

Evans, *Personal Politics: the roots of women's liberation in the civil rights movement and the new left*, Vintage, New York 1980.

20. For example, see G.McKay, *op.cit.*, chapter 3.

THE RIGHT TO RAVE: OPPOSITION TO THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC ORDER ACT 1994

Rupa Huq

INTRODUCTION¹

The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, after numerous false starts, finally became law on 3 November of the same year to a chorus of disapproval from various sections of British society. This chapter examines the legislation's impact on one such group, the 'rave community', and draws on my own involvement throughout 1994 with Advance Party, a group of rave-goers and free party organisers formed in opposition to the contents of the Act in its earlier form as the Criminal Justice Bill. Will the events have lasting results or will they fade from memory as quickly as they seemed to occur?

RAVE VS THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC ORDER ACT 1994

The mass mobilisations of ravers, against the introduction of laws that threatened to criminalise their lifestyle, played an important part in the wave of mid-1990s non violent direct action, which was on a scale unseen in the UK for some years, and raises important questions about changing notions of politics, youth culture, new alliances and ideology in the 1990s. In order to examine these further an understanding of the roots of rave is important.

Numerous clichés have attached themselves to 1990s youth. The cohort variously labelled as the 'slackers' or 'Generation X' in the US and 'Thatcher's children' in the UK were born too late for the golden years of the subcultural explosion of the 1960s and 1970s, and also missed out on the 1980s boom. Consistently suffering the consequences of the Conservative 'rolling back' of the welfare state – social

policy from a party whose leader had claimed that there is no such thing as society² – by the mid-1990s popular wisdom dictated that this was a dispossessed and alienated generation. Even the usual healthy characteristic of risk-taking that we have come to accept as part of being young seemed to be in disconcertingly short supply. AIDS signalled constraints on free love given that casual sex now carries a potential death sentence. That one-time barometer of youth consciousness, the political demonstration, was conspicuous by its absence; the 1990s meagre efforts (eg mobilisations over the naked self-interest of student grants) underline the passing of the 1968 spirit. Vietnam is over and Bosnia is too complex an issue to grapple with compared to the computer games in which today's young find solace, such as the appropriately titled 'Doom'.

For their addition to the great British youth culture collection, the 1980s and early 1990s bequeathed us 'rave', which has been interpreted by some as entirely appropriate for this so-called ideologically void generation. Unlike some of its spectacular subcultural antecedents, rave's 'come as you are' dress code carries no strongly identifiable subcultural style. Rejecting idealist chants of subcultural antecedents, such as 'all you need is love' (hippie), or 'anarchy in the UK' (punk), the nearest rave has to a slogan is simply 'on one' – the affirmation of having taken an Ecstasy tablet. E, as it is more commonly called, is the subculture's drug of choice. E shapes many of the subculture's rituals (baggy clothing as the uniform and bottled water as the raver's drink are both necessitated by ecstasy's dehydrating properties). Rave's ideology rejects idealism for hedonism in the clouds. 'Techno', its electronically processed music, has a name that appears to suggest the value of technical expertise over all the other qualities that we have come to recognise as essential to music and the song in the twentieth century: passion, authenticity and soul. Interestingly the term 'rave', used here for reasons of convenience, is dislikd by many involved who prefer the expression 'party'. Yet techno's alleged impersonality is belied by the sociability of the dance and of sound systems (teams of DJs that play together). The square root of rave was always the pleasure of the dance. Perhaps this can be seen as a realistic response to 1990s harsh circumstances. Steve Redhead calls it 'hedonism in hard times'.³ Rave had never in its wildest E-induced dreams dabbled in what we have come conventionally to recognise as politics,⁴ until the Criminal Justice Bill.

By the mid-1990s rave was still central to UK youth culture,

demonstrating an impressive lasting power dating from at least acid house and the 'second summer of love' of 1988. However, noticeable changes had occurred throughout this period and, far from existing as a single entity, two separate scenes had evolved, broadly classifiable as the illegal (underground) and the legal (overground, official), each with its own multifarious facets and myriad of different musical soundtracks for which 'rave' serviced the event. Before outlining the Bill's contents, it is important here to distinguish the illegal (free entry) rave parties implicated in the legislation from the legal raves (of the pay-scene) which are largely unchanged as a result. While entry to a commercial rave comes at a price, the lack of an entrance charge at donation-financed illegal raves (often collected in a bucket passed around for participants to 'give what they can') should theoretically ensure a wider mix of people in free rather than pay events. However, conversely, the exclusivity demanded by this form of clandestine clubbing can never really make illegal raves a truly all-embracing democratic force. Calling one of several underground rave phonelines accesses immediate events unlisted by the listings magazines. Such leads may be no more than a junction number of a motorway, since the final venue is still secret, a precaution to counter the police. However not everyone will know how to find an illegal rave, indeed their existence is founded on this very mystique.

