frac{Q \times A}{C} \times \frac{1}{5}$$

- (4) A and C have the meanings given in section 12 above.
- (5) P is the number of days which fall within the financial year and on which—
- he is shown in the register as subject to the charge, and
 - he is not undertaking the course.
- (6) Q is the number of days which fall within the financial year and on which—
- he is shown in the register as subject to the charge, and
 - he is undertaking the course.
- (7) The Secretary of State may by order substitute such proportion as he sees fit for the proportion of one fifth mentioned in subsections (2) and (3) above or for the proportion for the time being mentioned there by virtue of an order under this subsection.
- (8) For the purposes of this section a person shall not be treated as undertaking a full-time course of education on a particular day unless he is shown in the register as undertaking the course on that day.

Standard community charge.

14.—(1) If a person is entered in an authority's register as subject in a chargeable financial year to a standard community charge of the authority, he shall be liable to pay to the authority an amount in respect of the charge as it has effect for the year.

(2) The amount shall be calculated by—

- finding the amount to be paid for each day which falls within the financial year and on which he is shown in the register as subject to the charge, and
- aggregating the amounts found under paragraph (a) above.

(3) The amount to be paid for a day which falls within the financial year and on which he is shown in the register as subject to the charge shall be calculated in accordance with the formula—

$$\frac{A \times B}{C}$$

(4) A is the amount set by the authority for its personal community charges for the financial year for its area or (as the case may be) for that part of its area which contains the property by virtue of which he is shown in the register as subject to the charge.

(5) B is the standard community charge multiplier which by virtue of section 40 below is effective for the financial year for the following properties or class of property (as the case may be)—

- all properties in the authority's area;
- the specified class of property to which the relevant property belongs on the day concerned.

(6) C is the number of days in the financial year.

(7) For the purposes of subsection (4) above the Secretary of State may make regulations containing rules—

(a) for treating a property as contained in an authority's area if part only falls within the area or (in the case of a property which is a self-contained part of a building) if part only of the building falls within the area;

(b) for ascertaining what part of an authority's area contains a property (whether contained in the area in fact or by virtue of the regulations).

(8) For the purposes of subsection (5) above the relevant property—

(a) is the property by virtue of which the person is shown in the register as subject to the charge, and

(b) belongs to a particular class on a particular day if (and only if) it belongs to the class immediately before the day ends.

Collective community charge.

15.—(1) If a person is entered in an authority's register as subject in a chargeable financial year to a collective community charge of the authority, he shall be liable to pay to the authority an amount in respect of the charge as it has effect for the year.

(2) The amount shall be found by deducting amount B from amount A.

(3) Amount A is the aggregate of the amounts payable (and whether or not paid) to the person by way of contribution to the amount he is liable to pay to the authority in respect of the charge as it has effect for the year.

(4) Amount B is an amount equal to the relevant proportion of amount A; and the relevant proportion is 5 per cent. Or such other proportion as may be prescribed by the Secretary of State by order.

Joint and several liability: spouses.

16.—(1) This section applies where—

(a) a person (the chargeable person) is liable to pay an amount (the chargeable amount) to an authority in respect of a community charge as it has effect for a chargeable financial year,

(b) the liability arises under section 12 above (read with section 13 above, where it is appropriate) or section 14 above, and

(c) on any day in the chargeable period the chargeable person is married to a person (the spouse) who is aged 18 or over on the day.

(2) In this section "the chargeable period" means the period consisting of the days which fall within the financial year and on which the chargeable person is shown in the register as subject to the charge.

(3) If, on each day of the chargeable period—

(a) the chargeable person and the spouse are married to each other, and

(b) the spouse is aged 18 or over, they shall be jointly and severally liable to pay the chargeable amount.

(4) In any other case—

(a) they shall be jointly and severally liable to pay such fraction of the chargeable amount as is represented by

A

B, and

(b) the chargeable person shall be liable to pay the remainder of the chargeable

amount.

(5) A is the number of days which fall within the chargeable period and on which—

- (a) the chargeable person and the spouse are married to each other, and
- (b) the spouse is aged 18 or over.

(6) B is the number of days in the chargeable period.

(7) In a case where—

- (a) the chargeable person and the spouse are jointly and severally liable to pay an amount by virtue of this section,
- (b) the chargeable person fails to pay all or part of it because of wilful refusal or culpable neglect, and
- (c) the spouse accordingly pays an amount to the authority, the spouse may recover from the chargeable person an amount equal to the amount paid by the spouse to the authority.

(8) Subject to subsection (7) above, the spouse may not recover from the chargeable person anything by way of contribution to any amount paid by the spouse to the authority by virtue of this section.

(9) For the purposes of this section people are married to each other if they are a man and woman—

- (a) who are married to each other and are members of the same household, or
- (b) who are not married to each other but are living together as husband and wife.

(10) For the purposes of this section people are not married to each other on a particular day unless they are married to each other throughout the day.

Joint and several liability: management arrangements.

17.—(1) This section applies where—

- (a) a person (the chargeable person) is liable to pay an amount (the chargeable amount) to an authority in respect of a standard or collective community charge as it has effect for a chargeable financial year,
- (b) on any day in the chargeable period he has a management arrangement with another person (the manager) who is neither the chargeable person's employee nor (if an individual) aged under 18 on the day, and
- (c) if the charge is a standard community charge, the chargeable person is a company.

(2) In this section "the chargeable period" means the period consisting of the days which fall within the financial year and on which the chargeable person is shown in the register as subject to the charge.

(3) For the purposes of this section a management arrangement is—

- (a) where the charge is a standard community charge, an arrangement under which the manager is to collect payments for the use of the property in respect of which the charge arises;
- (b) where the charge is a collective community charge, an arrangement under which the manager is to collect payments for residential accommodation in the designated dwelling in respect of which the charge arises, or amounts by way of contribution in respect of the charge, or both.

(4) If, on each day of the chargeable period—

- (a) the management arrangement subsists, and
- (b) the manager is neither the chargeable person's employee nor (if an

individual) aged under 18, they shall be jointly and severally liable to pay the chargeable amount.

(5) In any other case—

(a) they shall be jointly and severally liable to pay such fraction of the chargeable amount as is represented by

A

B, and

(b) the chargeable person shall be liable to pay the remainder of the chargeable amount.

(6) A is the number of days which fall within the chargeable period and on which—

(a) the management arrangement subsists, and

(b) the manager is neither the chargeable person's employee nor (if an individual) aged under 18.

(7) B is the number of days in the chargeable period.

(8) The manager may recover from the chargeable person an amount equal to any amount paid by the manager to the authority by virtue of this section.

(9) For the purposes of this section a management arrangement subsists on a particular day if it subsists at any time on the day.

Discharge of liability.

18. The liability to pay an amount under any provision of sections 12 to 17 above must be discharged by making a payment or payments in accordance with regulations under Schedule 2 below.

Miscellaneous

Co-owners.

19.—(1) The Secretary of State may make regulations as regards any prescribed case where (apart from the regulations) co-owners would be subject to different standard or collective community charges by virtue of the same property.

(2) The regulations may contain—

(a) provision that as regards the period for which the co-ownership subsists there shall be one charge only, that the co-owners shall be jointly subject to it, and that the registration officer for the charging authority concerned shall enter an item in the register accordingly;

(b) provision that the amount payable in respect of the charge concerned as it has effect for a chargeable financial year shall be calculated in a prescribed manner, and that the co-owners shall be jointly and severally liable to pay the amount;

(c) provision that, notwithstanding that the co-owners are jointly and severally liable, section 16 or 17 above shall have effect to make a spouse or manager of any of the co-owners jointly and severally liable as well;

(d) where the charge concerned is collective, provision as to the person or persons to whom any amount payable under section 9 above is to be paid.

(3) The regulations may provide that there shall be different charges as regards each of the following—

(a) the period for which the co-ownership subsists (that is, for which the co-owners concerned are co-owners);

(b) any period for which one only of the co-owners has an interest in the building, part of a building or dwelling concerned, or is owner of the caravan

concerned;

(c) any period for which there is a co-ownership as regards the property concerned but the participants of it do not correspond with those of the co-ownership mentioned in paragraph (a) above (whether because the number of members differs or because any of the personnel differs).

(4) The regulations may include provision conferring rights of recovery as between parties (whether co-owners, spouses or managers).

(5) Without prejudice to section 143(2) below, the regulations may include provision amending or adapting provisions of this Part; and in particular the regulations—

(a) may provide that section 11(4) above shall apply where different charges arise because of the operation of the regulations;

(b) may amend or adapt provisions of this Part which themselves confer power to make regulations (such as Schedules 2 and 4).

(6) References to co-owners include references to persons who together have an interest under a lease or underlease, and references to co-ownership shall be construed accordingly.

Contributions in aid.

20.—(1) Where a person would be subject to a personal community charge but for paragraph 11 of Schedule 1 below, and a contribution in aid of community charges is made in respect of him, the contribution shall be paid to the charging authority to whose charge he would be subject.

(2) Where a person would be subject to a standard community charge but for the rules as to Crown exemption, and a contribution in aid of community charges is made in respect of him, the contribution shall be paid to the charging authority to whose charge he would be subject.

Standard community charge:

special cases.

21.—(1) Subsection (2) below applies in the case of property provided and maintained by an authority mentioned in subsection (3) below for purposes connected with the administration of justice, police purposes or other Crown purposes.

(2) Any rules as to Crown exemption which would have applied apart from this subsection shall not prevent—

(a) a person being subject to a charging authority's standard community charge by virtue of the property,

(b) an entry being made in the register in relation to the charge, or

(c) the person being liable to pay in respect of the charge.

(3) The authorities are—

(a) a county council,

(b) a district council,

(c) a London borough council,

(d) the Common Council,

(e) a metropolitan county police authority, and

(f) the Northumbria Police Authority.

Administration and penalties.

22.—(1) Schedule 2 below (which contains provisions about administration, including collection) shall have effect.

(2) Schedule 3 below (which contains provisions about civil penalties) shall have effect.

(3) Schedule 4 below (which contains provisions about the recovery of sums due, including sums due as penalties) shall have effect.

Appeals.

23.—(1) A person aggrieved by any of the matters mentioned in subsection (2) below may appeal to a valuation and community charge tribunal established under Schedule 11 below.

(2) The matters are—

(a) the fact that the person is or is not at any time entered in a charging authority's register as subject to a community charge of the authority,

(b) the contents of any item which is contained in a charging authority's register and relates to a charge to which the person is there shown as subject at any time,

(c) any designation of an individual as a certification officer under regulations under section 30 below,

(d) the fact that such a designation has not been revoked,

(e) any estimate, made for the purposes of regulations under Schedule 2 below, of the amount the person is liable to pay in respect of a charging authority's community charge,

(f) any designation of an individual as a responsible individual under regulations under Schedule 2 below,

(g) the fact that such a designation has not been revoked,

(h) the imposition of a penalty on the person under Schedule 3 below,

(i) the fact that a relevant dwelling has been designated under section 5 above, and

(j) the fact that a designation of a relevant dwelling under that section has not been revoked under that section.

