

'Manchester calling' For what?

Grupo de Investigación Cultura Digital y Movimientos Sociales.

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Analítica

Manchester's 'northern quarter', an area targeted for regeneration - cheap hostels, clubs, old textile businesses and new cafe bars - was, on the Tuesday evening, rapidly shutting up shop. There had been rumours from late afternoon that Salford about a mile away had seen trouble, and restaurant owners round here were taking no chances. We took refuge in a Lebanese place off Oldham Street while the kids set off on their bikes to see what was happening a block or two south and reported back from time to time on events in Piccadilly gardens. An occasional flash of blue light, people sprinting from one alleyway to the other, stories of stones thrown, and all this in a growing atmosphere of tense, expectant, unusual silence. The trams and bus system closed down by mid-evening, music venues were told by the authorities to stop early, so by now there was a different mix; city centre workers and customers were moving out, anxious about how to get home, some locals were working their way down to the centre to see what was what, and small huddles of youth hung around the corners with nowhere to go. Everyone looked suspicious, looking suspiciously at each other, made objects of suspicion, and already separation was at work, division of each from the other, and no place in this for solidarity, just disorganisation and uncertainty about what would happen next

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