The rave departs from many constraints of the 'conventional' rock concert, bending and at times breaking the usual rules of the game. The DJ-centred culture is the antithesis of the spectacle. Within this premise itself, the free party goes even further. The illegal rave is non-linear; it will not only possibly change place throughout its course but its time will also be unfixed. While the legal rave will have a defined start time and an end, its illegal counterpart will be of potentially infinite duration. Participants dance like there's no tomorrow because literally tomorrow just isn't going to happen; no one will hurry you out because there is no terminus, no curfew when the licence ends. The public will dance for perhaps ten hours on end at a legal rave. The illegal rave may sometimes last for several days, pushing this boundary even further. The legal rave will be sited at a premises which has the requisite number of fire exits and toilets whereas the illegal rave will often be in a squatted building, either a boarded-up former domestic dwelling or church, or a deserted warehouse on the edge of town: a new type of urban regeneration in the failed industrial estates where the traditional manufacturing industry has collapsed. Lighting will often

be basic at an illegal event due to the use of hot-wired electricity. For this reason the free rave will also be unable to boast a mind-boggling number of kilowatts-powered sound system in the way a club such as the world-reputed Ministry of Sound in London does. The legal and illegal rave will also draw two differently-constituted publics, with some overlap.

The target of the CJA was not then just the stereotype of the ecstasy-guzzling raver that had been forming in the public imagination as a result of negative coverage since the late 1980s, but the illegal-rave goer, an even more extreme version. This character – an amalgam of raver, squatter and traveller, with roots in paganism and technology, punk and hippy – quickly became known as the ‘crusty’. According to Press: ‘in reality there is no generic squatter or traveller; instead there is a multitude of “tribes”.’⁵ Lowe and Shaw’s interviewee, Jeremy, claims: ‘People called us crusties and that label’s stuck and become a sort of fashion thing which is ridiculous really because it was the opposite of that ... It was anti-fashion, anti-image. It was supposed to be a viable alternative way of life.’⁶ The crusty rapidly became a new folk devil fuelling moral panic. By Autumn 1992 the music press were in time honoured tradition running ‘how to dress crusty’ items for their youthful readership. Simultaneously the hysterical and alarmist right-wing press were fuelling the ire of the ‘disgusted of deep suburbia’ of the nation with scare stories. Admittedly the free party scene is inescapably elitist. However those encompassed by it, crusties and their dogs on strings, are the very people excluded from ‘straight society’ and do not fit with our usual perceptions of the selectivity that defines a clique. The state had already practised its attempts to rein in rave in the earlier Entertainments (Increased Penalties) Act 1989 which was introduced as a private member’s bill sponsored by the backbench Conservative Graham Bright MP to put restrictions on the licensing of legal raves. Now with the Criminal Justice Bill it was the turn of the illegal scene.

Few pieces of legislation have generated as much debate and disagreement as the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994.⁷ At the time of the legislation’s passage through Parliament in Bill form, Channel 4 Television’s satirical programme *Drop the Dead Donkey* joked that the CJA contained implications for ‘every living organism’. The allegation was in reality not as far removed from the truth as it sounds given the Criminal Justice Act’s wide scope. Young offenders, the prevention of terrorism, football ticket touts and the lowering of

the age of consent for homosexual acts are also among its sprawling contents. Part three includes the abolition of the Right of Silence. Part four increases police stop and search powers considerably. It is for part five however – public order – that the CJB and subsequently CJA became best known. Many of the provisions relating to raves and festivals are nothing short of Draconian. Police are given powers to end outdoor happenings. It becomes a criminal offence to disobey a direction to leave a rave event. If a police officer ‘reasonably believes’ ten or more people are waiting for or setting up a rave, they can be ordered to disperse and a refusal to do so carries the liability of three months’ imprisonment or a £2500 fine, even if the event has the permission of the landowner. The police can also turn away anyone who comes within five miles of a potential rave, and they can enter land and seize vehicles and sound equipment which the courts then have forfeiture powers over.

Most bizarre of all is the state definition of rave as ‘music wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats.’ The definition is ridiculous because all music is organised sound.⁸ As Debby Staunton of ravers’ pressure group Advance Party has pointed out: ‘I guess that’s goodbye to Ravel’s Bolero then.’ This is state intervention on grounds of musical taste with censure for those who do not conform to the state’s chosen view of society. Andrew Blake sees it as a return to an eighteenth century concept of privatised land. He claims, ‘It is the mobility, the mixability, of club culture that conservative “essential England” wishes to banish with the Criminal Justice Bill’. Home Secretary Michael Howard claimed that the legislation was directed to ‘tackle crime, punish criminals and protect people’. George McKay calls it ‘the criminalisation of diversity’. As Robertson has pointed out: ‘The traditional liberties are easy to erode when times call for financial sacrifices or action against terrorism’.⁹ Accordingly the Criminal Justice Bill was introduced to regulate lifestyles by the self-styled non-interventionist Conservative Party under the pretext of a crime-prevention measure. Exploiting fears of rising criminality and placing the accent on law and order was key to this strategy.