(3) Subsection (2)(e) above shall not apply where the grounds on which the person concerned is aggrieved fall within such category or categories as may be prescribed by the Secretary of State by regulations.

(4) Where a penalty is imposed on a person under Schedule 3 below, and he alleges that there is no power in the case concerned to impose a penalty of the amount imposed, he may appeal under subsections (1) and (2)(h) above against the imposition.

(5) In subsection (2)(i) above "relevant dwelling" means a building, or part of a building, in respect of which the person would be subject to an authority's collective community charge if the designation were valid.

(6) In subsection (2)(j) above "relevant dwelling" means a building, or part of a building, in respect of which the person would cease to be subject to an authority's collective community charge if the revocation were made.

Appeals: preliminary steps.

24.—(1) No appeal may be made under section 23 above unless—

(a) the aggrieved person serves a written notice under this section, and

(b) one of the conditions mentioned in subsection (4) below is fulfilled.

- (2) A notice under this section must be served on—
- (a) the charging authority concerned, where the grievance relates to an estimate mentioned in section 23(2)(e) above or to the imposition of a penalty by a charging authority;
 - (b) the community charges registration officer concerned, in any other case.
- (3) A notice under this section must state the matter by which and the grounds on which the person is aggrieved.
- (4) The conditions are that—
- (a) the aggrieved person is notified in writing, by the authority on which or officer on whom he served the notice, that the authority or officer believes the grievance is not well founded, but the person is still aggrieved;
 - (b) the aggrieved person is notified in writing, by the authority on which or officer on whom he served the notice, that steps have been taken to deal with the grievance, but the person is still aggrieved;
 - (c) the period of 2 months, beginning with the date of service of the aggrieved person's notice, has ended without his being notified under paragraph (a) or (b) above.
- (5) Where a notice under this section is served on an authority or officer, it or he shall—
- (a) consider the matter to which the notice relates;
 - (b) include in any notification under subsection (4)(a) above reasons for the belief concerned;
 - (c) include in any notification under subsection (4)(b) above a statement of the steps taken.

Death.

- 25.—(1) The Secretary of State may make such regulations as he sees fit to deal with any case where a person dies and at any time before his death—
- (a) he was (or is alleged to have been) subject to a charging authority's community charge,
 - (b) he was (or is alleged to have been) liable to pay an amount under section 9 above,
 - (c) he was (or is alleged to have been) liable, as spouse or manager, under section 16 or 17 above, or
 - (d) a penalty was imposed on him under Schedule 3 below.
- (2) Nothing in the following provisions of this section shall prejudice the generality of subsection (1) above.
- (3) The regulations may provide that where before his death a sum has become payable by the deceased but has not been paid his executor or administrator shall be liable to pay the sum and may deduct out of the assets and effects of the deceased any payments made (or to be made).
- (4) The regulations may provide that where before his death a sum in excess of his liability has been paid (whether the excess arises because of his death or otherwise) and has not been repaid or credited his executor or administrator shall be entitled to the sum.
- (5) The regulations may provide for the recovery of any sum which is payable under the regulations and is not paid.
- (6) The regulations may provide that proceedings (whether by way of appeal under section 23 above or otherwise) may be instituted, continued or withdrawn

by the deceased's executor or administrator.

Community charges registration officer.

26.—(1) There shall be a community charges registration officer for each charging authority.

(2) The registration officer for a district council, a London borough council or the Council of the Isles of Scilly shall be the person having responsibility for the administration of its financial affairs under section 151 of the [1972 c. 70.] Local Government Act 1972.

(3) The registration officer for the Common Council shall be the chamberlain.

(4) A charging authority shall provide the registration officer with such staff, accommodation and other resources as are sufficient to allow his functions under this Part to be exercised.

Default powers as to registers.

27.—(1) If it appears to the Secretary of State that a charging authority's register does not contain items in relation to all community charges of the authority, the Secretary of State may direct the registration officer or the authority (or both) to supply the Secretary of State with such information as he considers necessary to enable him to decide whether his belief is well founded and what action (if any) he should take under subsection (3) below.

(2) A direction under subsection (1) above—

(a) must specify the information to be provided and the period within which it is to be provided;

(b) may be amended by another direction under subsection (1) above;

(c) may be revoked by a direction under this paragraph.

(3) If the period specified in a direction under subsection (1) above ends (whether or not the direction has been complied with) and it still appears to the Secretary of State as mentioned in that subsection, he may direct the officer or the authority (or both) to take such steps as the Secretary of State considers appropriate to secure that the register contains items in relation to as many of the authority's community charges as practicable; and the steps may involve conducting canvasses or otherwise.

(4) A direction under subsection (3) above—

(a) must specify the steps to be taken and the period within which they are to be taken;

(b) may include a requirement to make a report or periodic reports to the Secretary of State as to what steps have been taken and the results of taking them;

(c) must, if a requirement is included under paragraph (b) above, specify the period within which any report is to be made;

(d) may be amended by another direction under subsection (3) above (but without the need for a further direction under subsection (1) above);

(e) may be revoked by a direction under this paragraph.

Default powers as to resources.

28.—(1) If it appears to the Secretary of State that a charging authority has failed to comply with section 26(4) above he may direct the authority to supply him with such information as he considers necessary to enable him to decide

whether his belief is well founded and what action (if any) he should take under subsection (3) below.

(2) A direction under subsection (1) above—

(a) must specify the information to be provided and the period within which it is to be provided;

(b) may be amended by another direction under subsection (1) above;

(c) may be revoked by a direction under this paragraph.

(3) If the authority purports to comply with a direction under subsection (1) above or the period specified in the direction ends without its purporting to comply and (in either case) it still appears to the Secretary of State as mentioned in that subsection, he may direct the authority to provide the registration officer with such staff, accommodation and other resources as the Secretary of State considers sufficient to allow the officer's functions under this Part to be exercised.

(4) A direction under subsection (3) above—

(a) must specify the staff, accommodation and other resources the authority is to provide under the direction and the period within which it is to provide them;

(b) may include a requirement to make a report or periodic reports to the Secretary of State as to what steps have been taken to comply with the requirement included under paragraph (a) above and the results of taking them;

(c) must, if a requirement is included under paragraph (b) above, specify the period within which any report is to be made;

(d) may be amended by another direction under subsection (3) above (but without the need for a further direction under subsection (1) above);

(e) may be revoked by a direction under this paragraph.

Rights of electoral registration officers.

29. For the purpose of exercising his functions the electoral registration officer for any area in England and Wales may inspect the register of any charging authority.

General

Students.

30.—(1) For the purposes of this Part a person shall be treated as undertaking a full-time course of education on a particular day if (and only if) he fulfils such conditions as may be prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State.

(2) The regulations may include provision that—

(a) as regards any educational establishment of a prescribed description an individual (to be called a certification officer) may be designated by the appropriate registration officer, or otherwise identified, in accordance with prescribed rules;

(b) a certification officer shall at a prescribed time supply to a person who is pursuing or is about to pursue a course at the establishment, and who is of a prescribed description, a certificate in a prescribed form and containing prescribed particulars;

(c) conditions prescribed under subsection (1) above shall include a condition as to the possession of such a certificate;

(d) failure to supply a certificate to a person in accordance with the regulations

is actionable by the person concerned as a breach of statutory duty.

(3) The regulations shall include a statement of what courses constitute, in the Secretary of State's opinion, full-time courses of nursing education; but this is without prejudice to the power to provide, or not to provide, that a person undertaking such a course is to be treated as undertaking a full-time course of education for the purposes of this Part.

(4) The regulations may include provision allowing or requiring the appropriate registration officer to revoke a designation of an individual as a certification officer.

(5) "The appropriate registration officer" means the registration officer for such charging authority as may be prescribed as regards the educational establishment concerned.

Interpretation.

31.—(1) This section applies for the purposes of this Part.

(2) References to the register, in relation to a charging authority, are to its community charges register.

(3) References to anything shown in a register on a day are references to what is shown for the day (including what is shown by virtue of a retrospective entry).

(4) References to the registration officer, in relation to a charging authority, are to the community charges registration officer for the authority.

(5) The residential address of a person who is a company is the address of the company's registered office.

(6) References to a building include references to a chalet or hut.

(7) Whether anything is a caravan at a particular time shall be construed in accordance with Part I of the [1960 c. 62.] Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960.

(8) If at a particular time a person has no fixed abode (in England and Wales or elsewhere) he shall at that time be treated as having his sole or main residence in the place where he is at the time.

(9) Section 2(6) above shall not apply to a person to whom subsection (8) above applies at the time concerned.

(10) The Secretary of State may make regulations containing rules for ascertaining what is to be treated as the greater or greatest part of premises or a building or caravan.

(11) Nothing in a private or local Act passed before this Act shall prevent a person being subject to a community charge or being liable to pay anything in respect of a community charge or anything by way of contribution in respect of a collective community charge.

Part II

Charges and Multipliers

Charges

Amount for personal community charges.

32.—(1) For each chargeable financial year, a charging authority shall set for its personal community charges an amount or amounts in accordance with this section and section 33 below.

(2) Any amount must be set on or before 1 April on which the financial year for which it is set begins, but is not invalid merely because it is set after that date.

(3) In setting any amount the authority must secure (so far as practicable) that the total amount yielded by its community charges for the year is sufficient to provide for the items mentioned in subsection (4) below, to the extent that they are not to be provided for by other means.

(4) The items are—

(a) any precept issued to the authority for the year,

(b) the authority's estimate of the aggregate of the payments to be met from its collection fund in the year under section 90(2)(b) to (g) below or section 90(4)(b) and (c) below (as the case may be),

(c) the amount calculated (or last calculated) by the authority in relation to the year under section 95(4) below, and

(d) the authority's estimate of the amount to be transferred from its collection fund in the year under section 98(4) below.

(5) In construing subsection (4)(a) above any precept for which another has been substituted shall be ignored.

Setting of different amounts.

33.—(1) A charging authority must set one amount for its area under section 32 above, except as provided by the following provisions of this section.

(2) Where an item mentioned in subsection (3) below relates to a part only of its area, a charging authority must set different amounts for different parts so as to secure (so far as practicable) that the item is provided for only by amounts yielded by such of its community charges as relate to the part, to the extent that the item is not to be provided for by other means.

(3) The items are—

(a) any precept or portion of a precept issued to the authority if the precept or portion is stated to be applicable to a part, and

(b) any expenses of the authority which are its special expenses and were taken into account by it in making the calculation (or last calculation) in relation to the year concerned under section 95(2) below.

(4) For the purposes of subsection (3) above—

(a) provided a resolution of a charging authority to the following effect is in force, its expenses needed to meet a levy issued to it are its special expenses or (if the resolution relates to some only of those expenses) those to which the resolution relates are its special expenses,

(b) any expenses which a charging authority believes will have to be met out of amounts transferred or to be transferred from its collection fund to its general fund or to the City fund (as the case may be), and which arise out of its

possession of property held in trust for a part of its area, are its special expenses,

(c) any expenses which a charging authority believes will have to be met out of amounts transferred or to be transferred from its collection fund to its general fund or to the City fund (as the case may be), and which relate to a part of its area, are its special expenses provided that expenses of the same kind which relate to another part of its area are to be met out of property held in trust for that part, and

(d) any expenses incurred by a charging authority in performing in a part of its area a function performed elsewhere in its area by the sub-treasurer of the Inner Temple, the under-treasurer of the Middle Temple, a parish or community council or the chairman of a parish meeting are the authority's special expenses provided a resolution of the authority to that effect is in force.

