

news

STOP THE CITIES

During the last week of March there were several Stop the City protests against the financial institutions' support of various sorts of oppression.

On March 22 in Glasgow, about fifty people staged a series of occupations and pickets all over town. At each stop, ten or fifteen people occupied or blockaded the institution, while the rest leafleted passers-by. Stops included the Stock Exchange, four or five banks, the armed forces' recruiting offices, and the Glasgow City Council chambers. The demonstrators' mobility frustrated the police who finally made six arrests for breach of the peace. Nearly 10,000 (!) leaflets were handed out. (Thanks to Dolly and the Impressionists 1984 for reports).

On the night of March 21 in Bristol, bank cash dispensers were superglued and Barclay's banks were sprayed with anti-apartheid graffiti. The next morning sixty people demonstrated around town. They ended their action on the steps of the police station in protest at the earlier arrest of eight demonstrators on suspicion of doing the night's damage. (Thanks to Andy for report).

On March 29 in London, two to three thousand demonstrators were met by a highly organised and very heavy police response. Over four hundred people were arrested in a variety of actions ranging from taking tampons from Boots and delivering them to Fleet Street to a die-in at St Paul's. The City police prepared a 35-page briefing for the 550 or so police there (including plain-clothes policepersons and Metropolitan police). Here are some snippets:

As the name implies the object of the demonstration is to "stop the City". All Officers should bear in mind that this is not a lawful protest march/demonstration. It is a deliberate attempt to paralyse the financial heart of the country by mainly unlawful means...

All [protestors] are anti-establishment, unco-operative with Police, and in the case of some extremists potentially violent...

A Royal Visit (Princess Alexandra) to Guildhall, arriving at 18.00 hrs. The other guests will arrive from 17.00 hours, furs and Rolls Royces annoy our demonstrators...

On being deployed drivers must get as close to the crowd as possible. Thereafter, their main consideration must be safety of personnel, protection of vehicles and the efficient deployment of units...

Commissioner's Directions have been made [banning gatherings] under the City of London Police Act 1839... A person may, therefore, be told that a "direction" exists which prohibits the action he [sic] is taking and be warned of the consequences should he persist. If he then continues his contact, he may be arrested by virtue of the above powers and subsequently charged with, eg, obstructing police, etc...



photo: Alan Pease

See page 7 for pictures of the London STC, and future issues of PN for personal accounts and analysis. There will be a defendants' meeting on April 14. Contact: Amanda, tel 01-833 1633. Otherwise, contact: STC, c/o LGG, 6 Endsleigh St, London WC1.