ANTI-CJA CAMPAIGNING

In July 1993 I was given a telephone number for Spiral Tribe, a sound system playing and organising free parties around London. By January 1994, when I actually rang, it had become the contact number

for Advance Party, a civil liberties collective formed to protect the rights of festivals and free parties. My call's interceptor told me, 'The proposed legislation is disgusting. It abuses people's rights to choose their own lifestyle'. Thus began my own involvement with the anti-CJB campaign. Over the next year I attended meetings at venues ranging from derelict laundrettes to Squatland Yard (a disused mansion block in central London) and alternative community centres in an ex-dole office and a former church. Gatherings were comprised of a fluid composition of DJs and sound system teams sitting round in a circle, smoking dope and discussing non-violent action as if it had never gone out of fashion. Despite being 'new' the scene had historical landmarks. Certain pre-Act festivals and parties stood out as key flashpoints in the anti-CJB legacy. The Castlemorton Free Festival, an open air gathering which took place in 1992, is seen by party-goers as foreshadowing the gloomy way ahead following the Bill's enactment. Suing the organisers for constituting a public nuisance resulted in the expenditure of £4 million of taxpayers' money. All were eventually acquitted. Gradually other raves added themselves to the legendary list, including the ill-fated '7th of the 7th' Festival to have been held in July 1995 as the first large-scale party after the Bill's enactment, but which was prevented by the police.

Advance Party was structured as a loose-knit, decentralised, leaderless (dis)organisation. Its two main speakers always seemed unlikely pipers of rave: Michelle Poole, a former teacher, veteran anti-abor-tion, IMG, SWP and CND campaigner, aged around the half century mark, and Debby Staunton, ex-CPSA (civil service trade union) representative mother of two who reached suffrage in 1979. Michelle told me in January 1995, 'I say you're never too old to dance'. Early aims emphasised rights awareness, training people in police negotiation and legal observation, plus organising rallies, fundraising and media functions. The proposed legal rights card became a booklet due to the sheer volume of contents. The vogueish word 'network' – or several co-existing networks – has often been employed to describe the CJB campaign, rather than calling it a social movement. Advance Party's logo was, appropriately, a spider web. However, much social movement writing argues that movements are networks anyway, therefore a false dichotomy between network and movement is suggested. 'Bottom up' is equally unhelpful in describing the structure because the top and bottom were indistinguishable. In any case, the contrast with old-style political parties and traditional pressure groups was marked

in aims and means. Anti-CJBism avoided, for example, the London-centrism of other political campaigns, such as much of the anti-racist movement which had been concentrated largely in and on East London.¹⁰ Ad hoc groups were often launched as the result of localised issues. FINs – Free Information Networks – sprouted in such ostensibly reactionary locations as Guildford and Dorset.

The legislation was quickly dubbed the 'Criminal In-Justice Bill', emphasising an acute sense of the Government publicly selecting scapegoats to compensate for its own failures. At various press conferences and rallies held throughout 1994, a careful balance of those affected was assembled, representing squatters, ravers, road protesters and travellers under a backdrop reading 'Defending Diversity, Defending Dissent' – Home Secretary Michael Howard's worst nightmare, an assortment of social undesirables. Continuity was underlined, with the right to rave presented as part of a traditional cultural heritage. Ward writes, 'Dance reinforces community ... For society to continue operating effectively (it can be argued) it is necessary for individuals to have some release from their daily routines and pressures'.¹¹ Debby Staunton's speeches similarly refer to 'our inalienable right to hold parties and dance as our ancestors have done for hundreds of years'. It is an alternative 'back to basics', a bastardisation of the philosophy espoused by the then-current Conservative Party, selecting different antecedents than Victorian Values. Much of the legitimacy laid claim to by the road protesters at Twyford Down and Solsbury Hill is rooted in their status as ancient festival sites. Rights can then be claimed by all sides, not just the 1990s complaining culture of consumers rights. Freedom Network, a loose alliance of grassroots protesters used the phrase 'CJA: together we'll crack it,' directly subverting the government's 'Crime: together we'll crack it' slogan. Lord Justice Hoffman's affirmation of 'an ancient and honourable tradition of peaceful public protest' adorned a campaign postcard.

Strategies to oppose the Bill drew other groups. Liberty (civil liberties organisation), Shelter (homeless charity), the Green Party (ecologists) and Charter '88 (constitutional reform group) took up the cause from the more organised and more respectable end of the organised pressure group spectrum. The joint Charter 88/Advance Party January 1994 lobby of Parliament resulted in a turnout of 300 (very odd DJs, squatters, ravers and conscience-stricken middle/chattering class card-carrying Charter '88 members. 1994 saw three marches

between Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square in London, each larger than the last in numbers, media attention and entryism from other factions determined to climb aboard the Criminal Justice bandwagon.