(5) A community charge relates to a part of an area if it is—

(a) a personal community charge arising in respect of a residence contained in the part;

(b) a standard community charge arising in respect of a building, self-contained part of a building or caravan contained in the part;

(c) a collective community charge arising in respect of a dwelling constituting or contained in a building which is contained in the part.

(6) Rules contained in regulations under sections 10(6), 12(6) and 14(7) above shall apply for the purpose of construing subsection (5) above.

(7) As regards any charging authority the Secretary of State may make directions that, for the purposes of subsection(2) above, the extent (if any) to which an item is to be provided for by other means shall be determined by the authority in accordance with the directions.

(8) Directions under subsection (7) above—

(a) must be made in writing;

(b) may contain rules in accordance with which, or specify factors by reference to which, a determination is to be made;

(c) may specify (as the extent concerned) an amount in relation to a particular item;

(d) may relate to one item or to a number of items;

(e) may contain different provision as to different items;

(f) may be amended or revoked by other directions under subsection (7) above.

(9) The power to give directions under subsection (7) above may be exercised differently for different authorities.

(10) No directions under subsection (7) above shall have effect in relation to a determination unless they are served on the authority concerned before it makes the determination.

(11) In construing subsection (3)(a) above any precept for which another has been substituted shall be ignored.

Power to set substituted amounts.

34.—(1) An authority which has set an amount or amounts for a financial year under section 32 above, this section or section 35 below may set an amount or amounts in substitution.

(2) Any amount set in substitution under this section must be set in accordance with sections 32 and 33 above, ignoring section 32(2) for this purpose.

(3) No amount may be set in substitution under this section if it would be greater than that for which it is substituted, except as provided by subsection (4) below.

(4) Any amount set in substitution under this section may be greater than that for which it is substituted (the old amount) if the setting of the old amount has been quashed because of a failure to fulfil section 32(3) or 33(2) above.

Duty to set substituted amounts.

35.—(1) Where an authority has set an amount or amounts for a financial year under section 32 or 34 above or under this section and a precept of a relevant authority is then issued to it for the year (originally or by way of substitute) it must as soon as is reasonably practicable after the issue set an amount or amounts in substitution, even if it or any of them is equal to or greater than that for which it is substituted.

(2) Each of the following is a relevant authority for the purposes of subsection (1) above—

- (a) a county council,
- (b) a metropolitan county police authority,
- (c) the Northumbria Police Authority,
- (d) a metropolitan county fire and civil defence authority,
- (e) the London Fire and Civil Defence Authority, and
- (f) the Receiver for the Metropolitan Police District.

(3) Any amount set in substitution under subsection (1) above must be set in accordance with sections 32 and 33 above, but applying the following rules—

- (a) section 32(2) shall be ignored for this purpose;
- (b) the amount must be set by reference to the precept whose issue gives rise to the amount being set;
- (c) the amount must be set by reference to any other precept issued to the authority for the year since the time when it set (or last set) an amount or amounts for the year under section 32 or 34 above or under subsection (6) below;
- (d) the amount must be set by reference to any amount calculated by the authority in relation to the year under section 95(4) below since the time mentioned in paragraph (c) above;
- (e) subject to paragraphs (b) to (d) above, the amount must be set by reference to the information in the authority's possession at the time mentioned in paragraph (c) above.

(4) Where an authority has set an amount or amounts for a financial year under section 32 or 34 above or under this section and it then makes substitute calculations in accordance with section 95 below, it must as soon as is reasonably practicable after making the substitute calculations set an amount or amounts in substitution, even if it or any of them is equal to or greater than that for which it is substituted.

(5) Any amount set in substitution under subsection (4) above must be set in accordance with sections 32 and 33 above, but applying the following rules—

- (a) section 32(2) shall be ignored for this purpose;
- (b) the amount must be set by reference to the amount calculated by the authority in relation to the year under section 95(4) below in making the

calculations giving rise to the amount being set;

(c) the amount must be set by reference to any precept issued to the authority for the year since the time when it set (or last set) an amount or amounts for the year under section 32 or 34 above or under subsection (6) below;

(d) subject to paragraphs (b) and (c) above, the amount must be set by reference to the information in the authority's possession at the time mentioned in paragraph (c) above.

(6) Where a special authority has set an amount or amounts for a financial year under section 32 or 34 above or under this section and it then sets a multiplier in substitution under paragraph 10 of Schedule 7 below, it must as soon as is reasonably practicable after setting the multiplier in substitution set an amount or amounts in substitution, even if it or any of them is equal to or greater than that for which it is substituted.

(7) Any amount set in substitution under subsection (6) above must be set by reference to the multiplier set in substitution and in accordance with sections 32 and 33 above, ignoring section 32(2) for this purpose.

(8) In construing subsections (3)(c) and (5)(c) above any precept for which another has been substituted shall be ignored; and in construing subsection (3)(d) above any calculation for which another has been substituted shall be ignored.

Substituted amounts: supplementary.

36.—(1) Where an authority sets any amount in substitution under section 34 or 35 above (a new amount) anything paid to it by reference to the amount for which it is substituted (the old amount) shall be treated as paid by reference to the new amount.

(2) But if the old amount exceeds the new amount, the following shall apply as regards anything paid if it would not have been paid had the old amount been the same as the new amount—

(a) it shall be repaid if the person by whom it was paid so requires;

(b) in any other case it shall (as the charging authority determines) either be repaid or be credited against any subsequent liability of the person to pay in respect of any community charge of the authority.

(3) Where an authority sets an amount or amounts in substitution under section 35(1) above it may recover from the precepting authority administrative expenses incurred by it in, or in consequence of, so doing.

Power to anticipate precept.

37.—(1) For the purposes of this section a district council, the Common Council and the Council of the Isles of Scilly are relevant charging authorities, and—

(a) in relation to a district council, a relevant precepting authority is any parish or community council, chairman of a parish meeting or charter trustees with power to issue a precept to the district council;

(b) in relation to the Common Council, a relevant precepting authority is the sub-treasurer of the Inner Temple or the under-treasurer of the Middle Temple;

(c) in relation to the Council of the Isles of Scilly, a relevant precepting authority is any parish council or chairman of a parish meeting with power to issue a precept to the Council.

(2) Subsections (3) to (7) below apply if at the time a relevant charging authority sets an amount or amounts for a financial year under section 32 above a precept for the year has not been issued to it by a relevant precepting authority.

(3) If a precept for the previous financial year has been issued to it by the precepting authority, in setting an amount or amounts for the financial year under section 32 above the charging authority may include among the items listed in section 32(4) above an amount equal to that payable under the precept (or last precept) issued for the previous financial year; and in such a case section 32(4) shall be read accordingly.

(4) If the charging authority sets an amount or amounts in substitution for the year under section 34 or 35 above at a time when a precept for the year has not been issued to it by the precepting authority, and an amount was included under subsection (3) above, the charging authority shall include among the items listed in section 32(4) above an amount equal to that included under subsection (3) above; and in such a case section 32(4) shall be read accordingly.

(5) If the precepting authority issues to the charging authority a precept for the year (originally or by way of substitute) then—

(a) if subsection (3) above does not apply, or no amount was included under it, the precept shall be treated as not having been issued,

(b) if an amount was included under subsection (3) above, and it is equal to or less than the amount of the precept, the amount of the precept shall be treated as equal to the amount included, and

(c) if an amount was included under subsection (3) above, and it exceeds the amount of the precept, the amount of the precept shall be treated as equal to its actual amount.

(6) If the precepting authority issues no precept to the charging authority for the year, the fact that an amount is included under subsection (3) above does not make the charging authority liable to pay anything to the precepting authority.

(7) If the charging authority sets an amount or amounts in substitution for the year under section 34 or 35 above at a time when a precept for the year has been issued to it by the precepting authority, section 32(4) and 35(3) and (5) above shall be read in accordance with subsection (5) above.

(8) Where the financial year mentioned in subsection (2) above is that beginning in 1990 this section shall have effect as if subsection (3) read—

"(3) The charging authority may include among the items listed in section 32(4) above an amount equal to its estimate of the amount of any precept it expects will be issued to it for the year by the precepting authority; and in such a case section 32(4) shall be read accordingly."

Anticipated precepts:
supplementary.

38.—(1) References in this section to the charging authority, the precepting authority and the financial year are to the charging authority, the precepting authority and the financial year mentioned in section 37(2) to (7) above.

(2) Where the charging authority includes under section 37(3) or (4) above an amount equal to that payable under a precept, section 33 above shall have effect as if among the items listed in subsection (3) there were included an

amount equal to that payable under the precept, in a case where the precept is stated to be applicable to a part of the authority's area.

(3) Where the charging authority includes under section 37(3) or (4) above an amount equal to its estimate of the amount of any precept it expects to be issued, in a case where it expects the precept will relate to a part only of its area section 33 above shall have effect as if—

(a) the reference in subsection (2) to an item relating to a part included a reference to an item the authority expects will relate to a part, and

(b) among the items listed in subsection (3) there were included an amount equal to the authority's estimate of the amount of the precept it expects will be issued to it in relation to a part.

(4) If the charging authority sets an amount or amounts in substitution for the year under section 34 or 35 above at a time when a precept for the year has been issued to it by the precepting authority, sections 33 and 35(3) and (5) above shall be read in accordance with section 37(5) above.

Information.

39.—(1) An authority which has set an amount or amounts under section 32, 34 or 35 above shall, before the end of the period of 21 days beginning with the day of doing so, publish a notice of the amount or amounts in at least one newspaper circulating in the authority's area.

(2) Failure to comply with subsection (1) above does not make the setting of an amount or amounts invalid.

Multipliers

Standard community charge multipliers.

40.—(1) A charging authority shall determine a standard community charge multiplier for properties in its area.

(2) If the authority sees fit, different multipliers may be determined for properties of different specified classes.

(3) A specified class is such class as may be specified in regulations made by the Secretary of State.

(4) If the Secretary of State so requires by regulations, a multiplier for a specified class of property shall not exceed whichever of the following he specifies in the regulations as regards the class, namely, 0, $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 2.

(5) An authority must determine under this section before 1 April 1990.

(6) Once a multiplier has been determined it shall remain effective for all chargeable financial years until varied (whether to comply with a requirement under subsection (4) above or otherwise).

(7) A multiplier as it has effect for a given financial year may only be varied before the year begins.

(8) Regulations under this section in their application to a particular financial year (including regulations amending or revoking others) shall not be effective unless they come into force before 1 January in the preceding financial year.

(9) A multiplier must be one of the following, namely, 0, $\frac{1}{2}$, 1, $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2.

(10) References to properties are to buildings, self-contained parts of buildings and caravans in respect of which persons are or may become subject to standard community charges of the authority.

(11) A class may be specified by reference to such factors as the Secretary of

State sees fit.

