

WHAT YOU CAN DO

EXPLAIN TO OTHERS HOW 'TERRORISM' IS BEING REDEFINED in broader, anti-democratic ways.

OPPOSE RENEWAL OR EXTENSION OF THE TERRORISM ACTS

INFORM OUR CAMPAIGN of any harassment related to these laws

PROTEST AGAINST DETENTIONS under these laws; any arrests must be based on evidence under the ordinary criminal law.

REFUSE POLICE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION ABOUT NORMAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY

MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL ETHICS about confidentiality of information on political activities

For further information on the work of CAMPACC please visit our website at www.campacc.org.uk.

Our next monthly meetings will be held on Thursday 15 January and Monday 9 February 2009 at 7pm, Camden Town Hall, Judd Street, WC1 (near Kings Cross station).

Speakers are available from CAMPACC

To find out more please contact Estella on 020 7586 5892 or 020 7272 4131 e-mail us at estella24@tiscali.co.uk

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CRIMINALISING COMMUNITIES (CAMPACC)

Honorary Chair: Michael Mansfield QC

President of the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers

ANTI-TERRORISM LAWS: Unjust Powers Serving the Politics of Fear

Do anti-terror laws make us safer? Whom do they protect?

Since 2000 several 'anti-terror' laws have been officially justified as necessary to protect us from global threats to our lives. Yet these laws have political aims and consequences.

Anti-terror powers:

- define terrorism more broadly, thus blurring any distinction between anti-government protest and organized violence against civilians;
- label numerous organisations as 'terrorist', as a basis for placing entire communities under suspicion of associating with 'terrorism';
- use 'intelligence' obtained by torturing detainees abroad; and
- detain and prosecute people for suspected activities which could just as well be handled under other laws.

These powers cast a wide net for treating more and more people as 'terror suspects',. Anti-terror powers foster a racist culture of suspicion towards migrants and Muslims, treating them as suspect communities. This politics of fear helps to intimidate dissent and so shield the government's foreign policies from criticism and protest.

The Terrorism Act 2000 underpins all subsequent anti-terror laws. It defines terrorism to include simply 'the threat' of 'serious damage to property', in ways 'designed to influence the government' for a 'political cause' anywhere in the world. . This broad definition stigmatizes a wide range of legitimate political activity as 'terrorism'. Organizations could be banned on the basis that their activities in other countries fit the broad definition of terrorism. Since the Home Office banned more than forty organizations under the Terrorism Act 2000, free speech has been attacked and political activists have been prosecuted.

Under the 2000 Act, police gained powers to impose stop-and-search on an arbitrary basis, without any grounds for suspicion about an individual. These powers have been widely used to harass political activists. Under this Act they also gained powers to detain 'terror suspects' without charge for 7 days. This was later extended to 14 days, and then to 28 days in 2005. Such long detentions impose punishment without trial, psychological pressure on 'suspects', and damage to their livelihoods.

After the 11 September attacks, the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act (ATCSA) 2001 granted further powers of detention and surveillance. It even imposed duties on everyone to inform the authorities of any 'suspected terrorist' activities. Charities faced extra restrictions: for example, Interpal had its bank account temporarily frozen, and political activists have been barred from serving as officers of charities.

The ATCSA 2001 also authorized the government to intern non-UK citizens suspected of links with a vaguely defined 'international terrorism'. Several foreign nationals were detained for an indefinite period, in many cases based on 'intelligence' from torture abroad. After a three-year protest campaign, the Law Lords declared this power illegal. The government rushed through the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) 2005 authorising 'control orders'; these keep individuals in their homes under curfew, restrict movements, and require clearance for any visitors. This system turns homes into domestic prisons. 'Control orders' can be imposed on anyone in this country.

The PTA 2005 also criminalised any statements 'glorifying terrorism', or possession of any item which 'may be useful for terrorism'. Again these powers referred to the broad definition of terrorism from the 2000 law. Some 'suspects' have been prosecuted simply for downloading documents from the internet, for possessing 'radical' DVDs, for exploring websites, and for writing poems. These prosecutions intimidate dissent against the government's foreign policies.

Attacks on civil liberties are not simply a means but also a fundamental purpose of 'anti-terror' laws. Ordinary criminal law provides more than adequate powers for the police to protect the public. Anti-terror laws help the state:

- to isolate migrant communities and deter them from political protest against oppressive regimes abroad, especially those allied with the UK government.
- to undermine struggles for national self-determination.
- to obtain extensive access to information on political activities, as well as to harass them.

'Anti-terror' laws contradict fundamental principles of justice – the presumption of innocence, habeas corpus and a fair trial by jury. They treat suspicion as guilt, impose punishment without trial, and allow arbitrary executive decisions. Such powers have been extended by the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008.

All these powers could be used even more extensively against any of us, bringing this country closer to a police state. Resistance and solidarity are essential to protect our rights.

November 2008
Campaign Against Criminalising Communities (CAMPACC),
www.campacc.org.uk

CAMPAIGN AGAINST CRIMINALISING COMMUNITIES (CAMPACC)

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 1. To oppose all laws based on a pretext of counter-terrorism.**
- 2. To campaign for the repeal of such laws: the Terrorism Act 2000, the Anti-Terrorism Crime and security Act (ATCSA) 2001, and the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005.**
- 3. To oppose any measures which could criminalise mere association with a political organisation, or which involve detention without charge, or restrictions on freedom of speech, association or publication.**
- 4. To work in close association with affected communities and build the broadest possible alliance for civil liberties, human rights and universal values.**
- 5. To demand that everyone must be treated as innocent until proven guilty, that the right of habeas corpus be restored, and that there should be no punishment without trial (e.g. 'control orders').**
- 6. To defend the democratic freedom to dissent and to resist oppression, nationally and internationally.**
- 7. To oppose crimes against humanity, regardless of who (or what government) commits them.**