The first one, which occurred on 1 May, probably represented the movement at its most 'pure'. The turnout was probably somewhere between the police estimates of 10,000 and the organisers' reckoning of 30,000: an impressive number given that it received no (mainstream) advance publicity, and instead relied solely on underground mobilisation. Unlike traditional antagonistic demonstrations, a good humoured crowd raved down the streets of Monopoly board fame, let loose in the city in the blazing sunshine. Present were playful elements of spectacle: jugglers, stilt-walkers and a bicycle-powered rave which engendered a carnival-like spirit and countered the 'faceless techno' image of rave. Striking a sinister note, however, was the absence of media coverage, despite the fact that the march cannot have escaped the attention of anyone present in Central London on the day.

In August the route was altered to pass Whitehall, where an altercation at the gates of Downing Street followed: the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) were blamed for their supposedly inflammatory slogan 'Kill the Bill' that could be interpreted as an incitement to anti-police violence.¹² In October, after another re-routing, the looting of shops in Oxford Street completed the proceedings, which triggered far-fetched media comparisons with the poll tax riot of 1989. In November a meeting at Westminster Central Hall, on the eve of the Bill's enactment, was due to have been followed by a lobby of Parliament. However Parliament itself was sealed off and scenes of bloody violence perpetrated against the police made it onto the evening news bulletins, ignoring the role that police provocation played.¹³

DIY culture, denoting 'Do It Yourself', is also a key concept in the anti-Criminal Justice Bill's theory and practice. With such tools as desktop publishing and camcorders, the mastery of media manipulation and new technology has been an important part of the strategy to (re)claim ancient rights. After Advance Party meetings people were urged to leave with one copy of each leaflet, go forth and photocopy, jam radio phone-in switchboards and flood newspaper postbags. Marchers were encouraged to carry hand-held cameras on actions, as evidence in the event of police aggravation, and to serve as symbolic and material counterpoints to big brother police surveillance. Campaigner George Monbiot of the Centre for Environmental Studies, Green College, Oxford, told me in January 1995 that 'creating great

spectacles and harnessing the power of the media to make really grand alliances right across the spectrum' was a pivotal priority. Television pictures of a June 1994 protest were helped by the irresistible imagery of campaigners dressed as suffragettes chained to the railings outside Parliament, demanding not the right to vote but the right to protest. The BBC *Open Space* documentary of June 1994, in which final editorial control rested with Advance Party, was an example of open access media exemplifying the DIY principle.

It is interesting to note parallel developments, across the divide, which involved the legal rave scene in the anti-CJB campaigns. Regular pay venues unaffected by the legislation have, depending on your interpretation, either cynically cashed in on the campaign or shown solidarity to the cause by collecting petitions and hosting benefit nights. Megatripolis in Central London represents the greatest blurring of boundaries with its hi-tech counterculture new-age festival-like format including fortune-tellers, internet terminals, alcohol-free energy drinks, subversive leaflets stall and 'parallel university' talks and music in a legal setting. The club was run by ex-free party personnel who often name-checked illegal events on the PA. 'It's for people who want to take a walk towards the wild side but don't want to go over the edge', Blue, the organiser, told me in November 1993. Less admirable was the commercial three-day legal outdoor festival in Oxfordshire, improbably titled 'Tribal Gathering', organised by club giants Universe Promotions in 1995 and advertising itself as 'the first legal rave'. Its publicity strongly attached itself to the language of resistance, yet such use of the language of resistance sat somewhat incongruously with its £25 ticket price.

THE 'NEW POLITICS' AND THE RIGHT TO RAVE

Just as rave departs from the traditional conventions of pop music and spectacle, the politics of its defence in the face of the Criminal Justice Bill breaks with what we recognise as traditional politics, in theory and practice. The Labour Party, Her Majesty's loyal opposition, abstained rather than opposing the CJB in Parliament, leaving it as detested as the Government. Debby consistently mocked 'the members of the opposition who are no longer performing their rightful role in moderating the excesses of their colleagues.' Extra-parliamentary parties were less slow to take up the cause. The Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) launched a CJB telephone hotline and clothing range. The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) formed

the offshoot, The Coalition Against the Criminal Justice Bill, to draw political profit in terms of recruiting new members. Their CJB poster confusingly urged 'Defend Britain's Hospitals. Fight the Criminal Justice Bill,' lumping the two valid yet unconnected causes uncomfortably together. It would appear that the two are not connected anywhere, except in the SWP's fetid imagination. Paul Foot explains the SWP position in classic class terms: 'The world we live in is controlled by an oligarchy whose only interest is to preserve for themselves inordinate wealth and power which they filch from what other people produce. They know their enemy: trade unions the one day, travellers and ravers the next. They seek to crush us all with equal ruthlessness.'¹⁴ Its validity is, however, limited; whether most ravers are aware that they are fighting the class war is doubtful. That large numbers of people were involved in CJA protests, and in the wave of non-violent actions which followed, seems to underline the fact that society is changing faster than the traditional political parties, constrained by totalising rigid dogma, can.