(12) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (11) above, a class may be specified by reference to one or more of the following factors—

- (a) the physical characteristics of properties;
- (b) the fact that properties are unoccupied or are occupied for prescribed purposes or by persons of prescribed descriptions;
- (c) the circumstances of persons subject to standard community charges.

Source: British Houses of Parliament, 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, on-line reproduction at Her Majesty's Stationery Office website: http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1988/Ukpga_19880041_en_1.htm; 05.05.01.

Appendix II:
Sample Community Charge Rates
for English authorities, 1990

Local authority	Actual Community Charge £ per adult (nearest £)
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Inner London:

City of London	88
Camden	34
Greenwich	408
Hackney	499
Hammersmith and Fulham	424
Islington	499
Kensington and Chelsea	375
Lambeth	548
Lewisham	297
Southwark	390
Tower Hamlets	297
Wandsworth	148
Westminster	195

Outer London:

Barking and Dagenham	278
Barnet	338
Bexley	280
Brent	498
Bromley	283
Croydon	287
Ealing	435
Enfield	329
Haringey	572
Harrow	322

Havering	350
Hillingdon	367
Hounslow	396
Kingston-Upon-Thames	345
Merton	279
Newham	450
Redbridge	290
Richmond-Upon-Thames	395
Sutton	387
Waltham Forest	438
Merseyside:	
Knowsley	365
Liverpool	449
St Helens	450
Sefton	372
Wirral	341

Source: A. Bloch, *The Community Charge in England: Local Authority Experience* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 1990).

Appendix III:
Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh website links
at <http://burn.ucsd.edu/~lothian/ace/links.htm>

Local discussion internet open forum

<http://www.smartgroups.com/message/listbydiscussion.cfm?gid=848802top/>

Edinburgh Claimants

<http://www.autonomous.org.uk/ec/>

Aberdeen

http://www.geocities.com/anti_authority_uk/

Prisoner Support

<http://www.j12.org/ps/>

Counterinfo

<http://www.autonomous.org.uk/ci/>

Wordpower Bookshop

<http://www.word-power.co.uk>

Intercourse (previously SFS)

<http://www.intercourse.org.uk>

Direct action site based in Scotland

<http://www.teknopunx.co.uk/>

NUM Miners advice

<http://www.minersadvice.co.uk/>

Subversion (UK news and analysis magazine)

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/8195/>

WSM (Irish Anarchists)

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/2419/>

Anarchist Federation

<http://www.afed.org.uk>

Solidarity Federation

<http://www.gn.apc.org/SolFed/>

The Anarchist Organisation

<http://www.tao.ca/>

Anarchist Teapot

<http://www.worthing.eco-action.org/teapot>

Aufheben (UK revolutionary theory journal)

http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/~spoons/aut_html/aufledit.htm

escape left links inc Radical Chains

<http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/guest/radical/LINKS.HTM>

Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies)

<http://www.iww.org.uk/>

Haringey Solidarity Group

<http://home.clara.net/hsg/hhome.html>

Pretty Good Privacy

<http://www.pgpi.com/>

Macdonalds Exposed

<http://www.mcspotlight.org/>

Feminist Pages

<http://www.fempages.org>

Uncarved

<http://www.uncarved.org.uk/>

Stewart Home Society

<http://www.stewarthomesociety.org/>

SI texts

http://fhis.gcal.ac.uk/PSY/sun/LectureNotes/ENV4_EnvCog/index.html

Jean Barrot text

<http://www.skatta.demon.co.uk>

Marxists

<http://www.marxists.org/>

Antagonism Press

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Lobby/3909/>

Practical History

<http://www.geocities.com/CapitolHill/Senate/7672/>

Unpopular Press

<http://www.unpopular.org.uk/>

Black Autonomy

<http://www.webcom.com/nattyreb/black.autonomy/>

Prison Activism

<http://www.prisonactivist.org/>

Mumia Abu Jamel

<http://www.mumia.org>

Earth Liberation Prisoners

<http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/3081/t1.html>

Decadent Action

<http://www.underbelly.demon.co.uk/decadent/>

Wombles

<http://www.wombleaction.mrnice.net>

People's Global Action

<http://www.agp.org/>

Gothenburg 2001

<http://www.gbg2001.org>

No War But the Class War starting point (email escape6@hotmail)

<http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/guest/radical/YUGO.HTM>

Analysis of Green Anarchist

<http://www.stewarthomesociety.org/ga/>

Source: Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh website:
<http://burn.ucsd.edu/~lothian/ace/links.htm>; accessed 10.10.01.

Appendix IV:

1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act

Part V Public Order –

Collective Trespass or Nuisance on Land

Powers to remove trespassers on land

61.(1) If the senior police officer present at the scene reasonably believes that two or more persons are trespassing on land and are present there with the common purpose of residing there for any period, that reasonable steps have been taken by or on behalf of the occupier to ask them to leave and—

(a) that any of those persons has caused damage to the land or to property on the land or used threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour towards the occupier, a member of his family or an employee or agent of his, or

(b) that those persons have between them six or more vehicles on the land, he may direct those persons, or any of them, to leave the land and to remove any vehicles or other property they have with them on the land.

(2) Where the persons in question are reasonably believed by the senior police officer to be persons who were not originally trespassers but have become trespassers on the land, the officer must reasonably believe that the other conditions specified in subsection (1) are satisfied after those persons became trespassers before he can exercise the power conferred by that subsection.

(3) A direction under subsection (1) above, if not communicated to the persons referred to in subsection (1) by the police officer giving the direction, may be communicated to them by any constable at the scene.

(4) If a person knowing that a direction under subsection (1) above has been given which applies to him—

(a) fails to leave the land as soon as reasonably practicable, or

(b) having left again enters the land as a trespasser within the period of three months beginning with the day on which the direction was given, he commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale, or both.

(5) A constable in uniform who reasonably suspects that a person is committing an offence under this section may arrest him without a warrant.

(6) In proceedings for an offence under this section it is a defence for the accused to show—

(a) that he was not trespassing on the land, or

(b) that he had a reasonable excuse for failing to leave the land as soon as reasonably practicable or, as the case may be, for again entering the land as a trespasser.

(7) In its application in England and Wales to common land this section has effect as if in the preceding subsections of it—

(a) references to trespassing or trespassers were references to acts and persons doing acts which constitute either a trespass as against the occupier or an infringement of the commoners' rights; and

(b) references to "the occupier" included the commoners or any of them or, in the case of common land to which the public has access, the local authority as well as any commoner.

(8) Subsection (7) above does not—

(a) require action by more than one occupier; or

(b) constitute persons trespassers as against any commoner or the local authority if they are permitted to be there by the other occupier.

(9) In this section—

"common land" means common land as defined in section 22 of the [1965 c. 64.] Commons Registration Act 1965;

"commoner" means a person with rights of common as defined in section 22 of the [1965 c. 64.] Commons Registration Act 1965;

"land" does not include—

(a) buildings other than—(i) agricultural buildings within the meaning of, in England and Wales, paragraphs 3 to 8 of Schedule 5 to the [1988 c. 41.] Local Government Finance Act 1988 or, in Scotland, section 7(2) of the [1956 c. 60.] Valuation and Rating (Scotland) Act 1956, or (ii) scheduled monuments within the meaning of the [1979 c. 46.] Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979;

(b) land forming part of—(i) a highway unless it falls within the classifications in section 54 of the [1981 c. 69.] Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (footpath, bridleway or byway open to all traffic or road used as a public path) or is a cycle track under the [1980 c. 66.] Highways Act 1980 or the [1984 c. 38.] Cycle Tracks Act 1984; or (ii) a road within the meaning of the [1984 c. 54.] Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 unless it falls within the definitions in section 151(2)(a)(ii) or (b) footpaths and cycle tracks) of that Act or is a bridleway within the meaning of section 47 of the [1967 c. 86.] Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967;

"the local authority", in relation to common land, means any local authority which has powers in relation to the land under section 9 of the Commons Registration Act 1965;

"occupier" (and in subsection (8) "the other occupier") means—

(a) in England and Wales, the person entitled to possession of the land by virtue of an estate or interest held by him; and

(b) in Scotland, the person lawfully entitled to natural possession of the land;

"property", in relation to damage to property on land, means—

(a) in England and Wales, property within the meaning of section 10(1) of the [1971 c. 48.] Criminal Damage Act 1971; and

(b) in Scotland, either—(i) heritable property other than land; or (ii) corporeal moveable property,

"damage" includes the deposit of any substance capable of polluting the land;

"trespass" means, in the application of this section—

(a) in England and Wales, subject to the extensions effected by subsection (7) above, trespass as against the occupier of the land;

(b) in Scotland, entering, or as the case may be remaining on, land without lawful authority and without the occupier's consent; and

"trespassing" and "trespasser" shall be construed accordingly;

"vehicle" includes—

(a) any vehicle, whether or not it is in a fit state for use on roads, and includes any chassis or body, with or without wheels, appearing to have formed part of such a vehicle, and any load carried by, and anything attached to, such a vehicle; and

(b) a caravan as defined in section 29(1) of the [1960 c. 62.] Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960;

and a person may be regarded for the purposes of this section as having a purpose of residing in a place notwithstanding that he has a home elsewhere.

Supplementary powers of seizure.

62.—(1) If a direction has been given under section 61 and a constable reasonably suspects that any person to whom the direction applies has, without reasonable excuse—

(a) failed to remove any vehicle on the land which appears to the constable to belong to him or to be in his possession or under his control; or

(b) entered the land as a trespasser with a vehicle within the period of three months beginning with the day on which the direction was given, the constable may seize and remove that vehicle.

(2) In this section, "trespasser" and "vehicle" have the same meaning as in section 61.

Powers in relation to raves

Powers to remove persons attending or preparing for a rave.

63.—(1) This section applies to a gathering on land in the open air of 100 or more persons (whether or not trespassers) at which amplified music is played during the night (with or without intermissions) and is such as, by reason of its loudness and duration and the time at which it is played, is likely to cause serious distress to the inhabitants of the locality; and for this purpose—

(a) such a gathering continues during intermissions in the music and, where the gathering extends over several days, throughout the period during which amplified music is played at night (with or without intermissions); and

(b) "music" includes sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats.

(2) If, as respects any land in the open air, a police officer of at least the rank of superintendent reasonably believes that—

(a) two or more persons are making preparations for the holding there of a gathering to which this section applies,

(b) ten or more persons are waiting for such a gathering to begin there, or

(c) ten or more persons are attending such a gathering which is in progress, he may give a direction that those persons and any other persons who come to prepare or wait for or to attend the gathering are to leave the land and remove any vehicles or other property which they have with them on the land.

(3) A direction under subsection (2) above, if not communicated to the persons referred to in subsection (2) by the police officer giving the direction, may be communicated to them by any constable at the scene.

4) Persons shall be treated as having had a direction under subsection (2) above communicated to them if reasonable steps have been taken to bring it to their attention.

(5) A direction under subsection (2) above does not apply to an exempt person.

(6) If a person knowing that a direction has been given which applies to him—

- (a) fails to leave the land as soon as reasonably practicable, or
- (b) having left again enters the land within the period of 7 days beginning with the day on which the direction was given, he commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale, or both.
- (7) In proceedings for an offence under this section it is a defence for the accused to show that he had a reasonable excuse for failing to leave the land as soon as reasonably practicable or, as the case may be, for again entering the land.
- (8) A constable in uniform who reasonably suspects that a person is committing an offence under this section may arrest him without a warrant.
- (9) This section does not apply—
 - (a) in England and Wales, to a gathering licensed by an entertainment licence; or
 - (b) in Scotland, to a gathering in premises which, by virtue of section 41 of the [1982 c. 45.] Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, are licensed to be used as a place of public entertainment.
- (10) In this section—
 - "entertainment licence" means a licence granted by a local authority under—
 - (a) Schedule 12 to the [1963 c. 33.] London Government Act 1963;
 - (b) section 3 of the [1967 c. 19.] Private Places of Entertainment (Licensing) Act 1967; or
 - (c) Schedule 1 to the [1982 c. 30.] Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982;
 - "exempt person", in relation to land (or any gathering on land), means the occupier, any member of his family and any employee or agent of his and any person whose home is situated on the land;
 - "land in the open air" includes a place partly open to the air;
 - "local authority" means—
 - (a) in Greater London, a London borough council or the Common Council of the City of London;
 - (b) in England outside Greater London, a district council or the council of the Isles of Scilly;
 - (c) in Wales, a county council or county borough council; and
 - "occupier", "trespasser" and "vehicle" have the same meaning as in section 61.
- (11) Until 1st April 1996, in this section "local authority" means, in Wales, a district council.

Supplementary powers of entry and seizure.

- 64.—(1) If a police officer of at least the rank of superintendent reasonably believes that circumstances exist in relation to any land which would justify the giving of a direction under section 63 in relation to a gathering to which that section applies he may authorise any constable to enter the land for any of the purposes specified in subsection (2) below.
- (2) Those purposes are—
- (a) to ascertain whether such circumstances exist; and
 - (b) to exercise any power conferred on a constable by section 63 or subsection (4) below.
- (3) A constable who is so authorised to enter land for any purpose may enter the

land without a warrant.

(4) If a direction has been given under section 63 and a constable reasonably suspects that any person to whom the direction applies has, without reasonable excuse—

(a) failed to remove any vehicle or sound equipment on the land which appears to the constable to belong to him or to be in his possession or under his control; or

(b) entered the land as a trespasser with a vehicle or sound equipment within the period of 7 days beginning with the day on which the direction was given, the constable may seize and remove that vehicle or sound equipment.

(5) Subsection (4) above does not authorise the seizure of any vehicle or sound equipment of an exempt person.

(6) In this section—

"exempt person" has the same meaning as in section 63;

"sound equipment" means equipment designed or adapted for amplifying music and any equipment suitable for use in connection with such equipment, and

"music" has the same meaning as in section 63; and

"vehicle" has the same meaning as in section 61.

Raves: power to stop persons from proceeding.

65.—(1) If a constable in uniform reasonably believes that a person is on his way

to a gathering to which section 63 applies in relation to which a direction under subsection 63(2) is in force, he may, subject to subsections (2) and (3) below—

(a) stop that person, and

(b) direct him not to proceed in the direction of the gathering.

(2) The power conferred by subsection (1) above may only be exercised at a place within 5 miles of the boundary of the site of the gathering.

(3) No direction may be given under subsection (1) above to an exempt person.

(4) If a person knowing that a direction under subsection (1) above has been given to him fails to comply with that direction, he commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(5) A constable in uniform who reasonably suspects that a person is committing an offence under this section may arrest him without a warrant.

(6) In this section, "exempt person" has the same meaning as in section 63.

Power of court to forfeit sound equipment.

66.—(1) Where a person is convicted of an offence under section 63 in relation to a gathering to which that section applies and the court is satisfied that any sound equipment which has been seized from him under section 64(4), or which was in his possession or under his control at the relevant time, has been used at the gathering the court may make an order for forfeiture under this subsection in respect of that property.

(2) The court may make an order under subsection (1) above whether or not it also deals with the offender in respect of the offence in any other way and without regard to any restrictions on forfeiture in any enactment.

(3) In considering whether to make an order under subsection (1) above in respect of any property a court shall have regard—

- (a) to the value of the property; and
 (b) to the likely financial and other effects on the offender of the making of the order (taken together with any other order that the court contemplates making).
- (4) An order under subsection (1) above shall operate to deprive the offender of his rights, if any, in the property to which it relates, and the property shall (if not already in their possession) be taken into the possession of the police.
- (5) Except in a case to which subsection (6) below applies, where any property has been forfeited under subsection (1) above, a magistrates' court may, on application by a claimant of the property, other than the offender from whom it was forfeited under subsection (1) above, make an order for delivery of the property to the applicant if it appears to the court that he is the owner of the property.
- (6) In a case where forfeiture under subsection (1) above has been by order of a Scottish court, a claimant such as is mentioned in subsection (5) above may, in such manner as may be prescribed by act of adjournal, apply to that court for an order for the return of the property in question.
- (7) No application shall be made under subsection (5), or by virtue of subsection (6), above by any claimant of the property after the expiration of 6 months from the date on which an order under subsection (1) above was made in respect of the property.
- (8) No such application shall succeed unless the claimant satisfies the court either that he had not consented to the offender having possession of the property or that he did not know, and had no reason to suspect, that the property was likely to be used at a gathering to which section 63 applies.
- (9) An order under subsection (5), or by virtue of subsection (6), above shall not affect the right of any person to take, within the period of 6 months from the date of an order under subsection (5), or as the case may be by virtue of subsection (6), above, proceedings for the recovery of the property from the person in possession of it in pursuance of the order, but on the expiration of that period the right shall cease.
- (10) The Secretary of State may make regulations for the disposal of property, and for the application of the proceeds of sale of property, forfeited under subsection (1) above where no application by a claimant of the property under subsection (5), or by virtue of subsection (6), above has been made within the period specified in subsection (7) above or no such application has succeeded.
- (11) The regulations may also provide for the investment of money and for the audit of accounts.
- (12) The power to make regulations under subsection (10) above shall be exercisable by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.
- (13) In this section—
 "relevant time", in relation to a person—
 (a) convicted in England and Wales of an offence under section 63, means the time of his arrest for the offence or of the issue of a summons in respect of it;
 (b) so convicted in Scotland, means the time of his arrest for, or of his being cited as an accused in respect of, the offence;
 "sound equipment" has the same meaning as in section 64.

Retention and charges for seized property

- 67.—(1) Any vehicles which have been seized and removed by a constable under section 62(1) or 64(4) may be retained in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary of State under subsection (3) below.
- (2) Any sound equipment which has been seized and removed by a constable under section 64(4) may be retained until the conclusion of proceedings against the person from whom it was seized for an offence under section 63.
- (3) The Secretary of State may make regulations—
- (a) regulating the retention and safe keeping and the disposal and the destruction in prescribed circumstances of vehicles; and
 - (b) prescribing charges in respect of the removal, retention, disposal and destruction of vehicles.
- (4) Any authority shall be entitled to recover from a person from whom a vehicle has been seized such charges as may be prescribed in respect of the removal, retention, disposal and destruction of the vehicle by the authority.
- (5) Regulations under subsection (3) above may make different provisions for different classes of vehicles or for different circumstances.
- (6) Any charges under subsection (4) above shall be recoverable as a simple contract debt.
- (7) Any authority having custody of vehicles under regulations under subsection (3) above shall be entitled to retain custody until any charges under subsection (4) are paid.
- (8) The power to make regulations under subsection (3) above shall be exercisable by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.
- (9) In this section—
- "conclusion of proceedings" against a person means—
 - (a) his being sentenced or otherwise dealt with for the offence or his acquittal;
 - (b) the discontinuance of the proceedings; or
 - (c) the decision not to prosecute him, whichever is the earlier;
- "sound equipment" has the same meaning as in section 64; and
- "vehicle" has the same meaning as in section 61.

Disruptive trespassers **Offence of aggravated trespass.**

- 68.—(1) A person commits the offence of aggravated trespass if he trespasses on land in the open air and, in relation to any lawful activity which persons are engaging in or are about to engage in on that or adjoining land in the open air, does there anything which is intended by him to have the effect—
- (a) of intimidating those persons or any of them so as to deter them or any of them from engaging in that activity,
 - (b) of obstructing that activity, or
 - (c) of disrupting that activity.
- (2) Activity on any occasion on the part of a person or persons on land is "lawful" for the purposes of this section if he or they may engage in the activity on the land on that occasion without committing an offence or trespassing on the land.
- (3) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary

conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale, or both.

(4) A constable in uniform who reasonably suspects that a person is committing an offence under this section may arrest him without a warrant.

(5) In this section "land" does not include—

(a) the highways and roads excluded from the application of section 61 by paragraph (b) of the definition of "land" in subsection (9) of that section; or

(b) a road within the meaning of the [S.I. 1993/3160 (N.I. 15).] Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993.

Powers to remove persons committing or participating in aggravated trespass.

69.—(1) If the senior police officer present at the scene reasonably believes—

(a) that a person is committing, has committed or intends to commit the offence of aggravated trespass on land in the open air; or

(b) that two or more persons are trespassing on land in the open air and are present there with the common purpose of intimidating persons so as to deter them from engaging in a lawful activity or of obstructing or disrupting a lawful activity, he may direct that person or (as the case may be) those persons (or any of them) to leave the land.

(2) A direction under subsection (1) above, if not communicated to the persons referred to in subsection (1) by the police officer giving the direction, may be communicated to them by any constable at the scene.

(3) If a person knowing that a direction under subsection (1) above has been given which applies to him—

(a) fails to leave the land as soon as practicable, or

(b) having left again enters the land as a trespasser within the period of three months beginning with the day on which the direction was given, he commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months or a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale, or both.

(4) In proceedings for an offence under subsection (3) it is a defence for the accused to show—

(a) that he was not trespassing on the land, or

(b) that he had a reasonable excuse for failing to leave the land as soon as practicable or, as the case may be, for again entering the land as a trespasser.

(5) A constable in uniform who reasonably suspects that a person is committing an offence under this section may arrest him without a warrant.

(6) In this section "lawful activity" and "land" have the same meaning as in section 68.

Trespassory assemblies

70. In Part II of the [1986 c. 64.] Public Order Act 1986 (processions and assemblies), after section 14, there shall be inserted the following sections—

"Prohibiting trespassory assemblies.