Paradoxically, the Criminal Justice Bill, by attempting to crush a legion of diverse, disparate and desperate groups, has succeeded in uniting them with a single purpose and a common enemy. Rick, a despatch rider and occasional DJ, told me his message for the Government: 'Cheers, thanks a lot for bringing us all together. We're a lot more networked now than we ever were.' The right to rave protests, along with road campaigns and animal rights demonstrations, form a new wave of non-violent direct action (NVDA) operating outside existing political structures; a new politics serving a different type of constituency. Definitions vary. C.J. Stone identifies 'justice, peace and natural goodness' as key ingredients.¹⁵ Michelle Poole has called it 'the process of radicalisation on people's own terms.' The new politics is issue-based and extra-parliamentary, bypassing the Westminster system because those involved do not feel they have to seek their MP's permission to participate. Old-style deference is no longer the compelling force that it once was, with the collapse of traditional institutions such as the royal family and the escalation of corruption in old politics, termed 'sleaze' in 1990s-speak. As a result, MPs quite simply cannot be trusted. Rave has often been seen as primarily hedonistic, and this is reflected in its politics. 'We might prefer putting on parties to angry marches but that's because it's what we do best', Debby explained at the Left Forum '95 Conference at SOAS in March 1995 to a heckler who had difficulties

with such unalloyed pleasure-seeking as politics. The point is that in the face of the Bill/Act the continuation of free parties has become highly charged political rhetoric in itself. C.J. Stone writes: 'People don't go on demos these days, they celebrate. They don't protest, they party.'

The question of 'right(s)' forms the philosophical common ground of the alliance of groups opposing the Criminal Justice Act. Non-violent action is, in the eyes of its perpetrators, carried out in a moral dimension with a higher value than the simple administrative mechanisms of the Law. A slogan on a leaflet from the M11 Link Road protesters in East London urges: 'Resist the roadbuilders, they are strong but we are right.' Liberty's Andrew Puddephatt claimed at the 1 May march: 'When tyranny is at home you have a duty to resist.' Here the principle of the Rule of Law, central in the UK's constitutionless constitutional apparatus, is under threat because it relies on respect for the Law as its basis, raising the question of justification. Hart wrote of this in relation to state action over the citizen: 'In asking it [justification] we are committed to at least the general critical principle that the use of coercion in any society calls for justification as something *prima facie* objectionable to be only tolerated for the sake of some countervailing good.' Even Card and Ward in their dispassionate guide to the Criminal Justice Act express doubts regarding section 5: 'Whether these new offences and police powers are necessary and can be justified – and any extension of the criminal law should be justified up to the hilt – is open to doubt'.¹⁶

Replacing a straightforward class analysis, postmodernist tendencies can be seen in The Criminal Justice protests' general characteristics. Identity politics has assumed major significance and has institutionalised pluralism and variety. DIY culture, with its assembly of new forms of culture from fragments, brings to mind the favourite post-modern principle of bricolage. Practitioners and theorists are sometimes the same. Oxford academic George Monbiot is, for example, often seen as the leading intellectual of the NVDA. Manchester Freedom Network organiser Ally Fogg, 26, a psychology researcher at Salford University, told me in June 1995: 'Our post-modern generation is very self-conscious. We know what we are doing, we know who we are. We know that the way we are portrayed in the media is different to what we are. The text and representation are two intrinsically different things. Whether people have read sociology textbooks and understand the jargon or not they still have a sense of postmodernism.'

However postmodernism itself can mean everything and nothing. Anti-CJBism is postmodern by Bauman's contention that 'incoherence is the most distinctive among the attributes of postmodernity (arguably its most defining feature).'¹⁷

Post-war French post-structural sociology also has a number of points in common with the general thrust of the CJA campaigning in some of its theories. The echoes of the past used by the campaigners as reference points (ancient festivals, suffragettes) are pertinent to Foucault and his interdisciplinary discourse theory which maps out a history of the present through archaeological analyses of past discourse. Foucault's work also displays a deep distrust of all institutional power, inspired by the authorities' response to the 1968 *événements*. The same period also influenced Lyotard, who argued that universal theories should be dismissed out of hand and that the 'grand narrative' should be replaced by the 'little narratives' of individual human beings. The Criminal Justice protesters likewise are drawn from a wide spectrum of society (travellers, ravers, hunt saboteurs), each with different individual experiences to bring. The totality of influences is consequently heterogeneous. In turn we can invoke the name of the deconstructionist Derrida, who influenced Lyotard and theorised the shifting and indeterminate nature of meaning. Bordieu's theory of practice based on the analysis of the practical intelligibility governing action can also be applied. Other philosophers who have been associated with rave include post-structuralists Deleuze and Guattari and Baudrillard, which seems to suggest that, at a theoretical level anyway, for contemporary chroniclers of rave the dictum 'each to their own frog' (*chacun a sa grenouille* in French), could be coined.¹⁸