14A. — (1) If at any time the chief officer of police reasonably believes that an assembly is intended to be held in any district at a place on land to which the public has no right of access or only a limited right of access and that the assembly—

- (a) is likely to be held without the permission of the occupier of the land or to conduct itself in such a way as to exceed the limits of any permission of his or the limits of the public's right of access, and
- (b) may result— (i) in serious disruption to the life of the community, or (ii) where the land, or a building or monument on it, is of historical, architectural, archaeological or scientific importance, in significant damage to the land, building or monument, he may apply to the council of the district for an order prohibiting for a specified period the holding of all trespassory assemblies in the district or a part of it, as specified.
- (2) On receiving such an application, a council may—
- (a) in England and Wales, with the consent of the Secretary of State make an order either in the terms of the application or with such modifications as may be approved by the Secretary of State; or
- (b) in Scotland, make an order in the terms of the application.
- (3) Subsection (1) does not apply in the City of London or the metropolitan police district.
- (4) If at any time the Commissioner of Police for the City of London or the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis reasonably believes that an assembly is intended to be held at a place on land to which the public has no right of access or only a limited right of access in his police area and that the assembly—
- (a) is likely to be held without the permission of the occupier of the land or to conduct itself in such a way as to exceed the limits of any permission of his or the limits of the public's right of access, and
- (b) may result— (i) in serious disruption to the life of the community, or (ii) where the land, or a building or monument on it, is of historical, architectural, archaeological or scientific importance, in significant damage to the land, building or monument, he may with the consent of the Secretary of State make an order prohibiting for a specified period the holding of all trespassory assemblies in the area or a part of it, as specified.
- (5) An order prohibiting the holding of trespassory assemblies operates to prohibit any assembly which—
- (a) is held on land to which the public has no right of access or only a limited right of access, and
- (b) takes place in the prohibited circumstances, that is to say, without the permission of the occupier of the land or so as to exceed the limits of any permission of his or the limits of the public's right of access.
- (6) No order under this section shall prohibit the holding of assemblies for a period exceeding 4 days or in an area exceeding an area represented by a circle with a radius of 5 miles from a specified centre.
- (7) An order made under this section may be revoked or varied by a subsequent order made in the same way, that is, in accordance with subsection (1) and (2) or subsection (4), as the case may be.
- (8) Any order under this section shall, if not made in writing, be recorded in writing as soon as practicable after being made.
- (9) In this section and sections 14B and 14C—
- "assembly" means an assembly of 20 or more persons;
- "land" means land in the open air;
- "limited", in relation to a right of access by the public to land, means that their

use of it is restricted to use for a particular purpose (as in the case of a highway or road) or is subject to other restrictions;

"occupier" means— (a) in England and Wales, the person entitled to possession of the land by virtue of an estate or interest held by him; or (b) in Scotland, the person lawfully entitled to natural possession of the land, and in subsections (1) and (4) includes the person reasonably believed by the authority applying for or making the order to be the occupier;

"public" includes a section of the public; and
"specified" means specified in an order under this section.

(10) In relation to Scotland, the references in subsection (1) above to a district and to the council of the district shall be construed—

(a) as respects applications before 1st April 1996, as references to the area of a regional or islands authority and to the authority in question; and

(b) as respects applications on and after that date, as references to a local government area and to the council for that area.

(11) In relation to Wales, the references in subsection (1) above to a district and to the council of the district shall be construed, as respects applications on and after 1st April 1996, as references to a county or county borough and to the council for that county or county borough.

Offences in connection with trespassory assemblies and arrest therefor.

14B. — (1) A person who organises an assembly the holding of which he knows is prohibited by an order under section 14A is guilty of an offence.

(2) A person who takes part in an assembly which he knows is prohibited by an order under section 14A is guilty of an offence.

(3) In England and Wales, a person who incites another to commit an offence under subsection (2) is guilty of an offence.

(4) A constable in uniform may arrest without a warrant anyone he reasonably suspects to be committing an offence under this section.

(5) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (1) is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months or a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale or both.

(6) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (2) is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(7) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (3) is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months or a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale or both, notwithstanding section 45(3) of the [1980 c. 43.] Magistrates' Courts Act 1980.

(8) Subsection (3) above is without prejudice to the application of any principle of Scots Law as respects art and part guilt to such incitement as is mentioned in that subsection.

Trespassory assemblies: power to stop persons from proceeding.

71. After the section 14B inserted by section 70 in the [1986 c. 64.] Public Order Act 1986 there shall be inserted the following section—

"Stopping persons from proceeding to trespassory assemblies.

14C. — (1) If a constable in uniform reasonably believes that a person is on

his way to an assembly within the area to which an order under section 14A applies which the constable reasonably believes is likely to be an assembly which is prohibited by that order, he may, subject to subsection (2) below—

- (a) stop that person, and
 - (b) direct him not to proceed in the direction of the assembly.
- (2) The power conferred by subsection (1) may only be exercised within the area to which the order applies.
- (3) A person who fails to comply with a direction under subsection (1) which he knows has been given to him is guilty of an offence.
- (4) A constable in uniform may arrest without a warrant anyone he reasonably suspects to be committing an offence under this section.
- (5) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (3) is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

Squatters

Violent entry to premises: special position of displaced residential occupiers and intending occupiers.

72.—(1) Section 6 of the [1977 c. 45.] Criminal Law Act 1977 (which penalises violence by a person for securing entry into premises where a person on the premises is opposed and is known to be opposed to entry) shall be amended as follows.

- (2) After subsection (1), there shall be inserted the following subsection—
 "(1A) Subsection (1) above does not apply to a person who is a displaced residential occupier or a protected intending occupier of the premises in question or who is acting on behalf of such an occupier; and if the accused adduces sufficient evidence that he was, or was acting on behalf of, such an occupier he shall be presumed to be, or to be acting on behalf of, such an occupier unless the contrary is proved by the prosecution."
- (3) In subsection (2), at the beginning, there shall be inserted the words "Subject to subsection (1A) above,".
- (4) Subsection (3) (which is superseded by the provision made by subsection (2) above) shall be omitted.
- (5) In subsection (7), at the end, there shall be inserted the words "and section 12A below contains provisions which apply for determining when any person is to be regarded for the purposes of this Part of this Act as a protected intending occupier of any premises or of any access to any premises."

Adverse occupation of residential premises.

73. For section 7 of the Criminal Law Act 1977 (trespassers failing to leave premises after being requested to do so by specified persons to be guilty of an offence) there shall be substituted the following section—

"Adverse occupation of residential premises.

7. — (1) Subject to the following provisions of this section and to section 12A(9) below, any person who is on any premises as a trespasser after having entered as such is guilty of an offence if he fails to leave those premises on being required to do so by or on behalf of—

- (a) a displaced residential occupier of the premises; or
 - (b) an individual who is a protected intending occupier of the premises.
- (2) In any proceedings for an offence under this section it shall be a defence for

the accused to prove that he believed that the person requiring him to leave the premises was not a displaced residential occupier or protected intending occupier of the premises or a person acting on behalf of a displaced residential occupier or protected intending occupier.

(3) In any proceedings for an offence under this section it shall be a defence for the accused to prove—

(a) that the premises in question are or form part of premises used mainly for non-residential purposes; and

(b) that he was not on any part of the premises used wholly or mainly for residential purposes.

(4) Any reference in the preceding provisions of this section to any premises includes a reference to any access to them, whether or not any such access itself constitutes premises, within the meaning of this Part of this Act.

(5) A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to both.

(6) A constable in uniform may arrest without warrant anyone who is, or whom he, with reasonable cause, suspects to be, guilty of an offence under this section.

(7) Section 12 below contains provisions which apply for determining when any person is to be regarded for the purposes of this Part of this Act as a displaced residential occupier of any premises or of any access to any premises and section 12A below contains provisions which apply for determining when any person is to be regarded for the purposes of this Part of this Act as a protected intending occupier of any premises or of any access to any premises.

Protected intending occupiers: supplementary provisions.

74. After section 12 of the [1977 c. 45.] Criminal Law Act 1977 there shall be inserted the following section—

"Protected intending occupiers: supplementary provisions.

12A. — (1) For the purposes of this Part of this Act an individual is a protected intending occupier of any premises at any time if at that time he falls within subsection (2), (4) or (6) below.

(2) An individual is a protected intending occupier of any premises if—

(a) he has in those premises a freehold interest or a leasehold interest with not less than two years still to run;

(b) he requires the premises for his own occupation as a residence;

(c) he is excluded from occupation of the premises by a person who entered them, or any access to them, as a trespasser; and

(d) he or a person acting on his behalf holds a written statement— (i) which specifies his interest in the premises; (ii) which states that he requires the premises for occupation as a residence for himself; and (iii) with respect to which the requirements in subsection (3) below are fulfilled.

(3) The requirements referred to in subsection (2)(d)(iii) above are—

(a) that the statement is signed by the person whose interest is specified in it in the presence of a justice of the peace or commissioner for oaths; and

(b) that the justice of the peace or commissioner for oaths has subscribed his name as a witness to the signature.

(4) An individual is also a protected intending occupier of any premises if—

- (a) he has a tenancy of those premises (other than a tenancy falling within subsection (2)(a) above or (6)(a) below) or a licence to occupy those premises granted by a person with a freehold interest or a leasehold interest with not less than two years still to run in the premises;
 - (b) he requires the premises for his own occupation as a residence;
 - (c) he is excluded from occupation of the premises by a person who entered them, or any access to them, as a trespasser; and
 - (d) he or a person acting on his behalf holds a written statement— (i) which states that he has been granted a tenancy of those premises or a licence to occupy those premises; (ii) which specifies the interest in the premises of the person who granted that tenancy or licence to occupy ("the landlord"); (iii) which states that he requires the premises for occupation as a residence for himself; and (iv) with respect to which the requirements in subsection (5) below are fulfilled.
- (5) The requirements referred to in subsection (4)(d)(iv) above are—
- (a) that the statement is signed by the landlord and by the tenant or licensee in the presence of a justice of the peace or commissioner for oaths;
 - (b) that the justice of the peace or commissioner for oaths has subscribed his name as a witness to the signatures.
- (6) An individual is also a protected intending occupier of any premises if—
- (a) he has a tenancy of those premises (other than a tenancy falling within subsection (2)(a) or (4)(a) above) or a licence to occupy those premises granted by an authority to which this subsection applies;
 - (b) he requires the premises for his own occupation as a residence;
 - (c) he is excluded from occupation of the premises by a person who entered the premises, or any access to them, as a trespasser; and
 - (d) there has been issued to him by or on behalf of the authority referred to in paragraph (a) above a certificate stating that— (i) he has been granted a tenancy of those premises or a licence to occupy those premises as a residence by the authority; and (ii) the authority which granted that tenancy or licence to occupy is one to which this subsection applies, being of a description specified in the certificate.
- (7) Subsection (6) above applies to the following authorities—
- (a) any body mentioned in section 14 of the [1977 c. 42.] Rent Act 1977 (landlord's interest belonging to local authority etc.);
 - (b) the Housing Corporation;
 - (c) Housing for Wales; and
 - (d) a registered housing association within the meaning of the [1985 c. 69.] Housing Associations Act 1985.
- (8) A person is guilty of an offence if he makes a statement for the purposes of subsection (2)(d) or (4)(d) above which he knows to be false in a material particular or if he recklessly makes such a statement which is false in a material particular.
- (9) In any proceedings for an offence under section 7 of this Act where the accused was requested to leave the premises by a person claiming to be or to act on behalf of a protected intending occupier of the premises—
- (a) it shall be a defence for the accused to prove that, although asked to do so by the accused at the time the accused was requested to leave, that person failed

at that time to produce to the accused such a statement as is referred to in subsection (2)(d) or (4)(d) above or such a certificate as is referred to in subsection (6)(d) above; and

(b) any document purporting to be a certificate under subsection (6)(d) above shall be received in evidence and, unless the contrary is proved, shall be deemed to have been issued by or on behalf of the authority stated in the certificate.

(10) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (8) above shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to both.

(11) A person who is a protected intending occupier of any premises shall be regarded for the purposes of this Part of this Act as a protected intending occupier also of any access to those premises.

Interim possession orders: false or misleading statements.

75.—(1) A person commits an offence if, for the purpose of obtaining an interim possession order, he—

(a) makes a statement which he knows to be false or misleading in a material particular; or

(b) recklessly makes a statement which is false or misleading in a material particular.

(2) A person commits an offence if, for the purpose of resisting the making of an interim possession order, he—

(a) makes a statement which he knows to be false or misleading in a material particular; or

(b) recklessly makes a statement which is false or misleading in a material particular.

(3) A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable—

(a) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or a fine or both;

(b) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or both.

(4) In this section—

"interim possession order" means an interim possession order (so entitled) made under rules of court for the bringing of summary proceedings for possession of premises which are occupied by trespassers;

"premises" has the same meaning as in Part II of the [1977 c. 45.] Criminal Law Act 1977 (offences relating to entering and remaining on property); and

"statement", in relation to an interim possession order, means any statement, in writing or oral and whether as to fact or belief, made in or for the purposes of the proceedings.

Interim possession orders: trespassing during currency of order.

76.—(1) This section applies where an interim possession order has been made in respect of any premises and served in accordance with rules of court; and references to "the order" and "the premises" shall be construed accordingly.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), a person who is present on the premises as a trespasser at any time during the currency of the order commits an offence.

(3) No offence under subsection (2) is committed by a person if—

- (a) he leaves the premises within 24 hours of the time of service of the order and does not return; or
- (b) a copy of the order was not fixed to the premises in accordance with rules of court.
- 4) A person who was in occupation of the premises at the time of service of the order but leaves them commits an offence if he re-enters the premises as a trespasser or attempts to do so after the expiry of the order but within the period of one year beginning with the day on which it was served.
- (5) A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or both.
- (6) A person who is in occupation of the premises at the time of service of the order shall be treated for the purposes of this section as being present as a trespasser.
- (7) A constable in uniform may arrest without a warrant anyone who is, or whom he reasonably suspects to be, guilty of an offence under this section.
- (8) In this section—
 "interim possession order" has the same meaning as in section 75 above and
 "rules of court" is to be construed accordingly; and
 "premises" has the same meaning as in that section, that is to say, the same meaning as in Part II of the [1977 c. 45.]

Criminal Law Act 1977 (offences relating to entering and remaining on property).

Powers to remove unauthorised campers

Power of local authority to direct unauthorised campers to leave land.

- 77.—(1) If it appears to a local authority that persons are for the time being residing in a vehicle or vehicles within that authority's area—
- (a) on any land forming part of a highway;
 - (b) on any other unoccupied land; or
 - (c) on any occupied land without the consent of the occupier, the authority may give a direction that those persons and any others with them are to leave the land and remove the vehicle or vehicles and any other property they have with them on the land.
- (2) Notice of a direction under subsection (1) must be served on the persons to whom the direction applies, but it shall be sufficient for this purpose for the direction to specify the land and (except where the direction applies to only one person) to be addressed to all occupants of the vehicles on the land, without naming them.
- (3) If a person knowing that a direction under subsection (1) above has been given which applies to him—
- (a) fails, as soon as practicable, to leave the land or remove from the land any vehicle or other property which is the subject of the direction, or
 - (b) having removed any such vehicle or property again enters the land with a vehicle within the period of three months beginning with the day on which the direction was given, he commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.
- (4) A direction under subsection (1) operates to require persons who re-enter the land within the said period with vehicles or other property to leave and remove

the vehicles or other property as it operates in relation to the persons and vehicles or other property on the land when the direction was given.

(5) In proceedings for an offence under this section it is a defence for the accused to show that his failure to leave or to remove the vehicle or other property as soon as practicable or his re-entry with a vehicle was due to illness, mechanical breakdown or other immediate emergency.

(6) In this section—

"land" means land in the open air;

"local authority" means—

(a) in Greater London, a London borough or the Common Council of the City of London;

(b) in England outside Greater London, a county council, a district council or the Council of the Isles of Scilly;

(c) in Wales, a county council or a county borough council;

"occupier" person entitled to possession of the land by virtue of an estate or interest held by him;

"vehicle" includes—

(a) any vehicle, whether or not it is in a fit state for use on roads, and includes any body, with or without wheels, appearing to have formed part of such a vehicle, and any load carried by, and anything attached to, such a vehicle; and

(b) a caravan as defined in section 29(1) of the [1960 c. 62.] Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960; and a person may be regarded for the purposes of this section as residing on any land notwithstanding that he has a home elsewhere.

(7) Until 1st April 1996, in this section "local authority" means, in Wales, a county council or a district council.

Orders for removal of persons and their vehicles unlawfully on land.

78.—(1) A magistrates' court may, on a complaint made by a local authority, if satisfied that persons and vehicles in which they are residing are present on land within that authority's area in contravention of a direction given under section 77, make an order requiring the removal of any vehicle or other property which is so present on the land and any person residing in it.

(2) An order under this section may authorise the local authority to take such steps as are reasonably necessary to ensure that the order is complied with and, in particular, may authorise the authority, by its officers and servants—

(a) to enter upon the land specified in the order; and

(b) to take, in relation to any vehicle or property to be removed in pursuance of the order, such steps for securing entry and rendering it suitable for removal as may be so specified.

(3) The local authority shall not enter upon any occupied land unless they have given to the owner and occupier at least 24 hours notice of their intention to do so, or unless after reasonable inquiries they are unable to ascertain their names and addresses.

(4) A person who wilfully obstructs any person in the exercise of any power conferred on him by an order under this section commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

(5) Where a complaint is made under this section, a summons issued by the court requiring the person or persons to whom it is directed to appear before the

court to answer to the complaint may be directed—

- (a) to the occupant of a particular vehicle on the land in question; or
- (b) to all occupants of vehicles on the land in question, without naming him or them.

(6) Section 55(2) of the [1980 c. 43.] Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 (warrant for arrest of defendant failing to appear) does not apply to proceedings on a complaint made under this section.

(7) Section 77(6) of this Act applies also for the interpretation of this section.

Provisions as to directions under s. 77 and orders under s. 78.

79.—(1) The following provisions apply in relation to the service of notice of a direction under section 77 and of a summons under section 78, referred to in those provisions as a "relevant document"

(2) Where it is impracticable to serve a relevant document on a person named in it, the document shall be treated as duly served on him if a copy of it is fixed in a prominent place to the vehicle concerned; and where a relevant document is directed to the unnamed occupants of vehicles, it shall be treated as duly served on those occupants if a copy of it is fixed in a prominent place to every vehicle on the land in question at the time when service is thus effected.

(3) A local authority shall take such steps as may be reasonably practicable to secure that a copy of any relevant document is displayed on the land in question (otherwise than by being fixed to a vehicle) in a manner designed to ensure that it is likely to be seen by any person camping on the land.

(4) Notice of any relevant document shall be given by the local authority to the owner of the land in question and to any occupier of that land unless, after reasonable inquiries, the authority is unable to ascertain the name and address of the owner or occupier; and the owner of any such land and any occupier of such land shall be entitled to appear and to be heard in the proceedings.

(5) Section 77(6) applies also for the interpretation of this section.

Repeal of certain provisions relating to gipsy sites.

80.—(1) Part II of the [1968 c. 52.] Caravan Sites Act 1968 (duty of local authorities to provide sites for gipsies and control of unauthorised encampments) together with the definition in section 16 of that Act of "gipsies" is hereby repealed.

(2) In section 24 of the [1960 c. 62.] Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (power to provide sites for caravans)—

(a) in subsection (2), after paragraph (b) there shall be inserted the following—

(c) to provide, in or in connection with sites for the accommodation of gipsies, working space and facilities for the carrying on of such activities as are normally carried on by them,"; and

(b) in subsection (8), at the end, there shall be inserted the words

"and "gipsies" means persons of nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, but does not include members of an organised group of travelling showmen, or persons engaged in travelling circuses, travelling together as such."

(3) The repeal by subsection (1) above of section 8 of the said Act of 1968 shall

not affect the validity of directions given under subsection (3)(a) of that section; and in the case of directions under subsection (3)(c), the council may elect either to

withdraw the application or request the Secretary of State to determine the application and if they so request the application shall be treated as referred to him under section 77 of the [1990 c. 8.] Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

(4) The repeal by subsection (1) above of the definition of "gipsies" in section 16 of the said Act of 1968 shall not affect the interpretation of that word in the definition of "protected site" in section 5(1) of the [1983 c. 34.] Mobile Homes Act 1983 or in any document embodying the terms of any planning permission granted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 before the commencement of this section.

(5) Section 70 of the [1980 c. 65.] Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 (power to pay grant to local authorities in respect of capital expenditure in providing gipsy caravan sites) is hereby repealed so far as it extends to England and Wales except for the purposes of applications for grant received by the Secretary of State before the commencement of this section.

Ticket touts: Sale of tickets by unauthorised persons.

166.—(1) It is an offence for an unauthorised person to sell, or offer or expose for sale, a ticket for a designated football match in any public place or place to which the public has access or, in the course of a trade or business, in any other place.

(2) For this purpose—

(a) a person is "unauthorised" unless he is authorised in writing to sell tickets for the match by the home club or by the organisers of the match;

(b) a "ticket" means anything which purports to be a ticket; and

(c) a "designated football match" means a football match, or football match of a description, for the time being designated under section 1(1) of the [1991 c. 19.] Football (Offences) Act 1991.

(3) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.

(4) In section 24(2) of the [1984 c. 60.] Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (arrestable offences), after the paragraph (g) inserted by section 85(2) of this Act there shall be inserted the following paragraph— h) an offence under section 166 of the [1994 c. 33.] Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (sale of tickets by unauthorised persons);"

(5) Section 32 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (search of persons and premises (including vehicles) upon arrest) shall have effect, in its application in relation to an offence under this section, as if the power conferred on a constable to enter and search any vehicle extended to any vehicle which the constable has reasonable grounds for believing was being used for any purpose connected with the offence.

(6) The Secretary of State may by order made by statutory instrument apply this section, with such modifications as he thinks fit, to such sporting event or category of sporting event for which 6,000 or more tickets are issued for sale as he thinks fit.

(7) An order under subsection (6) above may provide that—

(a) a certificate (a "ticket sale certificate") signed by a duly authorised officer

certifying that 6,000 or more tickets were issued for sale for a sporting event is conclusive evidence of that fact;

(b) an officer is duly authorised if he is authorised in writing to sign a ticket sale certificate by the home club or the organisers of the sporting event; and

(c) a document purporting to be a ticket sale certificate shall be received in evidence and deemed to be such a certificate unless the contrary is proved.

(8) Where an order has been made under subsection (6) above, this section also applies, with any modifications made by the order, to any part of the sporting event specified or described in the order, provided that 6,000 or more tickets are issued for sale for the day on which that part of the event takes place.