It is interesting here to draw comparisons with social movement theorists of the late twentieth century. According to Diani and Melucci, social movements are founded on diversity through networks, and unity through creative identity.¹⁹ They are composed of a plurality of individuals and organisations who have a collective identity that draws these various elements into a single entity. Diani identifies the twin forces of politics (challenging uneven distribution of power and social structures) and social conflict (challenging the shared meanings and ways of defining and interpreting reality). Here are echoes of the anti-CJB networks. Tourraine also reinterprets the past in a process of what he calls 'historicity'. For him the élite of the social order must be countered by initiating lines of protest which

generate new social movements. Examples given are the 1960s student movement and 1980s environmentalists.²⁰ As with the 1990s non-violent direct action and the Criminal Justice movement, these new struggles will be quite different from old forms of class conflict. Mafessoli's theory of neo-tribes holds that these are formed as concepts rather than integrated social bodies, self-constructed with an inevitable inconclusiveness. He writes 'there will be more coming and going between the tribe and the mass ... at the defined interior of a matrix crystallise a magnitude of poles of attraction ... we find there vagueness, mobility, experience, emotional life'.²¹ However it is not easy to categorise CJAism. As Jordan points out: 'If it is easy to see women's liberation as a new left political actor, it is not so easy to see animal liberation or raving in this way'.²² In a way, the campaign has rested on its internal (ir)rationality rather than on imposed political concepts from outside movements, although this has not stopped such external forces from trying to use the momentum of the protests for their own ends.

CONCLUSION: RAVE'S OPPOSITION TO THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC ORDER ACT 1994, NET RESULTS

The anti-Criminal Justice Bill campaign, by definition, has failed.²³ The Bill is now an Act of Parliament, with little chance of repeal under a Labour government, given that Tony Blair was the architect of many of its provisions while he was Shadow Home Secretary. However the legislation's smooth Parliamentary passage was always inevitable given the majority Conservative government. Outside Parliament however, what impact has the experience had on youth and politics?

'Thatcher's children are revolting', SWP coalition spokesman Weyman Bennett ebulliently told an audience at the party summer school in 1995, a perfect soundbite for the perfect moment. Jeremy Gilbert similarly claimed that the Criminal Justice Bill unleashed 'an intense and rapid repoliticisation of youth culture'. However, despite all the excitement of new politics, the old politics has undeniably also been present at every level of the Criminal Justice Bill campaign.²⁴ For the old left, battered by Thatcherism, betrayed by Blair, the Criminal Justice Bill represented a new version of the 1960s dream of politically conscious youth. However the spectre of false left optimism is ever important here. Jordan sees the rise of the protests corresponding with a prolonged crisis of the left. The criminal justice issue by 1994 was simply the latest leftist political cause to champion. I would claim that

many ravers, of legal and illegal scenes, even at the height of the actions remained blissfully unaware of the CJA.²⁵ Perhaps the most accurate answer to the question of whether the CJA has resulted in a radicalising of youth is 'yes and no'.

Concentrating on section five of the Act to portray it as 'the anti-rave bill' has also deflected from other key provisions. Youth are addressed in provisions to lengthen custodial sentences for the detention of young offenders, the contracting out of secure training centres and the lowering of the minimum age at which young offenders can be detained by the police from fifteen to twelve. Increased police powers, such as the 'sus' laws (arrest on suspicion), are bound disproportionately to affect young black people. Hutnyk has written of its impact on Asians. Bhattacharya has contrasted the sentimental attention focused by animal rights campaigners on calves in veal crates, to the human suffering of (similarly doe-eyed and brown) deportation victims who are just as roughly treated at the hands of the immigration authorities, claiming that the latter surely carries a higher price. Furthermore the imagery invoked by many (e.g. Rietveld) of rave as hypnotic, tribal, even primal, carries dangerous suppositions of western supremacy over a caricatured valorisation of savages in grass skirts banging tom-tom drums, and is deeply offensive to those of contemporary tribal communities. Paradoxically the campaign at times comes close to treading a little Englander, parochial path, yearning for an idealised imagined past that never was.²⁶