Source: British Houses of Parliament, *1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act*, on-line reproduction at Her Majesty's Stationary Office website: http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1994/Ukpga_19940033_en_1.htm#tcon; accessed 05.05.01.

Appendix V:
Public Transport Expenditure and Road
Expenditure, Britain,
1979/1980 - 1999/2000

Central and local government expenditure on transport

Composite of data from Table 1.17, *Transport Statistics Great Britain*

(London: Department of Transport and the Environment/Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 2001).

	1979/80	1980/81	1981/82
National Roads system (roads financed by central government)	607	708	840
Capital	548	641	740
Current	59	67	100
Local Transport (roads financed by local authorities)	2093	2502	2706
Capital	755	852	812
Roads	473	556	524
Public Transport	243	249	255
Current	1338	1650	1894
Roads	731	844	997
Revenue support to public transport	271	394	466

1982/83	1983/84	1984/85	1985/86	1986/87	1987/88	1988/89	1989/90	1990/91
969	965	1020	1030	1087	1212	1274	1636	2164
884	868	911	920	958	1096	1137	1493	2002
85	97	109	110	129	116	137	143	162
3041	3182	3359	3236	3124	3189	3374	3770	3885
924	969	1039	967	934	965	1139	1365	1208
628	657	705	837	853	853	1067	1221	1078
255	272	309	118	69	105	65	130	110
2117	2213	2320	2269	2190	2224	2235	2405	2677
1060	1102	1174	1408	1480	1566	1592	1692	1908
586	608	636	562	406	326	312	318	339

1991/92	1992/93	1993/94	1994/95	1995/96	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
2216	2390	2494	2574	2270	2018	1840	1703	1755
2026	2171	2268	2246	1923	1715	1436	1245	1095
190	219	226	328	347	303	404	458	660
4239	4501	4653	4670	4633	4230	4087	3915	4190
1407	1634	1770	1673	1707	1281	1279	1096	1256
1265	1481	1610	1411	1504	1210	1123	965	
131	144	151	190	174	148	139	130	
2832	2867	2883	2997	2926	2949	2808	2819	2934
2020	2037	2019	2166	2143	2126	2061	2059	2157
384	395	414	535	492	551	529	538	538

Source: Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, *Transport Statistics Great Britain: 2001 Edition* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 2001).

Appendix VI: ***International contacts list for J18***

Global activist networks (with principle points of contact only)

Peoples' Global Action:

Email: pga@agp.org

WWW: <http://www.agp.org>

Campaign Against the Arms Trade:

Email: admin@caat.demon.co.uk

Tel: +44 (0) 171 281 0297

Reclaim the Streets:

Email: rts@gn.apc.org

Tel: +44 (0) 171 281 4621

Address: PO Box 9656, London, N4 4JY, UK

WWW: <http://www.gn.apc.org/rts>

A SEED Europe

Email: johan@aseed.antenna.nl

Contact person: Johan Frijns

Address: PO Box 92066, 1090 AB, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Tel: +31 20 6682236

Fax: +31 20 4682275

WWW: <http://www.antenna.nl/aseed>

International contacts for J18

Austria:

Karl Fischbacher

UG/OeGB/Austria

Independent Unionists within the Austrian Union Federation OeGB

Gablenzg. 41/9, 1150 Wien, Austria

Tel/Fax: +43 1 98 33 992

Email: k.paw.fischbacher@magnet.at

Australia:

Local J18 discussion list: email: majordomo@xchange.anarki.net

Sydney:

Reclaim the Streets

Email: rpaulelliott@bigpond.com

Basque Country:

J18 network:

Email: inakig@epvasconia.com; iturralde@epvasconia.com

Tel: 944244954

Brazil:

Centro de Defesa dos Direitos Humanos

EUZEBIO ROCHA em Defesa do Brasil e do Povo Brasileiro

Email: vcaixe@convex.com.br

Encuentro Continental de Derecho Alternativo

Contact person: Tania Bacelli

Email: luba@cruzeironet.com.br

Tribunal da Divida (External Debt Tribunal/Campaign for Non-payment of External Debt):

WWW: <http://www.jubileu2000.org.br>

Email: jubileu2000@jubileu2000.org.br

Bangladesh:

National Garment Workers Confederation

Email: unity@bdmail.net

Contact person: Amirul Haque Amin, General Secretary

Address: GPO BOX 864, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Phone: 88 019 340268

Fax: 88 02 956562

Canada:

National network: Bioengineering Action Network

Email: BAN@tao.ca

J18 group Toronto: toronto@tao.ca

J18 groups Montreal/Quebec: bazarov@cam.org

J18 Vancouver: Canadian Auto Workers Lower Mainland Human Rights

Council: skookumsdad@yahoo.com

J18 Regina: The University of Regina Students' Union and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 2419, University of Regina, Regina, SKS4SOA2

Tel: 306 586 8811 ext. 203

Fax: 306 586 8812

Email: Marjorie.Brown@uregina.ca

Colombia:

Club de los Intelectuales Podridos Medellin

Email: emaam504@atenea.udea.edu.co

Czech Republic:

Zeme predevsim! – Earth First! Prague

PO BOX 237

160 41 Praha 6 Czech Republic

Email: zemepredevsim@ecn.cz

England:

Bristol: Kebele: 0117 939 9469

Brighton: South Downs EF!: 01273 698192; brightonj18@lycosmail.com

Hull: Hull on Earth: c/o PO BOX 43, Hull, HU1

Lancaster: J18 group: lancaster-j18@joymail.com

Leeds: Leeds EF!: 0113 262 9365

Liverpool: Liverpool EF!: 0151 727 1611

Resistance & Liberty Hall: 0151 726 9752; resistance@dial.pipex.com

London: RTS: 0171 281 4621

London Genetic Engineering Network: 0181 374 9516; genetics@gn.apc.org

London Animal Action: laa@globalnet.co.uk

McLibel/London Greenpeace: mclibel@globalnet.co.uk

Merton Claimants Action Group: mcag@muwc.demon.co.uk

Manchester: J18 group: 0161 226 6814

Newcastle: TAPP: c/o PO BOX 1TA, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1TA

Norfolk: Norfolk EF!: 01603 629482

Nottingham: Notts EF!: 0115 9585 666

Oxford: Corporate Watch/J18 group: 01865 791391

Sheffield: J18 group: 0114 258 4405

StokeonTrent: Planet Sound Community Arts: psound414@aol.com

Sunderland: Yassen Rousser: 0191 552 9232

Winchester: J18 group: 01962 889409; a.wallice@wkac.ac.uk

Finland:

Muutoksen kev

Email: skvilla@uta.fi; antti.rautiainen@kolumbus.fi

Address: PO BOX 847, 33101 Tampere, Finland

WWW: <http://www.sci.fi/~blindeye/mkevat/>

France:

Pericles Email: pericles@monstrogoth.inlandsys.com

Nantes: Nantes est une fête!

Email: mvayer@calva.net

Address: 113 rue d'Allonville, 44000 Nantes, France

Unemployed group Email: cbertaud@minitel.net

Germany:

German anti-MAI & Globalization campaign: anro0002@stud.uni-sb.de

Köln: Buendnis Köln 99

Address: Koernerstr. 69, 50823 Köln, Germany

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Fax: +49 221 952 0077

Email: koeln99@gmx.net

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Email: WIR_Frankfurt@wbox.de

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India:

Vikas Adhyayan Kendra

Email: vak@bom3.vsnl.net.in

Indonesia:

North Sumatra Peasant Union

Email: putratan@indosat.net.id

Israel:

Green Action Israel

Email: greenman@shani.net

Malaysia:

Email: csulin@pc.jaring.my

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Beurs Appèl – 18 juni

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Fax: +31 30 2343986

Email: frank@strohalm.nl

Nigeria:

Chikoko

Address: Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Tel/Fax: 234 84 236365

Email: oilwatch@infoweb.abs.net

Romania:

Ecotopia

Email: ecotopia@banat.ro

Scotland:

Edinburgh: Autonomous Centre of Edinburgh

Address: 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA, Scotland

Tel: 0131 557 6242

Email: ace@punk.org.uk

Glasgow: Faslane Peacecamp

Tel: 01436 820 901

South Korea:

Policy and Information Centre for International Solidarity

Address: TawKwang bldg, 4th fl, 1410-3, Shillim 5 Dong, Kwanak Gu,

Seoul, Korea 151-015

Tel: +82 2 886 2853

Fax: +82 2 877 4353

Email: picis_korea@hotmail.com

Spain:

Madrid and Spain J18 contact: Ecologistas en Acción
Internacional/Contra-Maastricht

Email: marisaja@yahoo.com

J18 network in Huelva (100 groups)

Coordinating group: Foros Telematicos Socioambientales de Huelva

WWW: <http://utopiaverde.org/foros-huelva>

Email: mgualda@huelva2000.com

Sweden:

J18 group

Email: j18.se@usa.net

Thailand:

J18 group

Email: robinhd@loxinfo.co.th

United States:

J18 US coalition

Email: ban@tao.ca

Reclaim the Streets, North America mailing list: email:
majordomo@tao.ca

Boston: Boston Encuentro

Email: midnotes@aol.com

Address: PO BOX 204, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Denver: J18 group

Email: StoneySmrf@aol.com

Eugene: Eugene Peace Works

Email: eugpeace@efn.org

Lincoln: J18 group

Email: kevin@dsndata.com

Los Angeles: Reclaim the Streets

Email: misskgb@hotmail.com

Massachusetts: Earth First! Western Massachusetts

Email: oakvale@aol.com

New York: The IWW, New York City general membership branch

Contact person: Richard Singer

Address: PO BOX 752, Planetarium Station, New York, NY 10024

Email: ricinger@inch.com

in the Streets

Email: notbored@panix.com

Creative/situationist type group

Email: jasokolinsky@jtsa.edu

Electronic Disturbance Theatre

Email: sjw210@is8.nyu.edu

New England:

Diverse Women for Diversity

Email: jgrossho@MtHolyoke.edu

General Chad and co

Email: GenChad1@AOL.COM

Oakland: Economic Justice Now

Email: rich@Plevin.COM

Portland, Oregon: End Corporate Dominance Alliance

Email: ecda@angelfire.com

Address: PO BOX 1375, Portland, Oregon, USA, 97207

Reno: Reclaim the Streets

Email: pete@stickerguy.com

San Francisco: Rainforest Action Network

Email: rags@ran.org

WWW: <http://www.ran.org>

Address: 221 Pine, 5th floor, San Francisco, CA 94104

Santa Cruz: Branch of the Street and Highway Transport Workers

Industrial Union 530 – IWW

Email: fhar@bari.iww.org

Seattle: J18 group

Email: kavimir@hotmail.com

Wales:

Cardiff J18 group

Email: efmaxmania@hotmail.com

Uruguay:

Montevideo J18 network

Email: vds@nagmedia.com.uy

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Ly., Melbourne, 04.05.99.

M., Edinburgh, 06.02.00.

Mk., London, 20.11.98.

PA., Bradford, 03.02.00.

P., London, 05.02.00.

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