Redhead sees the Act, along with the Entertainment (Increased Penalties) Act 1990 and the Football Spectators and Football Offence Acts of 1989 and 1991 respectively, as part of a pattern of the regulation of youth culture. He writes: 'These regulatory regimes all exhibit familiar features of the relationships between law, market and state in the 1990s and illustrate contemporary attempts to regulate, discipline and police popular culture in the late twentieth century'.²⁷ This example of attempted social control by Law is rooted in precedent, stemming from crowd fear and the idea of intoxicated dance. Plato saw the mob as 'the beast' and Shakespeare called the crowd 'the many-headed hydra'. Some claim that within rational industrial/post industrial societies dance will be peripheral to the main forms of activity and social relationships. Furthermore, those for whom dance does play an important role are definitely marginal and almost always suspect. However the Government's determination to legislate rave away, to the extent of devising a statutory definition of it, has been unheard of in

any youth culture. McKay claims that 'rave culture has been subject to a sustained assault by legislative forces ... far more sustained than on earlier subcultures of resistance'.²⁸ The Bill itself emerged against a backdrop of moral panic surrounding youth, fuelled by media uproar over joyriding, the murder of toddler Jamie Bulger by two juveniles, estate riots in Blackburn Leys, Oxford, and the murder of headteacher Philip Lawrence.

However the moral absolutism of the new right's 'back to basics' may have been a political misjudgment. The Criminal Justice Bill and New Politics issues have spread beyond a 'youth' campaign. If its purpose was to appease the electorate of the Tory shires, the consequence of the politicisation of middle-aged, middle-class, respectable England by the anti-CJB cause or animal rights and road campaigns was surely unintended. John Stewart of road-protesting group Alarm UK told me in 1995, 'Protesting is becoming almost respectable for the middle class. The middle classes are experiencing the same uncertainties the working class always had. No job is safe anymore. People are much more critical and more prepared to take on the establishment'.

Furthermore 'crusty' lifestyles are having an increasing impact on mainstream culture. With the growth in alternative lifestyles – vegetarianism, availability of herbal alternative medicines – the crusty may not any longer be so much of a bogey-man. Much has been made of the facile selection of societal scapegoats in the legislation. The government's targeting of ravers and crusties can also be read as fulfilling a need now that the Eastern bloc threat (arguably always dubious) has receded. This time however the perceived threat to stability is from the enemy within.

The question of who exactly is scapegoating whom is also important. The Government can be seen to be using the police. On asking officers in a parked police car outside an unlicensed party in Uxbridge in July 1995 what action they would take, I was told: 'Look love. If you saw 400 kids in a warehouse having a good time what would you do about it?': the officers made it clear that as far as they were concerned, providing that health and safety were not compromised, no action was needed.

In the short term there have been some tangible effects of the Criminal Justice mobilisations. Recent years have seen a cut-down of the government's road building programme, generated by cost considerations and the anti-roads lobby's ire. Summer 1995 saw a climbdown by Shell over the Brent Spar oil platform. On the eve of

the Act's first anniversary Liberty released the results of their twelve month public order monitoring project, which encouragingly showed that only three people had been arrested under the section five provisions. Of these three arrests only one had involved the Act's power to seize vehicles and sound equipment (effectively impounding sound systems). It was reported that there had only been two large-scale events in the twelve months following enactment but that smaller events with less than 500 attending had continued largely unhindered, indicating that the more Draconian sections of the CJA were not yet being enforced.

Nonetheless the provisions are enshrined in law if the state ever needs them. The disequilibrium of local variations in the law's application, depending on the extent of the local constabulary's individual zealotry, is also a cause for concern, in that it is effectively an unequal and arbitrary application of justice. Liberty's report claimed, 'The possibility that legislation enacted in this country could have produced a new group of cultural refugees would have been almost unthinkable until recently'. On the one hand, it seems that yesterday's power networks are no longer as assured as they once were now that issue-based politics and direct action are increasingly making their presence felt. On the other, unless the momentum is maintained, there is a perpetual danger that the movement could easily go into a sense of drift. With the Criminal Justice Act on the statute book, the movement has by definition lost its *raison d'être*. George Monbiot told me: 'So far we're lacking a sense of what we're for, as opposed to what we're against'.

Other less tangible results, such as a change in generational consciousness, are not yet apparent. They may come to light only if and when the anti-CJA protestors reach positions of influence. One thing however seems certain, the free party movement, in spite of the Law, is defiantly following the spirit of the Happy Monday's hit of 1989: *Rave on*.

NOTES

1. All the quotations with no reference are taken from interviews conducted by the author.
2. This of course was the famous utterance of Mrs Thatcher in 1988.
3. S. Redhead, *The End of the Century Party*, MUP, Manchester 1989.
4. 'Politics' of course is a much contested term, subject to various definitions. This statement is used here as 'scene-setting'. Rave can be read as a politics of

the body and pleasure. For more discussion around these themes see T. Jordan, 'Raving and the Future of Revolution: cultural and political social movements', paper given at the *Shouts from the Street* Conference, Manchester Metropolitan University Institute for Popular Culture, September 1995.

5. J. Press, 'The Killing of Crusty' in J. Savage and H. Kureishi (eds), *The Faber Book of Pop*, Faber, London 1995, pp797-806.
6. R. Lowe and W. Shaw, *Travellers: Voices of the New Age Nomads*, Fourth Estate, London 1993.
7. R. Card and R. Ward, *The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994*, Jordans, London 1996.
8. The Oxford English Dictionary describes music as 'the art of arranging the sound of voice(s) or instrument(s) or both in a pleasing combination'.
9. A. Blake, 'Village Green, Urban Jungle' in *New Statesman and Society*, 12.8.94; G. McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance since the Sixties*, Verso, London 1996; G. Robertson, *Freedom, The Individual and the Law*, Pelican, London 1989.
10. The UK anti-racism pressure groups have always been very East London-centred, e.g. Anti-Racist Action, Anti-Nazi League and others all have London premises and concentrate their activity in large degree on the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, in recent years a site of far-right political activity.
11. Card and Ward, *op.cit.*
12. 'The Bill' being British slang for police.
13. Media reactions to the marches ranged from a trite picture story on the back cover of the *Guardian*, 2 May 1995, following the May march, to the exposé of *News at Ten*, following the October lobby, which outlined the structure and workings of various anarchist groups, such as the anarchistic, numerically insignificant if well-meaning anarchists, Class War. The *Guardian* item was the May 1994 event's sole mention in the national newspapers. Vicky Hutchins' article in the *New Statesman* took much the same tone, marvelling at the weirdos. V. Hutchins, 'Fight for Your Right to Party', *New Statesman and Society*, 6 May 1994. Of course the marchers included people other than ravers. Groups such as Football Fans Against the Bill and the motorcyclists, Bikers Against the Bill also had banners at the demonstrations.
14. P. Foot, 'In the Vanguard', *Red Pepper*, No. 6, 1995, pp34-36.
15. C. J. Stone, 'Let's Have a Revolution for Fun', *New Statesman and Society*, 29 July 1994.
16. H. Hart, *Law, Liberty and Morality*, OUP, Oxford 1963, Card and Ward, *op.cit.*
17. Z. Bauman, *Intimations of Postmodernity*, Routledge, London 1992.

18. M. Foucault, *Les Mots et Les Choses: une archéologie des sciences*, Gallimard, Paris 1968; JF Lyotard, *La Condition Postmoderne*, Minuit, Paris 1968; S. Redhead (ed), *Rave Off*, Avebury, Aldershot 1993; T. Jordan, 'Collective Bodies: raving and the politics of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari', *The Body and Society*, 1(1), 1995, pp125-144.
19. M. Diani, 'The Concept of Social Movements', *Sociological Review*, 40(1), 1992, pp1-25; A. Melucci, *Nomads of the Present*, Century Hutchinson, London 1989.
20. A. Tourraine, *Le Retour a l'Acteur*, Denoels, Paris 1984.
21. M. Maffesoli, *Les Temps des Tribus: le déclin de l'individualisme dans les sociétés de masse*, Meridiens Klincksieck, Paris 1988, p182.
22. T. Jordan, 1995, *op.cit.*
23. At the time of writing (second half of 1997) it seems that the old CJB campaigners have diversified into a number of different directions. The 'Green Field' of the 1997 three-day Glastonbury festival (largest open-air arts festival in Europe), usually a good gauge of these things, included speeches from Swampy, new media-friendly eco-warrior who had made a name opposing the Manchester Airport expansion, and the McLibel pair, two anti-McDonalds activists who had won a moral and partial legal victory over the hamburger giants after their DIY literature raised the multi-national's corporate ire. In 1994, the last time that I attended the festival, Debby Staunton's speech resulted in an anti-CJB protest march inside the ramparts of the festival, which struck me as the ultimate preaching to the converted.
24. The intersections of the two are numerous. A group known as Labour Campaign For Travellers' Rights even emerged. In March 1995 the GMB, the boilermakers union, began a tour of raves up and down the country to spread the word on the joys of collective action and to enlist some more youthful members. Charter 88's youth wing, Active 88, organised a travelling roadshow of student towns to raise awareness and shake people out of apathy, using film, DJs, live music, and drama, in the form of a short sketch rather crudely representing police brutality against ravers as a sign of things to come under the impending draconian legislation.
25. McKay, *op.cit.*; J. Hutnyk, 'Repetitive Beatings or Criminal Justice?' in *Dis-Orienting Rhythms: the Politics of the New Asian Dance Music*, Zed, London 1996; Jordan, 'Collective Bodies', *op.cit.*
26. P. Cavadino, 'The Criminal Justice Act 1994 and Young Offenders', *Youth And Policy: the Journal of Critical Analysis*, 48, 1995; Hutnyk, *op.cit.*; G. Bhattacharya, 'White Angst', paper delivered at Race, Ethnicity, Politics seminar, Birkbeck College 20 January 1996; H. Rietveld, 'Living the Dream', in Redhead (ed), 1993, *op.cit.*, pp41-78.

27. S. Redhead, *Unpopular Cultures*, MUP, Manchester 1995.
28. McKay, *op.cit.*, p165.